

## OPEN FUNDING CALL FOR OVARIAN CANCER RESEARCH IN MANITOBA: COMPETITION GUIDELINES

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### B. Key Dates

Competition step	Date
Competition materials available online	On or before October 27, 2025
NOI submission deadline	November 21, 2025
Full application submission deadline	December 8, 2025
Application review period	December 2025 – February 2026
Competition results communicated to applicants	February 16, 2026
Funding start date	On or before March 31, 2026

### C. Competition Funder

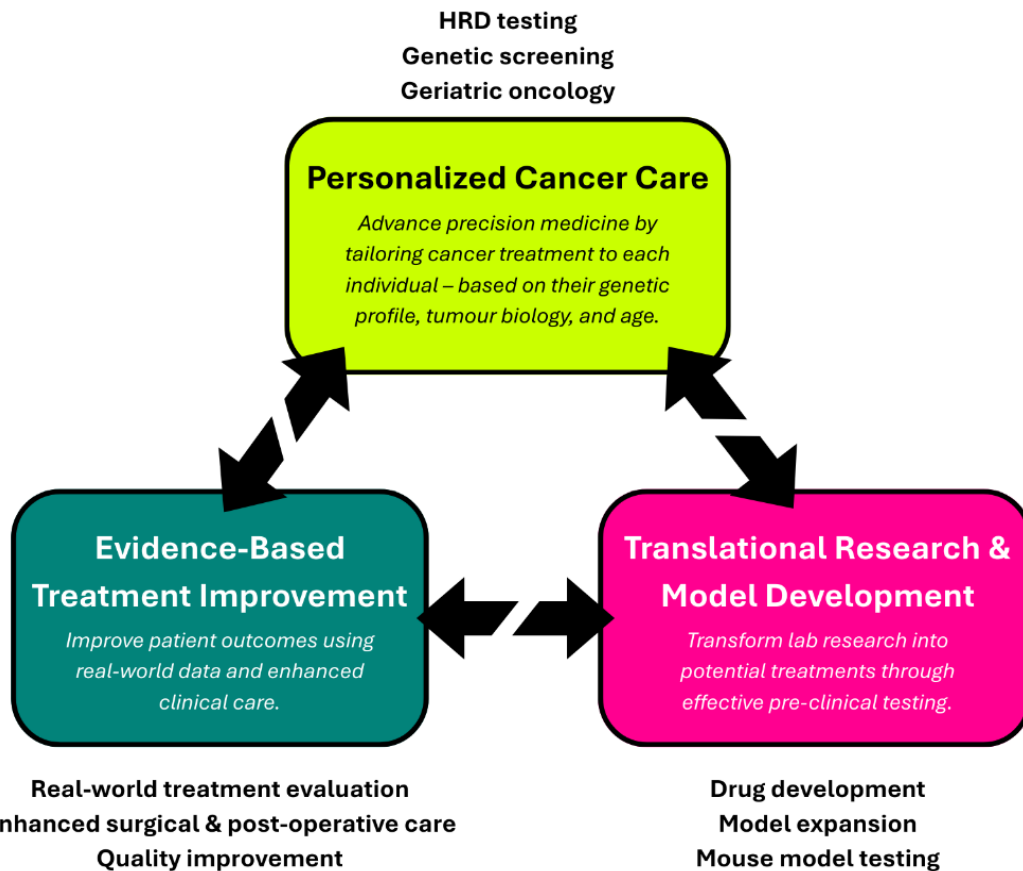
Ovarian Cancer Canada (OCC) is the only national organization dedicated to overcoming ovarian cancer (OC). Our mission is to boldly and unapologetically take action against OC until the number of deaths from this disease is zero. Central to this is our commitment to investing in all stages of research from bench to bedside to drive scientific progress and

improvements to patient-centered care in OC prevention, early detection, treatment and survivorship (<https://ovariancanada.org/about-our-research>).

**D. Project eligibility & evaluation criteria**

This competition is open to all clinical and scientific researchers studying OC in Manitoba. The goal of this competition is to fund the most innovative and impactful projects and initiatives of varied types (e.g., discovery-based, pre-clinical, translational, clinical, psychosocial, mixed methods, pragmatic, scientific resources) with the greatest potential to benefit OC patients in the province. Full or partial funding of salaries for trainees (e.g., MSc, PhD or postdoctoral) who are actively engaged in OC research is also encouraged.

