



Partnership Expression of Interest Information Package

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Purpose/Call to Action

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Alberta Division is seeking expressions of interest from non-profit organizations registered as a charity in the **Lethbridge region** (see Appendix A for map for defined geographical parameters) to implement a peer-to-peer family support program called Caregiver Connections. Caregiver Connections offers peer-based services and support for parents and caregivers of dependents experiencing mental health concerns, aiming to provide compassionate support and specific information and resources to aid individuals in maximizing their ability to assist their dependents affected by mental illness while maintaining their own mental health. This program is offered in partnership with various organizations across Alberta and the new funding cycle will be in effect from April 1, 2023, until March 31, 2025.

Please read this corresponding information package before completing the Expression of Interest Application Form

Background

Canadian Mental Health Association

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Alberta Division focuses on provincial-wide community mental health projects, mental health advocacy, government relations and workplace mental health training throughout the province. CMHA, Alberta Division's mission is "a nation-wide voluntary organization that promotes the mental health of all and supports people experiencing mental illness" and we advocate for increased outreach services, education, housing and suicide prevention services across the province. For 99 years, we have operated as a registered charity within the not-for-profit sector. We work at the intersection of clinical and local mental health care, developing projects to address the unique needs of individuals and communities. For more than 60 years in Alberta, CMHA has focused on recovery and support for Albertans impacted by mental illness. We stand with people living in the community as they achieve their wellness goals. Hundreds of CMHA staff and volunteers engage clients in activity and navigation within the complex matrix of mental health services. Our vision is to support wholistic, community-driven, and integrated activities within and across rural Alberta. The goals guiding the organizations are:

1. Strengthening community, organization, and systems' capacity to advance a healthy Alberta.
2. Be a catalyst for a mental health social movement.
3. Be a healthy and adaptive organization contributing to a collective impact in a dynamic environment.

Caregiving in Alberta

Almost half (44%) of Albertans have been a Caregiver at one point in time, which includes those individuals who provide support and assist family members or friends with challenges resulting from mental illness and/or substance use concerns (RAPP, p. 1). Most Caregivers (72%) report feeling that they have no other option than to provide their Caregiving support and many (47%) have been caregiving for five or more years (MHCC, p. 7). Though a critical support for the individual for whom they are caregiving, the role can come at significant cost to caregiver's own personal wellbeing (RAPP, p. 1). For example, one half of caregivers reported sleep issues resulting from their caregiving role, 31% reported mood disturbances such as irritability and feeling overwhelmed, and 18% reported that their health as deteriorated because of their role (RAPP, p. 1).

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Alberta Division is committed to building capacity within Alberta for mental health support. Peer-support, the "emotional and practical support between two people who share a common experience" (Peer Support Canada). Informed by the principles of hope, recovery, and self-determination, peer facilitators build capacity for caregivers through sharing resources and hands-on tools as well as foster meaningful connections among caregivers in their local communities. CMHA Alberta in partnership with the Ministry of Children's Services, has been operationalizing through seven CMHA Regions (Edmonton, Camrose, Wood Buffalo, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and Lethbridge) a quality peer-to-peer family support program. This program provides compassionate support and specific

information and resources to aid individuals in maximizing their ability to assist their dependents affected by mental illness while maintaining their own mental health.

Historically, Caregivers have not had adequate supports for their own wellbeing in relation to their caring role. Appropriate support for Caregivers has the potential to balance the potential negative impact of caregiving on the individual caregiver, reduce mental health strain and strengthen family bonds (MHCC, p. 8). Additionally, when Caregivers have adequate support, there are impacts on the individual receiving support as well “enhancing caregiving capacity has a clinically significant impact on the course of their relative’s mental illness, on the relationships with the ill relative, and on adherence to medications” (MHCC, p. 9). Lastly, supporting family caregivers can benefit the health and social services system, in that “well-supported family caregivers are likely to provide better care for relatives, generate savings in the system and enhance the benefits of caregiving” (MHCC, p.9).

Caregivers reported the following as integral supports that would help them in their caregiving role; (1) tangible resources, skill-development, as well as access to service providers to help them support the person for whom they care give; and (2) support and services to sustain their own mental and emotional health (MHCC, p. 9).

CMHA Alberta continues to support the implementation of peer-to-peer family support in the seven Alberta Regions, supporting regional partners, who take an individualized approach that is reflective of the needs of their community to ensure success.

CMHA Regions involved in the project include:

- Medicine Hat (Southeast)
- Lethbridge (South)
- Red Deer (Central)
- Edmonton
- Grande Prairie (Northwest)
- Wood Buffalo (Northeast/Fort McMurray)
- Camrose (East Central)

Regional partners provide support to Caregivers through various methods including One-on-one Peer Support, Group Support, Educational Programming, and Community Outreach. Based on local need, regional partners integrate educational content and learning opportunities, information sharing on relevant resources for caregivers as well as meaningful opportunities to connect and foster participants building an interpersonal network of Caregivers.

Programming is run by peer facilitators are individuals with lived experience of Caregiving and trained through the provincial program as well as certification with Peer Support Canada to provide direct support and facilitate significant learning and connection opportunities.

[Mental Health Commission of Canada \(MHCC\), National Guidelines for a Comprehensive Service System to Support Family Caregivers of Adults with Mental Health Problems and Illnesses.](#)

[Peer Support Canada \(PSC\)](#)

[Research on Aging Policies and Practice \(RAPP\), Caregivers in Alberta: impact of caregiving on wellbeing.](#)

Scope

Caregiver Connections Participants

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Alberta Division, hosts Caregiver Connections, a peer-led support program for those caring for someone diagnosed with a mental illness or who has a mental health concern. Funded through the Ministry of Children's Services, CMHA's peer-to-peer family support target population is the parents and caregivers of dependents experiencing a mental health concern. The support groups are for adults only.

