



ONTARIO RETT SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
THE HOPE FUND RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
JULY 2027 TO JUNE 2028 FUNDING CYCLE

KEY DATES

Release Date	October 1, 2026
Letter of Intent Deadline	December 11, 2026
Full Application Deadline	February 12, 2027
Anticipated Award Announcement	April 16, 2027
Funding Start Date	July 1, 2027
Award Duration	One year

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1. BACKGROUND

The **Ontario Rett Syndrome Association of Canada (ORSA Canada)** is pleased to offer the **HOPE FUND Research Grant Program** (the "Program") to support researchers and professionals conducting novel, emerging, and innovative research relevant to Rett syndrome.



The Program supports research focused on the **cause, cure, prevention, treatment, management, and understanding of Rett syndrome**, as well as its broader impact on individuals, families, healthcare systems, and society.

The HOPE FUND was established to support continued growth and innovation in Rett syndrome research, provide opportunities for both established and emerging investigators, and advance promising research toward meaningful outcomes for individuals living with Rett syndrome and their families.

ORSA Canada intends to provide awards of **up to \$50,000** to outstanding applicants who meet the eligibility requirements and whose applications are approved by the **HOPE FUND Research Grant Advisory Committee** (the "Advisory Committee").

Existing funded projects may be considered for renewal through a new application and competitive review process.

ORSA Canada welcomes applications across a broad range of research disciplines, including:

- Biomedical research
- Clinical research
- Health services and systems research
- Population health
- Translational research
- Treatment development
- Environmental research

The goal of the Program is to support research at every stage, from foundational discovery through clinical application and treatment development.

2. RESEARCH AREAS

The HOPE FUND supports a variety of research projects, including, but not limited to, the following areas.

Pilot and Emerging Research

Pilot grants are intended to encourage new investigators to enter the field of Rett syndrome research and to support established researchers exploring innovative areas of investigation.



These grants may enable researchers to collect preliminary data, establish the feasibility of a new research direction, and build a foundation for future research and larger funding opportunities.

Basic and Clinical Research

Basic and clinical research grants support projects that advance understanding of Rett syndrome and build upon promising preliminary findings.

Research may include disease mechanisms, genetics, biomarkers, clinical outcomes, diagnosis, natural history, and other areas relevant to Rett syndrome.

Treatment Research

Treatment grants support research focused on improving the lives of individuals living with Rett syndrome.

Projects may explore pharmacological, behavioural, biomedical, rehabilitative, technological, or other therapeutic interventions.

Environmental and Related Research

Research examining environmental influences on the development, progression, prognosis, or pathophysiology of Rett syndrome may also be considered.

3. FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Program will provide funding of **up to \$50,000 for one year**.

Depending on the quality and scope of applications received, ORSA Canada may award:

- **One grant of up to \$50,000, or**
- **Two grants of up to \$25,000 each.**

The Advisory Committee will determine the recommended funding level based on the scientific merit, scope, feasibility, and proposed budget of each application.

Tuition costs are not eligible expenses under this Program.

Indirect Costs

ORSA Canada may provide support for eligible indirect costs of up to **15% of the total awarded grant**, subject to approval of the proposed budget.



4. ELIGIBILITY

ORSA Canada is committed to supporting research excellence and the development of a broad and diverse field of Rett syndrome research in Canada.

Applications will be considered from researchers who:

- Meet the eligibility requirements outlined in this Request for Applications;
- Are conducting research directly related to Rett syndrome;
- Are affiliated with an eligible Canadian institution or organization; and
- Have an appropriate research environment, supervision, and institutional support to successfully conduct the proposed project.

Eligible Institutions

Eligible institutions may include:

- Canadian universities and other post-secondary institutions;
- Affiliated hospitals and healthcare institutions;
- Research institutes and centres; and
- Other organizations approved by ORSA Canada where the proposed research falls within the mandate of the organization.

Only research projects directly related to Rett syndrome will be considered for funding.

In evaluating applicants, the Advisory Committee may consider the applicant's research experience, qualifications, previous performance, proposed research, research environment, and potential contribution to the field.

Applicants may identify and explain significant career interruptions or circumstances that have affected their research trajectory.

5. LOCATION OF RESEARCH AND SUPERVISION

Grant funds will normally be administered by the eligible institution at which the Principal Investigator or approved supervisor holds an appropriate appointment.

The Principal Investigator or supervisor should be actively engaged in Rett syndrome research or in a closely related discipline and must be able to provide an appropriate environment for the successful completion of the proposed research.



Alternative research locations may be considered by the Advisory Committee provided that:

- The organization is an eligible institution or has been approved by ORSA Canada; and
- The proposed research falls within the mandate of the HOPE FUND Research Grant Program.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Applications submitted to ORSA Canada will be evaluated through a **peer review process** overseen by the HOPE FUND Research Grant Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee may include researchers, clinicians, scientists, and other experts with relevant expertise in Rett syndrome and related fields.

The peer review process is intended to ensure a **fair, transparent, and objective assessment** of all eligible applications.

The Advisory Committee will:

- Review and assess eligible applications;
- Rank applications according to overall merit;
- Consider proposed budgets and funding requirements;
- Recommend applications for funding; and
- Recommend the appropriate level of funding for successful applications.

External reviewers may be consulted when additional subject matter expertise is required.

Applicants whose proposals are not selected for funding will be notified of the decision. Where possible, ORSA Canada will provide brief feedback regarding the application.

7. REVIEW CRITERIA

The primary consideration in evaluating applications will be **research excellence**.

The Advisory Committee will consider the following criteria, as applicable.

Applicant

- Research experience and qualifications;
- Previous research accomplishments;
- Potential to contribute to the field of Rett syndrome; and



- Letters of reference or support, where requested.

