



**NEWS RELEASE** – For Immediate release

FRL launches \$1.7 million rural community-based employment solution

Guelph, Ontario – The Foundation for Rural Living's Rural Development Officer (RDO) Program – JCP Model *in partnership with RBC* was announced today. The RDO Program – JCP Model recruits and places unemployed individuals as Rural Development Officers (RDOs) with rural Community Partner organizations for up to one year. Eligible individuals will be able to begin as early as October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

This one-year \$1.7 million program leverages resources from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU), the RBC Foundation, The Co-operators and at the community level.

"Ensuring our communities are healthy and sustainable is grounded in our co-operative values," says Dennis Deters, Senior Vice-President, Member Relations and Corporate Services of The Co-operators Group Ltd. "Our longstanding partnership with the Foundation for Rural Living reflects our shared commitment to support integrative solutions that create a high quality of life in rural communities."

"The RDO Program-JCP Model invests in building the human resource, in-kind resource and fund development capacity of rural community-based organizations to better respond to the priorities of their communities," says Anita Hayes, Executive Director of the Foundation for Rural Living. "At the same time it invests in people who are seeking re-entry into the workforce."

The nonprofit sector employs 1.2 million people in Canada representing 7.2% of the workforce and 4% of the GDP. This sector makes a significant contribution to our national economy.

With a policy shift towards place-based solutions comes the challenges of increased responsibility for community program delivery. The impact of this shift is felt most acutely in small and rural community-based organizations. The volunteers and staff of these organizations need a new solution that builds their human resource, in-kind resource and fund development capacity to correspond to their increasing responsibility for program and service delivery in the community.

One solution is FRL's RDO Program.

"At RBC, we know the importance of investing in rural community development. Businesses want to locate in communities that offer a high quality of life," says Shari Austin, Vice President and Head, Corporate Citizenship of RBC. "The RBC Foundation is proud to partner with the Foundation for Rural Living on an innovative program that invests in people, community-based organizations and rural communities."

**CALL FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

Community Partner organizations will provide fulfilling work placements for the Rural Development Officers. RDOs receive compensation through the Job Creation Partnership Program (TCU) which means organizations who most need this support can participate without having to bear the wage cost.

Potential Community Partner organizations can apply to the Foundation for Rural Living for consideration. They must be geographically located in southwestern Ontario including: Huron, Perth, Bruce, Grey, Dufferin, Wellington, Waterloo, Hamilton-Wentworth, Niagara, Haldimand, Norfolk, Brant, Oxford, Middlesex, Elgin, Lambton, Chatham-Kent & Essex counties/regional municipalities. They can represent sectors including (but not restricted to) environment, agriculture, arts and culture, rural community development, children and youth and poverty reduction.

Information teleconferences for potential Community Partners will be held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup> at 10am. To register, email [gracegruber@frl.on.ca](mailto:gracegruber@frl.on.ca). An early bird deadline for applications has been set for November 9<sup>th</sup>. Final application deadline is November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Foundation for Rural Living advances the rural nonprofit and voluntary sector and builds sustainable rural capacity to enhance the quality of life of rural citizens. FRL's mission is supported by The Co-operators.

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