

TIPS: CFI JOHN R. EVANS LEADERS FUND (JELF) – PARTNERSHIPS

CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) enables a select number of an institution's excellent researchers to undertake leading-edge research by providing them with the foundational research infrastructure required to be or become leaders in their field. In turn, this enables institutions to remain internationally competitive in areas of research and technology development aligned with their strategic priorities.

The information below supplements the CFI JELF instructions. These tips do not replace a complete and careful reading of CFI's application and budget guidelines: see [JELF Guidelines for Completing a Proposal – Partnerships](#) and the [Policy & Program Guide](#) available on the CFI website.

While an allocation from the University of Toronto's JELF funding envelope, approved by a department chair and/or dean, is required to submit a proposal, **it does not guarantee its success**. A proposal is not in competition with other proposals, but it must satisfy the CFI assessment criteria to be funded.

The CFI JELF application is necessary only for those CRC nominations that have an associated infrastructure request.

GENERAL TIPS

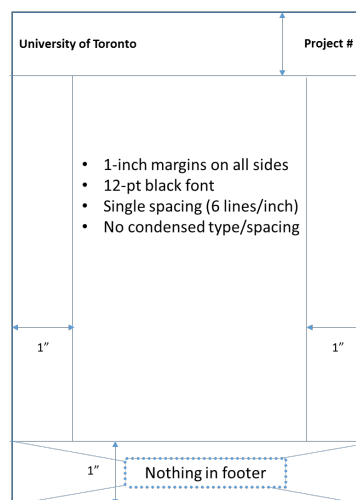
Formatting & Style

Provide the reviewers with a clear, readable, and compelling proposal by following these tips:

- Throughout the application, choose a logical heading system (mimicking the headings/ language/terms used in the instructions).
- Avoid lengthy paragraphs and use bulleted or numbered lists whenever appropriate.
- Try to strike a balance between jargon and plain language. The proposal must be credible to specialists but should also be accessible to readers with little background in your field.
- Use persuasive and optimistic language. Do not say that you *hope* something will happen – say that it *will* happen. Do not say that the research will *progress smoothly* – say that it will *break new ground*. Emphasize innovative aspects.
- Avoid copying and pasting the same passages into different parts of the application. Some information and key ideas will be mentioned more than once, but you should not repeat identical sentences and paragraphs.
- Write new material whenever possible and customize existing material to fully address the JELF criteria. Reviewers can easily tell when material has been cut and pasted from another application.
- Figures and diagrams may be included in the assessment criteria attachment. Be sure that figures are legible and clearly labelled.
- Check for common proofreading issues prior to submission: typos, incorrect numbering, paragraph alignment and spacing, font consistency, correct and consistent amounts in the assessment criteria and the budget tables.

In addition, your proposal attachments must adhere to CFI’s formatting guidelines. Note that the JELF application attachment has different formatting requirements than CRC:

- Margins should be no less than 2.5 cm (1 inch) around the page.
- In the header, indicate the lead institution on the top left and the project number on the top right of each page.
- Do not include any information in the footer, as this area will be used for automatic page numbering. Do not insert page numbers into individual documents.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to use a 12-point, black-coloured font and single-line spacing (six lines per inch) with no condensed type or spacing.
- The file size should not exceed 20 MB.
- For complete formatting instructions, see the [JELF Guidelines for Completing a Proposal – Partnerships](#).



SECTIONS OF THE JELF APPLICATION

PROJECT MODULE

- Project information: title, institutions, keywords, etc. (completed in the CFI Awards Management System [CAMS])
- Plain language summary: 1500 characters (completed in CAMS)
- Researchers: list a maximum of three (completed in CAMS)
- Assessment criteria: 6-page proposal (for CFI request >\$75,000; upload PDF document)
 - Infrastructure
 - Benefits to Canadians
- Financial resources for operation and maintenance: complete the tables “Operation and maintenance budget summary” and “Funding sources” (completed in CAMS)
- Attraction and retention of leading researchers (provide text to Research Services Office)
- Past/current CFI investments (provide text to Research Services Office)

FINANCE MODULE

- Cost of individual items: list requested infrastructure and costs (complete table in CAMS)
- Construction or renovation plans (if applicable): include timeline, floor plans, and cost breakdown (upload as separate PDF document)
- Contributions from eligible partners: include partner name, type, and financial contribution (completed in CAMS)
- Infrastructure utilization: indicate eligible and (if applicable) non-eligible infrastructure use (completed in CAMS)
- Overview of infrastructure project funding (generated automatically – read only)

PROJECT MODULE

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment criteria attachment can be a maximum of **6 pages**. The exact distribution of pages among sections is at the applicant's discretion. *If you are requesting ≤\$75,000, include only the Infrastructure section, with a maximum of 4 pages.*

The goals, objectives and activities of your research program are established within your CRC proposal. The CFI component is focused on what you will need, why it is essential, and how its acquisition will benefit Canada.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the research or technology development activities.

