



ONTARIO INSTITUTE
BRAIN ONTARIEN
INSTITUTE DU CERVEAU

Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation (GEEK)

Program Guide

Contact:

GEEK Program team
GEEK@braininstitute.ca

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WELCOME TO BRAIN CENTRAL

1 Richmond Street West, Suite 400, Toronto, Ontario M5H 3W4 | T: 647-847-9000 / 1-866-637-6301 | braininstitute.ca

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What is the GEEK Program?

The Ontario Brain Institute (OBI) is dedicated to enhancing brain health and wellness for Ontarians. One way OBI fulfills this commitment is through investments in evidence-informed care in the community.

The Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation (GEEK) program supports community-based organizations, including charities, non-profits, and community clinics that are not otherwise funded. The GEEK Program provides evaluation expertise, support, and funding for community-led programs and services focused on brain health and individuals with brain disorders. We focus on groups that aim to sustain, spread, or scale their community-led programs and services designed to improve the quality of life for individuals facing brain health challenges or impacted by brain disorders.

Sustainability: Ensuring long-term success and lasting benefits by optimizing resource use and/or by increasing resources (financial, human, or knowledge).

Scale: Increasing the positive impact on society through new strategies (vertical diffusion)

Spread: Replicating the initiative organically by other organizations (horizontal diffusion)

“Learning from action and acting from learning”

The GEEK program is both a funding opportunity and a capacity and skill building program. It enables community organizations to assess and deliver their programs, gather evidence for learning and improvement, and communicate their impact, leading to increased program success. Through improved evaluation capacity, GEEK enhances program design, delivery, and quality, ultimately benefiting clients.

By fostering evaluation capacity to improve the quality and quantity of evidence-based care in the community, OBI aims to expand the delivery of evidence-informed care solutions in the community and improve access to treatment for individuals with brain health challenges or brain disorders.



Guiding Principles

The GEEK program is founded on seven principles:

- Meeting the needs of the brain health community.
- Informed and guided design and implementation by members of the brain health community.
- Building capacity to demonstrate value, thus improving the sustainability of community-led brain health solutions.
- Enhancing the quality and quantity of evidence-based programs and services offered to the community.
- Deepening organizations' understanding of their programs and services through evaluation.
- Sharing learnings from funded organizations with other brain health organizations.
- Addressing a range of needs through the cohort of funded programs.

The GEEK program focuses on three key areas:

- Addressing unique and unmet needs of the brain health community.
- Representing a range of brain disorders and brain health challenges.
- Supporting activities across Canada, with the head office or lead site residing within Ontario.

How does the program help you?

GEEK provides 2-years of funding to promote evaluation capacity building and sustain, scale and/or spread your program or service. By participating in the GEEK program, you will be able to enhance quality of evidence that informs your community-led program or service and demonstrate how your programming improves the quality of life of your clients.

Evaluation Capacity Building

Why does OBI invest in evaluation capacity building?

