

## **Capacity-Building Grants for Family Support Networks 2024-25**

### **Grant Guidelines and Application Information**

### **Applications Due: Friday, March 15, 2024**

#### **Overview: Capacity-Building Grants for Family Support Networks**

The Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO) receives funding from The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to provide grant funding to help support, strengthen and expand the critical peer networks of families and (unpaid) caregivers that are supporting adults with developmental disabilities in Ontario. **Grants for 2024-25 will be awarded in May/June 2024, with activities to be completed by March 31, 2025.**

#### **What are Family Support Networks?**

For this grant program, a Family Support Network (FSN) is a group of family members and/or unpaid caregivers who are supporting individuals living with a developmental disability. To be eligible for a grant, FSN membership must include (but is not limited to) members who are the family or unpaid caregiver of adults (18+) with a developmental disability. FSNs are peer-based and family-led. They play a valuable role in:

- Connecting families/(unpaid) caregivers to one another.
- Supporting members through family support, education, networking, and peer mentoring.
- Connecting families/unpaid caregivers to appropriate supports/services/information that can assist their family member in achieving their goals.
- Empowering members to advocate for, and support full equity, inclusion, and citizenship of people with a developmental disability in Ontario; and
- Providing an environment built on trust, information-sharing, networking, and building relationships.

Grants are intended for FSNs that bring together families and unpaid caregivers from multiples families in the community – not groups that are centred on one individual or family. Family and unpaid caregivers are broadly defined and may include family members, friends, neighbours, or others who are supporting and mutually committed to a person with a developmental disability.

Family Support Networks often begin as informal grassroots networks of people with similar experiences that have found peer connection to be helpful. Many will expand their membership and activities and establish a more formal structure as they grow. The grant program aims to support both new/emerging FSNs as well as those that are more established.

## **Objectives of the Grant Program**

The grants will build capacity and sustainability of existing Family Support Networks (defined above) and encourage the creation of new Family Support Networks (FSNs) in order to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Expand membership and enhance member engagement to deepen social connections and belonging for families of adults with a developmental disability.
2. Provide forums for families and caregivers to support and mentor each other.
3. Provide opportunities for members to share local initiatives and information related to developmental services, resources, and family/caregiver support.
4. Support administrative needs of the network.
5. Expand local activities and create network-specific resources.
6. Share information and best practices with other Family Support Networks and communities.

All proposed activities for funding must align with one or more of these objectives. We recognize that some FSNs need basic operational support to sustain their work, while others are able to take on new activities and projects. We view both as very important.

## **Who Can Apply?**

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must:

- Be an existing Family Support Network (as defined above) OR a new/emerging Family Support Network OR an organization with a mandate to support and empower one or more family led FSNs.
- Be based/located in Ontario.
- Have a list of current FSN members or intended members.
- Include members/intended members who are family members or unpaid caregivers of an adult (18+) with a developmental disability.
- Have (or be prepared to set up) a bank account managed by the FSN or organization with two **unrelated** signing officers (co-signatories) and the ability to receive funds by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). **If the bank account is managed and set up by an FSN**, it must be used for the sole purpose of FSN banking, and the account may be in the name of the Family Support Network *or* the name of the two **unrelated** co-signatories.
- Operate on a non-profit basis (for-profit businesses and organizations are not eligible)

Each FSN or organization can only apply for one grant. Joint applications from more than one FSN or organization will be accepted, but only one should be identified as the applicant with the others listed as “partnering organizations” on the application form.

Applications are encouraged from groups that reflect the diverse experiences and communities of families/caregivers supporting people with developmental disabilities across Ontario, including those that may face barriers to accessing support.

Organizations or agencies who apply on behalf of an FSN will be required to demonstrate that:

- The FSN(s) they support are peer-led (led by families) and have the freedom to function and act with a high level of independence.
- There is a need for funding that cannot be supported by the organization's budget. Funding will not be awarded to offset the cost of existing staffing or expenses (e.g., if staffing is currently provided to facilitate an FSN, a grant will not be awarded to replace those costs).

### **What Can the Grant Funding Be Used For?**

Grants will support a wide range of initiatives and activities that help to build capacity of FSNs. It is important that expenditures and activities:

- Help achieve one or more of the 6 objectives of the grant program (as outlined in the Objectives section above);
- Benefit FSN members as a whole.
- Be spent/implemented by March 31, 2025.
- Be supported by invoices/receipts.

The following are examples of eligible expenditures and activities. Please note that eligible expenses are not limited to these examples, provided they meet the guidelines outlined above:

- Administrative costs including online meeting platforms/online accounts, banking service costs, long distance charges.
- Event or meeting related costs including meals, meeting/event rental space, facilitation.
- Costs to support promotion of network activities.
- Development, design and/or production of network-specific resources.

The following expenditures and activities are not eligible for funding:

- Expenses that only benefit a specific individual or family (versus FSN members as a whole);
- Expenses charged for time/services provided by people submitting the grant application.
- Cost-offset for expenses that are already part of agency or organization budgets (organizations or agencies who apply must ensure their initiative is directly benefitting and empowering FSNs to build their network capacity, and is not for programs, groups or initiatives that are already funded);
- Expenses for which invoices/receipts cannot be provided.
- Building or development fees.
- Major capital costs.
- Mortgage, rent or housing related costs (meeting or event rental space is permitted).
- Activities that are dependent on additional funding beyond the grant.

