



**FIGHTING
BLINDNESS
CANADA**

Director of Research & Mission Programs
POSITION PROFILE

The Position

Organization:	Fighting Blindness Canada
Title:	Director of Research & Mission Programs
Reports to:	President & CEO
Team:	6 positions: Senior Manager, Research & Education; Manager, Communications; Officer, Research and Education; Officer, Health Information; Coordinator, Digital Communications; Assistant, Education Events
Location:	890 Yonge Street

Is this you?

Are you passionate about being part of an organization committed to eliminating blinding eye diseases? Would you consider yourself an expert communicator, a passionate advocate, a team player and highly motivated professional? Can you multitask while keeping your eye on the goal? Are you a proven people leader with a passion for developing and growing your team's potential?

Do you possess a higher than average EQ and are used to working cross functionally by lending your knowledge and experience to others? Can you take the complex science and distill concepts down to digestible content for every person? Would your peers consider you an expert and credible source on blinding eye diseases and have you spoken at industry events on the topic? If you have media training, that's a bonus!

Your former managers would affectionately refer to you as their "utility player". Meaning, they could assign you a lot, or assign a task outside of your job description and you'd get it done, with near flawless execution and delivered on time.

Are you intellectually curious? Do you often ask yourself, "so what?"; and are you constantly on the lookout for new, innovative ways to generate revenue or partnership opportunities?

If the above sounds like you, please read on...

The Organization

Fighting Blindness Canada (FBC) is Canada's leading private funder of vision research.

FBC offers hope to Canadians by identifying the best, most promising research that is driving treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases, and by raising and stewarding funds to support this essential, sight-saving research. Vision research is on the cusp of transforming care for blinding eye diseases.

Over their 45-year history, FBC has invested over \$40 million to support vision research and education across Canada: that's over 200 research grants that have led to over 600 new discoveries in areas such as stem cell research, neuroprotective therapies, technological developments, pharmaceuticals, and gene therapies.

FBC is committed to developing vision research funding partnerships in Canada and internationally.

The research and educational initiatives FBC funds supports their goal of understanding why vision loss occurs, how it can be slowed or stopped, and how sight can be restored.

Fighting Blindness Canada (FBC) has been leading the fight against blindness since 1974, when they first received charitable status as the Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation of Canada. In 2000, they became the Foundation Fighting Blindness and expanded their mission beyond inherited retinal diseases, such as retinitis pigmentosa, to include age-related macular degeneration.

FBC's long-term focus on funding vision research steadily demonstrated that a discovery about one disease often reveals important insights about another. Many of the most promising and exciting vision research projects are relevant to many different eye diseases. These meaningful interconnections inspired and informed the expansion of their mission to include all blinding eye diseases. To communicate this expansion, they became Fighting Blindness Canada on April 25, 2019—the country's leading private funder of vision research.

The Position

This is a critical leadership role within the organization and is replacing an outgoing team member who is moving onto another exciting opportunity after five successful years in this role. Our successful candidate will report to the President & CEO and will be a core member of the Senior Leadership Team. They will lead a highly performing team of six (all currently in place) and will act as the internal expert on the science behind fighting blinding eye diseases.

A key component of this role will be the ability to communicate extremely effectively; verbally or written. Our candidate will be able to distill important research, clinical and sometimes confusing information in an easy-to-understand and digestible way. While at the same time they will be a

leader among their scientific and medical peers and considered an expert and credible source on the discoveries related to blinding eye diseases.

The communication element will be extremely important when our successful candidate is assisting their peers in Philanthropy. The Philanthropy, Special Event Fundraising and Corporate teams will rely on the Director to assist them in distilling content when creating Major Giving proposals and at times the Director of Research & Mission Programs will attend Major Giving meetings with donors of significant giving capacity.

The Director of Research & Mission Programs oversees the communications team who own the marketing and communications channels for the organization. The Director of Research & Mission Programs will be a regular contributor to the organizations web properties and will write frequent articles regarding recent discoveries on the topic of fighting blindness. They have two full time direct reports who manage the day to day as it relates to communications.

Advocacy and Community Engagement will be an important element to our candidates' success. They will oversee a fulltime staff member who manages Advocacy and will assist them where appropriate to improve Canadian access to new treatments and encourage a vision health care strategy across Canada. Community Engagement is an area of opportunity for the organization and as our successful candidate will be a prominent member of the scientific community on fighting blindness, they will be a key player in building momentum around a community movement against fighting blindness. This includes overseeing programs that are currently in place which include the [Young Leaders](#) program and [Vision Quest](#).

Fighting Blindness Canada is launching a new mission program this Fall with the recruitment of a Health Information Officer and establishing vision care pathways which includes medical referral tools, online educational materials and a phone line to help navigate genetic testing and medical information.

Our Director of Research & Mission Programs will be a comfortable public speaker, they'll enjoy representing Fighting Blindness Canada in the media, at scientific and medical meetings, and will frequently interact with senior volunteers, donors, stakeholders and board members. They will be accountable for the strategic leadership and operational direction for all research and mission programs in accordance with the FBC's strategic vision, annual operating plan and budget.

