



OHTN

## RESEARCH FUNDING GUIDELINES

### OHTN ENDGAME FUNDING PROGRAM

#### EMERGING ISSUES AWARDS

**REVISED** LOI Application Deadline: **November 22, 2018** (5:00 pm EST)

Results of LOI: December 12, 2018

Full Application Deadline: **February 15, 2019** (5:00 pm EST)

Fund start Date: **March 25, 2019**

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**The OHTN Endgame Funding Program**

Ontario is at a tipping point in our efforts to stop HIV. In chess, the endgame is a critical stage, where the tactics selected determine the outcome. The OHTN HIV Endgame Funding Program (EFP) draws on Ontario’s research expertise to improve our tactical responses to HIV. The program funds research to support the design, implementation, improvement and scale-up of programs and services that move Ontario closer to reaching the HIV endgame.

The OHTN’s HIV EFP will support research and evidence sharing activities that have the potential to:

- meet the needs of populations in Ontario most affected by HIV
- drive changes in policy and practice across the HIV prevention, engagement and care cascade
- lead to more integrated health and social services
- identify effective ways to address the social determinants that have a negative impact on the health of communities most affected by HIV, and
- contribute to a rapid learning HIV health and social system.

The OHTN will actively support a [rapid learning health and social system](#) for HIV that works to:

- identify where we most need to “move the dial”
- gather timely data and conduct research to identify how to move the dial and to measure progress
- implement evidence-informed approaches/interventions, monitor their implementation, evaluate their impact and adjust as required
- sustain effective approaches locally and support their scale up across system
- create a rapid learning and improvement culture (competencies, capacity) within our sector that fosters training, evaluation and innovation.

Through its strategic planning process and consultations with its stakeholders, OHTN has identified seven areas of rapid learning. The HIV EFP will support data and evidence sharing initiatives that will drive change in one or more of these areas of learning.

<b>Rapid Learning Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective PrEP scale-up in Ontario</li> <li>• Population-focused prevention and health promotion</li> <li>• HIV testing</li> <li>• Linkage, adherence, and retention in care</li> <li>• Clinical care standards and capacity</li> <li>• Integration of services</li> <li>• Mental health and well-being of people living with and at risk of HIV (including stigma reduction)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Populations most affected by HIV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People living with HIV</li> <li>• Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men</li> <li>• People who inject drugs</li> <li>• African, Caribbean, and Black communities</li> <li>• Indigenous communities</li> </ul>
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### **Emerging Issues Awards Description**

The **Emerging Issues Awards** will support research in areas where OHTN, in consultation with our stakeholders, have defined clear gaps in knowledge. When such gaps have been identified, the OHTN will issue a directed call for proposals, targeting researchers with a strong track record in related research/issues and the potential to conduct rapid research.

The **Emerging Issues Awards** for 2018-2019 will fund projects that implement or pilot interventions that:

1. use peer support or peer navigation to help people living with HIV have better outcomes along the HIV treatment cascade (with preference given to projects where community and clinicians work together)
2. reduce barriers to early access to HIV care and prevention for people who use drugs, including (but not restricted to) making better use of supervised injection sites
3. deliver mental health services to people living with HIV in innovative, non-traditional ways (telephone, internet, mobile health units, etc.) or that use mixed public/private billing models to make mental health more accessible
4. enhance sexual health literacy and/or access to health and mental health care for a specifically defined population (this can be any clearly defined population with evidence of enhanced HIV risk; use the priority population box above for reference).

The Emerging Issues Awards supports rapid learning and improvement objectives that can be executed within a year, and up to 3 years (clear milestones that will support a rapid learning and improvement for HIV should be outlined). The OHTN awardee is expected to:

- generate new evidence to improve the HIV prevention, engagement and care cascade in the specific area identified
- apply a multidisciplinary approach
- contribute to and work with the HIV, mental health sector collective impact group(s), and other allied health groups relevant to the funded project

### **Funds Available**

Up to \$300,000 is available in 2018 – 2019 for 1<sup>st</sup> year funding; with eligible annual amount between \$50,000 - \$200,000.

Duration: 1-3 years. If the timeline exceeds one year, milestones that can support rapid learning and improvement must be clearly described.

