Government of Canada | Gouvernement du Canada

Canada Research Coordinating Committee Progress Report 2020–21

COLLECTIVE RESPONSE

Canada

Contents

Canada Research Coordinating Committee at a glance 4

Canada Research Coordinating Committee strategic priorities 5

Message from the Ministers 6

Message from the Chair 7

PRIORITIES

Supporting Canada's research response to COVID-19
8

Increasing engagement in interdisciplinary, international, high-risk / high-reward, rapid-response research
10

Supporting early career researchers
12

Enhancing interagency cooperation on international research
13

Strengthening Indigenous self-determination, leadership and capacity in research and training
14

Strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion in research
16

Annex I
Self-identification data collection in support of equity, diversity and inclusion 18

Annex II
Early career researcher data for flagship investigator-initiated research grant competitions 24

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

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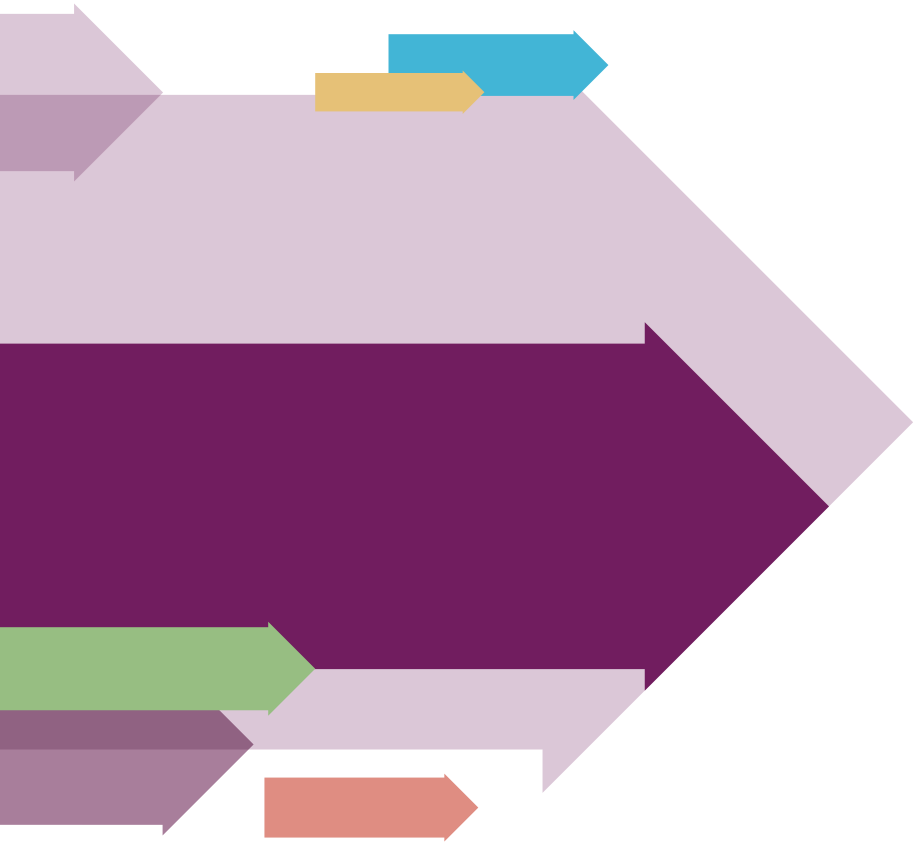
If there was ever a year when a collective response was needed to support Canada and its research community, it was 2020–21.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted research and, at the same time, demanded more—from all of us, urgently.

Canada's federal research funding agencies and departments came together on the Canada Research Coordinating Committee to sustain vital activities across the country, while working toward a better tomorrow.



Canada Research Coordinating Committee at a glance

The Canada Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) is a senior strategic forum that brings together the executive heads of key agencies and departments to advance collective priorities and coordinate federal research funding. Through the CRCC, members share information, build consensus and make decisions that strengthen Canada's research enterprise—fostering world-leading research and advancing the country's social and economic well-being.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Alejandro Adem
Chair, 2021; Vice-Chair, 2020
President, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

Ted Hewitt
Vice-Chair, 2021
President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Simon Kennedy
Deputy Minister
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

Stephen Lucas
Deputy Minister
Health Canada

Mona Nemer
Chief Science Advisor
Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada

Roseann O'Reilly Runte
President and Chief Executive Officer, Canada Foundation for Innovation

Iain Stewart*
President
National Research Council Canada

Michael Strong
Chair, 2020
President, Canadian Institutes of Health Research

* Also participating at CRCC meetings in 2020–2021, NRC Acting President Roger Scott-Douglas (September 2020–December 2020) and Interim President Mitch Davies (December 2020–October 2021)

Canada Research Coordinating Committee strategic priorities

PRIORITIES

COVID-19 response and recovery	Interdisciplinary, international, high-risk / high reward, rapid-response research	Early career researchers
Strengthen Canada's COVID-19 response and recovery by supporting the research community, funding rapid-response research, and enabling forward-looking, evidence-based decisions in government.	Foster world-leading discovery and innovation through the New Frontiers in Research Fund, encouraging Canadian research teams to take risks, meet new challenges, push boundaries and lead transformative projects with partners at home and abroad.	Develop the next generation of talent and encourage innovation, by engaging early career researchers in Canada's research ecosystem.
International cooperation	**Indigenous research and reconciliation**	**Equity, diversity and inclusion**
Position Canada as a valuable partner in global research and innovation.	Advance reconciliation and help build Indigenous research capacity by working with Indigenous communities to develop and support new models for Indigenous research and research training.	Achieve excellence by engaging the full pool of diverse research talent in an equitable and inclusive research ecosystem.

AN INTEGRATED CALENDAR OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

To make it easier for research teams to work together across disciplines, last year Canada's federal research funding agencies and the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) created an integrated calendar of funding opportunities on the CRCC webpage. The calendar gives a single view of funding opportunity deadlines, and provides links to application information for jointly administered and agency-specific Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and CFI programs—making opportunities easier to find for research administrators and research teams in all disciplines.

Message from the Ministers

On behalf of the Government of Canada, we are grateful to all the researchers and innovators across the country for their vital, collective response during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this crisis, Canadians depended on research communities to understand the virus and its effects, to develop solutions to the many unprecedented medical, technical, and social challenges we faced, and to lead our country into recovery.

Today, Canada continues to look to our researchers and innovators to collaborate and advance Canadians' health and well being. We are confident in our prosperous future with the vast innovations trailblazing a path forward for a healthier, stronger and more equitable country for all.

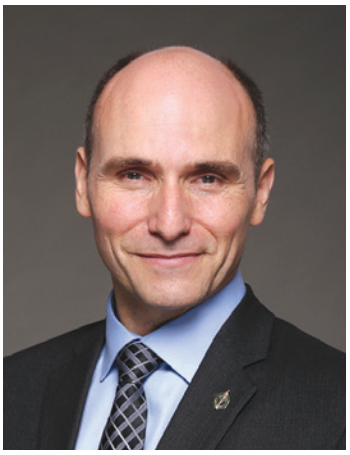
We also wish to thank the members of the Canada Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC), and their organizations, for devoting their talents to aid the collective recovery efforts. From coordinating a rapid research response, to adjusting programs, to overseeing federal support to sustain the research enterprise, the CRCC supported Canadians throughout this difficult period of uncertainty.

While responding to the pandemic, the CRCC continued to look to a brighter future in tremendous ways: by working with Indigenous and community partners to help build Indigenous research capacity; by creating an inclusive research community and engaging emerging innovators; by tackling complex interdisciplinary challenges; and by positioning Canada as a valued partner in the international research ecosystem, to name a few.

This report highlights the key contributions of the organizations brought together by the CRCC over the past year. As we reflect on these accomplishments, we look forward to continuing to work with CRCC members in the year ahead as we seek to improve health, well-being, and prosperity for all Canadians.

Together, with the Canadian research community, we will build back better.

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry



The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health

Message from the Chair

In all manner of ways, in all parts of the country, the COVID-19 pandemic required the Canadian population to come together to address the country's urgent needs—while keeping an eye on how the world might look when coming out of the crisis. Working together closely, the agencies and departments represented on the Canada Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) mobilized rapidly to support Canada's research enterprise.

In the first months, member agencies and departments provided funding to mobilize rapid-response research, extended application deadlines, topped up supports, made administrative adjustments, and managed emergency funds to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and help sustain Canada's research community.

On the CRCC, we broadened the scope of our collaboration to integrate perspectives from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the International Development Research Centre in "CRCC+" meetings. We championed a new way to advance evidence-informed decision making by linking government and the research community through the CanCOVID network and the Office of the Chief Science Advisor. We shared some of the first lessons learned with researchers, administrators and policy makers at the virtual Canadian Science Policy Centre Conference 2020.

