



## **Introduction to Compensating Partners**

Compensation is an important part of validating the contributions, time, and effort of public, patient or community partners to your project and is generally encouraged when budget allows. Compensation is different from covering expenses for travel and accommodations. There are many factors to consider when determining if and how you should compensate partners. For best practices on when and how to provide compensation, [CIHR's Considerations when paying patient partners in research](#) from the Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) offers guidance. It is important to note that there is not one standardized approach when it comes to compensation.

### **Factors to Consider**

The decision to provide compensation depends on the role of your partners, their time commitment, what funding you have available and how you are able to spend that funding.

**Some factors to consider when deciding if you should provide compensation are:**

- Will providing compensation provide more opportunity for diversity among your partners (e.g., socio-economic, ethno-cultural, or geographical)?
- Will your partners be doing work to support your project (e.g., drafting or editing documents, providing recommendations)?
- Will there be others present at meetings or sessions that are being paid for their time to be present (e.g., clinicians, researchers, and administration staff)?

### **Types of Compensation**

Compensation can be a fixed income (e.g., hourly wage or lump sum payment), a one-time payment (e.g., Honoraria or gift cards), or in-kind (courses, training, charitable donations, or gifts). The type of compensation should ideally be determined in collaboration with your partners based on their needs and preference. For example, individuals on disability payments may be restricted in terms of additional sources of income they collect. Partners may also opt to decline all forms of compensation or donate their compensation to a charity.

### **Compensation Amount**

There is no standardized amount for how much to compensate partners. However, most compensation amounts provide the equivalent of \$20-\$50 per hour (average compensation usually falls within \$25-\$35/hour) and no less than minimum wage. You may also decide to compensate based on the level of engagement, as some projects may require a greater level of commitment than others. For more information on payment rates and types, The SPOR Evidence Alliance has some [helpful tips](#). Also check out our **ICES-tailored document on budget estimates** for more in depth information

### **Other Considerations**

- ❖ If you are asking partners to be volunteers and are not providing any compensation you must indicate that at the point of recruitment.
- ❖ Talk to your partners about compensation. There is a helpful guide on how to start the conversation [here](#).
- ❖ Depending on the type of compensation you choose, you may be required to mail it to partners. Mailing gift cards and other types of compensation can be expensive and should be considered in your budget.
- ❖ All forms of compensation may be considered taxable income. Speak to your Finance team to determine whether you need to provide tax documents.