

## ONF'S VISION

- Prevent and reduce the incidence and prevalence of neurotrauma injuries.
- Enhance the quality of life for those living with an acquired brain injury.
- Enhance the quality of life for those living with a spinal cord injury.

## ONF'S MISSION

ONF's vision is putting neurotrauma research

# ONTARIO NEUROTRAUMA FOUNDATION

In Partnership with the Rick Hansen Institute

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

April 2018



Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation  
Fondation ontarienne de neurotraumatologie



Rick Hansen Institute  
Institut Rick Hansen

# ONTARIO NEUROTRAUMA FOUNDATION

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation and Rick Hansen Institute Partnership

The Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation (ONF) and the Rick Hansen Institute (RHI) work collaboratively to implement a program of research and best practice implementation designed to enhance the well-being of people with spinal cord injury (SCI). The program is supported by the Government of Ontario's Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science. The program leverages the national work of the Rick Hansen Institute with the provincial research and best practice implementation agenda of the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation.

Further information about the mandates and strategic priorities of the two partnering organizations can be found on their respective websites:

[www.onf.org](http://www.onf.org)

[www.rickhanseninstitute.org](http://www.rickhanseninstitute.org)

## 2. Request for Applications

In order to meet its objectives, ONF and RHI are launching a new funding opportunity to support the research, development, and optimal delivery of solutions to the problems experienced by people living with SCI. In accordance with the ONF/RHI partnership, applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for projects: a) emerging as priorities from the recent ONF/RHI sponsored Summit Meetings on secondary health complications; b) related to the Increased Understanding of SCI Biology and Physiology; c) related to the Development of Neuro-restorative Therapies, and d) related to the Commercialization and Implantation of practical solutions (Bringing Innovations to Market). Projects eligible for funding under these categories should address the relevant areas of focus described below:

Recommendations emerging from the Summit Meetings held on [Pressure Ulcer Prevention and Treatment](#), [Uro-health](#), and [Neuropathic Pain](#). Projects submitted under this category should acknowledge the fact that they are supported by the consensus building process employed in the Summit Meetings. Please visit the ONF website ([www.onf.org](http://www.onf.org)) to view summaries of the recommendations emerging from the various summits. (Projects related to these topic areas that were not identified within the consensus building process may also be considered for funding if they are sufficiently meritorious and relevant).

Clinical and late stage preclinical studies that provide insights into the pathophysiology and biology of SCI. The intent here is to provide insight into the pathological mechanisms at play throughout the continuum from primary and secondary acute injury, through neurorecovery and restoration, the intrinsic impairments in autonomic, bowel, bladder and sexual function, and medical complications that arise as sequelae from SCI. The latter include, but are not limited to, bone health, autonomic dysreflexia, immune dysfunction, bladder infection, pressure ulcers. Clearly the long term implication of a greater understanding of the pathobiology is to guide the development of new or improved interventions, practices or policy, and applicants are encouraged to make these implications explicit in their proposal.

Innovative clinical studies including those that constitute "proof of principle" of novel interventions to effect neuro-restoration and neuro-recovery (i.e. activities supporting the improvement of neurological outcomes which includes; pre-hospital triage, acute care management and rehabilitation to maximize recovery).



Developmental studies that pertain to the potential commercialization of products and interventions designed to enhance the well-being of individuals with SCI. The interventions and innovative technologies may include medical devices and diagnostics, including digital health technologies. The goals of this category of funding include:

1. Increasing the pipeline of potential interventions and technologies for SCI that will help better manage secondary complications, neurorecovery and enhance long-term health and wellness,
2. Accelerating the product development and commercialization process for innovative interventions and technologies,
3. Development of these interventions and technologies to the point in which they are ready for licensing, investor or industry investment, or spin-out, as well as other significant development or commercialization milestones.

Within the commercialization category, in particular, proper consideration will be given to the protection of Intellectual Property rights. Applicants, who wish to submit materials that are potentially patentable or would be protected by copyright, should make this explicit through both direct communications with ONF personnel and in the written materials submitted.

All applications are expected to reflect meaningful consumer engagement in the conceptualization, design and/or execution of the study.

Investigators who are new to the SCI field, or who have not previously received funding through the ONF/RHI partnership, are encouraged to participate in this funding opportunity.