We can take pride in this collective response—and in the resilience shown by the Canadian research enterprise, and the staff of all member organizations—in the face of this crisis.

The pandemic has reinforced the importance of science, and the significance of our work for the Canadian population. It has created complex technological, organizational and societal challenges that demand action informed by research in all disciplines, engaging the research community in all sectors across Canada and abroad. Our collective response has rarely been more important, and will be essential to the coming recovery.

I look forward to working with my colleagues across government and across Canada's research communities as we take on the challenges ahead.

Alejandro Adem
Chair, Canada Research Coordinating Committee (2021)

President, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

PRIORITY

Supporting Canada's research response to COVID-19

CRITICAL FUNDING IN A TIME OF NEED

When the pandemic shut down Canadian universities and health research institutions and put the productivity and sustainability of research teams at risk, CRCC members came together to provide strategic oversight for the Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund (CRCEF).

The Government of Canada announced the creation of the CRCEF in May 2020 and established the CRCC as the program's steering committee. The temporary emergency response program provided wage support for research personnel who did not qualify for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. It also reimbursed costs related to maintaining essential research-related commitments, helping the research community stay ready to ramp projects back up once public health restrictions were lifted. In the span of seven months, the CRCEF, through the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat, delivered $416 million to approximately 32,000 individuals engaged in research, and helped ensure the continuity of 22,000 projects.

BROAD AND INCLUSIVE SUPPORT

Institutions across Canada could use CRCEF funds to support research-related personnel whose salaries were paid, in whole or in part, from nongovernmental sources and cover extraordinary direct costs needed to maintain or ramp up research, regardless of their

CRCC members participated in a CSPC plenary session, which focused on Canada's research response to COVID and Canada's recovery. Left to right, top row: Michael Strong, Roseann O'Reilly Runte, Roger Scott-Douglas. Middle row: Mona Nemer, Ted Hewitt, Alejandro Adem. Bottom row: Uzma Urooj

funding source. Three rounds of funding were held, with the first deadline in July 2020. A fourth round was added in November 2020, in response to stakeholder feedback and evidence of the pandemic's continuing effects on research.

To ensure the emergency funds were distributed equitably, recipient institutions were asked to form internal committees that reflected the diversity of Canada's research community. They developed equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategies to reduce the influence of unconscious bias and systemic barriers in the allocation of funding.

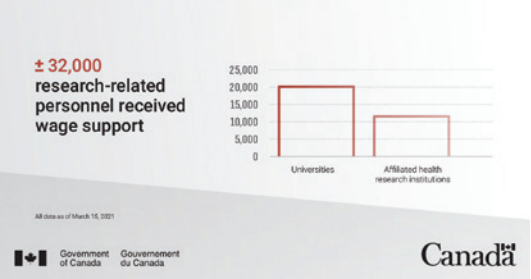
Mounting and delivering a program on such a scale, so quickly, required a dedicated and experienced team drawn from across the federal research funding agencies. Team members were pulled together on short notice to design and launch the program, facilitate rapid review of applications, prepare and update web content, hold virtual engagement sessions in both official languages and respond to hundreds of institutional questions and concerns in a timely manner.

PROTECTING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

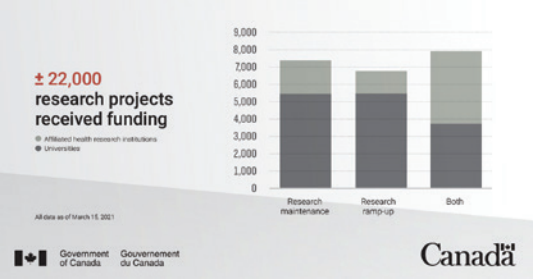
Throughout the year, the CRCEF supported 126 organizations and their research staff and projects, sustaining talent and knowledge that are critical to Canada's well-being and competitiveness in the global, knowledge-based economy across the disciplines of health, social sciences, humanities, natural sciences and engineering.

32,000
people

engaged in research received CRCEF support throughout the year



The Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund provided wage support for approximately 32,000 research personnel whose salaries were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and weren't eligible for the CERB.



Through the Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund, the Government of Canada supported about 22,000 research projects to cover unanticipated maintenance and ramp-up costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PRIORITY

Increasing engagement in interdisciplinary, international, high-risk / high-reward, rapid-response research

SWIFT ACTION TO DRIVE DISCOVERY

COVID-19 demanded new knowledge quickly. Alongside the range of actions taken individually by the granting agencies, CRCC members drew on the New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) to support a rapid call for research on key issues. The NFRF awarded $7 million to 15 interdisciplinary projects focused on everything from point-of-care diagnostics and community resilience to harnessing human mobility and surveillance data for disease forecasting.

To ease financial challenges for research teams, and help sustain their work, top-up grants and one-year extensions were offered to 2018 Exploration stream grant holders (all early career researchers (ECRs)) and to 2019 Exploration stream projects, 37% of which were led by ECRs. EDI and the support of ECRs are core elements of the program.[1]

BUSINESS AS (UN)USUAL

Alongside these urgent actions, the NFRF continued to carry out its planned granting program throughout the year. The results of the 2019 Exploration stream competition were announced in May 2020, with $46.3 million awarded for 186 grants. The 2020 Exploration stream competition led to another $29 million awarded for 117 grants in March 2021.

While the Exploration stream focuses on bold, high-risk, interdisciplinary projects, last year the first NFRF Transformation stream competition was launched to support large-scale, world-leading projects with potential to achieve real and enduring change. The NFRF received 347 letters of intent as part of the first Transformation call, with 31 proposals

Photo credit: Linda Zhang

Linda Zhang

NFRF-funded project with Ryerson University: Spaces Beyond Imagination: Therapeutic virtual reality co-creation for community empowerment through architecture

Interior design professor Zhang and her collaborators from the Ryerson-led project PROTECH will create a virtual reality (VR) platform that will allow communities to collaboratively visualize and virtually shape their own neighbourhoods. The project, through an interdisciplinary process, will identify the impacts of COVID-19 on marginalized people, and of the exclusion and displacement of racialized communities from the public space. Using VR and 3D building scans, the researchers will use an architecture-driven envisioning process to transform how communities and identities are built and mobilized, as well as strengthen resilience to promote social justice and equity.

1 For information on the participation of ECRs and designated groups, see the annexes.

invited to the full application stage. In the International stream, 12 applications were submitted to the 2020 Horizon Global Platform Competition, which provides funding to members of the Canadian research community participating in large, international projects funded through the European Union's Horizon 2020 program.

MAKING DATA VISIBLE

In November 2020, an interactive dashboard of NFRF competition information was launched in line with the federal government's commitment to transparency and active communication. The dashboard gives an at-a-glance, customizable view of NFRF funding allocations to date in response to 2,222 research applications involving 556 organizations, with 343 awards.

1,772
people

117
high-risk, high-reward, interdisciplinary projects

Exploration 2020–21

PRIORITY

Supporting early career researchers

CONTINUITY FOR CANADA'S NEXT GENERATION OF RESEARCH TALENT

Many ECRs and their work suffered acutely from lost access to research facilities and resources as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The situation was particularly complicated for those with caring responsibilities. Coordinated efforts across the three federal research funding agencies were made to ease the financial implications for them, at a critical time in their careers, and help safeguard Canada's next generation of research talent.

Recognizing the unique challenges and importance for researchers to establish a strong track record early in their careers, each agency introduced ways to recognize the disruptions caused by the pandemic when determining ECR status—effectively extending ECRs' access to funding equalization measures in their flagship programs.

NSERC and SSHRC both included COVID-19 as an eligible delay in research in new proposals and extended the period of time over which grant funds could be used for existing awards by one year. NSERC also offered one-year funding extensions to all active Discovery Grant holders, including ECRs. Both NSERC and SSHRC committed to keeping COVID-19 considerations in place for 2021–22. CIHR extended eligibility by one year for anyone with ECR status as of March 1, 2020, or who secured their first academic appointment after that date. CIHR also extended the Authority to Use Funds period for all active grants by one year. NSERC and SSHRC took similar action, allowing academic institutions to approve extension requests of up to 12 months for grants ending between February 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021.

As part of overall federal support for postsecondary students and recent graduates, the three agencies allocated an extra four months of funding for scholarships or fellowships scheduled to expire between March and August 2020 and provided three months of funding to support trainees and research support staff paid through grants. The NRC created 56 postdoctoral fellowship opportunities to help ECRs facing hardships during the pandemic and give them opportunities to advance their careers.

A DIVERSE NEW GENERATION

ECRs represent a diverse new generation of curiosity-driven individuals, creative, team-spirited, socially minded champions of research who connect Canadian communities to people around the world. The research funding agencies provided emergency and ongoing support for their careers during 2020–21.

