

Leadership Wood Buffalo Request for Community Action Project Submissions

About Leadership Wood Buffalo

Leadership Wood Buffalo is a community leadership development program offered through FuseSocial. The program is designed to help emerging leaders in Wood Buffalo discover and develop their leadership strengths and equip them with practical tools for understanding the dynamics of working within their community. We also strive to connect the participants with a network of other community leaders who are working towards a healthier and more vibrant community.

Leadership Wood Buffalo is entering its 17th year in 2023-2024 and has graduated over 280 community leaders. Our program offers an experiential, hands-on approach, designed to explore and develop leadership capacity within the context of existing community issues in the municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Each year, we select a group of emerging leaders from multiple sectors and many diverse social backgrounds. By helping people understand different perspectives, working styles, and collaboration approaches, the real-world conditions of community leadership are reflected.

What is a Leadership Wood Buffalo Community Action Project (CAP)?

The Community Action Project is significant to the Leadership Wood Buffalo learning experience, serving as a pivotal component. It embodies an action-learning process that allows participants to cultivate their leadership skills through active engagement with a genuine community issue. This engagement occurs in collaboration with a local community organization, fostering a valuable partnership. Every year, the Leadership Wood Buffalo cohort organizes itself into 3-5 working groups, comprising 3-6 individuals per group. Each group embarks on a collective journey spanning 7-months, during which they select a community-based project to tackle together. The projects are chosen based on various criteria:

- Passion for improving certain areas in the community.
- Service offerings that do not currently exist in the community.
- Service offerings that exist but could use improvement.
- Social innovation- new social practices that aim to meet social needs in a better way than the existing solutions.
- Urgent needs that have arisen in recent times that need immediate attention.

Once a group has selected a Community Action Project, they then connect with relevant agencies and/or organizations to obtain further information and create a clear path forward for the next 7 months. The group may work directly with an agency on the project or use it as a resource moving forward. See below for the responsibilities of the host organization and the Community Action Project Group:

Host Organization's responsibilities

- Collaborate closely with the project group to ensure that the work undertaken harmonizes with the needs outlined in the proposal, which FuseSocial has approved.
- Maintain proactive communication with FuseSocial, regularly update them on progress, and designate an additional contact person as a backup.
- Foster open and ongoing communication with the project group to guarantee that the work accomplished remains aligned with the project's objectives.
- Ensure the proper recognition and acknowledgement of the group responsible for executing the project during its launch.
- Appropriately reference the project as a valuable outcome of the Leadership Wood Buffalo program.
- Ensure your presence at the retreat on September 22nd, where you will speak about the project and its potential impact on the community. Additionally, be prepared to address any queries or concerns raised by the cohort participants, offering clear explanations, and providing necessary clarifications.

Project Group's responsibilities

- Develop a comprehensive action plan that includes well-defined timelines and specific deliverables.
- Conduct thorough research to identify and evaluate existing solutions, ensuring that the work being done does not duplicate previous efforts.
- Adapt timelines and deliverables as needed in response to unexpected barriers or circumstances that may arise.
- Foster a positive and collaborative relationship with the host organization, maintaining open lines of communication throughout the project.
- Regularly provide updates and valuable feedback to FuseSocial through timely and informative reporting, both at mid-term and upon project completion.

Our most remarkable achievements have been witnessed when teams collaborate on both fulfilling and rewarding projects while significantly contributing to host organizations and the community. Since participants may not be fully aware of all the ongoing efforts in the social profit sector, it occasionally leads to creating projects that duplicate existing agency work. This is precisely why soliciting project proposals proves immensely advantageous, as it enables us to allocate resources most efficiently and effectively.

What a Community Action Project Is:

- A Project work.
- A new idea that does not already exist and needs to be conceived and brought to life.
- An existing program or service that is not currently working and needs to be adjusted.
- A project that will fit within the organizational plan and is sustainable by the agency.
- Work that can be completed in the 7-month period. However, exceptions can be made if a solid sustainability plan is in place.

What a Community Action Project Is NOT:

- A grant. There is no funding attached to these project groups. If your project requires funding, it will be the responsibility of your agency to secure it.
- A free source of labor. While the participants do work on the project free of charge, they will be choosing the projects based on a match of community needs and interest in the work.
- A general fundraising initiative. Many of our participants are thought leaders, wishing to bring innovative ideas that have not been tested before.
- Day-to-day operational work that the agency is already doing.

