



Resident Research Grant Guidelines

News and Updates

PSI Foundation's new online application system is now in use for Resident Research Grant applications.

The PSI Foundation no longer has deadlines. You may submit an application at any time.

Follow us on twitter @PSIFoundation and check our website at www.psifoundation.org for the latest news and updates, such as updated application forms and policy revisions.

Please note: all applications received by the Foundation through the online system are acknowledged automatically. You will receive a second notification of acceptance within a few weeks.

Please note our new sponsoring institution requirements on page 3 of this document. This information is also available at <http://www.psifoundation.org/sponsoring.php>.

Please note new eligibility criteria for the Resident Research grant on page 2 of this document.

The PSI Foundation was established in 1970 by the physicians of Ontario with the original capital of Physicians Services Incorporated, the doctor-sponsored prepaid medical care plan. PSI was established with the mission of improving the "health of Ontarians". Physicians from across Ontario remain involved as members of the Foundation's House of Delegates as well as part of the governing board of directors for the Foundation.

PSI's granting interests are in two areas: education of practising physicians and health research with an emphasis on research relevant to patient care.

This document serves as the funding guidelines for the Resident Research funding program offered by PSI. For the funding guidelines for the other funding programs, please visit PSI's website at www.psifoundation.org and click on the applicable type of funding for guidelines and application forms.

Resident Research applications should be largely developed by the resident. The majority of the work involved in completing the research must be done by the resident who will be referred to as the Principal Investigator of the project under the supervision of a physician with an academic appointment (the "supervisor"). The resident/principal investigator must explain in the application what her/his role is in the proposed study.

Eligible Areas of Resident Research

Applications for PSI's Resident Research funding program must be in one of the following three areas:

- i. **Clinical Research** which is of direct relevance to patient care. Studies involving animals will be considered only if the animals are required as an immediate patient surrogate, which must be demonstrated in the written application.
- ii. **Medical Education Research** which focuses on projects designed to assess through research the post M.D. educational environment, such as curricula, methods and teaching resources. PSI recognizes that research within this area may involve teams that include non-medical researchers and consultants.

Please note that this funding stream is intended to support hypothesis-driven research proposals; therefore, applications will only be considered for projects that evaluate curricula, learning methods, teaching resources and evaluation strategies. Projects intended to create and/or develop curricula, educational programs or tools will not be considered. Also, any costs attributed to the creation and/or development of curricula, educational programs or tools will not be considered.

- iii. **Health Systems Research** which focuses on projects describing or evaluating aspects of the healthcare system, such as access, availability, effectiveness, or cost-effectiveness of medical practice.

Please note that projects involving large registries or databases that require persons other than Residents to identify, sort and analyze variables reflect applications whereby grant success would be more difficult, because several aspects of the project cannot be performed by the residents themselves. As noted above, the resident should be involved in completing the majority of work outlined in a Resident Research Grant, and this should be explicitly demonstrated in the application.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a Resident Research Grant, the Resident must have PGY status as per the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

Ineligible Applicants for a Resident Research Grant

Resident Research Grant applications will not be considered from:

- Applicants whose residency will end prior to the project end date
- Principal Investigators who hold a Ph.D. but not an M.D.
- Residents based outside of Ontario

PSI will consider and support only one project per Resident/Principal Investigator at any given time.

Resident Research Project Supervisor

All Resident Research projects must be supervised by a College of Physicians and Surgeons licensed M.D. with an academic appointment who must sign off on the application to PSI. Supervisors are eligible to supervise more than one applicant and/or recipient of the Resident Research Grants.

Sponsoring Institution

All applications must have a sponsoring institution which is registered with Revenue Canada as carrying on charitable activities. PSI now accepts applications from eligible applicants located from outside of Toronto where their research institute/hospital is named as the sponsoring institution. Previously, such applicants would have had to identify their university as the sponsoring institution.

Eligible institutions must:

- Be located in the Province of Ontario
- Be a registered charity
- Have their own, independent research ethics board
- Be eligible to hold Canadian Institute of Health Research grants. The list can be found at <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/36374.html>.