2 objectives of the Tri-Agency ECR Action Plan: *Fair Access to Tri-Agency Research Support* and *Equitable Participation in the Research System**

* For the latest data on ECRs, see the annexes.

PRIORITY

Enhancing interagency cooperation on international research

A GLOBAL ENTERPRISE

International collaboration extends the reach of Canadian research, creates avenues for new investigation, and helps tackle major social and scientific challenges—including those brought on by COVID-19. In the face of the pandemic, CRCC member organizations reached out to international partners and came together on new initiatives.

CRCC member organizations came together to support Steven Hoffman, scientific director of the CIHR Institute of Population and Public Health, and his team, working to develop the UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery. The Roadmap sets priorities and provides a framework for interdisciplinary, international cooperation that supports equitable socio-economic recovery and continued progress toward the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

At the same time, the CRCC reached out to the United Kingdom's UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to reinforce the longstanding science and technology relationship between Canada and the UK. Meeting with Dame Ottoline Leyser, chief executive of UKRI, in October 2020, CRCC members discussed their interests in the UN Research Roadmap, and pandemic preparedness, and reaffirmed a shared commitment to advancing EDI in international research. At the meeting, the CFI entered into a formal agreement with the UK Science and Technology Facilities Council to facilitate access to research infrastructure.

A COORDINATED APPROACH

Behind the scenes, a CRCC advisory subcommittee on international interagency cooperation recommended approaches to international collaboration that helped inform discussion at the CRCC-UKRI meeting. Building on that experience, CRCC member organizations worked with the CRCC secretariat to develop guidelines for a consistent and replicable "Team Canada" approach to the organization of future meetings with international research funding organizations.

WORKING WITH EU COLLEAGUES

To support Canadian participation in large, international research projects, the NFRF awarded grants to Canadian research teams engaged in European Union Horizon 2020 projects on topics ranging from vaccine hesitancy to inorganic contaminants capturing and "energy citizenship."

"Team Canada"

First international CRCC meeting

Strengthening Indigenous self-determination, leadership and capacity in research and training

RECONCILIATION THROUGH RESEARCH

Peer review is an integral part of the traditional academic granting process, but it can create barriers for Indigenous communities, organizations and teams seeking to engage in research. Last year, Canada's federal research funding agencies launched a pivotal new partnership with Indigenous researchers to make peer review processes more culturally appropriate, inclusive and relevant to Indigenous communities.

In 2020–21, Canada's federal research funding agencies moved toward implementing a strategic plan co-developed with Indigenous Peoples: *Setting New Directions to Support Indigenous Research and Research Training in Canada 2019–2022*. The plan identifies four key principles: self-determination, decolonization of research, accountability, and equitable access. It provides a holistic framework for an interagency approach to strengthening Indigenous research capacity.

An important first step, taken in concert with Indigenous Peoples, was the creation of the external—exclusively First Nations, Inuit and Métis—Reference Group for the Appropriate Review of Indigenous Research. The reference group's 18 members were chosen by a committee of distinguished Indigenous academics, bringing together a broad range of experience and expertise. They include youth, Knowledge Keepers and academics at various stages of their careers. Going forward, the group will evaluate peer review models across Canada's federal research funding agencies, and make recommendations on new methodologies to integrate Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing into review practices.

Photo credit to: Andy Thrasher

Dr. Zoe Todd, Paulatuuq, Northwest Territories, 2012

NFRF-funded project with Carleton University: Plural perspectives on Bighorn Country: restor(y)ing land use governance and bull trout population health in Alberta

"We have responsibilities to be reciprocal and thoughtful in how we move through the land and in how we behave as humans. We have impacts, every one of us, and that means we are obligated to reflect on how we can best nurture the planet and be just to the species we share our space with. We must acknowledge the ways we are embedded in webs of relations."

– Professor of Anthropology Zoe Todd.

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP IN RESEARCH

Following on the successful launch of the reference group, a similar process is underway to select membership for the Indigenous Leadership Circle in Research. The circle will advise senior management on the implementation of the strategic plan and matters related to Indigenous research. Canada's federal research funding agencies will welcome members of the new advisory circle in the months ahead.

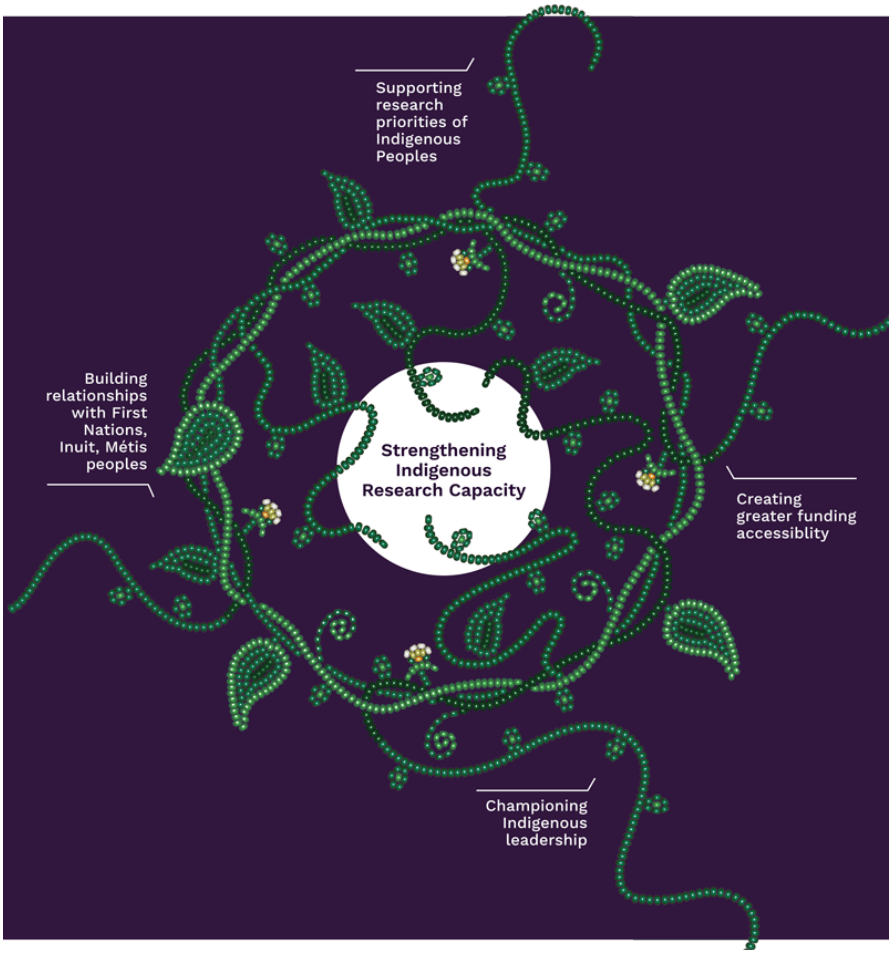
LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR CHANGE

In line with the strategic plan, Canada's research funding agencies have begun addressing administrative barriers, reviewing funding opportunities and creating governance structures to support progress toward reconciliation through research.

18

Indigenous members

appointed to the Reference Group for the Appropriate Review of Indigenous Research



Four proposed key strategic directions reflect new models for Indigenous research and research training.

From the Strategic Plan: *Setting new directions to support Indigenous research and research training in Canada 2019–2022*

Artwork by: Donald Chrétien

PRIORITY

Strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion in research

AN ACTION PLAN FOR EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITY

A growing body of evidence shows that embedding EDI in research drives better results. It's also clear that much remains to be done to make Canada's research system truly equitable. In working toward publishing the *Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan for 2018–2025*, Canada's federal research funding agencies took steps to increase participation of racialized minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and women in Canada's research system.

FAIR ACCESS TO TRI-AGENCY SUPPORT

Since 2018, researchers seeking tri-agency funding have responded to a self-identification questionnaire to help each agency monitor the diversity of participants in its programs and design new measures to help achieve greater EDI in the research ecosystem. Last year, the agencies added new questions on sexual orientation and language; the questionnaire now covers eight dimensions of identity, including age, gender, disability, Indigenous identity, and identification with a visible minority.

CIHR published baseline, disaggregated questionnaire data on its Project Grant and COVID-19-related competitions, while SSHRC and NSERC made data available through interactive dashboards. In 2021–22, all three agencies will implement the revised questionnaire across their respective application platforms. The resulting data will allow them to assess underrepresentation in their programs, and systemic barriers in their policies and practices, in more detail and more consistently.[2]

EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

In 2020–21, 15 more postsecondary institutions and other research organizations signalled their commitment to embed EDI principles in their policies, practices and culture, by signing the Dimensions charter—bringing the total number of signatories to 125. The agencies continued to work closely with 17 postsecondary institutions on the Dimensions pilot program to develop ways to advance and publicly recognize institutional efforts to increase EDI in the postsecondary sector. A Dimensions handbook, to help guide institutional efforts, is currently being developed.

