

Spark-ON

I. Program Overview

COVID-19 has created extremely challenging circumstances for point-of-care staff who work with older adults and persons with dementia. Throughout 2020, healthcare workers – especially those working in congregate-care environments – have been relied upon to use their expertise and their creative problem-solving abilities to protect the health and wellbeing of the aging population. As we look ahead to 2021 and beyond, no one is better positioned to take on these critical challenges than point-of-care workers themselves.

The Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI) is calling on **Ontario’s frontline care workers, clinical managers, and clinical researchers** to present their innovative ideas to improve the lives of older adults, persons with dementia (PwD), and their care partners. [Apply to Spark-ON](#) and receive up to \$50,000 (CAD) along with coaching and mentorship over 12 months to develop your innovative ideas and solutions – and get them into the hands of those who need them the most.

Projects must accomplish one of the following two objectives:

1. Developing and/or testing your own novel innovative solution at your own organization.
2. Scaling your own solution to one or more collaborating organizations.

Note: Projects must follow all government and organizational infection prevention policies and consider other restrictions on implementation posed by COVID-19.

The deadline to submit the [application form online](#) is 5:00 pm ET on Monday, Dec. 21, 2020.

II. Important Dates

Application window opens	Monday, Nov. 16, 2020
Application deadline	Monday, Dec. 21, 2020

CABHI notifies awardees	Friday, Jan. 29, 2021
Signed program agreements returned to CABHI	Friday, Feb. 26, 2021
Program and projects begin	Monday, March 1, 2021

III. Priority Themes

To be considered for funding, your proposed solution must address one or more of the following COVID-19-related senior care priority themes. These priority themes were selected in consultation with CABHI’s network of care providers, policy experts, and persons with lived experience.

1. Caregiver Wellbeing	Solutions that specifically support both formal and informal caregivers of older adults and PwD to maintain and improve their own health during COVID-19.
2. Infection Prevention and Control	New solutions that promote optimal use of PPE and protocols for expanding staff and restricting visitors during COVID-19 outbreaks in older adult and PwD care environments.
3. Social Connectedness	Solutions that combat loneliness, address the “digital divide,” and promote social engagement for older adults and PwD at risk of becoming isolated during COVID-19.
4. Training Unregulated Care Providers	Solutions that support the training and education of unregulated healthcare providers working in care environments, as well as solutions that support their onboarding and retention during COVID-19.

Note: Special consideration will be given to projects that also address the cross-cutting themes of Indigenous Health, Racial Equality, and Ageism related to COVID-19. Applicants are encouraged to consider the utility of their solution in diverse care environments, including long-term-care, retirement, related congregate-care settings, and home healthcare organizations.

IV. Funding Available

The maximum funding available for projects selected in this call for innovations is \$50,000 (CAD). The Spark-ON program funds projects scheduled to occur over 12 months, starting March 1, 2021. CABHI plans to fund up to 20 projects through this program, though this is subject to change.

Funding will flow to the applicant's employer/host organization. The host organization will be accountable for ethics and regulatory requirements, administering funds at appropriate rates, and for the applicant's completion of project milestones, deliverables, and performance reporting. CABHI releases an initial payment of 90% of its funding at the start of the project. A holdback of 10% will be released upon project completion and approval of the final reports, and attestation from the host organization regarding the use of funds.

V. Eligibility Criteria

CABHI will review all submitted applications to determine if projects meet the following criteria:

The Applicant must:

- Work at a healthcare delivery organization located in Ontario and be one of the following:
 - o Frontline care staff, including:
 - Healthcare professionals
 - Allied health professionals
 - Personal support workers
 - Certified nursing assistants
 - Support staff (for example, dietary aides or housekeepers)
 - Home healthcare aides
 - o Clinical care manager
 - Person who directly manages clinical care delivery
 - o Clinical researcher
 - Person who conducts applied or translational research in a care setting

The Solution:

- Must clearly address at least one of CABHI's four Spark-ON priority themes
- Must be sufficiently innovative, meaning that it purposely differs from existing solutions
- Must represent Intellectual Property that belongs to the host organization, the applicant, or a combination thereof

The Project:

- Cannot involve basic research, primarily academic goals, subsidizing existing programs or initiatives at the host organization, capital investment, pharmaceutical trials, or incubators for startups
- Will focus on the development, testing, and/or scaling of an innovative solution at a healthcare delivery organization located in Ontario
- Must be completed, reasonably, in a maximum of 12 months
- [Adhere to CABHI's Eligible Expense Guidelines](#)

VI. Selection Criteria

All applications will be evaluated based on the following selection criteria:

1. The Solution (25%)

- How well does the solution address a critical COVID-19 issue?
- How is this solution better than others?

