



# Measuring Rural Community Vitality

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

**NEWCOMER ENGAGEMENT:  
BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL  
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES**

For

**Showcasing Effective Measurement Approaches**

Issued on

**April 8, 2016**

**Submission deadline April 22, 2016 at 3:00 pm**

By

**RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE**

Guelph Ontario Canada

# “Showcasing Effective Measurement Approaches”

## 1.0 Introduction

The *Rural Ontario Institute (ROI)* invites you to submit a fixed price proposal for a consulting services role to capture and transfer lessons learned and highlight effective measurement approaches in rural Ontario communities.

The **Rural Ontario Institute** is a charitable nonprofit organization which develops leaders, initiates dialogue, supports collaboration and promotes action on issues and opportunities facing rural Ontario. Our office is located north of Guelph Ontario Canada. Our website is [www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca](http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca).

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) has undertaken a three-year applied research initiative, supported by the Province of Ontario called the **Measuring Rural Community Vitality (MRCV)**. Seven (7) inter-related projects will provide insight and practical models regarding “hard-to-measure” aspects of community well-being and the rural municipal role.

The initiative rationale stems from the recognition that the economic success and ongoing viability of small towns and rural communities is tied to a number of intangible factors which are hard to measure and which are integral to municipal functions.

The aim is to share insights that reflect current “state of the art” around ways to understand and build social capital and civic engagement. The initiative will share methodologies and techniques in capturing and documenting these kinds of community outcomes and overall ways to measure community quality of life. The ultimate beneficiaries are intended to be rural communities; municipalities, civic organizations and Provincial Ministry agencies. The initiative’s knowledge translation and transfer (KTT) goals are supported by extensive partnerships and advisory roles for a range of provincial ministries and municipal stakeholder organizations. This assignment will produce various types of information to be shared among these networks.

## 2.0 Background

Newcomer participation in local communities is an important mechanism for community development, strengthening local accountability, and building social capital. Using a case-study approach this applied research project will examine qualitatively the role of newcomer engagement in community decision-making and its contribution towards building social capital. Areas to consider are incentives for participation and the existing social capacity of communities. Since effective participation often depends on the maximization of newcomer involvement and on the establishment of vibrant social networks; to what extent and how is the community encouraging newcomer involvement.

## 3.0 Role of the Consultant

The Consultant will monitor and track three rural Ontario communities with a focus on documenting outcomes, processes and developmental components. The Consultant will develop the framework to be used for capturing the community experience of the community case study participants. To the extent practically possible this will be a common framework for all of the communities. The framework will include: identifying key community stakeholders, organizations and partners; key questions to be answered by community participants and the use of key informant interviews and other means of collecting information to tell each community’s story.

Through three community case studies we will seek to tell the stories of communities as they endeavor to integrate newcomers into the social fabric in order build the community's social capital. Typical questions to be explored include:

- What are the key characteristics of small rural communities and newcomers in relation to building social capital through community engagement?
- What is the role of newcomer engagement in the strengthening of social capital systems?
- What are the key factors involved in making newcomer participation effective?
- What are the key indicators of effective newcomer participation and how are they measured?

By effective participation we are referring to participation processes in which the interests, skills and knowledge of newcomers are incorporated into community decision-making so that communities undergo a substantive improvement through the participation of newcomers.

The Consultant will collect data, analyze the information gathered, interpret the findings and create a Final Report and other deliverables for each community project. The Consultant will also generate a Comprehensive Report summarizing the findings from all three of the participating communities.

All of these documents may be widely shared electronically or otherwise distributed and disseminated by ROI. Thus the successful proponent will need to exercise discretion and diplomacy as this will be required in order to share successes as well as any instructive pitfalls, missteps or other perceived problematic aspects of the community case study that may help other rural communities avoid such difficulties in their own community.

Finally the Consultant will be invited to support ROI at various KTT webinars, events and conferences by presenting aspects of their findings from this initiative. Expenses incurred by the Consultant specifically for ROI endorsed KTT activities are eligible for reimbursement under the ROI Business Expenses Policy.

## **4.0 Scope and Key Deliverables**

### **4.1 Objective**

The objective of the assignment is to provide practical insights on the hard to measure aspects of outcomes as well as learnings on the processes and development observed in the communities. The Consultant will provide an independent view on results and how well the community utilized existing social capital and good practices in their initiative.

