



2023 CLINICIAN-SCIENTIST EMERGING LEADER AWARD COMPETITION GUIDE

COMPETITION TIMELINES

Activity	Date
Registration of interest deadline	Thursday, April 27, 2023, 5pm EST
Full application deadline	Thursday, June 8, 2023, 5pm EST
Funding results announced (tentative)	September 2023
Funding start date (tentative)	October 1, 2023

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Clinician-scientists are essential for the translation of fundamental and pre-clinical research into clinical trials, new treatments and improved patient outcomes. Fighting Blindness Canada's **Clinician-Scientist Emerging Leader (CSEL) award** aims to strengthen the community of clinician-scientists in Canada, who are ready to collaborate with key stakeholders and researchers across the vision research community.

The CSEL award provides funding to ophthalmologists and optometrists in training who have demonstrated a keen interest in forging a research career to complement their clinical practice. This competition is open to applications on any aspect of vision research with the potential to significantly impact Canadians living with a blinding eye disease.

Please note: In 2023 we have adjusted funding levels for this program. Applicants can now apply for funding at two levels (up to \$20,000 or up to \$40,000) dependent on the amount of protected research time they have. More details are provided below.

Please contact Larissa Moniz, Director, Research and Mission Programs (research@fightingblindness.ca) if you have any questions about this competition.

The CSEL awards have been made possible through the generous support of Andrew and Valerie Pringle and Bayer.



1) ELIGIBILITY AND OTHER CRITERIA

i. Eligibility Criteria

- Candidates must hold or be enrolled in a clinical doctoral degree (MD, OD etc.).
- Preferred candidates will have completed or be in the final year of their clinical doctoral degree. The strongest candidates will be currently accepted into or enrolled in an ophthalmology or optometry residency or fellowship program at a Canadian institution.
- Candidates must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.
- Candidates are ineligible if:
 - They are currently holding or have previously held a CSEL award.
 - At the start time of the award (e.g. October 1, 2023) it has been more than 8 years* since being awarded their clinical doctoral degree.
 - At the start time of the award (e.g. October 1, 2023) they have held an independent academic research position for more than 2 years*.
- Candidates must identify one or more mentors or supervisors who will provide guidance and practical support during the award. Mentors should be active clinician-scientists with faculty appointments. The research proposal should be developed in collaboration with the mentor.
- Fighting Blindness Canada is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusivity in its research programs. We encourage eligible applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply for our funding opportunities.

* Justified career interruptions (career breaks and part-time working) are not included when calculating eligibility windows. These interruptions, including but not limited to parental leave, medical leave and family care will be considered and must be described in the Registration of Interest and Application forms.

ii. Institutional Support

The CSEL award requires collaborating institutions to devote resources to support the applicant's success. Examples of institutional support include, but are not limited to, donated equipment and space, institutional funded staff time and effort, or other resource investments.

An indication of institutional support is essential for the success of the application and should be included in the Institutional Support section (Section 6) of the application. In addition, if relevant,



specific institutional contributions can be described at the end of the Budget section (Section 5) of the application but should not be included in the detailed budget request.

2) FUNDS AVAILABLE

It is anticipated that three or four awards will be funded in this competition. Applicants can apply for two levels of funding depending on their eligibility.

- 1) Up to \$20,000 (up to \$10,000 per year for two years)
- 2) Up to \$40,000 (Up to \$20,000 per year for two years)

To apply for the higher level of funding, applicants must have over 60% guaranteed protected research time (e.g. 3 out of 5 days protected research time) for the entirety of their award. If an applicant has over 60% protected research time in one of the two years, they can apply for higher funding for one but not two years (e.g. Y1, 20% research time, \$10,000; Y2, 60% protected research, \$20,000; Total budget \$30,000).

All applications must clearly outline how much protected research time the applicant has in the statement of institutional support and include a signature from the program or institution director to confirm the protected time.

