

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Evaluation of Northview Community Garden

Unison Health and Community Services is a non-profit, community-based organization that serves neighbourhoods in North West Toronto. Operating out of six locations, Unison offers core services that include primary health care, counselling, health promotion, Early Years programs, legal services, harm reduction programs, housing assistance, adult protective services, Pathways to Education™ and a Diabetes Education Program. Unison's mission is working together to deliver accessible and high quality health and community services that are integrated, respond to needs, build on strengths and inspire change. Unison Health and Community Services is committed to working from an inclusive, pro-choice, sex positive, harm reduction, anti-racist, anti-oppression and participatory framework.

Unison invites graduate students with a background in program evaluation, community health, social sciences, or related fields to submit proposals for the evaluation of our community garden program. The Northview Community Garden, a collaboration between Unison, Northview Heights Secondary School, and North York Harvest Food Bank, is a vital initiative providing fresh produce and fostering food security within the community. To support the sustainability and efficiency of the garden, Unison seeks to evaluate key components of the garden's leadership structure, volunteer engagement, produce output, and resource utilization.

To learn more about the garden, you may visit the garden here:

<https://www.instagram.com/northviewgardenbf/>

To read our last garden evaluation report, please review it here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/183F4jdyhgEgfeZ13zT9daoyyuMxx4x_9/view?usp=drive_link

Below are the main objectives of the evaluation project:

1. Evaluate the leadership structure of the garden project and analyze the flow of communication and decision-making between Unison, the steering/advisory committee, project partners (Northview Heights Secondary School and North York Harvest Food Bank), and volunteers.

Key Questions:

- How are decisions made, and who is involved in the decision-making process?

- What are the communication channels between key stakeholders, and how effective are they?

2. Assess the level of volunteer participation in the garden, including the number of hours worked, levels of commitment, volunteer roles and tasks performed, and satisfaction levels. Identify any skill, training, or engagement gaps, and volunteer recruitment that could improve volunteer effectiveness and garden operations.

Key Questions:

- What is the level of volunteer participation (e.g., hours, retention, and commitment)?
- What roles and tasks are volunteers engaged in, and how satisfied are they with their experience?
- What training and skill-building opportunities are provided, and where are there gaps?
- What are some other volunteer recruitment opportunities we have not identified?

3. Analyze the type, quality, and quantity of produce grown in the garden and compare these findings to the past five years of operations.

Key Questions:

- What is the quantity and variety of produce grown in the garden compared to the past five years?
- How has the quality of produce changed, and what factors have contributed to these changes?

4. Evaluate the efficiency of resource utilization, including water use, types of tools and equipment employed, and other resources critical to the garden's operations. Identify opportunities for improving resource efficiency.

Key Questions:

- How efficiently are resources such as water and tools utilized in the garden?
- What improvements can be made in resource management to enhance garden efficiency?
- If funding becomes available, what changes or additions to the infrastructure can be considered?

The student will be responsible for:

- Conducting in-person interviews and surveys with key stakeholders (Unison staff and management, advisory committee members, partners, and volunteers) in the month of October.
- Developing and administering surveys for volunteer satisfaction by mid-November.
- Reviewing historical records of produce output and volunteer participation.
- Analyzing the efficiency of resource use, including water and tools.
- Providing a final evaluation report with actionable recommendations by mid-December.

Eligibility and Requirements:

This opportunity is open to graduate students pursuing a master's degree in fields such as community health, social sciences, environmental studies, urban agriculture, or program evaluation. Applicants should demonstrate a strong understanding of evaluation techniques and qualitative/quantitative research methodologies.

Proposal Requirements:

- Executive Summary: Overview of the evaluation approach
- Experience and Qualifications: Description of the student's qualifications and relevant experience in conducting evaluations or similar projects
- Methodology: Detailed methodology for addressing the evaluation objectives, including proposed data collection tools and techniques
- Timeline: Proposed timeline for the evaluation, including milestones. Deadline of the project is December 18th, 2024.
- Budget: If applicable, include any cost requirements or stipend expectations
- References: Contact information for at least one academic advisor or professor familiar with the student's work in evaluations or research

Proposals must be submitted by 5 pm, October 4th, 2024. Please submit your proposal in PDF format to amy.cheng@unisonhcs.org with the subject line "Community Garden Evaluation Proposal." (Proposals received after this date will not be considered.)

Contact Information:

For any inquiries or clarifications, please contact:

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