

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

### **KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

**The purpose** of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit submissions from community based organizations wishing to undertake **knowledge exchange activities** in any of the Canadian Council on Learning priority areas.

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#### **Mandate of the Canadian Council on Learning**

The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) is a national, independent, non-profit corporation committed to improving learning outcomes across the country from early childhood to the workplace and beyond. CCL has a mandate to:

- promote knowledge and information exchange among learning partners;
- report to Canadians regularly on the state of learning in Canada; and
- address knowledge gaps and provide evidence-based information to improve investments on a pan-Canadian basis.

Through these activities, CCL aims to foster a culture of lifelong learning and to support evidence-based decision-making by the many partners in Canada's learning systems. CCL is committed to ensuring those making decisions with respect to learning – be they teachers, administrators, policy makers, politicians, parents or individual learners – have the evidence they need, in a format they can use, in a timely manner, to make informed decisions.

There exists a wealth of research and other evidence on education and learning issues within institutions such as government departments, universities and community groups, which could benefit a wider audience. How often do you hear “If only I had known ... before we implemented our new program,” or “I just don't know where to look”?

While academic publications, conferences and lectures are often effective mechanisms for sharing research among researchers and students, they are not necessarily the best way for individuals and organizations outside academia to learn about and benefit from university-based research. Similarly, while a local community group may have developed an innovative solution to an education issue, other communities which could benefit from knowing about the initiative often do not. Finally, the absence of formal linkages between

academics, mainstream learning institutions and individuals limits researchers' access to other valid sources of evidence and networks which could inform and improve their work.

Therefore, a mechanism is needed to create “common communities” around specific learning issues. In building a common community, it is anticipated that stakeholders involved, be they practitioners, learners, policy makers or researchers, will benefit individually and the overall impact will be greater than had they not come together. In essence, it is a community where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

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## **Knowledge Exchange**

The **Knowledge Exchange Program** is intended to improve learning outcomes by fostering relationships that facilitate the exchange of evidence. Proposals must clearly reflect the principles of partnership. CCL invites joint submissions from non-government organizations, not-for-profit organizations and/or learning organizations together with other relevant partners, including researchers, governments, and/ or private sector, to undertake strategic knowledge exchange initiatives consistent with the objectives described below.

Each initiative should focus on a particular learning issue. It should identify a clear audience and articulate expected outcomes. It should involve the sharing of existing evidence between relevant stakeholders in a format that is likely to result in a change in behaviour or attitudes. Initiatives should engage researchers, making their expertise accessible in ways useful to stakeholders. At the same time, initiatives should ensure a reciprocal process whereby stakeholders' knowledge and experience can enhance researchers' work. Initiatives may focus on knowledge exchange in any of CCL priority areas or cross cutting-themes.

## **Objectives of Request for Proposal**

The program will fund strategic **knowledge exchange initiatives** that systematically enable learning stakeholders (practitioners, policy-makers, learners and researchers) to benefit from existing knowledge and evidence-based “promising and/or exemplary practices”.

This request for proposal has three specific objectives:

### **1) Engaging in knowledge exchange**

To improve learning outcomes by facilitating enhanced evidence-based decision making through innovative knowledge exchange activities

### **2) Developing organizational capacity to engage in knowledge exchange**

To develop organizational capacity within learning institutions and systems as well as within research organizations to engage in knowledge exchange activities which provide individuals in organizations with the opportunity to develop or expand their knowledge exchange skills

### **3) Fostering relationships**

To remove silos and foster relationships between practitioners, community groups, policy makers, researchers and others.

**Proposals must clearly demonstrate how their activities meet all three objectives.**

Potential activities may include (this list is illustrative, not exhaustive):

- Theme-specific roundtables
- Theme-specific, web-based communities of interest
- Issue-specific, evidence-based networks
- Sharing exemplary practices
- Innovative, audience-specific activities (such as “podcasts” or “vodcasts”)
- Scholar in residence (in a community group) and practitioner in residence (in a research role within a university) programs

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### **Eligibility**

Registered non-government organizations and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply. Universities and researchers are welcome to apply, provided there is an emphasis on the leadership by community-based organizations. Applications must clearly demonstrate a partnership of relevant stakeholders. For example, if the initiative is intended to bring evidence to bear on increased employer investment in workplace-based training, relevant stakeholders would include employer representatives from small, medium and large business, industry sector councils, researchers and relevant provincial and federal governments. Applicants should note the program is designed to support strategic knowledge exchange which leads to improved evidence-based decision making.

Private sector, for-profit organizations, universities, or individuals cannot apply as the lead, however, may participate as partners.

In addition to the above, projects must meet the following basic criteria:

1. The project must be based on a clearly identified body of evidence.

2. It must employ approaches appropriate to its intended participants and/ or audiences.
3. CCL participation must add value to each project; for example, the project would not proceed without CCL support.
4. The project must be carried out in Canada.
5. The project proposal must clearly articulate an evaluation framework consistent with its stated objectives.

