

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**Issued by: Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation**

**Re: Seeking Proposals from Respondents interested in assuming full or shared responsibility for operating, enhancing, expanding and reinventing the Foundation's Innovation Awards Program**

## **OBJECTIVE**

We seek creative proposals to reinvent, sustain and grow Canada's premier program for discovering, recognizing, and celebrating outstanding early-stage innovators. We emphasize that all proposals will be seriously considered, including any proposals for complete acquisition, transfer, merger, renaming, redefinition or shared operation of all or some of the existing program. Our purpose is to find the best way in future to reinvent, operate, enhance and expand a program of recognizing early-stage innovators in Canada\*.

## **THE RESPONDENT**

Responses are welcome from parties interested in and capable of achieving the objective, in particular those wishing to establish a legacy of inspiring individual Canadians at a time of increasing awareness of the importance of innovators to our economy and the wellbeing of society.

Responses are welcome from:

- Successful individuals or groups of individuals
- Private or public corporations
- Non-profit entities. including private and charitable foundations and trusts

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*\*This RFP was inspired by a 1907 RFP that also called for reinvention and innovation, 'Signal Corps Specification No. 486'. Creative responses to this RFP led to a reinvention of heavier-than-air flying machines from local curiosities into global innovations that transformed economies and societies.*

## BACKGROUND

Since 1982, the Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation has celebrated the achievements of 288 Canadians as Manning Award recipients and honoured more than 2,800 nominated Canadian innovators from all over Canada and all walks of life. It has awarded recipients almost \$4.8 million.

In 2018, the Foundation will grant four Innovation Awards. The Innovation Awards consist of the \$100,000 Principal Award; the \$25,000 David E. Mitchell Award of Distinction; and two Innovation Awards of \$10,000 each for practical innovations. For more information visit: [www.manninginnovationawards.ca](http://www.manninginnovationawards.ca)

## CURRENT ASSETS

The Ernest C Manning Awards Foundation has accumulated substantial assets over its 36 years of operation which it is willing to turn over to, or share with, the successful respondent. These include:

- **Track Record:** 36 years of successful experience in identifying, evaluating, recognizing, and celebrating Canadian innovators
- **Database of Stories of Successful Canadian Innovators:** A rich collection of the inspirational stories of those innovators, their innovations and their successes, as recorded and preserved in the Foundation's Innovator Database
- **Network of Innovators:** A network of 2,800 past laureates (award winners) across the country who are supportive of our mission and program
- **Network of Volunteers:** A current network of committed volunteers and 8 regional chapters across the country who are available to assist in identifying and encouraging nominees for these innovation awards
- **Blue-Ribbon Evaluation Panel:** An established, blue ribbon, arms-length, highly qualified evaluation panel, supplemented as needed by specific expertise in particular areas of nominated innovations

- **Accomplished Board of Trustees:** An accomplished Board of Trustees drawn from across the country and dedicated to advancing our mission and the objective of this RFP
- **Administrative Team:** A core administrative team who could be available to serve the respondent in a transitional or partnership mode
- **Professional Website and Social Media Presence:** A well-designed and updated website, with additional on-line presence via social media.
- **Successful Fundraising Program:** An established fundraising program has sustained existing programs Foundation for 36 years without any governmental support, and includes lists of donors and sponsors who are supportive of our mission and programs.
- **Cash Reserve:** A cash reserve of up to \$300,000, available as a cash award to the successful RFP respondent.
- **Experience in Celebrating Innovators:** Experience in organizing innovation panels/symposia and an annual Innovation Awards Gala to celebrate our innovation awards winners.
- **Prior 'Transitioning' Experience:** Prior experience in successfully transitioning one of our programs, for Young Innovators (at the high school level), to a family foundation dedicated to sustaining and growing innovation among young Canadians
- **Established Linkages:** With other innovator recognition programs and activities, including those of regional technology associations, universities and post-secondary institutions, and the recently established Governor General's Innovation Awards
- **Innovative New Digital Media Scanning Tools:** A valuable source of information for our chapters and selection committee, used to regularly and comprehensively scan all media, including social media, to identify promising new innovators and innovations meeting our criteria, locally, regionally and nationally.

## THE MANNING AWARDS PROGRAM

### The Current Program

Each year, outstanding innovators are nominated from across Canada, and often the focus is on early-stage technological innovators, social innovators, and

practical innovators – the unsung heroes of Canadian innovation. A national and independent Selection Committee reviews all qualified nominees and selects award winners. Drawn from academic and professional backgrounds, their deliberations are supported by qualified experts, recruited to provide insight on the uniqueness and degree of innovation of the various work nominated. In any given year, the Selection Committee reviews work requiring detailed knowledge of state-of-the-art practice in a wide range of fields that have continued to evolve over the past 36 years of progress. Additional information is available upon request.

In brief, all qualified nominees must meet five criteria, and are ranked on that basis:

1. Intellectual Achievement: quality of intellectual insight and experimentation required to discover, create or conceive the innovation.
2. Uniqueness and Originality: of aspect, design or style utilized to produce the invention.
3. Development: the extent to which the idea or concept has been thought through to completion.
4. Commercialization and implementation: the degree to which the innovation has been implemented successfully, commercialized and marketed.
5. Impact: the economic and/or social benefit to Canada resulting from the innovation.

