



Weston Family  
Foundation

## **Weston Family Foundation launches new \$7M program aimed at maintaining and improving the brain health of Canadians**

TORONTO, November 5, 2020 – The Weston Family Foundation is pleased to announce it is accepting letters of intent from Canadian researchers for a new funding program targeting brain health. *Brain Health: 2021 – Lifestyle Approaches and Microbiome Contributions* is designed to support projects examining the impact of lifestyle and the microbiome on the maintenance of optimal brain health, specifically the prevention or delay of neurodegenerative diseases of aging.

“We’re excited to extend funding to Canadian researchers interested in the maintenance of optimal brain health because we believe this is an area of research that holds great potential,” said Tamara Rebanks, Chair. “The focus on prevention fits well within our Foundation’s newly-refined strategy to support projects that create measurable impacts and empower Canadians to improve their health.”

In this \$7M pilot round, funding of up to \$1.5M over three years will be available to Canadian researchers who propose projects that seek out new ways to maintain or improve the brain health of Canadians. Projects should aim to evaluate the link between brain health and lifestyle approaches, the contributions of the microbiome to brain health, or both.

“Our hope is that this pilot will prove successful and will bring increased attention from the research community in the coming years,” added Galen G. Weston, President. “Reducing the incidence of neurodegenerative diseases of aging has the obvious benefit of improving the well-being of Canadians, but also has the potential to substantially lower health care costs across the country.”

**The deadline for submitting letters of intent is November 25, 2020.** Researchers can find more information about the *Brain Health: 2021 – Lifestyle Approaches and Microbiome Contributions* program at [www.westonfoundation.ca](http://www.westonfoundation.ca), or by sending queries to Dr. Geordie Stewart at [brainhealth@westonfoundation.ca](mailto:brainhealth@westonfoundation.ca).

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### **About the Weston Family Foundation**

At the Weston Family Foundation (formerly The W. Garfield Weston Foundation), more than 60 years of philanthropy has taught us that there's a relationship between healthy landscapes and healthy people. That's why we champion world-class health research and innovation with the same passion that we support initiatives to protect and restore biodiversity on our unique landscapes. We take a collaborative approach to philanthropy, working alongside forward-thinking partners to advance Canada and create lasting impacts. We aspire to do more than provide funding, as we enable others to find transformational ways to improve the well-being of Canadians.

### **Brain Health: 2021 – Lifestyle Approaches and Microbiome Contributions FAQs**

#### **What is the Weston Family Foundation seeking to support with this program?**

*The Brain Health: 2021 – Lifestyle Approaches and Microbiome Contributions* program seeks to support research and implementation initiatives that aim to improve Canadians' maintenance of optimal brain structure and function starting in midlife, and reduce the incidence and progression of neurodegenerative diseases of aging, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

#### **How is this program different from other Weston Brain Institute and Weston Family Foundation programs?**

This program focuses exclusively on the impact of lifestyle approaches and microbiome contributions to the mitigation of incidence and progression of neurodegenerative diseases of aging. Much of the other funding programs offered by our organization support translational research seeking to advance therapeutic strategies for the intervention of neurodegenerative diseases of aging.

#### **What types of research evaluating the microbial contributions to brain health are eligible for funding?**

Pre-clinical and clinical research projects that contribute to the understanding of microbial influences on brain health are eligible for funding, including those that demonstrate impact on health or assess molecular and cellular mechanisms.



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### **How many projects does the Weston Family Foundation seek to fund under this program?**

In this inaugural competition, we are seeking to fund a minimum of 4 projects for up to \$1.5M each over three years.

### **What are the eligibility requirements for applicants?**

Principal applicants submitting an application must be a researcher working in Canada at least 30% of the time and hold a position at or above the level of assistant professor or equivalent.

Co-applicants and collaborators must be at the post-doctoral level or above, and can be working outside Canada.

The Weston Family Foundation only provides grants to not-for-profit and charitable organizations that are registered with the Canada Revenue Agency.

### **What is the process for applying to the Brain Health: 2021 program?**

The application process consists of two stages: letters of intent (LOIs) and full proposals. For further details on the application process, please visit our website at [www.westonfoundation.ca](http://www.westonfoundation.ca).

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