### **Funding Streams and Grant Funding Amounts:**

Grant applications ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 will be accepted. We expect most grants awarded will be between \$2,500 - \$4,500. Applicants can only submit one application and must apply for one of three funding streams:

- 1) New/emerging FSNs (\$1,000 to \$4,500): To support the creation of new FSNs and build capacity for FSNs that are less established. This could include an informal group of families and caregivers that would like to form an FSN in their community, or a smaller/emerging FSN that would benefit from funding to help them continue activities and grow.
- 2) Growth/support of existing Family Support Networks (\$1,000 to \$4,500): To build capacity of FSNs that are already established but need funding to sustain, strengthen and expand.
- 3) Impact & Collaboration Grants (\$2,500 to \$10,000): To support collaborative initiatives that will have broader impact and will benefit families and caregivers of adults from more than one FSN or reach multiple communities across the province.

The total amount of funding that will be awarded in each stream is not pre-determined and will be based on applications received. Due to funding limitations, applications may not be approved for funding and grants may be awarded for less than the full amount requested. Priority will be given to local, community-based initiatives.

Please contact [grants@ontariocaregiver.ca](mailto:grants@ontariocaregiver.ca) if you are uncertain which stream to apply for.

### **How Will Approved Grants be Decided?**

Grant applications will be reviewed and assessed by a review panel including Ontario Caregiver Organization staff members and external partners. Each grant submission will be reviewed and assessed to ensure that the application is complete and that proposed expenses and activities are consistent with the parameters outlined in these guidelines.

All applications will be scored based on the following evaluation criteria: (max score 20 points):

- Impact (9 points)  
*The application demonstrates benefits and positive impact for Family Support Networks and the families/caregivers they support, with potential for positive impact to be longer term.*  
*The application demonstrates a need for funding not available elsewhere.*
- Alignment with Objectives of Funding (7 points)  
*Funding is intended to enhance the capacity or sustain the activities of existing Family Support Networks (defined above), and to encourage the creation of new Family Support Networks.*  
*Alignment with one or more of the 6 grant program objectives (as outlined above).*

- Value for Money (4 points)  
*The application demonstrates good value for money and provides a description of how funding will be used.*

The Ontario Caregiver Organization will make the final decision on which applications will be funded.

### **How Do We Apply?**

To apply, complete the Application for Funding and the signed Checklist and Terms and send it by email to [grants@ontariocaregiver.ca](mailto:grants@ontariocaregiver.ca) no later than 4:00 p.m. **on Friday, March 15, 2024**. The Application is available as a Word document on our [website](#).

- In addition, all successful grant recipients must complete and return the Electronic Fund Transfer Information Form which will be provided to you upon notification of the success of your grant.

All financial requirements must be met including:

- Void cheque or EFT Information statement from FSN bank forwarded to OCO, if grant is successful.
- Dedicated account for the FSN with 2 unrelated co-signatories (signing officers) on the above-mentioned account.

### **How Will the Funds Be Distributed?**

Successful grant applicants will be notified in late May/early June 2024.

Successful applicants must complete, sign and return the Letter of Acceptance and provide the banking information (void cheque or EFT statement) as noted above before funding will be released.

*All successful applicants must sign and return the Acceptance Letter and provide a Void cheque OR EFT Statement from your bank by July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, or your grant may be forfeited and passed on to another applicant.*

### **Accountability and Reporting Requirements for Grant Recipients**

Grantees will be required to complete an interim report and final report that will include updates on progress, spending vs budget, achievements, outstanding items to be completed, and impact relative to the goals of the program. The final report will also include a final spending/budget report with copies of all receipts and submission of a 1–2-minute video describing their project and its outcomes at its completion.

### **Timelines:**

Below is the planned timeline for the grant program roll-out:

Call for Applications Open	Week of February 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
Information sessions for interested applicants via Zoom. (see below for more information)	February 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 @ 7:00 p.m. February 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 @ 12:00 p.m.
Deadline for applications	March 15, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.
Notification to success grant recipients	Mid-May 2024
Acceptance and financial forms submitted by recipients	Late May/early June 2024
Grant funds released	Mid to late June 2024
First Progress Report due from grant recipients	November 15, 2024
Sharing and Knowledge transfer session for grant recipients	January 2025
All grant activities and spending complete	March 31, 2025
Final report due from all grant recipients	April 12, 2025

### **Virtual Information Sessions**

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to apply. New and returning applicants are encouraged to join an information session (via Zoom) offered on two dates. Both sessions will cover the same content. Please note that these sessions will only be offered in English. If you wish to speak to someone in French about the grant program, please contact [grants@ontariocaregiver.ca](mailto:grants@ontariocaregiver.ca).

#### **Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting

[2024-25 FSN Grant Information Session #1](#)

Meeting ID: 833 3851 6540

Passcode: 012568

#### **Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup> @ 12:00 p.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting

[2024-25 FSN Grant Information Session #2](#)

Meeting ID: 816 6630 6418

Passcode: 701316

### **For More Information**

For further details on the FSN Grant, timelines, eligibility or you have questions about your idea, event or project, you can refer to the FAQ or contact [grants@ontariocaregiver.ca](mailto:grants@ontariocaregiver.ca). The Application Form can be found on our [website](#).