- Describe each item and justify its need to conduct the proposed activities. For construction or renovation, provide a description of the space including its location, size and nature. Use the item number, quantity, cost and location found in the "Cost of individual items" table. Provide a cost breakdown for any grouping of items.
- Explain why existing infrastructure within the institution and the region cannot be used to conduct the proposed activities.

Note: For construction or renovation, a detailed cost breakdown, timeline and floor plans must be provided in a separate document as part of the finance module.

In this section, you must make the case that the proposed infrastructure is essential for the success of your research program. We suggest the following structure:

Overview and Need of the Requested Infrastructure

- In a summary paragraph, provide an overview of all the requested items and briefly describe why the infrastructure is essential for your research. Although this section should focus on the items included in the JELF equipment budget, you can also describe your *overall* infrastructure requirements (including items supported from other sources) to provide context for your JELF budget request.
- Describe the location where the infrastructure will be housed and, if applicable, describe how it will be integrated into an existing facility.
- Explain why your infrastructure needs cannot be met within the university.
- If the infrastructure is not unique within the university or the region, explain why you cannot use the existing infrastructure. Briefly describe similar infrastructure available locally and why it is not accessible or appropriate for your research (for example, if it is already at full capacity or cannot be integrated with other equipment in your lab).

Justification for the Infrastructure

- **For *each* requested item, create a sub-heading that includes only the following information:**
 - The item number and item description (e.g., Item 1: Microscopes; Item 2: Molecular Biology Suite) as a subheading, **exactly as it appears in the "Cost of individual items" table of the Finance Module.**
 - The total eligible cost and in-kind amounts for each line item in brackets, e.g., Item 1: Microscopes (\$X total, \$X in-kind).

- **For *each* requested item, under its sub-heading, provide the following information:**
 - Provide detail about the requested item: what it is, what it does, why you need it, and how it will be used. Demonstrate that the new infrastructure is *essential* for the success of your proposed research.
 - For items identified as systems or suites, provide detail about **each component** of the system. **Every** component listed in the U of T Excel budget document should be described and justified.
 - As you describe each requested item, **refer directly to the specific research or technology development activities** outlined in the “research or technology development section.” For example, “this equipment will be used to achieve objective #1.” This will reinforce that the requested items are necessary to carry out the research activities.
 - Make a case for the *appropriateness* of the requested item. Describe how you have selected the best tool for the task and how it is ideal for the proposed research activities and the methods. If you have a choice of makes or models, explain why you have selected particular options.
 - Describe any special features that increase the cost of the item and, if the item is more expensive than its nearest competitor, justify the need for this specific item. Indicate how the cost has been determined, thereby ensuring the best value for money.
 - If appropriate, discuss the infrastructure’s expected lifespan and the benefit-cost ratio.
- **Grouped or bundled items:** If an item is an integrated system with a number of components (i.e., the vendor supplies a single quote for the entire working assemblage) or if a number of standalone equipment items have been bundled into functional groups (e.g., centrifuges and vortexes grouped into the line item Molecular Biology Suite), describe and justify the necessity of each of the components or standalone equipment *and* the system as a whole for conducting the research.
- **Custom items:** Indicate the method of valuation for major, unique items that will be custom built or specially developed to fit with existing infrastructure.
- **Personnel costs:** If personnel costs are requested for the main developers/custom builders of the infrastructure or for professional consultants directly involved in the design and engineering, indicate their roles and responsibilities, and estimate the time required to carry out the tasks. Provide a breakdown of these personnel costs.
- **Service contracts and warranties:** Where service contracts or extended warranty have been bundled in the cost of an item or as a separate line item in the “Cost of individual items” table, describe the service or maintenance work that is covered, and the number of years of coverage.
- **Renovations/Construction:** Briefly describe the space (including square metres or net assignable square metres [nasm]), the location of the renovations/construction, and the nature of the work (e.g., wall demolition, asbestos removal, electrical rewiring, HVAC, etc.). Explain why this is necessary for carrying out the proposed research, and which elements of the requested infrastructure will be housed in the space. Other details of renovations/construction (cost breakdown, timeline, floor plans) will be included in a separate PDF as part of the Finance Module.

