

CHALLENGE

In 2019, the City of Oshawa and the Oshawa Senior Community Centres (OSCC55+) approved the Oshawa Age-Friendly Strategy and became a member of the World Health Organization's (W.H.O.) Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities to help communities meet the needs of their older residents. The [Oshawa Age-Friendly Strategy](#) outlines the importance of respect and social inclusion for older adults. A key objective is to ensure that older adults are included and respected in the community.

Social isolation is a concern because of the negative impact on individuals and their families. Social isolation could be associated with lower general well-being, poor mental health, increased use of health and support services, reduced quality of life and poor general health.

A number of the programs for older adults through the City and the OSCC55+ have recently been cancelled due to physical distancing requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Public health messaging to older adults to stay home during the pandemic is magnifying the issue of older adult isolation. Older adults now limited in their ability to interact with others.

The pandemic has led to increased use of digital technology to create new opportunities for engagement but not everyone has the financial resources and or skill level to participate. Service providers for older adults are investigating creative ways to connect to prevent the negative effects of social isolation.

OPPORTUNITY

The City of Oshawa is interested in exploring TeachingCity Oshawa partnerships focused on any one of the following challenge questions related to the topic of older adults and isolation:

- 1. What are the current factors and impacts of social isolation on older adults living in Oshawa? What steps can be taken to reduce/eliminate these conditions?**
- 2. How can the City and the OSCC55+ use its amenities to increase social engagement of older adults living in the community in order to reduce the negative effects of isolation? How might intergenerational activities assist in these efforts?**
- 3. How might the City or the OSCC55+ improve the engagement of older adults who are experiencing the negative effects of social isolation by using digital technology? What has been the effect of the efforts to utilize technology to reach older adults during the pandemic on social isolation in older adults? How can we reach older adults who may not have the financial resources and/or ability to use digital technology?**

Partnerships could consist of applied research, experiential learning opportunities for students, academic course assignments, City Idea Lab courses or other collaborations.

To express interest in applied research projects: Interested researchers and faculty should complete a TeachingCity Project Proposal form. See Project Proposal Form for contact information.

To express interest in City Idea Lab or Course assignments: Please contact: teachingcity@oshawa.ca

For more information, contact teachingcity@oshawa.ca

Expressions of Interest and Proposals are welcome until June 26, 2020