



Lundin Cancer Fund – Canadian Cancer Society Glioblastoma Research Program

Summit Discovery Grants – 2026

Background:

The Summit Discovery Grants – offered as part of the Glioblastoma (GBM) Research Program - provide a unique opportunity for members of the Research Collaborative to test out their novel ideas for potentially game-changing impact in the GBM field. These Grants will fund high-risk, high-reward, early-stage projects for which preliminary data is not required. Projects submitted to this competition will be rated on their novelty, feasibility and potential impact in the GBM field.

The Summit Discovery Grants will address an unmet need in the Canadian funding ecosystem by supporting unique ideas that would not normally be supported through “traditional” funding sources due to lack of preliminary data or level of risk. In addition, this funding opportunity seeks to foster collaboration and break down siloes within the GBM research space in Canada. Breakthrough science depends on collaboration across institutions and research teams. Through this grant, we aim to engage the GBM community, encourage cross-team collaboration, and accelerate progress in the field.

This program is a **pilot funding program** by the LCF CCS GBM Research Program, and emerged as a direct response to what we heard during the [consultations and GBM Summit](#) held in 2025 to accelerate research and enhance collaboration. With that in mind, we are modelling the review of this program on [Distributed Peer Review](#). This is an innovative approach to grant evaluation designed to broaden participation and bring diverse perspectives into the assessment process. In this model, members of the research community play an active role in reviewing and providing structured input on proposals submitted by their peers. For this program, community feedback is used at an early stage to help identify which ideas should advance: input provided during the **Letter of Intent (LOI) stage is decisional in determining which applications are invited to submit a full application**, based on the collective signal from assigned reviewers and the broader Collaborative. For the LOI review stage, both applicants and reviewers will be anonymized.

At the full application stage, the role of community input shifts from selection to **development and refinement**. Feedback provided on full proposals is intended to help applicants strengthen their approach, clarify risks, and enhance feasibility, rather than directly determine funding outcomes. Applicants are expected to engage thoughtfully with this feedback and demonstrate sound scientific judgment in how it is addressed. In this program, funding decisions consider not only the strength of the idea, but also the applicant’s ability to critically engage with and respond to peer feedback. At the full application feedback stage, reviewers and applicants will NOT be anonymized, as this stage is not decisional. As the reviewers at this stage are intended to be the same as at the LOI stage, **please keep this in mind as you conduct your LOI review!**

Final funding decisions will be made by the GBM Research Program’s Advisory Committee, informed by the proposal, the feedback received, and the applicant’s response. This staged



approach balances early community-driven selection with rigorous, accountable decision-making, while creating opportunities for proposals to improve before final evaluation.

Considering the distributed peer review process adopted in this funding opportunity, CCS would like to emphasize that, by applying, **researchers may be invited to review and provide feedback on other applications**. In line with the collaborative spirit of this initiative and the Code of Conduct, reviewers are expected to provide thoughtful, fair, and unbiased feedback to ensure that the process reflects the true merit of each proposal.

Program description:

The Summit Discovery Grants will support preliminary research to establish proof of principle in novel concepts or approaches with the potential to advance GBM detection, treatment and patient quality of life. These grants will support proposals from any research field and discipline that demonstrate the potential for high impact and, where appropriate, seed collaborations among non-traditional cancer fields (engineering, AI, robotics, statistics etc). These grants are **not** intended to support research that represents incremental research in a program of work, or an expansion of previous work, but rather provide novel data and directions for future larger grants that will serve as “game-changers” in the way we approach GBM, disrupting existing methods and displacing the status quo.

The goals of this funding opportunity:

- To spur the development of proof of concept ideas to better diagnose and treat GBM and/or lead to new lines of future investigation.
- To provide a unique opportunity for researchers to follow up on findings that they would not otherwise have the resources to probe.
- To facilitate the adaptation and repurposing of existing methods and technologies from other health fields and research disciplines with the potential to change the status quo in cancer prevention detection and treatment.
- To fund bold projects that, if successful, would generate enough preliminary data to allow for more funds in the future and lead to disruptions in current standards of care and replace the status quo in GBM detection and treatment.

Projects that would be considered ineligible for this competition include:

- Projects that focus on obvious next steps or incremental research associated with ongoing studies
- Projects for which validation already exists in the literature
- Projects with no obvious potential impact on GBM

For this grant, collaboration across institutions and disciplines is highly encouraged, including engagement of people with lived and living experience of cancer – including caregivers (ideally GBM or brain cancer). In addition, at least one of the applicants (PI, Co-PI, or Co-Applicant) must be an Early-Career Researcher (within 5 years of their first academic appointment).



Awarded grantees will be required to present updates to the GBM collaborative community in webinar sessions coordinated by the Canadian Cancer Society approximately six months after the funds are awarded. We aim to generate conversations and networking across Canada, so different centers can complement each other's expertise. Science is stronger when walls are broken and data is shared.

