

# **2026 CORPORATE PLAN**

**November 2025**

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## SECTION 1: ABOUT THE GAIRDNER FOUNDATION

### ABOUT THE GAIRDNER FOUNDATION

The Gairdner Foundation was established by Toronto stockbroker, James Gairdner in 1957. The Foundation awards annual prizes to scientists from around the world whose discoveries have had a major impact on scientific progress and human health.

The Gairdner Foundation, whose headquarters are located in the heart of Toronto's MaRS Discovery District, was incorporated in December 1957 as a charitable corporation under the laws of the Province of Ontario, Canada. During 2013, the Foundation was continued as a federal corporation under the Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act. Its funds were originally derived from the personal gifts of the founder and members of his family. In 2008, the Federal government, through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, provided an endowment to the Foundation to ensure that the Awards continue to grow in international stature, and a new Canada Gairdner Global Health Award was established. In 2024, an additional endowment was provided to increase the value of the International Awards. CIHR has also provided funding annually since 2008. At that time, the name of the Awards was changed to the Canada Gairdner Awards. Today, the Governments of Alberta and Québec also generously support the Gairdner Foundation and its programming.

**Since 1959, 434 scientists have received a Canada Gairdner Award and to date, 103 have gone on to receive the Nobel Prize.**

The Canada Gairdner Awards raise the profile of Canada as a nation that fosters innovation and scientific excellence. The awards are Canada's only globally recognized international scientific prize. Gairdner stands out as the only national organization that consistently brings the best biomedical researchers from around the world to Canada, providing opportunities for new insights, shared projects, and collaborations. The Canada Gairdner alumni network is among the strongest in the world of major scientific awards. Each year, past laureates return to participate in the award adjudication processes, give lectures as part of outreach programming, contribute to discussions on key topics of the day with government and other stakeholders, and attend Gairdner events.

There are three types of Canada Gairdner Awards given annually:

**Five Canada Gairdner International Awards** are given to biomedical scientists who have made original contributions to biomedicine resulting in an increased understanding of human biology and disease.

**One John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award** is given to an individual(s) who has made seminal discoveries that have had significant impact on health outcomes in the developing world.

**Two Canada Gairdner Momentum Awards** are given to mid-career investigators in Canada who in their last 6 active years have produced exceptional scientific research contributions with continued potential for impact on human health. The first awards were made in 2023.

**The Foundation leverages the prestige of the prizes and laureates to promote the importance of scientific research to the public and next generation of scientists, researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs.**

The Foundation aims to address key issues of the day, such as pandemic responses, AI and

precision health, mental health and impact of environmental change with input from our outstanding network of international experts.

Gairdner Connects programs bring laureates, current and past, to Canadian universities to speak virtually and in-person to faculty, trainees and postgraduate students about their work. Gairdner brings together high school students across Canada to hear laureates speak about their career inspirations, research, challenges, experiences, and promote a future in STEMM. Many laureates continue to cite the high school programs as their favourite part of the Canada Gairdner Awards experience.

Gairdner also promotes the understanding of scientific discovery to a wider audience through public lectures, Global Perspectives Panels, Science Literacy workshops and through its online presence. Gairdner strives to make research accessible and easier to understand so that all Canadians are aware of its impact.

### **Gairdner is a reliable source for scientific information for Canadians and global partners.**

Gairdner's outreach extends beyond Canadian borders to showcase the country on the international stage. Gairdner seeks to develop programs that will recognize excellence in health research in low and middle- income countries and encourage sustainable scientific research. Gairdner also uses its awardees' expansive networks to help Canada build relationships with scientists around the world to promote Canadian research and innovation.

## **MISSION & OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

### **Mission**

- **To recognize major research contributions to the treatment of disease and the elimination of human suffering**

*Gairdner's core mandate is to select and celebrate the annual Canada Gairdner Award laureates. Over the past 67 years, Gairdner has gained a superb international reputation for its early recognition of research breakthroughs that have changed the way medicine is practiced.*

- 434 Canada Gairdner Awards have been bestowed on individuals from 40+ countries
- 56 Canadians have received the Canada Gairdner International Award
- 103 Canada Gairdner Award laureates have gone on to win Nobel Prizes in Medicine and Physiology or Chemistry.

- **To inspire students to be the next generation of researchers, leaders and innovators**

*Our Gairdner Connects program is unique among major scientific prizes. Each October, Gairdner sends current and past laureates to universities across Canada, where they present virtual or in-person lectures on their work to scientists, trainees, and high school students. Through this educational program, we aim to inspire faculty, trainees and post graduate students to consider a career in science, technology, engineering, math and medicine (STEMM).*

- **To act as conveners with the public, policymakers and other stakeholders to demonstrate the impact of science on our everyday lives**

*Building on its international reputation for excellence, the Foundation uses its convening power and networks to bring together the world's best biomedical, clinical and public*

*health leaders to address key strategic issues related to major health related issues of the day.*

*Gairdner's aim is to enhance Canada's stature in the international scientific community, by facilitating linkages between leading international scientists, Canadian research institutions and government stakeholders. We also aim to inspire young Canadians to aspire to the highest levels of scientific excellence. Further, Gairdner uses its network to help combat misinformation through informative programming around increasing science literacy.*

## **Operating Principles**

1. Encourage and celebrate international excellence in health research.
2. Educate and inform the public about the impact of scientific research and the Canada Gairdner Awards.
3. Inspire Canadians to perform at a world-class level of scientific excellence.
4. Promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in all of our activities.
5. Contribute to building the pipeline and strengthening the global profile of Canada and competitiveness of Canadian scientists in the research community.
6. Cultivate international relationships alongside the Canadian government sector.
7. Foster collaborative relationships with government, private sector and other non-governmental parties to further expand and augment the Canada Gairdner Awards.