*"We think that the best thing this workbook has to offer is a "menu" of actual measures that groups of citizens can choose from to gauge their progress as they build their community's capacity."* ASPEN INSTITUTE/RURAL ECONOMIC POLICY PROGRAM - MEASURING COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING - VERSION 3/96

### **4.2 Deliverables**

The main deliverable will be three individual community reports or stories and a comprehensive summary report of key information, performance and trends.

The Consultant will compile the key experiences and learnings from each participating community case study. This will include specific details around the achievement of outcomes, project process and development and operational findings. A listing of tips, good practices, resources and tools for engaging newcomers will be compiled as a resource for practitioners and rural municipal staff.

- 4.2.1 Outcomes and Results** – This component of the investigation will focus on the reporting of intended outcomes for the community’s efforts in newcomer participation and engagement and document this by applying qualitative methods, such as capturing user experiences.
- 4.2.2 Identification of Barriers, Lessons Learned** – This component of the investigation will use qualitative data collected from outcomes evaluation to document barriers, lessons learned from community successes and failures, and other community project findings.
- 4.2.3 Developmental Process** – This component of the investigation will use qualitative methods to gather stakeholder experiences and feedback on how the community’s efforts in newcomer participation and engagement have developed from concept to implementation, including engagement of partners and stakeholders and environmental or contextual factors impacting development and operationalization of the community’s initiative.
- 4.2.4 Operational Process** – This component of the investigation will use documentation from meeting minutes, project planning records, Municipal Council minutes, media releases, news articles etc. to describe and evaluate three aspects of the community initiative: the leadership, the on-the-ground coordination and the “transcendental” processes that are indirectly related to the work, for example when a community partner carries an issue to another community partner resulting in resolution of barriers through these indirect means.
- 4.2.5 Critical Analysis (So What, What’s Next?)** – A reflection on what happened in each community: What did the leadership, community partners, and others do? What did they expect and what was different? Why does that matter? To the community? To the community partners? To rural Ontario communities as a whole? What can we do differently? What lessons have been learned?
- 4.2.6 Summary of Good Practices** – A listing of tips, practices, resources and tools being employed in successful communities for engaging newcomers.

**5.0 Project Timing**

Project Duration	May 1 – December 18, 2016
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**6.0 Working Relationship**

A shared understanding of the broader outcomes and management approach will form the basis for the method, tools and reporting style employed by the Consultant. Input from the Consultant will be sought to fully develop the approach to the assignment. Mark Cassidy will serve as the primary ROI contact. ROI is ultimately accountable for the project deliverables and therefore will have final approval of all decisions affecting the project and final approval of all reports produced by the project.

**7.0 Required Qualifications**

- Minimum 5 years professional experience in local community-based research and community case study development
- Knowledge of the managing, planning, designing, developing, implementing and reporting of community-based initiatives
- Experience in collaborative approaches to community case study development
- Strong quantitative and qualitative analytical skills
- Available to travel to rural communities across Ontario

**8.0 Application Requirements**

Your proposal must include the following items:

- Curriculum Vitae including a description of the experience of conducting research, monitoring and assessment, process and impact evaluation of the proponent and other team members involved in the project, if applicable.
- A brief outline of the approach and personal schedule to conduct the assignment and how the proponent will collaborate with the ROI team
- Cost of the assignment broken down into detailed information (travel to communities, communications costs, material costs, consulting fees and HST)

**9.0 Maximum Proposal Value**

The fixed price contract amount for this engagement is \$50,000 inclusive of all travel, expenses, materials and HST.

**10.0 Submission Date**

If you are interested please send your proposal to ROI by Friday April 22, 2016 - 3:00 PM.

**11.0 Submission Process**

Submission of Proposal deadline	Friday April 22, 2016 - 3:00 PM
Proponent selection notification	Friday April 29, 2016
Project Duration	May 1, 2016 – December 18, 2016

**12.0 Submission Format**

Maximum number of pages is six – not including cover page, CV and table of contents. Proposals for this RFP are to be submitted via email in PDF format to the attention of:

Mark Cassidy, Project Manager  
 Rural Ontario Institute  
 7382 Wellington Road 30 RR #5  
 Guelph ON N1H 6J2  
 Email: [mcassidy@ruralontarioinstitute.ca](mailto:mcassidy@ruralontarioinstitute.ca)

Additional Supplementary Documents included in this RFP:

- None