



Veteran and Researcher Partnership Guidelines 2023

Aim

The aim of this document is to provide guidance on the partnership between researchers funded by the Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans (CPCoE) and Veteran Partners.

Background

At the core of all CPCoE activities is the principle of Veteran engagement. Consultation and engagement with Veterans, which includes an Advisory Council for Veterans (ACV) to advise on research priorities, began prior to establishing the organization and continues as a leading priority. This ongoing engagement helps the CPCoE to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Veterans, and their families, living with chronic pain. That understanding is used to shape research to ensure that it will have a genuine and practical impact on the well-being of Veterans and their families. The following guideline has been produced based on the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's (CIHR) Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR)¹.

In accordance with SPOR, the CPCoE strongly encourages researchers to include Veteran Partners in the development and/or realization of their research projects. Including Veteran Partners in the research life cycle, from conceptualization to dissemination, will improve outcomes for all stakeholders.

Veteran Partners

Veteran Partners are key members of the research team involved in meaningful and active collaboration throughout the research project to shape and execute research projects. This can include tasks such as priority setting, co-design of research, conducting research, and knowledge mobilization. Veteran Partners are separate from Veteran participants who voluntarily elect to participate in surveys, interviews, and trials. Veteran Partnership should occur from the very beginning of the research project to support the conceptualization of study aims, design, and approach. The CPCoE values the experience of all Veterans, recognizing different lived experiences and research experience being valid to the research process. The CPCoE acknowledges the importance of engaging a representative sample population of Veterans across many variables including age, gender, race/ethnicity, geography, and military specific variables. The CPCoE encourages researchers to work with Veterans with varied experience and to ensure development of a relationship with a Veteran partner that is beneficial for the project, the researcher, the Veteran and his/her family.

Veteran Partner Roles and Expectations

Veteran Partners can assist in:

¹ (2022-05-25). *Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research*. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41204.html>



- Providing insights about living with chronic pain that may validate or change the direction of the research or concepts you wish to explore (for example, exploring outcomes that are important to Veterans);
- Providing a Veteran's perspective, feedback and insight into tools and resources that you are developing/wish to develop;
- Partnering in regular research team meetings to provide feedback or insight on the project;
- Co-designing, reviewing and commenting on informed consent forms or case report forms;
- Co-building, reviewing and commenting on research protocols to identify potential hurdles or enablers for research participants;
- Co-developing questionnaires or interview guides for participants in the research project;
- Reviewing and participating in discussions about the analysis and findings of the project;
- Supporting with knowledge translation planning and with sharing your research results to key audiences.

Veteran Partners are expected to:

- Declare all actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest;
- Demonstrate preparedness for meetings;
- Take part in all relevant meetings and teleconferences (as health and life permit);
- Recognizing that research projects may have phases that do not require active participation, openly and constructively participate in discussions, provide feedback, raise issues and solve problems collaboratively;
- Foster and contribute to an open, collaborative climate, independent of personal vested interests;
- Actively provide constructive criticism;
- Draw upon knowledge, personal and professional networks, and experience to provide informed input into discussions and decisions;
- Act as a catalyst for further Veteran engagement;
- Note: While Veteran Partners agree to make every effort to uphold their commitment to participating in research, there may be instances where they need to withdraw due to unforeseen health and/or personal life circumstances. Veteran Partners are encouraged to provide advance notice of withdrawal to researchers wherever possible.

Veteran Partner Requirements

- Strong general understanding of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) as an organization, rank structure, and role;
- Able to explain the nuances of military life and language to provide support that will ensure that research engagements with Veterans are conveyed in a manner that makes sense, and connects, with other Veterans;
- General understanding of the role of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) as well as the system for recognition and compensation of service-related injuries for Veterans;



- Have the appropriate understanding and awareness of the impact of culture and identity on Veterans to be able to explain this to researchers;
- Have a general understanding of the way research is undertaken, different types of research, and how Veteran Partners can best add value.

Researcher Roles and Expectations

Researchers can assist in:

- Involving Veteran Partners in a meaningful and engaging way in all aspects of their project. This includes, but is not limited to: developing research questions, project design, recruitment, data collection, analysis of findings, and mobilizing of findings to Veteran networks and peer groups;
- Providing Veteran Partners with education and training on subject matter and research approaches, where applicable, to ensure they can contribute meaningfully and efficiently;
- Cultivating a safe and inclusive environment for Veteran Partners to express their unique contributions;
- Acknowledging Veteran Partners as authors or co-authors of publications (please see guidance on co-authorship [here](#));
- Providing Veteran Partners Honoraria as per 'Honoraria for Veteran Partners' section below.

Researchers are expected to:

- Show respect for Veterans' experiences, knowledge, and the vulnerability that engagement may bring;
- Demonstrate openness and willingness to listen and consider feedback at all stages of research;
- Maintain a collaborative, non-judgmental spirit;
- Commit to work with and learn from Veterans;
- Communicate research terms in plain language wherever possible;
- Schedule meetings at times that work for Veteran Partners;
- Understand that, sometimes, Veterans may not be able to participate fully due to unforeseen health and/or personal life circumstances;
- Manage differences of opinion and conflict in a respectful manner;
- Provide Honoraria for Veterans' time and efforts.
- At the end of the project, the research team is committed to sharing the results with the Veterans who were involved in the project.

Implementation

At the time of application, researchers are required to complete, "[Patient Engagement Training Course: A How-to-Guide for Patient Engagement in Research](#)" Modules 1-4 provided by the [Canadian Institute of Health Research \(CIHR\) Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis \(IMHA\)](#) and include a certificate of completion when submitting their application.



Researchers are encouraged to reach out directly to Veteran organizations in search of Veteran Partners and build a well-defined Veteran Partner strategy in advance of submitting an application for research funding. Applications without a clear Veteran Partner strategy are likely to be considered uncompetitive. A strong emphasis is put on Veteran Partnership during the adjudication process.

For further assistance with Veteran Partnership, please contact the CPCoE.

Honoraria for Veteran Partners

When Veterans and family members Partner in research, the CPCoE requires that they are offered Honoraria for their time and contribution. Veteran Partner Honoraria must be included in proposed budgets when submitting an application for research funding. Please note: some Veterans and their family members may choose not to receive Honoraria for various reasons and that choice must be respected.

Please see the following notes:

- Honoraria are the responsibility of the Principal Investigator;
- The CPCoE requires Veteran Partners to receive, at minimum, the following standardized Honoraria based on existing compensation rates from the Chronic Pain Network (CPN) and the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families (all values in Canadian dollars):
 - Every hour: \$50.00
 - Half day (3.5 hours): \$200.00
 - Full day (7 hours): \$400.00
 - Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requires that if an individual receives payments or income of \$500 or more in a calendar year from an institution, the institution must issue a T4A slip to that individual for the purposes of reporting it as income. In cases where payments to one or more individuals will be \$500 or more in the calendar year, the Principal Investigator commits, in writing, to obtain from and provide to Financial Services, the name, mailing address and Social Insurance Number of each individual.
 - This requirement means that the Principal Investigator's institution must have the name, mailing address, and Social Insurance Number for each individual who receives such amounts, even if these amounts are only for contributions to research.
 - *Note: this excludes reimbursement for actual expenses to participate in a research project, such as travel or parking expenses.*