



**ORGANIZATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH**  
***“Research that helps families today.”***

**2010 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**Preproposals due April 2, 2010**  
*(Revised Version Posted March 10, 2010)*

1. **Background**

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) seeks applied research proposals for its 2010 Autism Applied Research Competition. Through this competition, OAR intends to promote evidence based practices delivered from research in the following areas:

- The analysis, evaluation, or comparison of current models of assessment, intervention, or systems of service delivery including policy analysis,
- Applied aspects of educational, behavioral, or social/communicative intervention across the lifespan,
- Effective intervention across the lifespan for individuals considered to be severely impacted by their autism,
- Adult issues such as continuing education, employment, residential supports, sexuality instruction, quality-of-life determinants, and “later intervention,” and
- Issues related to family support, social and community integration, assessment and intervention with challenging behavior, and the use of technology in support of learners with ASD.

OAR seeks to fund studies of **one (1) year** in length that will likely produce practical and clearly objective results that promise some direct benefit for learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), their families, and related service providers (e.g., teachers, classroom aides, job coaches, speech pathologists, psychologists, etc.) at different times in their lives.

2. **Evaluation Criteria.** OAR’s Scientific Council will evaluate the proposals it receives for scientific and technical merit. Review criteria for the evaluation include:

- **Significance** - Does the study address an important problem? How will the study advance scientific knowledge in the field? Can the outcomes be readily translated in support of evidence-based practice? Does this study address the needs of a currently, underserved cohort of individuals?
- **Approach** - Are the concepts, design, methods, and analyses adequate and appropriate? Are potentially confounding variables accounted for?
- **Innovation** - Does the project employ novel approaches or methods? Are its aims original? Does it have the potential to advance our understanding of ASD?



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- **Investigator** - Is the investigator and/or the research team appropriately trained and well-suited for the research?
- **Environment** - Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to its probability of success? Does the work take advantage of any unique features of the environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements?
- **Practical relevance** - How relevant is the study and its outcomes to the everyday challenges posed by autism? Does it offer practical findings? Are they generalizable beyond the research setting? Can the study's key components be readily replicated?

OAR's Board of Directors will make grant awards based on these evaluations and the recommendations of the Scientific Council. OAR places special emphasis on studies that offer to produce outcomes that will be meaningful to the autism community and have potentially broad application to the practical challenges of autism.

3. Competition. With this year's competition OAR will consider awarding up to:

- A maximum of 12, one-year studies funded at a maximum of \$30,000 per year,

The total funding available through this year's Applied Autism Research Competition is a maximum of \$360,000 for a total of 12 grant awards. Preproposals are due by April 2, 2010. OAR will invite full proposals from selected preproposals and will complete the final review in October, 2010 with successful applicants notified in November, 2010.

4. Information for All Applicants on Uses of OAR Funds. Even though OAR does not require a budget for the initial application, questions regarding the budget and OAR's funding policies often arise when prospective researchers initiate a grant proposal within their system. All applicants should review OAR's guidelines for uses of OAR funds before applying for a grant. The guidelines are posted on OAR's website, [www.researchautism.org](http://www.researchautism.org).

5. Overview. The application and review process will proceed in two distinct phases: (1) open application and initial review and (2) invited proposals for final review.

### **a. Open Application and Initial Review**

During this period OAR will receive preproposals prepared in accordance with the guidelines that follow in an open competition. Interested researchers should submit preproposals postmarked no later than **Friday, April 2, 2010**. Screening and review will begin immediately and will be completed by **May 14, 2010 with applicants notified of outcome no later than June 1, 2010**. The objective of the initial review process is to identify those proposed studies which best meet the criteria described above.

### **b. Final Review**

Once the initial screening and review is complete, OAR will invite those Principal Investigators whose preproposals are selected for further review to submit full proposals. At



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the same time, OAR will notify all other applicants that their proposed study is not among those selected for final review. Full proposals will be due by **August 6, 2010**.

OAR's Scientific Council will conduct the final review between August 7, 2010 and October 31, 2010. OAR's Board of Directors will receive the report and recommendations of the Scientific Council and approve the grant awards for this competition shortly thereafter. **OAR will notify awardees during November 2010 and funding will begin on or after January 1, 2011.**

6. Application Process. Due to the increasing number of applications OAR receives each year, compliance with the RFP to include the administrative requirements is essential. **Applications that do not meet these guidelines will be disqualified. Preproposal submissions in the form of a single, PDF or Word document are greatly preferred.**

**Instructions for the Preproposal**. The preproposal is a scaled-down version of the full proposal and focuses primarily on the study's topic, design, methodology, and expected outcomes. For this phase of the competition, OAR does not require a budget or proof of Institutional Review Board approval. In a similar vein, OAR does not desire to receive any additional materials such as letters of support, enclosures, or appendices. Please prepare the preproposal in the following sequence in accordance with the administrative guidelines that follow.

- a) **Cover Letter**. Please submit a one page cover letter that identifies the Principal Investigator(s), the university, institute or center where the research will take place, provides the title of the study, the proposed length of the study, (i.e. one or two years), amount of funds requested, and any other information (**e.g., applicants preferred mailing address and e-mail address**) pertinent to the preproposal.
- b) **Preproposal**. Please describe the proposed research study in three to five pages (not including references or biosketches) using following sequence.
  - o **Title**. Self-explanatory
  - o **Background**. Please include a brief analysis of relevant historical and contemporary knowledge and research related to the proposed topic. Demonstrate that your proposed research group has the experience and resources necessary to complete the study and accurately assess its outcomes.
  - o **Methodology**. Please describe and justify the proposed research design and methodology you will use including clearly defining the characteristics of your research participants. **Please be as clear a possible when describing the proposed methodology.**



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- **Evaluation/Data Analysis.** Please explain what evaluation and assessment measures and qualitative or quantitative analyses you intend to use and provide your rationale. **Please be as clear a possible when describing the proposed evaluation/data analysis.**
  - **Outcome Recommendations.** Please provide an overview that is based on predicted results of your project. What outcomes or recommendations may result from the project, and why are they significant to the autism community?
  - **Biographical Information.** For economy, consistency and standardization, OAR requests that the principal investigator and main research team submit their biographical information using the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) *Biographical Sketch Format Page*. This form can be found at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html> under **Fillable Individual PHS 398 Forms**. Please do not send additional pages or full CVs.
- c) **Administrative.** As discussed above, the preproposal has three components: a cover letter, the preproposal and the biographical information for the researcher/research team. The requirements for the cover letter and biographical information are covered above. The administrative specifications for the cover letter and preproposal are:
- (1) Margins: 1 inch top, bottom, left and right,
  - (2) Font size: 12 point font,
  - (3) Spacing: Single or double-spaced,
  - (4) Number of copies: Original and three hard copies mailed and **one complete electronic file e-mailed to: [oar@researchautism.org](mailto:oar@researchautism.org)**.  
For files larger than 300KB, please use OAR’s Filebox set up at <https://www.sendthisfile.com/f.jsp?id=P9F7KSc5UTa1s1yAzjumhqv>.  
(Please note: OAR determines eligibility for the 2010 Competition based on the postmark on the mailed copies.)
  - (5) Mailing address: Organization for Autism Research  
Applied Research Competition 2009  
2000 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 710  
Arlington, VA 22201

For more information, contact Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D., at OAR: (703) 243-9710, or send an email to [Pgerhardt@researchautism.org](mailto:Pgerhardt@researchautism.org).