Examples of Past Community Action Projects

- **Social Asset Sharing System (SASS)** - an online hub for sharing physical assets among social profit agencies to save costs.
- **Mental Health Directory** - one stop, online location to find the right mental health resource for you or someone you know.
- **TEDx Fort McMurray** - This group worked with TEDx and created an organizing committee (which consisted of the 5 members of their Leadership Wood Buffalo team plus 3 additional outside members). The event was held with success with 11 local speakers.
- **MACOY (Mayors Advisory Council on Youth) Mentorship** – Awareness campaign with youth to support Canadian Mental Health Awareness and mental health faced by young people.
- **Heart of Wood Buffalo Leadership Awards** – This group collaborated with Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo to create and produce the Heart of Wood Buffalo Leadership Awards, an annual event that recognizes the invaluable contributions to the visionary, passionate, hardworking, and committed people, and organizations in the non-profit sector in Wood Buffalo.
- **Re-Branding Centre of Hope** - This group led an experiential learning day for their cohort and worked with the Centre of Hope to rebrand within the community via a marketing campaign.
- **Social Inclusion of Temporary Foreign Workers** - This group worked with a focus group of Temporary Foreign Workers to understand the struggles and issues that they deal with in our country. The group was then a part of a panel discussion for the remaining Leadership Wood Buffalo participants to understand how they can support Temporary Foreign Workers within our community.
- **Safety City Feasibility Study** – Participants constructed a “Safe City” idea that would improve the health and safety of the region by providing educational programs, training facilities, safety resources and professional expertise to educators, residents, and visitors within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Benefits of Submitting a Proposal

If your project proposal is a match with one of our groups, you will have the opportunity to work with experienced professionals in the community who will dedicate time and expertise to bring this project to life. Their time will come at no cost to your organization. This project and your agency will also get exposure because the graduates are required to present all their work to the community before they graduate. We will also invite organizations who project was selected to speak at the presentations about the benefits that this project has on the community.

Our participants represent a wide range of diversity. They are employed in various sectors such as oil and gas, social profit, government, education, health care, large and small business, etc. The project groups contain vast amounts of expertise, experience, and diversity of thought.

Request for Proposals from Agencies

If your registered, non-profit agency has a project that could benefit from a group of passionate, skilled, diverse professionals in our community, we would like to hear from you. Please provide a description of the work you need assistance with, and we will present it to the group if approved. The group will then reach out to learn more about getting involved if interested.

Some things to keep in mind about the cohort members:

- Submitting a proposal by your organization incurs no costs, and if your project proposal is successfully matched with a group, there is still no financial burden. However, the agency and the project group need to collaborate in identifying and securing the necessary funding if there are any associated costs with executing the project.
- Submitting a proposal does not guarantee the selection and pairing of your project with a group. Nevertheless, it presents an opportunity for your agency to gain visibility within a network of individuals who may need to develop a deeper understanding of the exceptional work you undertake in the community or the challenges you encounter.
- Throughout the 7-months, each participant is dedicated to investing 40 hours into their project, which includes regular meetings with their project team.
- The relationship between the partner agency and CAP group will be at the CAP group's discretion. FuseSocial will not be monitoring this relationship but is happy to receive feedback and updates from the organization.
- Upon completing the Leadership Wood Buffalo program for the year, members are not obligated to continue advancing their project work. They can pursue further work on the project beyond the program's conclusion, although this is not guaranteed. It is crucial for your agency to have a sustainability plan in place in case additional efforts are needed.
- Cohort members are enthusiastic, willing, capable, and prepared to engage in a project that will challenge and inspire their personal growth as well as impact communities.

Submission Requirements

Please provide the following details in your submission:

- 1) Description of your agency: This is an opportunity to talk about your mission, vision, and values; not just what you do, but why you do it. There are agencies in our community doing fantastic work that many people are not aware of. This is your chance to brag and get noticed!
- 2) Description of the problem or issue at hand and the impact it has on our community. Please provide resources that highlight the need for support.
- 3) Description of the work required.
- 4) Reasons why your agency needs some assistance collaborating on this project.

- 5) Agency Support and Capacity: Is the agency willing and able to commit resources and work together for the duration of the project or will the participants work independently? Who will be the point of contact at the agency?
- 6) Measuring Success: At the end of the 7-months, what does your agency wish to receive from the project group? What specific deliverables are being requested?
- 7) Sustainability: What happens after the project is over? What is the project's sustainability plan? Who continues the work if there is still work left to be done? Does the agency have the resources to implement the project deliverables into the day-to-day operations?
- 8) Accountability: Will there be a reporting structure between the agency and the project group? Who reports to whom? What happens if the agency or the project group is not upholding their obligations to the work? How will mismatched expectations be avoided or addressed if they occur?
- 9) Contact information: Who can FuseSocial contact if we have questions. You can provide the contact details of more than one person.
- 10) Kindly share details on how your project incorporates the lived experiences and requirements of the specific group or community it aims to serve and how they are represented within your organization. For instance, if your proposed project aims to support indigenous peoples, how are you ensuring that it is designed and implemented by indigenous individuals themselves? Are you partnering with or seeking consultation from a local nation? Which local nation are you partnering with or consulting with?
- 11) Provide a written agreement stating your acceptance to recognize Leadership Wood Buffalo's input in actualizing the project.

Please be thorough but concise and limit your proposal submission to 3 pages or less.

Important Dates

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Deadline for proposal submissions to FuseSocial | Jul. 21 st , 2023. |
| 2. FuseSocial to send approved project details to cohort participants: | Aug. 25 th , 2023. |
| 3. Agencies to provide FuseSocial a testimonial | Apr. 12 th , 2024. |

Contact Information

All questions and submissions can be directed to Ebenezer Olowo, Leadership Coordinator at FuseSocial. ebenezer.olowo@fusesocial.ca or 587-674-2390

For general information on the Leadership Wood Buffalo program, please visit our website: <https://fusesocial.ca/leadership-wood-buffalo/>