Payments will be made annually based on satisfactory progress and financial reporting (see [reporting requirements](#)).

### **Eligibility Criteria**

The OHTN seeks proposals from outstanding multidisciplinary teams that:

- have a documented history of working in a collaborative, culturally respectful way with people living with HIV, clinicians, community-based organizations, policy makers, and researchers
- have developed a data and evidence-sharing plan that:

- meaningfully engages affected communities involving community members throughout the research process, including decision-making, and implementation of results
- is solution-focused – seeks to develop, implement, and evaluate interventions, programs, services, treatments or policies to address the issues that are relevant to the populations most affected by HIV in Ontario and drive change
- will support implementation of a new or improved intervention, as described in the emerging issues award description, with the potential to drive sustainable change
- will contribute to a rapid learning health and social system for HIV in Ontario.
- are based at an appropriate host organization in Ontario. Eligible institutions include university faculties and departments, research institutes and hospitals, and HIV agencies.
- have a nominated principal investigator who is eligible to work in and resides in Ontario.

As a condition of OHTN funding researchers and all members of their research team are expected to adhere to the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for the Research Involving Humans \(Version 2\)](#)

### **Expected Commitments**

Recipients of this award will be expected to:

- participate in rapid learning and improvement initiatives that emerge from OHTN's collective impact work
- collaborate closely with the OHTN and with OHTN funded researchers, and be an active part of the broader Ontario HIV community
- share information with, and seek feedback from other OHTN funded researchers and the broader network, as appropriate (especially those communities affected by the data and evidence-sharing plan proposed).
- participate in OHTN initiatives (including policy exchanges and roundtables, and research and community consultations); and
- work with a Community Research Advisory Committee made up of people living with HIV, clinicians, decision makers, service providers, and other relevant stakeholders to inform the development of research initiatives and future priorities.

### **How to Apply**

#### **a) Letter of Intent**

Applicants will complete and submit a Letter of Intent and, if successful, will be invited to submit a Full Application using the OHTN web-based [Grant Application Manager](#).

The Letter of Intent should include the following information:

- Principal Investigator and research team information
- Relevance
- Community engagement
- Title and brief proposal (maximum 3 pages including description of data and evidence-sharing plan, impact statement, and relevant areas of learning and improvement)

- Duration and amount of funding requested
- Registration CCV

The steps required for a Letter of Intent application are described below.

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

1. Access OHTN web-based Grant Application Manager at : <https://ohtn-on.fluidreview.com/>
2. Applicants must create a username and password and answer eligibility questions
3. The application does not need to be completed in order or all at once. Incomplete applications may be saved (click “save & finish later”) and returned to at a later date

**Letter of Intent Application Instructions**

1. Create and/or log-in to your [OHTN Grant Application Manager](#) account
2. Follow the steps to the Emerging Issues Awards – Letter of intent application form
3. Complete the principal investigator contact information
4. Complete the [research team](#) information page
5. Insert the title of your proposed research project
6. Indicate the duration of funding you are requesting (up to three years - 36 months)
7. Indicate the amount of funding you are requesting for the first year of the award
8. Complete the [relevance section](#)
9. Complete the [community engagement plan](#)
10. Upload a brief [description of research](#) (maximum 3 pages) in PDF
11. Upload the [principal investigator registration](#) CCV in PDF
12. Complete and upload the [disclosure statement](#)
13. Review and submit your application by the deadline (print a copy, if desired)

**Research Team**

Describe the relevant experience and education of all team members (principal and co-investigators), as well as collaborators when they play an integral part in the operationalization of the data and evidence-sharing plan. Also, describe how the various project partners will contribute to the various aspect of this data and evidence-sharing plan.

**Relevance**

Describe the relevance of the proposed data and evidence-sharing plan, and/or intervention to the OHTN’s Endgame funding program and to one of the four specific priorities listed in the [Description](#) of the OHTN Emerging Issues awards. How will your work support rapid learning in this area (listed in box on page 3)? What gaps in existing knowledge will the proposed plan fill, and what is the intended impact of the intervention? How might the proposed data and evidence-sharing activities, and/or intervention improve the health of people living with HIV in Ontario and drive change? *(maximum 400 words, entered directly into application form)*

### **Community Engagement Plan**

Community engagement in HIV research is viewed by the OHTN as an essential mechanism to ensuring that data and evidence-sharing plan is relevant to community needs. This is the first step in creating rapid learning and improvement. Broad stakeholder collaboration is also considered to ensure greater relevance and potential for impact.

