



OHTN Impact Focused Research Program - Annual Competition (2013)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

OHTN RESEARCH OPERATING GRANT

The Ontario HIV Treatment Network:

Funding Research with Real-Life Impact

Launch Date: November 7, 2012
List of Priority Areas Posted: December 17, 2012
Letters of Interest Due: February 1, 2013 (11:59pm)
Results of LOI: March 2, 2013
Full Applications Due: May 24, 2013 (11:59pm)
Fund Start Date: September 1, 2013

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Description

The **OHTN Research Operating Grant** supports exceptional HIV research teams conducting relevant and community-engaged research that aligns with the OHTN's research funding policy '[Funding Research with Real-Life Impact](#)' - designed to help us achieve our mission to improve the health and well-being of people living with and at risk of HIV in Ontario.

Funds Available

Up to \$1.5 million is available from the OHTN to support at least four (4) OHTN Research Operating Grants up to \$125,000 per year for up to 3 years. This award is renewable once, upon full re-submission.

The annual award amount is allocated as follows:

- Up to \$125,000 towards the direct research, capacity building and knowledge translation and exchange costs of the research

Payments will be made semi-annually based on satisfactory progress and financial reporting (including quarterly teleconferences).

Eligibility Criteria

The OHTN seeks proposals for OHTN Research Operating Grants from research teams that:

- Are based in Ontario
- Are proposing to conduct research that focuses on/significantly impacts one or more of the populations most affected by HIV in Ontario:
 - People living with HIV/AIDS
 - Gay men and other men who have sex with men, including gay, bi, and queer trans men, youth, and newcomers
 - African, Caribbean and Black men and women, including youth
 - Aboriginal men and women, including youth

- Men and women who use drugs, including youth
- Women, including trans women, who are at risk (e.g. have unprotected sex or share drug equipment with people from the populations listed above)
- Are proposing research that is consistent with and promotes our [values](#)
- Meaningfully engage affected communities – as members of research teams –involving people with and at risk of HIV throughout the research process, including decision-making, knowledge translation, and implementation of results
- Engage relevant stakeholders (such as healthcare providers and policy-makers) throughout the research process
- Are proposing research that is solution-focused – that is, research that seeks to develop, implement, and evaluate interventions, programs, services, treatments or policies to address the issues that are relevant to the populations most affected by HIV in Ontario
- Demonstrate how the proposed research will have a measureable impact in the short- to medium-term (2 to 5 years) – in other words, research that has the potential to lead to an effective new or improved intervention, program, service, treatment or policy

As a condition of OHTN funding researchers and all members of their research team are expected to adhere to the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for the Research Involving Humans \(Version 2\)](#)

The OHTN will not fund:

- Prevention initiatives aimed at the general public
- Clinical research that ought to be funded by industry and pharmaceutical companies
- Research that is a duplication of research conducted or in progress by others

Research Priorities

The OHTN encourages proposals from teams whose research is relevant to one or more of the populations in Ontario most affect by HIV. The OHTN will also seek, and will give preference to, proposals that address the priority areas identified. The priorities are currently under development, but will be posted [here](#) by December 17, 2012.

Priorities are being developed in the following five areas:

1. **Prevention** - Our goal is to identify effective, appropriate strategies to reduce HIV transmission and prevent new infections.
2. **Health, Social & Related Services** - Our goal is to ensure that people living with or at risk of HIV have access to appropriate services to support their health and wellbeing at the appropriate time in an appropriate way.
3. **Social Determinants of Health** - Our goal is minimize the negative impact of the broader social determinants on the health and well-being of people living with HIV and those most at risk.
4. **Policy & Decision-Making** - Our goal is to ensure that policy and other decisions affecting people living with and at highest risk of HIV are informed by the best evidence available.

5. **Knowledge Translation/Capacity Building** - Our goal is to ensure all our stakeholders -- people living with and at risk of HIV, community-based HIV/AIDS organizations, healthcare providers, researchers, and decision makers – have access to the best evidence and the skills to apply that evidence in their work.

How to Apply

Letter of Interest

Applicants will complete and submit both their Letter of Interest and, where applicable, Full Application using the OHTN’s web-based Grants Application Manager. The steps required for a Letter of Interest application are described below.

