

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Issued By
Parkinson Canada

PARKINSON'S DIGITAL HEALTH APPLICATION GRANT

Release Date:	April 25, 2022
Application Deadline (Online Receipt):	June 6, 2022 (11:59PM EST)
Notifications of Award:	September 19, 2022
Funding Start Date:	November 1, 2022
Duration of Award:	3 years (non-renewable)

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About Parkinson Canada

More than 100,000 Canadians live with Parkinson's, a number expected to increase substantially in the coming years, with 30 Canadians diagnosed each day.

Parkinson's is a chronic, progressive neurodegenerative disease caused by a loss of dopamine-producing neurons in areas of the brain associated with movement. Symptoms include a resting tremor, slowness of movement, muscle rigidity, and balance problems. Non-motor symptoms can include anxiety, depression, sleep issues, and cognitive impairment. The average age of diagnosis is 60, but some people are diagnosed prior to that and referred to as having early onset Parkinson's.

People with Parkinson's are at the centre of everything we do. Our mission is to transform the lives of people living with Parkinson's. Parkinson Canada funds critical research, provides information and support, increases awareness and advocates for improved healthcare outcomes for people with Parkinson's across Canada. A national registered charity, Parkinson Canada fulfils its mission through the generosity of donors and is an accredited organization under the Imagine Canada Standards Program.

CONTEXT

There is a tremendous need for support in disease management for the over 100,000 Canadians living with Parkinson's. Many people with Parkinson's only interact with their medical specialists 1-2 times a year for short appointments. For a person living with Parkinson's, this amounts to 1 hour of medical care and 8 765 hours of self-management each year. There is growing interest, both in clinical and patient communities, for tools that can better support people with Parkinson's in their self-management efforts by assisting in symptom tracking, providing pertinent health information, and contributing to positive habit forming (i.e., consistent medication timing, regular exercise, and sleep hygiene).

OPPORTUNITY

Parkinson Canada is pleased to offer the Parkinson's Digital Health Application Grant as part of its strategic initiative to impact more people throughout their journey with Parkinson's.

It is our intent that successful applicants in this Grant will utilize the funding to enhance and evaluate a digital health app that will engage people living with Parkinson's and support their approach to wellness by offering education and wellness tracking metrics to empower them to optimize their health.

Parkinson Canada will award up to \$300,000 over a three-year term to one outstanding applicant who meets the eligibility and review criteria. This funding is non-renewable.

Successful applicants will consider the following key questions as part of the design and evaluation of their proposed digital health app:

Self-Management:

1. How will the digital health app facilitate or improve the overall self-management of Parkinson's for users between and outside of medical appointments?
2. How will the digital health app influence disease management for urban and rural users, as well as those not affiliated with a movement disorder clinic?

Engagement:

3. How will the digital health app provide insights on symptoms and lifestyle factors that improve knowledge and contribute to health awareness for a person with Parkinson's?
4. How will the digital health app user data, including insights into patient well-being, be used to support the provision of care by healthcare team and specialists?
5. How will the digital health app engage with external supports, such as healthcare providers, motivational coaches, or Parkinson Canada staff?

Outcomes & Evaluation:

6. How will the applicants monitor and evaluate the digital health app to understand outcomes and impact (e.g. improved knowledge and/or awareness, perceived self-efficacy in managing their condition, and improvements in overall disease management)?

ELIGIBILITY

Parkinson Canada is committed to supporting the most advanced and/or highest quality of Parkinson's research in Canada. As such, proposals will be accepted from individuals who are representative of a broad spectrum of health-related communities and sectors, including, but not limited to, researchers, scholars and health professionals. Proposals will be accepted from applicants who are affiliated with and/or conduct research with the following institutions and organizations (an "Approved Institution"):

- Canadian post-secondary institutions and their affiliated institutions, including hospitals and research institutes;
- Canadian non-governmental not-for-profit organizations (including community or charitable organizations) with an explicit research or knowledge translation mandate; and
- Other organizations, as determined by the Research and Clinical Advisory Committee of the Board of Parkinson Canada, provided that the applicant's research or research-related activities fall within the mandate of Parkinson Canada.