Priority areas for funding were determined through consultation with clinicians, researchers and individuals with lived experience of OC (e.g., patients or caregivers) in Manitoba. These priorities include personalized cancer care, evidence-based treatment improvement and translational research and model development (non-exhaustive examples shown below).



The following criteria will be considered by academic and patient reviewers when evaluating applications:

- ❖ Scientific merit & research strategy
- ❖ Project fit
- ❖ Potential for impact
- ❖ Innovation
- ❖ Readiness & feasibility
- ❖ Strength of supporting/preliminary data
- ❖ Qualifications of research team & research environment
- ❖ Budget & timelines
- ❖ Importance and relevance to OC patients
- ❖ Patient engagement plan
- ❖ Lay summary

#### **E. Patient engagement in research**

All projects funded through this competition are **required** to meaningfully engage patient partners throughout the study period, for instance through co-developing research questions and study design, ensuring recruitment methods are feasible and acceptable to the patient population, interpreting results and knowledge translation (see **Annex** for additional examples and considerations).

Applicants may choose to collaborate with local patient partners within their community or with OCC's Patient Partners in Research (PPiR) program to facilitate patient-researcher partnerships. If you want to collaborate with local patient partners in Manitoba, but are unsure of how to connect with them, send an email to Dr. Jessica Lawson ([jlawson@ovariancanada.org](mailto:jlawson@ovariancanada.org)) with the subject line "**OCC x MB\_Local patient connection request**" for assistance.

To collaborate with members of the national PPiR team, send an email to Dr. Jessica Lawson ([jlawson@ovariancanada.org](mailto:jlawson@ovariancanada.org)) with the subject line "**OCC x MB\_PPiR Research Inquiry**" and a brief description of the research engagement ([here](#)) as well as some general availability for a follow-up meeting. **Please note that requests will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis**; we cannot guarantee the fulfillment of last-minute requests. FAQs for researchers interested in collaborating with OCC's PPiR team can be found [here](#).

#### **F. Budget & study term**

A total funding envelope of **\$850,000** has been allocated to this competition, including \$425,000 in 2025/26 and \$425,000 in 2026/27\*. There are no set per-project limits for funding

requests by applicants; the number of projects to be funded will therefore depend on the balance of funds requested and project rankings by the independent review panel. The intent is to allocate all funding through one round of competition, with the option for a second round only if needed. Funding for grantees will start upon execution of the funding agreement with the Principal Applicant's host institution, with the first payment being sent **on or before March 31, 2026**. Applicants can request a study term for completion of project deliverables of up to 3 years. Eligible and ineligible expenses are listed below:

### ***Eligible expenses***

- ❖ Full or partial salary support to staff (e.g., research coordinators, assistants, associates, technicians) or trainees (e.g., graduate students and post-doctoral fellows) responsible for the work. Guidelines for trainee annual salaries are below:
  - MSc students - \$27,500
  - PhD students - \$35,000
  - Postdoctoral fellows - \$50,000
- ❖ Consumables and service costs (e.g., core facilities) required to carry out the work;
- ❖ Costs related to acquisition, processing and molecular characterization of biospecimens;
- ❖ Costs associated with data collection and analysis;
- ❖ Costs related to engaging patients in the planning and implementation of the project, including but not limited to honoraria for patient partners;
- ❖ Costs related to sharing of materials (e.g., clinical biospecimens, research models) and data to facilitate multi-institutional collaboration;
- ❖ Publication fees up to \$4,000;
- ❖ Up to \$2,000 per year for attending meetings, seminars or conferences (e.g., registration, travel, accommodation).

### ***Ineligible expenses***

- ❖ Remuneration of Principal Applicant, Co-Applicants or Collaborators (with the exception of honoraria for patient partners);
- ❖ Purchase of equipment, unless approved by OCC in advance;
- ❖ Indirect costs to institutions;
- ❖ Sabbatical or parental leave;
- ❖ Publication fees in excess of \$4,000\*\*;
- ❖ Meeting, seminar or conference expenses in excess of \$2,000 per year.

