



# 2024 ALDO DEL COL RESEARCH GRANT

## DESCRIPTION

To honour the legacy and memory of Myeloma Canada's co-founder, the Aldo Del Col Research Grant funds patient-prioritized Canadian research projects that help address the knowledge gaps in the diagnosis and treatment of myeloma and/or related plasma cell disorders that were identified through the Myeloma Priority Setting Partnership (PSP).

The Myeloma PSP is a collaborative project between the Horizon Health Network, the Maritime SPOR SUPPORT UNIT (MSSU), and Myeloma Canada, and adhered to established PSP practices set by the James Lind Alliance. ([Click here](#) to read the published correspondence, "The future of myeloma research in Canada and beyond: results of a James Lind Alliance priority setting partnership".)

Research proposals must:

- be for projects of a duration of one or two years;
- address one or more of the **top ten** priorities for multiple myeloma research in Canada as identified through the Myeloma PSP. [Click here to access the Top Ten Myeloma Research Priorities](#);
- satisfy one or more of Myeloma Canada's Funded Research Principles. The research must have a direct impact on:
  - improving the quality of life and/or survival of myeloma patients;
  - increasing patient access to new myeloma therapies, new treatment combinations, or improved treatment administration; or
  - improving myeloma healthcare delivery.

Funded research projects will ideally have an impact on all Canadians impacted by myeloma. While some projects may be conducted regionally, the potential research impact should be applicable to the regional, provincial, or national myeloma community. Patient involvement in the planning, development, and execution of research projects is an asset. Research proposals are peer-reviewed by an Independent Research Review Committee (IRRC).

## GRANTS

Based on the number and quality of applications, grants totaling at least CDN \$350,000 are expected to be awarded in 2024. The minimum award is CDN \$50,000 and the maximum award is CDN \$150,000. The IRRC will endeavour to award at least 1 grant in each of the following categories:

- Accelerate the development of academic cellular therapies
- Lab/bench projects (including but not limited to the development of novel therapeutics)
- Quality of life, database or real-world evidence that can help:
  - accelerate access to treatments;
  - inform best practices and standards for treatment;
  - highlight the variability/disparities in access to treatment and best/standard practice patterns;
  - increase the speed of incorporating new evidence into government policy and clinical practice;
  - fill the evidence gaps in myeloma care within healthcare systems to improve access to and delivery of care for patients.
- Clinical trial research components (e.g., quality of life or health economic analyses) that can help:
  - increase access to new treatments and drug combinations;
  - change clinical practice;
  - influence reimbursement decisions;
  - ensure treatment access to a wide geographic/demographic representation of patients.



## APPLICATION AND FUNDING DEADLINES

Applications will be accepted from March 15 – May 31, 2024. Funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in October 2024.

## GRANT DISBURSEMENT

Awarded funding will be disbursed according to the length of the research proposal.

- **One year:**
  - 100% by December 2024 or earlier
- **Two years:**
  - 50% by December 2024 or earlier
  - 50% by December 2025 or earlier

Grant winners must agree to provide an interim and/or final status update according to the length of the research proposal.

- **One year:**
  - Final status update by October 2025
- **Two years:**
  - Interim status update by September 2025
  - Final status update by October 2026

## APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

The principal applicant must be a researcher at any career stage, and be affiliated with a Canadian university, hospital, cancer centre, or research institute. The submitted research may include collaborations with researchers affiliated outside Canada; however, awarded funds may not be used to fund patient-based research outside Canada.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING ANIMALS

In the event that the submitted research project involves animals (i.e., vertebrates or cephalopods), the investigator(s) shall employ the guiding principles of replacement, reduction, and refinement ([Three Rs of Humane Animal Experimentation](#)) according to the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC).

The investigator(s) shall also ensure that research activities involving animals have been pre-approved by their institution and:

- maintain a valid [CCAC Certificate of Good Animal Practice](#);
- ensure that the research fully complies fully with [CCAC fundamental principles](#);

Without proper approvals, the awarded funds may be withheld.

## TO APPLY

Eligible applicants must complete and submit the [Aldo Del Col Research Grant Application Form](#) prior to the posted application deadline. As part of the application process, eligible applicants must:

- accept the “Applicant Terms and Conditions” (see below);
- successfully answer pre-screening eligibility questions;
- provide an impact statement (250 words max) on the significance and potential impact of the research project.



