

Unsung heroes behind those big genomics breakthroughs



It's the end of summer, and for many scientists, that means a few things. The academic year is just around the corner. Courses will start, professors will once again grumble about teaching commitments, and campuses will swell with an influx of undergraduates, new and returning.

And in this country, scientists will feverishly start scrambling to get their grants written, because in Canada, September is Grant Season. In our biomedical sciences landscape, the biggest player is the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research](#) (CIHR), similar to the UK's [Medical Research Council](#), or the US [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH), but many other agencies and foundations also have autumn deadlines.

My own field is genomics, the study of the DNA in the body's cells: how it is inherited, how changes in the genes contained within it can cause disease, and how it varies between people. Scientists around the world send us, or other facilities like ours, samples of DNA, and we run the experiments, generate data, and send it back.

[Our team of 90 or so](#) includes laboratory technologists with all manner of technical skills, computer programmers and systems support personnel, statisticians, bioinformaticians, and even an ethics consultant. It's a good bet that somewhere in that group, we have the right expertise to help out just about anybody who approaches us.

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