



The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness

Social Connectedness Fellowship Application

Research Project #7 – HelpAge Canada

The Social Connectedness Fellowship provides students and recent graduates with the opportunity to carry out research, writing, analysis, and outreach related to overcoming social isolation and building social connectedness. Fellows are paired with partner organizations that work to build belonging and social inclusion across a variety of thematic areas—climate change, disability and older people’s rights, refugee integration, inclusive education, placemaking and urban design, and much more.

Project Details:

Partner: [HelpAge Canada](#) works in partnership with others to improve and maintain the quality of life of vulnerable older persons and their communities in Canada and around the world.

HelpAge works across Canada providing grants for accessibility equipment and well-being for low-income seniors, and grants for creative programming delivered by charitable organizations at a local level. HelpAge is combating isolation and loneliness through their national digital literacy programs. They were also the first national responder of emergency relief for seniors during the Covid-19 pandemic in Canada. HelpAge also undertakes other special projects and contributes to advocacy and education initiatives related to seniors issues.

HelpAge works internationally currently in Lebanon, Eastern Ukraine, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Haiti, Jamaica, and Dominica. Through their Sponsor a Grandparent program, over 500 older persons and their communities receive support including food, water, shelter, medicine and clothing. They also support other humanitarian projects with partner organizations.



Location of Fellow: Remote, with a preference for someone in Canada

Project Description:

Do you want to contribute to improving accessibility in transportation for older people in Canada?

Project Need: Many Canadian seniors are living without affordable, accessible transportation options to support active and healthy aging which is detrimental to their health & well-being. Studies show that seniors age 65 and older who no longer drive make: 15% fewer trips to the doctor, 59% fewer trips to shop/eat and 65% fewer trips to visit friends and family. Approximately 42% of senior non-drivers reported that within the last six months they had unmet transportation needs. Not surprisingly, the inability to access a ride when they need has left more than 37% of Canadian seniors reporting that they experience social isolation on a regular basis. In fact, 10 percent of women aged 75 to 84 and 24% of women aged 85 or older cited transportation problems—the second most cited reason after health problems—as a reason for not participating in social or recreational activities as much as they would have liked.¹

Project Overview: HelpAge Canada is expected to be funded to undertake a National Seniors Transportation Project called Mind the Gap. This will be Canada's first ever Seniors Transportation Solutions Incubator, placing a national call to communities large and small, urban and rural, to give voice to both the gaps and barriers as well as existing innovative solutions within the seniors transportation sector.

Mind the Gap: A Seniors Transportation Solutions Incubator, will take a large step forward in identifying issues at the community-level, and working with those communities to test and scale solutions in the interest of solving this problem.

¹ 2018 Seniors Transportation: Affordable, Appropriate and Available by the Office of the Seniors Advocate of British Columbia.



Community submissions, structured using the 5 A's of age-friendly transportation (accessibility, availability, affordability, adaptability, and appropriateness), will allow municipalities across the country to provide a local context to the transportation challenges that seniors face in their communities. Coupled with an international innovation scan and the first ever Seniors Transportation Innovation Awards, this project represents the first phase towards establishing this incubator and will give the sector something it has never seen before: a national snapshot of the gaps & barriers in seniors transportation and a menu of identified innovation options that are ready to be replicated and scaled. This phase of the project will conclude by hosting the National Consortium of Seniors Transportation: Issues & Innovation, where communities, stakeholders and future funding partners will connect to make necessary investments into options and opportunities to create real and effective change for the wellbeing of Canadian seniors.

This project is expected to span 12 months.

Fellow Contributions: A Fellow will undertake an international transportation innovation scan. This will be a significant research project where the Fellow will conduct a global sweep to identify innovative solutions in senior's mobility within both urban and rural communities around the world. This will include a large focus on countries with robust age-friendly initiatives such as the UK and Australia.

Key tasks and responsibilities will include:

- General research and mapping to identify countries that are leading in Age-Friendly Transportation.
- Identification of cities, municipalities, communities, etc. with innovative & unique Age-Friendly transportation solutions.
- Conduct outreach, interviews, meetings, and analysis to understand the solutions that have been implemented and why they have been effective.



- Ongoing awareness building of the Canadian Seniors Transportation Incubator project.
- Participating in various project team meetings.
- Assist with Canadian stakeholder recruitment for seniors' mobility and age-friendly transportation, i.e. all levels of government, municipalities, seniors organizations, social service organizations, transportation partners, technology partners.

Key Deliverables:

1. 2 blog articles
2. Master list of all international stakeholders conducted during this outreach initiative and their contacts
3. Research report and summary table of international innovation within the seniors transportation sector, including the comparison of solutions relevant to challenges identified in Canada's senior transportation landscape with a focus on social isolation and social connectedness
4. Develop a webpage showcasing international findings on the project website
5. Production of a video/presentation or other media format that can be presented at the National Consortium of Seniors Transportation that will be hosted at the end of the larger project (likely early 2022)

Key Skills/Competencies Required:

- Relevant background focused in sociology, gerontology, public policy, urban planning, etc., or equivalent work/life experiences.
- Strong research skills, experience in conducting best practice scans & literature reviews.
- Excellent organizational skills & ability to effectively document, organize & categorize research, i.e. using excel or other software.
- Strong initiative, time management and project management skills to plan and lead an international research project.



- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills to effectively conduct outreach with international partners by building trust and strengthening the project's relationship with stakeholders.
- Second or third language skills are considered an asset.
- Preference for someone in Canada or with knowledge on Canada's transportation systems.

How to Apply:

All applicants must fill out the [Google Form application](#) by March 7, 2021 at 11:59 pm EST. Applicants can apply for 1 or 2 projects. In addition to answering the standardized questions, applicants must also answer a specific question or two for each project that they are interested in. Specific questions for Research Project #7 - HelpAge Canada:

1. Age-Friendly transportation is a solution to achieve broader outcomes for older adults (i.e. in the areas of health, social inclusion, etc.).
 - a) What are some positive outcomes that you think are related to age-friendly transportation?
 - b) What are some measurable indicators of solution success as they relate to these outcomes? (i.e. how do you know a solution is successful?)

(Max 300 words for both parts)