

# CALLS FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROPOSALS 2021-2022

## APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Deadline for Submission: June 30, 2021

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# REQUEST FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Overview	
Value	As determined by researcher
Duration	1 year ending July 31, 2022
Applications deadlines(s)*	5 p.m. Eastern on June 30, 2021
Results announced*	August 1, 2021
Apply	Minimum \$2500; Maximum to be determined

\*Note: If the deadline falls on a weekend or a Ontario public holiday, the online application system will remain open until 5 p.m. on the next business day.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (WeRPN) provides research grant funds to encourage and support all levels of research through an annual research budget. Eligible researchers include those from Ontario post-secondary research institutions – colleges or universities and/or independent researchers, e.g., not affiliated with a college or university, who believe a proposed project meets all or most of the components, e.g., data integrity, research ethics board approval, peer-reviewed publication, and is commensurate with the size of grant, e.g., small pilot study, case study. These funds are intended to generate high quality academic research co-designed with Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) and RPNs as participants and/or with the involvement of governmental and/or industry partners. The research projects are offered to align with WeRPN's strategic plan and address the under-representation of evidence in the literature regarding the utilization of RPNs, optimization of the RPN roles, and the impact and value of RPN interventions on processes and client outcomes across sectors in our health system. Because of the unique structure of Ontario's nursing profession and the RPN/RN model, research cannot credibly be applied between jurisdictions since non-standardized approaches to education, implementation and use of the role of registered practical nurse, provincially, nationally and/or globally do not exist.

Through its own merit review process, WeRPN determines the number of competitions, establishes the deadlines for competitions, and sets application procedures for small-moderate scale research and research-related activities about the research priorities for Registered Practical Nurses.

## 2. WeRPN

*What is an Ontario Registered Practical Nurse?*

Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) are:

- ❖ regulated nurses with the College of Nurses of Ontario,
- ❖ minimally, hold a diploma in practical nursing from an accredited Ontario college,
- ❖ combine knowledge, skills, and judgement to provide compassionate, informed, and expert, technical, medical, and virtuous nursing care,
- ❖ mostly employed to provide direct care to clients, residents and families on a daily basis, and
- ❖ in even greater demand for their service and skills as Ontario's demographics shift.

Today, more than 55,000 RPNs ([www.cno/stats](http://www.cno/stats)) are registered with the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and support patients, clients and residents in hospitals, primary care practices, public health units, community care agencies, long-term care facilities, retirement homes and schools.

#### *About WeRPN ([www.werpn.com](http://www.werpn.com))*

The Registered Practical Nurses of Ontario (WeRPN), formerly RPNAO, was founded in 1958, and is the professional association representing the voice of RPNs in Ontario with over 14,500 voluntary members.

#### *Mission*

WeRPN's mission is to break the walls down, build the person up, and bring the people together to improve client care. WeRPN realizes this mission via four strategic drivers: advancing expertise, driving evidence, advocacy and influence-building, and innovative growth.

#### *Vision*

WeRPN's vision is to support improved health outcomes and deliver the best possible care to patients, residents, and clients.

#### *Values*

- ❖ Proud Professional- We are smart and knowledgeable. We hold ourselves to rigorous and rising standards. We take pride in ongoing learning and sharing our learning experiences with counterparts at home and around the world.
- ❖ Leading the Way Together - We believe there is tremendous opportunity to deliver even greater client care more effectively. Achieving this requires challenging norms – including the myth that anyone within the health system is more “important” than others. So even though we stand for our members, our brand is committed to providing excellent client care in collaboration with our fellow health professionals.
- ❖ Giving RPNs a voice - We champion the critical role of RPNs by unifying our members, listening carefully to their needs, advocating on their behalf, and telling personal nursing stories in a way that ensures they are heard.
- ❖ Focused on the Greater Good - Everything we do is for the good of the client, the health system, and the nursing profession at large. Client care always comes first.

