



HIV ENDGAME PROGRAM

Endgame Leader Grants: Postdoctoral Grant Application Guidelines

LOI Application Deadline: **September 13, 2024** (12:00 pm EST)

Results of LOI: late September 2024

Full Application Deadline: **October 30, 2024** (12:00 pm EST)

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The OHTN HIV Endgame Program

Ontario is at a tipping point in our efforts to stop HIV. In chess, the endgame is a critical stage where the tactics selected determine the outcome. The OHTN HIV Endgame Program draws on Ontario's expertise to improve our tactical response to HIV. This requires a strategic approach to data and evidence use; innovative and rapid generation of evidence; and flexibility to change course when a new approach is ineffective or unsuccessful. The ultimate goal is to enhance HIV programming and service delivery, design effective integrated HIV health and social services, improve the health and well-being of people living with HIV, and eradicate HIV infections.

The OHTN HIV Endgame Program funds groundwork to support the design, implementation, improvement, and scale-up of programs and services that move Ontario closer to reaching the HIV endgame. The program will support data, evidence-sharing, and impact activities that will:

- Meet the needs of [populations in Ontario most affected by HIV](#)
- Drive changes in policy and practice across the HIV prevention, engagement, and care cascade
- Lead to more integrated health and social services
- Identify effective ways to address the social determinants of health for communities most affected by HIV
- Contribute to a [rapid learning HIV health and social system](#)

Through its strategic planning process and consultations with its stakeholders, OHTN has identified seven areas of rapid learning and improvement. The OHTN HIV Endgame Program will support data, evidence-sharing, and impact initiatives that will drive change in one or more of these areas of learning.

Seven areas of Rapid Learning

- Effective PrEP scale-up in Ontario
- Population-focused prevention and health promotion
- HIV testing
- Linkage, adherence, and retention in care
- Clinical care standards and capacity
- Integration of services
- Mental health and well-being of people living with and at risk of HIV (including stigma reduction)

Populations most affected by HIV

- People living with HIV
- Men who have sex with men
- People who use drugs
- African, Caribbean, and Black communities
- Indigenous communities
- Women*

Women = Cis and Trans women, including African, Caribbean and black women, women who use drugs, Indigenous women, and other women who face systemic and social inequities, are more likely to be exposed to HIV through a sexual or drug using partner.*

Other Relevant Programs

The OHTN offers other services that might be of relevance or use to potential applicants before or during the implementation of their program of data, evidence-sharing, and impact activities. Please see the list of available services listed under [Additional Resources](#) to determine which one is best aligned with your interest and application.

Grant Description

The Endgame Leader Postdoctoral Grant provides salary support for recent trainees with PhD and emergent leaders who are interested in working closely and collaboratively with the OHTN to drive change, contribute to rapid learning and improvement in our sector, and build HIV innovation capacity in Ontario.

The Postdoctoral Grant is for emergent leaders in HIV inquiry who are preparing to establish a HIV program of data, evidence-sharing, and impact. Postdoctoral Grant recipients must be committed to collaboration with other OHTN-funded leaders and stakeholders. Projects should be relevant to the [areas of rapid learning and improvement](#). Their program of data, evidence-sharing, and impact should aim to fill knowledge gaps in HIV prevention and care or evaluate interventions to improve programs and services.

This funding cycle, OHTN is accepting applications for projects designed to implement and evaluate interventions that align with strategies outlined in the [HIV Action Plan to 2030](#) of the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS (OACHA). These strategies include approaches specific to key populations affected by HIV, health equity, and development or implementation of evidence-based HIV programs or services.

During the grant period, the OHTN Postdoctoral Grant recipient is expected to:

- Work to improve the HIV prevention, treatment, and care cascade in Ontario and health systems and services for people living with and at risk of HIV
- Be an active part of the OHTN network and the broader Ontario HIV community
- Participate in OHTN initiatives, including policy exchanges, roundtables, and stakeholder consultations
- Collaborate with, share information with, and seek feedback from other OHTN-funded teams and the broader network, especially those communities affected by the proposed work

Funds Available

Duration: up to three years

Maximum annual funding: up to \$50,000

Payments will be made annually based on the submission of satisfactory progress narrative and financial reports (see [reporting requirements](#)).

