

**Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit (OSSU)
Partnership Capacity Building Fund (PCBF)
Request for Proposals**

December 1, 2023

SUMMARY

Program: Partnership Capacity Building Fund
 Overview: The Partnership Capacity Building Fund (PCBF) supports the cost of patient engagement for Graduate students working with patient partners as part of their Master’s thesis, placement and/or capstone projects, or doctoral research.
 Funding: Up to \$1,500
 Launch Date: December 8, 2023
 Funding Term: Up to 1 year starting from notification date.

Key Dates:	Phase I	Phase II
Application Deadlines:	Feb 1, 2024	Sep 19, 2024
Anticipated Notification Dates:	Feb 28, 2024	Oct 11, 2024

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) seeks to support POR, translate evidence to improve the health of Ontarians and sustain patient-oriented approaches to health research in Ontario. 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.

Capacity development is one of SPOR’s core component areas addressed by provincial SUPPORT Units. As part of OSSU’s capacity building strategy, the Partnership Capacity Building Fund (PCBF) is intended to defray the cost of engaging patients¹ for graduate students in Ontario-based university settings.

DETAILS: PCBF Projects

PCBF Project funding is intended to encourage and support graduate students to meaningfully engage and partner with patients (people with lived experience, caregivers and community representatives) as part of their Master’s thesis, placement and/or capstone projects, or doctoral research. This may include

¹ For SPOR, the term “**patient**” is overarching and is inclusive of individuals with personal experience of a health issue and informal caregivers, including family and friends.

and is not limited to patient partners advising on project objectives, supporting the development of data collection tools, helping with recruitment, interpreting data, and disseminating findings.

NOTE: This fund is not intended to support costs related to patients as research *participants*, but rather, as **partners in research** who are equal members of research teams, and provide input during various stages of a research project such as study design, priority setting, gathering and analyzing data, and/or helping distribute and implement research results.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The PCBF project funds can be used in a number of ways to recognize the valuable contributions patient partners make to research. The funds can be used to directly compensate patient partners in the form of an honorarium/stipend, gift cards, or pay the costs of workshops to support training needs of the patient partners related to the project. The patient partner will decide how they are compensated. The use of PCBF Project funds must be in keeping with OSSU's Patient Compensation Policy and Guidelines.

POR is a key mobilizer of fairness and equity in health care delivery and health outcomes. As such, addressing equity, diversity and inclusion is an important consideration in PCBF Project funding. OSSU's Fairness is Excellence [framework and training curriculum](#) is a helpful resource for project planning.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for this funding opportunity, applicants must:

- be currently active in a Master's or Doctoral training (pre-dissertation completion) program at a Tri-council-eligible institution (as per [CIHR's TAGFA](#));
- identify one or more patient partner(s) who have agreed to work with the applicant prior to applying for this funding;
- clearly demonstrate that their Master's thesis, placement and or capstone projects, or doctoral research engages patient partners in a meaningful co-design role during the conceptualization, design, conduct and analysis of the work; and,
- ensure that the date of completion of the Master's thesis, placement and or capstone projects, or doctoral research does not predate the end of term of this funding;

SELECTION PROCESS

Submissions will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary panel of researchers, patient engagement experts and patient partners. Submissions will be assessed based on the following criteria:

1. Eligibility of the applicant;
2. Suitability of the proposed patient engagement approach for the work;
3. The meaningfulness of the engagement with patient partners in the work;
4. The appropriateness of the engagement activities proposed to consider diversity, inclusivity and equity; and,
5. Appropriateness of the budget.

EXPECTATIONS OF FUNDING SUPPORT RECIPIENTS

OSSU's PCBF Project recipients are expected to complete the following during the funding period:

- Engage in some form of training in patient partnership approaches in research either through their institution or by contacting OSSU (email ossu@ossu.ca). (Applicants who have already received formal graduate school training in patient engagement in research can substitute relevant supplemental training or mentorship for this requirement)

- Meaningfully engage one or more patient partners as part of their Master’s thesis, placement and/or capstone projects, or doctoral research.
- Prepare and submit to OSSU a brief 1-page report describing the activities supported by the PCBF Project funds. Include in the report:
 - An evaluation of the engagement with your patient partners;
 - The degree of success achieved regarding equity, diversity and inclusion;
 - Proof of training (or mentorship) in patient engagement research; and,
- Present findings and experiences from the award at an OSSU event or meeting.
- Participate in any program evaluation or improvement activities related to this opportunity.

FUNDS AVAILABLE

OSSU will allocate up to \$1,500 for a one-year period beginning April 1, 2024 for up to six (6) PCBF projects. At least two (2) of these awards will be awarded to Masters degree candidates. Applicants are reminded that PCBF Project funding is NOT to be used to supplement research activity funding or to conduct further research.

HOW TO APPLY

A complete submission includes two (2) documents and two (2) letters as follows:

1. Signature page;
2. Engagement plan and budget;
3. Letter from your Supervisor; and,
4. Letter from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies confirming the applicant’s eligibility.

ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The Engagement Plan for the PCBF Project proposals must be written in plain language and include the following sections:

- Project title.
- Who is the applicant? Who is the supervisor?
- Description of the thesis/research project.
- Description of the engagement approach.
- Description of how the engagement will be made meaningful.
- Patient testimonial.

Applications are to be submitted as a single electronic file in PDF format to ossu@ossu.ca on or before **5:00 pm eastern on Thursday, February 1, 2024**. Submissions received after 5:00 pm eastern will not be included. Please format the file name as: **Last Name First Initial – PCBF 2024**. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of your email application within 36 hours, please send an email to the contact below.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Application Guide
- Signature page template

CONTACT

Further information about the call and application requirements can be obtained by emailing ossu@ossu.ca, please indicate **RFP PCBF Project**, **attn John Riley** in the subject line.

Online POR resources

OSSU	www.ossu.ca
CIHR	www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca
PCORI	www.pcori.org
NIHR	https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/