Funding can be used to support the direct costs of research, including supplies, salaries (e.g. trainees and research support staff) and equipment associated with the proposed work. Equipment costs should not exceed 10% of budget. Up to 10% of total budget per year can be used for professional development including travel to meetings or training. Indirect costs are not eligible.

Please note: Fighting Blindness Canada may share information about individual applications with partner organizations to increase funding opportunities.

3) APPLICATION PROCESS

There are two steps to the application. Applicants must register their interest by **April 27, 2023, 5pm EST** with the full application due **June 8, 2023, 5pm EST**. The *Registration of Interest* form, the *Application* form and submission link are found on Fighting Blindness Canada's website (fightingblindness.ca/research/for-researchers).



Note: Only applicants that have registered interest by the deadline (April 27, 2023) will be eligible to submit a full application.

Please contact Larissa Moniz, Director, Research and Mission Programs (research@fightingblindness.ca) if you have any questions about your eligibility or require help with the registration or application.

REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

DEADLINE: Thursday April 27, 2023. 5pm EST

Please complete and submit the *Registration of Interest* form through the “**Submit Here**” button at fightingblindness.ca/research/for-researchers/

APPLICATION

DEADLINE: Thursday, June 8, 2023. 5pm EST

- Applications will be assessed on the scientific merit of the research plan and its potential to impact clinical care and patient outcomes (50%) and on the excellence of the candidate as demonstrated by prior training and previous research efforts (50%).
- Fighting Blindness Canada may share information about individual applications with partner organizations to increase funding opportunities.
- Only applicants that submitted the *Registration of Interest* form by the deadline (April 27, 2023) are eligible to submit a full application.
- Submit completed application through the “**Submit Here**” button at fightingblindness.ca/research/for-researchers/

Formatting Guidelines

****Please respect word/page limits. Applications exceeding these limits may not be accepted****

- To facilitate peer-review, submit all documents in English.
- Use black ink for text and where word limits are not specified use single-spaced text, Calibri font, pt.11.
- The application **should be submitted as a single PDF document** in the order specified below.
 - Letters of references can be included in the single PDF document or submitted separately.
 - Do not create the PDF from scanned documents (signature page excepted). PDFs should be created by converting from Word or other compatible formats.
 - Delete instruction pages before saving as PDF.



- Include the last name of the applicant in the file name e.g. Smith_CSEL Application

Section	Format	Section Description
1	Application Form	Application Form: Available in 2023 CSEL Application document. Electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable
2	Free text, 1000 word maximum	Career development plan: Should include a clear description of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate's previous training and experience demonstrating a commitment to develop a career as a clinician-scientist. • A career development plan that identifies key activities that the candidate will accomplish and/or professional development events that candidate will participate in to achieve their goal of developing both an independent research career and a clinical practice in Canada.
3	Free text, 1500 word maximum, not exceeding 5 pages. Including figures and tables but not references	Research plan: Should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale and aims of the project • Experimental design, methods and analysis • Relevant previous work done in this area • Clear indication of the relationship between the mentor's research or expertise and the candidate's proposed research.
4	Free text, 500 words, not exceeding 1 page	Project Timeline: Identify key activities and milestones for the research plan. May be presented as a narrative, table or figure. If relevant include career development activities.
5	Free text, 1 page maximum	Project Budget: Including detail for staffing, reagents, services. Include details about other funding or resources that will support this project.
6	Free text, 1 page maximum	Statement of Institutional Support:



		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May include description of the research environment, infrastructure, resources, mentoring and administrative support.• Must clearly identify protected research time.• The statement may be written by the applicant but should be signed by the program or institutional lead confirming institutional support and protected research time.
7	Free text, 5 page maximum each	CV for applicant and mentor(s): CV that showcases key accomplishments. We recommend using the NIH Biosketch format, but this is not mandatory. <u>Each applicant and mentor should submit a CV.</u>
8	Free text	Two letters of reference: These may be included as part of the single PDF. Alternatively the reference may directly upload the letter through the link on: fightingblindness.ca/research/for-researchers or email it to research@fightingblindness.ca .