**Funds are available to support projects up to a maximum of \$150,000 over 3 years (i.e. \$50,000 per year)**

It is expected that ONF will receive more applications than it will be able to provide funding to; therefore, only the most competitive applications will receive funding. In their letter of intent, applicants are strongly encouraged to state where on the translational research continuum the proposed project falls on: [SCI and Pressure Ulcers](#), [SCI Urohealth Summit](#), and [SCI Neuropathic Pain Summit](#). Furthermore, as ONF and RHI are required to assess the return on investments in the research, development, and delivery, of solutions, applicants are strongly encouraged to describe the extent of the problem the proposed project is intended to mitigate or solve.

Those who are invited to submit a full application will have access to consultation services, or a workshop, to enhance the application from the perspective of ONF and RHI. These services intended to support consideration of integrated knowledge translation, including stakeholder engagement and evaluation (economic or otherwise) with respect to anticipated outcomes.



## 2.1. Eligibility

Funding can only be committed to investigators based in Ontario academic, research or clinical institutions and companies. Partnerships with clinicians and/or scientists outside the province are encouraged.

## 2.2. Eligible Project Costs

Eligible project costs are incremental costs for items that directly support the objectives of the approved project, such as staff salaries, student stipends or assistantships, equipment, fee-for-service contracts, reasonable operating costs and costs related to intellectual property evaluation. Administrative costs directly related to the conduct of the project are eligible. The salary of a Principal Investigator will not be considered as eligible for funding. Institution and overhead costs will not be paid by ONF.

## 2.3. Co-Funding

Co-Funding refers to eligible project costs not borne by ONF. Applicants are encouraged to seek partnership co-funding, in financial contributions or in-kind support.

Supporting documentation for co-funding includes written confirmation from the co-funding source, including detail of the amount of funding and date of funding.

### 2.3.1. Eligible Co-Funding

Possible sources of co-funding include non-Canadian:

- Granting agencies
- Institutional funds, trust funds or foundations
- Industry
- Voluntary or charitable organizations
- Individuals
- Venture capital or other investment funds

ONF will accept co-funding from Canadian firms and corporations.

ONF will only accept funding that was applied for since **January 1st, 2018**.

In-kind contributions will be considered as co-funding on a case-by-case basis. Supporting documentation and clear rationale for the in-kind value is required.



### 3. Submission & Review Process

#### 3.1. Letters of Intent

A letter of intent (LOI), outlining the purpose and scope of the study, should be submitted to ONF by July 1, 2018. This letter should not exceed three pages but should be accompanied by a preliminary budget.

The LOIs will be reviewed with the goal of selecting initiatives that align with ONF/RHI priorities, and describe realistic outcomes for developing new interventions or informing practice or policy. The successful applicants will be invited to develop full submissions and take advantage of the services offered by ONF/RHI with respect to integrated knowledge translation, economic and other forms of evaluation and performance measurement.

The LOI will also be used to identify suitable external reviewers.

#### 3.2. Letters of Intent Submission

All LOIs must be submitted in PDF format via email to:

**Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation**

**Attn:** Dr. Tara Jeji

**Email:** [tara@onf.org](mailto:tara@onf.org)

Letters of intent are due before July 1, 2018, 4:59pm Eastern Standard Time.

**Applications submitted after this time will not be accepted.**

The format of the letter of intent should follow the general guidelines outlined below for the full submission but in an abbreviated manner.

#### 3.3. Key Dates & Timeline

The following is the anticipated timeline for this funding opportunity:

Letter of Intent	July 1, 2018,
Invitation to Submit Full Proposals	August 15, 2018
Full Proposals Submission Deadline	October 15, 2018
Application Review Process	October – December, 2018
Notice of Funding	January 2019
First Installment of Funds	February 2019

Any significant changes to the anticipated timeline will be communicated to applicants.



## 4. Administration Following Notice of Funding

The plan for disbursement of approved funds will be determined based on the specific needs of the project and constraints on when ONF may disburse funds based on agreements with its funding partners. The disbursement schedule may include a retainer from the approved budget until a final report is submitted by the project. The first disbursement will occur once the funding agreement between the funding recipient and ONF is executed and other conditions for the release of funds are met.

