



**CONTRACT OPPORTUNITY:  
PROJECT EVALUATION CONSULTANT**

**ORGANIZATION:**

THE YMCAs OF QUÉBEC

**LOCATION:**

Montréal, Québec (head office and program site) with 3 other participating Canadian cities: Surrey (BC), Regina (SK) and Moncton (NB).

**POSTING AND CLOSING DATE:**

August 1st, 2016 to September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

**BACKGROUND:**

YMCA Scotland launched the PLUSONE pilot initiative in 2009 and has since received widespread recognition. At the end of the 2 year pilot phase, which ran in 3 Scottish districts and included an evaluation, the project was credited as being a key part of YMCA Scotland's award as *UK Charity of the Year* in the "Children and Young People" category. Also, in 2012 YMCA Scotland received a sizeable grant from the *Big Lottery Realising Ambition* stream, which identified PLUSONE as one of 25 best practice projects in the UK for intervening with youth. This grant has since allowed YMCA Scotland to replicate the program in 10 other Scottish communities. In 2014 [The YMCAs of Québec](#) began collaborating with YMCA Scotland with the objective of bringing PLUSONE and its proven track record to Canada. In early 2016, the YMCAs of Quebec received a 5 year grant from Public Safety Canada to implement the program in 4 cities across the country.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

YMCA PLUSONE is a community-based mentoring program (traditional mentoring with a 1:1 adult to youth ratio) and is an established model and proven best practice in early intervention that engages high risk young people and diverts them from criminality. Delivered by trained volunteer mentors and complemented by a youth work approach, PLUSONE places the young person at the centre, focuses on changing behaviours and building aspirations in order to construct positive pathways to a sustainable future and help them realize their full potential.

The program's target group are youth aged 10-17 years old, the core of the group being between 10-14 years. Participants are identified and recruited through a referral system that involves a variety of community partners. It is estimated that this project will serve 720 direct participants over its term (i.e. 4 ½ years). PLUSONE cohorts consist of 20 cases per year, each lasting a maximum of 1 year. The YMCA intends to implement PLUSONE in 4 cities, 2 cohorts in each for a total of 8 cohorts per year (i.e. 160 total cases per year, 40 per city).

The program's objective is to offer a mentoring opportunity to the youth who will benefit from it most, and so an emphasis is put on recruiting young people who meet specific criteria, namely that they show an accumulation of risk factors in their home, school, and personal lives. These criteria include youth who: are at-risk of, or have already come into contact with, the youth justice system; are living in care; are new to Canada; aboriginal; a visible minority; living in the inner-city; and show 2 or more risk factors (e.g. signs of drug abuse, gang relations, trouble at school or at home, etc.). The following are the main risk factors that PLUSONE intends to address and reduce in its participants:

- Disruption, exclusion or disengagement at school;
- Offending, aggressive or anti-social behaviour;
- Conflict in the home and/or family life;
- Substance abuse and other risk taking behaviours (association with or involvement in a gang, early sexual activity, etc.);
- A lack of positive adult role model;
- Associations with antisocial peers;
- Weak community ties.

Volunteer mentors will be recruited via community partnerships, as well as through internal YMCA mechanisms. Mentors are adult-aged and must have previous experience working with youth, and more specifically at-risk youth populations. Mentors will be trained on the program model as well as on youth work approaches. Pairings will then be created based on common interests between mentors and mentees, as well as geographical and cultural similarities (when appropriate). A program facilitator will be responsible for the recruitment, screening, training and ongoing support of the mentors.

The mentor-mentee relationship will last for up to 1 year and no less than 9 months. During this time, the mentor engages their mentee in regular activities (individually and in groups) in the community. Activities are decided based on a development plan devised by the mentor in conjunction with the program facilitator, also taking into consideration the youth's interests and what motivates them. At first, meetings between mentor and mentee are intensive at 2-3 hours per week. Progressively, the meetings are decreased and replaced with other community-based and constructive activities that the mentor encourages their mentee to participate in. This allows for a smooth transition to other community based programs at the end of 1 year when the mentoring relationship ends.

Finally, here are the program's expected results and measurable outcomes:

- Short term: Development of a positive and caring relationship with a role model, active and sustained participation in positive community based alternative activities; decreased association with negative peer influences; reduced risk of substance use, decrease of conflict in the young person's home and/or family life, as well as in their increased engagement to school and improved academic results.
- Medium term: Increased understanding of the relationship between choices and consequences, renewed ambition and confidence in themselves and their ability to achieve, decrease in criminal activities.

**RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS REQUIRED OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION CONSULTANT:**

The program will be evaluated over the course of 4 ½ years and will include approximately 700 youth participants, 700 adult mentors, their parents and their respective schools and communities partners involved with these participants. The evaluation consultant will:

- Develop a performance monitoring and assessment plan that includes defining the scope of the project monitoring.
- Develop a process and impact evaluation plan and determine what additional data collection sources and methods will be employed, above and beyond the data produced by the monitoring system. Please note that a sophisticated monitoring data base is already in use by similar YMCA programs and will be adapted internally for data collection and case management for the PLUSONE program.
- Develop and select key indicators.
- Develop strategies to recruit and maintain control group participants.
- Collect data on the project in the 4 Canadian service sites in conjunction with the local program teams.
- Analyze data.
- Report writing (bi-annual performance monitoring and assessment reports, annual process and impact evaluation reports and final reports for both including a cost effectiveness analysis).

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

The successful candidate will:

- Have Masters Degree (PhD is an asset) in a relevant field, such as social science or statistics.
- At least 7 years professional experience in the last 10 years developing project monitoring and impact evaluations for similar types of projects with a similar target group.
- Ability to work in collaboration with internal staff and external government funders, partner agencies and committees.
- Sound analytical and evaluation skills, both in quantitative/qualitative approaches.
- Sound experience in measuring changes in attitudes, knowledge, skills, behaviours and program impact, including a causal attribution test, such as a control group.
- Sound knowledge and practice in ethics related to program evaluation.
- Good IT skills including MS Office (Word, Excel, Power Point and Access) and statistical packages.
- Proficient in both official languages.
- Available to travel across the country to various services sites.
- The contracted evaluator will need to be available for the life of the project: Fall of 2016 to spring 2020.

Submissions must include a brief proposal including:

- A resume with basic information about the applicant; name, address, contact information of the consulting firm or individual, description of the firm or individual, relevant experience and qualifications, names of the key personnel who will work

directly on this project, indicating the anticipated proportion of their contribution to the project.

- A draft work plan outline and timeline that delineates the key elements of a successful performance monitoring and impact assessment, identifies appropriate and achievable targets, and is specific about deliverables to be achieved.
- A summary outline on how you plan to recruit, engage and maintain the control group for the impact portion of the evaluation.
- A draft budget to cover the responsibilities and tasks required (must not exceed 325 000\$ - 20% for the first year, 15% for year 2 and 3 and 25% for year 4 and 5).
- References to at least two similar projects completed in the past 6 years.

**PLEASE SUBMIT VIA EMAIL BEFORE FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016 AT 5PM E.S.T. TO:**

- Andrew Borrelli  
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