



## **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

Issued By:

*Ontario Rett Syndrome Association*

## **RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM**

**(July 2023 – June 2024 cycle)**

**November 25, 2022**

**December 21, 2022**

**February 15, 2023**

**April 19, 2023**

**July 1, 2023**

**Duration of award:**

**Release Date**

**Letter of Intent Receipt Date**

**Application Deadline Receipt Date**

**Anticipated Announcement of Award**

**Funding Start Date**

**One year**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Ontario Rett Syndrome association (“O.R.S.A.”) is pleased to offer its research grant program (the “Program”) to professionals committed to conducting novel, emerging, or innovative research in areas relevant to the cure, cause, prevention, improved treatment and/or understanding of Rett Syndrome and its implications on society. This program is provided to support current investigators and encourage new investigators to pursue research in Rett Syndrome. O.R.S.A. wishes to encourage continued growth in the field of Rett Syndrome. O.R.S.A. intends to provide an award in the amount of up to **\$100,000** to outstanding applicants who meet the eligibility criteria of the Program and who have been approved by its Research Grant Advisory Committee (the “Advisory Committee”). Further support is possible to existing funded projects by offering the option to renew funding upon the successful applicant’s re-application to the program. O.R.S.A. encourages applications from the fields of biomedicine, health services and systems research, population studies and clinical research. This initiative is consistent with, and reflects, O.R.S.A.’s commitment to support innovation and interest in Rett Syndrome and to foster international leadership potential in this area.

We are pleased to be able to support many different types of projects, each critical for advancing all phases of Rett Syndrome research, from basic to clinical to treatment. These grants are crucial for allowing investigators to gain enough data to be able to

attract even larger, multi-year commitments from other traditional medical research funding organizations. Our grants include pilot grants, basic and clinical grants, and treatment grants.

Our grants generally include:

**Pilot Studies** - Grants for Pilot Studies are intended to draw new investigators into the field of Rett Syndrome research and to allow researchers to collect preliminary data to show the plausibility of an innovative area of exploration (may include assistant's).

**Basic and Clinical Grants** – Basic and Clinical Grants fund a broad range of areas, providing researchers the opportunity to pursue leads that have shown promise in Pilot Studies and offering larger awards over a longer period of time.

**Treatment Grants** – Treatment Grants address the urgent need to develop effective therapies to treat those living with the syndrome today by supporting research focused on all aspects of treatment including behavioral, biomedical and technological interventions.

**Environmental Sciences** – The goal of the Environmental Sciences Research Grants is to stimulate research on the role of environmental influences in the etiology, course, prognosis, and pathophysiology of Rett Syndrome.

## **FUNDS AVAILABLE**

The Program offers grants for the support of projects with amounts of up to **\$100,000 (two grants of \$50,000 or one grant of \$100,000)** 10% of the funds could go towards indirect costs per year for a period of one year. Funds cannot be used to cover tuition costs.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

O.R.S.A. wishes to support research excellence and development of a wide scope of Rett Syndrome research in Canada. Applications will be accepted from applicants who meet the eligibility criteria established by O.R.S.A. (as summarized in this Request for Applications) and who propose to continue their training or conduct research with the following organizations (an “Approved Institution”):

- Canadian post-secondary institutions and their affiliated institutions, including hospitals and research institutes; or
- Other organizations, as determined by the O.R.S.A. Board Policy Committee in consultation with the Advisory Board, provided that the applicant's research or research-related activities fall within the mandate of O.R.S.A..
- Only research projects directly related to the area of Rett Syndrome will be considered for funding.

In the evaluation of the Application, the Advisory Committee will typically consider previous performance and experience, research project and training environment. Applicants will be given an opportunity to respond to career interruptions.

## **LOCATION OF TRAINING AND SUPERVISION**

Grants provided under the Program shall be held in trust by the Approved Institution at which the proposed supervisor of the successful applicant (an “Approved Supervisor”) holds a faculty appointment.

An Approved Supervisor should be an investigator actively directing research either in the field of Rett Syndrome or working in a highly relevant discipline and must be able to provide the successful applicant with a strong training environment. Other training locations may be considered by the Advisory Committee, provided that the facility is an Approved Institution and the research or research-related activities conducted at the location falls within the mandate of O.R.S.A..

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

The evaluation of Applications submitted to O.R.S.A. will be completed by the Advisory Committee through a peer review process. The Advisory Committee is composed of prominent neurologists, geneticists, and scientists from across Canada. The peer review process is a cornerstone of O.R.S.A.’s research program and provides for the highest quality of objective adjudication.

The Advisory Committee is responsible for the evaluation of all Applications submitted to O.R.S.A. in response to this Request for Applications, to rate each of the Applications so that they may be ranked in order of priority and to recommend to O.R.S.A. the size of the award needed to support the research should the Application be approved.

External reviewers will be solicited for additional expertise as needed.

The Advisory Committee anticipates that it will provide each applicant whose Application to participate in the Program has been declined with written notice of such decision and where possible, a brief written critique of the substance of their Application.

