

Springboard Grants Program - Early Career Researcher Competition Program Guidelines



About CFN

The Canadian Frailty Network (CFN) is a not-for-profit organization funded by the Government of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence Program. CFN is Canada's sole network devoted to improving care for older Canadians living with frailty and supporting their families and caregivers. We do this by increasing recognition and assessment of frailty, increasing evidence for decision making, advancing evidence-based changes to care, educating the next generation of care providers, and by engaging with older adults and caregivers.

Collaboration with AGE-WELL, Perley Health and Sepsis Canada

CFN is pleased to announce that it has partnered with AGE-WELL, Perley Health and Sepsis Canada to co-fund early career researchers (ECRs) in Canada. This competition will help ECRs build skills, knowledge and allow them to develop early stage research programs such that they are competitive for future larger funding competitions. See below for additional details and important dates.

- **AGE-WELL** (www.agewell-nce.ca) is a unique Canadian network that brings everyone together to develop technologies and services for healthy aging. We're also training the next generation of innovators in this field and making Canada a world leader in technologies that help aging populations everywhere.
- **Perley Health** (www.perleyhealth.ca) is a unique and innovative community of care that empowers Seniors and Veterans to live life to the fullest. We are also a centre for research, education, and clinical innovation and our Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care™ conducts and shares the practical research needed to improve care. The Centre of Excellence provides opportunities for the next generation of researchers in the field of aging.
- **Sepsis Canada** (www.sepsiscanada.ca) is a single nationally coordinated network committed to supporting research and innovation that reduces the burden of sepsis for all Canadians. Specifically, Sepsis Canada is committed to understanding the causes of sepsis, improving the prevention, detection and management of sepsis, advancing rehabilitation from this disease and building capacity within the current and next generation of sepsis researchers.

Competition Details

There are four funding streams in this competition.

1) Proposals Solely Funded by CFN:

- Clinical studies, knowledge translation, implementational science, or quality improvement studies that investigate novel and innovative ways to improve the lives of older adults living with frailty are eligible for CFN funding. Studies must meaningfully integrate older Canadians living with frailty and/or their families and caregivers in planning, designing and executing the study, and interpreting study findings.

Where appropriate, protocols must utilize frailty assessment of study participants using a published and validated frailty assessment instrument appropriate for the care setting(s).

- Grant term is 18 months and maximum budget for a proposal is \$100,000. Total budget is \$525,000.

2) Proposals Supported by CFN and AGE-WELL:

- We welcome proposals that support innovative early-stage, scalable research projects including pilot studies, feasibility studies, and novel approaches or post-discovery projects focused on implementation. Proposals must focus on the real-world use and impact of AgeTech solutions to improve the lives of older Canadians living with frailty and their caregivers. Studies must meaningfully integrate older Canadians living with frailty and/or their families and caregivers in planning, designing and executing the study, and interpreting study findings. Protocols must include frailty assessment of all study participants using a published and validated frailty assessment instrument appropriate for the care setting(s).
- Recipients of AGE-WELL-CFN supported ECR awards will be enrolled in the AGE-WELL ECR Program and be able to access value-added in-kind supports including:
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 - Membership in a pan-Canadian knowledge community
 - Access to a community of AgeTech ECRs via the AGE-WELL Slack Channel
 - Access to teaching resources such as syllabi and reading lists on our Members' Intranet
 - Participant recruitment support via AGE-WELL social media channels
 - Trainee recruitment support via AGE-WELL social media channels and newsletters
 - Opportunities to share your research with the AGE-WELL network via social media, newsletters, and webinars
 - Facilitated connections to AGE-WELL researchers for potential collaboration with an emphasis on transdisciplinarity
 - Mentorship and/or sponsorship matches from senior AgeTech researchers
- Grant term is 18 months and maximum budget for a proposal is \$50,000. Total budget is \$50,000.

3) Proposals Co-Funded by CFN and Perley Health:

- Implementational science, translational or quality improvement studies that investigate novel and innovative ways to improve the lives of older adults and/or Veterans living with frailty in long-term care are eligible for funding. Submitted proposals must align with one or more of Perley Health's Centre of Excellence research priorities (see www.perleyhealth.ca/research-priorities). Studies must meaningfully integrate older Canadians and/or Veterans living with frailty and/or their families/caregivers in planning, designing and executing the study, and interpreting study findings. If appropriate, protocols must utilize frailty assessment of study participants using a published and validated frailty assessment instrument appropriate for long-term care.
- Recipients of CFN-Perley Health supported ECR awards will be able to access value-added in-kind support including:
 - Participant recruitment support via Perley Health social media channels and newsletters
 - Trainee recruitment support via Perley Health social media channels and newsletters
 - Opportunities to share your research through social media and the Centre of Excellence newsletters and webinar series.
 - Facilitated connections to researchers and clinicians working in the field of frailty and long-term care for potential collaboration.

