



CANADIAN ARTHRITIS NETWORK | LE RÉSEAU CANADIEN DE L'ARTHRITE

CANADIAN ARTHRITIS NETWORK NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ARTHRITIS RESEARCH INITIATIVE II

Request for Applications

Important Dates	
Opportunity Launched:	October 2009
Registration date.	March 16, 2010
Full applications must be sent by email and the signature page faxed or courier stamped by this date.	March 30, 2010
Anticipated notification of decision.	August 15, 2010
Anticipated start date.	August 30 2010

Summary

Aboriginals in Canada are a population where the burden of rheumatic diseases is particularly great. Similar to the first NAARI initiative, the aim of NAARI II is to build research capacity and partnerships between researchers and members of aboriginal communities across Canada in the area of rheumatic diseases.

Priority will be given to aboriginal health grants that fall within **one or more** strategic areas identified as relevant to NAARI and CAN's second cycle research areas in osteoarthritis (OA), inflammatory joint disease (IJD), and bioengineering for joint reconstruction (BIO). The priorities for this research initiative are:

1. Research on the pain of arthritis (e.g., genetic and molecular bases of pain, how pain is generated and how it relates to the pathology of arthritis; the impact, measurement, and control of pain);
2. Research on early onset and progression of arthritis in aboriginal people (e.g., development and application of new imaging and biomarker technologies, the interplay of genetic/familial and environmental factors related to disease progression, tools and measures for identification of early disease and assessing its impact and ways to prevent further joint damage);
3. Development of new bio-reconstructive treatments and techniques for healing joint injuries and preventing onset/progression of early degenerative arthritis in aboriginal people;
4. Research on models of care and health care delivery for aboriginal people. Examples include access to care, non-pharmacologic care, gaps in care, evaluation of service delivery models (e.g., telehealth, client-centred care), health care provider education (e.g., communication, traditional medicine) and adherence to treatment.
5. Research on vulnerable populations and the social determinants of health in aboriginal individuals with rheumatic diseases (e.g., education, children and youth, low socioeconomic status, employment, culture, spirituality, support).

6. Research on KTE strategies that will efficiently and effectively translate new knowledge into relevant actionable messages targeted for users (e.g., aboriginal health promotion/awareness, health care professional awareness/guidelines, government).
7. Ethical considerations for research in indigenous populations (e.g., individual versus collective informed consent, therapeutic misconceptions).

Funds Available:

Funding available for this initiative is subject to the grant provided by the Networks of Centres of Excellence program to CAN and the terms and conditions that may be attached to those funds.

- Strategic grant valued up to a maximum of **\$100,000**/year with matching funds of **\$25,000**/year for 2 years.
- Pilot grant valued up to a one time maximum payment of **\$50,000**
- Successful applicants must complete a final report upon completion of the project at one year.

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Background

The National Aboriginal Arthritis Research Initiative (NAARI) was conceived by the Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN) as a long-term strategy of building mutual respect and trust between Network-funded researchers and aboriginal communities across Canada.

Launched in late 2007 and funded in 2008, two teams of researchers have been fulfilling that mandate in order to lay the foundation for a federally funded initiative in aboriginal arthritis research.

Overarching Considerations

The following overarching considerations were identified as important elements in the implementation of the National Aboriginal Arthritis Research Initiative:

- gender;
- knowledge translation and exchange;
- consumer and community inclusion and leadership in research program design;
- regional, cultural and age factors;
- remote and unique/indigenous populations;
- trainee involvement; and
- training, e.g., of researchers, of consumers as advocates.

Projects funded with a focus on First Nations, Inuit and Métis living with arthritis must embrace the following guiding principles:

- Earning the trust of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis community through meaningful dialogue about arthritis in their communities and recognizing the importance of aboriginal leadership in such partnerships;

- Develop meaningful relationships and partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis community partners interested in arthritis, on- and off-reserves and in Inuit communities, to describe arthritis in their community;
- In equal, ethical partnerships, work with the First Nations, Inuit and Métis community to develop “readiness” to raise awareness in their own community, to politicize arthritis in the First Nations, Inuit and Métis community and at the Federal and Provincial government levels;
- Partner or assist the First Nations, Inuit and Métis community with the creation and implementation of a National Aboriginal Arthritis Initiative in Canada.

Eligibility

This research competition is open to (CIHR, SSHRC, and NSERC) researchers who hold an appointment as an independent investigator at a Canadian institution that has been designated by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) as eligible to receive research funds. Applicants do not have to be Network Investigators with the CAN. Successful applicants will become CAN Network Investigators.

CIHR research funding eligibility criteria apply for this program. The business office of the institution of an eligible Principal Applicant generally administers CIHR funds. Please refer to the [2010 CAN NAARI II Competition Application Guidelines](#) regarding the eligibility requirements for individuals and institutions.

Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) will NOT be considered under this RFA. RCTs are defined as any study involving humans where at least two interventions are compared using random allocation, statistical methodologies and blinding techniques for the purpose of determining whether an innovative intervention leads to improved health.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements specific to this Request for Applications include the following:

- Research projects must focus on arthritis in First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis populations;
- Projects must demonstrate effective partnerships with the First Nations, Inuit and Métis community either through Letters of support from community leaders or Band/Tribal Council resolution. In addition, involvement of other relevant partners is encouraged.
- Projects applications must address all specific licenses and permit requirements applicable for the region in which they are conducting the research.