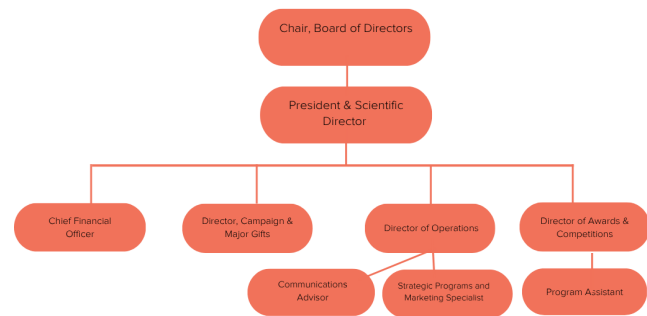
## GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONS

The Gairdner Foundation has seven full-time employees and one part-time employee in addition to volunteers and consultants who provide expertise in the delivery of specialized services on an as-needed basis.

The Foundation is governed by a 14-member Board of Directors which is comprised of individuals who bring their expertise from the academic, private and public sectors. Board members are nominated and appointed for a term of three years, renewable up to two times. Directors are not compensated for their regular Board and Committee duties.

Gairdner's mandate, governance, operations, and performance requirements are determined by the Board of Directors. While the Foundation receives funding from the Federal Government and from other funding partners, the Foundation has full independence in its governance and operations, as well as the nomination and selection process for the scientists on whom it confers its awards.

The Board is responsible for overseeing the management of the organization, and through committees, conducts detailed examinations of issues and opportunities. The Directors provide strategic insight and leadership, as well as effective governance and work diligently to maintain and extend the capacity for the Foundation to achieve its purpose and goals. The Board has established a number of committees to help discharge its duties, including Audit, Investment, Governance/Nominating and Fundraising.



**Investment Committee:** oversees the investment and management of funds according to a Board-approved Investment Policy Statement that outlines guidelines, standards and procedures for the prudent investment and management of funds. Investment decisions are made with the principal objective being the preservation of the capital amount over the long-term, while providing sufficient annual funds to support the awards and to increase the value of the funds over time. The committee meets quarterly.

**Audit Committee:** oversees the Gairdner Foundation's policies, processes and activities in the areas of accounting and internal controls, risk management, auditing and financial reporting. The committee meets semi-annually.

**Development and Government Relations Committee:** supports Gairdner staff in strategic fundraising initiatives. The committee meets three times a year.

**Governance and Nominating Committee:** identifies the skillsets required for new Directors, manages the nomination of new candidates for the Board of Directors, and ensures effective oversight of the governance of the Foundation for approval by the Board. The committee is charged with succession planning for the President and the Chair of the Board. The committee is also responsible for oversight of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy of the Foundation. The committee meets semi-annually.

The committees report to the Board semi-annually on the outcome of their deliberations.

## AWARDS ADJUDICATION

The Board of Directors appoints a President and Scientific Director, who among other duties has the responsibility for the adjudication panels that provide expertise on the selection of the annual Awards:

- **Medical Review Panel (MRP):** composed of a group of leading scientists from across Canada with specialties in various fields of health research, who provide a "first screening" of the nominations for the Canada Gairdner International Awards, submitting their selected list to the Medical Advisory Board.
- **Medical Advisory Board (MAB):** composed of eminent Canadian and international scientists. The MAB reviews the nominations submitted by the Medical Review Panel. After an in-depth study and lengthy discussion of each nominee, comparing their work with others in their respective field, secret ballots are cast and the annual awardees are chosen.
- **John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award Advisory Committee:** composed of international experts in the field of global health with a clear understanding of the basic, clinical, population and social science issues in developing countries.
- **Canada Gairdner Momentum Award Committee:** Composed of Canadian and international research scientific and institutional leaders. The committee has a two-stage process to reduce systemic barriers for candidacy (e.g. workloads, access to senior representatives, institutional support systems). Initial submissions focus on eligibility and the fundamental body of research and can be made by the nominee themselves or a nominator. The Momentum Committee members review the initial submissions for the Momentum Award and select the strongest nominees who move on to the second stage of the Award competition.

More objective evaluation of the accomplishments of the nominees and comparative analyses with others in the field of research are sought from external experts to help the committee delineate between candidates. Following a review of these enhanced nominee files and an in-depth discussion on their accomplishments, impact and trajectory, the full committee chooses two awardees each year by secret ballot.

## IMPACT – GAIRDNER'S ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- The Canada Gairdner Awards are recognized as one of the top international awards in biomedicine, on a par with a small group of International Prizes exceeded only by the Nobel prize
- 434 Canada Gairdner Awards have been bestowed on individuals from 40 countries
- 56 Canadians have received the Canada Gairdner International Award
- 103 Canada Gairdner Award laureates have gone on to win Nobel Prizes in Medicine and Physiology or Chemistry, including Drs. Ambros and Ruvkun and Drs Hassabis and Jumper respectively in 2024 and Dr. Shimon Sakaguchi in 2025.

## IMPACT – GAIRDNER’S BENEFIT TO SOCIETY

The achievements of Gairdner Awardees have dramatically impacted global health and scientific advancement around the world. A few examples include:

### **Drs. Michael Welsh and Paul Negulescu (2025 Canada Gairdner International Award)**

Transforming the treatment of cystic fibrosis through groundbreaking research that led to the development of highly effective CFTR modulator therapies. Their pioneering work translated decades of fundamental discovery into life-changing medicines, dramatically improving life expectancy, and quality of life for thousands of people living with cystic fibrosis worldwide.

### **Drs. Demis Hassabis and John Jumper (2023 Canada Gairdner International Award) 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry**

Developing AlphaFold, which has been heralded as an AI-based solution to the 50-year grand challenge of protein structure prediction and has culminated in the release of the most accurate and complete picture of the structure of the human proteome, with enormous potential to accelerate biological and medical research.

### **Drs. Pieter Cullis, Drew Weissman and Katalin Karikó (2022 Canada Gairdner International Award)**

#### **2023 Nobel Prize in Medicine to Karikó and Weissman**

Pioneering work developing nucleoside-modified mRNA and lipid nanoparticle (LNP) drug delivery: the foundational technologies for the highly effective COVID-19 mRNA vaccines.

