CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
Understanding and Addressing Isolation and Loneliness in Family & Friend Caregivers of Seniors

Introduction

In preparation for its next round of funding, the RTO/ERO Foundation is seeking expressions of interest for projects that advance our collective knowledge about the impact of social isolation and loneliness on unpaid (family and friend) caregivers of seniors (65+) in Canada; and/or that evaluate innovative interventions to improve their social engagement and mental health.

According to Statistics Canada, as Canadians age, family and friend caregiving becomes increasingly important to the well-being of seniors. An estimated 3.8 million Canadians aged 45 or older (35%) are providing unpaid care to a senior with a short- or long-term health condition. These are family and friends who provide unpaid assistance with tasks such as transportation and personal care. They help seniors remain in their homes, thereby reducing demands on the health care system. Moreover, remaining in one's home is usually the preference of seniors themselves.

Caring for someone with a health condition or limitation, particularly cognitive impairments such as Alzheimer's and other dementias, can cause physical and emotional problems and create financial and social burdens for the caregiver. This may be especially true for caregivers who themselves, are seniors. On the other hand, providing care can give individuals pleasure, a sense of purpose, and pride. It can enhance their self-worth and help them to build stronger relationships with the care recipient.

The Foundation will award four grants of $25,000 each for well qualified projects.

Areas of Focus

The RTO/ERO Foundation will consider proposals that fall within one of more of the following areas:

- Advancing our understanding of how social isolation and loneliness impact the health and well-being of unpaid caregivers;
- Focusing on different types of caregivers such as elderly, multi-generational, indigenous, LGBTQ+ and immigrants;
- Focusing on caregivers of special needs recipients, such as those who are managing frailty or dementia;
- Focusing on specific geographic areas: urban, small community, rural or remote settings;
• Bringing researchers and communities together to find practical and innovative solutions to the challenges of isolation and loneliness for caregivers and their care recipients.

Eligibility Criteria

• Funds must be received and administered by a registered Canadian charity
• Projects should use current literature and evidence to make their case
• We encourage academic researchers to join forces with community organizations to apply evidence to real life situations
• Proposals should include a strong evaluation component to determine the value and impact of the project
• Projects that result in the development of sharable, lay-oriented output materials such as toolkits, manuals and video are strongly encouraged
• Projects must receive ethics approval prior to funds being distributed
• Projects should involve caregivers and older adults in all phases, including the development, implementation and evaluation stages
• Applications are welcome from anywhere in Canada
• For projects being conducted in French, all applications must be submitted in English

Expressions of Interest Guidelines

• Expressions of interest will be accepted until midnight EST on Sunday, January 19, 2020
• Letters should be no longer than three pages using 1” margins and 11-point, Arial font. Letters must include:
  1. a short description of the project
  2. objectives and desired outcomes
  3. A list of the organizations expected to be involved in the project
  4. the name and charitable registration number of the organization that will be administering the funds
  5. an estimated budget amount
  6. estimated timeline for project completion
• Letters should be sent electronically with Subject Line: RTO/ERO Foundation Grant – Social Isolation – EOI to jsobie@rto-ero.org.
• All Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by our grant review panel, with the top scoring applicants being invited to submit full proposals. Selected applicants will be contacted by January 31, 2020.
Proposal Review Process

- For those applicants who are invited to submit full proposals, the Foundation will provide a more detailed set of guidelines, including the criteria that will be used for scoring.
- All proposals are reviewed and scored by a panel of experts and peer reviewers.
- Note that the RTO/ERO Foundation does not fund general overhead, only expenses directly relating to the project will be accepted.
- **Deadline for detailed proposals will be Sunday, April 6, 2020 at 12:00am.**
- The RTO/ERO Foundation Board of Directors will make final decisions on the successful applicants.

Role of the Successful Applicant

The successful applicant agrees to the following terms (to be outlined in a formal letter):

- Projects must begin within six months of approval.
- The RTO/ERO Foundation will be recognized in materials (print and electronic) related to the project including, but not limited to announcements, press releases, promotional material, reports, etc. as well as plaques and naming opportunities as appropriate for the grant and the institution.
- An interim and final report outlining project results, challenges, key learnings and other highlights.
- RTO/ERO Foundation will be given access to key individuals involved in the project for the purpose of our own marketing and promotion; as well as liaison with local RTO/ERO members.
- **Successful applicants will be notified on Friday April 30, 2020.**

About the RTO/ERO Foundation

Established in 2011, the RTO/ERO Foundation is the charitable partner of RTO/ERO (formerly The Retired Teachers of Ontario/ Les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l’Ontario).

With a vision to enhance the quality of life for aging adults, the Foundation provides funding to institutions across Canada for geriatric and gerontology research, education and community action, with a special focus on social isolation.

The RTO/ERO Foundation provides a bridge between over 80,000 retired members of the education sector across Canada, who voluntarily support the Foundation, and researchers focused on the health and wellness of older adults.

Contact: Jo-Anne Sobie  
Executive Director, RTOERO Foundation  
300 – 18, chemin Spadina Road, Toronto, ON M5R 2S7  
Telephone 416-962-9463 x 276 Toll Free 1-800-361-9888  
Email: jsobie@rto-ero.org Website www.embrace-aging.ca