



HIV ENDGAME PROGRAM

Endgame Leader Grants: The OHTN Cohort Study Chair Grant Application Guidelines

LOI Application Deadline: **November 15, 2024** (12:00 pm EST)

Results of LOI: Mid-December 2024

Full Application Deadline: **January 24, 2025** (12:00 pm EST)

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The Ontario HIV Treatment Network Cohort Study

[The Ontario HIV Treatment Network Cohort Study \(OCS\)](#) is a collaborative, community-governed, province-wide, multi-site HIV research study aimed at improving the health and well-being of people living with HIV in Ontario. The OCS focuses on people living with HIV, and all the research questions and inquiries related to the OCS center the lived experience of people living with HIV.

The scientific aims of this cohort study are to examine and understand:

- the psychosocial and health context of people living with HIV;
- patterns of health services use and issues related to mental health and addictions;
- HIV infection and its complications;
- HIV treatment, including adverse events and HIV drug resistance;
- co-morbid infections, diseases, and conditions; and
- social, psychological, and other factors related to behaviours that pose risk for secondary HIV transmission.

The OCS maintains a rich and comprehensive dataset, promotes synergies and collaboration in developing and addressing research questions, and shares knowledge gained through OCS research.

Established in 1996, the OCS is the largest community-governed HIV cohort in Ontario and is one of the largest HIV cohort studies in North America. Its administrative committees include scientists, clinicians and other health-care providers, policymakers, and persons living with HIV:

- The Scientific Steering Committee and Priority Population Working Groups oversee the scientific direction of the OCS.
- The OCS Governance Committee, which is made up of stakeholders in Ontario's HIV community, evaluates each project proposal for its community relevance and ethics of the intended data use, and recommends policies related to data security and confidentiality.
- The OCS Data Governance Circle ensures that Indigenous data is treated with additional attention and reviewed by Indigenous Peoples. This committee also oversees the analysis of Indigenous data prior to release.

The OCS represents a diverse Ontario adult population living with HIV, including people of different genders, ages, sexual orientations, and ethnicities. Its extensive data collection activities include clinical chart data, interviews, and record linkage with health administrative data at Public Health Ontario and at the Institute of Clinical Evaluative Sciences ([ICES](#)). The OCS also encourages sub-studies that incorporate additional primary data collection and/or record linkage.

The OCS promotes clinical, psychosocial, and socio-behavioural research to inform government policy, clinical practice, and other care and support services. For almost 30 years, the OCS has collected, analyzed, and interpreted research evidence to support cutting-edge initiatives related to the HIV care cascade and improving the quality of life of people living with HIV.

The OCS Chair grantee is expected to be a leader in Ontario and an active part of the broader Ontario HIV community and OHTN network, as outlined in the [grant description](#). This person will be a resource for scientific information and data for policy makers and media.

The OCS Chair will work closely with eight OCS staff. This includes a Director who manages the day to day operation of the OCS, including site management, recruitment, data collection, and analysis.

Grant Description

The OCS Chair Grant will provide salary support for the Principal Investigator of the OCS. Potential Chair candidates should be interested in working closely and collaboratively with the OHTN and its stakeholders to answer research questions with the purpose of advancing the health and well-being of people living with HIV and contributing to improved number of people actively and successfully engaged in the HIV treatment and care cascade (e.g. retention, viral suppression). The successful candidate will build HIV innovation capacity in Ontario by leading an active research program; promoting a thriving team environment for collaborators, partners, and trainees; and encouraging others to work with the cohort's extensive dataset.

The inception of the OCS was deeply rooted in the principles of GIPA/MEPA (Greater Involvement/Meaningful Engagement of People Living with HIV and/or AIDS). The successful candidate will ensure that people living with HIV are full partners and decision makers with respect to the inception, operation, and implementation of all aspects of the cohort study. This includes participant recruitment, data collection tools, external research access, and use of collected data.

The successful candidate will also demonstrate an explicit commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) principles (see [Best Practice in equity, diversity, inclusion in research practice and design](#)). Past OCS Principal Investigators have made great strides to ensure that OCS data accurately reflects the lived experience of diverse Ontarians living with HIV, using strategies that range from broad and targeted recruitment to the development of specific study questions. The OCS Chair will expand on the work of their predecessors and maintain IDEA as a primary goal in all future work (see [Guidance Document and Framework for Anti-Racist Approaches to Research and Analytics at ICES](#)).

