



Community Connectors Training Program – Request for Submissions

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Organization's Mandate

CRC is an innovative, impactful and collaborative mid-sized multiservice agency that has served the Regent Park and surrounding neighbourhood for 54 years. The agency strives to be a beacon of opportunity amid the challenges of serving the community with the highest child poverty rate in Canada. Our 40 Oaks facility -custom built in 2012-serves as headquarters to an array of services, including 87 units of deeply affordable rental housing; a 5000-sq.-ft. community hub, outfitted to provide the social connectivity of drop-in, housing supports, complimentary clothing, shower and laundry facilities, and a suite of life skills workshops; and, as of 2014, the Regent Park Community Food Centre (RPCFC), one of only eight national centres affiliated with Community Food Centres Canada, where people convene to cook, grow, share, and advocate for food security. RPCFC provides 65,000+ nutrient-dense meals throughout the year, offers support to 187 community gardens, hosts year-round food skills workshops, and provides a team of experienced local advocates who connect participants with a range of resources from legal to healthcare-related and address systemic poverty issues.

Volunteers

The majority of our over 300 volunteers (45%) help out in the meal program, preparing and serving breakfasts and lunches to over 250 people daily, and in the Clothing Room. In 2017, they gave us 33,000 hours of their time. Volunteers are a mix of people from the Regent Park community (22%), people who also use our services (13%), and people from other neighbourhoods in the city (65%).

Corporate volunteer groups come in frequently, usually helping on a recurring basis in the meal program, or on a one-time basis in our gardens or for public events. This is used as an opportunity to provide civic engagement for our corporate partners, facilitate a better understanding of systemic poverty issues in the wider community, and initiate and cultivate relationships with a view to future corporate donations. Overall the program is rated by volunteers as very successful, with 99% of volunteers reporting that they feel they are making a

difference and 84% who feel very appreciated. One challenge is managing the sheer volume of volunteer interest and logistics with the staff support currently in place.

Mission Statement

Building Lives. Creating Community. Together

Mission

The CRC provides innovative solutions which help residents of Regent Park and the surrounding neighbourhoods enrich community well-being, improve economic conditions, realize their potential and direct their lives.

We prioritize our efforts toward individuals and families facing barriers (e.g., caused by poverty, inequity, discrimination).

Vision

Regent Park and its surrounding neighbourhood is a flourishing community where individuals and families live lives of dignity, good health, and well-being.

Project Description

With limited staff time and resources, CRC|RPCFC's nearly 300 volunteers are an essential part of our service mix. We rely on their dedication and support to deliver our suite of community-focused programs.

Many of our participants live in social isolation, and accessing services at CRC|RPCFC provides an opportunity to connect with others, engage in positive capacity-building activities, and set personal goals to move forward in their lives. Because volunteers bring to bear a broad diversity of insights and personal/professional areas of expertise, they are deeply valuable in what they can potentially share with our participants. By virtue of their extensive lived experience, this is especially true of both our existing senior volunteers from the wider community and potential volunteers among those seniors who access our services.

The Challenge: Many of our volunteers lack the training and experience required to provide more intensive support to program participants in a social service setting. This deficiency was highlighted in our 2015 Volunteer Survey, in which only 4% of volunteers surveyed reported having learned best practices in social service delivery (e.g. identifying individual community members' needs and referring them to appropriate community resources where necessary) through their volunteer work.

At the same time, we are aware of the phenomenon of social isolation frequently encountered by senior members of the community as well as an eagerness on their part to substantively contribute to the fabric of our social environment.

The Opportunity

We know that many program participants would benefit from learning from our senior volunteers, who have gained many skills prior to retirement. In keeping with both our agency's

needs to promote volunteerism including amongst seniors and, complementarily, to engage volunteers, including seniors, with a broad range of skills in potential mentoring opportunities and to support their social participation and inclusiveness, our proposed **Community Connectors program** would provide a robust 8-week training (24 hours in total = 3 hours/week x 8 weeks) to CRC's existing volunteers and select new volunteers to deliver enriched community service training in our combined 40 Oaks Drop-in space and Regent Park Community Food Centre. A significant number of these volunteers will be seniors (about 30), and other non-senior volunteers will be included in this cohort. The program will then be replicated with other volunteer groups.

This program will permit a deeper impact and knowledge transfer from volunteers to our program participants. We have a significant number of existing senior volunteers and would recruit new senior volunteers to play a key role in this wider connecting and mentoring program. Senior community members who use our services would also be positively impacted.

There is a \$10,000 budget for the Project Consultant based on a successful grant submission. The project will commence mid-March 2018 and conclude in December**2018**.

Scope of Work

Over a period of 10 months, you will work with the Volunteer Coordinator to:

1. Develop a document reviewing best practices in volunteer community training for deeper anti-oppressive trauma-informed engagement with a vulnerable population.
2. Convene a Senior Volunteer Advisory Council.
3. Design a senior-friendly volunteer community engagement training module.
4. Develop volunteer facilitation guidebooks and training assessment tools.
5. Support the Volunteer Coordinator by co-leading the training of the first cohort of the project
6. Complete final report with Volunteer Coordinator.

Outputs

At the end of this project, we will have:

1. Developed a participant training program and curriculum materials based on best practices and consultation with local community agencies.
2. Trained a committed group of 30 senior volunteers and some non-senior volunteers through a community engagement program to improve their ability to engage, support and mentor program participants in meaningful ways, including effective referrals and supportive trauma-informed conversations.
3. Filled at least 15 Community Connectors positions with trained senior volunteers.

Submissions: if you intend to submit a proposal, please provide an email notification ASAP to: emilymc@tcrc.ca and copy to daniellek@tcrc.ca.

Submissions must be received via email (emilymc@tcrc.ca) OR mailed /delivered in a sealed envelope to Emily McKenzie, Volunteer Coordinator, CRC, 40 Oak Street, Toronto, ON M5A 2C6, no later than 4:00pm (EST), February 23rd, 2018. It is anticipated that the successful candidate will begin work in March, 2018.

Content

Submissions must contain responses to the information requested below to demonstrate a strong ability to carry out the terms of the contract, delivery of a quality product and/or service within an appropriate budget.

1. Proposals must clearly list, in detail, what services will be provided with the associated costs for each component.
2. Responses must contain a list of references of past projects and work of this nature, with contact names and telephone numbers.

Organize your proposal in the following order:

1. Cover letter
2. Team bios and relevant experience - provide information on specific experience related to this project for the team participants and project lead
3. Project Methodology, including Community Consultation (asset/needs assessment) process
4. Project timeline, including tasks, days required and who will complete the task.
5. Proposed budget for each activity, including any travel costs, incidentals, and HST.
6. Samples of work and references - Provide samples of work in PDF and online sources and a list at least three references from similar type of work.
7. Optional additional relevant content chosen by proponent

Enquiries

All questions related to the submissions process may be directed to Emily McKenzie, Volunteer Coordinator, (emilymc@tcrc.ca) before February 16th. Any questions posed and responses to questions will be forwarded to all known proponents.