BENEFITS TO CANADIANS

The research or technology development results will be transferred through appropriate pathways to potential end users and are likely to generate social, health, environmental and/or economic benefits to Canadians, including better training and improved skills for highly qualified personnel.*

- Briefly describe potential socioeconomic benefits, including better training and improved skills for highly qualified personnel.
- Delineate the knowledge mobilization plan and/or technology transfer pathways, including partnerships with end users.

*Highly qualified personnel include technicians, research associates, undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

This section has two main components: (1) benefits resulting from your research, including the training of highly qualified personnel (HQP), and (2) a knowledge mobilization/technology transfer plan.

Benefits

Social, health, environmental and economic benefits

- Provide concrete examples to show how your research program, enabled by the infrastructure requested, will bring about benefits. It is fine to use background information on your field to start (e.g., “Information technology and telecommunications is a multi-billion- dollar industry in Canada”), but you should also address the specific impact of your research that will be made possible by the infrastructure.
- When discussing economic impact, use plausible numbers rather than making general statements. The websites of organizations such as [Statistics Canada](#) and [Innovation, Science & Economic Development Canada](#) may be informative. Do a search for “economic benefit [your research area].” This search may uncover studies—even in other countries—that could be cited. Economic impact can be assistance for business/industry, start-up/job creation, wealth generation or cost savings.

Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)

- Explain how the new infrastructure is essential for training your HQP. Describe the unique elements of the training environment.
- Describe the new knowledge and skills that trainees will acquire as a result of the proposed research program and requested infrastructure; indicate how these skills will prepare them for academic and non-academic careers. If possible, provide example data of employment destinations of previous students/PDs or technicians in the lab.
- If possible, give estimated numbers of HQP expected to be trained and the potential to further increase these numbers.
- Demonstrate that this area of research and/or these skills are of critical importance to Canada. For example, are your graduating students in demand and an attractive addition to the workforce? If they will be trained to work in the private sector, how large is that industry sector and what is its value to the Canadian economy? Provide evidence through industry statistics.

Knowledge Mobilization/Technology Transfer

- How will the knowledge or technology be disseminated to end users? Describe **specific pathways** for knowledge transfer and/or plans for technology transfer and commercialization.
- Who will use the results of the research? Provide specific end users from outside the university and academia.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An example of these tables (completed in CAMS) is provided for reference:

Operation and maintenance budget summary

Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Personnel	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200	16,000
Supplies	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Maintenance and repairs	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000	3,000	9,000
Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (specify)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$7,200	\$7,200	\$30,000

Funding sources

Funding sources	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Institutional contributions	5,200	5,200	5,200	7,200	7,200	30,000
Other organizations	0	0	0	0	0	0
User fees	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (specify)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$7,200	\$7,200	\$30,000

Operation and Maintenance Budget Summary Table

- List what types of operating and maintenance costs are necessary to ensure that the requested infrastructure remains in research-ready mode over its useful life (review Section 4.7 of the [Policy and Program Guide](#) for examples of eligible and non-eligible operating and maintenance costs).
- The salary of technicians or professionals who are directly involved in the operation or maintenance of the infrastructure can be prorated for the time that the individual(s) will work on the equipment.
- The operating and maintenance costs outlined in this section should be fully described in the “Sustainability” section of the assessment criteria, as noted above.

Funding Sources Table

- Outline what sources will be committed to cover the operation and maintenance costs. One source of funding could be the IOF, which is provided by CFI in addition to the funding in the main equipment award. The IOF is equivalent to 30% of the CFI contribution to the main award. In the example above, the CFI contribution is \$100K, therefore the IOF will be an additional \$30K over five years. If the IOF is included as a funding source, it should be added to the row “Institutional contributions.”
- The annual totals from the funding sources must be equal to or higher than the corresponding annual costs.
- All funding sources in this table should be detailed and fully justified in the “Sustainability” section.

ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF LEADING RESEARCHERS; PAST/CURRENT CFI INVESTMENTS

Researchers **are not** able to make or save selections in these two sections. Provide a text version of your selections to all questions in “Attraction and Retention of Leading Researchers” and “Past/Current CFI Investments” to the Research Services Office, who will enter the information on your behalf.