****IMPORTANT****

1. OHTN Research Operating Grant award applications must be accessed for the first time at https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_920/?SA=SNA&FID=35068
2. Once created, applications must be re-accessed using https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_920/ and entering a user-unique ID and password
3. The application does not need to be completed in order, or all at once. Incomplete applications may be saved (click ‘Save & Finish Later’) and returned to at a later date
4. Print a copy of the application for your records (if desired) *prior* to electronic submission

Letter of Interest Application Instructions

1. Follow the link to the [OHTN Research Operating Grant - Letter of Interest](#) application form
2. Create and/or log-in to your account
3. Complete the (Nominated) Principal Investigator (NPI) Contact Information
 - *Note: this individual will be responsible for the overall conduct of the project, including the budget.*
4. Complete the Project Team information page (note that additional team members may be added up to the time of Full Application for successful proposals):
 - Co-Principal Investigators (PIs): have primary responsibility for achieving the activities described in the proposal, while adhering to financial and administrative requirements, including obtaining the appropriate ethical approvals and reporting on progress as required by the funder and others. Where there are multiple Principal Investigators, the main or ‘nominated’ PI retains overall responsibility for the project’s successful completion and for fund management according to the Sponsor (in this case, the OHTN).
 - Co-Investigators (Co-Is): are involved in the development and execution of a project, typically devote a specified percentage of time to the project, and may have a specific role in the project. They are usually not as involved in the overall execution of the project as a principal investigator, but may be involved in decision-making.

- Collaborators: may be beneficiaries of project results, and/or may be contributing specific expertise to a project – such as training or equipment – but are not usually involved in decision-making on a project.
 - Space has been allocated for up to 3 PIs, 10 Co-Is, and 5 Collaborators. Please contact [OHTN Funding Staff](#) if you have additional team members to add.
5. Insert the Title of your proposed research project (max 15 words)
 6. Indicate the duration of funding you are requesting (up to 3 years (36 months))
 7. Indicate the amount of funding you are requesting for the 1st year (up to \$125,000)
 8. Complete the [Relevance of Research](#)
 9. Complete the [Plain Language Summary](#)
 10. Complete the [Community Engagement Plan](#)
 11. Upload the [Brief Description of Research](#) document in PDF
 12. Upload the [Team Members](#) document in PDF
 13. Review, print a copy of, and submit your application by the deadline

Relevance of Research

Describe the relevance of the proposed research project to the HIV community in Ontario, specifically those populations most affected by HIV, and the [research priorities](#) identified. What gaps in existing knowledge will the proposed research fill, and what is the intended impact of the research? How might the proposed research improve the lives of those living with and at risk of HIV in Ontario? (*maximum 250 words, entered directly into application form*)

Plain Language Summary

Provide a lay language summary of the research project and the anticipated impact it will have on the epidemic in Ontario. Describe the overall vision of the research and its pathway to impact. Describe the knowledge translation and exchange approaches to be utilized to facilitate the desired outcomes. (*maximum 500 words, entered directly into application form*)

Community Engagement Plan

Community engagement in HIV research is viewed by the OHTN as an essential mechanism to ensuring that research is relevant to community needs. The funding policy **Funding Research with Real-Life Impact** reinvigorates the OHTN's commitment to meaningfully engage community members throughout the research process.

Describe how the community has previously been engaged in research conducted by the applicants, including decision-making processes, advisory roles, capacity-building, dissemination, uptake and other activities as appropriate. Describe the engagement process to be applied in the current proposal, and any progress to date. The OHTN requires investigators to meaningfully engage the HIV community in all stages of the research process beginning with conception and development through to dissemination and uptake of the research results. Applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with community-based organizations, people living with or at risk of HIV, and government decision-makers during development

stages, to encourage maximal relevance and uptake of research results. (*maximum 500 words, entered directly into application form*)

Brief Description of Research (maximum 5 pages)

The proposal should contain the following information:

- Brief background and rationale for the proposed research
- The objectives of the proposed research to be undertaken over the period of funding, including any objectives related to building capacity
- The relevance of the proposed research to the populations most affected by HIV in Ontario and the [research priorities](#) identified
- A brief description of the intended outcomes and impacts
- A brief description of the knowledge translation plan to be employed throughout the project and beyond

Team Members (maximum 3 pages)

- Provide a description of the relevant expertise and role in the current proposal of all (current) team members
- Describe past and current collaborations between investigators, and indicate where new partnerships are being forged, and in what areas additional team members will be sought for the full application (if applicable)