Eligibility Criteria

The OHTN seeks proposals from individuals who:

- Are emergent trainees who have completed their PhD and are working with a supervisor who is an Ontario-based HIV investigator
- Have a documented history of working in a collaborative and culturally respectful way with people living with HIV, clinicians, community-based organizations, policy makers, and researchers

- Are affiliated with an appropriate host organization in Ontario. Eligible institutions include university faculties and departments, research institutes, and hospitals
- Have primary employment and residence in Ontario

In addition, Postdoctoral Grant applicants are expected to meet the criteria outlined below:

- Emerging scholar preparing to establish a program of HIV data, evidence-sharing, and impact
- Devote at least 75% of time to HIV data, evidence-sharing and impact activities
- Commit to collaborate with other OHTN stakeholders and funded leaders

As a condition of OHTN funding, applicants are expected to adhere to the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for the Research Involving Humans](#).

Endgame Leader Grants may not be held concurrently with any other salary awards, such as CIHR Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship or other Fellowship Awards. Applicants who currently hold a salary award may apply only if the current award will end by the start date of the HIV Endgame Leader Grant.

Expected Commitments

A successful Postdoctoral Grant candidate is expected to:

- Participate in rapid learning and improvement initiatives that emerge from OHTN's collective impact work, when these initiatives intersect with the funded program
- Collaborate with the OHTN and other OHTN-funded Leaders

How to Apply

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent for review by **September 13, 2024 at 12:00pm (EST)**.

If approved, the applicant will be invited to submit a full application. Notifications will be sent to successful candidates by email in late September 2024.

The deadline to submit a full application is **October 30, 2024 at 12:00pm (EST)**.

Letter of Intent (LOI)

Applicants will complete and submit an LOI application via the [OHTN grants portal](#). The required steps are described below:

1. Create or log in to your OHTN grants portal account. Please note: incomplete applications may be saved and returned to at a later date
2. Complete the [Eligibility Questions](#)
3. Complete LOI – Grant Information (Endgame Leader): amount requested (see: [Funds Available](#)), and duration of grant (up to 3 years)
4. Complete LOI – Postdoctoral Grant Application Form:
 - Complete Principal Applicant contact information
 - Indicate relevant [areas of learning and improvement](#)

- Describe [Relevance](#) of proposed data, evidence-sharing, and impact plan
 - Describe [Stakeholder Engagement Plan](#)
5. Upload a brief [Project Plan](#)
 6. Upload a list of any relevant publications released within the last three years
 7. Upload [Applicant CCV](#)
 8. Upload a completed [Disclosure Statement](#)
 9. Review and [submit](#) your application by the deadline

Note: All uploads should be in PDF format.

Relevance

Describe the relevance of the proposed data, evidence-sharing and impact plan to the OHTN's Endgame funding program and the [grant description](#). How will your project address the [rapid learning areas](#)? What gaps in existing knowledge will the proposed project fill? How might it change programs, services or care delivery in Ontario in the short-, medium- and long-term? How might the proposed data, evidence-sharing and impact plan improve the health of people living with or at risk of HIV in Ontario? How might the proposed program of work drive change and support development of [a rapid learning health and social system for HIV](#)? (*maximum 400 words, entered directly into application form*)

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Stakeholder engagement is an essential mechanism to ensure that data, evidence-sharing, and impact activities are relevant to community needs. This is the first characteristic of a rapid learning health and social system. Broad stakeholder collaboration will ensure greater relevance and potential for impact.

Please describe how you plan to work with communities of people living with or at risk of HIV in a collaborative, culturally-respectful way, and how this will shape decision-making, capacity-building, dissemination, uptake, impact, or other activities. Describe the engagement process to be applied in the current proposal. The OHTN requires Postdoctoral Grant recipients to meaningfully engage the HIV community in all stages of the process, from conception and development to dissemination and uptake. Applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with people living with HIV, clinicians, community-based organizations, policy makers, and other researchers. (*maximum 300 words, entered directly into application form*)

Project Plan

The project plan (max. 4 pages) should contain the following information:

- A brief background and rationale for the program of data, evidence-sharing and impact
- Proposed objectives to be achieved during the grant period (including capacity building objectives, as applicable), and how they will improve the HIV prevention, engagement and care cascade
- A brief description of the intended outcomes, impact, and contribution to a rapid learning HIV health and social system, including [areas of learning and improvement](#)
- Please include the annual amount requested and indicate the proportion of time to be

- dedicated to data, evidence-sharing, and impact activities
- A brief description of the evidence-sharing and impact plan to be implemented throughout the project and beyond

Applicant CCV

The applicant should include a completed [Common CV](#) using the CIHR Biosketch.

Disclosure Statement

The [Disclosure Statement Form](#) should be downloaded and completed as instructed. The Disclosure Statement allows applicants to disclose, in advance, any involvement with the OHTN that may be relevant to our [conflict of interest policies](#). Any questions regarding this disclosure statement or our funding policy should be directed to [funding program staff](#).

*****End of LOI Stage*****

Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application and notified in late September 2024.