FINANCE MODULE

COST OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

Below is an example of requested infrastructure for a hypothetical application:

Item #	Type	Item description	Number of items	Eligible costs			Date acquired (YYY/MM) or to be acquired (YYYY)
				Cash \$	In-kind \$	Total \$	
1	13	Microscopes	2	95,000	25,000	120,000	2023
2	13	Molecular Biology Suite	1	55,000	15,000	70,000	2023
3	20	Lab Renovation	1	60,000		60,000	2022
Total eligible costs				\$210,000	\$40,000	\$250,000	

Requested items must be eligible and used for research/technology development (review Section 4.6 of the [Policy and Program Guide](#) for examples of eligible and non-eligible costs). You must adhere to the university's procurement policy (see procurement.utoronto.ca). It is useful to be familiar with the policy and its procedures prior to receiving an award.

- **Item description:** Bundle items into functional groups, especially if the cost of each item is small and together these items serve a similar purpose (e.g., various molecular biology lab equipment can be grouped into one line called Molecular Biology Suite). Likewise, items that are integrated, or physically connected and for which there are multiple components, should be grouped into a "system."
- **Number of items:** Where there is a small number of high-cost items in a group, items should be separately counted (e.g., 2 microscopes = 2 items in the Microscopes group). A group with many low-cost items can be considered as a unit (e.g., 1 Molecular Biology Suite may include a number of pieces of basic lab equipment). An integrated system should be listed as a single 'system,' rather than the number of components that comprise the system.
- **Date acquired or to be acquired:**
 - CFI expects JELF projects to promptly spend the award, usually within 1 to 2 years.
 - Equipment may be purchased up to 6 months prior to the CFI application deadline date, but the PI/Division bears any associated financial risk until both the CFI and the Ontario ministry (providing matching funds with the ORF) have approved the awards.
 - If the purchase of an item occurred or will occur over several periods, indicate the last order date.
 - As a result of the length of time for the approval process by both CFI and ORF, **availability of funds is not expected until approximately 18 months after the CFI application deadline.** Plan the timing of purchases accordingly, especially if renovation of project space is necessary for the housing of infrastructure. Renovation/construction work must commence sooner than 18 months after the CFI decision date.
- **Eligible Costs: Cash**
 - At the CFI application stage, obtaining quotes for infrastructure costs is intended to help establish a realistic overall budget. Acquiring quotes does not constitute a commitment to any particular vendor.

- The cash portion of an item must include tax (3.41% HST) and shipping, installation, and brokerage fees where applicable. Do not include these costs in the in-kind contributions.
 - Infrastructure that will be used for dual purposes (e.g., research and clinical use) should have costs prorated for research/technology development use only. That is, if the infrastructure will be used 50% of the time for clinical work, only 50% of the cost may be requested from CFI/Ontario to cover the research component.
 - When estimating costs, factor in any possible fluctuations in foreign exchange rates or prices that might adversely affect the purchasing power of the requested funding. CFI and ORF will not provide more funding than is requested in the application.
 - If you plan to purchase service contracts or extended warranties beyond the standard warranty, they should either be included in the cost of the infrastructure [recommended] or listed as a separate line item. Note that warranties cannot be removed from the budget after the project is awarded.
 - **Eligible Costs: In-kind Contributions**
 - Items involving vendor deep discounts or in-kind contribution must be reported at a fair market value. The supplier should detail its pricing to clearly specify on the quote and invoice the list price, the normal discount and/or educational discount, the CFI discount, and the net selling price (review Section 6.5 of the [Policy and Program Guide](#) for definitions and documentation requirements). If a reference to “CFI discount” (or similar wording) is not explicitly stated on the quote and invoice, the discount will be disallowed. The following calculation is provided as an example.
- | | |
|--|----------------|
| List Price | \$500 |
| Normal discount | (\$20) |
| Educational discount | (\$80) |
| Fair market value (total eligible cost) | \$400 |
| CFI discount (in-kind) | (\$100) |
| Net selling price (cash) | \$300 |
- Vendors that do not offer a normal and/or educational discount should include a statement on the quote and invoice to confirm that any further discount is specifically offered as a CFI discount only.
 - In-kind contributions in excess of \$500,000 require a higher level of due diligence to assess the item’s fair market value. This could include a market comparison, a comparison with previous purchases at the university/other institutions, or an appraisal at the time of the application.
 - **Computing:** CFI expects new or additional computing resources costing more than \$100K will normally be housed, managed, and operated by Compute Canada. If you have infrastructure that falls within this category, it is strongly recommended that you discuss and/or develop your proposal in collaboration with Compute Canada prior to submitting the application to CFI (review Section 4.6.4 of the [Policy and Program Guide](#) for examples of systems or resources that are considered advanced research computing infrastructure). Compute Canada can be contacted [directly by email](#).
 - **Construction or renovations:**
 - These costs are eligible if the project space is essential for the housing and use of the requested infrastructure, or to conduct research (review Section 4.6.2 of the [Policy and Program Guide](#) for examples of eligible and non-eligible costs related to construction and renovation). Specify the full cost to renovate the space even if CFI funds are not being requested to cover the entire cost of the renovation (i.e., if the space requested is only part of a larger construction project).

