

# CSL AWARDS

*Community Service-Learning*

---

## INTENT

Solutions to the complex challenges facing our communities today demand new ways of thinking and working together.

To create broad and powerful forces for social change, we need to draw inspiration and knowledge from our collective experience: the intellectual resources of post-secondary institutions, the expertise of community organizations and business, and the passion and skills of students.

Innovative community service-learning (CSL) programs motivate individuals and organizations from these different spheres to collaborate around local issues to improve the well-being of their communities.

The CSL Awards will recognize successful community initiatives supported by robust community service-learning programs. They will highlight innovative approaches that have—and will continue to—transform relationships, structures, policies, and/or mainstream practices. The Foundation hopes that such recognition will encourage similar initiatives in communities across the country.

## BACKGROUND

Community Service-Learning (CSL) is a model of experiential learning that combines classroom learning with volunteer work designed to achieve community goals and to instill in students a sense of civic engagement.

Since 2004 the Foundation has supported ten universities<sup>1</sup> to develop and expand their community service-learning programs. This has included support for professors to adapt courses, for community organizations to effectively engage students, and for practitioners to promote CSL within the university.



1. Since 2004 the Foundation has provided almost \$10 million for the following universities to create, strengthen, and expand their CSL programs: St. Frances Xavier, Sherbrooke, Nipissing, UQTR, Trent, Ottawa, Lakehead, Laurier, Alberta, UBC.



To date, there has been a dramatic increase in CSL opportunities for students in the ten participating universities. In moving from the margins of academic life to the mainstream, CSL programs have pushed universities to redefine their role—linking scholarship to active citizenship while emphasizing community involvement as central to the mission of their institution. The dramatic growth of CSL programs nationwide is one of the most visible signs of this transition: in addition to the ten programs funded by the Foundation, many other universities have launched similar programs.

Community Service-Learning is in the DNA of community colleges. Classroom learning is usually grounded in an in-depth knowledge of the local context and often there are opportunities for practical experience through co-op placements, practicums, internships or CSL experiences. The curriculum for most courses is designed with input from practitioners and community organizations to ensure that the skills and knowledge students develop are relevant for the marketplace. The local community is considered a living lab by the college which results in strong partnerships and a commitment to community impact.

## CSL AWARDS 2012: APPLICATION

### PROCESS

Community organizations and post-secondary institutions are invited to jointly submit an application by January 31, 2013. Award winners will be announced in June 2013 at a public event and several outstanding initiatives will be profiled in the media.

### ELIGIBILITY

Any community initiative in Canada that is supported by community service-learning activities at the post-secondary level is eligible.

### AWARDS

A total of \$30,000 is available for *up* to four awards of \$7,500 each.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING INITIATIVE<sup>2</sup>: GENERAL QUESTIONS

To be answered by those involved in the local CSL initiative: faculty or staff of the college / university, staff or volunteers of community organizations, students, citizens, etc. Please address the following topics in four pages or less.

### RATIONALE

Why was this initiative developed? What is your vision for this initiative: what changes would you like to see in your community, in the college/university, and for the student experience? What attracted you to community service-learning as a way to achieve these changes?

### GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Whose idea was the initiative? Who has been involved in setting up the initiative? Where do resources and support come from? Who oversees and manages the initiative? How does this initiative connect with other local, regional, or national projects or networks?

### OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Briefly describe the activities of the initiative: when did it start, what organizations and departments are participating, how many CSL placements and students have been involved? Give a few examples of what students are doing.

### STRATEGIC LEARNING

What does / will success look like for this initiative, in the short-term and the long-term? How are you assessing results? What will you do with this information, and with whom are you sharing lessons? *You may include copies of evaluations, links to learning platforms, communication products, etc. as supporting documentation.*

### PRIZE

If selected, how would you use the prize (approximately \$7,500) to support the initiative?

## THE COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

To be answered by a member of a participating community organization. Please address the following topics in two pages or less.

### APPROACH

What programs of your organization are involved in this initiative? How does your organization work with faculty, staff, and students from the college / university in this initiative?

2. By “initiative” we mean either one large project that takes place over several years and involves many student placements or a cluster of complementary projects that are coordinated around one community issue or theme. It does not refer to the sum total of an academic institution’s “CSL program”, if this is made up of a roster of largely unconnected placements.



# CSL AWARDS 2012

---

## IMPACT

What are you able to accomplish now that you could not before? In what way does your organization work differently since becoming part of this initiative?

## LEARNING

Describe something your organization has learned about itself during this initiative, or that you learned about working with post-secondary institutions. If you faced a major challenge, how did you deal with it?

## THE COLLEGE / UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE

To be answered by a member of the college or university involved. Please address the following topics in two pages or less.

### APPROACH

Which departments are involved in this initiative? How do they work with community organizations and with each other, both at the level of professors and students?

### INFLUENCING INSTITUTIONS

Has research or teaching within the institution changed as a result of this initiative? How are staff, faculty, and students being recognized for CSL accomplishments within the college/ university? What support does this initiative have from the administration of your institution? In what way have the values and practices of CSL influenced the college / university?

### LEARNING

Describe something your institution has learned about itself during this initiative, or that you learned about working with community organizations. If you faced a major challenge, how did you deal with it?

## SUPPORTING MATERIAL

### PLEASE INCLUDE

1. Contact information for three references that would be available for a follow-up call. All three references must have been directly involved with the initiative, and should include a member of a community organization, a student, and a professor.
2. Up to four brief pieces of material relevant to this initiative. This could include evaluation results and communication products.

To apply, send your application to [riapalucci@mccconnellfoundation.ca](mailto:riapalucci@mccconnellfoundation.ca) by January 31, 2013.