



Empower Recreational Therapy 2025 Research Grant

Grant Funding Background:

In 2020, the study, *Impact of a Pilot Adaptive Sports Intervention on Skilled Nursing Facility Residents* won the National Academy of Recreational Therapists (NART) Scholarly Manuscript Award. The four authors (an educator, a practitioner, a graduate assistant, and an RT intern) collaborated to design and implement the study which benefited each in unique and important ways. They decided to take the monetary award they received and “pay it forward,” negotiating with **Empower Recreational Therapy, LLC** to establish a new funding opportunity for future recreational therapy professionals to design and implement innovative programming for older adults. The following are published manuscripts from previous grant award winners:

Weaver, MS, C., Sardina, PhD, A. L., Newsham, PhD, T. M. K., & Fugate-Whitlock, PhD, E. (2022). A preliminary feasibility study of a virtual mentally stimulating activities program for older adults. *American Journal of Recreation Therapy*, 21(4), 17–30.

Kennedy, A., Newsham, T. M., Fugate-Whitlock, E., & Sardina, A. L. (2025). HydroWorx coupled with virtual trail walks to improve symptoms of osteoarthritis: A case study. *American Journal of Recreation Therapy*, 24(1), 29–44.

Because of this continued success, two of the grant founders, are pleased to continue this grant program through **Empower RT** and are inviting **Applications for the 2025 Empower Recreational Therapy Research Grant** for innovative recreational therapy programs that address the unique needs of older adults.

Application Eligibility:

To be eligible to apply for this funding, applicants must complete and submit all applications materials (noted below), as well as agree to the following requirements:

- 1) Hold a current CTRS or be an RT/TR student supervised by a CTRS.
- 2) Test/evaluate an innovative recreational therapy intervention (new or existing) for participants aged 60+.
- 3) Utilize evidence-based practice for program design.
- 4) Utilize valid and reliable tools to collect evaluation data.
- 5) Provide a letter of support from each agency participating in the proposed program
- 6) If awarded, recipient(s) agree to:
 - a. Disseminate the results of project to a professional outlet (journal, newsletter, conference), and
 - b. Provide **Empower Recreational Therapy** with
 - i. 1-pg abstract describing complete study with findings
 - ii. a short written or video testimonial of your experience receiving the grant money.

- c. Optional (but encouraged) – provide photos, videos, or other media products of the program.

Application Submission Deadline:

Completed applications should be emailed to Laura Kelly at lkelly@empowerrectherapy.com by the **deadline, November 1, 2024**. Proposals will be reviewed by the four grant founders. Applicants will be notified of application status after the reviewers' decision. Grant amounts may vary from \$100 - \$500, at the discretion of the reviewers. Application materials will not be returned. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to read about the project that received the initial award. Bedini, L. A., Kelly, L. H., McKenzie, K. & Mitchell, K. (2019). Impact of pilot adaptive sports program on skilled nursing facility residents. *[Special Issue ATRA Annual] Therapeutic Recreation Journal* 53(4), 340-367. <https://doi.org/10.18666/TRJ-2019-V53-I4-9755>.

Empower Recreational Therapy 2024 Research Grant Application Criteria:

PART 1. - COVER PAGE - on a separate page, include the following:

- a) Title of Proposed Project
- b) Name and Contact Information for Principal Investigator (PI), (must include job title, credentials, phone, email)
- c) Name and Contact Information of Primary Agency at Which Program Will Be Conducted
- d) 1-page Resume of Principal Investigator

PART 2 - PROPOSAL NARRATIVE – In no more than four (4) single-spaced pages and in font no smaller than 11 pt., please provide the following information:

- (a) **What do you plan to do:** Describe the project's overall purpose and specific objectives.
- (b) **Why is this project important/significant:** Describe how the proposed program would impacts your clients, your agency, the community, and/or the practice of recreation therapy. Please include the needs or problems (clients, agency) that the proposed project addresses. Cite any research, literature, or statistics that supports the rationale for the proposed project.
- (c) **How will you do it:** Provide a detailed description of the proposed program (this is only about the program, not how you will evaluate it). Include the following:
 - Program goals
 - Population(s) to receive proposed program
 - Content of the proposed program
 - Delivery methods of proposed program
 - what are the program activities
 - who will be providing these activities (indicate experience or credentials that these leaders bring to the project)
 - Duration and frequency of actual program

- Specific resources used to support successful implementation of program (administrative support, equipment, materials, technology, etc.).

(d) **How you will evaluate it.** Describe the proposed evaluation of the program by specifically identifying how each outcome will be measured.

- **Outcomes that you expect to address.** List all outcomes to be measured, noting corresponding indicators of success,
- **Specific Measures** – For each outcome, identify how success toward reaching it will be measured (be specific, noting reliable and valid instruments to collect data on specific outcomes),
- **Who will be conducting this evaluation.** Describe the roles of staff, consultants, and/or volunteers providing project leadership in the evaluation of outcomes. Indicate experience and/or credentials that these leaders bring to the project, including past research experience.

(e) **Collaboration.** Describe any collaboration with other organizations/individuals on this project and how the collaboration will be established and maintained.

NOTE: Must include a letter of support on agency letterhead confirming the scope and type of resource-sharing or other cooperative arrangements from each agency collaborator cited in the proposal narrative.

(f) **Budget.** Describe how the funding will be used. (NOTE: ***Empower Recreational Therapy*** will fund a total of no more than \$500.00, however, there is no cap on other funding sources)

- Itemize all anticipated project expenditures and sources and amounts of support. Identify source of funding for each item (for each source other than ***Empower Recreational Therapy***, indicate amounts received, committed, requested, and/or to be requested.
- Provide a justification for each project expense.

(g) **Timeline:** Outline timeframes/proposed deadlines for each task to be accomplished.

(h) **Dissemination:** Indicate likely outlets (article, newsletter, presentation) for reporting the project findings to professionals.

Please contact Laura Kelly (lkelly@empowerrectherapy.com) or Leandra Bedini (bedini19@gmail.com) with any questions.