Renovation costs, if not included at the applications stage, will not be accepted as an eligible cost after the project is awarded.

- If the project space is part of a larger renovation initiative, ensure that the estimated cost to renovate the space for your project is determined separately. An appropriate cost-allocation method should be developed and supporting documents kept on file. Ideally the project should be separately costed in the contract with the constructor.

CONSTRUCTION OR RENOVATION PLANS (if applicable)

- If the project includes a renovation, upload a separate PDF with the following details:
 - Floor plans showing the location of the infrastructure, the layout of the space, and the scale of the plan (if multiple rooms are being renovated for the project).
 - A timeline with key dates for the stages of the renovation, specifically (1) the start of construction, (2) the completion of construction, and (3) occupancy or when the infrastructure is moved into the space(s).
 - For renovation costs that exceed \$500,000, a cost breakdown is required for (1) soft costs, e.g., professional design fees, permits/licenses, etc., (2) direct costs, e.g., construction costs such as electrical work, HVAC, demolition, etc., and (3) contingency costs (not to exceed 10% of total soft costs plus direct costs).
- Ensure that the appropriate faculty/department space and planning office, Capital Projects, or building management have been consulted so that initial costs and timelines are realistic.
- At the time of the CFI application, renovations must be developed well beyond the conceptual stage. CFI expects renovations to start within 18 months of the notice of award.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ELIGIBLE PARTNERS

Partner name	Partner type	Cash	In-kind	Total	Secured or expected	Delete
Ontario Research Fund	Provincial governments (departments or agencies)	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	Expected	
University of Toronto	Institutions, trust funds or foundations	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	Secured	
Various Vendors	Corporations/firms	\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000	Expected	

If applicable, outline partner contributions that are expected but not yet secured, and indicate plans for securing these funds.

3000 characters 4%

An application for matching funding will be made to the Ontario Research Fund. Vendor deep discounts will be realized at the point of purchase.

PART 1

PART 2

Part One

- List all eligible partners (ORF, department, vendor, etc.) and the type of contribution (i.e., cash or in-kind), but do not include the amount requested from CFI. The CFI contribution will be calculated automatically from the cash amounts provided for other partners.
- Note that Tri-Agency grants and programs cannot be used to leverage CFI funds (review Section 4.8 of the [Policy and Program Guide](#) listing eligible and non-eligible partners).
- The ORF contribution (Partner name: Ontario Research Fund) must equal the CFI contribution. An application submitted to the province, in which the CFI and ORF requested amounts are not equal, will be corrected by the province at the lower amount.


- Department start-up funds or faculty funds (Partner name: University of Toronto) that will be used as matching should be attributed as a “cash” contribution and “secured.” You are encouraged to vigorously request discounts/in-kind contributions from vendors to minimize the requirement for departmental cash.
- You are encouraged to bundle all vendor deep discounts under a single line called “Various Vendors” and include the total amount under “in-kind.”
- Vendor deep discounts from external partners and cash expenditures already made by the department are only eligible if these were received no earlier than six months prior to the CFI application deadline.
- Select “expected” for contributions not yet confirmed or received (e.g., ORF, vendor deep discounts).

Part Two

- Use this section to provide information on partner contributions that are “Expected.” Include the following text: “An application for matching funding will be made to the Ontario Research Fund. Vendor deep discounts will be realized at the point of purchase.”

INFRASTRUCTURE UTILIZATION

	Percentage
Research/technology development and associated training	100
Education, excluding research / technology development training (not eligible for CFI support)	
Administration	
Clinical or other service function	
Other (specify) <input type="text"/>	
50 characters	
Total	100%

 Give a breakdown of the eligible costs included in each of the above categories.
If the infrastructure is used for non-CFI-eligible purposes, explain how the percentage of utilization was determined in each category and how the budget was pro-rated.

2%

The requested infrastructure will be used exclusively for research and research training.

PART 1

PART 2

Part One

- This section captures the use of the infrastructure for CFI-eligible and non-eligible purposes.
- If the items are intended entirely for research/technology development, enter 100% in this line.
- For infrastructure that will be used for other purposes, the eligible cost must be prorated appropriately and the rationale for the proration should be explained.

Part Two

- In this section, enter the following text, if appropriate: “The requested infrastructure will be used exclusively for research and research training.”

Last updated: July 28, 2021 (GS)