

Terms of Reference

The Gray Centre for Mobility & Activity Catalyst Grant 2025-2026 Program

Background

The Gray Centre for Mobility and Activity (the Gray Centre) was established in 2020 and is a clinical research center based out of Parkwood Institute of St. Joseph's Health Care London. The Gray Centre advances evidence-based discoveries and develops bold rehabilitation solutions to improve outcomes for people with mobility and activity impairments. A core strategic priority is supporting and fostering impactful research that addresses complex movement challenges and enhances patient outcomes.

Purpose

The Gray Centre Catalyst Grant Program aims to strengthen the competitiveness of novel research for external funding (e.g., CIHR, Praxis, Heart and Stroke). Catalyst grants provide seed funding to establish feasibility and lay the groundwork for larger programs of research that can secure external funding within three years. For 2025-2026, the total funding envelope is \$100,000, with applicants able to request up to \$25,000 through a justified budget.

Eligibility

Principal Investigators must be able to hold funds at Lawson Research Institute. Applicants may be involved in a maximum of two catalyst grant applications in this competition. Projects are intended to be conducted within Lawson facilities; however, off-site components may be considered if they are essential and consistent with the objectives of this grant program.

Applications will be considered only if the proposal:

1. Represents the foundation of a novel (i.e., unfunded) research program with potential for substantial impact in mobility and activity.
2. Clearly advances mobility and/or activity outcomes for individuals with complex movement challenges.
3. Provides details for how the project will be completed within 24 months after funding.
4. Provides details for how this project links with future research directions and includes a plan for sustainability.

Submission Requirements

Catalyst Grants may be submitted as a Word document or PDF. Include a cover page listing the grant title, PI and their contact information, and co-applicants. The proposal narrative, timelines and sustainability plan must not exceed three (3) pages, single-spaced, in 12-point font with margins of at least 2.5 cm. Figures and references must be contained within this three-page limit, and any text beyond three pages will not be reviewed. A separate, standalone line-item budget page must be included as the final page and is not counted toward the three-page limit. A curriculum vitae (CV) for each team member must be included with the application. Applications are due January 18, 2026, and should be emailed to Jeff Weiler at jeff.weiler@sjhc.london.on.ca. PIs will receive an email confirming receipt of their submission.

Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following range of criteria:

1. Merits of Proposal
 - Outcomes have strong potential to help attract external funding to sustain the novel line of research.
 - Innovation and originality.
 - Benefits to individuals with mobility and activity dysfunction.
 - Clarity and scope of objectives.
 - Appropriateness of methodology.
 - Feasibility of achieving objectives within two-year timeframe.
2. Research Team
 - Demonstrated expertise and capacity to conduct the work.
3. Budget
 - Justification and appropriateness of budget request.
 - Alignment of budget with methodology and project feasibility.

Catalyst Grant Adjudication

Every effort will be made to ensure review panel members have scientific or clinical expertise in mobility and activity or lived experience with complex mobility challenges. To minimize bias, reviewers will not evaluate or score proposals from PIs with whom they have published within the past five years. At the discretion of the review panel Chair(s), reviewers will also be recused if there is a reasonable potential for perceived bias between the reviewer and the PI applicant. Reviewers will be asked to provide detailed reviews for all, or a subset, of proposals based on the number of submissions. Each reviewer will submit preliminary ratings to provide a starting point for discussions and to identify applications for which there is clear consensus to fund or decline funding. These scores will not be binding and are intended solely as a starting point for discussion. Notes about the subsequent discussion will be taken to form the basis for written feedback to applicants. The Chair(s) will ensure that all panel members can weigh in. Following discussion, the panel will aim to reach a ranking

consensus of the submitted applications prior to discussing specifics of the proposed budgets. Applications will be awarded until there are no more proposals which warrant funding or the funding envelope is exhausted.

Responsibilities of Catalyst Grant Holders

It is expected that awardees will seek external funding following the Catalyst Grant funding window. The award recipient must acknowledge The Gray Centre for Mobility and Activity in all related presentations and publications. Following the Catalyst Grant funding window, successful applicants will be required to complete a summary report outlining how the funds were spent, the results of the work, and how the findings contribute to the development of a novel research program and plans for securing future external funding.

Contact Information

Questions regarding the Gray Centre for Mobility & Activity Catalyst Grant Program can be sent to Jeff Weiler: Manager of the Gray Centre for Mobility and Activity (jeff.weiler@sjhc.london.on.ca).