Describe how you have previously worked with communities of people living with or at risk of HIV in a collaborative, culturally respectful way and how this has shaped decision-making processes, capacity-building, dissemination, uptake and other activities as appropriate. Describe the engagement process to be applied in the current proposal. The OHTN requires investigators to meaningfully engage the HIV community in all stages of the process beginning with conception and development through to dissemination and uptake. Applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with people living with HIV, clinicians, community-based organizations, policy makers, and researchers to encourage relevance and uptake. *(maximum 300 words, entered directly into application form)*

### **Description of Research**

The proposal (up to 3 pages, excluding references) should contain the following information:

- Brief background and rationale for the data and evidence-sharing plan
- The objectives of the project, and how it will address one or more of the emerging issues identified (see page 4)
- Brief description of the intended outcomes, impacts and contributions to rapid learning in this area
- Overall budget (total amount requested with estimates)
- Brief description of the evidence-sharing plan to be employed throughout the project and beyond.

### **Applicant CV**

Principal Investigator should include a completed [Common CV](#) finalized for the OHTN. For the LOI, complete the OHTN registration CV template. Once completed, download and save PDF version of your registration from the “history” section of your common CV.

### **Disclosure Statement**

The [Disclosure Statement Form](#) should be downloaded and completed as instructed. The Disclosure Statement allows applicants to disclose, in advance, any involvement with the OHTN that may be relevant to our [conflict of interest policies](#), as required by our policy. Please note that this disclosure does not affect an applicant’s eligibility for funding, but merely provides the information necessary to prevent any material conflicts of interest in the application and review process. Any questions regarding this disclosure statement or our funding policy should be directed to the Senior Lead, Research Funding Programs.

## **b) Full Application**

Applicants who have successfully completed the letter of intent phase will be invited to submit a full application. The full application package should include the following information:

- Application form
- Proposal (rationale, background, methods, impact statement, evidence-sharing plan)
- Budget and Budget Justification
- Timeline
- CCV
- REB approval, when applicable
- Letters of support
- Relevant appendices

The steps required to submit a full application are described below.

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

- 1. Applicants who have successfully completed the Letter of Intent phase will receive an email notification**
- 2. Applicants will log-in to [Grant Application Manager](#) to access the application form and upload relevant documents**
- 3. The application does not need to be completed in order or all at once. Incomplete applications may be saved (click “save & finish later”) and returned to at a later date**

### **Full Application Instructions**

1. Log-in to your [OHTN Grant Application Manager](#) account
2. Follow the steps to OHTN Emerging Issues Awards – Full Application form
3. Review Principal Investigator and Research Team Contact Information
4. Complete the Administration of Funds information, including Financial Administrator, Department Head and Executive Officer (Dean/Associate Dean/Institute Director) contact information
5. Review the [Relevance](#)
6. Review the [Community Engagement Plan](#)
7. Complete the [Plain Language Summary](#)
8. Complete and upload the full [Proposal](#) in PDF
9. Complete and upload the [Timeline](#) in PDF
10. Complete and upload the [Budget and Budget Justification](#) in PDF
11. Complete and upload [Applicants Common CV](#) in PDF
12. Collate and upload any [REB approvals](#) or [Consent Forms](#) in PDF, where relevant
13. Complete and upload the [Host Institution Verification form](#) in PDF
14. Upload the [Host Institution Letter of Support](#) in PDF
15. Upload the signature page in PDF
16. Collate and upload [Letters of Support](#) in PDF
17. Upload any relevant [Appendices](#) in reduced-size PDF
18. Review, print a copy (for your records), and submit your application (electronically) by the deadline

**Proposal** (*maximum 13 pages*)

The proposal should illustrate a clear rationale for the support being requested. The proposal should address the following (the order and number of pages are provided as suggested guidelines only):

**Project description** (*approximately 5-7 pages*)

- a succinct description of the data and evidence-sharing plan proposed (objectives, methods, planned analysis)
- a description of how the proposed work will address one or more of emerging issues outlined;
- a description of complementary or conflicting research being pursued by others, and how this project is positioned within that work, and avoids duplication
- anticipated challenges, limitations, and proposed solutions associated with the pilot of the proposed intervention
- a discussion of the ethical implications of the research proposed, including risks to individuals and communities, and how those risks are/will be mitigated
- a description of what is needed to make the proposed intervention sustainable, and to integrate it into the existing environment of HIV programs and services.

