

## **Canadian Initiative for Outcomes in Rheumatology cAre (CIORA) Grant Terms of Reference**

CIORA will have achieved its mandate when:

- Just like cancer and diabetes, all rheumatic diseases are widely recognized by doctors, patients, the government, and the general population as serious chronic illnesses, urgently in need of early intervention and resource allocation;
- Efficient and appropriate systems for rheumatic disease care and referrals are in place across the country;
- Optimal care is available to all Canadians who need it, regardless of where they live

### **Goals**

1. To support academic clinical research initiatives related to all Rheumatic Diseases.
2. To support clinical research initiatives for community rheumatologists related to all Rheumatic Diseases.

### **Scope**

CIORA has established funds for the conduct and evaluation of endeavors in Canada for all rheumatic diseases. The stipend attached to the grant will depend on the merit and budget of the project. CIORA provides one-year funding to a maximum of \$75,000 and two-year funding to a maximum of \$120,000. Proposals should have measurable outcomes at the end of the one and/or two-year term. Applicants can reapply for funding for subsequent project phases; the application should describe the probability of this project securing additional funding if required and have a sustainable impact. A limited number of two-year grants will be considered with funds released on a yearly basis after review of a detailed progress report. All grants are peer-reviewed, and grants are awarded based on the recommendation of the CRA Research Committee and dependent on available funds. A member of the CRA (in good standing) must be the Principal Applicant or co-applicant for submitted grants.

### **Deadlines**

Letter of Intent must be submitted by **March 8, 2024**.

CIORA Online Grant Application submission deadline is **April 5, 2024**.

Grant notifications will be sent out in **July 2024**.

Applicants must indicate their intention to submit a project proposal by providing a Letter of Intent (LOI). This mandatory letter will be used for planning purposes to improve the overall efficiency of the project evaluation process. Specifically, it will help the CRA to identify, at an early stage, potential reviewers, any conflicts; the number and type of projects in specific categories; and the resource requirements for the review committee

All LOI's will be reviewed to ensure eligibility and applicants will be notified if it does not meet the criteria.

## Format of the application

The grant application must be no more than 10 pages (excluding CVs). The 10 pages include a lay summary, background, methods, impact, feasibility, timeline, and project leverages which allow a maximum 3,000-word limit combined (approximately 6 pages).

The components of the grant proposal and review scoring scheme are listed below:

1. **Scientific Abstract** (maximum 500 words) - summarize the research question, background, methods, impact and feasibility of the project
2. **Lay Summary** (maximum 500 words) - lay reviewer will only read this part of your grant, please be clear on your details.
3. **Research Question** (maximum 250 words) - overall objectives and/or hypothesis
4. **Background** (5 points) - provides context and preliminary results, if available
5. **Methods** (25 points)
  1. Specific aims (5 points)
  2. Description of the study population (5 points)
  3. Study design/implementation (5 points)
  4. Outcome measures (including measurable outcomes and definitions of success) (5 points)
  5. Statistical plan (including sample size justification). Expertise of a methodologist is recommended. (5 points)
6. **Impact** (10 points) - expected results, project deliverables and dissemination (include how this project will impact rheumatology care).
7. **Feasibility and sustainability** (10 points) - Applicants must demonstrate scientific and technical feasibility (e.g. research team, role of Principal Applicants, co-applicants, recruitment, acquisition of data, access to necessary equipment, etc.). They must address limitations and pitfalls. They must also demonstrate

realistic timelines and milestones. Optionally, applicants who submit projects that rely on existing resources (e.g. databases, established research infrastructure, equipment) and collaborators may submit letters of support to provide further evidence of feasibility. Finally, applicants must provide evidence of sustainability i.e. what happens when the grant is over?