Full Application

1. Log in to your [OHTN grants portal](#) account. Please note: incomplete applications may be saved and returned to at a later date
2. Provide [Financial Administrator Information](#)
3. Provide [Referee Information](#)
4. Complete the Endgame Leader Grant: Full Application Form:
 - Review Principal Applicant contact information
 - Indicate relevant [areas of learning and improvement](#)
 - Review [Relevance](#) of proposed data, evidence-sharing, and impact plan
 - Review [Stakeholder Engagement Plan](#)
5. Upload [Full Proposal](#)
6. Upload [Timeline](#)
7. Upload [Budget & Budget Justification](#)
8. Upload [Applicant CCV](#)
9. Upload [Host Institution Information](#)
10. Upload relevant [Appendices](#)
11. Upload [Ethics Documents](#)
12. Upload [Letters of Support](#)
13. Review and [submit](#) your application by the deadline

Note: All uploads should be in PDF format.

Financial Administrator Information

Please provide the contact information of the financial administrator at your institution. The financial

administrator is the person responsible for the financial management and reporting at the institution with which you are affiliated. Once the task is submitted, the financial administrator will receive an email asking them to log in to the grants portal and complete a short form.

Note: You will not be able to submit your application until the financial administrator has submitted this information. To ensure adequate time for their response, please complete this task no later than 2 weeks prior to the application deadline.

Referee Information

Please provide the contact information of **three** individuals with whom you have worked, and who are in a position to give an assessment of your suitability for the Postdoctoral Grant. Once the task is submitted, your referees will receive an email asking them to log in to the grants portal and upload a letter of reference.

Note: You will not be able to submit your application until your referees have submitted this information. To ensure adequate time for their response, please complete this task no later than 2 weeks prior to the application deadline.

Full Proposal (max. 10 pages, excluding references)

The proposal should illustrate a clear rationale for the support being requested and address the following. The order and number of pages are provided as suggested guidelines only.

a) Data, evidence-sharing and impact plan (approximately 7 pages)

- A description of the data, evidence-sharing and impact plan, including objectives, methods, analyses, and outcomes
- A description of how the proposed work fulfills the [described core components](#) of the Endgame Leader Grants
- A description of complementary or conflicting projects being pursued by others, how your work is positioned within this context, and how it avoids duplication
- Anticipated challenges and proposed solutions
- A discussion of the ethical implications of the proposed activities (including risks to individuals and communities) and how they will be mitigated
- Evidence-sharing methods and impact approaches for the current proposal

b) Areas of learning and improvement (approximately 1 page)

- A description of the [areas of learning and improvement](#) to be addressed by the proposed data, evidence-sharing and impact plan
- Details about relevant partners and stakeholders needed to successfully meet the areas of learning and improvement

c) Impacts (approximately 1 page)

- A description of the envisioned short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of this work, how it will impact one or more of the [populations most affected by HIV in Ontario](#), and the steps

required to achieve that impact

- An explanation of how this grant will drive change in the stated time period
- A description of how the findings will contribute to a [rapid learning health and social system](#) for HIV in Ontario

Proposals should be no more than 10 pages (not including references), single spaced, minimum 11-point font, with 1" margins. Proposals, including references, must be converted to PDF prior to upload.

Timeline

A year-by-year plan for the proposed activities, including proposed and anticipated impacts and relevance to areas of learning and improvement. A template is available in the [online grants portal](#).

Budget & Budget Justification

Complete the [budget template](#) for each year of the grant being requested. Maximum annual funds available and grant duration are listed under [Funds Available](#).

Provide a separate narrative that justifies the requested budget using the following guidelines:

- Salary Amount: Indicate the proportion of time to be dedicated to data, evidence-sharing, impact activities, and whether this includes pro-rated benefits for the proportion of time being requested. Describe how the salary support will reduce current workload obligations (this must be consistent with information from the Host Institution).

Applicant CCV

Applicants should include a completed [Common CV](#) using the CIHR biosketch.

Host Institution Information

Please upload the [Host Institution Verification Form](#) and a letter of support.

The Host Institution Verification Form certifies the institution's support of the application and articulates the total salary support and benefits being requested.

A Host Institution Letter of Support written by the mentor should also be provided. This letter should indicate the applicant's suitability for the Postdoctoral Grant and outline the type of support and mentorship which will be made available to the trainee. The letter should also articulate how the applicant's research fits into the overall goals of the institution.

Appendices

1. Applicants should upload questionnaires, surveys, or other tools related to the current proposal.
2. Applicants may upload up to three (3) manuscripts (submitted, accepted for publication, or published) that are relevant to the proposal. Manuscripts should be compressed to ensure easy upload.
3. Applicants may upload up to three (3) products (presentations, testimonials, summaries, etc.)

that demonstrate evidence sharing and uptake from previous work.