**Impacts** (*approximately 2-3 pages*)

- a description of the envisioned short, medium and long-term outcomes of this work, how the implementation of this intervention could impact one or more of the populations most affected by HIV in Ontario, and the steps required to achieve that impact
- information about how this award will drive change in the stated time period
- a description of how the findings will contribute to rapid learning health and social system for HIV in Ontario.

**Evidence-sharing Plan** (*2-3 pages*)

- evidence of previous success in moving research results into action at the practice, program or policy levels
- methods and approaches to be used in the current proposal.

*Proposals should be no more than 13 pages (not including references), single spaced, minimum 11 point font, with 1" margins. Proposals, including references, must be converted to PDF prior to uploading into the application form.*

**Timeline**

A separate year-by-year plan for the proposed activities, including proposed/anticipated outcomes, and areas of learnings and improvement, should be included.

**Budget & Budget Justification**

Complete the budget template for each year of the award being requested.

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Provide a separate narrative that justifies the requested budget using the following guidelines:

- **Personnel/Salaries:** provide details on the rates of remuneration requested for research staff, including employee benefits. The OHTN will allow a portion of salary support for principal or co-investigators who are independent community researchers who are not undertaking the work as part of a paid position
- **Programming cost:** the budget may include expenses associated with a pilot or scale up of the intervention, including participants' honorarium
- **Supplies:** Funds for the purchase of supplies are not intended for the purchase of furniture, office equipment or supplies normally supplied by the institution.
- **Evidence Sharing:** Please itemize all requests for evidence sharing support expenses, including publication costs in open access journals
- **Other Expenses:** The OHTN will consider requests for computing costs, local travel for data collection, and transportation of participants
- **Travel to Scientific Meetings/Conferences:** Applicants must indicate on the budget sheet travel funds requested to attend scientific meetings and conferences. Except in exceptional circumstances, the maximum amount that may be granted for travel in any one year will be \$2000. This amount is not transferable between fiscal years of an award, unless previously approved by OHTN Research Funding staff.

### **Applicants CV**

Team members should include a completed [Common CV](#) finalized for the OHTN. There are two possible templates that can be used – 1) Academic or 2) Community/Knowledge User. PDF versions of your CCV can be accessed in your CCV's 'History' section online. (*Collate all prior to uploading*)

### **Appendices**

1. Applicants may upload up to three (3) manuscripts (submitted, accepted for publication, or published) that are relevant to the proposal (*manuscripts should be compressed to ensure easy upload*).
2. Applicants may upload up to three (3) products (presentations, testimonials, summaries) that demonstrate evidence sharing and uptake from previous work.
3. Questionnaires, surveys, or other tools related to the current proposal should be uploaded.

Please note that any attachments exceeding the limits stated above will be removed from the application prior to review at the OHTN's discretion.

### **Ethics Approval and Consent Forms**

Upload collated copies of related ethics board approvals, as well as a copy of a consent form (draft form is encouraged if final approved version is not available) to be signed by prospective participants or other explanatory material (draft is acceptable) to be given out. Final approved versions should be submitted when available, and annual renewal letters from the relevant REBs should be submitted to the OHTN in a timely manner.

### **Host Institution Verification and Letter of Support**

Download and complete the [Host Institution Verification form](#) per the instructions. The Host Institution verification form certifies the institution's support of the application.

A Host Institution Letter of Support should also be provided, indicating the applicant's suitability for the Emerging Issues Award, and the enhanced research capacity it will bring to the department and/or institution.