- Onsite access to space at Perley Health to conduct research activities, if required.
- Grant term is 18 months and maximum budget for a proposal is \$100,000. Total budget is \$100,000.

4) Proposals Co-Funded by CFN and Sepsis Canada:

- Proposals must generate new knowledge around the topics of rehabilitation, frailty, and sepsis. The proposed research program must involve the intersection of rehabilitation, sepsis and frailty and can include observational studies on this population, surveys, health services research, knowledge synthesis, or innovative approaches to improving clinical trial design and outcome measurements. It is not meant for directly funding clinical trials. There must be mentorship plan that involves the ECR and a [senior researcher](#) or a [mid-career researcher](#) that will provide mentorship to the ECR, and one or more trainees (e.g., post-doctoral scholars, graduate students or undergraduate students). The project must include a patient partner. The funding is not meant to complete funding for larger projects.
- Grant term is 18 months and maximum budget for a proposal is \$100,000. Total budget is \$100,000.

Overall Funding Details:

A proposal will be more competitive for funding if it includes partners who have committed cash or eligible in-kind contributions. There is no minimum partner contribution requirement although higher cash and in-kind partner funding will be weighted higher in proposal evaluations.

All applicants must provide proof that they have submitted their study for REB review/approval. For applicants whose REB will not review studies prior to funding, please provide a letter from your REB stating that reviews will only take place once CFN funding is confirmed. To receive funds, successful Applicants must submit final ethics approval to CFN. Failure to provide REB approval within four months of the Project Leader being notified of grant approval (i.e. Receiving Notice of Award) will result in termination of the grant.

Eligibility Criteria: It is important to note that these funding criteria reflect the mandate and objectives of CFN, AGE-WELL, Perley Health and Sepsis Canada.

- Applicants (Principal Investigators, PI) must be an ECR and must be eligible to receive grant funding from CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC. There can be more than one PI per project; however, a lead PI known as the Project Leader (i.e. primary applicant) for the proposal must be identified.
- An ECR can only submit one application to this competition as the Project Leader. An ECR can be named as a team member on more than one proposal.
- Applicants must be part of an Institution that is a signee of the CFN Network Agreement and if applicable a signee of the AGE-WELL Network Agreement. To receive funds, successful PIs must abide by the Network Agreement, through which they will become Network Investigators of CFN and/or AGE-WELL, and take on all of the associated rights and obligations. These obligations include the requirement to provide CFN and/or AGEWELL with project reports as requested and to participate in reviews of projects and proposals submitted to CFN and/or AGEWELL funding opportunities as required. Successful PIs will also need to adhere to the Network's Conflict of Interest Policy and Conflict of Interest Guidelines, and submit a Conflict of Interest Declaration Form.

Definition of an Early Career Investigator:

- As of the full application submission deadline, investigator must be within six years from the start of first academic appointment (e.g., an assistant professor, or equivalent).
- Any career interruptions (e.g. parental leave for birth or adoption, medical leave, residency training, clinical licensing, etc.) will be deducted from the calculation if justified.
- All time spent in research appointments will be factored into the calculation for eligibility.
- Part-time (0.5 FTE or less) appointments will be counted taken into account in the calculation. For examples at 0.5 FTE one-year part-time research appointment will be calculated as six months.

Evaluation Criteria: In addition to the above, eligible proposals must satisfy the evaluation criteria listed below.