### **Jennifer Doudna, Emmanuelle Charpentier & Feng Zhang (2016 Canada Gairdner International Award)**

#### **2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry to Doudna and Charpentier**

The development of CRISPR-CAS9 as a genome editing tool for eukaryotic cells, a technology that is transforming the fields of molecular genetics, genomics, agriculture and environmental biology.

### **Anthony Fauci (2016 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award)**

Defining research on the mechanisms of HIV disease and prevention modalities for patients living with HIV/AIDS. Well-known for his advisory role on the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

### **Dr. Nubia Muñoz (2009 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award)**

In proving that the human papilloma virus (HPV) causes cervical cancer, her epidemiological studies led directly to the development of the HPV vaccine, preventing these infections and potentially eliminating cervical cancer in the future.

### **Dr. Cesar Victora (2017 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award)**

Dr. Victora’s career has focused on the factors affecting maternal and child health in low- and middle income countries. His work on the importance of breast feeding in early life has led to widely accepted WHO Guidelines on promoting breast feeding globally.

## SECTION 2: 2025 PERFORMANCE RESULTS

### PERFORMANCE GOALS AND RESULTS FOR 2025

#### **1. Ensure that the Canada Gairdner International and Global Health Awards remain at the forefront of international recognition of excellence in health-related research.**

The fundamental mission of the Gairdner Foundation is to recognize and celebrate excellence in health-related research that has an impact on human health and well-being. The prestige of the awards depends on our rigorous adjudication processes which we continue to refine, year over year, with the intent of providing a truly independent evaluation of the nominees. In 2025, Gairdner expanded its outreach efforts by hosting online information sessions and actively engaging with key partners and research communities to encourage a higher number of nominations.

This year we were able to increase the value of the individual Canada Gairdner International Awards to \$250,000, thanks to a \$10M Federal contribution to our endowment realized in late 2024. This keeps Gairdner current with other awards on the international stage.

Gairdner's exceptional track record in identifying future Nobel Prize laureates underscores its unique ability to spotlight groundbreaking science well before it receives broader international recognition. In 2024, Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun (Canada Gairdner International Award 2008) received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, while Demis Hassabis and John Jumper (Canada Gairdner International Award 2022) were honoured with the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. In 2025, Shimon Sakaguchi (Canada Gairdner International Award 2015) was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

#### **2. Build on the success of the initial Momentum and Early Career investigator award competitions to highlight Canadian science and its diversity with stakeholders, the public and international partners.**

Gairdner promotes the achievements of Canadian scientists and highlights the importance of recognizing and retaining Canadian talent.

In 2025, Gairdner executed a unified media rollout for the Early Career Investigator competition, collaborating with communications teams across Canada and achieving strong pickup. Momentum laureates Daniel De Carvalho and Jennifer Stinson drew significant attention — for developing a novel blood-based cancer test and for being the first nurse clinician scientist awardee in Gairdner's history, respectively. Both participated in Gairdner outreach programs, including Gairdner Science Week, where they served as mentors and were themselves mentored by leading scientists and laureates.

The Momentum awardees and associated Early Career Investigators joined Gairdner in Ottawa for a Gairdner on the Hill event, engaging parliamentarians and science leaders in discussions about Canadian research excellence and innovation — further raising the Foundation's national profile and strengthening relationships across government and the research ecosystem.

### **3. Raise the profile of Gairdner and Canadian science on the world stage through international events and partnerships.**

In 2025, the Gairdner Foundation hosted four laureate receptions—two in Toronto celebrating our Momentum awardees, and one each in Boston and Iowa City. The U.S.-based events provided an opportunity to expand Gairdner’s brand and reach by engaging local communities and celebrating the achievements of our laureates with their research teams, family and friends. Dr. Rossant attended these receptions and was able to interact with local science and community leaders.

While in Ottawa for Gairdner Science Week, Dr. Rossant, two board members, two Momentum awardees and two Early Career Investigators met with the Brazilian Ambassador to Canada to celebrate Brazil–Canada research connections, including those exemplified by 2024 Momentum Awardee Daniel De Carvalho and 2017 Canada Gairdner Global Health Award laureate Cesar Victora.

Gairdner also continues its longstanding tradition of welcoming diplomats representing the home countries of our laureates to attend the Canada Gairdner Awards Gala and present awards on stage.

### **4. Develop enhanced Global Health programming and partnerships.**

In 2025, Gairdner provided dedicated Global Health programming in Montreal through *Food for Thought: Insights from International and Canadian Experts on Nutrition, Policy, and Food Systems*, which convened leading voices to address global nutrition challenges in both international and Canadian contexts. The program blended panel discussions on the challenges of ensuring food security around the world with a public lecture by 2025 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award laureate, Dr. André Briand. This programming included French-language content to enhance accessibility and local resonance.

Building on the success of the previous year, Gairdner renewed its partnership with the Institute of Philanthropy (IoP), who funded the Global Health symposium for a second time. Together, the Foundation and IoP are connecting with global health institutions worldwide to amplify the reach and impact of Canadian-led science.

By engaging new networks of global health researchers and reaching broader audiences, Gairdner continues to deepen its global health footprint and strengthen its year-round programming.

### **5. Continue the 5-year goals of the Campaign for Gairdner.**

A year into the Campaign for Gairdner, the Foundation has expanded its donor base by 65% and achieved 35% of its \$25 million goal, positioning Gairdner well on track to meet its five-year targets. A transformative \$5 million lead gift from the Peter Gilgan Foundation is providing core program support, including increased funding for the Peter Gilgan Canada Gairdner Momentum Awards, which recognize outstanding mid-career researchers whose discoveries are driving the next generation of scientific breakthroughs. This landmark contribution set the tone for the campaign’s success, inspiring additional major gifts from laureates, strong support from the Board of Directors, and renewed commitments from long-time friends of Gairdner. By diversifying its funding sources across philanthropy, corporate partnerships, charitable foundations, and

organizations, Gairdner is building the sustainable foundation needed to strengthen and expand its programs for years to come.

