

Call for Proposals

Azrieli Accelerator and Owerko Centre Catalyst Grants in Neurodevelopment Research

Applications due by March 7, 2025, by 5:00 pm (MT)

Contact azrieli.accelerator@ucalgary.ca for more information.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The [Azrieli Accelerator](#) and [Owerko Centre](#) invite applications for catalyst grant funding for research related to neurodevelopment and neurodevelopmental conditions. Research questions can focus on any developmental period – from pre-natal to childhood to older adulthood. All pillars of research are eligible to apply. This includes, but is not limited to:

- fundamental discovery research focused on mechanisms of brain development.
- research focused on interventions and clinical settings.
- technology development that supports neurodevelopment research and/or people living with neurodevelopmental conditions.
- research focused on well-being, community and quality of life.
- population health research.

For the purposes of this competition, we define **neurodevelopmental conditions** as a group of heterogeneous conditions emergent in early childhood that affect brain development. These conditions persist throughout an individual's lifespan, impacting behavioural, social, cognitive, and motor abilities in different ways with variable levels of impact from person to person and across different conditions. Neurodevelopmental conditions encompass a wide spectrum of disabilities, including autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), intellectual disability, specific learning disorders, communication disorders, motor disorders and Tourette syndrome, genetic neurodevelopmental syndromes (such as Fragile X), fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), cerebral palsy, among others.

Up to ten grants will be awarded in this competition.

The Azrieli Accelerator and the Owerko Centre are partnering to enable a broad set of applications to be funded. Six grants will be funded by the Azrieli Accelerator, four grants by the Owerko Centre. Both funding streams are dedicated to neurodevelopment research, but each stream has unique criteria required for eligibility. Read more below to differentiate the funding streams or reach out to azrieli.accelerator@ucalgary.ca with clarifying questions.

About the Azrieli Accelerator: The Azrieli Accelerator is an initiative of the Office of the Vice-President Research at UCalgary focused on neurodevelopment and neurodevelopmental conditions with a *lifespan* approach. **To be eligible for funding from the Azrieli Accelerator**, applications should meet the following criteria:

- Projects should align with at least one of the Azrieli Accelerator's three [Keystone Program areas](#): Brain Circuitry; Microbiome Influences; or Supports, Services & Systems.
- The research proposed must be related to neurodevelopment or neurodevelopmental conditions.
- Research may focus on any developmental period across the lifespan, up to and including older adulthood.

About the Owerko Centre: The Owerko Centre is part of the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute. The Centre is focused on neurodevelopment and mental health in *childhood*. **To be eligible for funding from the Owerko Centre**, applications should meet the following criteria:

- The Nominated Principal Applicant (NPA) must be a member of ACHRI and the Owerko Centre.
- The research proposed must be related to neurodevelopment, neurodevelopmental conditions and/or child mental health.
- Research must be focused on childhood, spanning early developmental periods to adolescence.

About the 2025 Catalyst Grant Competition

The funding pool: Ten grants, up to \$50,000 each, will be awarded. Six grants will be awarded by the Azrieli Accelerator, and four grants will be awarded by the Owerko Centre.

Duration of award: 2 years

Proposal Criteria: The terms of the application are outlined separately, but reviewers will be looking for alignment with these criteria:

- 1. Catalyst funding:** The project should enable a researcher (or a research team) to initiate and catalyze research projects that will increase their competitiveness for larger scale external funding opportunities. Applicants will be asked to articulate the **Expected Outcomes** of the proposal, which should include details on future work that this funding will enable and plans for applications to other funders (local, provincial, national or international). Plans for knowledge mobilization and/or community engagement should also be articulated.
- 2. Alignment with the funder mandates:** During the online submission process, applicants will be asked to identify how their proposal aligns with the funding criteria of the Azrieli Accelerator and/or the Owerko Centre. In some cases, proposals might be aligned with both and will thus be submitted for review to both funders. The details provided in this backgrounder, the Application Guide, and on the websites of the Azrieli Accelerator and the Owerko Centre can be used to determine alignment. Applicants are welcome to reach out to azrieli.accelerator@ucalgary.ca with any questions about eligibility or alignment.

- 3. Eligibility to apply:** Funds must be held by a Nominated Principal Applicant (NPA), who is a UCalgary faculty member. Please note that the grants funded by the Owerko Centre require the NPA to be a member of the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute and Owerko Centre. Please note that a researcher can only be listed as an NPA on one Catalyst Grant application in this request for proposals. Researchers who actively hold catalyst grants from the Azrieli Accelerator or the Owerko Centre are not eligible to apply to that funder's stream as an NPA but may be listed as a co-applicant or collaborator on another proposal in this competition.

Adjudication: All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and assigned to the appropriate funding stream(s). The Owerko Centre and Azrieli Accelerator will separately conduct application reviews based on their own criteria and mandates.

Proposals will be judged based on the following criteria:

- Scientific merit and impact (50%)
- Feasibility and expertise (25%)
- Long-term objectives (25%)

Application Process: Please review the requirements for the full proposal in the **Application Guide**. When ready, applications will be submitted online in two parts: 1) identifying information will be collected to help determine which funding stream the proposal is eligible for; 2) a single .pdf with the complete proposal should be uploaded and submitted.

Questions? Please send all inquiries to azrieli.accelerator@ucalgary.ca so that all communication is centralized. Inquiries will be forwarded for response to the appropriate experts.