



Registered Practical Nurses
Association of Ontario

CALL FOR FELLOWSHIP PROPOSALS 2021-2022

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Deadline for Submission: July 15, 2021

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REQUEST FOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROPOSALS

Overview	
Value	Up to a maximum of \$12,500 WeRPN funded with matching 30% employer <u>in-kind</u> contribution(maximum \$3750)
Duration	ending June 30, 2022
Applications deadlines(s)*	5 p.m. Eastern on July 15, 2021
Results announced*	Aug 15, 2021

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

1. INTRODUCTION

The Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (WeRPN) wishes to encourage and support all levels of research through an annual research budget. For fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, WeRPN is inviting applications for two co-sponsored RPN research fellowships up to a maximum of \$12,500 each. The purpose of the research fellowships is to develop opportunities for RPNs to build applied research knowledge capacity and capability in “real-world” contexts, facilitate a culture of curiosity and clinical practice improvements, and nurture confidence and competence in leading small scale research studies for RPNs, e.g., writing for publication. Using evidence to inform practice is an entry to practice competency requirement that requires nurturing and support. WeRPN hopes to encourage and facilitate individual RPNs and employers to engage in research to achieve enhanced capacity and capability in evidence-informed practice.

WeRPN welcomes co-sponsored research fellowship applications for:

- (1) Pilot research studies which may lead to grant applications to larger funding agencies, or
- (2) Small research studies

The co-sponsorship criteria include:

1. a 30% matching in-kind contribution up to a maximum of \$3750 from the RPN fellow’s employer, and
2. completion of the project by June 30, 2022.

2. WeRPN

What is an Ontario Registered Practical Nurse?

Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) are:

- ❖ regulated nurses with the College of Nurses of Ontario,

- ❖ current education - 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,
- ❖ majority 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) 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)

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. FELLOWSHIP FOCUS & 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 research as a target area for enhancement. A research strategic plan was developed and is being implemented for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. To operationalize the WeRPN research strategic plan, two areas of focus were established:

1. Sponsor/support/co-produce/create priority-area research projects that reflect current population needs' trends, and emphasizes category-specific cognitive knowledge, skills, interventions, and tactics aligned with WeRPN research priorities. A call for research proposals was released May 5 and May 10, 2021.
2. Create an inquisitive knowledge culture. Building a culture of research within the RPN profession is dependent on RPN members and the WeRPN professional practice team to facilitate interest and desire to support evidence-informed practice and to build research capacity. The call for fellowship proposals is a key strategy to building an inquisitive knowledge culture and research capacity.

Our call for fellowship proposals for 2021-2022 can be generated based on questions, issues or problems identified within your workplace. Additionally, the fellowship project can target any of the four priority areas described below identified by WeRPN:

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)? 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 with RPN intervention compare and differ from other roles? What is the impact of an RPN providing care to their 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 optimize

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) perform? Offering progressive models of care optimizes 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? How do RPNs integrate into interprofessional collaborative models of care? How do RPNs use specific cognitive skills for the 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)); quality patient to 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 other 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. This priority is focused on innovative RPN practice using evidence that results in effective patient outcomes and health system changes that optimizes 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

Proposals must:

1. Identify an RPN applicant and an organizational Executive Sponsor.
2. Involve practice settings where RPNs are directly involved in the delivery of patient/client care (e.g., hospitals, long term care, community care, retirement homes, assisted living, public health, primary care, private practice) OR Involve work environments where RPNs are not providing direct care but are supporting teams, clients and families while using their nursing knowledge to support the health of Ontarians.
3. Be co-sponsored by and not limited to a health care, social services or educational institution with a matching 30% in-kind contribution (maximum \$3750) to the overall project costs.
4. For members without research preparation, a formal or informal arrangement with an established researcher, including but not limited to researchers in academia affiliated with an Ontario post-secondary academic research institution, e.g., college or university, and/or hospitals, community care, long term care, independent researchers, and research institutes.

5. FUNDS AVAILABLE

The funding is being provided by WeRPN. For this call in 2021-2022, the maximum funding per fellowship is \$12,500. Two fellowship grants are available. A 30% in-kind matching contribution, up to a maximum of \$3750, from the employer partnership organizations are required. The only eligible expenses are the salary and benefits of the RPN fellow.

6. HOW TO APPLY

1. The application form must be completed by all applicants. All details, including contact information must be complete.
2. **Complete applications must be received by July 15, 2021, time stamped no later than 1700 hours.**
3. The application must be typed letter quality, 12 cpi or 10 point, 1.5 spacing, 1" inch margins.

The project description may be a maximum of seven (7) pages in length.

- a. Title (maximum 250 characters)
- b. Goal(s) and Project Description including methodology, ethics requirement, budget, timelines and expected outcomes (5 pages maximum)
- c. Quality of the team – description of the applicant, corporate partner and research affiliate (2 pages maximum)

- d. Fellowship Applicant's Curriculum Vitae CV (not included in total page count)
 - e. Researcher's Curriculum Vitae CV (not included in total page count)
 - f. Letter of support from organization's Executive sponsor (not included in total page count)
 - g. List of References (2 pages maximum), Optional (not included in total page count)
4. A Certificate of Research Ethics Review approval is required if human or animal subjects are involved. This can be pending and included with the final report.

7. 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.