#### *WeRPN Strategic Plan and Drivers of Impact*

WeRPN's current activities are directed by the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. Please access the strategic plan [here](#)

The current status of the 2020-2024 strategic plan [can be found here](#):

### **3. RESEARCH PRIORITIES**

Through a provincial Innovation Tour (2017), a Research Think Tank (2018) and a focus group at the National Nursing Leaders Conference (2019), WeRPN identified the need for research proposals in the areas of professional development (leadership, research, wellness, clinical practice), role awareness (role clarity, nursing profession equality, interprofessional team collaboration, role optimization), promotion and advocacy (value-add awareness, advocacy) and

innovation (delivery of care, specialization) for sponsored research projects from scientists/ academicians/ professionals/ administrators from innovative institutions.

As a result, our priorities for this 2021-2022 call for proposals include these four priority areas:

1. **Value/impact of the optimized RPN roles.** This priority has direct alignment with WeRPN's strategic drivers of advancing expertise, advocacy and influence and driving evidence. What are the variety of roles and range of activities performed by RPNs, e.g., Caring discourse (feelings and relational care); Technical work (physical and instrumental); Scientific and medical work (cognitive and critical thinking work)? What are the required competencies linked to these roles and activities? How do these roles and competencies compare and contrast to RNs and/or other health care providers? How do the patient outcomes compare and differ from other roles? What is the impact of an RPN providing care on the served patients? What is the public awareness and understanding of nursing scientific knowledge and clinical skills requirements? What is the image RPNs project? What are the institutional restrictions or barriers on RPNs?  
These are only a few of the research questions requiring answers to advance RPN expertise, advocate for and influence the health system about the value of RPNs and provide evidence to support policy changes. What are the RPN competencies required of administrative/leadership for teacher/instructor, Professional Practice Lead, Director of Care roles?
2. **Delivery of care.** This priority has direct alignment to advancing expertise and driving evidence. What new models of care can improve patient outcomes and system performance using optimization of the RPN roles? How does our current system of patient matching to the nurse, the environment and the patient (College of Nurses of Ontario Three Factor Framework)<sup>1</sup> perform? Offering progressive models of care advances RPN expertise and provides evidence to support policy and practice changes. Are RPNs able to use their knowledge, skills, and judgment to greatest extent possible? How do RPNs organize their care for patient assignment; bedside care? Sinking from view and becoming work of others; use of RPN specific cognitive skills for knowledge process model - assessment, treatment planning and treatment delivery; Evaluation of outcomes - examples of outcome measurements need to reflect bedside direct care investigating topics such as gratitude; emotionally attentiveness (time to talk; kind and gentle; listen to expressed concerns; compassionate); patient safety measures; quality of care measures; are patients receiving nursing time equivalent to what they need (Hours per patient day (HPPD)); doses of nurses time; direct observation, surveys, risk adjusted statistics; patient documentation; abstracted data elements; complications – falls, pressure injuries; hospital acquired infections, DVTs, PE; depression; delirium; pain; mortality; failure to rescue; psychosocial status of patient; functional status. What are the concrete contributions around physical (technical and medical knowledge and care), psychosocial (caring and virtuous discourse care) and educational care (health literacy and system navigation knowledge and skills)? What are the models of care and staffing mix combinations? Does a holistic model create more continuity and better outcomes? How do RPNs interact with less skilled workers at the bedside?
3. **Excellence in practice and leading change for better patient outcomes.** This priority directly aligns with the strategic drivers of advancing expertise and driving evidence. RPN specific practice guidelines and evidence-based reviews will provide evidence of innovative

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<sup>1</sup> CNO The patient, the nurse and the environment

and effective protocols that can be measured by patient outcomes. Evidence of impact to patient outcomes and health system change will advance RPN expertise.