### **Signature Page**

Download and complete the [signature page](#) form per the instructions. The signature page certifies that the signatory supports the application and will play the role and responsibilities as described in the proposal. All members of the research team are expected to sign this document. (*collate all the signature pages prior to uploading*)

### **Letters of Support**

If your data and evidence-sharing plan involves the support or collaboration of external organizations or individuals not listed on the application please submit letters of support indicating their approval of, role in, and commitment to, your proposed data and evidence sharing activities. Letters of support from decision-makers are particularly significant. (*collate prior to uploading*)

### **Plain Language Summary**

Provide a concise summary of the data and evidence-sharing activities and the anticipated impact on the population most affected by HIV, and the HIV epidemic in Ontario. Describe the evidence-sharing approaches implemented to facilitate the desired outcomes. Note: This summary will be posted on the OHTN website if the project is awarded funding. (*maximum 500 words, entered directly into application form*)

### **Submitting the Proposal**

Complete Letters of Intent applications must be submitted electronically by the application deadline (**Thursday November 22, 2018 at 5:00pm EST**). No changes can be made to a grant application after the submission deadline. Where electronic copies (including scans, which are acceptable) of documents are not available, applicants may submit in unstapled hard copy only, via trackable courier; however these documents must be received by the deadline. Full applications must be submitted by **Friday February 15, 2019 at 5:00pm**.

Please be advised that all application materials and information provided to the OHTN, including personal information such as sexual orientation or HIV status is kept strictly confidential and only forwarded to the members of the OHTN Review Committee, and external grant reviewers, as needed. It may also be referenced in the review of your application. Please omit any personal information from your application that you do not want shared with these parties. Contact [Lydia Makoroka](#) if you have any questions.

**Note:** Allow a sufficient amount of time to ensure successful electronic submission. File limits have been imposed to ensure your application is accessible to reviewers. If you experience any difficulty with the

online process, please notify [Research Funding staff](#) at least 24 hours prior to the deadline so that any issues may be resolved.

Address hard copy documents (if applicable) to:

Lydia Makoroka  
Senior Lead, Research Funding, OHTN  
1300 Yonge Street, Suite 600, Toronto, Ontario. M4T 1X3, Canada

### **Evaluation Criteria & Review Process**

LOI will be reviewed for relevance, evidence of community engagement, potential impact and successful applicants will be invited to submit full applications.

Full applications will be reviewed independently by the OHTN Review Committee (RC) for relevance, impact, efficiency, context sensitivity, sustainability, feasibility, and adherence to OHTN research accord.

- **Relevant:** The proposal addresses a priority of one or more stakeholder groups related to the cascade (i.e. prevention, testing/diagnosis, linkage and retention in care, HIV care, care for co-morbidities, social determinants of health), has the potential to drive improvements in Ontario's prevention, treatment and care cascade (e.g. improves the health of populations most affected by HIV in Ontario, supports consistent high quality care); and contributes towards a rapid learning health and social system for HIV in Ontario.
- **Impact-focused:** The evidence-sharing plan accompanying each program or initiative: (a) identifies one or more target audiences (e.g. community based organizations, clinics, local health integrated networks, policymakers); (b) describes the intended uses of any products and the outcomes of any evidence sharing and educational activities (e.g., re-designed services, informed policy process) and how they will contribute to achieving the strategy; and (c) establishes realistic pathways to achieve impact that are informed by what is known about effective evidence sharing (e.g. timely feedback of information to improve organizational performance). Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be able to confirm that the plans were implemented and achieved the desired impacts or that corrective action was taken to address identified concerns.
- **Efficient:** The data, research evidence or supports for using data and research evidence that are the focus of the program or initiative are not available from another source. Any data collection or engagement process places a minimal burden on participants (e.g. people living with HIV, ASOs, clinics), the resulting information and insights are available in as close to real time as possible, and participants receive regular updates about how the information and insights are being used and their impact
- **Context sensitive:** The data, evidence-sharing and/or intervention will break new ground or result in findings specific to the Ontario HIV sector. Rapid learning activities will drive change that benefits Ontario. There must be capacity to implement and scale up the programs or interventions being studied or promoted, and the interventions themselves must be feasible in the Ontario context (i.e. they do not require a level of investment, model of funding or staffing structure the system cannot support).

