

## Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit (OSSU)

### EMPOWER Projects VIII

Engaging **M**ulti-stakeholders for **P**atient **O**riented-research **W**ider **E**ffects and **R**each Projects

September 2024

#### SUMMARY

Program:	EMPOWER Projects VIII
Overview:	...
Funding:	\$25,000 for a one-year period
Launch Date:	September 11, 2024
Application Deadline:	November 6, 2024
Anticipated Notification:	January 24, 2025
Funding Term:	1 year

#### ABOUT SPOR AND OSSU

Canada's [Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research](#) (SPOR) is a national collaboration of federal, provincial and territorial partners dedicated to enhancing the integration of research into care. SPOR was created by the [Canadian Institutes for Health Research](#) (CIHR) to integrate funding, research and expertise to foster evidence-informed health care by bringing innovative diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to the point of care to ensure greater quality, accountability and accessibility. SPOR has several elements through which to achieve its goals, including the provincial and territorial SUPPORT Units, patient-oriented research (POR) supports (such as the Evidence Alliance, National Training Entity and Canadian Data Platform) and direct investment in POR projects (such as the national SPOR research networks, Innovative Clinical Trials (iCTs) and POR Training Grants). The [Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit](#) (OSSU) will facilitate the implementation and mobilization of SPOR in Ontario for capacity building towards sustainability of patient-oriented research (POR).

Established in 2013, OSSU is a collaboration of [14 leading health research centres](#) and [8 initiatives](#), supported by a Coordinating Centre which facilitates, connects, and integrates activities across the network. Jointly funded by the Government of Ontario, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and partner Ontario hospital foundations and institutes, the initiative engages patients<sup>1</sup>, researchers, clinicians, policy makers, industry representatives and other health system professionals to implement SPOR within Ontario.

#### DETAILS: EMPOWER Projects

Ontario is home to a wealth of high-quality patient-oriented research, with research teams meaningfully partnering with patients, families, caregivers, and communities to deliver rigor, relevance and results from their patient-oriented research project. For these patient-oriented research findings to enter the evidence chain for changing health policy, practice and health outcomes, there is often a need to support end-of-grant knowledge mobilization activities to build the relationships and push the results to those who can use them to effect real impact and change

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<sup>1</sup> "Patient" in the terminology of SPOR includes patients, family members, caregivers, and community members.

for Ontario. This includes the extent to which patient-oriented research findings will be transferrable and scalable to support Ontario's response to health system and public health challenges (e.g., to practice, programs and/or policy contexts). **End-of-grant knowledge mobilization covers any activity aimed at disseminating or applying the results and/or recommendations of a completed research project.** Outputs at the end-of-grant stage include a focus on knowledge-users and community dissemination. The goals of end-of-grant activities include raising awareness of the research in the original project and promoting action in moving the research forward to practice and policy.<sup>2</sup> Funding is explicitly designed to extend mobilizing the results and recommendations of the original project to help to support Ontario's response to health system and public health challenges (e.g., to practice, programs and/or policy contexts).

In our current health system climate in Ontario, patient-oriented research is more important than ever in informing practice and policy. Collaboration with and orienting research to patient engagement affects the implementation of changes in the health services, health policy, and for clinical and public health research. In this integration and intersection between patient engagement, research, data, and implementation, Ontario is moving towards a learning health system for transformational change with deliberate collaboration at and across the system and local levels with systematic use of evidence in and for practice.

Fairness or equity in health care and health outcomes can be promoted through patient-oriented research. As outlined in [OSSU's Fairness is Excellence Framework](#), a research project can promote health equity when they are designed and conducted with equity in mind, when patients or members of the public who reflect the diversity of the actual population are meaningfully engaged, and teams are formed fairly. This includes engaging equitably with various marginalized population such as rural and remote populations, Francophones, Indigenous populations, newcomers and members of the LGBTQ2+ community. Overall, the EMPOWER Projects aims to embed patient partnership and co-design with a view for transformational change for equity and system-wide impact in sustaining POR.