4. **Health Human resource and workforce planning.** This priority directly aligns to advocacy and influence, advancing expertise, and driving evidence. Building, maintaining, and planning workforce needs are required because of current workforce challenges: health care staffing shortages, aging and gendered workforce; retention and recruitment issues for nursing industry and by sectors; working conditions (e.g., mandatory overtime); nurse to patient ratio. Evidence in current workforce demographics and population needs linked to educational planning and health system workforce needs drives policy, (e.g., career laddering, micro-credentialling) to mitigate workplace challenges and optimize costly yet valuable human resources.

## 4. GUIDELINES

### 1. GENERAL:

- a. This program of sponsored research projects can be conducted simultaneously or sequentially on themes of critical significance and priority for WeRPN in Ontario, Canada.
- b. The WeRPN expects that the research will develop new understanding and insight on the issues which will become benchmark in terms of concept, theory, methodology and research outcomes.
- c. Such research studies will be commissioned by WeRPN from identified experts, research institutions and practicing clinicians in a desired theme of study.
- d. An institution of institutions, individual scholar, or group of scholars, interested in carrying out a program of research on any theme notified by WeRPN under this program having necessary facilities and expertise, may submit a proposal thereon to the WeRPN.
- e. The extent and scope of these studies can be smaller case studies, exploratory action research studies or extensive studies employing one or multiple methods with larger financial outlays.
- f. Given the breadth of the call for proposals and the nature of research expected under the sponsored program ranging from case studies to small pilot projects to moderate sized endeavours, the WeRPN expects that the research could be interprofessional in character with researchers from different discipline constituting a team, e.g., economic impact analysis. Research teams can be individual researcher or institutes or may consist of more than one department/Centre/institute.

## 5. FUNDS AVAILABLE

The funding is being provided by WeRPN. Annually, the maximum funding per grant is variable. For this call, the 2021-2022 funding is \$80,000, allowing potential for multiple grants. Individual grant awards are dependent on the specifics of the proposal, the number of proposals received, and the number of proposals recommended for funding. Subsequent opportunities for applications may be issued. Matching or exceeding cash or in-kind contributions from partnership organizations are strongly encouraged.

## 6. REVIEW PROCESS AND ADJUDICATION

Applications are adjudicated and available funds are awarded through a merit review process of the WeRPN Research Advisory Council. Each grant will be reviewed by a minimum of three (3) reviewers. Applicants will be offered an opportunity to recommend up to three (3) reviewers. WeRPN bases grant approval decisions on the recommendation of the adjudicators and on the funds available. Funding decisions are guided by the principle of minimum essential funding. Recommendations are based on the evaluation criteria below. Feedback will be provided upon notification of whether grant was awarded or declined.

## 7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Challenge – The aim and importance of the endeavour (60%):

- The research's relevance to needs, challenges, priorities and opportunities facing partner organization (if applicable), WeRPN, and RPNs
- Originality, significant and expected contribution to knowledge
- Appropriateness of the literature review, methods, rigour and theoretical approach
- Potential for the project to have influence and impact with governmental, regulatory, industry and partner organization and beyond.
- Research Questions or Hypothesis: The research questions to be answered/ addressed are unequivocally stated.
- Implications:- The proposal states whether this research would bring forth any implications locally, nationally, or internationally, any methodological innovations or contribute to theory building.

Feasibility – The plan to achieve excellence (20%)

- Duration of the Project: The timelines for the project activities are detailed sufficiently, appear feasible and do not exceed one year. It should indicate the time needed for various tasks such as ethics approval, preparation of schedules, pilot study (if any), data collection, data analysis, report writing etc.
- Budget: The budget indicates the number, type and cost of personnel, travel, data processing, supplies, printing, books, journals, equipment, contingency, and any other items with justification. Indications of other planned resources, including leveraging cash and in-kind support from host institution and/or from partner organization.

- Quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including effective dissemination, exchange and engagement with the partner organization and other stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community. Includes a manuscript prepared for peer review publication. Successful applicants will be encouraged to enable other researchers and stakeholders to access and re-use or text-mine the data suggesting an Open Access approach.
- Involvement of team including RPNs and patients, clients, residents and/or families/caregivers in the design and conduct of the research and/or related activities is evident

Capability – The expertise to succeed (15%)

- Evidence of other knowledge mobilization activities (e.g., films, performances, commissioned reports, presentations, knowledge synthesis, experience in collaboration/other interactions with stakeholders, contribution to public debate and the media) and of impacts on professional practice, social service, policies, etc.
- Evidence of past contributions to training and mentoring of students, postdoctoral researchers, and highly qualified personnel
- Quality, quantity, and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any co-applicants relative to their roles in the partnership and to the stage of their career

Proposal's alignment with WERPN Strategic plan (5%)

- Adjudicated by WeRPN Research Advisory Council

## 8. ELIGIBILITY FOR AWARD

- a) Priority will be given to proposals forwarded by organizations/ institutions with a strong history of RPN research and quality improvement.
- b) Eligible researchers include those from Ontario post-secondary research institutions – colleges or universities, and/or independent researchers, e.g., not affiliated with a college or university, who believe a proposed project meets all or most of the components, e.g., data integrity, research ethics board approval, peer-reviewed publication, and is commensurate with the size of grant, e.g., small pilot study, case study.
- c) In the event that the open competition proposals fail to sufficiently meet the criteria above, WeRPN reserves the right to ask for specific research proposals to seek out studies focused on priority areas. For such purposes, applications may be sought from scientists/ academicians/ professionals/ administrators. In such cases, the prescribed application form will be submitted to WeRPN.

Applying teams will need to minimally consist of:

- One principal applicant –either a new or established researcher with access to research ethics board approval.



- Co-applicant(s) - at least one researcher with expertise in Registered Practical Nursing and the Ontario health system and/or expertise in health services, policy and/or systems research
- Knowledge User - at least one Registered Practical Nurse registered with the College of Nurses of Ontario and currently in the workforce, preferably a member of WeRPN, as appropriate.
- Partner Organization – at least one Ontario health system partner representative with decision-making authority, as appropriate.
- At least one patient/resident/care partner with lived experience of care by an Ontario Registered Practical Nurse, as appropriate.
- Collaborator (optional) – any team member who contributes significantly to the development, design and implementation of the project.

Applicants who demonstrate partnership with the Supporting Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) - Ontario SPOR Support Unit (OSSU) research network is an asset.

## 9. APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

As part of the grant application process, applicants are required to complete the WeRPN Research Application form, with all the sections described below (mandatory), unless otherwise specified:

- Title (maximum 250 characters)
- Summary of proposal (one page maximum)
- Goal(s) and Project Description (five pages maximum)
- Expected Outcomes (one page maximum)
- List of References (Optional) (two pages maximum)
- Quality of the team and anticipated contributions of each team member (two pages maximum)
- Budget and budget justification (two pages max) including funds requested from WeRPN and cash and in-kind contributions from research partners.
- Knowledge Mobilization plan (one page maximum)
- Potential reviewers (optional) (one page maximum)
- Exclusion of potential reviewers (optional) (one page maximum)
- Summary of research contributions and relevant experience of principal applicant (five pages maximum)
- Principal investigator(s) – CV
- Co-investigator(s) – CV
- Knowledge User – CV
- Health System Partner - Letter of engagement/support, as appropriate
- Patient/Resident/Care partner – Letter of engagement/support, as appropriate
- Collaborator(s) – Letter of engagement/support (optional)

## 10. HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be made on the requested application form, e.g., application form in pdf format, along with all supporting materials (maximum three pages).

Applications must be approved by an authorized research grant officer, or equivalent, from the applicant's institution, as dictated by institutional policy. The application deadline is 5 pm EST. No applications will be accepted after the 5 pm EST .