8. ETHICS: HUMAN SUBJECTS, ANIMALS AND BIOHAZARDS

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

9. REVIEW PROCESS AND ADJUDICATION

Applications are adjudicated and available funds are awarded through a merit review process of the WeRPN Research Advisory Council. WeRPN bases fellowship approval decisions on the recommendation of the adjudicators and on the funds available. Recommendations are based on the evaluation criteria below. Feedback will be provided upon notification if a grant was declined.

If the project is a pilot study, the researchers should identify how the study will contribute to the development of a larger study/research program and identify the agency to which the application for the next phase will be targeted.

Two fellowships per year will be granted. The Chair will review the forms from the review team to determine:

- Based on ratings, the highest rated proposal will be recommended by Research Advisory Council to CEO for funding.
- If more than one proposal has the same highest rating, *then the Chair will submit a ranking for the proposals (the Chair ranking will only be used in this circumstance).*
- In the unlikely circumstance that the committee does not find any of the proposals fundable in their current form, then no grant will be awarded.

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Background and research problem (10%)

- Is the scope of the research problem/issue clearly established?
- Does the proposal address an issue of relevance to Registered Practical Nursing?
- Are the expected outcomes described?

Research question (15%)

- Is the research question or hypothesis to be tested clearly articulated?
- Does the question/hypothesis flow logically from the research problem?

Methods (30%)

- Is study design described clearly?
- Is the design suitable for the question posed?
- Is the sample described? Are inclusion and exclusion criteria clear?
- Is the sampling plan and recruitment method described, suited to the design and reasonable?
- Is the plan for data analysis clearly described and suited to the design?

Ethical concerns (20%)

- Are ethical considerations adequately addressed? (e.g. confidentiality, use of proxy consent if the study is to include persons with cognitive impairment)
- Is the process for Ethics Approval identified?

Researcher /Research team expertise (20%)

- Is the experience of the researcher/researcher team suited to the proposed method?
- If the fellow is a novice researcher, do they have the support of experienced investigators?
- Do the investigators describe how this study links to development of a program of research and/or the WeRPN research priorities?

Budget and Financial Management (5%)

- It is feasible that the fellow is expected to complete the project as proposed within the timeframe and budget specified.
- Is a schedule provided?

11. DECISION

Once the application period has closed, the Chair will circulate a list of fellowship applicants to the committee. WeRPN reserves the right to determine the eligibility of applications, based on the information therein. WeRPN reserves the right to exclude from competition any submissions that are incomplete or inconsistent. Each fellowship application will be reviewed by a minimum of three (3) reviewers. 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.

12. PROJECT TIME PERIOD KEY DATES:

- ❖ Funding announcement: June 2021
- ❖ Applications due: July 15, 2021 at 5 pm. No late submissions will be accepted.
- ❖ Anticipated notice of decision and funding start: Aug 15, 2021

13. FINAL REPORTS

Each sponsored fellow will have a reporting relationship with the Research Advisory Council using interim and final reports.

Fellowship holders will be expected to report on the 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 one month after the end date of the project – July 30, 2022.

The sponsored project will be required to be completed by June 30, 2022. Limited extensions of time may be granted by the Research Advisory Council. However, no financial enhancement to the initially sanctioned grant shall be done.

14. PROCEDURE FOR AWARD OF SPONSORED RESEARCH PROJECT

After due process of evaluation by evaluation experts, the successful project will be subsequently recommended to the Research Advisory Council. Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by Aug 15, 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 two installments according to the agreement/contract, and the last being released on completion of the study by June 30, 2022.

15. ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Fellowship applicant is required to:

- a. carry out the Project in accordance with an agreement with WeRPN.

- b. use the Funds only for the purpose of carrying out the Approved Project.
- c. not use the Funds to cover any cost that has or will be funded or reimbursed by one or more of any third party, ministry, agency, or organization of the Government of Ontario.
- d. ensure that the Approved Project is completed by the Completion Date; and notify WeRPN if the Approved Project cannot be completed by the Completion Date. If the fellowship applicant has not used the Funding for the purpose of the Approved Project, WeRPN may request repayment of all or part of the Funding within thirty (30) days.
- e. submit immediately and in writing, any substantive changes to the Approved Project to WeRPN for written approval. Minor changes or pivots resulting from planned tests of change may proceed without approval and must be documented in the final report.
- f. submit a final report to WeRPN to the Chair within the one year duration of the project.
- g. The research fellow is expected to present or publish findings from the study, e.g., WeRPN Annual General Meeting & Conference, WeRPN newsletter/journal. WeRPN will provide an opportunity for fellows to present a video webinar to the RPN community. Submitted abstracts, manuscripts and citations should be included in the final report.
- h. The support of WeRPN should be acknowledged in presentations and publications.
- i. Final Project Report Due: July 31, 2022. The report must include a description of the project, outcomes and personal experience of the fellow and final budget reconciliation.
- j. Any violation of rules will entail refund of the entire research grant to WeRPN.

16. TERMINATION

Either party may terminate this Agreement:

- a. at any time for convenience upon fourteen (14) days' written notice to the other party; or
- b. immediately upon written notice if the other party becomes insolvent, or is made the subject of bankruptcy, conservatorship, receivership, or similar proceedings.

17. 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: nsnobelen@werpn.com (Subject line: Request for research fellowship)

proposals)
Phone: (519)-352-7190
Contact person: Attention: Dr. Nancy Snobelen

18. 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_2021WeRPNresearchfellowshipgrant.pdf

Please submit file to:

Annette Weeres

Director of Professional Practice and Research

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.