



Request for Proposal

Seeking Consultant to build tools, resources and learning platforms for a new field of practice in aging

Building a Strength-based Approach to Aging Within Intergenerational Community Centers

THE OPPORTUNITY

United Neighborhood Houses of New York [UNH] seeks to hire a consultant who has experience observing and documenting community-based processes and facilitating efforts that lead to the co-creation of tools, resources, curricula and learning platforms. The consultant will work with UNH and its member settlement houses to develop and advance new practices. These new practices would be built upon a strength-based approach to aging in intergenerational community centers. The resources, tools, curricula and/or learning platforms (referred to as learning tools in the rest of this document) would support organizational change and the professional development required for this practice change.

BACKGROUND

For more than a dozen years, UNH has been working to change how our society views and values the increasing number of older people, positioning long life and population aging as positive developments for our society and communities. UNH launched The Institute for Empowered Aging to bring more attention to this perspective, which at its core sees older people as tremendous assets which, if mobilized for the greater good, would increase our society's capacity to address important issues and strengthen community life. We refer to our work as building a new practice in aging, one built upon the strengths, assets, skills, knowledge, life experience and passions of older people. One that aims to bring meaning and purpose to later life and that ensures we all remain a valued part of - and integrated within - the fabric of our communities throughout our life and especially in our old age.

Core to this work is creating more and deeper opportunities for older people to meaningfully contribute to their community by working with people of all ages - especially younger people - to address important local issues. Settlement house community centers are excellent settings to enable young and old to regularly mix, work together, and build relationships that keep both generations connected and of value to their communities.

Research is revealing that creating spaces, opportunities, and programming that bring different age groups together and that meaningfully integrate older people throughout community centers have multiple benefits. To name but a few:

- younger people become more empathetic;

- older people are healthier and more active;
- programmatic opportunities are enhanced;
- loneliness and social isolation are reduced; and
- communities become stronger, more engaged and interconnected and are better able to address important local issues and needs.

Enhancing and creating new opportunities at settlement houses for all ages to mix across program areas changes the tasks and responsibilities of staff, but also unlocks the underutilized resource of community members and especially the skills, talents, experience and interests of older people, allowing organizations to achieve more in response to community needs!

CURRENT INITIATIVE

In 2021 UNH launched a multi-year initiative that partners with 4 settlement houses that run community centers designed to serve and engage people of all ages. This initiative:

- enables robust community centers through training and the application of promising practices where people of all ages have multiple opportunities to connect and come together – virtually and in-person,
- integrates and empowers older people (virtually and in-person) in meaningful and valued ways throughout community centers as participants, aides, program creators and implementers, and drivers of change – enriching programs and the lives of community members of all ages through robust cross-generational community and civic engagement,
- builds on and engages the strengths and assets of community members of all ages for the greater good
- engages in evaluation efforts that establish and demonstrate the efficacy and impact of community centers where all generations mix and work together,
- facilitates a learning community of settlement house staff that guides the development of best practices and learning tools to help other settlement houses interested in creating similar centers.

The four settlement house community centers involved in this initiative are:

- A large multi-service community center in the South Bronx that has served primarily younger people but where a new older adult center program is being launched,
- Two community centers across the street from each other (one for older people and one for younger people) serving a large public housing development in East Harlem,
- An Afterschool Beacon Program in Queens that sits in the middle of large housing complex that is a NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community), and
- A large multi-service community center in Queens anchored by an older adult center.

UNH's Institute for Empowered Aging has developed tools and resources for mobilizing the skills, interests and experience of older people for the benefit of children, youth and local

communities – launching food pantries, urban farms, early childhood and afterschool programming, and civic and community betterment projects.

Through this initiative and in partnership with the settlement house community centers described above, UNH is now working to turn this body of knowledge into a core practice for multi-service community centers that:

- builds upon a set of values and principles behind a strength-based approach to working and partnering with older and younger people,
- positions this work for all involved as consciousness raising work about aging, ageism and the role of older and younger people in community,
- utilizes a community engagement framework – bringing people together across age and difference to talk, imagine and create,
- fosters a sense of reciprocity where old and young contribute equally, and
- provides staff with learning tools to adopt this practice.

