

Chronic Wasting Disease Research Program

June 26, 2023

About Alberta Innovates

Innovation is the catalyst for sustainable jobs, economic and community strength, improved health and environmental benefits. [Alberta Innovates](#) leads and accelerates innovation from discovery to use across all sectors in all parts of the province. As Alberta's largest research and innovation agency, we are uniquely positioned to propel great ideas forward to improve the lives of Albertans today and for generations to come.

Alberta Innovates believes the research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem is stronger and more sustainable when it is broadly representative of the overall diversity of our community. We strive to ensure that all interested and qualified parties have an equitable opportunity to participate and contribute to the ecosystem and that our processes are inclusive.

The projects that our programs invest in are critical to how Alberta Innovates achieves positive impact for Albertans in alignment with the Government of Alberta's R&I priorities, as expressed in our corporate Business Plan. (See the most recent Business Plan on our [Publications](#) page on our website.) Accordingly, it is essential for project outcomes to align with those of the program.

The [Chronic Wasting Disease Research Program](#) is managed through the Clean Resources business unit within Alberta Innovates, under the [Agri-Food Innovation](#) portfolio. [Clean Resources](#) helps technology developers and industry clients accelerate technology development and deployment, grow their businesses and enhance the competitiveness of the resource sector. We provide scientific and technical insights to the Government of Alberta (GOA) on energy and natural resource development, agriculture, economic diversification, emission reduction and water/land policies. The Agri-Food Innovation portfolio invests in research and innovation supporting data-driven decision making and automation for growth of Alberta's agriculture and food sector.

Program Overview

The Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Research Program supports collaborative research directly related to understanding and managing CWD, a prion disease that affects deer, elk and other cervids. The Program funds projects to find solutions to the challenges faced from CWD.

The description of the research should clearly demonstrate how the Project will further the objectives of one or more of the identified theme areas. The Program is designed to encourage collaboration within Alberta and between Alberta-based investigators and researchers outside of Alberta, to focus on innovative approaches to develop therapeutic strategies to control CWD.

Successful applicants are expected to provide opportunities for the development and training of investigators, especially graduate students and fellows.

The **objectives** of the Program are to:

- provide a better understanding of the mechanism and transmission of CWD
- minimize disease risks through the development of innovative approaches that contribute to the diagnosis, prevention, cure and possible elimination of the disease
- identify the broader societal and economic impact of CWD in Alberta
- provide information useful to all levels of government for the development of public policies regarding CWD

The **key outcomes** (i.e., measurable effects) the Program will accomplish for the benefit of Albertans are:

- increase employment in the science and agri-food sector
- reduce, control or eliminate CWD in the environment
- introduce techniques to monitor and control the spread of CWD

Funding

The CWD Research Program provides support for up to \$250,000 per project. Up to \$1 million CAD is available over a two-year period (2022-2024). Funding encourages collaborations within Alberta and between Alberta investigators and researchers in institutions outside of Alberta.

Projects must include a cash contribution from a partner funder, external to the nominated Principal Investigator's organization, of at least 25% of the total amount contributed by Alberta Innovates. In-kind contributions are welcome but are not eligible to be counted against the partner's cash contribution. Projects must be completed by **December 31, 2025**.

Alberta Innovates only funds reasonable costs incurred after an Investment Agreement is signed by Alberta Innovates and the Applicant. Any costs incurred prior to the signing of the Investment Agreement, and costs greater than market prices, are ineligible. Costs must be incurred between arm's-length entities. Please refer to Schedule B in the Investment Agreement posted on the [CWD Research Program web page](#) for detailed formation, including eligible and ineligible expenses.

Eligible and ineligible expenses

Alberta Innovates only funds reasonable costs incurred after a signed Investment Agreement between Alberta Innovates and the Applicant. Any costs incurred prior to the signing of the Investment Agreement or costs greater than customary market prices are deemed ineligible. Costs must be incurred between arm's length entities.

All usual operating expenses for a research project that are consistent with Alberta Innovates policy on the use of grant funding normally will be allowable for grants funded in a CWD research competition, except for salaries of investigators. Final decisions on the amount of funding awarded and limitations on specific categories of spending remain with Alberta Innovates and will be identified in an Investment Agreement.

The chart on the next page provides a high-level summary of eligible and ineligible expenses.

Key Dates

Applicants must Register their intention to submit a proposal by first completing an **Intake Form**. The Intake Form identifies the general scope and aim of the intended research proposal. All applicants must submit an Intake Form by **Monday, August 14, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. MDT** to be eligible to complete a full proposal.

