



Registered Practical Nurses
Association of Ontario

CALL FOR FELLOWSHIP PROPOSALS 2024-2025

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Deadline for Submission: March 31, 2024

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REQUEST FOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROPOSALS

Overview	
Value	Up to a maximum of \$12,500.00 WeRPN funded with matching 30% employer <u>in-kind</u> contribution (maximum \$3,750.00)
Duration	One year ending June 30, 2025
Applications deadlines(s)*	March 31, 2024 at midnight (April 1, 1200 AM)
Results announced*	June 1, 2024

*Note: If the deadline falls on a weekend or a Canadian public holiday, the application process will remain open until midnight 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 implementation plan and budget. WeRPN invites RPNs to apply for funded RPN research fellowship co-sponsored by their employer or community organization. RPN research fellowships begin July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 and can receive up to a maximum of \$12,500.00 of WeRPN funding. The purpose of the research fellowships is to develop opportunities for RPNs to build applied research knowledge capacity and capability (e.g., ethics application, data collection/analysis and writing for publication) in “real-world” contexts, facilitate a culture of curiosity, and nurture confidence and competence in leading small scale research studies for RPNs (e.g., policy, health system and clinical practice improvements). WeRPN wishes to encourage and facilitate individual RPNs and partnering organizations to engage in research, as using evidence to inform practice is an entry to practice competency that requires nurturing and support.

WeRPN welcomes co-sponsored research fellowship applications from academic (college or university), independent research, and service provider organizations. The co-sponsorship criteria include:

- a) a 30% matching in-kind contribution up to a maximum of \$3,750.00 from the RPN fellow’s sponsor, and
- b) completion of the project by June 30, 2025.

2. WeRPN

Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) are:

- ❖ regulated nurses with the College of Nurses of Ontario,
- ❖ minimally, hold a diploma in practical nursing from an accredited Canadian 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 60,000 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 16,544 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 and the current status <https://www.werpn.com/about/> here.

3. FELLOWSHIP FOCUS & PRIORITIES

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. Applications for academic research awards open in November and close in March.
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. Applications for RPN research fellowship awards open in November and close in March.

4. GUIDELINES

Proposals must:

1. Identify an RPN applicant, an organizational Executive Sponsor (e.g., director, manager, chief nursing executive, etc.), **and** an academic mentor from a university or college or independent facility with research experience.
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 \$3,750.00) to the overall project costs. In-kind contributions could include, but is not limited to time to schedule RPN replacement, use of office space, laptop, internet and telephone, executive sponsor time spent with RPN research fellow, etc.

5. FUNDS AVAILABLE

The funding is being provided by WeRPN. For this call in 2024-2025, the maximum funding is \$12,500.00 per fellowship. Eligibility of fellowship funding will include RPN compensation for research activities, including conferences, travel and lodging. Two fellowship grants are available.

6. HOW TO APPLY

- a) Applicants must complete an online application form. All details, including contact information must be complete.
 - Step 1: Visit <https://www.werpn.com>, click the 'research' tab and select 'research calls for proposals from the drop down menu
 - Step 2: Review fellowship application guidelines carefully to complete all required fields
 - Step 3: Submit completed applications through the WeRPN research portal by March 31, 2024 (*Note: the selection committee will only review applications that have been fully completed)
- b) Complete applications must be submitted through the www.werpn.com research portal by March 31, 2024 by midnight EST (April 1, 2024 12:00AM).
- c) The submission must follow the online application form, be typed letter quality, 12 cpi or 10 point, 1.5 spacing, 1" inch margins and include:
 - i. Title of Project
 - ii. Contact Information for RPN Research Fellowship Candidate
 - iii. Contact Information for Executive Sponsor
 - iv. Contact Information for Academic Research Mentor
 - v. Funding Requested & In-Kind Contribution (30%)
 - vi. Other Funding Sources
 - vii. Pilot Project (Yes/No)
 - viii. Document Upload (*CV-RPN Fellow; CV-Executive Sponsor; CV-Academic Mentor; Letter of support from Executive Sponsor - partnering organization*)
 - ix. Research Documents
 - i. Research proposal (*1-page maximum*)
 - ii. Quality of the team (*2-page maximum*)
 - iii. Budget and budget justification (*2-page maximum*)
 - iv. Additional documents – optional (*3-page maximum*) (**note: the selection committee will review materials at their discretion and are not obligated to consider these documents during the review process*)
 - v. List of references
 - a. Attestation

7. 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. A recognized institutional review board must approve all research fellowship proposals involving ethics (human subjects), animal subjects and/or biohazardous materials.

8. REVIEW PROCESS AND ADJUDICATION

Applications are evaluated and available funds are recommended through a merit review process. WeRPN fellowship approval decisions are based on the recommendation of the evaluators and on the funds available. Each fellowship application will be evaluated by a minimum of three (3) reviewers. Dianne Martin, Chief Executive Office, WeRPN makes the final approval decision. Recommendations are based on the evaluation criteria below.