Full Application

Full Application Instructions

1. Follow the link to your in-progress application here: [Research Operating Grant – Full Application](#)
2. Create and/or log-in to your account
3. Ensure all previously entered information is correct, and make edits where necessary
4. Complete the Host Institution information, including Department Head and Executive Officer information
5. Complete the Administration of Funds information, including Financial Administrator contact information
6. Complete the [Impact](#) section directly into the application form
7. If applicable, complete and upload the [Resubmission](#) requirements in PDF
8. Complete and upload the full [Proposal](#) in PDF
9. Complete and upload the [Timeline](#) in PDF
10. Complete and upload all Principal and Co-Applicants' [Common CVs](#)
11. Upload any relevant [Appendices](#) in reduced-size PDF
12. Collate and upload any [REB approvals](#) or [Consent Forms](#) in PDF
13. Upload [Letters of Collaboration](#) in PDF
14. Upload [Letters of Support](#) in PDF
15. Complete and upload all [Signature Sheets](#) in PDF
16. Complete and upload the [Budget](#) and [Budget Justification](#) in PDF

17. If applicable, Complete and upload the [Institutional Letter for Release Time Request](#) in PDF
18. Review, print a copy of, and submit your application by the deadline

Resubmissions

If you are **resubmitting** a previously unsuccessful proposal, you **must** include a two-page letter addressing both the reviewer's comments, and any changes made to the application as a result.

Note for resubmissions: Copies of the previous reviews must be included with the application. Please contact OHTN Research Development staff to obtain a copy of your reviews if you have not retained them.

Proposal (maximum 13 pages)

The proposal should illustrate a clear rationale for the support being requested:

Research Plan (5-6 pages):

- background and rationale, including relevance of the proposed research to the populations most affected by HIV in Ontario and the [research priorities](#) identified
- a list of clear objectives of the proposed research project
- a description of the proposed research project (methods, analyses)
- a description of complementary or conflicting research being pursued by others, and how that research is positioned within this work
- anticipated challenges and proposed solutions and limitations
- a discussion of the ethical implications of the research proposed, including risks to individuals and communities, and how those risks are/will be mitigated

Capacity Building Activities (1-2 pages):

- describe the capacity building activities to be undertaken with members of the research team

Impacts (2-3 pages):

- a description of the envisioned impact, how the research is positioned to have an impact, and the steps required to achieve that impact

Knowledge Translation & Exchange Plan (1-2 pages):

- evidence of previous success in moving research results into action at the practice, program or policy levels
- knowledge translation and exchange methods and approaches for the current proposal

Research Team (1-2 pages):

- a description of the roles of all team members (principal and co-investigators), and collaborators, where applicable

More on Impact

The OHTN has adapted the logic model and impact framework developed by the [Canadian Academy of Health Sciences](#) for the measurement of returns on investment in health research.

Applications are expected to fulfill those categories that are appropriate to the research being proposed. There are 5 categories, ranging the spectrum of research impacts:

1. **Advancing Knowledge** - includes new discoveries and breakthroughs from health research, and contributions to the scientific literature
2. **Research Capacity-Building** - includes the development and enhancement of research skills in individuals and teams (personnel, activity funding, infrastructure)
3. **Informing Decision-Making** - includes the impacts of research in the areas of science, public, clinical, and managerial decision-making practice and policy
4. **Health-Impact** - encompasses advances in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and palliation when related to research (in groupings of health status, determinants of health, prevention and health system performance)
5. **Broad Economic and Social Impacts** - commercialization of discoveries, direct cost savings, and human capital gains

The goal is for research funded by the OHTN to achieve impacts in at least categories 1 through 3, but ideally 4 and/or 5 as well. Applicants should refer to these categories and indicators when describing the impact of their proposal.

Note: Generating knowledge and contributing to the scientific literature (Advancing Knowledge), and building capacity (Research Capacity-Building) are important, but do not generate sufficient impacts on their own to qualify for funding. Proposals must also demonstrate impact in at least one of the other categories. Ideally, the OHTN will fund research that, taken with other evidence, will lead to a new or improved intervention, program, service, treatment or policy.

Proposals (not including references) should be no more than 13 pages, single spaced, minimum 11 point font, with 1" margins. Proposals, including references, must be converted to PDF prior to uploading into the application form.

Timeline

A separate year by year plan for the proposed activities, including proposed/anticipated impacts, should be included.