Research Environment

- Previous research conducted by the applicant and research team;
- Qualifications and expertise of collaborators and supervisors;
- Adequacy of the proposed research environment; and
- Access to required facilities, equipment, participants, data, and other resources.

Research Project

- Relevance to Rett syndrome;
- Significance and potential impact;
- Originality and innovation;
- Scientific merit;
- Feasibility;
- Appropriateness of the proposed methodology;
- Potential to advance knowledge, treatment, care, or quality of life for individuals living with Rett syndrome; and
- Potential to generate preliminary data for future research and larger funding opportunities.

Ethical and Safety Considerations

Applications will also be reviewed for the adequacy of proposed protections for:

- Human participants;
- Animals, where applicable; and
- The research environment.

Applicants must obtain all required institutional and regulatory approvals before beginning research involving human participants, animals, personal health information, or other regulated materials.

8. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Successful applicants will be required to comply with the terms and conditions established by ORSA Canada and outlined in the **Grant Agreement**.

Failure to comply with the terms and conditions may result in suspension or termination of funding and may affect eligibility for future ORSA Canada grant competitions.



Grant funds must be used only for approved expenses associated with the funded research project.

A funded project may not be transferred to another institution without prior written approval from ORSA Canada.

ORSA Canada reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate funding where there has been a material change to the project, failure to comply with the Grant Agreement, or other circumstances that affect the appropriate use of grant funds.

9. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS OF FUNDING

Successful applicants will be required to provide the following information upon notification of an award:

- Principal Investigator biography;
- Names and affiliations of other investigators and key personnel;
- Principal Investigator headshot;
- Institutional contact information;
- Name and address of the organization to which funds should be payable;
- Required banking or payment information; and
- Any additional information requested by ORSA Canada.

All successful applicants must sign a **Grant Agreement** before funding is released.

Funding will be provided according to the payment schedule outlined in the Grant Agreement.

Final Progress Report

Grant recipients are required to submit a final progress report to ORSA Canada following completion of the funded project.

The final report must include:

- A summary of the research conducted;
- Progress toward the original objectives;
- Key findings and outcomes;
- Final budget and use of funds;
- Future research directions; and
- An acknowledgement of ORSA Canada support.



Where requested, recipients may also be required to provide a research abstract suitable for communication to the Rett syndrome community.

Research Abstract

The abstract should be no more than **500 words**, excluding the title and authors, and should include:

Title: A brief title that clearly identifies the research.

Objectives: A concise statement of the purpose and research question.

Methods: A description of the study design, participants, materials, procedures, and relevant statistical methods.

Results: A summary of the key findings, including statistical results where appropriate.

Conclusions: The scientific or clinical significance of the findings and potential implications for individuals living with Rett syndrome.

Tables and graphs should not be included unless specifically requested by ORSA Canada.

10. LETTER OF INTENT

Applicants intending to submit a full application **must submit a Letter of Intent by December 11, 2026.**

The Letter of Intent allows ORSA Canada to:

- Estimate the number and scope of applications;
- Plan the peer review process;
- Identify and manage potential conflicts of interest;
- Identify appropriate reviewers; and
- Confirm applicant and institutional contact information.

The Letter of Intent form will be available through the ORSA Canada website.

Submission of a Letter of Intent does not guarantee an invitation to submit a full application unless otherwise stated by ORSA Canada.

Failure to submit a required Letter of Intent by the deadline may result in the applicant being ineligible for the competition.



11. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Full applications must be received by ORSA Canada no later than **February 12, 2027**.

Late applications will not be considered.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is complete and successfully received before the deadline.

Applicants should carefully review all application requirements before submitting their application.

Supporting Materials

Supporting materials may include, where applicable:

- Curriculum vitae or biosketch;
- Research references;
- Letters of collaboration or support;
- Relevant publications;
- Ethical approvals or documentation;
- Additional supporting information; and
- Other materials specifically requested in the application guidelines.

Formatting Requirements

Unless otherwise specified:

- The project narrative must not exceed **three pages**;
- References, biographical information, ethics documentation, and supporting materials are not included in the three-page limit;
- Applications must be typed and single-spaced;
- **12-point font** must be used;
- **Times New Roman** is preferred;
- Margins must be at least **1 inch** on all sides; and
- All page and formatting limits identified in the application instructions must be followed.

Applications that do not comply with the submission requirements may be deemed ineligible.



Submission

Signed applications must be submitted electronically by email according to the submission instructions provided by ORSA Canada.

Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt.

If confirmation is not received, applicants are responsible for contacting ORSA Canada to verify that their application has been received.

12. CONTACT INFORMATION

Ontario Rett Syndrome Association of Canada (ORSA Canada)

HOPE FUND Research Grant Program

Attention: Research Grant Advisory Committee

For questions regarding the HOPE FUND Research Grant Program, application requirements, or submission procedures, please contact:

Rick Goodhew

Research Grant Advisory Committee

Email: goodhew@rogers.com

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PROGRAM NOTICE

ORSA Canada reserves the right to amend program dates, funding amounts, eligibility requirements, application requirements, or other program terms where necessary. Any changes will be communicated to applicants.

Filename: HOPE FUND Research Grant Application 21SEPT26
Directory: C:\Users\sabri\OneDrive\Desktop
Template: C:\Users\sabri\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.do
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Title: PUT ON ORSA LETTERHEAD
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Author: martineauc
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 2021-04-06 11:04:00 AM
Change Number: 9
Last Saved On: 2026-09-25 9:43:00 AM
Last Saved By: Sabrina Millson
Total Editing Time: 0 Minutes
Last Printed On: 2026-09-30 2:18:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 10
Number of Words: 2,123 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 12,103 (approx.)