

2007 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Pre-proposals due April 6, 2007

1. Background

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) seeks applied research proposals for its 2007 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,
- 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 to two years 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?
- **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?
- **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?



ORGANIZATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

"Research that helps families today."

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:
 - 8 One-year studies funded at a maximum of \$30,000 per year,
 - 2 Two-year studies funded at a maximum of \$30,000 per year (\$60,000 total award), and
 - 2 One-year studies funded at a maximum of \$45,000 per year.

The total funding available through this year's Applied Autism Research Competition is a maximum of \$450,000 for a total of 12 grant awards. Pre-proposals are due by April 6, 2007. OAR will invite full proposals from selected pre-proposals and will complete the final review by October 27, 2007.

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.

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. Application and Initial Review

During this period OAR will receive pre-proposals prepared in accordance with the guidelines that follow in an open competition. Interested researchers should submit (i.e., must be postmarked) pre-proposals by **Friday, April 6, 2007**. Screening and review will begin immediately and will be completed by **May 18, 2007**. 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 pre-proposals are selected for further review to submit full proposals. At 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 10, 2007**.

OAR's Scientific Council will conduct the final review between August 3, 2007 and October 25, 2007. OAR's Board of Directors will receive the report and recommendations of the Scientific Council and approve the grant awards for this competition on October 27, 2007. **OAR will notify awardees during November 2007 and funding will begin on or after January 1, 2008.**

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 administratively disqualified.**

Instructions for the Pre-proposal. The pre-proposal 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, the amount of funds requested, 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, as enclosures or appendices. Please prepare the pre-proposal 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 pertinent to the pre-proposal.
- b) **Pre-proposal**. Please describe the proposed research study in three to five pages using following sequence.
 - **Title**. Self-explanatory
 - **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.
 - **Methodology**. Please describe and justify the proposed research design and methodology you will use including clearly defining the characteristics of your research participants.
 - **Evaluation**. Please explain what evaluation and assessment measures and qualitative and quantitative analyses you intend to use and provide your rationale.
 - **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 pre-proposal has three components: a cover letter, the pre-proposal 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 pre-proposal 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 (Please note: OAR judges eligibility for the 2007 Competition based on the postmark on the mailed copies.)
- (5) Mailing address: Organization for Autism Research
Applied Research Competition 2007
2000 N. 14th Street, Suite 480
Arlington, VA 22201

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