

**Friends Foundation for the Aging**  
**Year-end Report & Reapplication Proposal Form**  
(limit 3 pages)

Date: 9/11/24

Organization: Connectedly (formerly Supportive Older Women's Network)

TIN & Formal organization name: 22-2629856 / Connectedly

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Amount requested: \$25,000

Project title: Connectedly Telehealth Groups

Please answer the following questions clearly and concisely:

1. What is the problem you identified? Has it changed?

The problem Connectedly (formerly SOWN) identified nearly 40 years ago is social isolation and lack of connection in older adults. The problem of social isolation and lack of connection of older people has not changed. Lack of social connection continues to be a major public health issue with older people especially vulnerable. Baby boomers are aging and living longer with chronic health issues that can impact mobility and keep seniors homebound.

Philadelphia's housing stock is not designed for older adults, often making it inaccessible and difficult for older residents to get out. Unfortunately, insufficient affordable senior housing exists in our city. Fewer neighborhood/community services exist, and older adults continue to be concerned about the risk of COVID exposure limiting outings, family gatherings, and other social events.

What has changed is an increasing awareness of the impact of social isolation on health and well-being. In May 2023, the United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy called for urgent action to address the public health epidemic of loneliness and isolation. Dr. Murthy wrote: *"Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation has been an underappreciated public health crisis that has harmed individual and societal health. Our relationships are a source of healing and well-being hiding in plain sight – one that can help us live healthier, more fulfilled, and more productive lives. **Given the significant health consequences of loneliness and isolation, we must prioritize building social connection the same way we have prioritized other critical public health issues such as tobacco, obesity, and substance use disorders.**"*

Social isolation is a crisis that impacts our health as much as smoking, blood pressure, and obesity. In fact, lacking social connection increases risk of premature death by more than 60% and the health risks of isolation are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day! This epidemic is particularly severe for older people in our city. Philadelphia has one of the **highest percentages of older adults of any big city in the U.S.** and almost **half of our low-income seniors live alone**. This high rate of living alone can contribute to loneliness and lack of social

contact leading to negative health outcomes. Connectedly (formerly SOWN) establishes social networks so older adults are not alone, build connections, and stay healthier.

## 2. What actions did you take to address the problem?

Connectedly provided 5 telehealth support groups 50 weeks a year to isolated seniors in Philadelphia. We have implemented our Connect4Health pilot program as a referral source for our telehealth program. Connect4Health uses an integrated care approach linking “social care” with a major health system in Philadelphia, Penn Medicine. Older adults who are identified as high risk for social isolation, loneliness, and lack of social connection are being referred to our telehealth services for potential enrollment via Connect4Health.

## 3. What did you learn? Will you make any changes in the coming year?

What we learned is that the problem of social isolation is an ever-present threat to the lives and well-being of older adults in Philadelphia. For the coming year, we will continue to add more participants to our telehealth programs via Connect4Health referrals through health care systems and the community at large via our Community Engagement Specialist. Our aim is to expand the potential referral sources with another major Philadelphia health care system, Jefferson Health.

## 4. How have you engaged any partners/collaborators in implementation or funding? Have you considered how to sustain the program?

Connectedly continues to partner with over 15+ community-based sites where we have established formal relationships including senior housing facilities, senior centers, community centers, and more. Our grassroots approach includes working with PCA, CARIE, LGBT Elder Initiative, Senior Law Center, and many other agencies that provide information/advocacy services for seniors in Philadelphia. For our telehealth program, we are collaborating with Penn Medicine as a referral source for new participants thanks to an innovative project grant from The Sarah Ralston Foundation. Our current key funding partners include the Erichson Charitable Trust, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, and The Sarah Ralston Foundation.

Connectedly hired an Individual and Corporate Giving Officer to increase our donor pool and corporate funding channels. In addition, a new source of potential funding Connectedly is exploring are Federal and state government funding opportunities for local non-profits.

## 5. How do you know your actions had an impact? Please describe those who participated, outputs and outcomes. Stories or photos are welcome.