The three agencies also announced the recipients of a second round of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Institutional Capacity-Building Grants to help postsecondary institutions identify and eliminate systemic barriers to recruiting, advancing and retaining researchers from underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups.

2 For the latest data on EDI, see the annexes.

Finally, significant progress was made toward realizing EDI objectives for the Canada Research Chairs Program as set out in the 2019 Addendum to the 2006 Canadian Human Rights settlement agreement. The program reached historic highs in the representation levels and nomination rates for members of racialized minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and women—marking important progress toward Canadian population-level representation of these groups within the program.

EMBEDDING EDI

To further ensure fair access to research support, the granting agencies increased the diversity of their advisory and governance boards, and the executive heads of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC issued a public statement regarding the importance of enhancing EDI in their agencies, in academic institutions and across the research enterprise.

125 organizations

have signed the Dimensions charter

ANNEX I

Self-identification data collection in support of equity, diversity and inclusion

This annex represents a data set drawn from the self-identification questionnaire for tri-agency and agency-specific (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC and CFI) major funding opportunities from the 2020 competition year.[3] The tables and figures from the data set present a snapshot of self-identification information regarding the following groups: women, Indigenous Peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities. Completing the self-identification questionnaire is mandatory; however, all questions provide an option to select "I prefer not to answer."

The data set presents a summary of the application and award rates[4, 5] of tri-agency and agency-specific major funding opportunities (tables 1a to 1c; figures 1a to 1d).[6] The data distinguish between applications and award rates for research and training programs, and provide an overview of the nominations and active chair awards for the Canada Research Chairs Program, as well as an overview of the team leaders for the CFI Innovation Fund.

APPLICATION AND AWARD RATES FOR TRI-AGENCY AND AGENCY-SPECIFIC MAJOR FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Application and award rates for major funding opportunities for competition year 2020 are outlined below as they relate to the four groups distinguished in the self-identification questionnaire. The data are collected from the questionnaires completed by the individuals who have primary responsibility for the application.

The collection of this data is still relatively new, and caution should be exercised in interpreting it, particularly for competitions with low numbers of applications. As more data are collected in coming years, trends can be tracked and analyzed for a clearer picture of each group's participation in the Canadian research enterprise and in accessing available funds.

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3 Competition year is defined by the fiscal year in which the first award payment for a competition is anticipated. Applications may be received in the previous fiscal year, and/or some awardees may receive their first payment in the subsequent fiscal year, but all application and award data for a given competition year are kept together.

4 The application rate is calculated by dividing the number of applications in the competition year where the individual responsible for the application self-identifies as a member of an underrepresented group by the total number of applications in the competition year, multiplied by 100 (to calculate a percentage).

5 The award rate is calculated by dividing the total number of awardees from a competition year who identify as a member of an underrepresented group by the total number of awardees who received funding in a competition year, multiplied by 100 (to calculate a percentage). Here, awardees are the individuals responsible for the application. This does not include colleagues who are part of research teams, where applicable.

6 This data set represents the individual identified as having primary responsibility for the overall intellectual direction of the research, research-related activity or partnership. The agencies refer to this person in various ways, such as "principal investigator," "project director" and "(nominated) principal applicant." Such individuals also include members of the student body and postdoctoral fellows who submit applications to agency scholarships and fellowship programs.

Table 1a: Summary of application and award rates for tri-agency and agency-specific major funding opportunities

	Women		Indigenous Peoples		Persons with disabilities		Members of visible minorities	
Research programe	App. Rate	Award rate	App. Rate	Award rate	App. Rate	Award rate	App. Rate	Award rate
CIHR Project Grants	36.0%	39.2%	0.7%	–	1.6%	1.7%	24.4%	20.6%
NSERC Discovery Grants	23.8%	23.9%	0.6%	0.6%	1.8%	1.4%	25.0%	23.0%
NSERC Partnership Grants	18.8%	17.6%	0.8%	–	1.6%	1.2%	37.4%	36.7%
SSHRC Insight Grants	48.8%	50.0%	1.8%	2.4%	3.4%	3.5%	21.2%	19.8%
SSHRC Partnership Grants	57.5%	59.6%	3.3%	3.5%	4.7%	5.3%	19.6%	19.6%
CFI John R. Evans Leaders Fund	40.8%	42.0%	2.8%	3.4%	2.6%	2.8%	26.0%	23.8%
NFRF*	33.1%	35.9%	–	–	3.6%	–	37.4%	32.5%
Training programe	App. Rate	Award rate	App. Rate	Award rate	App. Rate	Award rate	App. Rate	Award rate
Canada Graduate Scholarships–Master's*	59.8%	62.2%	2.1%	2.3%	4.8%	4.4%	22.4%	20.1%
CIHR Doctoral Research Awards	65.8%	63.2%	2.4%	–	4.7%	5.3%	28.5%	22.6%
CIHR postdoctoral fellowships	53.1%	51.7%	–	–	1.3%	–	31.8%	21.9%
NSERC Postgraduate Scholarships—Doctoral	39.2%	41.6%	2.0%	1.8%	3.7%	3.4%	27.8%	26.2%
NSERC Postdoctoral Fellowships	37.2%	42.4%	–	–	2.7%	–	38.5%	41.6%
SSHRC doctoral awards	65.1%	65.2%	5.1%	4.5%	7.2%	8.4%	21.7%	22.1%
SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowships	54.6%	56.4%	–	–	4.7%	–	20.8%	17.3%
Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships*	55.6%	59.5%	1.9%	–	6.2%	6.0%	32.5%	37.5%
Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships*	48.2%	40.0%	–	–	2.4%	–	31.7%	30.0%

* Tri-agency funding opportunities

Notes:

- To respect legal obligations under the *Privacy Act*, a dash (–) indicates categories where fewer than 10 responses were received.
- The groups are not exclusive; thus, percentages cannot be summed or compared directly.

Table 1b: Nominations and filled chair awards for the Canada Research Chairs Program

Program	Women		Indigenous Peoples		Persons with disabilities		Members of visible minorities	
	Nominations	2020 Rep*	Nominations	2020 Rep*	Nominations	2020 Rep*	Nominations	2020 Rep*
Canada Research Chairs Program	51.0%	38.6%	4.0%	3.2%	7.0%	5.5%	27.0%	21.4%

* Data includes off-cycle nominations up to December 1, 2020.

Notes:

- The Canada Research Chairs Program requires that all nominees submit a self-identification form as part of their complete nomination package. As such, the data presented in this table correspond to the nomination rates (% of nominations submitted for individuals from the four designated groups) and total representation in the program (i.e., active awards in that year). These data must not be used to calculate award rates or success rates. For additional program statistics, consult the program website.
- Canada Research Chairs Program nominations represent the numbers of nominations in all cycles for the reporting year (e.g., 2020–1 and 2020–2) in which nominees self-identified as members of one or more of the four designated groups, divided by the total number of nominees in all cycles for the reporting year, multiplied by 100 (to calculate a percentage).
- Representation in the program refers to the number of active chair holders who self-identify as members of one or more of the four designated groups, divided by the total number of active chairs, multiplied by 100 (to calculate a percentage). Due to the nature of the program, these data are only available as point in time.

Table 1c: Team leaders* for the Canada Foundation for Innovation's Innovation Fund

Program	Women		Indigenous Peoples		Persons with disabilities		Members of visible minorities	
	Applications %	Awards %	Applications %	Awards %	Applications %	Awards %	Applications %	Awards %
Innovation Fund	26.5%	23.6%	–	–	–	–	15.2%	12.4%