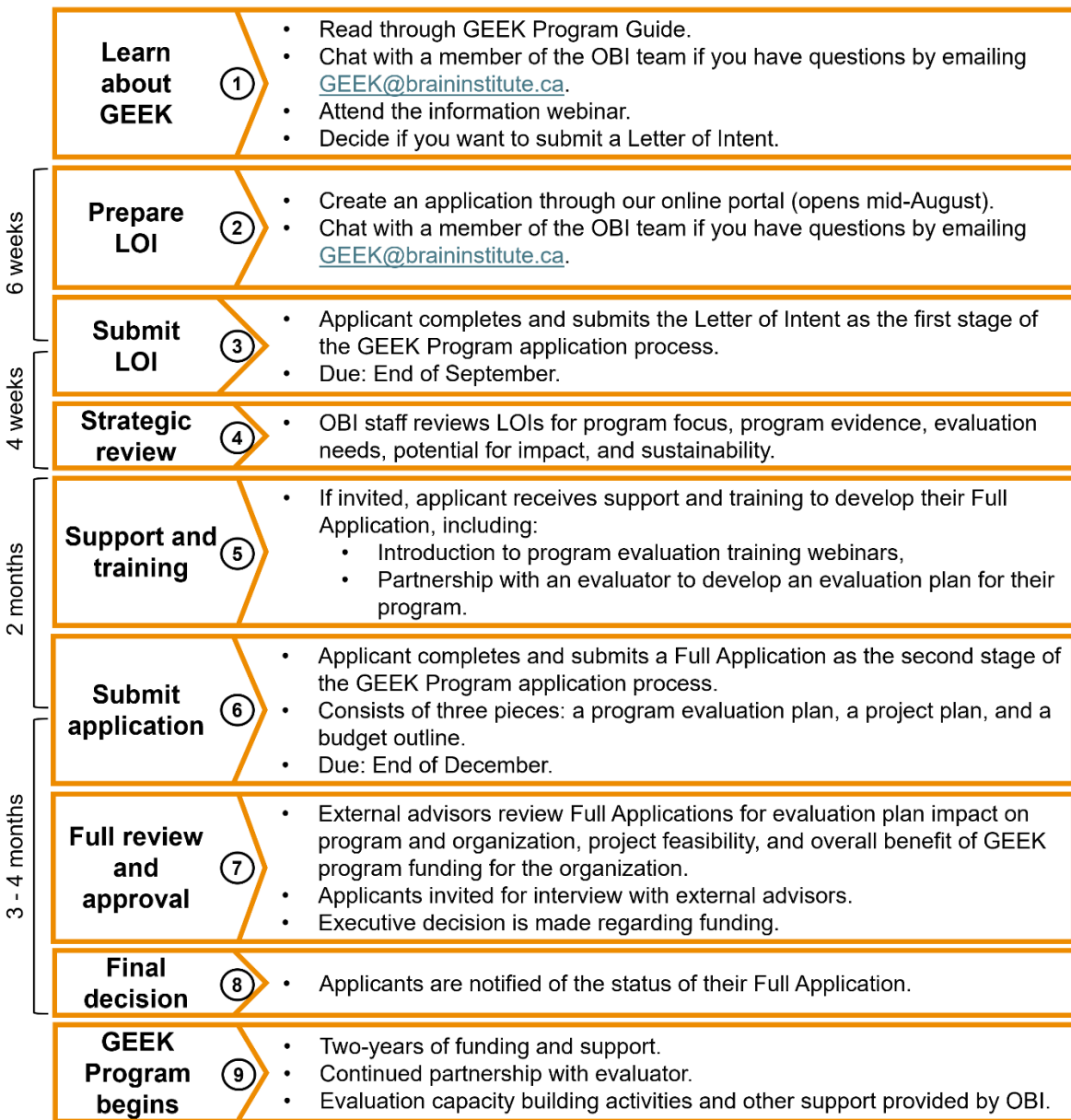
By improving community-based organizations' ability to generate program evidence through evaluation, community programming can better situate itself into health care contexts. Through the GEEK program, we believe that providing participants with an opportunity to learn by doing and to readily transfer what they learn about evaluation into a program is key to increasing organizational evaluation practice and evidence generation.

Why is it important to build evaluation capacity in community-based organizations?

Organizations with a high level of evaluation capacity conduct quality evaluation studies in a timely manner, use evaluation findings regularly as part of program and organizational decision-making, and adopt an evaluative culture founded on the principles of organizational learning.



What is the application process for the GEEK Program?





What support is provided?

- Program Support
 - Funding for program delivery for up to 2 years
- Capacity: Evaluation
 - Partnership with an experienced evaluation professional
 - Co-develop evaluation plans/tools and conduct a program evaluation
 - Learning collaborative and events
- Community
 - Invitations to GEEK Program events (i.e., annual welcome meeting, Community of Practice)
 - OBI network events
 - Networking within the brain health sector
- Connecting
 - Program and event promotion
 - Storytelling opportunities
 - Amplification/sharing of knowledge translation products or resources

What are the eligibility criteria?

Preference is given to programs/services that address unique/unmet community needs, implement evidence-informed programs/services in new contexts, or grow their capacity to deliver their services. GEEK will fund two to four initiatives annually, with a maximum total budget of \$150,000 available for each applicant.

Applicant Inclusion Criteria

- The applicant is a community organization that seeks to increase their ability to conduct and use evaluation.
- The applicant is an incorporated organization with prior or existing funding.
- The applicant is not a previous GEEK Program recipient (applicants who previously applied but did not receive funding are permitted to reapply).

Preference will be given to programs or services that:

- Address a unique and/or unmet need of the community, and
- Are implementing their evidence-informed program/service in a new context or setting, or
- Are growing their capacity to deliver their program/service.