Primary Accountabilities

The successful Candidate will be accountable for the following:

Leadership & Cross Department Collaboration

- Acts and contributes as core member of the senior leadership team
- Leads the development and oversees the implementation of a multi-year, multi-pronged plan for FBC's mission programs including: funding and oversight of scientific research grants, research trainees initiatives, education programs including Vision Quest, Young Leaders, Vision Care Pathways, Health Policy, Advocacy, and Communications
- Supports three key external expert advisory groups to promote and develop the most impactful research portfolio; these committees include:
 - Scientific Advisory Board
 - Patient Registry Steering Committee
 - Mission Investment Steering Committee
- Leads the Mission Investment Steering Committee in strategic planning, operational planning and problem solving to facilitate the effectiveness of mission-related activities
- Oversees the program evaluation plan that measures the FBC's progress and assesses the impact of the mission programs. This will include the development of key indicators and metrics to measure program performance standards of accountability
- Identifies, assesses, and informs the President & CEO, of internal and external issues, risks and opportunities which may affect the FBC's mission, branding, fundraising, research activities, health policy advocacy and community engagement, and recommend mitigating strategies as required
- Assesses situations to determine the importance, urgency and risks, and make clear decisions which are timely and in the best interests of the organization
- Seeks and creates innovative and non-traditional partnerships to move forward with key initiatives that further FBC's mission
- Assists the Philanthropy team, specifically the Director of Philanthropy in the development of proposals, stewardship impact reports, and on occasion, attends meetings with high net worth donors to distill the science into layman terms with the goal of securing financial commitments for the organization

Research, Education, and Health Policy Development

- Manages the development of web-based education programs
- Works closely with the President and CEO (and with external advisory committees, as appropriate) in developing, implementing, and evaluating research initiatives, educational programs, and health policies advocacy; takes proactive steps to implement decisions and move projects and initiatives forward
- Oversees the FBC's research grant and trainee portfolio

- Lead contact for the ophthalmology, optometrist and optician communities including the academic departments of ophthalmology and optometry
- Lead contact for vision research community including facilitating the establishment of the Canadian Vision Research Network
- Oversees FBC's advocacy program and cultivates key relationships with lived experience community including CNIB, CCB, Retina International, and related stakeholder organizations. Provides input to organizational strategies to influence public policy as it relates to the support of vision research and access to vision health resources, including new diagnostic tools, such as genetic testing, and new therapies
- Oversees the development of mission program evaluation frameworks that measure outcomes against the strategic plan and ensure continuous improvement to achieve the Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Financial and Resource Management

- Oversees the nationwide annual mission program plan, integrates budgets, objectives, priorities and targets for research and mission programs
- Works with the Leadership Team on the annual operating plans, budgets and strategic directions for presentation and approval of the Board
- Accountable for ensuring that the research granting function operates in a manner that supports the funding of research with the greatest potential to impact the FBC's mission, while also being responsive to investor and donor interests
- Ensures appropriate financial oversight of research grants
- Approves expenditures in accordance with the annual budget and within the authority delegated by the President & CEO

Communications

- Manages communications team to develop and implement the annual communications plan
- Oversees the development of FBC marketing plan to implement the Strategic Plan 2019-2023
- Oversees and contributes to content creation (InVision, monthly e-news, Annual Impact Report, etc.)
- Oversees ambassador program
- Oversees brand integrity
- Acts as a national spokesperson to deliver key messages and represents the FBC on various external stakeholder groups including ophthalmologists, optometrists, opticians, vision scientists, health charity coalitions and committees, general public, donors, media, etc.

The Ideal Candidate

Our successful candidate will have the following qualifications:

- University degree or equivalent combination of work experience and education, ideally a PhD in Knowledge Transfer, Biology or equivalent
- Demonstrated ability to thrive under pressure while seeking values-driven and team-based results
- Superior interpersonal skills, including the ability to relate effectively with people at all levels both internal and external
- Exceptional writing and presentation skills and the ability to effectively communicate to a diverse constituency
- Strong public speaking ability, bonus if media trained
- Strong management skills, with the ability to mentor, coach and supervise professionals
- Ability to develop and manage departmental and project budgets
- Demonstrated ability to identify, develop and "close" individual relationships, and clear evidence of ability to close gifts
- Experience working with a non-profit Board of Directors and other volunteers
- CFRE designation considered an asset
- Monthly travel is required in Canada and an annual international medical conference

If you are someone looking for an outstanding challenge, working with a great team for a very important, uniquely focused organization, then what are you waiting for? Apply now to Lindsay Preston by sending your Cover Letter and CV to lindsay@phcap.ca. The application deadline is October 7, 2019.

FBC is an equal opportunity employer and supports applicants with disabilities. Accommodations are available upon request throughout the recruitment process.

Please note only qualified respondents will be contacted.