Please note that any attachments exceeding the limits stated above may be removed from the application prior to review at the OHTN's discretion.

Ethics Documents

Upload collated copies of related ethics board approvals, copies of consent forms to be signed by prospective participants, or other explanatory materials for distribution. Draft versions are encouraged if final approved versions are not available. Final approved versions should be submitted when available or three months following funding allocation. In addition, annual renewal letters from the relevant REBs must be submitted to the OHTN in a timely manner.

Letters of Support (max. 3 letters)

If your projects involve the support or collaboration of external organizations or individuals, please submit letters of support indicating their approval of, role in and commitment to your proposed data, evidence-sharing and impact plan. Letters of support from decision-makers are particularly significant. Please collate prior to uploading.

Submitting the Proposal

A complete LOI application must be submitted electronically by **September 13, 2024 at 12:00pm (EST)**. Full applications must be submitted by **October 30, 2024 at 12:00pm (EST)**.

Please be advised that all application materials and information provided to the OHTN, including personal information such as sexual orientation or HIV status, are kept strictly confidential and only forwarded to the members of the OHTN Review Committee and external grant reviewers, as needed. Submitted information may also be referenced in the review of your application. Please omit any personal information from your application that you do not want shared with these parties. Contact [program staff](#) if you have any questions.

Note: Please allow a sufficient amount of time to ensure successful electronic submission. File limits have been imposed to ensure your application is accessible to reviewers. All forms and uploads from your Financial Administrator or Referees must also be complete and submitted by the deadline. If you experience any difficulty with the online process, please notify [program staff](#) at least 24 hours prior to the deadline so that any issues may be resolved.

If your application is approved, you will be asked to submit the additional information below:

Plain Language Summary

If you are awarded funding, you will be asked to provide a concise summary of the proposed data and evidence-sharing activities, and the anticipated impacts on the populations most affected by HIV in Ontario. Describe the approaches used to facilitate the desired outcomes and impact. Note: This

summary will be posted on the OHTN website if the project is awarded funding. (*maximum 500 words, entered directly into application form*)

Additional Resources

The Ontario HIV Epidemiology and Surveillance Initiative (OHESI)

OHESI provides access to timely, relevant, and comprehensive information about the epidemiology of HIV in Ontario and disseminates this information more widely to different groups of stakeholders. If you are looking for HIV epidemiologic data specific to Ontario, please visit the [OHESI website](#).

The Ontario Cohort Study (OCS)

OCS data can be used to support evidence production and development of evidence-sharing and impact activities. OCS is a rich source of clinical, socio-behavioural, and population health data.

Individuals interested in using OCS will have access to:

- Clinical data obtained through participants' clinic records
- Psychosocial and behavioural data collected through an interviewer-administered standardized questionnaire
- Serological and viral load test data collected by Public Health Ontario Laboratory

All of the data in the OCS is anonymized and cannot be linked back to the participant.

There are two ways to use OCS data:

- Linking with external databases
- Accessing the OHTN cohort study data

Should you decide to access the OCS data, please consider the information below:

- Before the LOI deadline, contact the [study coordinator](#) to submit your request
- Your LOI application should outline your research objectives/questions related to the OCS and affirm that the OCS Principal Investigator has reviewed them
- Your full application must include a feasibility letter provided by the OCS Principal Investigator
- Please note that between the LOI stage and the full application stage, the OCS will ask you develop an OCS data analysis plan

For more information about the OCS, please visit the [OCS website](#).

Evaluation Criteria and Review Process

LOI applications will be reviewed by the OHTN for relevance, alignment with funding objectives, evidence of community engagement, and potential impact. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

Full applications will be reviewed independently by the OHTN Review Committee for relevance, impact, efficiency, context sensitivity, sustainability, feasibility, and approach. Based on the review, OHTN's Executive Director will recommend candidates to the OHTN Board for final funding consideration.