**6. Strengthen the Gairdner brand by enhancing its online presence and connecting with a wider, more diverse audience.**

This year, Gairdner advanced its digital advertising strategy through partnerships with Science Advisor, Frontiers for Young Minds, Post Media, Blog TO, and Toronto Life delivering curated content that reached both core scientific audiences and the broader public. The Gairdner brand was elevated by producing content tailored to researchers, students, and general audiences. In addition, student roundtables and the creation of social media clips extended engagement and provided new pathways for meaningful interaction.

In collaboration with *Frontiers for Young Minds*, the Gairdner Foundation brought world-class research directly into the hands of young scientists. Together, we created a special series of student-led scientific journals—articles authored in collaboration with Gairdner laureates then reviewed and edited by students.

**7. Develop reliable online informational resources and accessible scientific materials for a variety of audiences.**

Gairdner is developing lasting digital resources that extend the impact of its programming well beyond in-person attendance. Initiatives such as the Laureate Roundtables are creating accessible and enduring scientific materials for diverse audiences. During Gairdner Science Week 2025, the Foundation conducted a series of in-depth interviews with laureates and partners that will be produced into short, engaging clips and digital content for release in 2026 and beyond. In parallel, new partnerships supporting science literacy symposia and the Laureate Roundtable series are helping Gairdner reach new audiences, strengthen engagement, and build a library of evergreen content that continues to inform and inspire year-round.

**8. Expand the reach and impact of the Student Outreach Program by forming strategic partnerships and developing engaging content.**

Launched in 2025, Gairdner Connects is a restructured evolution of our National Student Outreach Program, designed to reach more students across Canada through higher-impact events. Through strategic partnerships with RCI Science, Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants, Visions of Science, and the Canadian Association of Girls in Science, the program strengthens science communication, broadens engagement with underrepresented groups in STEM, and amplifies the impact of Gairdner's core programming.

Gairdner also continues to collaborate with its strong network of university partners to deliver in-person programming for students across the country. A newly standardized format for lectures and campus events has helped streamline delivery and ensure a consistent, high-quality experience nationwide.

## 2025 GAIRDNER SCIENCE WEEK EVENTS

### **Gairdner Connects**

[See full program](#)

Gairdner Connects is the Gairdner Foundation's national outreach program, bringing science to universities and communities across Canada. Through interactive events, discussions, and digital resources, we inspire future innovators and spark public dialogue about the role of research in tackling the health challenges we face as a global society.

Nine locations and 14 partner institutions participated across Canada, including major hubs in Montreal and Toronto. Programming featured 8 current laureates, 5 past laureates, and 5 Early Career Investigators (ECIs) engaging with students, researchers, and the public.

Events included regional collaborations, student events, and lectures emphasizing the impact of cutting-edge biomedical research.

Planning is already underway for spring 2026 outreach in Manitoba and expanded online programming to reach additional partners.

- 3,500 students reached across Canada through in-person, hybrid, and digital programming.
- Reach has expanded to rural and remote schools, homeschool networks, and STEM equity organizations.

### **Gairdner Global Health Symposium: Food for Thought: Insights from International and Canadian Experts on Nutrition, Policy and Food Systems**

October 21, 2025 / Attendance: 100 online and in-person

[See full program](#)

In partnership with the Institute for Philanthropy, Université du Québec à Montréal and Université de Montréal and inspired by the award-winning research of Dr. André Briend, the 2025 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award Laureate, this symposium focused on the major challenges in nutrition worldwide, and how those trends are reflected in the experiences of Canadians.

### **Public Lecture: Quand la science sauve les enfants**

October 21, 2025 / Attendance: 60 in-person

[See full program](#)

This French public lecture, in partnership with Coeurs des sciences, featured 2025 Canada Gairdner Global Health Award laureate Dr. André Briend discussing groundbreaking advances in the fight against child malnutrition — from simple diagnostic tools to life-saving therapeutic foods that transformed treatment worldwide. He also examined the ongoing need for effective prevention programs to ensure every child has access to adequate nutrition.

### **Gairdner International Symposium: Current Frontiers of Precision Therapeutics**

October 22, 2025 / Attendance: 500 online and in-person

See [full program](#) and [recording](#)

This symposium celebrated the pioneering work of Drs. Michael J. Welsh and Paul Negulescu, recipients of the 2025 Canada Gairdner International Award. Their research into the molecular

mechanisms of cystic fibrosis has led to the development of breakthrough therapies that have profoundly changed patient outcomes. Other speakers discussed the next generation of life-saving therapeutics across a wide range of health conditions.

### **Women of Gairdner**

October 22, 2025 / Attendance: 130 online and in-person

See [full program](#)

In partnership with Women's College Hospital, Gairdner hosted the fourth annual Women of Gairdner event, celebrating the achievements of women and underrepresented groups in science. Featuring 2025 laureates Dr. Jennifer Stinson and Dr. Iva Greenwald, along with Early Career Investigator Dr. Prativa Baral, the program brought together students, researchers, and academic leaders to explore how we can collectively build a more inclusive scientific community. Through powerful storytelling and open conversation, the event highlighted career journeys, leadership, and the systemic changes still needed in science and medicine.

High school students, researchers, and local faculty participated in the discussions and hands-on educational activities, followed by a networking session designed to broaden their understanding of science and diverse knowledge systems, strengthen networking skills, and foster connections with scientists, researchers, and peers.

### **Gairdner Laureate Lectures**

October 23, 2025 / Attendance: 875 online and in-person

See [full program](#) and [recording](#)

Lectures by the 2025 Canada Gairdner Award Laureates showcased their groundbreaking, prize-winning research, complemented by presentations from two outstanding emerging scientists from across Canada selected through Gairdner's national Early Career Investigator competition.