The sponsoring institution must provide the necessary infrastructure for the research project including, but not limited to, accounting and reporting of grant funds as well as ensuring the research is carried out according to the institution's policies and procedures and accepted research standards in Canada. In addition, REB approval **must** come from the sponsoring institution.

Amount and Duration of Funding

Up to a maximum of \$20,000 is available. Resident Research Grants must be completed before the residency end date. The timeline will be up to 2 years. Grants with a timeline longer than 1 year must be completed at least 6 months before the residency end date. Please note that PSI generally allocates a maximum of \$300,000 per year in total to Resident Research Grants and therefore this granting stream is highly competitive.

If a grant is awarded, the study must commence within six months of notification. In conjunction with the Resident/Principal Investigator, PSI will establish a granting period for every award. This granting period represents the timeframe for which the grantee has to complete the study. Within three months of the end of the granting period, the research account must be closed and any unused funds remaining in the account must be returned to PSI along with a final accounting statement for how funds were used.

The institution to which a grant is paid must immediately notify and return unused funds to PSI if the Resident/Principal Investigator is unable, for any reason, to carry out or complete the research for which the grant is given. This includes if the Resident/Principal Investigator ends her/his residency early.

See further information in the guidelines for use of funding and budget requirements.

How to Apply

The PSI Foundation no longer has deadlines. You may submit an application at any time. All requests for funding must be submitted using PSI's online application system. PSI's internal review committee will consider your application at its next meeting following the peer review process. You will generally receive a decision within 6 months.

To be eligible for consideration, applications must contain all requested information in full. PSI is unable to consider incomplete applications.

Please do not upload scanned documents to the online system, with the exception of letters of support with signatures and the completed signature page.

Leveraged Funding

In ranking research proposals, PSI will prioritize applications that leverages PSI's granting dollars with additional funding. Specifically, PSI will give priority to applications that have funds from other granting funders and institutions, rather than *in-kind* support.

Funding Criteria

All applications will be funded weighting scientific merit and clinical relevance. The following questions represent the criteria that will be considered by the Grants Committee in assessing an application (as applicable to the specifics of the research). Please consider these questions with respect to your research proposal fully before completing an application for funding to PSI:

1. Is the proposal within the interests and objectives of PSI, or is it a proposal which is more appropriate for support by another granting agency?
2. Does the application demonstrate a comprehensive literature review was conducted? Is the resident fully aware of the present state of knowledge in the area to be investigated?
3. Will the proposal add significantly to the current state of knowledge?
4. Does the proposed study represent truly innovative work?
5. Are the aims of the project feasible and can they be achieved realistically within the time frame outlined in the application? Are the objectives of the project testable and, if the objectives are stated in the form of a hypothesis, is the time reference reasonable with respect to the realization of the testing of this hypothesis?
6. Are the research methods appropriate for the objectives of the study? Is the methodology of the proposal sound? The application must include sufficient detail to provide a full understanding of the steps / protocols. Is the sample size statistically justified and feasible?
7. Is the Resident / Principal Investigator qualified? Is the environment in which he or she works satisfactory to carry out the project?

8. Are the personnel and equipment proposed adequate to carry out the project? Are all budget items sufficiently justified in the application? Is the budget feasible in relation to the objectives of the study?
9. To what extent could the research project findings strengthen clinical care and improve the health outcomes of patients in Ontario?
10. Will the project have any impact on reducing health costs?
11. What is the relevance of the project to the provincial health context?
12. Is there a strong knowledge translation plan?
13. Are there alternative ways to address the clinical problem being addressed by the research?

