

ARVO International Advocacy Toolkit: Canada

1. Which organization(s) are significant sources of research funding? (e.g., national/local governments; private funding/foundations/charity groups; large non-governmental organizations (NGOs); industry/pharmaceutical companies)

There are significant sources of funding for vision related research in Canada:

- [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#)
- [The Foundation Fighting Blindness \(FFB\)](#)
- [The Glaucoma Research Society of Canada \(GRSC\)](#)
- [The Canadian National Institute for the Blind \(CNIB\) Research Awards](#)
- [The provincial ministry of health fund, e.g., the Ontario Health Data Platform \(OHDP\)](#)

In addition, Canadian researchers are also eligible to apply for NIH grants in the U.S.

2. What does the normal science funding/policy decision-making process look like?

Is peer/scientific review involved in the funding-decision process?

Yes. Usually, the funding decision-making is based on peer/scientific review ranking, which involves 2-3 reviewers' comments and suggestions. The evaluation criteria vary from one funding agency to another, but usually include:

- Significance and Impact of the Research
- Approaches and Methods
- Expertise, Experience and Resources

Patient engagement is part of the evaluation criteria in some grant applications, but not all.

3. Which patient advocacy groups, if any, are active in the area?

[Patients Canada](#): A national, independent organization that champions change that matters to patients. Their mission is to amplify the patient voice.

[Change Foundation](#): They are active in “bringing the authentic patient voice to health care decision-making, ensuring decisions reflect patient priorities.”

[The Glaucoma Research Society of Canada](#): A patient run group. It is the only Canadian charity solely dedicated to raising money to fund glaucoma research. Funds are usually raised from pharmaceutical companies and public donations.

4. Are there existing national/regional organizations that work towards improving research funding/policy?

[Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#)

5. How do scientists currently contribute to the existing funding/policymaking/advocacy process, if at all?

Scientists contribute through participating in peer-review process.

6. When are science funding/policy decisions made?

Depending on the funding agency, annually or biannually on a set schedule or as needed.

7. What kinds of opportunities exist for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers?

Can scientists invite decision makers to their lab/institution to see their work firsthand?

Yes, opportunities exist for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers for some funding agencies, e.g., the CIHR does hold open meetings at various universities to collect researchers' comments and suggestions regarding the application and evaluation process.

Contributor:

Yaping Jin, PhD, University of Toronto