Distinguished speakers:

- 2025 Canada Gairdner International Award Laureates: Dr. Michael Welsh, Dr. Paul Negulescu, Dr. Iva Greenwald, Dr. Gary Struhl, Dr. Spyros Artavanis-Tsakonas
- 2025 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award Laureate: Dr. André Briend
- 2025 Canada Gairdner Momentum Award Laureates: Jennifer Stinson, Dr. Daniel De Carvalho
- 2025 Gairdner Early Career Investigator Awardees: Dr. Prativa Baral, Dr. Nika Shakiba

### **2025 Gairdner Connects Student Lunch**

October 23, 2025 / Attendance: 60 in-person

Following the 2025 Laureate Lectures, a student networking lunch at the MaRS Atrium brought together seven laureates, five ECIs, four ICAM winners and about 42 students from high schools and universities across the GTA. Designed to foster meaningful connections, students received background materials in advance and chose tables based on their interests, enabling informed, engaging conversations that sparked mentorship and inspiration.

### **2025 Canada Gairdner Awards Gala**

October 23, 2025 / Attendance: 450 in-person

The annual Gairdner Awards Gala at the Royal Ontario Museum welcomed 450 guests, including dignitaries from Canada, the United States, and France; government representatives; and members of the scientific and academic communities. Among the attendees were The

Honourable Marjorie Michel, Federal Minister of Health, and The Honourable Nolan Quinn, Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, Ontario, who brought greetings on behalf of their respective governments. Students from Visions of Science and the Canadian Association for Girls in Science (CAGIS) also attended as special guests, bringing fresh energy and inspiration to an evening that celebrated scientific excellence and collaboration.

## 2025 QUEBEC PROGRAMMING

Gairdner proudly partners with the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQ-S) to promote scientific achievement and strengthen science culture across the province of Quebec.

### **Journées provinciales de la fibrose kystique**

Quebec, Quebec - May 9, 2025

Hosted by CHU de Québec – Université Laval, this event brought together researchers, clinicians, and students from across Quebec for two days of collaboration and knowledge exchange. The program featured a research day showcasing new discoveries and student presentations, followed by a clinical day with interdisciplinary workshops and lectures.

### **2025 RiboClub Annual Meeting**

Orford, Quebec - September 21 – 25, 2025

[See full program](#)

The RiboClub Annual Meeting brought together RNA scientists, trainees, and industry partners from across Canada and internationally for five days of lectures, panels, and networking. Featuring Nobel and Gairdner Laureate Tom Cech alongside leading researchers from Yale, Harvard, and Canadian institutions, the conference highlighted excellence and innovation in RNA biology and therapeutics. With a strong emphasis on collaboration, EDIA, and academia–industry partnerships, the event advanced Canada’s leadership in RNA research and fostered new scientific connections.

## 2025 ONTARIO PROGRAMMING

Gairdner values its longstanding partnership with the Krembil Foundation, working together to promote scientific excellence and engagement across the province of Ontario.

### **Organoids: Transforming Disease Modelling into Personalized Medicine**

London, Ontario - November 4–6, 2025

[See full program](#)

The Gairdner Foundation partnered with the University of Western Ontario to host a three-day symposium exploring how organoid technologies are revolutionizing disease modeling and advancing personalized medicine. The event brought together leading researchers, clinicians, and trainees to share discoveries, discuss translational applications, and strengthen collaborations in this rapidly evolving field.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Neuromodulation: Helping the Brain Rewire After Injury**

Toronto, Ontario - August 2025

[See full program](#)

In partnership with Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Gairdner presented a symposium exploring how neuromodulation technologies are transforming recovery and rehabilitation following traumatic brain injury. The program convened leading clinicians, neuroscientists, and innovators to share research breakthroughs, clinical applications, and future directions for brain repair. The event underscored Gairdner's commitment to advancing discovery and collaboration in neuroscience and brain health.

## 2025 ALBERTA PROGRAMMING

Funded by an endowment from the Government of Alberta.

### **13th Conference on Signalling in Normal and Cancer Cells**

Banff, Alberta - March 23–27, 2025

[See full program](#)

The Gairdner Foundation partnered with leading Canadian research institutes to present this international conference at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. Featuring world-renowned scientists such as Elaine Fuchs and Michael Rosen, the meeting explored the latest discoveries in cell signalling, cancer biology, and molecular medicine. The event fostered collaboration among researchers, trainees, and industry partners, advancing innovation in cancer and cell biology research.

### **Edmonton Protocol 25th Anniversary Celebration**

Edmonton, Alberta - June 4–5, 2025 | Attendance: 300 in-person

[See full program](#)

The Gairdner Foundation joined forces with the Alberta Diabetes Institute to commemorate the 25-year milestone of the groundbreaking Edmonton Protocol—a pivotal advance in Type 1 diabetes care that made insulin independence a reality for many. The two-day event brought together leading researchers, clinicians, and students to reflect on past achievements in islet cell replacement therapy and to chart the future of translational diabetes research.

### **RiboWest Conference 2025**

Lethbridge, Alberta | June 8–11, 2025 | Attendance: 100 in-person

[See full program](#)

The Gairdner Foundation partnered with the Alberta RNA Research and Training Institute (ARRTI) at the University of Lethbridge to host this four-day conference gathering RNA scientists from across Canada and the Northwestern United States. The event featured presentations on transcription, RNA processing, translation, viruses, genomics, bioinformatics and computational biology—providing a platform for trainees and leading researchers alike to share work and build networks.

### **9th International Calicivirus Conference**

Banff, Alberta | September 7–11, 2025

[See full program](#)

The Gairdner Foundation proudly supported the 9th International Calicivirus Conference, which convened global experts in calicivirus virology, evolution, pathogenesis, structural biology, diagnostics, and prevention. Designed to bridge basic and translational research, the conference fostered collaboration across disciplines and highlighted innovative approaches to norovirus and other calicivirus infections in humans and animals.