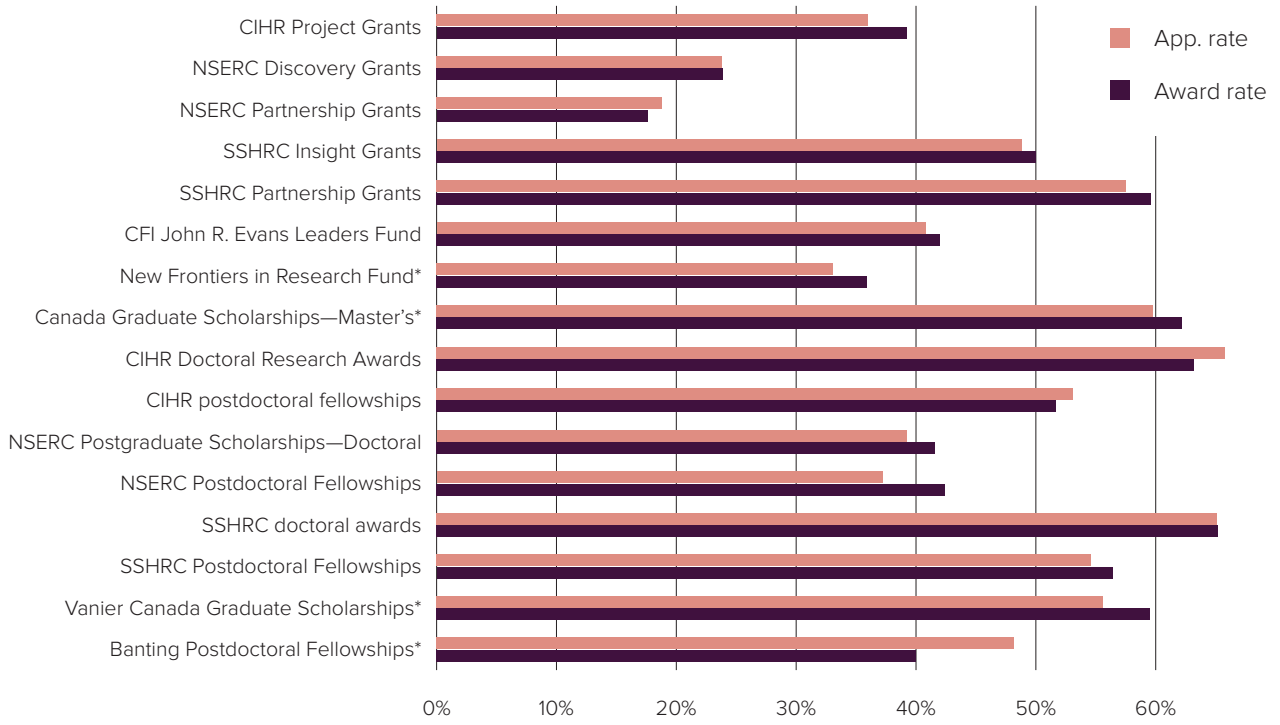
* Institutions have the option to select up to two team leaders for each Innovation Fund project, instead of a single project leader, to compose a more inclusive research team. The statistics above refer to the total number of team leaders (n=520), rather than the total number of applications (n=307). Out of the 307 applications, 102 projects were funded.

Note

- The CFI asks questions regarding Indigenous and visible minority identity only when research team members are affiliated with institutions located in Canada. The CFI's question regarding disabilities uses a narrower definition than does the tri-agency question. The definition used by the CFI is limited to impairments and accommodations in the workplace.

Figures 1a to 1d below are visual representations of the data provided in Table 1a, above.

Figure 1a: Application and award rates for women by tri-agency and agency-specific funding opportunities



* Tri-agency funding opportunities

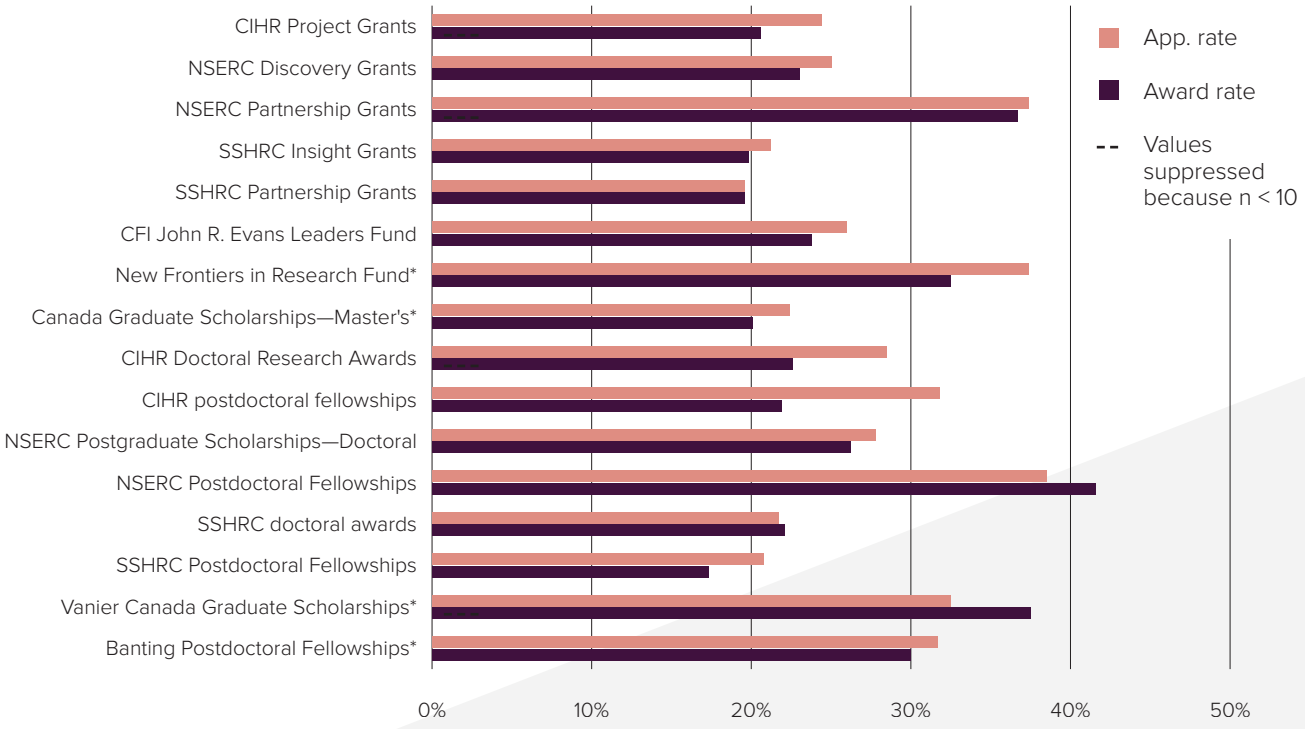
Figure 1b: Application and award rates for Indigenous Peoples by tri-agency and agency-specific funding opportunities

* Tri-agency funding opportunities

Figure 1c: Application and award rates for persons with disabilities by tri-agency and agency-specific funding opportunities

* Tri-agency funding opportunities

Figure 1d: Application and award rates for members of visible minorities by tri-agency and agency-specific funding opportunities



* Tri-agency funding opportunities

ANNEX II

Early career researcher data for flagship investigator-initiated research grant competitions

Each agency has provided an update to last year's report, providing data from the 2019 and 2020 competition years from their flagship investigator-initiated research programs, based on grant amounts committed at the time of offer.

CIHR has included data from the Open Operating Grant Program, which ran from 2000 to 2015, and Project Grant program, which began in 2016.

NSERC has included data from the Discovery Grants program. The Discovery Launch Supplements, which began in 2018, is included for 2019 and 2020.

SSHRC has included data from two funding opportunities separately. The first table includes data for the Insight Development Grants funding opportunity, which began in 2011; the second table includes data for the Insight Grants funding opportunity, which began in 2012.

The CFI has included data from the John R. Evans Leaders Fund.

CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH

Project Grants are designed to support people at any career stage to build and conduct health-related research and knowledge translation projects. There are two Project Grants competitions per year (spring and fall). These awards support research projects rather than programs of research. Grant values and durations are proportionate to the requirements of the research proposed and vary depending on the research field, research approach and scope of project activities, but are not explicitly capped.

