

CALL FOR FELLOWSHIP PROPOSALS 2025-2026

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Deadline for Submission: March 31, 2025 (11:59
PM)

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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, 2026
Applications deadlines(s)*	March 31, 2025, at 11:59 PM
Results announced*	June 1, 2025

*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 a strategic research implementation plan. WeRPN invites RPNs to apply for funded RPN-research fellowship grants co-sponsored by an employer or community organization. RPN research fellowships begin July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and can receive up to a maximum of \$12,500.00 of funding from WeRPN, and complementary access to participate in the 'Introduction to Research for RPNs' 8-week online course valued at \$310.75 (members) or \$403.98 (non-members). The purpose of the RPN-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 proposals from RPNs on a research topic area of interest. All proposals for WeRPN RPN Research Fellowships must be in partnership with a research mentor who has demonstrated expertise in research methodologies, and co-sponsored by an executive sponsor from an organization who has authority for organizational expenditures related to in-kind resources and payroll. Fellowship timeframe of 1 year to be completed between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

The co-sponsorship criteria:

- a) A 30% in-kind contribution up to a maximum of \$3,750 from the executive sponsor organization through written agreement with WeRPN
- b) Shares interest and believes in the content of the study
- c) Enables and commit organizational resources to support the RPN research fellow
- d) Support the RPN research fellowship development, implementation and evaluation of their learning plan/goals for the specific project

Research Mentor criteria:

- a) Provide instruction and guidance on the research methods and tasks
- b) Provide resources that might be required to assist with research related activities (e.g., ethics applications, research methods, knowledge translation activities)
- c) Provide mentorship to support the RPN research fellowship development, implementation and evaluation of their learning plan/goals for the specific project

2. WeRPN

Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) are:

- ❖ regulated nurses with the College of Nurses of Ontario,
- ❖ hold a diploma in practical nursing from an accredited Canadian college
- ❖ leaders who foster continued self-growth to meet the challenges of an evolving healthcare system
- ❖ healthcare professionals who work in settings or circumstances where healthcare is delivered
- ❖ advocates for the implementation and use of evidence-informed practice
- ❖ nurses who practice autonomously, safely, competently and ethically along the continuum of care in situations of health and illness across a client's lifespan
- ❖ competent with transferable knowledge and skills across all areas of responsibility including direct care, administration, education and research
- ❖ nurses who build practice upon the four concepts of person, environment, health and nursing.

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 14,000 voluntary members.

Mission

As the voice of RPNs in Ontario, our mission is to break down barriers, raise each other up, and collaboratively enhance the difference RPNs can make across the health system. WeRPN realizes this mission via six strategic pillars: 1) Building and Engaging our Membership 2) Advocating for the Shared Interests of RPNs 3) Advancing the Expertise of our Profession 4) Driving an Evidence-Informed Practice 5) Communicating RPN Value and Identity 6) Strengthening our Organization for the Future.

Vision

Together we strive for a vision where all RPNs are exceptionally prepared, strategically positioned, and recognized for their distinctive contributions to improved health outcomes and exceptional care.

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 patient/resident/client, the health system, and the nursing profession at large. Care always comes first.

WeRPN Strategic Plan and Impact Pillars

WeRPN’s current activities are directed by the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. Please access the strategic plan and annual report 2023-2024 by [clicking here](#).

3. FELLOWSHIP FOCUS & PRIORITIES

To operationalize the WeRPN strategic plan, four supporting strategies were established for driving an evidence-informed practice:

1. **Expand research infrastructure.** Grow our robust research infrastructure that engages RPNs in research, facilitates RPN-inclusive studies, fosters external collaborations, and integrates evidence-informed practice into RPN roles
2. **Research-informed clarity.** Utilize evidence to improve role clarity, enhancing both RPN, nursing leadership, health partner and broader public perceptions about value RPNs bring to healthcare.
3. **Leadership through research literacy.** Ensure that RPNs are proficient in the language and methodologies of research and evidence – enabling them to lead effectively within healthcare systems.
4. **Promote identity and recognition through research.** Highlight the unique identity of RPNs and their contributions to healthcare through evidence.