## 2025 GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES PANELS – PRESENTED BY TELUS HEALTH

**Global Challenges in a Canadian Context** (during Food for Thought: Insights from International and Canadian Experts on Nutrition, Policy and Food Systems)

Montreal, Quebec- October 21, 2025 / Attendance: 100 online and in-person

[See full program](#)

An in-depth discussion led by Dr. Malek Batal (Université de Montréal) featuring Canadian experts on food and nutrition policy, challenges in urban and Indigenous communities and food security interventions for the Canadian context.

**The Past, Present and Future of Global Child Health** (in partnership with Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC))

Halifax, Nova Scotia | April 3–6, 2025 | Attendance: 250

[See recording](#)

Gairdner Laureates Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta and Dr. José Belizán participated in a powerful panel and engaging discussion which drew on decades of groundbreaking research and international leadership. Belizán and Bhutta traced the evolution of global efforts to improve maternal and child health outcomes—from early community-based interventions and policy shifts to the persistent inequities that continue to shape access to care today.

### **Canada Gairdner Award Winners Virtual Roundtables**

In collaboration with Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants, two livestream sessions were held connecting 2025 Gairdner Award winners with students and educators across Canada.

#### **Session 1 – Briend, De Carvalho, Greenwald, Stinson, Struhl**

Virtual – September 19, 2025 | Attendance: 275 online

[See full program](#) and [recording](#)

The Gairdner Foundation hosted the first in a two-part virtual roundtable series connecting students and educators with 2025 laureates Dr. André Briend, Dr. Daniel De Carvalho, Dr. Iva Greenwald, Dr. Gary Struhl, and Dr. Jennifer Stinson. The session featured personal reflections on their prize-winning discoveries, and a live Q&A that offered students unique insight into the human stories behind world-class science.

#### **Session 2 - Artavanis-Tsakonas, Negulescu, Welsh**

Virtual - September 30, 2025 | Attendance: 350 online

[See full program](#) and [recording](#)

The second session in the series featured Dr. Spyros Artavanis-Tsakonas, Dr. Paul Negulescu and Dr. Michael Welsh, who shared their research journeys and discussed the impact of their discoveries on patient care and translational medicine. Students across Canada participated in an interactive dialogue that encouraged curiosity, mentorship, and a deeper understanding of how scientific innovation transforms lives.

**Breaking Barriers in STEM**  
**A Gairdner Connects conversation on equity, access and opportunity**  
Virtual | November 21, 2025

The Gairdner Foundation, in partnership with Visions of Science explored systemic barriers in STEM and highlighted pathways toward greater equity and inclusion. The program featured 20-minute pre-recorded video with interviews from students, professionals, and community leaders, followed by a live virtual discussion that fostered dialogue, reflection, and actionable ideas for progress in science engagement.

**SCIENCE LITERACY WORKSHOP**

**Trust Issues: Science, Skepticism and Showing Up**  
October 9, 2025, Toronto | Attendance: 75 in-person and online  
See [full program](#) and [recording](#)

Presented by the Gairdner Foundation in partnership with the Royal Canadian Institute for Science (RCIScience), the event brought together science communicators, filmmakers, and community advocates to explore how trust in science can be strengthened through dialogue, transparency, and community engagement. The discussion offered practical strategies for addressing skepticism and deepening connections between science and society.

**ADDITIONAL STUDENT AND TRAINEE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

**Canadian Student Health Research Forum (CSHRF) with the International Congress of Academic Medicine**  
Halifax, Nova Scotia - April 3 – 6, 2025 | Attendance: 400

The 2025 International Congress on Academic Medicine, hosted by the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, featured Gairdner Laureates Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta and Dr. José Belizán in a *Gairdner Global Perspectives* panel and discussion session on Saturday, May 5. They were joined by Dr. Janet Rossant and Sarah Devonshire to judge graduate student research posters and participate in mentoring sessions with student attendees. The four students with the top poster presentations were invited to Toronto for Gairdner Science Week in October 2025, recognizing their excellence and engagement in biomedical research.

**High school on-line lectures with Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants (EBTSOYP)**  
The Gairdner Foundation, in collaboration with Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants, presented a series of interactive online sessions for students across Canada and worldwide.

**Unlocking the Mysteries of Life**  
Virtual | May 2, 2025 | Attendance: 575 online

Gairdner Laureate Dr. Lewis Kay guided young students through the world of proteins—the building blocks of life—showing how cutting-edge tools help scientists visualize the inner workings of cells and uncover breakthroughs in biology.

**CRISPR, Gene Editing and Food Science**  
Virtual | November 21, 2025 | Attendance: 419 online

Featuring Laureate Dr. Rodolphe Barrangou. Students explored how CRISPR technology is revolutionizing the way we understand and modify genes, with applications that extend from human health to the food we eat. Through real-world examples and interactive discussion, Dr. Barrangou demonstrated how gene editing is shaping the future of food science, agriculture, and biotechnology.

### **Repairing the Brain**

Virtual | November 22, 2024 | Attendance: 380 online

Featuring Laureate Dr. Ed Boyden, the session introduced students to groundbreaking neuroscience tools that help scientists map, understand, and repair the brain. Through clear examples and interactive discussion, Dr. Boyden illustrated how advances in neuroengineering are transforming our understanding of brain function and leading to new treatments for neurological disorders.

### **Vaccines and Beyond**

Virtual | November 25, 2024 | Attendance: 400

Dr. Anna Blakney, Gairdner Early Career investigator introduced students to the science behind vaccines and the emerging field of RNA technology. Through engaging explanations and real-world examples, Dr. Blakney demonstrated how innovations in vaccine design and biotechnology are shaping the future of global health and disease prevention.