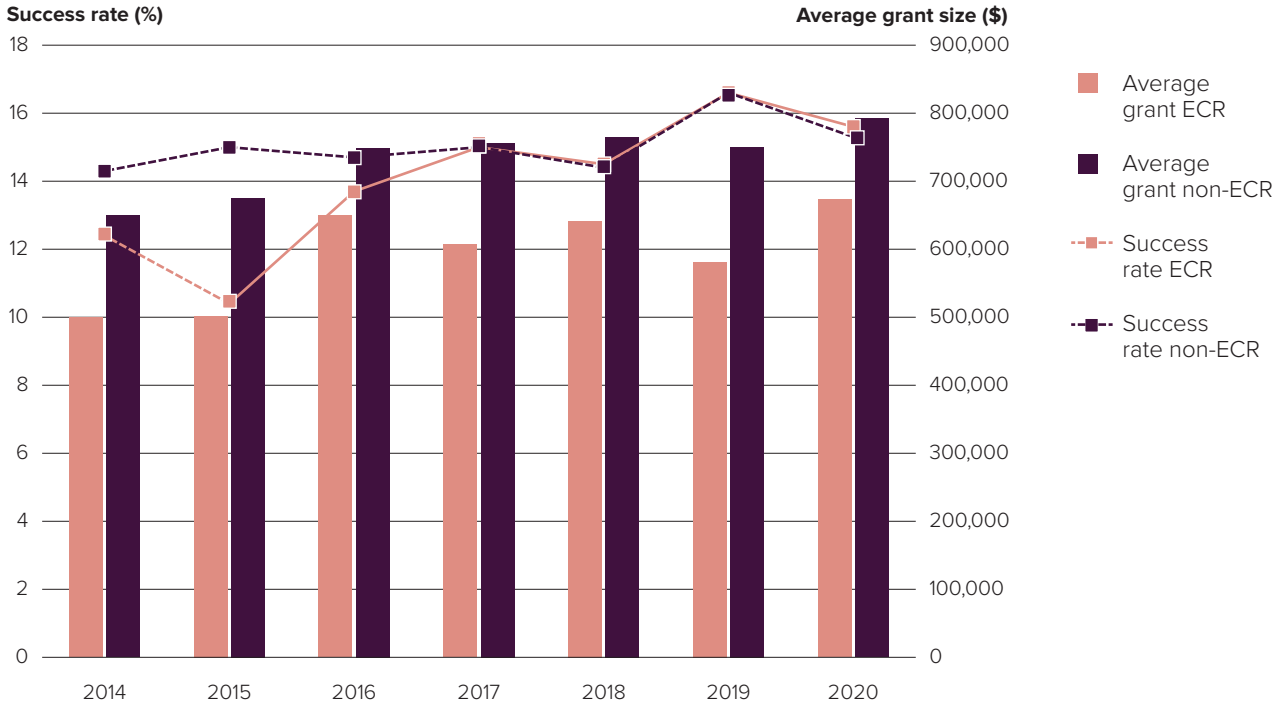
At CIHR, an early career researcher (ECR) has historically been one who, at the time of application, has held a full-time, independent research appointment for a period of up to five years (60 months), excluding leaves of absence. ECR status was validated only for project competitions. ECRs in Open Operating Grant Program competitions (2014 to 2015)

Canadian Institutes of Health Research Table

Open Operating Grant Program and Project Grants	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of applications—ECRs	445	403	1,515	821	1,130	1,016	1,121
Number of applications—total	2,862	2,682	6,697	3,415	5,117	4,629	4,489
% of all applications	15.5%	15.0%	22.6%	24.0%	22.1%	21.9%	25.0%
Success rate—ECRs	12.4%	10.4%	13.7%	15.0%	14.5%	16.6%	15.6%
Success rate—established researchers	14.3%	15.0%	14.7%	15.0%	14.4%	16.6%	15.3%
Average grant—ECRs	$499,585	$501,453	$649,423	$606,909	$641,404	$581,139	$673,052
Average grant—established researchers	$649,479	$675,264	$759,156	$756,462	$765,262	$750,253	$792,275
Total Open Operating Grant Program / Project Grant program funds awarded—ECRs	$27,477,201	$21,061,029	$134,430,504	$74,649,750	$105,190,260	$98,212,527	$117,784,111
Total Open Operating Grant Program / Project Grant funds awarded	$251,547,297	$251,326,181	$711,389,291	$368,913,660	$545,981,020	$547,613,842	$526,597,846
% of funds to ECRs	10.9%	8.4%	18.9%	20.2%	19.3%	17.9%	22.4%
Average grant (per year of grant)—ECRs	$122,025	$122,894	$151,524	$142,565	$145,751	$140,158	$155,533
Average grant (per year of grant)—established researchers	$145,307	$146,186	$167,376	$169,043	$169,984	$166,980	$174,951
Total Open Operating Grant Program / Project Grant program funds awarded—ECRs (per year of grant)	$6,711,363	$5,161,554	$31,365,461	$17,535,442	$23,903,223	$23,686,639	$27,218,346
Total Open Operating Grant Program / Project Grant program funds awarded (per year of grant)	$56,842,202	$55,010,876	$158,571,008	$83,293,027	$121,814,153	$123,707,806	$117,492,829
% of funds to ECRs	11.8%	9.4%	19.8%	21.1%	19.6%	19.1%	23.2%

were considered those within five years of the date of their last degree. Within the overall competition budget, there is a specific funding envelope to ensure the proportion of grants going to ECRs is at least equal to the proportion of applications submitted by ECRs. Competition processes and peer review for this cohort are fully integrated in the entire competition, with no additional steps required on the parts of people submitting applications.

Figure 1: Canadian Institutes of Health Research success rates (lines) and average grant sizes (bars) for early career researchers and non-early career researchers for Open Operating Grant Program and Project Grants from 2014 to 2020



NATURAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA

NSERC Discovery Grants support ongoing programs of research with long-term goals rather than a single, short-term project or collection of projects. Discovery Grants are five-year grants. There is one Discovery Grants competition per year. Individuals can apply for and hold only one Discovery Grant at a time. Discovery Grant holders cannot reapply for another until the last year of their current award.

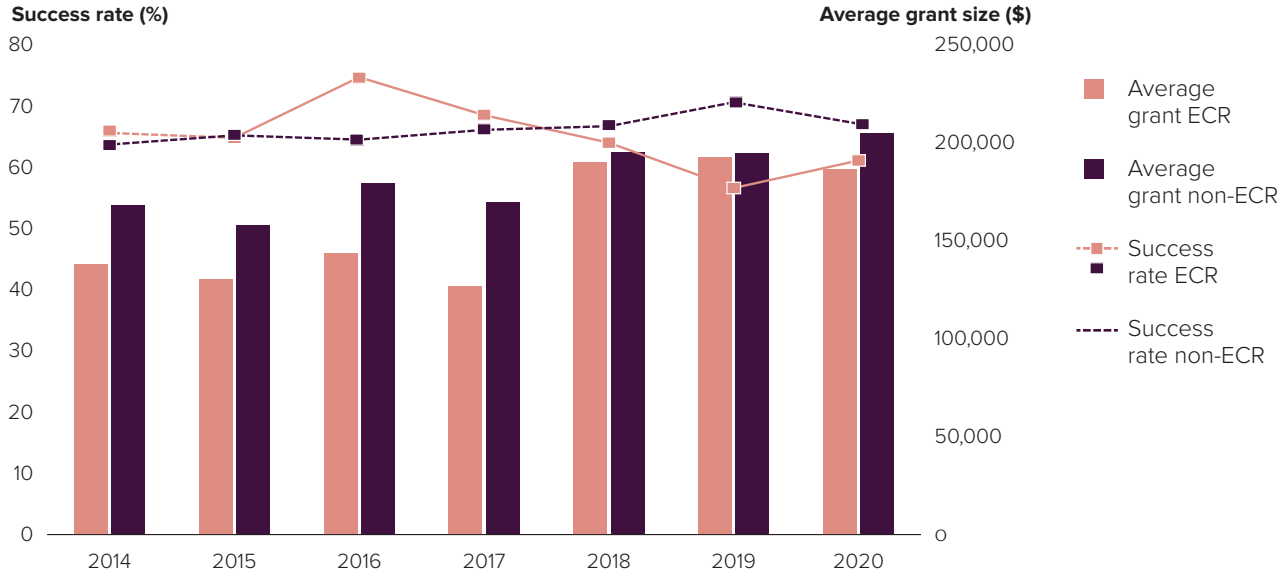
People submitting an application are categorized as either ECRs or established researchers. From 2014 to 2016, ECRs were defined as people submitting an application within two years of the start date of their first eligible position at a university and having no prior academic or non-academic independent research experience. From 2017 to 2018, the ECR eligibility window was increased to three years; in 2019, it was increased to five years. In all years reported, the window for being considered an ECR could be adjusted to include instances where one had an eligible delay in research (owing to illness, parental leave, etc.).

While applications from ECRs are evaluated against the same three selection criteria as from established researchers, it is recognized that people submitting an application early in their career may not have had the opportunity to make the same levels of contribution to training as established researchers. For this reason, NSERC implements a different quality cut-off for funding ECRs, ensures the overall ECR success rate is at least 50%, and offers additional sources of support to those awarded a Discovery Grant. These include:

- an annual $5,000 top-up on their Discovery Grant;
- the Discovery Launch Supplement, introduced in 2018, a one-time award valued at $12,500; and
- offering, since 2017, ECRs scheduled to apply for their second Discovery Grant the option of accepting an additional year of funding for their existing Discovery Grant at the same level.

Increases in funds awarded to ECRs in 2018 and 2019, in comparison to previous years, reflect the Discovery Launch Supplements and the additional year of funding. Besides the flagship Discovery Grants program, NSERC also devotes funds to a number of Discovery funding programs, many of which provide support to ECRs.