WeRPN RPN Research Fellowship priorities:

1. Provide opportunities for RPNs to participate in small-scale research projects to foster professional growth and development by advancing research literacy, participation in all phases of research, including knowledge translation and mobilization activities.
2. Provide opportunities for organizations to engage in RPN inclusive research
3. Enhance RPN, health leaders, and broader public perceptions about value RPNs bring to healthcare.
4. Creating an inquisitive knowledge culture, and a culture of research through research capacity building
5. Exchange knowledge about RPNs experience in research and related outcomes.

4. GUIDELINES

Proposals must:

1. Identify an RPN applicant, an organizational Executive Sponsor (e.g., director, manager, chief nursing executive, etc.), and a research mentor from a university or college or independent facility with demonstrated research experience.
2. Involve RPN practice settings and work environments that are supportive of RPNs' participation in a research fellowship, including sponsoring a 30% in kind contribution (maximum \$3,750.00) to the overall project costs.

Examples of in-kind contributions are use of office space and equipment (laptop, internet, printer), schedule RPN replacement during research activities, executive sponsor (or designate) time spent with RPN related to fellowship project.

5. FUNDS AVAILABLE

The funding is being provided by WeRPN. For this call in 2025-2026, the maximum funding is \$12,500.00 per fellowship. Eligible costs of fellowship funding will include RPN compensation for research activities, including wages, benefits, conferences, travel and lodging according to WeRPN's policies. Two fellowship grants are available. Budget and budget justification must be allocated for the RPN fellow.

6. HOW TO APPLY

- a) Applicants must complete an application through WeRPNs online portal. 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: Review WeRPN research fellowship resources (infographic, videos) to assist with preparing the application.
 - Step 4: Prepare application and export to pdf format - research proposal, quality of the team document, budget and budget justification, teams CVs

and letter of support, and additional supplementary documents as required.

- Step 4: Upload and submit completed application (pdf versions) to the WeRPN research portal by 11:59pm (EST) on March 31, 2025 (*Note: the application must be complete as the application portal does not offer a “save and return” function)

b) The submission must follow the online application format. All uploaded documents are to be typed letter quality, 12 cpi or 10 point, 1.5 spacing, 1” inch margins, saved in pdf format. Sections for completion 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 noted, if applicable
- vii. Pilot Project Status (Yes/No)
- viii. Documents for Upload in pdf format:
 - i. *CV/Resume-RPN-research Fellowship candidate.*
 - ii. *CV-Executive Sponsor.*
 - iii. *CV-Academic Mentor.*
 - iv. *Letter of support from Executive Sponsor - partnering organization)*
- ix. Research Proposal Documents – for upload in pdf format
 - i. Research proposal (*1-2 page maximum*) including research question, burden of the issue, relevance, and goals of the project
 - 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 bibliographic references (Vancouver style is recommended)
- x. 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 for human subjects, animal subjects and/or biohazardous materials. Individuals conducting research on the previously mentioned subjects and materials require completion of TCPS2 Core ethics certification.
<https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

8. REVIEW PROCESS AND ADJUDICATION

Applications are evaluated and available funds are recommended through a merit evaluation process. WeRPN fellowship approval decisions are based on the recommendation of the evaluators and on the funds available. The Chief Executive Office, WeRPN, makes the final approval decision. Funding for two fellowships is available. Recommendations are based on the evaluation criteria below.

- Each fellowship application will be independently evaluated by a minimum of three (3) reviewers from the WeRPN Research Advisory Council (RAC). The RAC will evaluate the fellowship proposals and determine the proposals that will be recommended to the Chief of Nursing Practice and Research, and 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** – Scope of the proposed research project and scope of the RPN research experience

- i. 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 (e.g., research language, knowledge, and methodologies) in “real-world” contexts, facilitating a culture of curiosity and clinical practice improvements, nurture confidence and competence in small scale research studies for RPNs, e.g., writing for publication,
 - ii) using evidence to inform practice, and/or
 - iii) encouraging and facilitating individual RPNs and employers to engage in research to achieve enhanced capacity and capability in evidence-informed practice?

2) **Learning Plan**

Is a learning plan clearly outlined for the RPN research fellowship to identify learning objectives specific for the fellow and expected research outcomes.