*\*The availability of 2026/27 funds are contingent upon continued funding of OCC by The Government of Manitoba. \*\*Paid invoices for manuscript publication fees in excess of \$4,000*

can be submitted to [atone@ovariancanada.org](mailto:atone@ovariancanada.org) for consideration of partial or complete reimbursement.

### **G. Applicant eligibility criteria**

Study Principal Applicant/s must hold a research position at an academic institution in Manitoba and be able to hold research funds at their institution. Study co-applicants and collaborators may be affiliated with institutions outside of Manitoba; however, funds must be spent within the province.

### **H. Multiple applications**

There are no limits on the number of applications submitted, as a Principal Applicant, co-applicant or collaborator.

### **I. Two-stage application process**

Ovarian Cancer Canada will administer and manage this competition. All applications must be submitted in English to facilitate peer review. The application process is comprised of two stages: **(1)** submission of a brief Notice of Intent (NOI; **Section J**) and **(2)** submission of a Full Application (**Section K**). All Principal Applicants **must submit an NOI**. The NOI is non-competitive and will be used by OCC to guide recruitment of expert reviewers for the full application stage. Deadlines for submission are indicated below and will be strictly enforced.

- ❖ NOIs must be received by **November 21, 2025 @ 5:00 pm CT**
- ❖ Full Applications must be received by **December 8, 2025 @5:00 pm CT**

### **J. NOI submission instructions**

Please fill out the **OCC x MB Competition Notice of Intent Form** ([here](#)) by **November 21, 2025 @ 5:00 pm CT**. The following information is required:

- ❖ Principal Applicant name, affiliation and email
- ❖ Names of co-applicants and collaborators – *including patient partners, if applicable*
- ❖ Project title
- ❖ 3-5 key words to describe the project
- ❖ Total budget being requested

## **K. Full application submission instructions**

To be considered a complete application, the following information must be compiled into a single PDF document and emailed to [jlawson@ovariancanada.org](mailto:jlawson@ovariancanada.org) with the subject line “OCC x MB\_Full Application\_lastname” by **December 8, 2025 @5:00 pm CT**:

- 1) Application form** – includes basic project information and applicant demographics. Will be available at <https://ovariancanada.org/for-researchers> on or before October 27, 2025.
  
- 2) Written components** – description and page limits indicated below. *Formatting guidelines for each: single-spaced, minimum of ¾” (2 cm) margin all four sides, 12pt font. Please note that non-compliance to the guidelines could lead to an administrative rejection of a submitted application prior to its scientific evaluation.*
  - a) Scientific abstract (max 1 page).** Describe the rationale, research aims, methodology, anticipated outcomes and their potential impact for patients.
  
  - b) Lay summary (max 1 page).** Summary of the research project in lay terms, to be understood by those who are not in academic research.
  
  - c) Research proposal (max 5 pages).** Describe the proposed research project, considering the following elements:
    - Rationale and background;
    - Proposed aim(s)/objectives and hypotheses;
    - Study design/methodology and analysis plan;
    - Patient engagement plan;
    - How the proposed project fits eligibility/evaluation criteria;
    - Significance of the proposed research and expected outcomes;
    - Study timelines.
  
  - d) Research team (max 1 page).** Describe the expertise and contributions of the Principal Applicant, co-applicant(s) and other key personnel involved in the proposed research.
  
  - e) Budget summary and justification (max 2 pages).** All budget items, including salaries\*, must be justified in terms of the objectives and milestones of the project. For every item in the budget, the applicant must provide a complete breakdown of the amounts requested for the project. Where there are subprojects, clearly itemize the budgetary requirement for each one.