Initiative Inclusion Criteria

- The program or service is brain health related (includes mental health).
- The program or service is currently or has previously been offered.
- The program is community-led and takes place outside of a hospital or primary care setting.
- Funding supports activities taking place in Ontario or across Canada, with the head office or main site located in Ontario.

Examples of Initiatives for Funding

- Existing programs or services in community settings ready for evaluation to support scale, spread, or sustaining.
- Applying/implementing an evidence-based activity/service/program to a new population.
- Community-based delivery of a solution previously delivered in a hospital or outpatient care setting.
- Community-based programs with focus on system navigation, intervention, peer support and/or education/ skill building

Exclusion criteria

- Initiatives or programs that have not yet been implemented anywhere.
- Research projects.
- Hospital care.
- Technology/product development.
- Event sponsorship.
- Lobbying.

What are the eligible and ineligible expenses?

Eligible costs include salaries and/or stipends for existing staff for project related work; salaries and/or stipend for relevant researchers, evaluators, students, interns; research and/or evaluation services related to project initiative; communications, outreach, marketing, dissemination costs; travel costs related to project initiative; and goods and/or materials for project related work.

Ineligible costs include costs related to existing facility infrastructure improvements; and any items or services not directly related to the project initiative.



If I receive GEEK Program support, what is expected from me?

The GEEK Program is intended to provide support that is most conducive to your organization and program needs. We are here to assist you throughout the funding period and beyond.

Recipient Expectations

- Continue to work closely with the evaluator throughout the funding period.
- Build capacity for evaluation through your project.
- Touch-base with OBI staff as needed for guidance, support, and brainstorming solutions to challenges that may arise.
- Participate in OBI learning and networking events.
- Participant in Community of Practice.
- Complete bi-annual program reporting.

Frequency Asked Questions

What is a "community-led" program?

A community-led program is a program run by an organization that is not part of a hospital or clinical setting (i.e., outside of the formal healthcare system setting). These programs typically provide care via knowledge, support, advocacy, or access.

Do you assign evaluators? Can we suggest names of evaluators?

We have a roster of qualified evaluators that can be assigned to programs based on location and skill sets. If you have an evaluator you would like to work with, we ask that you connect us with the evaluator.

The role of the evaluator is to assist with the development of an evaluation plan, help to carry out the evaluation, and create evaluation learnings from the data collected. Through all this, they help to increase your organization's evaluation capacity.

How much is the funding and for how long?

Proposed budgets can range, and the funding term is flexible up to 2-years. We anticipate applications to range from \$50,000 - \$75,000 per year for 2-year funding terms but are open to budgets and timelines outside of this range. This budget includes evaluator support.

How many programs will be funded?

We anticipate funding two to four programs each year, but the exact number is dependent on each year's applications and proposed budgets.

Who should the letter of intent come from?

The letter of intent should be signed by someone with the authority to bind the community organization, for example the Executive Director or another senior executive at your organization.

If there is a program that was developed and run in another province that could be adapted and implemented in Ontario, would it be eligible?

Absolutely. Please see our case study about importing Minds in Motion from British Columbia on our website.

Are partnerships between community and hospital included?

Partnerships between a community organization and a hospital can be eligible, but the community organization should be the ultimate recipient of evaluation capacity building, support, and funds. The GEEK program is working to build capacity at the community level.

Can the intervention target the family rather than the person living with the brain disorder?

Yes. Supporting family members and caregivers is important for achieving improved brain health and wellness for those living with brain disorders.

Is there a preference for programs that can be carried out in a wider geographic area? Are you looking to spread your funding across regions?

The GEEK program is seeking to fund a cohort of programs that represent diverse regions and groups in Ontario. That said, a single program does not have to be carried out in a wide geographic area. We will also accept applications that support people across Canada as long as the main site or head office is in Ontario.

Is there a preference for programs that can cut across brain disorders?

A single program does not need to cut across multiple brain disorders. Over the course of the GEEK program we are seeking to fund a cohort of programs that represent a range of brain disorders and challenges.

Are depression and anxiety included as brain disorders? Can brain disorders that are not a part of OBI's integrated discovery programs be eligible?

Yes. We are interested in reaching the broader brain health community through GEEK, so any brain health or mental health programs are eligible. Depression and anxiety are brain disorders.



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GEEK Program:

Build evaluation capacity and receive funding to sustain, spread & scale community-based programming.



OBI Contact

If you have any questions about submitting a Letter of Intent, please reach out to the GEEK Program team at OBI at GEEK@braininstitute.ca.

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