

Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists Research Fund (OSOTRF)
Occupational Therapy Research Grant and
Strategic Priorities Research Grant
Guidelines and Application

Occupational Therapy Research Grant: up to \$2,000

Description

The OSOTRF Occupational Therapy Research Grant is an annual grant of up to \$2,000. Its purpose is to promote the growth of the occupational therapy profession by supporting original/applied research that provides evidence for clinical or practice related challenges or opportunities. Submissions from OT clinician-researchers is encouraged.

The grant period begins September 1st and the recipient has one year to use the funds. Research projects may include, but are not limited to, the following criteria:

- clinical intervention
- case studies
- a systematic literature review or scoping review
- survey relevant to a clinical area or other aspects of occupational therapy practice
- analysis of existing clinical data
- program evaluation
- needs assessment
- other actions that will assist in development of a full research proposal

Strategic Priorities Research Grant: up to \$10,000

Description

The OSOTRF Strategic Priorities Research Grant is an annual grant of up to \$10,000. Its purpose is to encourage and contribute to the growth of clinical research in occupational therapy that supports the positioning and evolution of practice in Ontario. The grant period begins September 1st and the recipient has one year to use the funds.

Strategic Priorities for the 2025 Application Year

Each year the OSOT Board of Directors establishes strategic priorities that frame the criteria for grant approvals. The intention of establishing these practice priorities influencing the delivery of occupational therapy services in Ontario, is to encourage research proposals that examine and reflect the priorities impact, economic and other, at client, organization and/or systems levels.

Priority will be given to projects seeking to provide evidence of the value of occupational therapy to clients, families/caregivers, and the health care system particularly as this relates to:

- **Return on Investment of Occupational Therapy**
 - Consider:
 - use of research/data/existing outcome measures reporting the impact of occupational therapy services
 - artificial intelligence/technology/innovative models of care

- collaboration with occupational therapy assistants (OTAs)
- enhanced/innovative community-based models, role of OT in long-term care, primary care, or other sectors (such as: home modification, addictions and mental health, return-to/stay-at work, paediatric mental health, transitions in care, etc.).
- **Healthcare Human Resource Challenges**
 - consider models that optimize existing resources and roles for OT, OTA, or both and/or new, innovative models of care which include OT, OTA, or both.
- **The role of OT in Primary Care**
 - evidence for role of OT on Family Health Teams/in Community Health Centers that enhances patient care, improves patient outcomes, relieves system pain points, reduces costs.
- **The Need for OT in Long-term Care (LTC)**
 - evidence of the need for OT in LTC to improve resident quality of life and care outcomes, relieve system pain points, reduce costs.

Researchers are asked to include in their proposal how their work might be leveraged to have the largest possible impact.

If the project is a thesis, the thesis supervisor must be listed as the principal investigator on the application.

***New for 2025:** if requested/applicable, each grant recipient will receive one complimentary posting in an OSOT e-newsletter promoting completion of a survey related to their research project.

Applicable to Both Grants

1. Funding

Applicants may apply for funding up to the total amount of the grant. OSOT reserves the right to award less than the total amount requested. In the event a grant has been awarded and the scope of the project changes during the grant period, OSOT reserves the right to adjust the amount dispersed.

2. Eligibility

- a) The principal investigator must be:
 - a member of OSOT for at least six months prior to application
 - a COTO registrant in good standing
- b) Recipients of an OSOTRF Research Grant are eligible to re-apply in subsequent years, however, generally the OSOTRF will not be awarded to any one researcher more than once every three years.

3. General Policies

- a) OSOT recognizes that an investigator may apply to other funding sources for the same activity or project. If other funding is received, this funding may be complementary to the OSOTRF grant or it may overlap. OSOT reserves the right to adjust the amount of the grant awarded, including withdrawal, based on the perceived overlap with funding from other sources.
- b) OSOT recognizes an investigator may wish to apply for funding for more than one project. OSOT reserves the right to limit an individual/group to receive no more than one OSOTRF grant per calendar year. Each project is eligible for one OSOTRF grant. Applicants must select for which grant they wish their project to be considered.

- c) Where possible, the principal investigator should identify an institution willing to administer funds. If the principal investigator does not have an institutional affiliation, OSOTRF will issue a T4A to the individual. The investigator must include this amount as income when filing a tax return for the year the grant is awarded. Expenses associated with the grant may be deducted to offset the income.
- d) All investigators must be listed on the application.
- e) Indirect costs, such as overhead, are not eligible to be covered by the OSOTRF. This includes costs related to supporting the research environment, for example, computer networks, utilities, etc., administrative support, or human resource management.
- f) Principal investigators may not draw a salary from the grant.
- g) Funds unexpended, or unallocated at the end of the project must be returned to the OSOTRF.
- h) Funds not spent within one year following the receipt of the grant may be carried into the following year upon written permission from OSOT.

4. Considerations for Applications

- a) Applicants must state the relevance of the research to the practice of occupational therapy in Ontario as well as demonstrate competence to successfully complete the project.
- b) The Strategic Priorities Grant must address a strategic priority as identified by OSOT in this package.
- c) Projects should be innovative, progressive, original, and must be scientifically sound.
- d) OSOT values research which demonstrates an inter-professional approach and consumer participation.
- e) Projects must be conducted in an Ontario setting.
- f) OSOT reserves the right not to award funding if applications submitted do not meet or surpass a threshold of 16/20 (or 80%) when reviewed according to the prescribed evaluation criteria. In such a situation, a third-party reviewer will be sought to review all applications to ensure a grade below the threshold is truly reflective of the application's merit and not low inter-rater reliability.

