

United for Literacy



Overview:

Our Vision:

Literacy is recognized as a human right and a driving force to empowerment and prosperity. United For Literacy leads the effort in Canada to help people and communities achieve their goals through the power of literacy.

Our Cause:

Why Literacy?

Literacy touches virtually every aspect of our lives and has a profound influence on our well-being. Effectively using the printed word in daily life is essential to fully engaging in society and achieving one's personal goals. Yet people of all ages— even whole communities—face unique barriers to being fully literate which fuels poverty, poor health, and major social challenges.

Bridging the literacy gap is doable and urgent. Low literacy skills are directly linked to poverty, poor health, and high unemployment. Bridging the literacy gap is something we can do. It's our most effective, achievable tool for dramatically improving the lives of millions of Canadians.

Our Philosophy:

United for Literacy believes any place can be a learning place. We deliver our programs in schools, community centres, shelters—anywhere we're invited. All over Canada—in urbanized, rural, and remote locations—United for Literacy is there. We work with community partners to determine what is most needed in their region. This includes programs for children, teens, adults, seniors, and families. Our free literacy and numeracy programs include after-school homework clubs, including reading, writing, and STEM support, workplace literacy, essential skills for adults, learning support for adults with developmental disabilities, Reading Tents where children learn to love reading, Summer Literacy Camps to keep kids reading and learning during the summer, small group tutoring and conversation groups for newcomers, online reading support, and many more.

The placement:

United for Literacy is seeking an enthusiastic and community-minded 4th-year university student to support local literacy programs as part of our partnership with Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) at New College. This hands-on role provides a meaningful opportunity to contribute to literacy education while developing skills in communication, program delivery, and community engagement.

Working closely with staff and volunteers, you'll assist in planning, facilitating, and evaluating literacy activities for children and youth, —many of whom face barriers to education. You'll gain experience in inclusive, learner-centered approaches and see firsthand how community-based education can drive social change.

<https://www.unitedforliteracy.ca/>

The position:

Organizational Team (OT) members are central to program start up and volunteer management. As OT, your responsibilities include:

- Supporting the volunteer intake and screening process.
- Campus or community outreach.
- Arranging for site tours and planning volunteer orientation days in conjunction with the community partner.
- Managing site needs and responsibilities such as weekly supervision of location, tracking attendance, distributing learner evaluations, taking photos, collecting learner and volunteer stories or testimonials.
- Regular communication with community partners.
- Reporting incidents.
- Communication with a team of volunteer tutors.
- Ensuring sites have necessary resources by requesting materials from Community Coordinators.
- Attending regular OT meetings.

The opportunity:

By the end of this placement, students will:

- Understand barriers to literacy and strategies for inclusive learning.
- Gain real-world experience applying academic knowledge to social issues.
- Develop leadership, facilitation, and community engagement skills.
- Reflect critically on their role in supporting equitable education.
- Gain leadership skill and experience working with diverse populations, particularly newcomer and underserved populations.
- Gain volunteer management skills - Skills in volunteer screening, intake, orientation, and ongoing communication and support.
- Gain/improve Teamwork and Collaboration skill- Experience working in a team setting with other Organizational Team members, tutors, and staff.

The ideal candidate:

- Effective written and verbal communication
- Initiative and self-direction – comfortable working independently and managing time effectively.
- Collaborative mindset – able to work respectfully and effectively with a small, mission-driven team.
- Digital literacy – experience with basic office tools and comfort with social media or digital communication platforms is an asset.
- Be able to play a lead role to ensure equity and access are maintained for learners who need our services most. This will include working to provide services to children and youth facing systemic barriers, children and youth living in poverty or in low-income situations, and offering supports to newcomer children or refugees.
- Volunteer mobilization and outreach.
- Experience conducting interviews and completing volunteer screening steps.
- Program planning and facilitation.

How to apply:

For information about the application process, go to: <https://www.newcollege.utoronto.ca/cel-courses/cel-how-to-apply/>

Application deadline: Wednesday, July 2, 2025

For more information about the course, please visit: <https://www.newcollege.utoronto.ca/cel-courses/>

CEL Coordinator - Kevin Edmonds: nc.engagedlearning@utoronto.ca
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