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## **CIHR Message from the President Regarding Foundation Grants**

### **Sponsor**

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

### **Program**

Foundation Grants

### **For More Information**

[Full Message from the President](#) [1]

### **Description**

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) issued a formal message from the President on April 15, 2019 regarding the final decision for the Foundation Grants program as follows:

*When CIHR created the Foundation Grant program, it was with the intent to support health researchers across all four pillars who were highly successful in the open grants programs. The goal was to support them in a way that would allow them to have the flexibility to pursue new and innovative lines of inquiry, while also training and mentoring the next generation of health researchers. Creating the program was a bold step for CIHR and we know that outstanding research has been supported through it.*

*As a learning organization, however, CIHR takes pride in assessing its programs and making evidence-based decisions for the way forward. After four completed Foundation Grant competitions, [a critical analysis of the data has revealed significant issues](#) [2]. Most notably, the evidence highlights that there are unintended consequences in funding distribution within the Foundation Grant program that are not evident in the Project Grant program (and were not in the former Open Operating Grant Program). Furthermore, the program's peer review process does not align with our renewed commitment to face-to-face review and has not reduced reviewer burden, as originally envisioned.*

*We have concluded that making adjustments to the program design would not be sufficient to address these issues. **As a result, the 2018–19 Foundation Grant competition (currently under way) will be the last competition for this program.***

*This decision to sunset the Foundation Grant program was not taken lightly and has been a*

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*long process in which a broad range of views regarding the program were heard. This included the Foundation Grant Program Review committee, which was struck in late 2017 and recommended significant modifications to the program while preserving it. We also relied heavily on the experience and insights of the Institute Scientific Directors, as discussion about the Foundation Grant program and the range of options available to us became a regular agenda item at our [Science Council](#) [3] meetings. For months, we carefully considered feedback from the University Delegates, as well as from the discussions that my predecessor, Dr. Rod McInnes, had with the research community during cross-country university visits in 2017. Finally, as we began to see consensus around the Science Council table, our deliberations with CIHR's [Governing Council](#) [4] took shape. Indeed, they reviewed all the evidence thoroughly, ultimately (and unanimously) deciding to endorse senior management's recommendation to sunset the program.*

*Reaching this decision has been a tremendous team effort, and I am confident that it is the right one for the CIHR community as a whole.*

*We are committed to minimizing disruptions and supporting as best as possible the smooth re-entry of Foundation grantees into the Project Grant program. As such, I would like to emphasize some key points for current Foundation grantees and applicants:*

- This decision will not affect the 2018–19 competition that is currently in progress. Successful applicants from the 2018–19 competition will still receive their Foundation Grants in full, and the budget available for the current competition has not changed. The anticipated Notice of Decision date remains July 16, 2019.*
- Those individuals who currently hold a Foundation Grant will continue exactly as planned, with no reduction in their funding levels. We have developed a transition plan to ensure that, upon completion of their grant, existing Foundation grantees can gradually return to the Project Grant program in a fair and timely fashion, while also considering the impact on the system overall. CIHR contacted current Foundation grantees earlier today and we will continue to work with them over the coming months to ensure that their needs can be addressed individually.*

*While we recognize that the research community has been waiting for a decision about the Foundation Grant program for some time, we also realize that this news may now leave you with additional questions. To this end, I invite you to [register for the "Ask Me Anything" webinar session](#) [5] taking place on April 16, 2019, with Adrian Mota, CIHR Associate Vice-President of Research Programs.*

*Our next step will be to talk about the future as we now have an opportunity to reinvest the resources that would have gone into future years of the Foundation Grant program. Our official strategic planning process will begin very shortly, and my hope is that we will be able to have a robust national dialogue about the best ways for CIHR to have a positive impact on the lifecycle of a research career and in making Canada a great place to conduct health research.*

*First and foremost, however, I will make the commitment that the annual budget for the Project Grant program will not decrease as part of CIHR's strategic planning exercise. As you know, CIHR has intentionally invested all of the [Budget 2018](#) [6] funds into the Project Grant program, which is part of how the annual budget for these competitions (two competitions per year) has*

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*grown to \$550M. Our current plan is to invest the majority of the original Foundation Grant budget into the Project Grant program in future fiscal years.*

*As part of our approach for determining additional future program resourcing needs, our strategic planning process will give us the chance to discuss the very real gaps that exist in the Canadian system and what we can do about them. For example, [CIHR's Strategic Action Plan on Training](#) [7] has identified three main challenges for the health research enterprise, and it has become clear that we cannot make any significant impact in these gap areas without additional investment. We also need to broaden the conversation to include various types of capacity development at all career stages so that we can support our best and brightest across the entirety of their careers. I have no doubt that other pressure points deserve our attention as well, and I look forward to engaging with you about these issues soon.*

*I look forward to starting this next chapter at CIHR and I hope that you will be, as well.*

*Sincerely,*

*Michael J. Strong, MD, FRCP, FCAHS, FAAN  
President, CIHR*

Alert Classifications **Category:**

Funding Opportunities and Sponsor News

### **Disciplines:**

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Physical Sciences and Engineering

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### **Source**

**URL:** <https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/alerts/content/cihr-message-president-regarding-foundation-grants>

### **Links**

[1] <http://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51431.html>

[2] <http://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51418.html>

[3] <http://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/33807.html>

[4] <http://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38103.html>

[5] [https://gts-ee.webex.com/mw3200/mywebex/default.do?nomenu=true&siteurl=gts-ee&service=6&rnd=0.38368297080697045&main\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fgts-ee.webex.com%2Fec3200%2Feventcenter%2Fevent%2FeventAction.do%3FtheAction%3Ddetail%26%26EMK%3D4832534b000000402badff02105d1ae80522985459b0a440f07a3170596d05aa59cdf7c48300f2%26siteurl%3Dgts-ee%26confViewID%3D124537164951210310%26encryptTicket%3DSDJTSwAAAATDhjTbLwkS5pctBeNyBi9FR1eGVmXsAAaSf4iy-NrHKw2%26](https://gts-ee.webex.com/mw3200/mywebex/default.do?nomenu=true&siteurl=gts-ee&service=6&rnd=0.38368297080697045&main_url=https%3A%2F%2Fgts-ee.webex.com%2Fec3200%2Feventcenter%2Fevent%2FeventAction.do%3FtheAction%3Ddetail%26%26EMK%3D4832534b000000402badff02105d1ae80522985459b0a440f07a3170596d05aa59cdf7c48300f2%26siteurl%3Dgts-ee%26confViewID%3D124537164951210310%26encryptTicket%3DSDJTSwAAAATDhjTbLwkS5pctBeNyBi9FR1eGVmXsAAaSf4iy-NrHKw2%26)

[6] <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2018/home-accueil-en.html>

[7] <http://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50519.html>