## **REVIEW CRITERIA**

The principal consideration used to evaluate Applications is research excellence. A variety of additional criteria will also be considered by the Advisory Committee in the evaluation process. Applications will be sent to peer reviewers as selected in accordance with review guidelines. Each application will be thoroughly reviewed and checked for consistency in adhering to the guidelines. Scoring will be based on several criteria. A specific set of performance levels established for each criteria to enable an appropriate discrimination between “outstanding”, “excellent”, “very good”, and “good” candidates will be used by the reviewers for consistency and equality in the review process. Each of the criteria listed below will be considered in assigning the overall ranking of the Application, weighing them as appropriate for each Application:

- CANDIDATE
  - Research Experience
  - Letters of Reference/Support
  
- SUPERVISOR/ENVIRONMENT:
  - Previous Research Conducted
  - Training Environment
  
- PROJECT
  - Relevance to Rett Syndrome
  - Originality of the proposal
  - Feasibility of the proposal
  - Overall impression of the proposal

In addition to the above criteria, all applications will also be reviewed with respect to the following:

- The adequacy of the proposed protection of humans, animals, or of the environment, to the extent that they may be adversely affected by the project proposed in the application. The Advisory Committee will also examine the provisions for the protection of human subjects (if any) and the safety of the research environment.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Failure to comply with the Terms and Conditions of this Program may result, in addition to any other remedies O.R.S.A. may have at law, in termination of the Program and exclusion of the applicant from future grant competitions.

A successful applicant who has received an award under the Program may not transfer the award to another institution unless exceptionally approved by the chairs of the Advisory Committee.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS OF FUNDING**

Upon announcement to the successful applicant(s) they are responsible to provide the following to O.R.S.A.:

- Biography of the principal investigator;
- Names of the other investigators;
- A photo of the principal investigator (headshot);
- Who to make the funds payable to;
- Where to send the funds;

All successful applicants shall be required to sign a letter of agreement and comply with the Terms and Conditions of that agreement. The initial payment of the awarded grant

will be made upon signing of the agreement and the second will be forwarded by end-October.

O.R.S.A. requires recipients to submit a Final Progress Reports. A Final Progress Report including a final budget and a submitted abstract with acknowledgement to O.R.S.A.. shall be submitted to the attention of the Chair, O.R.S.A. Board at the O.R.S.A. office no later than **1 October of the concluding year**, three months after the termination of the term of the Grant.

The report should include (maximum 500 words not including title and authors):

- Title: should be brief and clearly indicate the nature of the presentation;
- Objective(s): state the study purpose in a concise manner.
- Study methods: indicate the location, number and type of human subjects, nonhuman species or material being studied, the principle test performed, and the type(s) of statistical analysis is appropriate.
- Results: confirm or refute the hypothesis, supported by statistics if appropriate. **NO TABLES OR GRAPHS PLEASE.**
- Conclusions(s): state the effect of the study on patient management, the scientific or clinical significance of the work, or the way we teach students or patients.

## **LETTER OF INTENT**

Applicants intending to submit an application to participate in the Program **must** submit their Letter of Intent by **December 21, 2022**. The information contained therein will allow O.R.S.A. to estimate the potential review workload, avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review process, and verify contact information.

The Letter of Intent form can be found on the O.R.S.A. website at [www.rett.ca](http://www.rett.ca) and should be a scanned copy submitted via e-mail at the address listed below. Confirmations of receipt will be provided upon successful submission.

**\* Please note that failure to submit a Letter of Intent by the above deadline will result in exclusion from the granting competition.**

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

Applications must be submitted no later than **February 15, 2023** (the “Application Deadline”) to O.R.S.A.. Submissions received past this date will be ineligible and will not be reviewed. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to follow up and ensure that all criteria have been met. Applicants will not be contacted if their submission has been deemed ineligible.

Relevant and reasonable support material, including but not limited to photographs, literature references, publications, letters of collaboration and appendices may be included. The three-page limit applies only to the project narrative and does not include references, biographical information, ethical approvals or other support documents.

Please note that the application must not exceed the allotted pages unless otherwise noted. Pages must be typed using Times New Roman font and may be single-spaced. Font may not be less than 12 point, and page margins should not be smaller than 1 inch per margin. Any applications in violation of these guidelines will be subject to disqualification at the discretion of the Advisory Committee.

**Signed applications must be sent electronically or by scanned e-mail but an original copy with original signatures must follow via mail.** Confirmation of receipt will be provided at the e-mail address provided upon successful submission of the application. If you have not received a confirmation, please contact the O.R.S.A.. Office. You are responsible for ensuring that your proposal has been received.

The original signed application must be forwarded to:

**O.R.S.A..**

**Attention: Rick Goodhew**

**3371 McLauchlan Cres,**

**London, ON, N6P 0A4**

**Email: [goodhew@rogers.com](mailto:goodhew@rogers.com)**

Incomplete applications or applications received later than **February 15, 2023** will not be considered under any circumstances.

For more information, please contact Rick Goodhew at [goodhew@rogers.com](mailto:goodhew@rogers.com)