Project Budget - Use of Funding

The total amount of requested funding may not exceed \$20,000. The proposed budget must include a detailed budget narrative within the application (including quantities and rates/prices) to explain how amounts were determined. Ineligible or unjustified budget items will be removed from the budget. The eligible budget items are outlined as below:

Eligible Budget Items

Personnel

- Salaries for technicians, technologists, research assistants and other similar persons required for the successful completion of the project and who are not assigned to the project for the purpose of receiving training.
- Salaries for personnel must be in accordance with those paid to similarly qualified persons at the institution where the project is undertaken.
- PSI will not provide salary support at a level greater than the experience required for the work to be undertaken on a project.
- The employer's cost of project staff benefits may be included in the budget proportional to hours of employee time directed to project.
- Salaries for trainees and students, including medical students and fellows.
- Personnel costs may not include any individuals named on the application (co-investigators/collaborator) or salaries/stipends for residents.
- Secretarial assistance is also excluded for clinical research studies.

Equipment

- Equipment necessary for carrying out the project activities is to be included in this budget category.
- PSI is unable to support items such as the cost of computers, furniture, tape recorders, photographic equipment and calculators. Service contracts on equipment will also not be covered.
- Ineligible costs also include fees charged by the sponsoring institution for IT support (internet/web connections, software licenses, network components, etc.)

Material and Supplies

- Direct project related material and supplies
- The cost of purchasing animals and the maintenance thereof is an allowable expense.

Conference presentations and publication costs

- A maximum of \$1,500 per project may be allowed for travel to attend scientific meetings to present papers on a project, publication costs and the cost to purchase a reasonable number of reprints.

Other Expenses

- Direct project related items that may not fit within the categories above (such as research activity travel costs) that are necessary for completion of the project activities and requested with detailed justification is provided.

Additional Project Budget Requirements

- It is expected that the institution at which the project will be undertaken will provide research and office space.
- Grant funds must be used according to the approved project budget; however, PSI understands that the Principal Investigator is the best judge of the use of the funds awarded and may propose a change in the use of the grant funds, except where PSI has specifically excluded an expense item from its funding.
- Funds awarded will be deposited with the sponsoring institution where the project will be undertaken, to be administered by the appropriate officer.
- A statement of disbursement of the funds awarded must be submitted to PSI at the completion of the project. In projects that exceed a year in duration PSI expects to receive an accounting at the end of each twelve month period, as well as the final accounting at the end of the granting period.
- When a grant is approved, details of the schedule of payments will be given to the Resident / Principal Investigator and Project Supervisor at the time they are notified of the award being made. At the time grant payment is sent by PSI to the institution, a copy of the payment letter will be sent to the Resident/Principal Investigator and Research Supervisor.
- When work is completed, or cannot be continued for any reason unused funds must be immediately returned to PSI.

Funding Exclusions

Listed below are the items and areas which will not be accepted for consideration for a Resident Research Grant from PSI:

- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Building funds or other capital cost campaigns
- Operating costs of any organization or department
- Budget deficits
- Membership fees
- Entertainment / hospitality costs
- Service programs
- Ongoing research
- Major equipment, unless required for a research project being supported by the Foundation
- Projects outside the province of Ontario

- Films, books and journals

Decision Process

All applications received by the Foundation through the online system are acknowledged automatically. Applications submitted will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility. Once completeness and eligibility are confirmed the application will be sent for external peer review by experts in the research focus area. Applicants will receive unattributed external reviewer comments once a funding decision has been made by the Grants Committee.

The Grants Committee will review the full applications and external reviews prior to their meeting. At the Grants Committee meeting each application will be discussed and a consensus funding decision will be reached based on overall scientific merit and clinical relevance. All applicants will be notified of the Committee's funding decisions within 15 business days.

External Peer Review Process

Resident/Principal Investigators and Project Supervisors are asked to suggest potential reviewers with appropriate expertise to assess their proposal. Suggested reviewers must not have a potential real or perceived conflict of interest in reviewing the proposal. As such, applicants must not suggest the following as potential expert peer reviewers:

- A person who has a family / personal relationship with any member of the research team (including Research Supervisor and co-investigators)
- Colleagues at any member of the research team's clinical and/or academic institution
- Current and former supervisors, students or trainees of any member of the research team
- Anyone the research team (Resident/PI, Supervisor, or co-I) is currently collaborating with (or has collaborated with in the last two years).