## 5. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this opportunity please contact one of the following:

Keith C. Hayes, PhD  
Provincial Lead SCI Research  
t: 416-422-2228  
e: [kchayes@uwo.ca](mailto:kchayes@uwo.ca)

Tara Jeji, MD  
Program Director SCI  
t: 416-422-2228  
e: [tara@onf.org](mailto:tara@onf.org)



## Appendices

### I. Application Preparation Instructions

#### i. Formatting Your Application

Format your application as follows:

- Calibri 11 point font
- 1.0 margin
- 1.5 line spacing
- Header: Insert Project Title and Applicant's Full Name in each page
- Footer: Insert version control (use submission date) and page number in each page
- Budget: Identify all standard budget entries (e.g. salaries, equipment, supplies) as well as co-funding
- Detailed CVs formatted for other institutions (e.g., CIHR) may be used provided the CV contains the requisite information (e.g., publication history, funding history)
- PDF (other formats, e.g., .doc and .docx, will not be accepted).

#### ii. Preparing your Proposal

- Part 1: Title + Abstract (**150 words maximum**)
  - Use plain language suitable for a lay audience. This information will be used by lay reviewers and in documents prepared for the general public as well as for ONF and RHI's funders.
- Part 2: Project Background (**1 page maximum**)
  - Review the literature and describe the current state of knowledge.
  - Explain key assumptions, risks and mitigation strategies. Discuss how the scope, timeline and budget may be affected.
- Part 3: Relevancy (**1.5 pages maximum**)
  - Impact of outcomes on stakeholders
    - Provide a list of all stakeholders (e.g., health care providers, administrators, policymakers, people with SCI) affected by the project.
    - Discuss the anticipated impact of the project outcomes on stakeholders.
  - Appropriate engagement of stakeholders
    - Briefly describe completed and planned engagement with stakeholders (e.g., surveys, workshops, correspondence and consultation) including all stakeholder consultations planned as part of the project.
  - Likelihood for knowledge uptake by target audience
    - Discuss likelihood of knowledge uptake by target audience. Provide supporting evidence, if available.



- Ethical considerations
  - Discuss any potential ethical issues that may arise and how they will be addressed during the execution of the project.
- Part 4: Scientific
  - Significance of issues(s) from clinical and scientific/technical aspects & validity and relevance of evidence provided for project rationale (**1 page maximum**)
    - Discuss the innovation and originality of the proposed project.
    - Describe the current clinical, scientific and/or technical issue(s) that the project addresses. Provide a rationale of how the project will address the issues(s) through its design and/or through the resulting outputs.
    - Discuss the solid and relevant clinical and scientific evidence on which the project rationale is based.
  - Project design (**3 pages maximum**)
    - Provide a detailed description including, but not limited to, methodology, activities, target population and size, controls, specialized resource needs, geographical extent, evaluation methodology, outline of statistical analysis plan, outputs as appropriate to the project and resources (personnel, infrastructure, equipment as applicable) required and currently available.
  - Strategy for knowledge translation (KT) and best practice implementation (BPI) (**1 page maximum**)
    - Describe your KT and BPI strategy, which should include the following
      - Target audience
      - How KT will be integrated into the project
      - How knowledge uptake will be measured
      - What resources will be dedicated to KT activities
      - Description of content requiring dissemination and the expected forum of translation
      - Evidence, if any, to support assumptions/strategy
  - Expected results and performance measurement (**0.5 page maximum**)
    - Project Results (Outputs and Outcomes)
      - List the outputs, immediate outcomes and long-term outcomes of the project.
      - Outputs are the direct products or services of the project and are usually within the control of the project team (e.g., publications, conference presentations).
      - Outcomes are external consequences attributed, in part, to the project. Outcomes are not within the control of the project team; instead they are within the area of the project's influence.
        - Immediate outcomes occur shortly after the outputs are produced and are directly attributable to those outputs. An example of an immediate outcome of a conference presentation might be increased awareness among conference delegates of the content of the presentation.