- Proposals must have a clearly stated hypothesis, goals and objectives, with clearly defined milestones and deliverables. If appropriate proposals should clearly define the question(s) and knowledge or practice gap(s) being investigated. A detailed project schedule is mandatory.
- For proposals enrolling study participants, a frailty assessment of all study participants using a published validated frailty assessment instrument appropriate for the care setting must be included. For knowledge syntheses, evaluation of the impact of frailty must be included. Analysis of differential impact(s) of the study intervention(s) or innovation(s) based on the degree of frailty is strongly encouraged.
- Proposals must include the evaluation/reporting of one or more measurable socio-economic outcomes such as patient-centred outcomes, patient-centred experiences, patient/family satisfaction, or health economic outcomes.
- Project feasibility needs to be demonstrated through a detailed description of the methodology and by having appropriate teams with the necessary or appropriate skills required.
- The inclusion of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) trainees who will be directly involved in a meaningful way in the study will enhance the competitiveness of the proposal although it is not an absolute requirement. HQP can be part-time or full-time graduate/doctoral/post-doctoral or undergraduate students, residents, fellows or working professionals. Note that meaningful involvement in the study components of a project includes activities such as data collection, data synthesis, report writing, etc., but would exclude tasks that are more related to administration and/or coordination (e.g., data entry, meeting scheduling, minute taking, completion and distribution of paperwork, etc.).
- If appropriate proposals must clearly describe an end-of-grant knowledge translation plan and the potential for project results to have a significant effect on health care practice or policy.
- Projects must demonstrate that knowledge users (e.g., frail older adults and their family or friend caregivers with lived experience and/or sepsis lived experience, decision makers, stakeholders, practitioners) are involved in the study in a meaningful and tightly integrated manner. For clarity, meaningfully involved participation of knowledge users includes being involved in the planning and execution of the project and/or in assisting in the interpretation and translation/mobilization of the findings.
- Proposals will be more competitive if they demonstrate collaborative efforts of investigators in more than one discipline (e.g. combinations of disciplines from the biomedical sciences, natural sciences and social sciences etc.), and preferably at more than one institution.
- Proposals should demonstrate that completion of the proposed study will enhance the ECR's ability to develop future partnerships and collaborations with external organizations and stakeholders (e.g. health care practices, service providers, care facilities, etc.).

- Proposals need to articulate the potential of the research program to be recognized nationally and globally for scientific excellence and to improve the care for Canadians living with frailty and/or improving the lives of their caregivers.

How to Apply

The application process requires submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) prior to submitting a Full Application. CFN will only accept a Full Application if a LOI has been submitted by the deadline.

Step #1 – Letter of Intent (LOI):

- Go to CFN’s Forum website to complete the online LOI. <https://forum.cfn-nce.ca/index.php/Special:Report?report=EarlyCareerIntent>
- Information collected in the LOI will include; study summary (rationale, hypothesis, objectives, milestones, deliverables), team members and partners.
- The LOI is for administrative purposes only and will not be adjudicated.
- Project team member lists must include all confirmed and anticipated Principal Investigators (PI) and Co-Investigators (Co-I). No additional PIs or Co-Is can be added after the LOI has been submitted but PIs and Co-Is can be removed. The Project Leader (PL; i.e. primary lead PI) is responsible for managing the project team and reporting project progress and final results. The PL is the primary contact for CFN.
- After registering your LOI, you will receive a CFN file number that you will use to submit your completed online Full Application.

Step #2 – Full Application: Only Project Leaders that have previously submitted an LOI are eligible to submit a Full Application. Go to CFN’s Forum website (https://forum.tvn-nce.ca/index.php/Main_Page) to complete the online Full Application, which will be available after the LOI deadline. Please review the application instructions document prior to completing the Full Application.

A Full Application is comprised of:

1. Project Team Information
2. Application Form
3. Partner List/Partner Letters of Support
4. Detailed Budget and Budget Justification
5. Principal and Co-Investigators’ CIHR biosketch CVs.
6. CVs (5 pages maximum) of other team members (e.g., knowledge users, partners)
7. Required signatures
8. Proof of study submission to Research Ethics Board (REB) – CFN is requiring that all applicants demonstrate that they have submitted their study for REB approval. For applicants whose REB will not review studies prior to funding, please provide a letter from your REB stating that reviews will only take place once CFN funding is confirmed. Note that successful applicants will need to submit REB approvals to CFN before funds can be forwarded to the eligible institution.

Important Dates

Please read Program Guidelines and the Application Instructions carefully before completing and submitting your LOI and Full Application.

1. Competition launch: **Wednesday April 13, 2022**
2. Deadline to submit LOI – **Monday, May 16, 2022 - 4 pm ET.**
3. Deadline to submit online Full Application – **Monday, July 18, 2022– 4 pm ET.**
4. Adjudication of Full Applications is estimated be completed by late September/early October 2022.

5. Successful Applicants will be notified in early October 2022. Funding installments will commence after all necessary agreements have been executed and REB approval(s) received.

Contact for Further Information

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