Part of the OCS commitment to IDEA includes the recent formation of the OCS Indigenous Data Governance Circle.

Guided by the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and working in relationship with Indigenous researchers and stakeholders, the OCS Chair will ensure that future scholarship is grounded in respect for Indigenous research priorities, values, cultures, and knowledges. A successful candidate will be

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.*

willing to understand and apply decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies, as well as demonstrate experience working collaboratively with Indigenous communities.

The OCS Chair will be part of the OHTN investigator and OHTN collective impact groups that drive learning and improvement in the Ontario HIV sector. They will develop dynamic partnerships with those affected by HIV and engage a broad range of stakeholders – including clinicians, researchers, community members, and trainees – to shape the OCS research and influence relevant policy- and decision-makers. The OCS Chair will work strategically and collaboratively to ensure broad reach and access to valuable OCS data.

In addition, the OCS Chair is expected to:

- Analyze, interpret, and share data to improve the HIV treatment and care cascade in Ontario and health systems and services for people living with HIV;
- Collaborate with other OHTN leaders, other principal investigators of the OCS sites, the OCS Governance Committee, the OCS Scientific Steering Committee, the Indigenous Data Governance Circle, and communities affected by HIV in order to strengthen the cohort study, maintain its relevance, and promote accurate use of longitudinal data;
- Act as a source of expertise for the OCS and any data that can drive change in the system
- Promote the expansion and increased accessibility of the linked dataset at [ICES](#). The successful candidate will have an ICES appointment or will be committed to securing one within the first term of the grant;
- Protect and maintain the status, integrity, and reputation of the cohort data, including a review of new data to ensure its accuracy and relevance;
- Be an active part of the OHTN network and the broader Ontario HIV community by participating in OHTN initiatives, including policy exchanges, roundtables, collective impact groups, and stakeholder consultations;
- Mentor individuals in the sector, helping them to build effective relationships and strengthen knowledge-sharing skills. This may include those eligible for OHTN Junior Investigator or Postdoctoral Grants; and
- Partner with relevant stakeholders, including national and international collaborators, to share findings emerging from the cohort and contribute to knowledge translation and exchange (KTE) activities.

In this leadership role, the OCS Chair will work closely with a team of eight OHTN staff composed of biostatisticians, data engineers, data analysts, and a coordinator who have worked diligently over the years to support the OCS sites, recruitment, data collection and analysis, and dissemination.

Funds Available

Duration: Five years, with the opportunity to renew. In addition, a formal review will be initiated after the third year, with continued funding dependent on a successful review at this stage.

Annual funding: Up to \$150,000 (*\$110,000 for salary award and \$40,000 for research allowance*)

Trainees working with the OCS Chair will have the opportunity to apply for grants at the OHTN such as the Junior Investigator or Postdoctoral Grants.

Payments will be made annually based on the submission of satisfactory progress narrative and financial reports.

Selection Criteria

The OHTN seeks proposals from individuals who:

- Are outstanding innovators who will champion the OCS, have experience leading multi-site projects, and have a deep knowledge of HIV in Ontario;
- Are applied scientists with expertise in cohort studies, health research, and health data, who have strong quantitative data management and analysis skills;
- 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 – Involving community members in decision-making and implementation of results;
- Have an explicit commitment to GIPA/MEPA and IDEA principles within their research program;
- Have a strong commitment to respectful and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, as well as collaboration with the Indigenous Governance Circle and Indigenous researchers. The successful candidate will promote the application of decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies;
- Have a history of supervising and mentoring graduate trainees and a commitment to coaching and mentorship, including members from affected communities; and
- Have excellent communication and presentation skills, and an outstanding track record of publications and knowledge translation activities.

In addition, applicants must meet the criteria outlined below:

- Be an outstanding leader who is collegial, respectful, and accountable;
- Devote at least 75% of their time to research, with most of the time dedicated to leading an active research program with the OCS;
- Mentor trainees in the Ontario HIV sector, including those who may be eligible for OHTN Junior Investigator or Postdoctoral Grants;

- Hold a primary appointment in an appropriate host organization in Ontario with the ability to hold research funds as PI. Eligible institutions include university faculties and departments, research institutes, and hospitals; and
- Live and work in Ontario.