## **PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EXPECTED RESULTS FOR 2026**

### **1. Continue to build on the global reputation of the Canada Gairdner International and Global Health Awards, ensuring they remain recognized worldwide as premier honors for excellence in health-related research.**

Gairdner will continue to uphold its rigorous adjudication process to identify and celebrate the most outstanding contributions to global health and biomedical science. By elevating laureate achievements through international partnerships, strategic communications, and global programming, we will strengthen the Awards' visibility and prestige, reinforcing their position as a leading predictor of future Nobel Prizes and a benchmark of excellence in the scientific community.

### **2. Ensure a seamless leadership transition for Gairdner's new President & Scientific Director that strengthens organizational continuity, preserves stakeholder confidence, and maintains Gairdner's reputation for excellence.**

As Gairdner transitions to new leadership, the priority will be to preserve strong relationships, sustain program and partnership momentum, and uphold the Foundation's reputation as a trusted and distinguished global brand. All members of the team will be involved in providing detailed onboarding materials for the new President.

### **3. Continue the 5-year goals of the Campaign for Gairdner.**

Funded programs are now moving into development, while efforts continue to secure support for those not yet funded. Advancing both areas sustains campaign momentum toward the fundraising target, ensures full program delivery, and strengthens donor relationships through

consistent recognition, stewardship, and engagement—maintaining the confidence of existing supporters while attracting new ones.

#### **4. Raise the profile of Gairdner and Canadian science on the world stage through international events and partnerships.**

Increase the global reach of Gairdner and Canadian science by deepening international partnerships, hosting events beyond Canada, and developing content that engages audiences across borders. The opportunity to be engaged in a multi-organization partnership in Global health will be actively explored.

Looking ahead to 2026, Gairdner will continue the tradition of hosting hometown receptions, with the potential for even greater international exchange depending on the locations of our next cohort of laureates.

#### **5. Develop enhanced Global Health programming and partnerships.**

Building on the success of hosting the Global Health event in Montreal, Gairdner will consider pursuing similar initiatives in other regions, leveraging partnerships and high-profile programming to broaden reach, engage new audiences, and strengthen brand recognition internationally. Gairdner is in the early stages of developing a Global Health Award network convened by the Institute of Philanthropy (IoP)—which includes collaborations with the Prince Mahidol Award (Thailand) and the German Virchow Prize—Gairdner is deepening its international connections and positioning Canada as an international player in supporting global health research.

#### **6. Build on the success of the Momentum and Early Career Investigator Award competitions by securing funding to expand and strengthen both programs.**

In 2025, the Momentum program expanded with new initiatives and greater visibility for its awardees, making Gairdner's early- and mid-career programming more dynamic and attractive to funders. Building on this momentum, Gairdner will launch a new leadership forum for emerging scientists in 2026–2027, fostering mentorship and collaboration among laureates and early-career researchers. Strengthened by growing philanthropic interest, the Foundation is well positioned to secure sustained funding for the ECI program and expand opportunities for Canada's next generation of scientific leaders.

#### **7. Strengthen and expand the reach of the Gairdner brand and its Connects programming through engaging, accessible digital and in-person experiences that inspire diverse audiences across Canada and beyond.**

Building on the success of Gairdner Connects Gairdner will broaden the reach of its standardized, streamlined materials and digital resources that extend programming beyond live events. Public lectures, Laureate Roundtables, and Science Week interviews will be adapted for online and asynchronous access, ensuring lasting engagement with schools, partners, and global audiences while showcasing the excellence of Gairdner laureat

## SECTION 3: FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### Financial Summary

The Gairdner Foundation maintains proper financial controls and sound management practices to ensure the best use of its public and private funds.

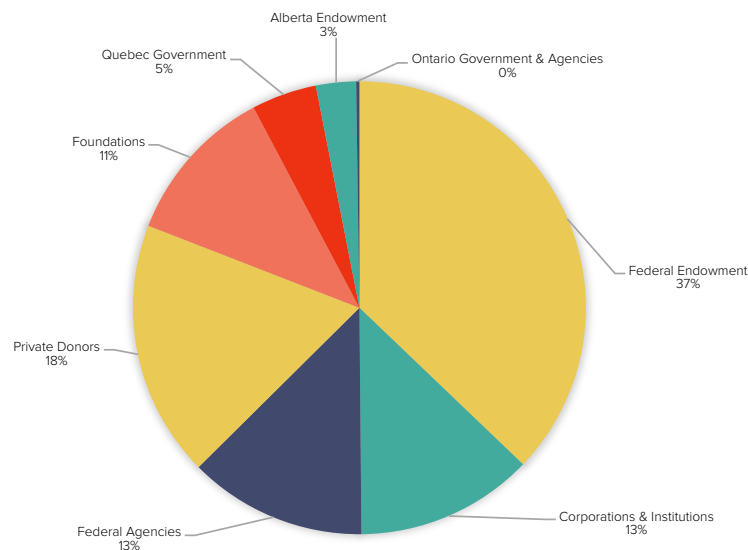
In 2008, the Federal Government, through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (“CIHR”), provided the Foundation with a \$20M endowment fund (the “Fund”), formalized through a Funding Agreement. The income from the Fund is used to support and enhance the Awards. In 2024, the Federal Government, through the CIHR, provided an additional \$10M to be added to the Fund to increase the value of the five Canada Gairdner International Awards. The original Funding Agreement was amended. The Fund has been capitalized, and income from the Fund, including interest, dividends, realized and unrealized gains may be used.

A grant of \$2 million was received from the Alberta government in 2008, for the purpose of expanding the Gairdner program in Alberta. This grant is also to be capitalized during the term of the agreement, and only the income from the Fund, including interest, dividends and realized capital gains may be used. This grant has an indeterminate term; however, the Agreement is to be reviewed at least every 5 years. The Foundation is able to draw upon the capital to a maximum of \$250,000 over the term of the Agreement, provided it uses best efforts to restore any capital withdrawn. Commitments made by the Foundation for the support of the Alberta Gairdner Outreach Program must not exceed the “Available Earnings”, and earnings from this fund are to be used to support the Alberta Gairdner Outreach Program. These funds have been invested together with the original family endowment under the guidance of the Investment Committee, and in accordance with the terms of these agreements and prudent governance.