The deadline for submission of the Full Proposal is **Monday, September 25, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. MDT**. Applicants will be notified whether their application is approved for support following the evaluation.

Projects must be completed by **December 31, 2025**, with reporting on outcomes following the completion date.

Eligibility

Applicant Eligibility

The CWD Research Program is open to:

- post-secondary institutions
- for-profit SMEs

In addition, to qualify for funding, the Applicant must:

- For-profits and not-for profit organizations:
 - Meet the following definition of an SME: a company with fewer than 500 full-time employees and less than \$50,000,000 annual gross revenue;
 - Be incorporated in Alberta AND/OR incorporated in another jurisdiction and extra-provincially registered in Alberta;
 - Be a General Partnership, Limited Partnership, or Limited Liability Partnership and registered in Alberta.
- Post-secondary institution:
 - Be Alberta-based AND/OR non-Alberta based.

All Applicants must also:

- Exist as a corporate person, with up-to-date corporate filings;
- Be authorized to undertake the proposed project and execute a grant with Alberta Innovates on our standard terms;
- Not otherwise be prohibited from receiving Alberta Innovates funding, for instance due to a past bad debt or otherwise not be in good financial standing with Alberta Innovates or its subsidiaries, InnoTech Alberta and C-FER Technologies;
- Have a physical presence in Alberta.

Please note: For Applicants **not** at post-secondary institutions, Alberta Innovates may perform corporate, bankruptcy and litigation searches, and conduct other forms of due diligence on the Applicant company and its principals.

Partner Eligibility

Partners are required to:

- Exist as a corporate person, with up-to-date corporate filings; and
- Be authorized to undertake the proposed project;

- Demonstrate that the relationship between the Applicant and Partner does not create a conflict of interest;
- Be at arm's length from the Applicant (i.e., no legal relationship with the Applicant);
- Provide the service(s) and/or product(s) at reasonable market rates;
- Provide a letter indicating the Partner's intention to participate in the Project at the time of the application;
- Have the financial capability to purchase or enter into a distribution agreement of the product upon Project completion of a demonstration; and/or
- Show tangible resources committed to the Project.
- Not otherwise be prohibited from receiving Alberta Innovates funding, for instance due to a past bad debt or otherwise not be in good financial standing with Alberta Innovates or its subsidiaries, InnoTech Alberta and C-FER Technologies.

Note: For partners, collaborators and/or service providers **not** at post-secondary institutions, Alberta Innovates may perform corporate, bankruptcy and litigation searches, and other forms of due diligence.

Project Eligibility

To qualify for funding, all Projects must:

- Align with the objectives of the CWD Research Program;
- be stepped with critical "go/no go" milestones;
- be completed by **December 31, 2025**; and
- agree to other criteria that Alberta Innovates may develop from time to time.

The CWD Research Program funds research directly related to CWD, a prion disease for which the etiology involves protein misfolding and the pathogenesis has prion-like characteristics. Funding is accessible for all relevant fields of inquiry in the areas described below.

Protein Folding and Misfolding

Applying tools of structural biology, biophysics, biochemistry, molecular biology and bio-computing to understand the mechanisms of CWD and other protein misfolding diseases.

Pathobiology of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs)

Understanding CWD/TSE biology, susceptibility, transmissibility and disease progression using genomics, proteomics, metabolomics and other innovative approaches that contribute to the diagnosis, prevention, cure and possible elimination of the disease.

Surveillance and Control

Minimizing risks associated with prion exposure, including disposal of specified risk material, technologies for inactivation and decontamination of prions in water, wastewater, soil and the environment.

Diagnosis of CWD using prion genomics, focusing on immunologic and biomedical engineering technologies to apply, validate and improve antemortem tests developed elsewhere, and to explore opportunities for new tests to be developed in Alberta.

CWD and Society

Studying policy and response modeling, assessing economic and sociological components of community impact, risk perceptions, consumer acceptance and impact on markets, and ensuring fair and accurate communication of scientific advances. This component will also provide information useful to all levels of government for the development of public policies regarding CWD.

Proposals that embody expertise and approaches including more than one theme are strongly encouraged. Projects must include partner funding and be completed by December 31, 2025.

How to Apply?

HOW TO APPLY

1

STEP 1A Register by completing an Intake Form

Registration using the Intake Form must be submitted electronically via the Alberta Innovates online grants management system.

STEP 1B Full Proposal Application Submission

Applications will be submitted electronically via the Alberta Innovates online grants management system.