Figure 2: Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada success rates (lines) and average grant sizes (bars) for early career researchers and non-early career researchers for Discovery Grants from 2014 to 2020



Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Table

Discovery Grants	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of applications—ECRs	427	489	494	562	677	882	889
Number of applications—total	3,134	3,159	3,167	3,240	3,213	3,404	3,372
% of all applications	13.6%	15.5%	15.6%	17.3%	21.1%	25.9%	26.4%
Success rate—ECRs	65.6%	64.8%	74.7%	68.5%	64.0%	56.6%	61.1%
Success rate—established researchers	63.7%	65.2%	64.5%	66.1%	66.7%	70.6%	67.1%
Average grant—ECRs	$138,073	$130,553	$143,855	$127,043	$190,094	$192,549	$186,540
Average grant—established researchers	$168,017	$157,924	$179,571	$169,937	$195,366	$194,672	$205,158
Total Discovery Grants funds awarded—ECRs	$38,660,539	$41,385,170	$53,082,500	$48,911,515	$82,310,534	$96,081,926	$101,291,334
Total Discovery Grants funds awarded	$328,489,387	$316,489,081	$362,842,820	$349,530,120	$412,869,600	$442,598,291	$443,084,989
% of funds to ECRs	12.0%	13.1%	14.6%	14.0%	19.9%	21.7%	22.9%
Average grant (per year of grant)—ECRs	$27,723	$26,120	$28,771	$25,409	$32,099	$32,508	$31,509
Average grant (per year of grant)—established researchers	$35,513	$32,903	$37,135	$34,948	$40,355	$40,071	$41,032
Total Discovery Grants funds awarded—ECRs (first year of grant)	$8,137,508	$8,280,084	$10,616,500	$9,782,303	$13,898,839	$16,221,571	$17,108,139
Total Discovery Grants funds awarded (first year of grant)	$70,208,877	$65,870,975	$74,674,964	$71,605,024	$82,179,749	$87,547,244	$85,466,870
% of funds to ECRs	11.6%	12.6%	14.2%	13.7%	16.9%	18.5%	20.0%

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL

Insight Development Grants enable the development of new research in its initial stages. They are project-based: funding is provided for short-term research development projects. Insight Development Grants are valued at up to $75,000 over one to two years. A minimum budget of $7,000 in at least one of the years is required. The application deadline is in February.

Within the Insight Development Grants funding opportunity, funding is available for two distinct categories of scholars:

1. Emerging scholars: When applying, people identifying themselves as emerging scholars must demonstrate that they have not successfully applied, as principal investigator or project director, for a grant offered through SSHRC, NSERC or CIHR. In addition, they must meet at least one of the following criteria:
    - have completed their highest degree no more than six years before the competition deadline (SSHRC considers only the date of completion of the first doctorate);
    - have held a tenured or tenure-track postsecondary appointment for less than six years;
    - have held a postsecondary appointment, but never a tenure-track position (in the case of institutions that offer tenure-track positions); or
    - have had their careers significantly interrupted or delayed for health or family reasons within the past six years.

    Emerging scholar status is validated for Insight Development Grants, and at least 50% of funds are reserved for applications from emerging scholars.

2. Established scholars: Someone who has established—or who, since the completion of their highest degree, has had the opportunity to establish—a record of research achievement.

Insight Grants support research excellence. They are project-based. Insight Grants are valued at $7,000 to $100,000 per year over two to five years, up to a total of $400,000. When applying, individuals must choose from one of two funding streams, depending on the scale of their project:

- Stream A: $7,000 to $100,000
- Stream B: $100,000 to $400,000

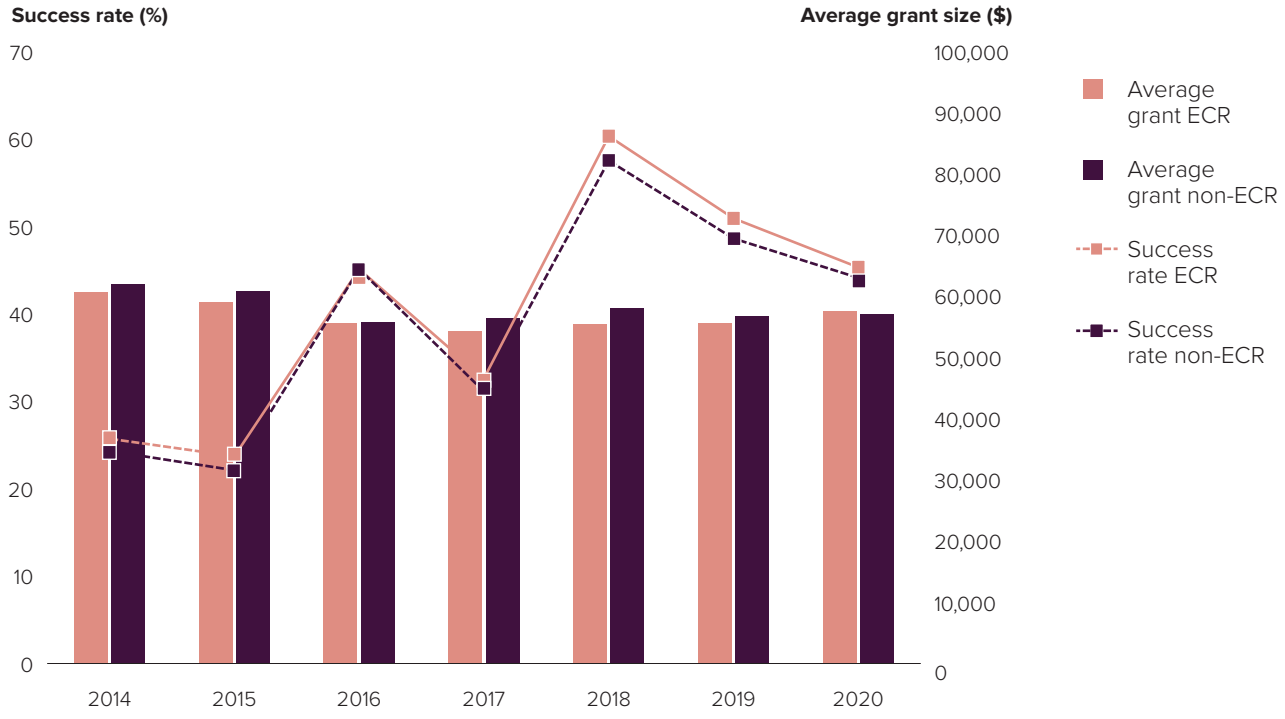
The application deadline is in October. There is no reserved budget envelope for emerging scholars, as everyone submitting an application competes in the same pool. As a result, ECR status is not validated within the scope of the Insight Grants.

The following apply to both Insight Grants and Insight Development Grants:

- Applications may be submitted by a principal investigator or a team consisting of one principal investigator and one or more co-investigators, collaborators or both.

- People submitting an application may be doing doctoral degrees or postdoctoral research, so long as they establish a formal affiliation with an eligible Canadian postsecondary institution within three to five months of the grant start date.
- An individual can only apply once as principal investigator in any given Insight Grants or Insight Development Grants competition. However, there is no limit to the number of times an individual can apply as co-investigator or collaborator for Insight Grants or Insight Development Grants.
- While individuals may not normally apply for an Insight Grant and an Insight Development Grant within the same calendar year, in 2017 SSHRC approved an exception to this regulation, which has been extended for the foreseeable future: people who applied unsuccessfully for an Insight Development Grant in February of a given year can apply for an Insight Grant in October of that same year.
- People submitting an application may hold an Insight Development Grant and an Insight Grant simultaneously, provided that the objectives of the two research projects are significantly different.

Figure 3: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council success rates (lines) and average grant sizes (bars) for early career researchers and non-early career researchers for Insight Development Grants from 2014 to 2020



Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Table

Overall	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of applications—ECRs	1,055	1,026	970	1,013	1,000	884	960
Number of applications—total	3,271	3,225	2,912	2,749	2,675	2,493	2,681
% of all applications	32.3%	31.8%	33.3%	36.8%	37.4%	35.5%	35.8%
Total Insight Development Grants / Insight Grants funds awarded—ECRs	$22,633,881	$19,972,111	$27,464,866	$23,579,015	$39,941,520	$29,049,725	$30,550,140
Total Insight Development Grants / Insight Grants funds awarded	$115,651,421	$98,888,444	$110,634,127	$114,577,848	$139,711,962	$122,615,958	$129,715,263
% of funds to ECRs	19.6%	20.2%	24.8%	20.6%	28.6%	23.7%	23.6%
Insight Development Grants							
Number of applications—ECRs	762	799	803	853	798	739	782
Number of applications—total	1,128	1,237	1,211	1,236	1,139	1,128	1,256
% of all applications	67.6%	64.6%	66.3%	69.0%	70.1%	65.5%	62.3%
Success rate—ECRs	25.7%	23.7%	45.5%	32.6%	60.3%	50.9%	45.3%
Success rate—established researchers	24.3%	22.1%	45.1%	31.1%	57.5%	48.6%	44.1%
Average grant—ECRs	$60,643	$59,123	$55,604	$54,372	$55,434	$55,694	$57,567
Average grant—established researchers	$62,048	$60,869	$55,862	$56,476	$58,087	$56,849	$57,050
Total funds awarded—ECRs	$11,886,052	$11,174,264	$20,295,306	$15,115,320	$26,663,844	$20,940,988	$20,378,648
Total Insight Development Grants funds awarded	$17,408,342	$17,078,587	$30,573,895	$21,835,969	$38,048,922	$31,685,401	$32,302,006
% of funds to ECRs	68.3%	65.4%	66.4%	69.2%	70.1%	66.1%	63.1%
Average grant (per year of grant)—ECRs	$30,629	$29,695	$27,872	$27,180	$28,016	$27,950	$28,995
Average grant (per year of grant)—established researchers	$31,649	$30,592	$28,101	$28,599	$29,419	$29,482	$28,805