Peer Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

CAN will utilize its external international Scientific & Medical Advisory Council (SMAC) to review applications submitted to this RFA. A full listing of current members of the SMAC can be found at the CAN website (www.arthritisnetwork.ca). CAN will contact additional international expert reviewers to ensure suitable competencies are available on SMAC.

The following evaluation criteria specific to this RFA will apply.

- **Progress and/or Enabling Factors:** The spirit of CAN includes promoting new ideas and does not penalize applications for a lack of preliminary data. Because a key goal of this competition is to create links with the First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis community that will permit the future development and funding of a national initiative to address scientifically the high burden of arthritis in First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis communities. Factors that will enable this should be described.
- **The Research Plan and Feasibility:** Although the NAARI does not focus on traditional CIHR style hypothesis driven research, the proposal will be structured to include each of the following elements:
 - Pilot grants: Realistic objectives (aims); Background and rationale; Clear description of the research plan and methods; Preliminary data or specific enabling factors; feasibility including the potential limitations (pitfalls).
 - Strategic grants: Objectives (aims)/Hypothesis; Background and rationale; Preliminary data or specific enabling factors; Research plan and methods; Justification of the design and methodologies; Research Plan Feasibility; and potential limitations (pitfalls) and identified alternatives.
- **Innovation:** CAN seeks projects that demonstrate an innovative approach to arthritis research, resulting in advances in the understanding or treatment of arthritis. Innovation at CAN is recognized in all areas of research spanning the four CIHR pillars (Biomedical, Clinical, Health Services and Population Health research). (applies to NAARI II Strategic Grants only)
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Involvement of members of the First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis community is essential. Successful applications will include a Band/Tribal Council resolution or other suitable endorsement from a local organization representative of the aboriginal population. Other important aspects of partnership/collaboration include: Projects that have active participation from the community, non-governmental organisations, government and other stakeholders; and, Projects that make the most effective use of the diverse resources of its partners.
- **Management Plan:** Applicants must provide a project Management Plan that clearly demonstrates the viability of the management approach relative to the size and complexity of the project. Elements of the Management Plan should include: a clear description of key elements of the plan that are necessary for the research to be successful and achieve the stated deliverables; the availability and appropriateness of human and physical resources (i.e. resource allocation); communication plans for the management of the project; budget details and justification (in reference to the Budget Module); a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of team members, collaborators and partners.

- **The Project Team:** CAN wishes to ensure that the Team assembled for the project has the appropriate scientific, technical and management skills required. The expertise and experience presented should be relevant to the scope and nature of the research to be undertaken. Roles of the team members should clearly fit their expertise.
- **Advancing CAN's Strategic Research Plan:** CAN funds projects that are aligned with its strategic plan. Applicants should refer to the CAN website and the document entitled "[Description of the Research Priorities for the National Aboriginal Arthritis Research Initiative II \(NAARI II\) - November 11, 2009](#)" for guidance on how to complete this section.
- **Training and Career Development of HQP:** Applicants are asked to submit a Training and Career Development plan for Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP- people with highly marketable skills, including undergrads, grads, post-docs, technicians, research associates, clinician-scientists) involved in this project. The involvement of the First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis community in setting training goals is important. Consideration should be given to developing training plans that would be part of a future national aboriginal arthritis research initiative.
- **Knowledge Translation & Exchange (KTE):** The plan should describe how new knowledge, processes and services created by the project will be made available most effectively to community, non-governmental, government and other stakeholders with maximum continuing impact. A two-way KTE strategy with members and leaders of the First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis community is paramount.

Communications Requirements

Grant recipients are required to acknowledge CAN in any communication or publication related to the project.

Monitoring, Performance Measurement and Evaluation

CAN is committed to demonstrating results to Canadians for the money invested in health research. Therefore, processes for monitoring progress and appropriate use of funds, as well as for performance measurement and program evaluation are in place. As a result, funded recipients must:

- Complete mandatory annual statistical reporting.
- Submit a final report to CAN at the completion of the project.

How to Apply

Applications to this RFA must be submitted in electronic format as described in the [2010 NAARI II Competition Application Guidelines](#) and the [2010 NAARI II Competition Application Instructions](#). Applicants must use the 2010 NAARI competition application forms and submit additional documentation as described.

Completed applications may be submitted electronically (email or CD ROM) on or before the submission deadline to the CAN office at:

Stefanie Cara
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Canadian Arthritis Network
522 University Avenue, Suite 1002
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1W7
Tel: (416) 586-4770 ext. 5164
Fax: (416) 586-8395
Email: scara@mtsinai.on.ca

Large applications (greater than 4,000 Kb) or large files (greater than 4,000 Kb) may be submitted to the CAN office on a CD ROM via courier postmarked on or before the submission deadline.

In addition, the Principal Investigator must submit an original signed signature page via courier postmarked on or before the submission deadline.

All applicants will receive notice confirming receipt of applications files.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application submitted is complete with all necessary additional documentation and that the electronic files submitted to the RFA are in good order.

Contact Information

For questions on CAN funding guidelines, how to apply, and the peer review process contact:

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Description of CAN

Applicants are encouraged to view information about CAN at www.arthritisnetwork.ca