Scientific focus

Applications to any GBM research area are accepted, the following topics are encouraged, but if promising ideas outside of this scope are submitted, they will also be considered if based on scientific merit and possible impact:

- Immunotherapy optimization
- GBM resistance mechanisms
- GBM heterogeneity and microenvironment
- Imaging
- Precision medicine
- Diagnostics
- Biomarkers
- Patient's quality of life

Funds Available

The Summit Discovery Grants will be for \$175k, received at the start of the grant. The total budget available for the competition is approximately \$1M, enough to fund approximately 6-7 Discovery Grants. Funding will be provided to support the direct costs of research, including supplies, salaries, and equipment associated with the proposed work, in accordance with CCS [funding policies](#). Equipment requests cannot exceed 10% of the requested budget. Indirect costs are not eligible. The funding duration is 12 months.

Iterative review process – Community feedback

Expert review will be a three-step process.

Step1:

All Applicants will be required to register in the GBM Collaborative to be eligible for this funding program, registration is completed once the Code of Conduct for the GBM collaborative is signed and sent to program lead. Registration will give researchers access to the SharePoint folder designated for the funding program.

Letters of Intent (LOIs) **should be sent to the GBM research program lead (arthur.dantas@cancer.ca)**. The program lead will then anonymize the LOIs and post them on the collaborative's SharePoint space for feedback. After the closing deadline, applications will be open for all members of the community for 30 days, in which community members will be able to provide feedback to the LOIs. Three assigned reviewers will be designated for each application to ensure all applications receive feedback. The reviewers, like the LOIs, will be anonymized at this stage and one of the reviewers will be a Person with



Lived/Living Experience; these reviewers will also vote on whether an applicant should be invited to submit a full proposal (with the final decision being determined by majority or the Advisory Committee in cases of ambiguity). It is important to remember that while the collaborative members reviewing applications will represent a broad area of expertise, they may not necessarily have an in-depth understanding of a particular specialty. Structured feedback from assigned reviewers will form the primary basis of evaluation; additional community comments are considered supplementary.

Step 2:

Shortlisted LOIs will be invited to submit a full application, which will also be sent to the program lead (Arthur.dantas@cancer.ca) so they can be deposited on the SharePoint space. These applications will be open for feedback from the entire community as well. The three reviewers that assessed the application on step 1 will also be asked to provide feedback and commentary on the full application. This process aims to generate community engagement and allow applications to improve through peer feedback before a final funding decision is made. Community feedback is intended to be developmental and may reflect a range of perspectives. **Divergent feedback is expected and reflects the diversity of expertise within the Collaborative.** Applicants are encouraged to exercise scientific judgment in how this feedback is interpreted and addressed. Considering the developmental intention of this stage, neither the full applications nor the reviewers will be anonymized at this stage.

Applicants will then have an opportunity to address the feedback provided and strengthen their proposal before the Research Program's advisory committee makes a final decision on the funding status. Feedback will be addressed in a short response-to-feedback document, all feedback provided can be addressed, however only feedback from the reviewers will be mandatory to be addressed by the applicant.

Step 3:

The Research Program's Advisory Committee will receive a final package comprised of the original full application, feedback from community and reviewers, and a response-to-feedback document. They will meet to review and rank applications based on the combination of the novelty and potential impact of the idea, as well as the scientific merit and feasibility of the experimental work proposed.

Letters of Intent

LOIs will be submitted to the program lead (arthur.dantas@cancer.ca). Only LOIs submitted by email, by the deadline date at 5 pm, will be accepted. The LOI process is mandatory.

LOI proposals are limited to 6000 characters (including spaces) with no references, graphs or figures. LOI submissions will include applicant details on the front page (Principal Investigators, Co-Applicants, Additional Authors, Host Institution) for administrative purposes, these personal identifiers will be removed prior to review to enable the community



and reviewers to focus solely on the originality, feasibility, timeliness, and potential impact of the proposed idea. Reviewers will provide feedback using structured prompts focused on importance, feasibility, risks, and opportunities for improvement. Advancement decisions are based on the collective signal from assigned reviewers, compiled by staff and confirmed by the Advisory Committee. At the LOI stage, reviewers will also be anonymized.

All personal or institutional identifiers must be absent in the text of your LOI proposal. **Failure to meet this requirement will result in the elimination of your application.**

The purpose of the LOI is to provide reviewers and the community with the following:

- A public lay summary of the proposed study, which will be reviewed and evaluated for clarity and content. This section must be readily accessible to non-experts.
- A clear description of how the proposal represents a novel, bold and intriguing idea that has not yet been explored.
- A justification as to why now is the time to undertake this work and why it has not been done previously.
- A high-level summary of the approach to be taken and the resources required.
- A description of exactly how the proposed project could, if successful, revolutionize detection and/or treatment of GBM.

