CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Labarge Centre for Mobility in Aging invites the Associate Deans (Research) in each Faculty to identify research proposals for funding through the Centre.

About the Gift

In the fall of 2016, alumnus and former Chancellor Suzanne Labarge donated $15M to McMaster University to create the Labarge Centre for Mobility in Aging within the McMaster Institute for Research on Aging. The Centre’s long-term goal is the generation, sharing and implementation of new knowledge to improve the mobility of older Canadians and people worldwide. In this context, mobility is broadly defined and includes physical and community aspects, such as execution of daily activities and participation in society. Factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to mobility, as well as visible and invisible impairments, are important considerations.

Catalyst Grants

Labarge Catalyst Grants offer the opportunity to conduct collaborative and interdisciplinary research focused on mobility in aging. These grants are intended to stimulate new collaborations and allow researchers to collect preliminary data to support future proposals for full-scale studies. Catalyst Grants are valued at up to $40,000 (over 1 year) to conduct feasibility/pilot studies or scaling of interventions. These grants require matching funds of at least $5000 (can include up to $2500 of in-kind contributions) from alternate sources to support the project.

As a result of the new directives outlined by McMaster’s Vice-President, Research (VPR) in March 2020, many Faculties implemented processes to ensure both new and continuing research would be compliant with the VPR's new directives. Please consult with your Faculty Associate Dean, Research (ADR) before submitting your application to be sure that your research complies with current research restrictions. Consider how your research can be executed safely with an at-risk population if COVID-19 restrictions are still in place when your research commences.

Deadline: April 30th, 2021, 4 p.m. EST

Successful applications are expected to be announced mid-June 2021. The MIRA Scientific Director, in consultation with the MIRA Executive Committee, will review the submitted proposals to ensure alignment with the goals and themes of the grant opportunity.

Submission and selection process

MIRA will work with McMaster’s Associate Deans, Research (ADRs) to identify one proposal in each Faculty for Labarge Catalyst Grant support.

Prior to beginning their application, researchers are advised to consult with their Faculty’s Office of the Associate Dean, Research, to determine their proposed project’s alignment with Faculty research priorities and to seek out mechanisms for Faculty-level support. In addition, some Faculties may have internal deadlines or vetting processes, and researchers should determine the process in the principal investigator’s Faculty to ensure they are met.

Submissions must include a research proposal and completed Catalyst Grant Application Form. This form requires a signature from the principal investigator’s ADR. References and budget breakdown should be included on separate pages. Application packages must be submitted directly to mirafund@mcmaster.ca, copying the principal investigator’s ADR, and any appropriate administrative support in the ADR’s office.
LABARGE CENTRE FOR MOBILITY IN AGING

Themes

As in previous years, the primary theme will be promoting aging in place through the lens of mobility, specifically:

Understanding and defining mobility in aging
- Identifying trajectories of changes in mobility during aging
- Defining mobility across disciplinary domains

Maintaining and restoring mobility in aging
- Identifying or developing new interventions that affect mobility within diverse populations
- Identifying barriers for maintaining/promoting mobility in older adults within the health system, this includes access and navigation, lack of information, coordination, and continuity of care
- Identifying psychosocial factors affecting motivation and adaptation in mobility in aging

Environmental facilitators and barriers that influence mobility in aging
- Technological innovations
- Supportive designs that facilitate mobility

As described above, mobility is broadly defined and can include physical, mental, community and other components as relevant to the aging population.

Projects that are considered “high risk” are welcome and should illustrate the potential for high reward. Researchers who are not actively pursuing aging-related research projects are encouraged to consider expanding the scope of their work for the potential benefit of the aging population.

Proposal requirements

Each Faculty, through the Associate Dean (Research), is asked to nominate one proposal to be funded by MIRA. Funds will be allocated for up to six Labarge Catalyst Grants in 2021.

Submissions should include researchers from a minimum of three different McMaster Faculties as meaningful contributors to the project. Researchers who were identified as the Principal Investigator (PI) in a currently open Catalyst Grant cannot be the PI on a 2021 proposal. However, they may participate as a co-investigator.

The submission should outline the role of each researcher in the project, and how the integration of the distinct disciplines offers a unique and sustainable approach to study the research question. The study must also include mobility in aging as the central theme and should indicate the potential benefits of the project for older adults.

Research teams are strongly encouraged to employ design thinking or user-centred approaches in the formulation of the idea, refinement of the research question, implementation of the project, and development/execution of knowledge translation strategies (additional details below). Submissions should also indicate the key stakeholders, including but not limited to end users.

A research proposal (maximum 1000 words) should clearly outline the proposed project and funding request, including how the project addresses the priority theme and integrates cross-Faculty perspectives. Proposals should also indicate why this phase of the research is needed before applying for major funding and outline the anticipated impact on the research program.
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Reporting requirements

Research teams will be required to provide annual progress reports in September of each year while the project is still active, a final report detailing the outcomes, impact, and plans for the next stage of the project at the project’s completion and a brief closed-project report for two years following the conclusion of the project. Researchers are also asked to include details on any barriers or challenges that were faced during the execution of the project. From time to time, MIRA will check in with research teams for brief project updates. Teams are also expected to participate in the annual MIRA & Labarge research showcase in the fall.

User-centred approaches/design thinking

User-centred approaches integrate the perspectives of end users from the project outset to ensure that the outcomes are best positioned for successful implementation. Design thinking is an iterative, user-centred method of solution-focused thinking that starts with a goal and explores multiple, alternative solutions from different perspectives. It is an especially useful method to investigate ill-defined problems where many factors may be unknown. MIRA will offer tools to support researchers who wish to use these approaches, including resources listed on MIRA’s Design Thinking webpage and connections to end users and stakeholders.

For further information, please email mirafund@mcmaster.ca