## 11. PROJECT TIME PERIOD KEY DATES:

- ❖ Funding announcement: May 1, 2021
- ❖ Applications due: June 30, 2021 at 5 pm EST. No late submissions will be accepted.
- ❖ Anticipated notice of decision and funding start: August 1, 2021

All grants will be available for a period of up to one year. All travel and research must be completed within one year of receiving the award. Travel or research expenses that occur after one one-year span of the grant will not be eligible unless there is an approved extension of the use of the funds. Extensions can be requested and will be reviewed by WeRPN.

## 12. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Applicants may provide additional materials (3 pages maximum) that they think will strengthen their overall case for funding. The review committee is not obligated to consider these materials but may consider them at their discretion.

## 13. ETHICS: HUMAN SUBJECTS, ANIMALS AND BIOHAZARDS

All research proposals involving ethics (human subjects), animal subjects and/or biohazardous materials must be approved by a recognized institutional review board. Applicants must indicate whether they require approval for use of human and/or animal subjects and/or biohazardous materials in the application.

## 14. FINAL REPORTS

Grant holders will be expected to report on the use of grant funds, on funded activities undertaken during the grant period, and on outcomes. Successful applicants will be informed of reporting requirements upon receiving notice of the award. Final reports are due to WeRPN 30 days after the end date of the one-year project.

The sponsored project will be required to be completed in one year, resulting in a peer-reviewed major publication by a reputed publisher. Limited extensions of time may be granted by the Research Advisory Council. However, no financial enhancement to the initially sanctioned grant shall be done.

## 15. BUDGET

All budget items must adhere to the guidelines outlined for these grants in this document. Adequate budget justification is required in each application (two pages maximum). Decisions will be based on the detailed explanations of costs.

The Institute/individual scholar/group of scholars will have autonomy for framing the budget subject to the following broad expenditure sub-heads:

No	Expenditures for the sole purpose of the research study	Percentage allocation to the total budget of the study
1	Personnel: Full time or Part-time Research Associate or Assistant (staff or student assistance - does not include salaries of principal or co-investigators or collaborators) or project lead	

2	Non-Personnel/Non-Travel: Source Materials/ Software/ Data Base/ Open Access publishing fees	
3	Travel: Travel/Logistics/ Boarding/	
4	Institutional Overheads – administrative staff, telephones, office supplies, office rent used for research purposes	Not exceeding 5%

#### Remuneration and Emoluments of Project Staff

- a) Only essential core research staff should be employed for the project.
- b) Such staff could be engaged by the Project Director/Coordinator on a full time or part time basis and the duration and consolidated monthly emoluments of their employment may be decided by the project director within the limits of the sanctioned financial allocation.
- c) A re-appropriation up to 10% of any expenditure into another existing/new expenditure shall be permissible, subject to approval by the WeRPN.

## 16. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION AND ALLOWABLE COSTS (max. two pages)

### a. Personnel

Costs to hire Research Assistants, Research Associates and to support high quality personnel development may be requested. Applicants must pay appropriate wages and include benefits at a rate no higher than 25%. The budget justification description must include a description of duties of the personnel requested, the required qualifications, and an explanation as to why the position is necessary to the project.

### b. Non-personnel/Non-travel - Supplies and Services

Whenever possible, number of units and unit costs should be explained. Quotes from suppliers should be provided for purchased services, e.g., IT contracts.

### c. Travel

Details should be provided as to why travel is necessary rather than utilizing current technology. Travel must comply with WeRPN's policies and guidelines and will cover travel and subsistence costs only. Original receipts will be required when travel claims are included. Applicants are required to provide documents supporting the costs of all travel and are expected to use the most economical means of transportation and to take advantage of seat sales and travel discount whenever possible. Types of travel and travel costs are detailed below.