## SELECTION PROCESS

OSSU is inviting submissions from qualified research teams<sup>3</sup> with a completed POR project or initiative, defined as a research or quality improvement study/initiative that demonstrates a commitment to enhancing patient, caregiver, and/or community outcomes and that can demonstrate that:

- Additional funding is needed to bring in patient/caregiver partners for the co-creation and co-development of activities and outputs for more streamlined dissemination and implementation of the project's findings or recommendations and;
- This investment may have beneficial impacts for the health of Ontarians and the Ontario health system.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: Guide to Knowledge mobilization Planning at CIHR: Integrate and End-of-Grant Approaches. Retrieved April 4, 2022, from <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html>

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Application Administration, Section 1.D.1.1-1.D1.4: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22630.html#1-D1> Defined as research teams with a principal investigator or a principal applicant from a recognized university or institution. Teams may include patient partners as co-applicants and knowledge users.

OSSU welcomes co-designed, with patient and caregiver partnership, submissions that relate to one or more of the following 3 priorities that advance the objectives of OSSU for the development of capacity and sustainability of POR in Ontario:

- 1) Equity with a focus on: Improving health equity through using data OR equitable access to and use of health data;
- 2) Mobilizing knowledge with diverse populations and minorities including/not exclusive to rural and remote communities, linguistic groups including/not exclusive to Francophone community partners, Indigenous community partners for health decision and policy-making purposes
- 3) A project that demonstrates the advancement of the quintuple aim (improved patient experience, improved population health outcomes, advances in health equity, lower costs, and improved provider experience) in situating the mobilization of knowledge within a learning health system.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF FUNDING SUPPORT RECIPIENTS**

OSSU's EMPOWER Projects recipients are expected to complete the following in their funding period:

- Participate in a mandatory online training session held by OSSU's Research Centre, the McMaster Health Forum that will cover:
  - Writing policy briefs;
  - Engaging with citizens and plain language outputs;
  - Integrating knowledge users in knowledge mobilization activities to increase impact; and,
  - Utilizing multiple information and activity streams to support knowledge mobilization activities **as per the definition under the Details section.**
- Develop a targeted policy brief around the findings of their POR project that uses integrated knowledge mobilization approaches. Recipients are expected to provide a copy of the targeted policy brief to OSSU at the time of submission of the final report survey.
- Produce a diverse set of approaches to knowledge mobilization that are designed to meet the needs of stakeholders who can make the most impact from the health POR project findings. Recipients are expected to provide a copy of created outputs to OSSU at the time of submission of the final report survey.
- Create a short (2-3 paragraph) impact narrative to support research and patient-oriented activities. This is laid out in the End of Project Reporting Survey, which recipients will receive prior to the end of funding support (due within two months after funding has ended).
- Demonstrate in the End of Reporting Survey how their proposed project considered equity or fairness and to complete relevant training offered by the OSSU through a description of how the activities and deliverables met this aim.
- Demonstrate inclusion of trainees and patient partners in the proposal and the maintenance of this in the final report as part of the application and reporting requirements.

Monetary support for the OSSU EMPOWER Project is NOT to supplement research activity funding or to conduct further research based on the initial patient-oriented research project. Funds are to support knowledge mobilization activities to achieve impact of the original research.

## **FUNDS AVAILABLE**

OSSU will allocate up to \$25,000 for a one-year period for up to six Projects and we encourage Early Career Researchers to apply.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Submissions involve three documents:

1. The original project proposal;
2. EMPOWER workplan, following workplan criteria (see EMPOWER Workplan Template);
3. Budget using the OSSU budget template provided.

## **WORKPLAN**

The workplan for the EMPOWER Project proposal should follow the OSSU Workplan Template provided. The workplan must clearly identify:

- That the initial POR project has taken place in Ontario and that the original project ended no more than 2 years from the start date of the EMPOWER project funding (e.g. POR project completed no later than December 31, 2024);
- Who the PI is; the title of the project that this end of grant project funding is supplementing; the funding agency of the original project; the funding dates of the original project;
- The background ought to expand on the aims, methods, and findings of the original project, with explicit focus on what those findings and recommendations were and how and why additional funding is needed to bring in patient/caregiver partners for the co-creation and co-development of activities and outputs for more streamlined dissemination and implementation of the project's findings or recommendations for impact on the health of Ontarians and the Ontario health system. Include how the EMPOWER Project is related to patient-oriented health research with meaningful patient partnership, and a 1 paragraph testimonial from a patient partner, that focuses on how patients partnered in the work, including dissemination and implementation planning;
- The proposed stakeholders who will be targeted and how they will be engaged through the EMPOWER Project to maximize the impact of the POR project;
- How the project will address diverse populations and minorities, linguistic groups including/not exclusive to Francophone community partners, equity, diversity, anti-racism, inclusion, and Indigenous issues faced in Ontario;
- The objective of the proposed EMPOWER Project to be achieved with OSSU funding, including how you will build relationships and push the results of your project in relation to SPOR and end of grant knowledge mobilization activities;
- The milestones, deliverables, and outcomes to be accomplished during the one-year time period via the proposed EMPOWER Project.

## **BUDGET**

Using the budget template provided, prepare the budget and budget justification. The budget is meant to cover patient partner work and knowledge mobilization activities. Honoraria or other compensation for patient partners are eligible costs under the OSSU budget process. Overhead costs are not eligible. In-kind supports may be indicated.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

In order to be eligible for this funding opportunity, proposals must identify:

- That the initial POR project has taken place in Ontario;

- That the initial POR project ended no more than 2 years from the start date of the EMPOWER Project funding (e.g., POR project completed no later than December 31, 2024);
- That the initial POR project can demonstrate meaningful patient partnership;
- That the initial POR project was NOT funded by the Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit as part of its IMPACT Award demonstration Project;
- That the proposed knowledge mobilization team incorporates patient partnership both as part of the team and in the proposed activities;
- That the recipient of funding is associated with a CIHR-eligible institution to whom OSSU funds can be flowed (as per [CIHR's TAGFA](#)); and
- That the recipient of funding has not held an EMPOWER Project (previously EMPOWER Award) on the same project, within the last 3 years;

We encourage candidates at all career stages to apply, including early career researchers within the first 5 years of independent appointment.

## REVIEW PROCESS AND EVALUATION

Submissions received by the closing date will be assessed in a two-stage process. The first stage is a review by a committee of experts in patient-oriented research, knowledge mobilization, and implementation science. These include policy-makers and health system researchers. The committee will consider:

- The quality of the initial patient-oriented health research project that will be built on with the EMPOWER Project (scientific quality, patient partnership approach);
- Extent to which the patient-oriented research findings will be transferrable and scalable to support Ontario's response to health system and public health challenges (e.g., to practice, programs and/or policy contexts);
- The relevance and involvement of the stakeholders implicated in the proposed EMPOWER Project; and
- The appropriateness and feasibility of the activities outlined in the proposed EMPOWER Project and proposed impacts.

Those submissions successfully shortlisted for potential funding support will then be assessed by the OSSU Patient Partners Working Group, who will assess proposals based on:

- The meaningful engagement of patient partners in the initial POR project;
- The proposed knowledge mobilization activities;
- The potential benefit to patients, families, caregivers, marginalized population (e.g., Francophones, Indigenous populations, newcomers and members of the LGBTQ2+ community) and communities of the outcomes of the proposed knowledge mobilization activities through the funding support of the project.

Based on the findings of the expert review committee and the patient partner review, up to six applications will be selected for funding.

**The application deadline is Wednesday November 6<sup>th</sup> 2024 by/before 5pm. Submissions received after 5pm will not be included.**

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Workplan Template

Budget Template

## **CONTACT**

Further information about the call and application requirements can be obtained by emailing [ossu@ossu.ca](mailto:ossu@ossu.ca), please indicate

**RFP EMPOWER Project VIII, attn Hilary Edelstein** in the subject line.

### **Online resources related to Patient-Oriented Research**

OSSU	<a href="http://www.ossu.ca">www.ossu.ca</a>
CIHR	<a href="http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca">www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca</a>
PCORI	<a href="http://www.pcori.org">www.pcori.org</a>
NIHR	<a href="https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/">https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/</a>