- Long-term outcomes are higher-level outcomes expected to logically occur once one or more immediate outcomes have been achieved. Long-term outcomes represent the *raison d'être* of the project. They should represent the link between the immediate outcomes and ONF's mission and values. An example of a long-term outcome resulting from increased awareness might be an improvement in evidence-based decision-making in clinical practice environments.
- Outputs and outcomes should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.
- Performance Measurement
  - Identify at least one performance indicator for each output and each immediate outcome.
  - Performance indicators describe how you will measure or assess whether a result has been achieved; they are quantitative or qualitative variables that reliably measure achievement or reflect the changes connected to a project. For example, if you wanted to measure increased awareness on a certain topic, you might distribute a questionnaire asking the following question: "What is your level of awareness about X?" The indicator might be the percentage of respondents who self-report a high level of awareness on topic X. Carrying out the survey at baseline and again after project implementation could provide an indication of the changing level of awareness over time (towards with your project may have contributed).
  - Performance indicators should be valid, reliable, affordable, available and relevant:
    - Valid: The indicators measure what they intend to measure.
    - Reliable: The data collected is the same if collected repeatedly under the same conditions at the same point in time.
    - Affordable: Cost-effective data collection and analysis methods can be developed.
    - Available: Data for the indicators are readily and consistently available to track changes in the indicator.
    - Relevant: The indicator clearly links back to the project's outcomes.
- Likelihood of success of achieving outcomes **(0.5 pages maximum)**
  - Discuss the likelihood of the success of achieving the expected outcomes.
  - Note: This is often determined by the study design and the availability of sufficient study participants as well as investigational products, logistics, etc.
- Linkage to/utilization of ONF strengths **(0.5 pages maximum)**
  - ONF and RHI have a number of strengths that enable them to attain their objectives effectively including: access to and utilization of the Ontario Spinal Cord Injury Research Network (OSCIRN) for multi-centre collaboration, the Knowledge Mobilization Network (KMN), access to a national network of sites through RHI that encompass the health care continuum; national access to SCI subjects for studies; a versatile information management system (RHI Global Research Platform or



EMPOWER); project management resources; and, partnerships with granting agencies and accreditation bodies.

- Discuss how the proposed project utilizes one or more of ONF or RHI strengths.
- Sustainability of implementation of project outcomes **(0.5 pages maximum)**
  - Provide an estimate and assessment of the following costs: 1) knowledge update, or/and 2) implementation of project outcomes. Briefly address the economic benefit of implementing the proposed project and outcomes in Canada and internationally.
- Budget **(1 page maximum)**
  - Provide a detailed budget showing:
    - Total project budget by each fiscal year
    - Total budgetary request to ONF by fiscal year
    - Project costs to be borne by sources co-funding
      - Indicate which costs are to be borne by secured sources of co-funding and identify those sources
      - Indicate which costs are to be borne by sources of co-funding that will be secured at a later date.
    - Complete itemized budget request for each fiscal year
- Budget Justification **(1 page maximum)**
  - Provide an explanation for any items that particularly warrant explicit justification
- Consumer Engagement
  - Describe the role played by consumers in the proposed research process
- Leveraging opportunities **(0.5 pages maximum)**
  - Discuss actual and planned leveraging opportunities and impact to project scope, timeline and budget
- Work plan & likelihood of meeting proposed timelines **(1 page maximum)**
  - Provide a detailed work plan showing key milestones, deliverables and decision points for project continuation (i.e., go/no go).
  - Discuss foreseeable delays and mitigation strategies. Discuss impact to scope, timeline and budget.
- Qualifications and experience of team **(1 page maximum)**
  - On one page, list all project team members, their roles and responsibilities and the percentage of their time allocated to this project (including in-kind labour). Include roles that have been identified, but not filled. If there are unfilled positions, include the recruitment plan in your work plan. ONF/ RHI encourages, wherever possible, the inclusion of people with SCI in the project team.
  - Attach recent CVs for all key team members that include their detailed publication history and funding history. CVs formatted for other institutions, such as CIHR, are acceptable.
- Part 5: Other Information & Supporting Documentation
  - Include supporting documentation for any secured co-funding.



- You may include other information you feel may assist in the review of your application (e.g., copies of relevant approvals, publications and/or presentations, and/or award notices and/or detailed reviewer comments if the application has been submitted to another agency for funding).
- Part 6: Conflict of Interest Statement
  - Please identify ALL real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest:

*A conflict of interest may arise when activities or situations place an individual in a real, potential or perceived conflict between the duties or responsibilities related to the project, and personal, institutional or other interests. These interests include, but are not limited to, business, commercial or financial interests pertaining to the individual, their family members, friends, or their former, current or prospective professional associates.*

- Part 7: Suggestion for Potential Reviewers
  - You may suggest potential reviewers as well as non-reviewers. Declare any perceived or real conflicts of interest at this time. This information will be kept confidential.

## II. Application Review

All applications are reviewed for relevance to ONF and RHI objectives (Business Case Review), potential of uptake and impact on stakeholders (Relevancy Review) and methodology/interpretation (Scientific Review). The Business Case and Relevancy Review are undertaken internally with invited input from consumers and by subject matter experts. The Scientific Review is undertaken by an invited panel of external subject matter experts.