- i. Air train fare and car rental
- ii. Mileage  
Mileage costs must be calculated using established WeRPN rates or the research partner rates if the personnel position is subject to bargaining unit contract language.
- iii. Meals and Accommodation  
Applicants should provide their best estimate of the cost of their subsistence for the travel period. Detailed information as to destination and length of stay are required in the budget. Documents supporting the cost of accommodation should be provided. Specific meal allowances, per diem and accommodation rates should be calculated

using established WERPN rates or the research partner rates if the personnel position is subject to bargaining unit contract language.

d. Equipment

i. Computing Equipment and Software

No computer equipment funding is allowed under this "Request for proposals". Funding for relevant/ specialized software is allowed.

ii. Other Equipment

e. Ineligible expenses

Grant funds must be used exclusively for the sole purpose of the funded grant proposal. Equipment costs and purchases are ineligible expenses although could be recognized as in-kind contributions if purchased new. Receipts of purchased goods would be required documentation.

## 17. DECISION

WeRPN reserves the right to determine the eligibility of applications, based on the information therein. WeRPN also reserves the right to interpret the policies governing its funding opportunities. WeRPN reserves the right to exclude from competition any submissions that are incomplete or inconsistent. Excluded applications will not be presented to reviewers for consideration. Once notified, the successful applicant will receive a letter of agreement and must sign a contract explicitly stating the terms of the agreement with WeRPN.

## 18. PROCEDURE FOR AWARD OF SPONSORED RESEARCH PROJECT

All research proposals received, along with those selected for research grant, will be placed before the Research Advisory Council for final approval.

All the Sponsored Projects after due process of evaluation by evaluation experts will be subsequently recommended to the Research Advisory Council. Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by July 2021. These results will be transmitted to applicants electronically. Successful applicants are required to provide confirmation of their acceptance within 7 days of award notification.

WeRPN may hold interactive sessions with the prospective recipients of sponsored studies to finalize the academic and financial details.

Each Sponsored Research Study will be asked to provide the name and contact information of their departmental Finance Manager. WeRPN Director of Finance will ensure the necessary information is provided to the awardee's departmental financial office so installment payments can be provided. The allocations will be disbursed in three installments according to the agreement/contract, and the last being released on completion of the study and submission of report.

Installments subsequent to the first will be released on the basis of the receipt of progress reports. A template will be provided for progress reports.

## 19. REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Each sponsored study's Principal Investigator will have a reporting relationship with the Research Advisory Council using interim and final reports.

## 20. OBLIGATIONS OF THE INSTITUTION

All studies funded by WeRPN under sponsored projects are expected to acknowledge the supportive contribution of WeRPN in all forms of dissemination of findings of the study both in print and on electronic media.

The forwarding institution, where the proposed research project is to be located and administered has to provide, in the prescribed format contained in the Application Form, an undertaking to administer and manage the WeRPN grant and provide logistical support for study.

Such institution will be under obligation to ensure submission of the final report and audited statement of accounts.

Should an awardee be unable to complete the research study for which he/she is receiving support, WeRPN should be notified immediately.

In the event that the recipient/awardee fails to carry out the terms and conditions of the agreement, WeRPN may, at any time, cancel all further instalments of funds and demand the repayment of an amount equal to any funds WeRPN provided.

## 21. CONTACT INFORMATION:

Those applicants needing help while preparing the application should communicate with WeRPN well in advance of the application deadline. For assistance with general inquiries, technical issues or proposal questions, this competition is administered by:

Professional Practice Department

WeRPN

5025 Orbitor Drive, Building 5, Suite 200

Mississauga, Ontario L4W 4Y5

Email: [ppractice@werpn.com](mailto:ppractice@werpn.com) (Subject line: Research Request for proposals)

Phone: (905) 602-4664

Fax: (905) 602-4666

Contact person: Attention: Annette Weeres, Director of Professional Practice and Research

## 22. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Applicants must complete the WeRPN Academic Research Grant Application Form and combine with all other required information and forward in a single pdf document with file name -

Applicant last name\_first name\_2021WeRPNresearchgrant.pdf

Please submit file to:

Annette Weeres

Director of Professional Practice and Research

[aweeres@werpn.com](mailto:aweeres@werpn.com)

If you are applying for more than one research project, separate proposals are required for each submission.

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.