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Overall	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total funds awarded—ECRs (per average duration of grant)	$5,926,653	$5,538,089	$10,103,675	$7,542,462	$13,543,093	$10,512,432	$10,232,683
Total Insight Development Grants funds awarded (per average duration of grant)	$8,680,117	$8,490,250	$15,232,059	$10,902,787	$19,324,171	$15,984,153	$16,237,526
% of funds to ECRs	68.3%	65.2%	66.3%	69.2%	70.1%	66.1%	63.1%
Insight Grants							
Number of applications—ECRs	293	227	167	160	202	145	178
Number of applications—total	2,143	1,988	1,701	1,513	1,536	1,365	1,425
% of all applications	13.7%	11.4%	9.8%	10.6%	13.2%	10.6%	12.5%
Success rate—ECRs	18.4%	20.7%	28.7%	31.3%	47.5%	43.4%	41.0%
Success rate—established researchers	23.8%	23.7%	31.4%	40.9%	47.3%	46.1%	44.2%
Average grant—ECRs	$199,034	$187,188	$149,366	$169,274	$138,309	$128,710	$139,336
Average grant—established researchers	$198,853	$174,670	$151,540	$152,127	$140,072	$147,108	$158,334
Total funds awarded—ECRs	$10,747,829	$8,797,847	$7,169,560	$8,463,695	$13,277,676	$8,108,737	$10,171,492
Total Insight Grants funds awarded	$98,243,079	$81,809,857	$80,060,232	$92,741,879	$101,663,040	$90,930,557	$97,413,257
% of funds to ECRs	10.9%	10.8%	9.0%	9.1%	13.1%	8.9%	10.4%
Average grant (per year of grant)—ECRs	$50,625	$45,437	$37,895	$39,220	$36,524	$34,498	$37,947
Average grant (per year of grant)—established researchers	$48,947	$42,830	$37,925	$37,349	$36,316	$37,422	$40,267
Total funds awarded—ECRs (per average duration of grant)	$2,712,069	$2,164,915	$1,820,841	$1,941,214	$3,521,152	$2,155,487	$2,719,850
Total Insight Grants funds awarded (per average duration of grant)	$24,145,314	$19,969,335	$19,818,373	$22,460,343	$26,605,122	$23,338,470	$24,729,810
% of funds to ECRs	11.2%	10.8%	9.2%	8.6%	12.8%	8.7%	10.4%

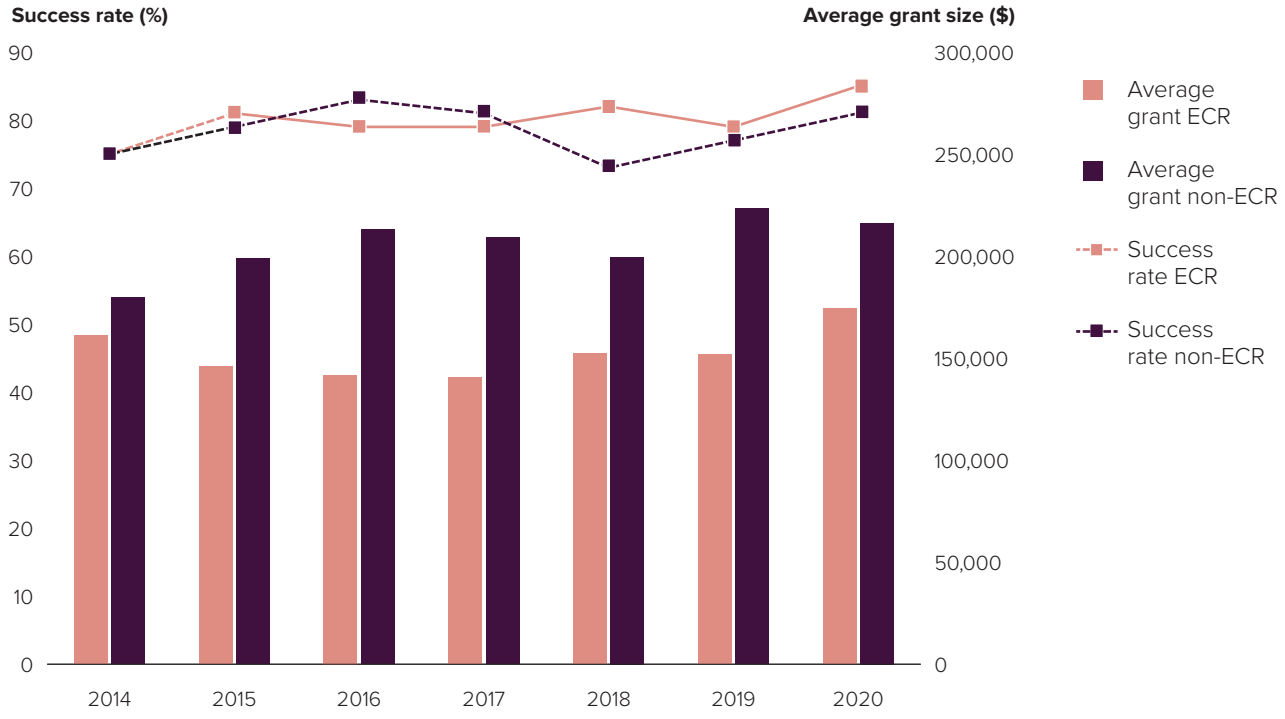
CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION

The John R. Evans Leaders Fund is designed to help institutions attract and retain the best people by providing them with the foundational research infrastructure needed to be or become leaders in their field. The John R. Evans Leaders Fund also offers institutions the opportunity to create competitive research support packages in the form of infrastructure and a portion of the operating and maintenance costs, coupled with direct research costs from partner organizations (Canada Research Chairs Program, Canada Excellence Research Chairs Program, NSERC and SSHRC).

Canadian universities, affiliated research hospitals and research institutions recognized as eligible by the CFI can apply for the John R. Evans Leaders Fund if they have received a minimum annual average of $200,000 in research funding over the last three years from the three federal research funding agencies. Research community members listed on the proposal must be:

- a recognized leader or have demonstrated the potential for excellence in the proposed research field(s);
- engaged in or embarking on research or technology development that is original, internationally competitive and of high quality; and
- a current faculty member with a full-time academic appointment or a candidate that the institution is recruiting to a full-time academic position in an area of strategic importance.

Figure 4: CFI success rates (lines) and average grant sizes (bars) for early career researchers and non-early career researchers for the John R. Evans Leaders Fund from 2014 to 2020



Canada Foundation for Innovation Table

John R. Evans Leaders Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of applications—ECRs*	216	259	305	240	283	334	273
Number of applications—totals**	382	439	591	418	452	665	464
% of all applications	56.5%	59.0%	51.6%	57.4%	62.6%	50.2%	58.8%
Success rate—ECRs	75.9%	80.7%	79.3%	78.8%	82.0%	79.3%	84.6%
Success rate—established researchers	75.3%	78.9%	82.5%	81.5%	73.4%	76.7%	81.2%
Average grant—ECRs	$161,031	$145,845	$141,832	$140,595	$152,209	$151,889	$174,267
Average grant—established researchers	$179,824	$198,789	$212,993	$209,100	$199,564	$223,418	$216,270
Total John R. Evans Leaders Fund grants awarded—ECRs	$26,409,068	$30,481,504	$34,323,312	$26,572,480	$35,312,473	$40,250,531	$40,255,643
Total John R. Evans Leaders Fund grants awarded	$48,887,096	$58,709,489	$84,589,750	$56,891,959	$60,058,409	$96,998,760	$73,777,455
% of funds to ECRs	54.0%	51.9%	40.6%	46.7%	58.8%	41.5%	54.6%

Note: Variances from the last report are due to the additional data collected since 2020 on the first faculty and research-related appointment, and to the dynamic nature of the relevant database.

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