- i) Do the activities of the learning plan link to the fellowship research objectives?

3) **Research Methods/Methodologies:**

- i) Is the proposed methodology achievable in the timeframes proposed?
- ii) Is the design posed suitable for the fellowship?
- iii) Are the research activities clearly described and suited to the fellowship learning plan?
- iv) 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.*)
- v) Has the question of ethics been addressed in the proposal?

- 4) **Expected deliverables:** Are the expected outcomes described? Do the proposed deliverables match the research objectives? Do the deliverables include an interim and final report to WeRPN? Is there a knowledge mobilization plan (Kmb)? Does the Kmb plan include involvement from the fellow?

- 5) **Benefit to the fellow.** Are the learning objectives beneficial to the fellow? Are the described expected benefits to the fellow, value for money, time and effort?

6) **Research/Research team expertise:**

- i) Is the experience of the research mentor suited to the proposed fellowship objectives and research topic methods?
- ii) Is the description of the executive sponsor's role clear and sufficient?
- iii) Is the executive sponsorship role enabling the fellow's success?
- iv) Is the description of how the fellowship will enhance the employer's organization clear and appropriate?

7) **Budget and Budget Justification**

- i) Is the budget allocated appropriately for goals of the RPN research fellowship (*e.g., RPN compensation for research activities, including wages, benefits, conferences, travel and lodging*)
- ii) Are the in-kind contributions of the executive sponsor clearly described

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 an agreement that explicitly states terms that are mutually agreeable with WeRPN, the research mentor's institutions, executive sponsors, and RPN research fellow.

11. PROJECT TIME PERIOD KEY DATES:

- ❖ Funding announcement: November 2024
- ❖ Applications due: March 31, 2025 (11:59 pm)
*** No late submissions will be accepted.
- ❖ Anticipated notice of decision and funding start: June 1, 2025
- ❖ Project start date: July 1, 2025 (Agreements signed)
- ❖ Project end date: June 30, 2026

12. REPORTS

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

Fellowship holders will be expected to report on their activities undertaken during the grant period related to their learning objectives and research study activities and outcomes. Fellows may request to have study materials (e.g., conference posters, papers, infographics) published or shared via WeRPN's electronic research library. 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, 2026. Limited extensions of time may be granted. In the funding agreement, a condition of funding clause regarding request for extension process on funded research proposals clarifies whether extensions of agreements will be approved. Extensions are possible for extenuating circumstances, e.g., death in family, only. Delays with processes, e.g., signing of agreement or ethics approval, are not considered extenuating circumstances. All extensions must be requested in writing and approved by WeRPN.

Interim reports are due January 12, 2026. Final reports are due to WeRPN 30 days after the end date of the project – July 30, 2026.

13. PROCEDURE FOR AWARD OF SPONSORED RESEARCH PROJECT

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by June 1, 2024. These results will be transmitted to applicants by email. 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 Chief of Finance will ensure the necessary information is provided to the recipient'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, 2026.

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) acknowledge or decline participation in the WeRPN 'Introduction to Research for RPNs' online course.
- g) submit a final report to WeRPN Research Advisory Council Chair according to timeframes described in the agreement for the project.
- h) to present or publish findings from the study, e.g., WeRPN Annual General Meeting & Conference, WeRPN Research Symposium, WeResearch newsletter/journal, WeResearch webinar. Submitted abstracts, manuscripts and citations should be included in the final report.
- i) WeRPN should be acknowledged in all knowledge mobilization activities, e.g., presentations and publications.
- j) interim progress report due January 12, 2026: The report must include the progress of the project, activities of the fellow and expenditures to date.
- k) final project report due: July 30, 2026. The report must include a description of the project, outcomes and achievement of learning objectives, personal experience of the fellow and final budget reconciliation.
- l) any violation of the rules will entail refund of the entire research grant to WeRPN.

15. TERMINATION

Either party may terminate the 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

17. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Applicants must submit a complete RPN-research fellowship application through the www.werpn.com research portal. Submissions are due by March 31, 2025 (11:59 pm)

If you are applying for more than one fellowship 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.**