8. **Timeline** (refer to [Timeline Template](#) for more details) - This is a text only field, tables can be uploaded in the Upload section of the application.
9. **Description of how this project leverages other funding** (if applicable) - All candidates must declare all potentially overlapping grants with full disclosure so the committee can decide if funding needs to be altered. If the proposal submitted is part of a larger project that has received prior CIORA funding or funding from another source, provide a description of how this project leverages other funding.
10. **Acknowledgements** - The Principal Applicant(s) must confirm that all investigators are aware of the application and agree to be an applicant or co-applicant on the CIORA grant as submitted. **The Principal Applicant(s) must confirm that they cannot apply for another grant as a Principal Applicant until the final progress report has been approved on this grant.**
11. **Curriculum Vitae (CVs)** - An abbreviated CV from a maximum of 5 key applicants (maximum 2 pages for each applicant), which should include the applicant's credentials, all awarded grant funding and publications (total and those over the last 5 years). The remaining co-applicants can be listed on a table and include names, degrees, position (including university, if applicable), areas of expertise and role on the project.
12. **Budget** - Upload one budget per grant in either word or excel format. Budgets must be well-justified and for a maximum of one year of funding (for one-year grant) and for a maximum of two years of funding (for two-year grant). The budget should detail the total funds required for the endeavor and the amount requested from CIORA (file size maximum 500mb). Abstract submission costs and /or publication fees, up to a maximum of \$1000. The budget will not include travel for abstract presentation to any meeting. Refer to [Fundable & Non-Fundable Items](#) for more details.
13. **References** (Word or PDF only)
14. **Images** (Word or PDF only) - This field is optional.
15. **Letters of Support** - Applicants who submit projects that rely on existing resources (e.g. databases, established research infrastructure, equipment) and collaborators may submit letters of support to provide further evidence of feasibility. This field is optional.
16. **Appendixes** (Word, PDF, PPT or excel only).- This field is optional.

## Terms of Reference

All proposed project funding is for Canadian research and funds must be spent in Canada. The Principal Applicant or co-applicant **must be a rheumatologist practicing in Canada and a member of the CRA.**

### Review Criteria:

The research project will be reviewed by the CIORA Review and Research Committees and must be pertinent to rheumatic diseases in one of the categories outlined below in the section Specific Terms of Reference. If the proposed project is outside the scope of the categories, it will not be considered. Principal Applicant(s) will not be involved in the peer review process. Priority may be given to grants that can leverage additional funding.

### Specific Terms of Reference:

As of the 2022 competition, CIORA will fund applications falling into the two following categories:

- a. **Any academic clinical research initiatives related to all Rheumatic Diseases** including, but not limited to early access to care, education, awareness, advocacy, and multi-disciplinary care. Excellence and impact, rather than an area of research, will be prioritized.
- b. **Community Rheumatology** Proposals in this category should aim to promote community rheumatology and have measurable outcome(s) for community rheumatologists or people with rheumatic diseases followed in the community. For this pillar, the principal applicant or co-applicant must self-identify as Community Rheumatologist and allocate a minimum of 50% of their time to community practice. **NEW: Ethics approval is required before funding commences. Proof of submission to IRB will be accepted.**

Please note that, as it has always been in the past, CIORA does not fund basic science research or any laboratory component of an application. **NEW: Patented commercialized projects will not be funded by CIORA.**

### Grant Maximum:

The limit of a grant in category (a) of the Specific Terms of Reference will be **\$75,000** for a one-year grant and **\$120,000** for a two-year grant. A limited number of two-year grants will be considered with funds released on a yearly basis after review of a detailed progress report.

Only 1 one-year grant to a maximum of **\$60,000** will be awarded to applicants to the Community Rheumatology category (b) in the Specific Terms of Reference.

*As this is a peer reviewed grant from CIORA, no institutional overhead will be paid.*

**Sustainability:**

The objective is to ensure that all projects are sustainable. For example, a hospital might provide space, time from Allied Health Professional; a local charity might join as a partner. Letters confirming support are highly recommended.

**Accountability:**

A one-page progress report must be submitted to the CRA Research Committee 18 months after a one-year grant is awarded. 10% of the approved Grant will be withheld until the progress report is submitted and approved as adequate.

A one-page progress report must be submitted to the CRA Research Committee 12 months after the two-year grant is awarded. Funds will be released as follows:

- Grant Maximum of \$75,000 (less 10%) for the first year
- 10% from first year + Max \$45,000 (less 10%) for the second year
- Remaining 10% (from 2<sup>nd</sup> year) upon completion of a final progress report.

A template of a progress report will be provided to successful applicants prior to the due date. Progress reports should clearly state the outcomes achieved, and include abstracts, publications, presentations and other dissemination activities relating to the project.

**Acknowledgement:**

All presentations and publications made possible by this grant must acknowledge CIORA funding.

**If you have any questions or require further information, please contact:  
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