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

How to Apply

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent for review by **November 15, 2024 (12:00pm EST)**.

If approved by the review committee, the applicant will be invited to submit a full application. Notifications will be sent to successful candidates by email in mid-December 2024.

The deadline to submit a full application is **January 24, 2025 (12:00pm EST)**.

Letter of Intent (LOI)

Applicants will complete and submit a 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 time for completion
2. Complete the [Eligibility Questions](#)
3. Complete LOI – Chair Grant Application Form:
 - Complete Principal Applicant contact information
 - Complete name and contact details of the Host Institution Administrator
 - Describe [Leadership and Mentorship Plan](#) (*maximum 500 words, entered directly into application form*)
 - Describe [Stakeholder Engagement Plan](#) (*maximum 250 words, entered directly into application form*)
 - Describe your [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Plan](#) (*maximum 250 words, entered directly into application form*)
 - List [Previous Accomplishments](#) (*maximum 250 words, entered directly into application form*)
4. Upload a brief [Research Program Plan](#)
5. Upload [Applicant CCV](#)
6. Upload a completed [Disclosure Statement](#)
7. Review and [submit](#) your application by the deadline

Note: All uploads should be in PDF format.

Leadership and Mentorship Plan

Please provide evidence of involvement in leadership of research activities, mentorship, and trainee supervision. Describe the strategies that would be used to lead collaboratively with OCS-affiliated researchers, partners, clinic sites, and staff, and to create an environment that will attract others to work with the OCS. Describe how you will attract, engage, and retain trainees. *(maximum 500 words, entered directly into application form)*

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Stakeholder engagement is an essential pillar of the OCS. Please describe how you have previously worked with communities of people living with or affected by HIV in a collaborative, culturally respectful way, and how this has shaped decision-making, capacity-building, dissemination, uptake, impact, or other research activities. Describe the engagement process you will apply during the tenure of the OCS Chair, including engagement with Indigenous communities. The Principal Investigator of the OCS will work closely with the [OCS Governance Committee](#) and the Indigenous Data Governance Circle, and is required to meaningfully engage the HIV community in all stages of the process, from conception and development to dissemination and uptake. Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to work closely with diverse communities of people living with HIV, clinicians, community-based organizations, policy makers, trainees, and other researchers. *(maximum 250 words, entered directly into application form)*

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Plan

Please provide a clear description of your proposed plan for inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) and how it will advance your proposed program of research, data, evidence-sharing, and impact. Describe how you will prioritize and implement IDEA principles in your proposed program of research and describe how you will assess progress and success. Please include proposed metrics and indicators. *(maximum 250 words, entered directly into application form)*

Previous Accomplishments

Please list three major accomplishments or significant contributions that are indicators of future success if awarded the OCS Chair. This could include outcomes of your impact, mentorship, and/or capacity building activities. *(maximum 250 words, entered directly into application form)*

Research Program Plan

The research program plan (maximum 1 page) should contain the following information:

- An overview of the applicant's current role, academic appointment(s), and institutional environment
- A brief rationale for the proposed program of research, data, evidence-sharing, and impact and their relevance to the vision and goal of the OCS
- Proposed objectives to be achieved during the grant period (including capacity building objectives, as applicable), and how they will improve the HIV treatment, engagement, and care cascade

- A brief description of the intended outcomes, evidence-sharing, and impact plan to be implemented throughout the 5-year term 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](#).

Submitting the Proposal

A complete LOI application must be submitted electronically by **November 15, 2024 (12:00pm EST)**. Full applications must be submitted by **January 24, 2025 (12:00pm)**.

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 shared with 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 to be shared with these parties. Contact [program staff](#) if you have any questions.

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

Evaluation Criteria and Review Process

LOI applications will be reviewed independently by the OCS Chair Recruitment and Nomination Committee for relevance, expertise, leadership, and evidence of community engagement. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

Contact Information

For questions regarding this Request for Proposals, please contact:

The OHTN HIV Endgame Program Staff

funding@ohntn.on.ca

Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application and notified in mid-December 2024.