Resubmission of Previously Declined Applications

Declined applications may be resubmitted to PSI one time only and must include a letter detailing how the external reviewer comments to the previously declined application have been responded to in the revised resubmission.

Grant Recipient Requirements

If funding is awarded the following requirements are conditions of funding:

1. PSI reserves the right to invite grantees to participate in the peer review grant process and may call upon a grantee, during the duration of their study, to assist in grant review. This may include, but not limited to, inviting grantees to provide peer reviews of applications and to rank multiple applications.
2. The Resident/Principal Investigator must maintain their eligible Resident status for the duration of the project. If the Resident's status changes at any time for any reason prior to the project being completed, PSI must be immediately notified. PSI believes the role of the funded resident is essential to the Resident Research Grant Program, as such if the PI is no longer an eligible Resident at any time in the granting period, the project will be ended and the unused funds and final report sent to PSI within three months.

3. The Resident/Principal Investigator and the supervisor and/or the sponsoring institution are responsible for notifying PSI of any significant changes to the project, including but not limited to status of the PI, methodology or budget prior to the changes being implemented to ensure all aspects of the project continue to meet PSI's funding criteria.
4. The Resident/Principal Investigator is to provide a start date and end for the project, which will also represent the start and end date of the granting period. *Please note:* PSI will use this date to determine when the sponsoring institution will close the research account and when to expect final reports from the grant recipient.
5. The project must start within six months of the date of the letter from PSI offering funding and be completed within the approved time period while the Resident/Principal Investigator meets PSI's Resident eligibility criteria.
6. If the project is delayed for any reason that will result in the project duration exceeding beyond the scheduled end date, please email your request for an extension to PSI before the original scheduled project end date. The request for extension must explain in detail the reason for the project timeline extension, a budget update, the state of the progress of the project to date and a revised project end date. Please note that such extension requests cannot contain a request for additional funding of the same project.
7. PSI requires that all funded research projects adhere to the sponsoring institution's policies and procedures as well as accepted research standards. Grant recipients must provide evidence of all applicable ethics and research standard approvals and registrations with the same title as that of the application approved by PSI.
8. Please note that the first payment of funding is conditional upon receipt of all applicable approval certificates and registrations.
9. The PI is responsible for submitting a final report on the project outcomes and use of grant dollars to PSI within *three months* of the project end date. This report should clearly state the findings of the research as carried out according to the methodology approved in the original application.
10. The Resident/Principal Investigator is responsible for reporting the results of the project so PSI can track the outcomes of all funded projects. Subsequent applications will not be considered unless the previously funded research project has met all reporting requirements.
11. Grant funds must be used according to the approved project budget; however, PSI understands that the Resident/Principal Investigator is the best judge of the use of the funds awarded and may propose a change in the use of the grant funds, except where PSI has specifically excluded an expense item from its funding. **Please note: the PI must notify PSI of any significant changes in the project budget before the change is made to ensure the proposed changes meet PSI's eligibility criteria.**

12. A statement of disbursement of the funds awarded must be submitted to PSI at the completion of the project. In projects that exceed a year in duration an accounting at the end of each twelve month period is required as well as the final accounting at the end of the granting period.
13. When work is completed, or cannot be continued for any reason unused funds must be immediately returned to PSI.
14. The Resident/Principal Investigator must notify PSI of any leave to be taken, apart from ordinary vacation, in order to make adjustments as applicable to the status of the study and to the payment of the funds. PSI must be notified before the leave starts.
15. In the case of maternity/paternity leaves, the Resident/Principal Investigator may request an extension to the granting period of up to one year. The request for an extension must be endorsed by the appropriate institution officials, in order for adjustments to be made to the granting period and reporting and payment schedule.
16. Where papers are published or presented, reprints or copies must be submitted to PSI. Electronic copies by email are preferred.
17. All publications and presentations arising from the funded project are to include acknowledgement of funding from "PSI Foundation"; furthermore, PSI's logo should be included whenever possible. An electronic file of the logo is available on the website.

Contact Us

Please contact us at 416.226.6323 or by email at psif@psifoundation.org to discuss any questions you may have about submitting an application for funding.