Impact

Using bullet points, per the categories outlined above, list the top 2-3 impacts per (relevant) category anticipated from the successful achievement of the proposal. This information will be tracked to enhance our research accountability and reporting. *(maximum 100 words per category, entered directly into application form)*

Applicants CVs

All Principal and Co-Applicants should include a completed [Common CV](#) finalized for OHTN. There are 2 possible templates that can be used – 1) Academic or 2) Community/Knowledge User. PDF versions of the CCV can be accessed in the CCV ‘History’ section online.

Appendices

1. Applicants may upload up to three (3) manuscripts (submitted, accepted for publication or published) that are relevant to the proposal (*manuscripts should be compressed to ensure easy upload*)
2. Applicants may upload up to three (3) products (presentations, testimonials, summaries) that demonstrate the dissemination and uptake of their research results
3. Questionnaires, surveys, or other tools related to the current proposal should be uploaded

Please note that any attachments exceeding the limits stated above will be removed from the application prior to review at the OHTN’s discretion.

Ethics Approval and Consent Forms

Upload a copy of related ethics board approvals, as well as a copy of a consent form (draft form is encouraged if final approved version is not available) to be signed by prospective participants or other explanatory material (draft is acceptable) to be given out.

Letters of Collaboration

If your research involves the collaboration of external organizations or individuals please include letters indicating their affirmation of, role in, and benefit from, your proposed research project. (*collate prior to uploading*)

Letters of Support (maximum of 4 letters)

If your research involves the support of external organizations or individuals please include letters of support for your proposed research project. Letters of support from decision-makers (i.e. people who have or will use the results of your research) are particularly significant. (*collate prior to uploading*)

Budget & Budget Justification

Download and complete the [detailed budget template](#) for each year of the award being requested.

In a separate narrative provide justification for the requested budget using the following guidelines:

- a. **Personnel/Salaries** – provide details on the rates of remuneration requested for research staff, including fringe benefits. The OHTN will allow a portion of salary support for principal or co-investigators who are independent community researchers who are not undertaking the work as part of a paid position, and as described below (see Note).
- b. **Equipment** – Research Operating Grant budgets may include a request of no more than \$20,000 for the purchase of research equipment (or items of equipment). Equipment expenditures in excess of this amount will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, and only where the

principal investigator has discussed the matter with The OHTN prior to submitting the grant application. The need for equipment should be explained. Where a piece of equipment is approved, title to it will be vested with the sponsoring institution.

- c. **Supplies** – Funds for the purchase of supplies are not intended for the purchase of furniture, office equipment or supplies normally supplied by the institution.
- d. **Knowledge Transfer & Exchange** – Please itemize all requests for KTE, including publication costs in open access journals.
- e. **Other Expenses** – The OHTN will consider requests for computing costs, local travel for data collection, transportation of participants, etc.
- f. **Travel to Scientific Meetings/Conferences** – Applicants must indicate on the budget sheet travel funds requested to attend scientific meetings and conferences. Except in exceptional circumstances, the maximum amount that may be granted for travel in any one year will be \$2000. This amount is not transferable between fiscal years of an award, unless previously approved by OHTN Research Development staff.

NOTE

For Researchers who qualify, up to \$15,000 may be requested per ½ course release, to a maximum of \$30,000 total over the course of the grant. Insert requested amount in the Personnel/Salaries section of the budget template and provide appropriate justification.

Eligibility:

- Nominated Principal Investigator status
- Full-time faculty member
- Minimum three (3) course teaching load per term (from September – May)
 - A separate **letter from the institution** should be submitted, verifying the applicant's teaching load, lack of a salary award, and approval of a course release if the grant is funded
- Fully justified rationale for course release
- Not eligible if on leave or if concurrent with a salary award

Submitting the Proposal

Complete applications must be submitted electronically by the application deadline. No changes can be made to a grant application after the submission deadline. Where electronic copies (including scans, which are acceptable) of documents are not available, applicants may submit in unstapled hard copy only, via trackable courier; however these documents must be received by the deadline.

Please be advised that all application materials and information provided to the OHTN, including personal information such as sexual orientation or HIV status is kept strictly confidential and only forwarded to the members of the Scientific Review Committee and external grant reviewers. It may also be referenced in the review of your application. Please omit any personal information from your application that you do

not want shared with members of the Scientific Review Committee or external reviewers. Contact Stephanie Lemelin Bazinet if you have any questions.

Note: Allow a sufficient amount of time to ensure successful electronic submission. File limits have been imposed to ensure your application is accessible to reviewers. If you experience any difficulty with the online process, please notify Research Development staff at least 24 hours prior to the deadline so that any issues may be resolved.