2. Strategic Alignment (25%)

- How well aligned is the solution to CABHI's four priority themes?
- How effectively does the solution address the identified problem?

3. Project Plan (25%)

- Does the project have clearly defined goals and objectives and consider COVID restrictions?
- Is the intended use of funds clearly linked to project goals and objectives?

4. Project Team (25%)

- How strong is the team's point-of-care experience?
- How well positioned is the project team to complete the proposed project?

Applications will be reviewed and scored by an external project evaluation panel that consists of reviewers with expertise in the clinical, applied research, business, and technical fields, as well as those with lived experience. Recommendations from the project review panel will be considered by CABHI leadership to ensure program portfolio balance and strategic alignment. CABHI reserves the right to select proposals to achieve a broad distribution of projects across its priority themes and to achieve a spread of projects that addresses diverse populations and care environments. CABHI also reserves the right to decline any application and to annul this call for innovations at any time, without incurring any liability. Additionally, CABHI reserves the right to modify the scope of this call for innovations at any time.

VII. Host Organization Obligations:

- Provide a **Letter of Support** for the applicant, as part of the application. Please [contact us](#) in advance of the deadline if this is an issue – we’re here to help!
- Receive funding from CABHI and deploy funding to support the project’s approved costs, as aligned with CABHI’s Eligible Expense Guideline and In-kind Contributions & Matching Funds guidelines (as applicable).
- Provide infrastructure and facilities support to applicant; for example, office or lab space, office equipment, supplies, etc.
- Permit applicant to access organization’s client population to facilitate testing.
- Ensure that the applicant completes project milestones and deliverables as well as performance reporting according to the project schedule.
- Oversee any regulatory requirements for the project and ensure that the project is approved by an accredited Research Ethics Board or Institutional Review Board, if necessary.
- Attest and submit financial reports to CABHI, regarding the use of approved project funds.
- Ensure submission of final report by the applicant within 30 days of project completion.
- Maintain project data to comply with requirements imposed by the Research Ethics Board or Institutional Review Board, if necessary.
- Cooperate with CABHI in the collection of performance metrics relevant to the project and provide CABHI with reasonably necessary documents and participate in CABHI’s publicizing the results from the project.
- Sign the CABHI Program Agreement related to the project.

VIII. Application Process & Timeline

Step 1: Applicants will submit an [online application form](#) on the CABHI website by 5:00 pm EDT on December 21, 2020.

Step 2: CABHI will review and evaluate the submitted applications, including project scope, timeline, deliverables, and expected outcomes, against the selection criteria, and then select finalists.

Step 3: Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email by January 29, 2021.

Step 4: Host organization must sign the program agreement with CABHI by Friday, February 27, 2021.

Note: The online application must include a Letter of Support from the host organization, which includes confirmation from the host organization that it understands its role and obligations, if the applicant's project is selected for funding. All applications must be in English and contain no material that is confidential or proprietary. You are granting no rights to any intellectual property by applying. The program agreement will set out any contributions/obligations of the host organization and any other rights of CABHI, including rights to disseminate the findings. If agreements are not signed by this deadline, CABHI reserves the right to cancel offered funding and divert funds to the next finalist.

IX. Spark-U Curriculum

Spark-U is a four-module accelerator curriculum that will run parallel to the project and help guide project leads towards a plan for success, sustainability, and maximum impact. The curriculum will be optional and offered in a virtual group learning environment. It will take no longer than one (1) hour per month, though additional support may be available for interested Project Teams through CABHI's [Acceleration Services](#). Successful applicants will also have an opportunity to learn about other innovative solutions in their Spark-ON cohort.

X. Webinars

Register for an upcoming webinar to learn more about how to submit a successful application. Topics will include: keys to a successful proposal; how to submit a proposal through our online portals; funding allocation; responsibility for reporting; and much more.

WEBINAR: Wednesday, December 2, 2020, at 12:00 pm ET. Contact Karol Kamecka, Analyst, Innovation Office, at kkamecka@cabhi.com, to register.

XI. Resources

1. [Eligible Expense Guidelines](#)
2. [Letter of Support Template](#)
3. [Program Agreement Template](#)

Funding for this program is provided by the Government of Ontario.

Contact Karol Kamecka, Analyst, Innovation Office, at kkamecka@cabhi.com, with questions about the Spark-ON program or anything else related to CABHI!

[Apply Now!](#)