5. Required Documentation

Application for an OSOTRF Grant must include:

- a) Completed application form clearly indicating for which grant the applicant is applying.
- b) Curriculum vitae of principal and co-investigators, limited to three pages, providing: educational qualifications, work experience for the previous five years, research experience, and any recent publications (within the last five years).
- c) Letter(s) of support from any individuals and/or organization whose cooperation is essential to the proposed research activity.
- d) 200-word (maximum) abstract.
- e) Proposal, limited to three pages (excluding references and necessary appendices) including:

- purpose/objectives of the research
- relevance to occupational therapy practice and the profession's evidence base
- relationship to OSOT's identified strategic priority(ies); if applying for the Strategic Priorities Grant only
- methods
- budget
- timeframe for the proposed study
- plan for dissemination of information
- identification of any overlap with other known projects or grant applications
- pertinent references and/or appendices

f) Certificate of ethics approval, if human subjects are involved (e.g. through interviews). Note: The certificate does not need to accompany the application, but it must be submitted before funding can be released.

6. Timelines and Deadlines

- The deadline for application submission is May 1, 2025. Incomplete applications will be returned and included in the competition only if received by the deadline.
- The review process will take a minimum of six weeks. Notifications will take place by email.
- Successful applicants will be announced at OSOT's annual Awards and Recognition event, as well as posted on the OSOT website and shared by email and social media.
- The grant period begins September 1st and the recipient has one year to use the funds.

7. Application Procedures

- The completed application form along with all supporting documentation, must be submitted electronically using this link: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=2E2dufkWjkC-pnwuUycld31Oro9nNMVEnHAdFp-gvmZURVFOQ0YzSUEXTDIRRFIZTkZCTVVETVlwVy4u>. An email acknowledging receipt of the application will be sent to the applicant.
- Each proposal is reviewed by two reviewers with no affiliation to the project team or any university with which the project team may be associated. The reviewers use an evaluation rubric.
- Applicants will be notified by email of the results of the competition after the OSOT Board of Directors decides based on the reviewers' recommendations.
- A cheque will be issued by the Canadian Occupational Therapy Foundation (COTF) to the successful applicant upon receipt of the researcher's direction for payment. COTF administers the OSOT Research Fund.

8. Expectations of Grant Recipients

- Acceptance of the grant by the applicant is considered a contract binding them to complete the research/project, as described, in the allotted time.
- OSOT must be informed, in writing, of any proposed changes to the procedure, timeline, and/or the budget outlined in the approved application before such changes are undertaken. Failure to notify OSOT in advance of any changes may impact the amount of funding dispersed.

b) To facilitate ongoing support and communication, OSOTRF **Strategic Priorities Grant** recipients are requested to submit quarterly progress reports and a final report on the project. Reports are anticipated on the following dates:

- December 1, 2025
- March 1, 2026
- June 1, 2026
- September 1, 2026
- December 1, 2026 (final)

OSOTRF **Occupational Therapy Research Grant** recipients are requested to submit three reports on the project. Reports are anticipated on the following dates:

- June 1, 2026
- September 1, 2026
- December 1, 2026 (final)

Report templates are provided by OSOT.

- d) A final report must be submitted that relays how the OSOTRF Grant contributed to the research and a brief synopsis of the outcome of the work. This report, which should be submitted in Executive Summary format, must be received by December 31st of the year following the grant period.
- e) At the completion of the grant period, the principal investigator must ensure the sponsoring institution, if any, provides a financial account that is forwarded to OSOT. When no sponsoring institution is involved, the principal investigator is responsible for providing the financial account.
- f) To support knowledge translation, promotion of research findings, and application of findings to occupational therapy practice in Ontario, the principal investigator will commit to participate in the following activities further to project completion:
- Prepare a one-page consumer friendly summary of research findings and implications of findings for occupational therapy practice to be posted on the OSOT website.
 - Participate in an OSOT knowledge translation activity such as a webinar, conference, workshop or poster, determined in consultation with the principal investigator and OSOT.
- g) Any abstracts, reports, presentations, or publications based on the research project must acknowledge the financial support of the OSOTRF and must be referenced and linked to in quarterly reporting.

Evaluation Criteria for OSOTRF Grant Application Review

Applicant name: _____

Proposed research project title: _____

Reviewer name: _____

I cannot identify any conflict of interest in reviewing this proposal.

Criteria	Possible Score	Considerations
Quality of Proposal		
Clearly stated objectives	/2	Is the intent of the project clear?
Strong rationale provided	/2	Does background/literature review demonstrate strong knowledge of the subject area? Is the proposed method suitable given the current state of knowledge?
Research methods well-articulated	/3	Are the methods clear? Is it clear how the methods will address the research objectives?
Budget	/1	Are budgetary needs clear? Have all relevant areas been addressed? Does the request seem reasonable in all areas?
Feasibility	/2	Do the project goals appear reasonable within the stated timeframe? If study involves collection of empirical data, does it appear likely that a sufficient number of participants will be available? Are the resources requested adequate to ensure successful completion?

Sub-total	/10	
Quality of Applicant		
Research experience	/2	Is the scope of the project a match with applicant research skills? If the applicant is a novice researcher, are adequate supports available or written into the proposal?
Institutional support	/1	Is there indication of support from any groups or institutions that would supply participants or other resources for the study?
Overall strength of applicant	/2	Consider the strength of the resume
Sub-total	/5	
Relevance to Occupational Therapy Practice		
Relevance	/3	Strategic Priorities Grant only: Does the project address a strategic priority identified by the Board of Directors? Occupational Therapy Research Grant only: Does the project address an important area for occupational therapy in Ontario?
Potential to impact strategic priorities provincially	/2	Do dissemination methods outlined suggest that results will have a major impact on occupational therapy practice and/or health system change?
Sub-total	/5	
Proposal Total Score	/20	