Connectedly is a data-driven organization with strong measures and data collection tools to track and analyze our impact. We will conduct regular outcomes evaluations using quantitative and qualitative methods. Our Connectedly Survey measures key goals and program impact. It is conducted at intake for baseline data and yearly intervals. The survey includes a core component measuring outcomes common to all programs, including items adapted from Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale and PHQ4 depression screen, and additional

questions to measure outcomes relevant to specific programs. Connectedly's unique model has a profound impact. In our most recent annual evaluation in July 2024 we were provided the following data points regarding our telehealth program:

- 88% of participants felt that they were not alone
- 100% felt they were helping others and having an important impact on their lives
- 100% felt participants in Connectedly telehealth groups help them deal with stressful situations
- 100% of participants felt more confident in their own abilities
- 100% found participating in a telehealth group helped them to make adjustments in their lives

Our participants frequently mention the power of their Connectedly group. Hear the impact of Connectedly's telehealth groups from our 2024 survey:

*"When I first started, I was very depressed. You want to talk to someone, but you also don't, and when you hold it all in it makes you crazy. This group is the best thing they could have for people like us. Some people are worse off than you and the group helps you cope with all kinds of situations. When you talk about your problems you get help in all types of ways. The people in the group are very nice and you don't feel ashamed about what you say, what you do, and how you feel."*

*"Some ladies are going through things I am going through and can relate. Some are older than me and have wisdom to share. The facilitator has good advice too. While some things in life seem hard at first, I realize that it's not actually that hard when you talk through it with others."*

*"It helps me to know that I'm not alone and all I have to do is ask for help and someone will say something to help me. That helps me to be more confident with myself. It helps me to feel more comfortable with myself."*

6. Is there anything else you would like FFA to know about this project?

7. Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful. Are there ways we can help beyond the grant?

Include a simple program budget/actual with income and expenses (eg. staff, program supplies, travel, etc) for both last year and next. Three columns: last budget, last actual, next budget.

Has your 501c3 status changed? Our status has not changed. However, we did legally change the name of our organization. After 40 years of operating as the Supportive Older Women's Network (SOWN), we changed our name in 2024 to better reflect our identity and purpose. Connectedly serves all older Philadelphians and strengthens community supports to *live connectedly*. The social connections gained through participation in Connectedly's programs are key to healthier living and improved quality of life.

# CONNECTEDLY Telehealth Groups

		Jul 2023-Jun 2024		Jul 2024-Jun 2025
		Budget	Actuals	Budget
1	<b>REVENUE</b>			
2	<b>Contracts</b>			
3	PA Long Term Care Options	10,000	5,170	7,000
4	PCA Subsidized Housing	18,000	18,000	18,000
5		<b>28,000</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>
6	<b>Grants</b>			
7	Erichson Charitable Trust	10,000	12,500	12,500
8	<b>Friends Foundation for Aging (this proposal)</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>
9	COF Barclay-Giel Seed Grant		9,270	
10	Impact 100 Philadelphia	15,000	25,000	
11	Scattergood Foundation		10,000	
12	The 25th Century Foundation	35,000	-	
13	The Sarah Ralston Foundation	20,000	10,695	57,000
14		<b>105,000</b>	<b>82,465</b>	<b>94,500</b>
15	<b>Other Revenue</b>			
16	Investment Income	-	-	-
17	Individual & Board Contributions	-	5,770	-
18	Revenue Other	-	-	-
19		-	<b>5,770</b>	-
20	<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>133,000</b>	<b>116,235</b>	<b>119,500</b>
21	<b>EXPENSE</b>			
22	<b>Salaries and Benefits/Taxes</b>			
23	Salaries	96,462	86,103	102,275
24	Benefits/Taxes	18,180	15,499	18,334
25		<b>114,642</b>	<b>101,602</b>	<b>120,609</b>
26	<b>Contract Services</b>			
27	Accounting and Audit	1,633	1,633	2,138
28	Grantsmanship	-	-	-
29	Benefits & Payroll Admin	488	451	551
30	IT Systems/Computer Mangmnt	2,688	2,633	3,610
31	Prof. Svcs (Consultants, Data Analyst)	3,984	-	4,050
32		<b>8,793</b>	<b>4,717</b>	<b>10,349</b>
33	<b>Other Expense</b>			
34	Program Expenses	-	-	-
35	Program Incentives	530	655	800
36	Client Assistance	-	-	-
37	Meeting Expenses	-	-	-
38	Transportation	-	-	600
39	Conferences	249	238	300
40	Dues, Fees, Subscriptions	291	289	361
41	Marketing / Communications	-	-	-
42	Photocopy/Postage/Printing	-	-	-
43	Office Supplies	365	354	437
44	Equipment	-	-	-
45	Telephone / Internet	730	752	950
46	Rent	6,172	6,401	8,265
47	Insurance	1,062	1,062	1,330
48	Bank / Finance Fees	166	166	-
49	Depreciation	-	-	-
50		<b>9,565</b>	<b>9,916</b>	<b>13,043</b>
51	<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>133,000</b>	<b>116,235</b>	<b>144,000</b>
52	<b>NET</b>	-	-	-