For this competition, there is a limit of one application per nominated Principal Investigator or co-Principal Investigator. In addition, transdisciplinary approaches, are also strongly encouraged. Only the LOIs that are qualified by the assigned reviewers will be invited to submit a full application.

Any significant changes to the proposed project or applicant team after the LOI deadline should be communicated to CCS staff (arthur.dantas@cancer.ca) as soon as they are known. Substantive changes that significantly alter the overall goals and aims of the proposal relative to the LOI are not permitted.

Full application

The full application will not be anonymized. The application should contain no more than 6 pages of single-spaced text and up to 3 additional pages of figures/tables/charts/budget and associated legends. It is expected that the feedback provided during the LOI stage is addressed during the full proposal if applicable. Neither the reviewers, nor the applications are anonymized at this stage. The full application should contain:

1. A public summary in lay terminology of the proposed research that demonstrates how the research could lead to game-changing improvements in GBM detection and treatment and why these changes are needed (approximately ½ page).
2. A scientific abstract that clearly states the aims of the overall proposal, experimental design(s), methods and analysis plans (approximately ½ page).



3. A clear description of the work to be performed, how the proposed research represents an original and novel approach, how it could generate early evidence to improve the way we diagnose and/or treat GBM (approximately 3 pages).
4. Considerations regarding sex and/or gender and/or diversity (approximately 1/3 page).
5. A detailed plan to engage the GBM collaborative during the project, either through updates, data sharing, feedback request, etc. The Canadian Cancer Society will organize a webinar at the 6-month mark post fund awarded with the award-winning groups. Other engagement mechanisms proposed by the applicants are encouraged (approximately 1/2 page).
6. A budget and justification for supplies, expenses, personnel and equipment to conduct the proposed research. This must include the number of personnel required to complete the work and a description of their experience and/or education level (separate space within the figures and charts).

Review process and criteria

LOIs will be posted on SharePoint for 30 days for community feedback. Assigned reviewers will also have the same overlapping 30 days to provide the requested feedback to the LOI. CCS staff will then compile the feedback and data and invite applicants that are approved to submit a full application. Applicants will have 30 days to submit a full application.

After submission of full application, it will be available for community and reviewer feedback for an additional 30 days (feedback at this step is non decisional). Applications at this stage will **not** be anonymized, same applies for designated reviewers, who will **be the same reviewers as the LOI stage**. Applicant will be given two weeks to address feedback and submit a modified application in addition to response to feedback document. The advisory committee will then review the full documentation and provide a decision on the funding. The advisory committee will meet to evaluate the proposals submitted and will evaluate and prioritize proposals the proposals according to novelty, scientific feasibility, and potential impact on GBM.

As mentioned in the opening section, considering the collaborative spirit of this initiative and the Code of Conduct governing participation in the GBM Research Collaborative, reviewers are expected to approach this responsibility with professionalism, respect, and scientific integrity, and to provide feedback to the best of their ability in a fair, objective, and unbiased manner. This collective effort is essential to ensuring that the review process is equitable and reflects the true merit of each proposal.

The review criteria for the applications will include but not necessarily be restricted to the following:

- The originality, timeliness, and feasibility of the proposed work
- The potential for impact in GBM detection and/or treatment
- The scientific rationale and unique aspects of the proposed research



- The appropriateness of the methods for the focus of the research
- The appropriateness of the qualifications and experience of the investigators leading and participating in the project
- The appropriate incorporation of sex as a biological variable and/or gender as a social determinant of health, where applicable

Timeline and deadlines:

Launch Call for Applications	June 23, 2026
Deadline for LOI Submission to program lead (arthur.dantas@cancer.ca)	July 22, 2026
Deadline for LOI feedback	Aug 12, 2026
Deadline to submit full application to program lead	Sep 23, 2026
Deadline for full application feedback	Oct 21, 2026
Submission of full application with addressed feedback to program lead	Nov 12, 2026
Advisory Committee recommendation	Dec 2, 2026

Partner Description

The Canadian Cancer Society is the national health charity with an unstoppable determination to unite people to change the future of cancer. Our ambitious approach to funding world-leading cancer research, our powerful influence shaping a healthier society and our deep commitment to provide compassionate support to all who need it are unparalleled. But nothing big gets solved by one person or one organization. To take on cancer, it takes all of us. It takes a society. Together, we can make life better today and transform the future of cancer forever.

The Lundin Cancer Fund advances the vision of its founders to transform cancer research through bold, innovative approaches and increased awareness. Established in response to the unmet needs observed during Lukas Lundin's illness, the Fund is dedicated to supporting cutting-edge research and clinical innovation worldwide. With a strong emphasis on collaboration, the Lundin Cancer Fund invests in initiatives that accelerate discovery, expand global data sharing, and push the boundaries of what is possible in cancer research.