### **The Opportunity to Reinvent the Awards Program**

When the Ernest C. Manning Awards Program was first established in 1982, very few such programs existed at the time. Those that did exist tended to offer “symbolic recognition” of innovators through certificates and public tributes rather than via substantial cash awards, and often focused on recognizing well established innovators rather than early stage innovators whose eventual success was far less certain. Thus the Manning Awards Foundation, by offering substantial, “no strings attached” cash awards and focusing on “early stage” innovators, was itself an “innovation”.

Flash forward to 2018, and the innovation environment has significantly changed. There are now dozens of well-funded programs, including many government programs, for encouraging innovation. Many of these programs, all of which we applaud, have similar characteristics. Once again, however, there is an unmet need to “innovate” in the area by discovering, recognizing, and celebrating (1) outstanding early-stage innovators, (2) practical innovators, and (3) young, emerging innovators.

The Manning Awards Foundation Trustees have therefore given considerable thought to defining a **reinvented awards program**, which could have some or all of the following unique characteristics:

- Making much better use of **social media** to inform the broadest possible audience of our work, in seeking an increased number of nominees for Manning Awards, in communicating the “innovation stories” of award winners as widely as possible to inspire the greatest number of next generation Canadian innovators, and in maintaining a vibrant network of Canadian innovators.
- Reinvent the Annual Gala to become a “triple purpose” event rather than a “single purpose” event: (1) Using it, as at present, to recognize and celebrate innovation award winners; (2) Also using it as a **networking event** to bring would-be innovators and potential sponsors/investors together; and (3) Also making it a potential **innovation fundraising event** along the lines of similar events which have successfully raised substantial funds for promising early-stage innovators.
- At one end of the spectrum, adding an “**Emerging Innovator**” award category to focus on identifying and rewarding even further “upstream” innovators –aimed directly at post-secondary innovators and entrepreneurs and drawing on new venture programs, entrepreneurship programs, and capstone programs at post-secondary institutions.
- At the other end of the spectrum adding a “**Genius**” or “**Career/Lifetime Innovator**” award category to focus on individual innovators who have achieved exemplary, outstanding and sustained (economic and/or social) success/impact resulting from their innovation in Canada. This “Genius”

category could include highly successful and/or prolific Canadian patent-holding inventors who have had great economic impact (thus drawing in patent lawyers and agents as nominators and supporters).

- Providing **sector specific awards** (either by addition or by reorganizing existing Manning Awards) – such as those targeted to social innovators, female innovators, specific sectors of the economy or specific sectors of technology such as AI, etc.
- **Making use of innovative new digital media scanning tools** (such as those developed by Meltwater) to regularly and comprehensively scan all media, including social media, locally, regionally and nationally to identify promising innovators and innovations meeting our identification criteria, and to pass them along to regional chapters and a selection committee for further consideration.

### **Focus Requested of Respondents**

Respondents are specifically requested to focus their proposals on the organization and delivery of a reinvented awards program, rather than on simply proposing to carry on the existing Manning Awards Program.

We emphasize that all proposals will be seriously considered, including any proposals for complete acquisition, transfer, merger, renaming, redefinition or shared operation of all or some of the existing program.

### **GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING**

1. Initial responses to this RFP may be in the form of an **Expression of Interest**, submitted to the Chairman, RFP Evaluation Committee, Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation at [RFP@manningawards.ca](mailto:RFP@manningawards.ca) **prior to December 31, 2018**. Each Expression of Interest will be acknowledged promptly, the submitter will be contacted and further information will be provided as requested.

2. **Complete Responses are due by February 28, 2019**, and must be submitted by email to the Chairman, RFP Evaluation Committee, Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation at [RFP@manningawards.ca](mailto:RFP@manningawards.ca), or by mail or courier to the Chair, RFP Evaluation Committee, Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation, 3553 31 St NW, Calgary, Alberta T2L 2K7.
3. Complete responses shall include:
  - A full and complete description of the responding organization and its principals
  - Evidence that the respondent possesses the financial and human resources required to implement their proposal
  - Evidence of past interest and experience with identifying, evaluating, and celebrating innovators and innovations.
  - A description of the “reinvented awards program” to be offered by the respondent, should the respondent’s proposal be accepted and implemented.
4. It is anticipated that a decision will be reached as to the identity of the successful respondent to this RFP by **April 30, 2019**, and that the transition/transfer/sharing of the program will be completed in **the June-September period of 2019**.
5. For further information concerning any aspect of this RFP, please contact the Chairman, RFP Evaluation Committee, at [RFP@manningawards.ca](mailto:RFP@manningawards.ca).

## **RFP EVALUATION COMMITTEE, CRITERIA AND TIMELINE**

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated by the RFP Evaluation Committee consisting of the individuals identified in the Appendix. This RFP Evaluation Committee will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

Criteria and weighting to be employed by the RFP Evaluation Committee in evaluating responses will be determined by the Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Board of Trustees.

## **APPENDIX – RFP EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

This committee is responsible for reviewing all responses to the RFP, including Letters of Intent and proposals, and for making recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Members are:

### **Hon. Preston Manning, PC, CC, AOE**

Canadian statesman; Founding Trustee. Representative of the Ernest C. Manning family

### **James A. McEwen OC PhD DSc**

Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees; past recipient, Principal Award; past Chapter Chair. President, Western Clinical Engineering Ltd.

### **John K. Read, PEng**

Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Co-Founder, Colt Engineering Corp.

### **Harry Schulz**

Past Trustee and past Chapter Chair; health sciences executive, innovator and investor, Winnipeg.