Address hard copy documents (if applicable) to:

Ontario HIV Treatment Network
c/o Stephanie Lemelin Bazinet, Coordinator, Research Development
1300 Yonge Street, Suite 600
Toronto ON M4T 1X3

Evaluation Criteria & Review Process

Letter of Interest

Letters of Interest will be screened for their relevance to the policy and [research priorities](#) by appropriate OHTN staff in consultation with the Chair of the OHTN's Scientific Review Committee. Applications will also be assessed for their eligibility, with particular attention paid to:

- Excellence in research methodology and approach
- Relevance and ability to address a priority identified by the population
- Calibre and expertise of the team
- Meaningful stakeholder involvement (e.g., community, front line service providers, researchers, policy makers)
- Integrated KTE plan (i.e., knowledge users involved throughout the process)
- Clear and actionable outcomes

Applicants will receive a brief letter outlining the decision with respect to their Letter of Interest by **February 15th, 2013.**

The names, project titles, and plain language summaries of successful LOIs will be posted on the OHTN website [here](#).

Full Application

All proposals submitted to the OHTN's Impact Focused Research Program for research grants or awards are evaluated for their relevance and potential impact, as well as their scientific and technical merit, by the Scientific Review Committee.

For more information regarding the review process, criteria, and scoring chart, please visit the [OHTN website](#).

Reporting Requirements

Continued release of funds is contingent upon timely receipt of satisfactory progress and financial reports. Failure to submit a report of any kind will preclude the awardee from receiving further financial support from the OHTN.

In addition to engaging in the activities related to their proposal, OHTN Research Operating Grant teams will be expected to:

- Actively participate in meeting(s) that bring researchers and others together to share learning
- Participate in the OHTN Annual Research Conference and other activities aimed at research knowledge translation and exchange

The following reporting requirements will be implemented to help demonstrate progress and success of the OHTN Research Operating Grant program:

- Quarterly progress conversations with principal investigators via teleconference (15-20 minutes in most cases)
- Annual written Progress Reports (2-3 pages)
- Annual Financial Reports detailing how funds were spent
- A Final Report that includes a clear assessment of the anticipated and actual impacts of the research (5-6 pages)
- Dissemination of knowledge through publications in peer-reviewed and grey literature
- Knowledge translation and exchange activities (as outlined in funding proposal)
- A Report 1 year past the end date of the award that describes successes and challenges with respect to actual and anticipated impacts

OHTN staff will work closely with funded researchers to: understand the context for their work; assist with managing challenges; help them meet their objectives; and understand and help disseminate their findings.

Instructions for reporting will be provided to successful grant recipients.

Communication Requirements

1. As a condition of funding, researchers are required to submit abstracts of OHTN-supported research for presentation at the OHTN's Annual Research Conference.
2. Significant deviations from the original objectives of the proposal, methodologies, budget or other significant changes (such as mentees) must receive written authorization from the OHTN prior to implementation. Failure to notify the OHTN in a timely manner may result in termination of funding.
3. The OHTN expects investigators to publish their work in peer-reviewed publications and other appropriate formats. The OHTN expects to be notified when OHTN-supported research is published, and requests copies of all publications arising from work supported through this award to assist the OHTN in its evaluation of this program.

4. Plain Language Summaries will be published on the OHTN website.
5. The OHTN assumes responsibility for disseminating the information contained within submitted reports via the OHTN website. However, OHTN affirms that the results are the intellectual property of the grant recipient and recognizes the need for teams to pursue publication in peer-reviewed publications or other appropriate formats. OHTN staff will work with grant recipients to ensure that its own dissemination efforts do not conflict with the teams' publication plans.
6. Funding recipients are also expected to contribute to the OHTN's monitoring and evaluation activities, including but not limited to: participating in evaluation activities (quarterly progress teleconferences, progress and final written reports, surveys, interviews, etc.), workshops, and providing data or reports as required for the purpose of assessing progress and results.
7. The following acknowledgement must be included in all publications resulting from research supported by The OHTN: *This research was supported by an award from The Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN).*

Dissemination of results through these methods ensures the OHTN is able to demonstrate accountability and impact to its various stakeholders.

Contact Information

For questions regarding this Request for Proposals, please contact:

Stephanie Lemelin Bazinet

Coordinator, Research Development

sbazinet@ohntn.on.ca

416.642.6486 x2244