Two fellowships will be granted. The Research Advisory Council will evaluate the fellowship proposals and determine:

- Based on ratings, the proposals that will be recommended by Research Advisory Council to the CEO for funding approval.
- In the unlikely circumstance that the evaluators do not find any of the proposals fundable in their current form, then no grant will be awarded.

9. EVALUATION CRITERIA

1) **Objectives of the fellowship** – Is the scope of the RPN-research Fellowship clearly articulated? Is the scope of the Fellowship clearly aligned with the original research problem/issue? Do the fellowship objectives flow logically from the background and research problem/issue?

- How well does this fellowship enhance the **WeRPN priorities and goals** of:
 - i) developing opportunities for RPNs to build applied research knowledge capacity and capability in “real-world” contexts,
 - ii) facilitating a culture of curiosity and clinical practice improvements, nurture confidence and competence in leading small scale research studies for RPNs, e.g., writing for publication,
 - iii) using evidence to inform practice, and/or
 - iv) encouraging and facilitating individual RPNs and employers to engage in research to achieve enhanced capacity and capability in evidence-informed practice?

2) **Methods/Methodologies**:

- i) Is a **learning plan** clearly outlined for the fellowship?
- ii) Is the proposed methodology appropriate and sufficient to achieve the objectives of the learning plan?
- iii) Do the activities link to the objectives?

- iv) Is the proposed methodology achievable in the timeframes proposed?
 - v) Is the design suitable for the fellowship posed?
 - vi) Are the research activities clearly described and suited to the fellowship learning plan?
 - vii) Do the described activities cover all aspects of learning about research studies (*e.g., study design, choosing methods of study, issue of ethics, instrument selection or design, literature review, participant sampling and recruitment, data collection, data analysis, knowledge mobilization, e.g., writing for publication, peer-reviewed manuscripts, conference abstract writing and presentation, resource development, etc.*)
- 3) **Expected deliverables:** Are the expected outcomes described? Do the proposed deliverables match the objectives? Do the deliverables include a final report to WeRPN? Is there a knowledge mobilization plan (Kmb)? Does the Kmb plan include involvement from the fellow?
- 4) **Benefit to the fellow.** Are the described expected benefits to the fellow value for money, time and effort?
- 5) **Research/Research team expertise:**
- i) Is the experience of the academic researcher suited to the proposed fellowship objectives/method?
 - ii) Is the description of the executive sponsor's role clear and sufficient?
 - iii) Is the executive sponsorship role beneficial to the fellow's role?
 - iv) Is the description of how the fellowship will enhance the employer's organization clear and appropriate?

10. DECISION

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. 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 in agreement with academic institutions and organizational sponsors.

11. PROJECT TIME PERIOD KEY DATES:

- ❖ Funding announcement: November 2023
- ❖ Applications due: March 31, 2024 by midnight (April 1, 2024 12:00 AM). No late submissions will be accepted.
- ❖ Anticipated notice of decision: June 1, 2024

12. FINAL REPORTS

Each sponsored RPN research fellow, academic mentor and executive sponsor will have a reporting relationship with the Research Advisory Council using interim and final reports.

Fellowship holders will be expected to report on their activities undertaken during the grant period, and on outcomes. Successful applicants will be informed of reporting requirements upon receiving notice of the award. The sponsored project is a one-year project and will be required to be completed by June 30, 2025. Limited extensions of time may be granted by the Research Advisory Council. However, no financial enhancement to the initially sanctioned grant shall be done.

Final reports are due to WeRPN 30 days after the end date of the project – July 30, 2025.

13. PROCEDURE FOR AWARD OF SPONSORED RESEARCH PROJECT

After due process of the reviewers, the successful project will be subsequently recommended by the Research Advisory Council to the WeRPN CEO. Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by June 1, 2024. These results will be transmitted to applicants electronically. Successful applicants are required to provide confirmation of their acceptance within 7 days of award notification.

Each Sponsored RPN Research Fellowship will be asked to provide the name and contact information of their organization's 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 July 30, 2025.

14. ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Fellowship applicant is required to:

- a) carry out the Project in accordance with the 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 Research Advisory Council Chair timeframes described in the agreement for 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 30, 2025. The report must include a description of the project, outcomes, personal experience of the fellow and final budget reconciliation.
- j) Any violation of rules will entail refund of the entire research grant to WeRPN.

15. 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.

16. 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:

Research Department

WeRPN

5025 Orbitor Drive, Building 5, Suite 200

Mississauga, Ontario L4W 4Y5

Email: research@werpn.com (Subject line: Request for research fellowship proposals)

Phone: 647-932-4246 ext. 445

Contact person: Attention: Jen Calver

17. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Applicants must complete submit the RPN-research fellowship application through the www.werpn.com research portal. Submissions are due by March 31, 2024 at midnight (April 1, 2024 1200 AM).

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.
Thank you for your support of RPNs in research.**