*\*If full salaries for trainees are being requested, please include the trainee’s name, supervisors name and what proportion of their work will be focused on OC.*

- 3) **Figures & Tables (max 3 pages).** Preliminary data and/or study schema.
- 4) **References (no page limit).** List of references cited in the Research Proposal.
- 5) **Letters of Support (no limit).** *Mandatory:* From lead institution, ensuring that the necessary infrastructure support is available for the project and that the Principal Applicant is able to hold research funds; *Optional:* From collaborators, service providers and patient partners, as applicable.
- 6) **Abbreviated CV / Biosketch.** Required for the Principal Applicant and all co-applicants (including academic and/or patient partners). No specific format is required; however, the following information must be included:

***Academic applicants:***

- ❖ Academic degrees
- ❖ Details of employment since graduation, including post-doctoral research and/or clinical fellowships
- ❖ 3-5 research and/or clinical contributions
- ❖ List of publications (including submitted manuscripts and manuscripts in preparation) during the last 5-full time or equivalent working years
- ❖ Grant support received in the past 5 years + relevant pending support – please note any potential overlaps with the current submission

***Named patient partners:***

- ❖ *Personal Statement: Briefly describe why your personal and/or professional experience make you particularly well suited for your role in the proposed project.*
- ❖ *Experience, Leadership, Engagement: List personal and professional experience relevant to the project/study topic, including participation with community and volunteer organizations and membership or leadership in relevant organizations and advisory groups.*
- ❖ *Engagement in Research/Implementation: Outline past engagement in patient-centered outcomes project/studies, including participation in an advisory capacity, publications authored or co-authored and presentations made.*

- 7) **Application form** – includes basic project information and applicant demographics. Will be available at <https://ovariancanada.org/for-researchers> by October 27, 2025.

### **L. Independent review process**

All Full Applications will be evaluated by an independent expert review committee assembled by OCC, made up of Canadian and/or international clinical and scientific experts (“academic reviewers”) and individuals with lived experience of ovarian cancer (“patient reviewers”). OCC has years of experience and processes in place for training of patients to participate in grant review panels and manage any potential conflicts of interest with submitted applications that may arise from patient-researcher collaborations. The selection of reviewers will be made based on expertise and compliance with OCC’s Research Conflict of Interest (COI) and Confidentiality Policy ([here](#)). All committee members are required to sign a Research Policy Declaration Form ([here](#)) prior to receipt of their assigned applications.

Each proposal will be initially reviewed and scored by 2-3 academic reviewers and 2 patient reviewers. At the final committee meeting, the proposal will be presented, discussed and scored. Final application scores and rank order will be reviewed by OCC leadership, with funding recommendations made to the CEO/Board of Directors for approval.

### **M. Research ethics & institutional policies**

Prior to commencing OCC-funded research activities, researchers shall ensure that the research protocol is consistent with the principles set out in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and is reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at each participating institution. All Research Ethics Board approval letters shall be forwarded to OCC’s Director, Research at [atone@ovariancanada.org](mailto:atone@ovariancanada.org).

It remains the responsibility of the Principal Applicant, co-applicants and collaborators to respect the rules and policies of their institutions.

### **N. Reporting requirements**

All funding recipients will be required to provide regular updates on progress to OCC as a condition of funding. Reporting templates and deadlines will be provided to recipients upon notice of funding.

### **O. Contact**

For questions regarding the competition, please contact Dr. Jessica Lawson (Research Coordinator; [jlawson@ovariancanada.org](mailto:jlawson@ovariancanada.org))

For other questions related to research at OCC, contact Dr. Alicia Tone (Director, Research; [atone@ovariancanada.org](mailto:atone@ovariancanada.org))

### **Annex: Patient engagement guidelines**

The Patient Partners in Research (PPiR) program was developed in 2020 by OCC to keep the voices of those with lived experience at the forefront of research, and has since become an integral component of all research at OCC. Engaging ovarian cancer patients as partners in research reflects our philosophy that the relevance, importance and impact of scientific and clinical inquiry can be enhanced by valuing the input and viewpoints of those affected by this disease. The PPiR program is led and managed by two OCC research staff and two patient advocates. Our PPiR team includes a diverse representation of ovarian cancer types, age, sexuality, cultural backgrounds, and geography with each member bringing their unique perspective and shared experiences as ovarian cancer patients, caregivers or loved ones.