The primary objectives of the investment policy are to preserve the capital, to generate sufficient income to pay for the administrative and award costs and to provide inflation protection to the fund.

The Foundation also receives operating funding from the Government of Canada, through CIHR, and the Québec Government, as well as a variety of sponsors and donors from both the public and private sector to support our annual programs. In 2025, estimated revenue of approximately \$4.4 million (excluding investment income) was allocated as indicated here.

ESTIMATED 2025 REVENUE BY SOURCE (TOTAL \$4.4 M)



## Planned Receipts and Disbursements for 2026

The approved budget for 2026 calls for revenue of \$4.59 million and operating expenditures of \$4.52 million, resulting in a surplus of \$0.07 million. Budgeted expenditures include \$1.55 million for awards, \$1.08 million for program costs, \$1.35 million for operational staff costs, \$0.50 million for administrative and marketing costs and \$0.04 million for adjudication costs. Revenue includes the Federal operating funding of \$638 million per year for one remaining year. Funds from this grant are allocated to enhancing our Canadian outreach activities, promoting Canadian science at home and abroad and placing Canada on the International stage.

The following table provides the budgeted revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year 2026. The Foundation's share of realized and unrealized investment gains and losses is not included in this budget. The budget was presented and approved by the Board of Directors at its November 20, 2025 meeting.

### BUDGET 2026 in '000's

	ACTUAL 2024	Q3 FCST 2025	BUDGET 2026
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Sponsorships and Donations	1,104	1,859	1,733
Federal Operating Grant	588	527	638
Quebec Operating Grant	256	205	200
Gilgan Momentum Fund	-	50	100
Federal Fund	934	1,635	1,688
Alberta Fund	124	126	128
Portfolio Revenue (net of fees)	1,214	100	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,219</b>	<b>4,503</b>	<b>4,587</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
Awards	700	1,550	1,550
Staff Costs	986	1,138	1,348
Events	944	986	1,075
Administration	271	396	275
Fundraising & Communications	183	236	224
Adjudication Committees	39	44	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,123</b>	<b>4,350</b>	<b>4,517</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS</b>	<b>1,096</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>70</b>

## SECTION 4: MANAGING RISKS AND CHALLENGES

### Managing Risks and Challenges

Managing risk is the ongoing responsibility of management and the Board of Directors. It is the responsibility of management to update its assessment of risk semi-annually and present this risk management matrix assessment to the Board annually. The Gairdner Foundation monitors risks and events that have the potential to undermine achievement of its strategic objectives and priorities. Management has developed and implemented appropriate systems, policies and procedures to manage these risks. The Board and its committees are aware of risk management responsibilities and exercise appropriate governance practices with respect to policy approval and oversight.

Managing reputational risk: At the awards adjudication level, risk is managed and mitigated by a rigorous, two-tier adjudication process/peer review with votes being cast by secure, secret ballot. The ongoing success in the selection process is largely due to a rigorous recruitment and evaluation process for new committee members.

Managing financial risk: Gairdner's Investment Policy has been structured to maximize revenue and preserve capital over the long term. However, the Foundation still needs to raise substantial annual funding to support its programs and to stabilize its infrastructure and operations. In 2024, the Foundation launched a \$25 million fundraising campaign to implement new programs and activities that promote a culture of, and investment in, science excellence and innovation in Canada and around the world.

For 2026, we are projecting a conservative 5.7% return on investment. The Investment Policy Statement amended in January 2025 calls for a long-term Asset Mix target allocation of 27% cash/fixed income, 41% equities and 32% alternative investments.

## SECTION 5: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

### Performance Monitoring

#### Audit, Evaluation and Annual Reports

As a not-for-profit charitable organization, the Gairdner Foundation selects external auditors to undertake an annual audit of its financial statements. The external auditors for 2026 are Ernst & Young. The audit is undertaken on an annual basis, in accordance with generally accepted Canadian accounting principles. The objective is to express an opinion on whether the Gairdner Foundation's financial statements present fairly the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows of the corporation. Upon completion of the audit, the financial statements and a summary of audit findings are presented to the Audit Committee and the Board of Directors for approval.

Within 150 days of the end of each fiscal year, an Annual Report is produced. This report includes audited financial statements, an overview of activities undertaken by Gairdner for the previous fiscal year, and a brief synopsis of projected activities for the upcoming fiscal year. As well, the annual report includes the results of any performance or evaluation audits undertaken during the year, disclosure of the range of remuneration of its senior managers and officers, and an overview of the significant expected results to be achieved in the upcoming financial year.

By November 30 every year, the Gairdner Foundation is required to prepare an Annual Summary Corporate Plan, outlining our objectives, outcomes, details of the Fund management, planned

activities and anticipated results of those activities, annual forecasted cash flow requirements, proposed expenditures as well as an assessment of risks and risk mitigation strategies. These reports are posted on the Gairdner Foundation website.

### **Additional Requirements**

The Gairdner Foundation is required to establish systems to monitor performance and report on achievement of results, beyond the annual report (although these are included when relevant). These include:

- Independent compliance audit every five years to verify whether the Foundation is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement.
- Independent performance audit every five years to assess value-for-money in the key performance areas of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

An independent evaluation was performed in 2023. Three external consultants were approached for proposals and the Gairdner team conducted a thorough review of each company. An organization with a strong reputation and references from within the academic/scientific community performed the evaluation. Their work included a variety of data collection methods, including document and data review, as well as interviews and surveys with key stakeholders. Overall, the results were positive with key stakeholders consistently viewing the Gairdner Awards as a “symbol of excellence in health research.”

An independent compliance audit was performed in 2024. Results showed that the Foundation is compliant with the terms of the funding agreement. The next independent compliance audit will take place in 2029.