- **Good value for money/sustainable:** The benefit/impact of the program or intervention justifies its cost, and the program or intervention is sustainable over time within existing budgets.
- **Feasible:** The staff, expertise, structures and budget to deliver the program or intervention are in place. No one else is better positioned to deliver the program or initiative
- **OHTN Research Accord Adherent:** The team involved in the project commits to meeting the expectations of the OHTN Research Accord. They work in a highly collaborative way to actively engage communities most affected by HIV, ensure rigorous research, build partnerships that can drive change, engage in collaborative evidence sharing processes, and demonstrate accountability for the use of research funds.

Based on the review, OHTN Executive Director will recommend candidate(s) to the OHTN Board for final consideration for funding.

### **Reporting Requirements**

***Continued release of funds is contingent upon timely receipt of satisfactory progress and financial reports. Failure to submit a report of any kind (within 3 months of the due date) will preclude the awardee from receiving further financial support from the OHTN.***

The following reporting requirements will be implemented to help demonstrate progress and success of the OHTN Emerging Issues awards:

- Annual written Progress Reports (3-5 pages) detailing specific community collaborations, as well as any other changes to the research plan as the research activities become established
- Progress conversations via teleconference (15-20 minutes in most cases, 1-2 annually)
- Annual Financial Reports detailing how funds were spent
- A Final Report that includes a clear assessment of the anticipated and actual impacts of data and evidence-sharing (5-6 pages)
- Dissemination of evidence through peer-review publications, as well as policy documents, clinical guidelines, or other HIV sector resource materials
- Evidence-sharing activities (as outlined in funding proposal)
- A report 1 year past the end date of the award that describes successes and challenges with respect to actual and anticipated impacts, whether the program/ intervention is sustainable, and other relevant uptake of the program/intervention.

The OHTN Emerging Issues awardee is expected to be an HIV research leader in Ontario and an active part of the broader Ontario HIV community and OHTN network, as outlined in the [Description](#). This person will be a resource for scientific information and data for policy makers and media, and for collective impact groups working in this area.

This awardee will be accountable to the OHTN but also to the people living with HIV who this research impacts. As a condition of ongoing funding, the awardee will be expected to demonstrate collaborations with relevant community stakeholders, and the OHTN will independently verify these.

OHTN staff will work closely with funded researchers to: understand the context for their work; assist with managing challenges; help them meet their objectives; and understand and help disseminate findings. Instructions and templates for reporting will be provided to successful grant recipients.

### **Communication Requirements**

1. Significant deviations from the original objectives of the proposal, methodologies, budget or other significant changes must receive written authorization from the OHTN prior to implementation. Failure to notify the OHTN in a timely manner may result in termination of funding.
2. The OHTN expects investigators to publish their work in appropriate formats, including peer-reviewed publications. The OHTN expects to be notified before OHTN-supported research is published, and requests copies of all publications arising from work supported through this award to assist the OHTN in its evaluation of this program.
3. The OHTN expects the awardee to take a leadership role in developing strategies to meet the needs of the priority communities with which they work. The awardee is expected to collaborate with the OHTN, with other OHTN funded researchers, and with community stakeholders in developing such strategies.
4. Plain Language Summaries and other materials describing the awardee will be published on the OHTN website. The OHTN assumes responsibility for disseminating information about research findings contained within submitted reports via the OHTN website. However, OHTN affirms that the results are the intellectual property of the grant recipient and recognizes the need for teams to pursue publication in peer-reviewed publications or other appropriate formats. OHTN staff will work with grant recipients to ensure that its own dissemination efforts do not conflict with the teams' publication plans.
5. Funding recipients are also expected to contribute to the OHTN's monitoring and evaluation activities, including but not limited to: participating in evaluation activities (progress teleconferences, progress and final written reports, surveys, interviews, etc.), workshops, and providing data or reports as required for assessing progress and results.
6. The following acknowledgement must be included in all publications resulting from research supported by the OHTN: *This research was supported by an award from the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN).*

Dissemination of results through these methods ensures the OHTN is able to demonstrate accountability and impact to its various stakeholders.

### **Contact Information**

For questions regarding this Request for Proposals, please contact:

**Lydia Makoroka**

Senior Lead, Research Funding

416-642-6486 x2244

[lmakoroka@ohntn.on.ca](mailto:lmakoroka@ohntn.on.ca)