History

In 2017, CMHA Alberta in partnership with the Ministry of Human Services and CMHA regions across Alberta began to offer a "Peer-To-Peer Family Support Group." Over the last five years this program has developed into Caregiver Connections, partnered now with Ministry of Children's Services and seven delivery partners across Alberta.

The current grant term is April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2023. CMHA AB has obtained grant funding over several years now for this project and will continue to advocate for the fiscal sustainability of this program to the Government of Alberta.

Caregiver Connections Operations

When signing onto the project, the regional partners are required to complete a "Schedule A", with a minimum of three program activities that will be offered through their program. Each partner is required to run:

1. Structured Co-Facilitated Drop-in Group
2. One on One Caregiver Support Sessions
3. Educational and/or Outreach Sessions

Regional partners are encouraged to run additional activities to fit regional needs. Reports will be based on the completed "Schedule A" and frequency of supports will be dependent on each partner's capacity within the frame of funding provided. Detailed program plans related to these three activities as well as targets and assessment plan are created by regions in collaboration with CMHA AB division upon contract agreement. Regional partners must engage promotional activities to recruit and engage potential beneficiaries of the program. Regions collect contact information for beneficiaries of their services to help promote other programming and peer-support services.

The selected regional partner organization will be responsible for ensuring the effective delivery and implementation of the Caregiver Connections Peer-to-Peer Family Support Program.

Regional Partner Roles and Responsibilities

- Identify, contract, or hire a Caregiver Connections Facilitator (Peer) with lived experience supporting a dependent with a mental illness diagnosis
- Identify, contract, or hire a CMHA Coordinator who shall support the Caregiver Connections program as a co-facilitator and act as a member of the Caregiver Connections working group, meeting monthly
- Ensure the Caregiver Connections team participates in all scheduled training

- Schedule and promote the Caregiver Connections program in your community
- Continue to offer Caregiver Connections programming throughout the year as identified in the co-developed agreement, often including drop-in group, one on one, and educational supports.
- Submit **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.** to the Caregiver Connections Provincial Team
- Communicate with the Provincial Team as soon as possible should you have a Coordinator or Facilitator leave the program and if there will be any disruptions in the program offering.

CMHA Division Roles and Responsibilities

- Finance and coordinate all training related to the Caregiver Connections program
- Provide program materials, including a Caregiver Connections Toolkit
- Provide required monthly reporting templates and bi-annual financial templates
- Provide the services of a Provincial Peer Support Project Manager. The Project Manager shall be the central point of communication, coordination, evaluation, and reporting for the Caregiver Connections program in Alberta
- Host a monthly administrative meeting for Caregiver Connections
- Provide promotional materials and tools available to be utilized in each Region
- Promote the Caregiver Connections program throughout Alberta
- Act as the liaison with the program funder; and coordinate the evaluation of the program based on input from participating Regions.

Submission Process and Requirements

Timeline:

March 2, 2023, Application Deadline
March 10, 2023, Candidates Contacted
March 31, 2023, Final Selection and Contract Signing
April 11, 2023, Onboarding Begins

Contact Information:

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Submission Requirements:

Before you submit your application, please double check that you have completed all the required fields.

- ☐ Completed Expression of Interest Application
- ☐ Completed Budget Template

Evaluation Criteria:

- Experience implementing similar programs,
- Quality of proposed program plan and budget,
- Ability to meet the requirements outlined in the Scope of Work and timeline,
- Understanding of Peer-based programming,
- Correlation of organizational values to CMHA AB and Caregiver Connections program approach.

Disclaimers

Disclosure of Information

The proponent hereby agrees to the disclosure, on a confidential basis, of this proposal by the CMHA leadership team and advisors retained by CMHA to advise or assist with the Expression of Interest process, including with respect to the evaluation of this proposal.

Conflict of Interest

You must declare all potential Conflicts of Interest in the document, this includes disclosing the names and all pertinent details of all individuals (employees, advisors, or individuals acting in any other capacity) who (a) participated in the preparation of the proposal; **AND** (b) were employees of CMHA Alberta Division within (12) months prior to Submission Deadline.

Disqualification for Conflict of Interest

CMHA Alberta Division may disqualify a proponent for any conduct, situation, or circumstances, determined by CMHA Alberta, in its sole and absolute discretion, to constitute a Conflict of Interest as defined above.

Confidential Information

All information provided by or obtained from CMHA Alberta Division in any form in connection with this application either before or after the issuance of this EOI.

- (A) is the sole property of CMHA Alberta Division and must be treated as confidential;
- (B) is not to be used for any purpose other than replying to this Expression of Interest and the performance of any subsequent contract for the Deliverables;
- (C) Must not be disclosed without prior written authorization from the CMHA Alberta; and
- (D) Must be returned by the proponent to CMHA Alberta immediately upon the request of CMHA Alberta.

Confidential Information of Proponent

A proponent should identify any information in its proposal or any accompanying documentation supplied in confidence for which confidentiality is to be maintained by CMHA Alberta. The confidentiality of such information will be maintained by CMHA Alberta, except as otherwise required by law or by order of a court or tribunal. Proponents are advised that their proposals will, as necessary, be disclosed, on a confidential basis, to advisers retained by CMHA to advise or assist with the EOI process, including the evaluation of proposals. If a proponent has any questions about the collection and use of personal information pursuant to this EOI, questions are to be submitted to the EOI Contact.

No Contract Until Execution of Written Agreement

This EOI process is intended to identify prospective suppliers for the purpose of negotiating potential agreements. No legal relationships or obligation regarding the procurement of any good or services will be created between the proponent and CMHA Alberta Division by this EOI

process until the successful negotiation and execution of a written agreement for the acquisition of such goods and/or services.