The role of the PPiR program is to train and match patient partners to research opportunities with the goal to complement and maximize the impact of research being done by Canadian researchers. All team members are required to complete the Science of Cancer online course, in addition to task-specific training dependent on the engagement opportunity. Some examples of activities that PPiR team members have participated in include:

- ❖ Serving as patient reviewers on grant funding (pre-clinical and clinical) and trainee award review panels
- ❖ Participating as embedded research team members on OCC-funded projects (both clinical and pre-clinical). Roles have included:
  - Review of grant applications and submission of letters of support;
  - Consultation on research study design, research questions, eligibility criteria and recruitment plans;
  - Review of lay language material (e.g., public summary, recruitment materials and informed consent forms);
  - Evaluation of patient surveys;
  - Participation in working groups led by research teams;
  - Co-development of patient decision aids and educational tools/modules;
  - Attendance at regular team meetings;
  - Review of manuscripts, meeting abstracts and other knowledge mobilization materials.
- ❖ Consulting on strategic planning, PPiR program guidelines, research partnership agreements, programmatic design and patient engagement best practices
- ❖ Participating as speakers and/or panelists at OCC events and external research conferences
- ❖ Participating on graduate student advisory committees
- ❖ Sharing their experiences and learnings with research teams and clinical trainees

- ❖ Participating in research and system advocacy alongside OCC staff and members of the research community

The goal of PPIR is to build sustainable partnerships between patients and researchers, so that patient partners are updated regularly on the research progress and how their contribution is shaping the research project. Please consider the following when designing your patient engagement plan:

- ❖ Use the buddy system: we recommend including **two** patient partners for your study; this helps them feel more comfortable and mitigates the impact of members' changing health status on the dynamics of the research team.
- ❖ Research teams are encouraged to have a **closing meeting**, where they present the results and conclusions of the research study as well as share how the input of patient partners has impacted their research project. Patient partners may also present their own reflections on their experience collaborating on the research project, to help researchers hone their patient engagement skills.
- ❖ Ask yourself these questions:
  - Why is this a good research opportunity to engage patients?
  - What will the role of the patient partner(s) be?
  - How will their input be used in the research process?
  - Are there any requirements to participate in the research opportunity? (e.g., living in a specific geographical region)
  - Do the patient partner(s) need to have any specific experiences that they can speak to? (e.g., specific ovarian cancer type, experience with a specific treatment)
  - Will OCC need to provide task-specific training to best prepare the selected patient partner(s)?
  - What level of participation is required from the patient partners (hours/month)?
  - What stage will the patient partner(s) begin to participate in the research process?
  - How long will the patient partner(s) be involved?
  - Is this a one-time engagement event or are there regular meetings?
  - Will patient partner(s) be compensated? *Note: this is not a strict requirement; however, patient partners should be made aware from the beginning.*

- ❖ Below are some helpful resources on patient engagement in research:
- Farrell AC, Lawson JA, Ovarian Cancer Canada’s Patient Partners in Research Team, Ross A, Tone AA. Advancing Research Alongside Patient Partners: Next-Generation Best Practices for Effective Collaboration in Health Research. *Current Oncology*. 2024; 31(11):6956-6978. PMID: [39590144](#)
  - Richards DP, Poirier S, Mohabir V, Proulx L, Robins S, Smith J. Reflections on patient engagement by patient partners: how it can go wrong. *Res Involv Engagem*. 2023 Jun 12;9(1):41. PMID: [37308922](#)
  - Richards DP, Cobey KD, Proulx L, Dawson S, de Wit M, Toupin-April K. Identifying potential barriers and solutions to patient partner compensation (payment) in research. *Res Involv Engagem*. 2022 Feb 23;8(1):7. PMID: [35197113](#)
  - Liabo K, Boddy K, Bortoli S, Irvine J, Boulton H, Fredlund M, Joseph N, Bjornstad G, Morris C. Public involvement in health research: what does 'good' look like in practice? *Res Involv Engagem*. 2020 Mar 31;6:11. PMID: [32266085](#)
  - Richards DP, Jordan I, Strain K, Press Z. Patients as Partners in Research: How to Talk About Compensation With Patient Partners. *J Orthop Sports Phys Ther*. 2020 Aug;50(8):413-414. PMID: [32736501](#)
  - Richards DP, Birnie KA, Eubanks K, Lane T, Linkiewicz D, Singer L, Stinson J, Begley KN. Guidance on authorship with and acknowledgement of patient partners in patient-oriented research. *Res Involv Engagem*. 2020 Jul;2(6):38 PMID: [32637153](#)
  - “A How-to Guide for Patient Engagement in Research” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research; [link](#))