Components of the application should include, but are not limited to:

- name, credentials, affiliations, and role of all participants/collaborators involved in the research;
- curriculum vitae (CV) of the principal applicant and key research team members;
- list of the applicant's most important related publications and academic/scientific contributions;
- description of the research project (e.g., title, abstract, methods, approaches, rationale, background/importance, questions, goals/aims, expected outcomes, references, tables, figures, photos, questionnaires);
- estimated budget (rounded to a multiple of CDN \$100, including provincial and federal taxes), including:
  - research staff (e.g., associates, assistants, technicians, trainees) and remuneration;
  - research materials, supplies, equipment, and services;
  - costs for open-access dissemination (e.g., journal) and presentation (e.g., conference) of research results (should include travel and up to 3 nights' accommodation);
  - other research-associated costs.
  - budget components and how the awarded funds will be used;
  - timeline and term/period covered by the budget
  - other grants applied for, including potential grant amount(s);
  - other funding received/awarded for the research.
- letter(s) of support from collaborators;
- proof of institutional approvals (i.e., ethics, including animal research if applicable);
- needs assessment (if applicable);
- commercialization plan (if applicable).

## APPLICANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Applicants must accept the *Applicant Terms and Conditions on the Communication of Research Funding and Results*.

### **Applicant Terms and Conditions on the Communication of Research Funding and Results**

Support for research is an investment by Canadians impacted by myeloma. Myeloma Canada seeks to demonstrate a return on investment for donors through the promotion of key research developments and results. Upon reasonable request, funded recipients must agree to:

- provide interim and/or a final research project status update(s);
- collaborate with Myeloma Canada on public communication initiatives related to the description, funding and findings of their research;
- disseminate their research findings through an appropriate open access medical journal and/or conference;
- cite support from Myeloma Canada and all other sources in all presentations and publications arising from the supported research conducted during the awarded grant period.

Myeloma Canada reserves the right to publicize and report on award recipients and their research project on Myeloma Canada's websites and social media platforms, within Myeloma Canada digital and print publications (i.e., Myeloma Matters email newsletter, Year in Review, Impact Report), news and media releases, and in any other general public announcement.

## INDEPENDENT RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE (IRRC) PEER REVIEW PROCESS

IRRC funding award decisions will be made by using best practice principles that include a review and ranking process. The goal of the peer review process is to ensure unbiased decision-making and complete transparency with applicants. The quality of submitted research proposals will be evaluated via a two-step process.



### Step 1: IRRC individual member assessment

- Evaluate research proposals on their relevance to the [Myeloma Top 10 Research Priorities](#).
- Evaluate research proposals on their relevance to Myeloma Canada's Funded Research Principals.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of research proposals.
- Rate research proposals on a scale of 0.0 (lowest rating) to 4.9 (highest rating), based on:
  - novelty of concepts and approaches (25%);
  - impact of expected outcomes on the field of myeloma (25%);
  - appropriateness of rationale and design to achieve results (10%);
  - appropriateness of the research team's training and experience to achieve results (10%);
  - appropriateness of the research environment to achieve results (10%);
  - feasibility of timeline to achieve results (10%);
  - feasibility of budget to achieve results (10%).
- Applications with an average weighted rating below 3.5 will not be considered for funding.

### Step 2: IRRC peer review group meeting

- Review and discuss results from step 1 (individual/remote assessment).
- Review and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of research proposals.
- Reach a consensus rating for each application discussed.
- Reach a consensus on the total number of grants to be awarded for the given grant competition period and the funding amounts for each grant awarded.

**Confidentiality:** IRRC members may not communicate any information about active applications or their chances of success/failure with applicants or anyone outside the IRRC.

**Fairness:** IRRC members will exercise professionalism, rigorous judgement, and be impartial, balanced, and reasonable. Constructive reviews that detail strengths/weaknesses of applications are encouraged. Myeloma Canada may request the removal of information that is factually incorrect or comments that could be construed as inflammatory, sarcastic, flippant, arrogant, or inappropriate from the peer review process.

**Conflicts of Interest:** To ensure that IRRC decisions are fair and objective, all voting IRRC members are required to withdraw from reviewing their own proposals, proposals in which they are involved, or proposals that fall within the same review period.

**Transparency:** Applicants may request access to all written materials used to evaluate their application. Requests can be sent to Gabriele Colasurdo, Myeloma Canada's Director of Science & Research, at [gcolasurdo@myeloma.ca](mailto:gcolasurdo@myeloma.ca). A list of IRRC members involved in funding decisions will be posted on the Aldo Del Col Research Grant website within 30 days of the funding decision announcement.

## DECISION GRIEVANCES, COMPLAINTS, AND FEEDBACK

IRRC review processes are based on internationally accepted peer review processes, and thus include an intrinsic human component. As such, applicants may not always agree with IRRC opinions and decisions.

Applicants may email their questions and concerns to Gabriele Colasurdo at [gcolasurdo@myeloma.ca](mailto:gcolasurdo@myeloma.ca). Myeloma Canada will investigate all inquiries to determine whether the funding decision should be reviewed. IRRC decisions may only be reviewed and overturned under exceptional circumstances. Feedback received may be used to update and improve IRRC review processes and/or related communications to applicants.

## QUESTIONS?

For any questions or additional information regarding the Aldo Del Col Research Grant program, please contact Gabriele Colasurdo at [gcolasurdo@myeloma.ca](mailto:gcolasurdo@myeloma.ca).