IDEAL CONSULTANT EXPERIENCE

To help it realize this goal, UNH is seeking a consultant who has the following experience:

- Convening, facilitating, and co-creating in and with communities to change or develop new practices based upon a set of core values and principles,
- Fostering and capturing effective processes and practices that emerge from value-driven community work,
- Co-creating and developing tools, resources, curricula and/or learning platforms that reflect effective and promising approaches and practices identified through value-driven community work,
- Delivering learning curricula, platforms and processes that have been scaled and successfully used for professional development. Obtaining approval for CEU credits or other professional educational accreditations is preferred but not required.

Please note that UNH has made a commitment to apply a racial equity lens to our work. We value diversity, equity, and inclusion, and welcome applicants of diverse backgrounds including race, ethnic, culture, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, and physical abilities. English-Spanish bi-lingual would also be helpful.

CONTRACT LENGTH

The anticipated contract period would be approximately 20 months and would include two phases:

Phase I: To be completed by March 2023

- A community engagement, listening and discovery phase
- A co-creation phase where learning tools are developed

Phase II: To be completed in or before February 2024

- An iterative testing phase where learning components developed in Phase I are piloted, vetted and revised
- A roll-out and replication phase where the final set of learning components are introduced to additional UNH member organizations.

DELIVERABLES

Deliverables expected from this engagement include:

Phase I: Completed by March 2023

- A workplan, detailing the steps, convenings and processes during this Phase of the work.
- An initial set of learning tools to be vetted and piloted in Phase II.
- Written summary of session(s) from learning community events and plans for next steps.
- Recommendations for next steps in phase II.

Phase II: Completed in or before February 2024

- A Phase II workplan detailing the steps for reviewing, testing and producing the final version of learning tools, including introducing these tools to additional UNH member organizations.
- Implementation of a review, piloting and vetting process involving learning community members regarding the learning tools developed in Phase I.
- A final set of learning tools for replicating and sustaining this practice. Ideally, these tools will be eligible for professional educational accreditations.
- In partnership with UNH, implementation of a roll-out and replication phase that introduces the learning tools to additional UNH member organizations,
- A final project report detailing successes, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for extending and sustaining this practice.

In all of the above, the results of the consultant's work should be communicated in a manner and style that is accessible to the staff and community members involved in this initiative.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS and DETAILS

Interested consultants should ensure that their proposals include the following:

1. **Proposed Approach**: A description of the approach for carrying out this consulting project, including:
 - a. specific steps / approaches to
 - i. engage and inspire staff and community members as partners in the capturing of learnings and practices and

- ii. the co-creation and vetting of tools, resources, curricula and learning platforms that reflect, support and sustain the values, principles and work of this initiative;
 - b. how the learning tools will be piloted and replicated including ways to position the learning tools as professional development opportunities;
 - c. an estimate of the minimum and maximum amount of staff and organizational time needed for the development and vetting of the tools and resources for replication
2. **Cost Detail:** A breakdown of the costs associated for each phase of this consulting opportunity as outlined above under “CONTRACT LENGTH”
 3. **Details on Team Members and Previous Practice Development Experience:** Details on qualifications and relevant experience of the organization and the relevant individuals who will work on this project.
 4. **Sample of Previous Practice Development Work:** One or two samples of learning tools created by the individuals who will work on this project.
 5. **References:** Names and contact information for three former or current consulting clients that can attest to the team’s expertise, approach and project management skills.

TIMELINE

Interested consultants should submit a proposal following the guidelines outlined above by:

Deadline for submission of Proposals

5 pm, Wednesday, May 18, 2022

The consultant will be selected by May 31, 2022.

We are seeking consultants who can begin work within 4 weeks of the selection date.

Contact for Questions:

Terry Kaelber, Director, Institute for Empowered Aging

United Neighborhood Houses of New York

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Proposals should be emailed to:

InterGenInitiative@unhny.org