**Grants will not be awarded for:**

- Producing institutional publicity material for general audiences;
- Disseminating information or research findings solely or principally to academic audiences;
- Promoting the research of a particular institution or research group within an institution ; or
- Carrying out new research—except where it is integral to the success of the knowledge exchange initiative, for example testing knowledge exchange tools or techniques

**Example**

A national service delivery agency has recently completed an international study of best practices with respect to in-home teaching by parents of children aged 1 year to 2.5 years. This study is currently available on their website and they would like to engage parent organizations in a discussion on barriers to and opportunities for implementing practices in communities across the country. They seek financial support from CCL to build the steering committee.

**Project Adjudication**

Subject to meeting the above criteria, each application will undergo review by an independent panel of knowledge exchange specialists during which each project will be assigned a score according to the following criteria:

**1) Overall quality of the proposed knowledge exchange initiative**

- Clearly identified objectives
- Clearly identified audience
- Clearly identified body of evidence
- Clearly identified methodology and explanation of intended impacts
- Clear identification by stakeholders of their priority needs

- Appropriate partners involved in the design and delivery (Clear commitment to participate from an appropriate mix of academic and non-academic partners)
- Demonstrated increase in knowledge exchange capacity within partner organizations
- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of evaluation
- Appropriateness of the proposed budget

## **2) Potential for sustained engagement with stakeholders**

- Likelihood of the applicant engaging in KE activities beyond CCL funding

CCL wishes to establish and develop close connections between evidence and those who will use it. As a result, CCL will favour proposals developed collaboratively among a variety of end users including researchers, practitioners, decision-makers, and learners and which bridge between organizations.

### **Value and Duration**

Organizations may propose one initiative per RFP, with a budget of up to \$50,000, for a one-year period. Multi-year projects are permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Applicants are encouraged but not required to secure funding support from other agencies in addition to CCL.

### **Interim and Final Progress Reports**

All successful proposals funded by CCL will be required to submit two reports, an Interim Progress Report, due mid project (i.e. six months after the project started for a one year project), and a Final Report, due within 30 days of the agreed upon date of completion.

The reports will include the following elements:

1. An updated summary of all knowledge exchange activities from the onset of funding, with clearly identified outputs, outcomes, and/or impacts;
2. An description of the extent to which the original objectives have been achieved;
3. An explanation of any variations from the original proposal;
4. Expenses to date and projected forecast, including notes to explain any variations from the original budget;
5. Notice of receipt of parallel funds from other partners; and
6. Updates on events and/or publications arising from the project, with a particular interest to hear of advance opportunities for CCL involvement, and /or any outputs, outcomes, and/or impacts, thus far.

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## **APPLICATION PACKAGE**

Please provide the following information. Your application should be a maximum of 10 pages (not including attachments). Please submit your application by deadline as specified.

### **I. IDENTIFICATION**

Please complete the attached **RFP Cover Page (See Appendix A)**.

### **II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Each proposal must clearly meet all criteria described above. It must include:

1. A brief one-paragraph summary of the project
2. A detailed description including:
  - a. Purpose(s),
  - b. Proposed methodology/(ies),
  - c. Schedule,
  - d. Deliverables,
  - e. Expected outcomes, and
  - f. Audience.

### **III. PROJECT TEAM**

For the Lead Applicant and each of the project's participating organizations:

1. Role in the project and expected contributions to its success;
2. Relevant qualifications, expertise, and experience.

### **IV. BUDGET PLAN**

1. Cost breakdown by category (see CCL Costing Memorandum);
2. Sources of funds;
3. No more than twenty percent of budget costs should be allocated to salary. CCL does not cover costs for capital purchases (e.g. computers) or for audits.

Respondents are encouraged to find complementary sources of funding for their projects. These sources should be clearly identified including an indication if they are expected or confirmed.

### **V. EVALUATION**

Proposals **must** contain an evaluation framework that will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the initiative. This evaluation need not be complex.

## **HOW TO RESPOND**

Electronic submissions are invited from organizations with an interest in responding to this RFP. The formal closing date for this RFP and for the submission of detailed proposals to CCL is midnight on July 23, 2007 EST. All proposals should be submitted electronically using PDF or MS WORD formats to [KnowledgeExchangeRFP@ccl-cca.ca](mailto:KnowledgeExchangeRFP@ccl-cca.ca).

The official CCL contact for this RFP, to whom all requests and communications should be addressed, is:

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[www.ccl-cca.ca](http://www.ccl-cca.ca)

## **SCHEDULE**

Respondents should be prepared to work within the following schedule:

1. July 23, 2007 – Response to RFP due
2. October 5, 2007 – Notification of successful proposals

### **Note: Review of Submissions and Next Steps**

CCL will be solely responsible for the review of the responses to this RFP and the decision as to the appropriate next step.

CCL reserves the right to select and combine partial solutions and to adjust budgets from different applicant's submissions.

## **APPENDICES**

There are three appendices respondents will find helpful in preparing their submissions - [Appendix A: RFP Cover Page](#), [Appendix B: Costing Memorandum](#), and [Appendix C: Intellectual Property Memorandum](#).

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