- **Relevance:** The proposal has the potential to drive improvements in Ontario’s prevention, treatment and care cascade for one or more priority populations and contributes towards a rapid learning health and social system for HIV in Ontario.
- **Impact-Focus:** The evidence-sharing plan accompanying each program or initiative: (a) identifies one or more stakeholders (e.g. community based organizations, clinics, local health integrated networks, policymakers); (b) describes the outcomes of any evidence-sharing and educational activities (e.g. re-designed services or policies) and how they will contribute to achieving the Endgame strategy; and (c) establishes realistic pathways to achieve impact that are informed by what is known about effective evidence sharing (e.g. timely feedback of information to improve organizational performance). Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be able to confirm that the plans achieved the desired impacts or that corrective action was taken to address identified concerns.
- **Efficiency:** The data or evidence used in the proposal is not available from another source. Any data collection or community engagement process places a minimal burden on participants (e.g. people living with HIV, ASOs, clinics). The resulting information and insights are available in as close to real time as possible, and participants receive regular updates about the use and impact of the collected information and insights.
- **Context Sensitivity:** The data, evidence-sharing, and impact activities will break new ground or result in findings specific to the Ontario HIV sector. Rapid learning activities will drive change that benefits Ontario. The applicant must have an interest in and the capacity to implement or scale up any programs or interventions being studied or promoted. The interventions themselves must be feasible in the Ontario context (e.g. do not require a level of investment, model of funding, or staffing structure the system cannot support).
- **Good Value for Money and Sustainability:** The benefit or impact of the program or intervention justifies its cost, and the program or intervention is sustainable over time within existing budgets.
- **Feasibility:** The staff, expertise, structures, and budget required to deliver the program or intervention are in place. No one else is better positioned to deliver the program or initiative
- **Approach:** The methodology, measurement, analysis, and ethical considerations are thorough, methodologically rigorous, and will successfully lead to data, evidence-sharing, and impact.

OHTN Engagement Accord

Successful candidates commit to meet the expectations of the [OHTN Engagement Accord](#). They work in a highly collaborative way to actively engage the communities most affected by HIV; ensure rigorous data, evidence-sharing, and impact activities; build partnerships that can drive change; engage in collaborative knowledge-sharing processes; and demonstrate accountability for the use of grant funds.

Reporting Requirements

Continued release of funds is contingent upon timely receipt and approval of progress and financial reports. Failure to submit a report of any kind (within three months of the due date) will preclude the grantee from receiving further financial support from the OHTN.

The following reporting requirements help demonstrate the progress and success of the OHTN Endgame Leader Grant. Report templates are accessible via the [online grants portal](#).

- Semi-annual progress meetings with funding program staff
- Initial impact plan within six months
- Annual narrative progress reports (3-5 pages), including questions about deliverables, challenges and successes, additional funding, community engagement, knowledge dissemination, capacity building, and impact
- Annual financial reports detailing how funds were spent
- A post-final narrative report one year past the end date of the grant to assess progress since the completion of the grant term

The Postdoctoral Grant recipient will be accountable to the OHTN and to the people living with HIV who are impacted by their work. The successful candidate is expected to work with a Community Advisory Committee (comprised of people living with HIV and their health care providers) to inform the development of data and evidence-sharing initiatives and future research priorities. As a condition of ongoing funding, the grantee will be expected to demonstrate collaborations with relevant community stakeholders, and the OHTN will verify these independently.

OHTN staff will work closely with grantees to: understand the context for their work; assist with managing challenges; help them meet their objectives; and understand and help disseminate findings.

Communication Requirements

1. Any deviations from the original approved objectives, methodology, budget, or other major changes must receive written authorization from the OHTN prior to being implemented. Failure to notify the OHTN in a timely manner may result in termination of funding.
2. The OHTN expects applicants to publish their work in appropriate formats, including peer-reviewed publications, where appropriate. The OHTN expects to be notified before OHTN-supported research is published, and requests copies of all publications arising from work supported through this grant to assist the OHTN in its evaluation of this program.
3. The OHTN expects the grantee to take a leadership role in developing strategies to meet the needs of the priority communities with whom they work. The grantee is expected to collaborate with the OHTN, other OHTN-funded leaders, and community stakeholders in developing such strategies.
4. Plain Language Summaries and other materials describing the program of research will be published on the OHTN website. The OHTN assumes responsibility for disseminating information about project findings contained within submitted reports via the OHTN website. However, OHTN affirms that the results are the intellectual property of the grant recipient and recognizes the need for researchers to pursue publication in peer-reviewed publications or other appropriate formats. OHTN staff will work with grant recipients to ensure that its own dissemination efforts do not conflict with their publication plans.
5. Funding recipients are also expected to contribute to the OHTN's monitoring and evaluation activities, including but not limited to: participating in evaluation activities (progress teleconferences, progress and final narrative reports, surveys, interviews, etc.) and workshops, and providing data or reports as required for assessing progress and results.

6. The following acknowledgement must be included in all publications resulting from data, evidence-sharing and impact activities supported by the OHTN: *This project is supported by a grant from the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN).*

Contact Information

For questions regarding this Request for Proposals, please contact:

OHTN HIV Endgame Program Staff

funding@ohntn.on.ca