<https://albertainnovates.S00martsimple.ca/>

2

STEP 2 Application Review & Partner Funding

Applications will be reviewed and may require adjustments to the funding requested from Alberta Innovates, and/or conditions that must be met prior to obtaining funding.

Final approval and initiation of funding will not occur until Alberta Innovates is formally advised in writing of the commitment to funding by other funding partner(s).

3

STEP 3 Project Management

For approved Applications, Applicants will execute an Investment Agreement with Alberta Innovates to proceed with the Project activities.

Applicants will need to submit all the requested documentation to execute the Agreement within 15 days from the Project award date. Project payments are based on milestone achievement and progress reporting.

***Registration – Step 1A:** Using the [online grants management system Intake Form](#), please provide a formal title for your research proposal (note it cannot be edited once submitted) that is clear/easy to understand and can be used in any public communication. Using language the general public would understand, describe your proposed project in a non-confidential, one-page summary, indicating how your proposed research can improve the management of CWD. This information may be used by Alberta Innovates to inform potential funding partners about the valuable research our organization supports. This will not replace the need to identify external sources of funding to match Alberta Innovates' funding opportunity.

The Intake Form will be reviewed for project eligibility. Applicants will then be invited to submit a full proposal.

Applicants are welcome to contact Alberta Innovates at any time during the application process.

Applicants are encouraged to complete their submissions in advance of the deadline. Alberta Innovates will not accept partial or incomplete submissions. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Evaluation Process

All Full Proposal applications are reviewed and evaluated to determine fit with the CWD Research Program objectives and intended outcomes. Alberta Innovates staff and external expert reviewers are engaged to evaluate Applications.

Alberta Innovates evaluates submitted Applications to the CWD Research Program based on:

- demonstrated contributions to the desired outcomes of the Program;
- quality of the research;
- experience of the participating investigators and trainees;
- success in attracting funding from other sources;
- proposed commercialization of inventions and research results; and
- plans for knowledge exchange.

Alberta Innovates retains the sole right to determine the evaluation process and assessment criteria and does not disclose the names of its reviewers to ensure their objectivity and impartiality. Internal and external parties involved in the evaluation are subject to confidentiality and conflict-of-interest policies set by Alberta Innovates.

All investment decisions are at the sole discretion of Alberta Innovates.

Performance Measurement

Alberta Innovates invests in research and innovation activities on behalf of Albertans to help build a healthier, more sustainable and prosperous future for the province.

To maximize the impact of these investments, our funding is tied to achievement of results and outcomes. For this reason, Alberta Innovates funds on a milestone completion basis. This means the Applicant must submit a Progress or Final Report and demonstrate sufficient progress before Alberta Innovates advances the next milestone payment.

The Investment Agreement outlines the responsibilities the Applicant has in reporting Project outcomes to Alberta Innovates over the course of the Project and following completion of the Project. Outcomes of the Project may be monitored for up to five years after Project completion, so Alberta Innovates can evaluate the economic, social, health and/or environmental benefits to Alberta resulting from our investments.

Alberta Innovates has a common set of performance metrics it monitors, both at the individual Project level and for the aggregate Program. These metrics may evolve over time.

Terms and Conditions

Once we have evaluated and approved an application for funding, Alberta Innovates will require the Applicant to sign our standard-form Investment Agreement. A copy of the Investment Agreement is available on the Alberta Innovates [website](#) for your reference.

The Investment Agreement sets out in detail the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the various Parties to ensure a successful Project. Alberta Innovate will not provide any funding until the Investment Agreement has been signed by all Parties.

Alberta Innovates will only fund Applicants who have satisfied all eligibility criteria. Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee access to funding, and all funding decisions will be made by Alberta Innovates at its sole discretion.

Alberta Innovates will only correspond in writing and provide copies of the Application to the person named in the Application form as the one authorized to speak for the Applicant.

Should you have any questions about this guide or what is expected, please contact Alberta Innovates (see contact information below). Please note that Alberta Innovates may modify this guide from time to time in keeping with any changes to the program.

Trusted Partners

We work closely with other funding organizations, usually provincially or federally funded, that share the goals and outcomes of Alberta Innovates. These Trusted Partners adhere to strict confidentiality guidelines. During the application process, the applicant will be asked if Alberta Innovates can share the application with our Trusted Partners for the sole purpose of determining their interest in funding the project with us. If the Trusted Partner is interested, they may request additional information.

Contact Information

RON CLARKSON

DIRECTOR OF PRION PROGRAMS

TEL: 780-429-9349

EMAIL: RON.CLARKSON@ALBERTAINNOVATES.CA