The applicant must be a researcher who has completed formal training in health-related research. Applicants must have a research appointment with an Approved Institution, typically, an employment relationship with such institution or organization.

The applicant's research appointment with his or her Approved Institution must:

- allow the applicant to pursue the proposed research project, to supervise trainees and to publish the results of the research; and
- Require the applicant to conform to institutional regulations concerning the conduct of research, the supervision of research trainees, and the employment conditions of staff paid from the Parkinson Canada grant.

The applicant must be responsible for the intellectual direction of the proposed project and must be willing and able to assume all administrative and financial responsibilities for any funds awarded. In the case where the responsibility for the intellectual direction of the proposed project is shared more or less equally between two or more individuals, there may be two or more applicants. However, in this situation, the applicants must nominate, by mutual written agreement, one of the individuals to assume administrative responsibility over funds awarded. These funds will be paid in trust to the nominated individual's Approved Institution.

Eligible expenses of this award include operating expenses, technical support staff salaries and equipment costs. Other funding may be used in conjunction with funding from this award. Applicants are prohibited from receiving the payment of a salary, stipend, honorarium, or any similar form of compensation from any Parkinson Canada grant. Funds received from this award cannot be used to cover institutional overhead costs. Funding from this award cannot be used to support post-doctoral fellows or other trainees. Applicants seeking a fellowship to support trainees at a postdoctoral level or clinical level should refer to Parkinson Canada's Fellowship Program.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applicants should contact Parkinson Canada (research@parkinson.ca) if they have inquiries about the application process. All applications must be submitted using Parkinson Canada's electronic grant management system (<https://www.parkinsonresearch.ca>). Applicants must complete all required application fields in the Parkinson Canada electronic grant application system before 11:59 PM EST on the deadline date.

All applications should also include the following:

- **Biographical Sketch:**
 - Biographical information of the applicant and any co-applicants and collaborators (using the Parkinson Canada biographical sketch form).
- **Project Summary (max 500 words)**
 - Using non-scientific, everyday language, describe the impact and relevance of the project.

- **Project Narrative including the following three sections (max 10 pages)**
 - **Scientific Plan:**
 - Describe the design features of the existing digital health app prototype in detail as well as the results of any preliminary data or evaluations that have already been completed. Detail proposed improvements to the digital health app including new features.
 - Outline the scientific questions that will be addressed using the digital health app, including background research informing the study objective and scientific questions, a description of the study design and methodology, and a feasibility assessment for addressing the intended research questions.
 - Describe and define the measures/endpoints to be evaluated during the study.
 - An overall strategy to define, identify, and recruit a sufficiently representative cohort of people with Parkinson’s in Canada to pilot the digital health app.
 - Outline the infrastructure for collecting data from the digital health app, data integration across pilot sites, and data privacy.
 - **Administration, Governance and Timelines:**
 - An initial description of the structure of the project to support the scientific plan: Research team structure, list of team members and anticipated roles of individual members.
 - A preliminary description of the pilot sites that will be involved and how other sites may be included over time.
 - A description of comprehensive communications and information-sharing plans among team members and sites.
 - A list of key milestones and timelines for the work that is anticipated over the funding period.
 - Describe how people with Parkinson’s will be engaged in the research study design of the digital health app development process.
 - A description of how Parkinson Canada will be incorporated in the design, input and/or governance structure of the research team.
 - **Planning, Development & Execution:**
 - Describe the digital health app design from a perspective of functionality (i.e., availability on various devices, ability to connect with other health tools, etc.)
 - Describe how the user experience and design aesthetic have been considered and incorporated in the development of the digital health app.
 - Describe the steps the team will take to engage and communicate with participants throughout the research study and beyond to encourage user retention of the digital health app.
 - Identify any risks and mitigation strategies in the design and implementation of the study.
 - A detailed sustainability plan for the digital health app beyond the three-year grant and as the number of users expands beyond the pilot cohorts.

- **Budget (max 2 pages):**
 - Provide a detailed budget for the project and description outlining types of expenses (i.e. salaries, material, and operating expenses) per year and clarify different phases of the project. Estimated budget information should be documented with sufficient detail and justification to allow reviewers to make judgements about the amount of funds necessary to allow the project to proceed. Parkinson Canada will not fund institutional overhead costs.
 - Applicants must include accurate and complete information regarding all other sources of funding support (current or pending), including title, funding source, total amount of funds requested or awarded, inclusive funding period, and percentage effort of the applicant.

- **Supporting Materials (no page limit):**
 - Relevant and reasonable support materials, including but not limited to photographs, literature references, any publications, letters of collaboration and appendices may be included.

- **Signatures**
 - Signatures of applicant and an authorized signing official of the applicant's host institution. Applications must be submitted with the required signatures by the due date. Prior to submission, applicants should determine what signatures are needed and obtain all the required signatures for the application. Applicants do not need to courier any documents to Parkinson Canada; however, we do ask that you keep the original signed documents which may be requested in the event that your application is successful in the competition.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Each application will be reviewed by an expert ad hoc committee comprised of prominent researchers and member of the Canadian Parkinson's community. The committee will evaluate the applications using the following criteria. The principal consideration of the review committee will be to evaluate the research excellence of the scientific plan. The committee will also consider the functionality and feasibility of the digital health app to achieve the anticipated objectives.

Parkinson Canada anticipates that it will provide each applicant whose application to participate in the program has been declined with written notice of such decision and a brief written critique of their application.

Review Criteria:

Required Digital Health App Features:

- The digital health app will incorporate representation with regards to both official languages (English & French).
- To eliminate research barriers and foster collaboration, data collected through the digital health app should be collected in a manner that allows for sharing and open science.

Scientific Plan:

- Does the proposed digital health app have the potential to facilitate and/or improve the overall self-management of Parkinson's for users between and outside of medical appointments?
- Are the objectives, aims, methods and end points aligned with the aims and key questions for consideration outlined in this RFA?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed scientific plan?
 - Is the theoretical approach or framework of the scientific plan appropriate?
 - Did the applicants consider the potential design of the study including: type of data, methods for data collection, and sample population description?
 - How does the study design account for representation in rural and urban regions of the country and incorporate pilot participants outside of a movement disorder clinic setting?
 - Does the recruitment strategy account for diverse representation of people with Parkinson's? Do the recruitment timelines seem appropriate?

Governance and Administration:

- Did the applicants provide detailed information about the team members and the team structure, including breakdown of expertise areas, responsibilities, and how each team member will contribute towards the planning and execution of the proposed activities?
- Do the proposed timelines for the project seem reasonable? Are there any buffers included in the timeline and contingency planning?
- Is the plan for data integration across multiple sites appropriate and feasible?
- Is there sufficient engagement of people with Parkinson's in the planning and study design stage?
- Have the applicants described an appropriate structure for engaging with Parkinson Canada throughout the design and execution of the study?

Planning, Budget, Development, and Execution:

- Does the proposal identify key risks and appropriate mitigation strategies?
- Does the proposal identify appropriate strategies to overcome barriers to use (i.e., cost, location, language) in the design and execution of the project?
- Does the proposal provide strategies and approaches to address user retention and engagement?
- How will users be notified about study results and receive feedback on their participation?
- Is the budget appropriate and feasible and has an adequate description of how funds will be allocated during the planning phase been provided?
- Is the plan for the long-term sustainability of the digital health app feasibility and appropriate?

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

Provide names and contact information for up to three individuals (Canadian and/ or International) who are knowledgeable in your research area and would be able to evaluate the application. Individuals should not have a conflict of interest.

CONTACT INFORMATION :

Julie Wysocki, (she/her) Director, Research Program & Partnerships
Email: Julie.wysocki@parkinson.ca

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