

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## CHANGING THE WAY WE WELCOME REFUGEE CLAIMANTS

**Kinbrace Community Society is seeking proposals from experienced researchers to conduct community-based, qualitative research with refugee claimants as a first step in a systems change initiative. The title of the project is *Changing the Way We Welcome Refugee Claimants*. The purpose of this RFP is to select a research professional to perform the research under the direction of the Research Steering Committee (RSC).**

### I. Project Objectives

The project will undertake community-based, qualitative research to:

1. Acquire an understanding of the experiences of refugee claimants *during the months prior to their refugee hearings* that affirmed their dignity, belonging, and overall sense of wellbeing;
2. Identify actions that residents of Canada can take to amplify the dignity, belonging, and overall sense of wellbeing of refugee claimants;
3. Share the findings and resulting report as part of an action plan toward systemic change.

The successful applicant will design and implement research methods to gather the experiences of refugee claimants that affirmed their dignity, belonging, and overall sense of wellbeing. Though the end goal of the project is systems change, the research will not dwell on what is wrong with problematic systems, but on what is working, and which, if amplified, could transform, displace, and overturn current systems. The following questions and grounding principles are provided for context and consideration in developing the research proposal.

- As refugee claimants interact with service providers, government agencies and the general public, what practices / postures / places do refugee claimants witness or experience that "make their days brighter" and/or improve their quality of life? We are interested in the full scope of interactions during the claim period that provide positive, hopeful insights which could be showcased as best practices.
- Which attitudes or values do refugee claimants appreciate in their interactions with service providers, government agencies, and the public because they promote feelings of safety, inclusion, and belonging?
- Acknowledging the complex, challenging terrain refugee claimants navigate in their quest for refugee protection, where and when (even if just a moment) do they witness or experience rest, confidence, acceptance, empowerment, respect, encouragement, success, hope, a sense of opportunity, a lightness of spirit, the feeling of being affirmed?

#### *Grounding Principles:*

- Listening to the personal experiences of of refugee claimants - primary voices
- Strengths-based and anti-oppressive
- Reflectively spacious, open, trusting, and non-judgmental; refugee claimants do not feel rushed or pressured
- Information drawn from lived experiences, not hypothetical or imagined
- Focused on bright moments, positive and affirming experiences, times when individuals experienced a distinct or noticeable sense of wellbeing
- Focused on what affirms refugee claimants' dignity or humanity
- Acknowledges the challenges refugee claimants face and uses these as stepping stones to deeper understanding of what works to overcome the challenges
- Action oriented - aims to encourage, stimulate, provoke systems change

We have provided additional background information at the end of this document.

### III. Project Scope

This research project will be:

1. Time constrained: June-December 2021
2. Refugee claimant focused - listening to those who are in, or have been through Canada's refugee determination system
3. Strengths-based - listening to what is working (positive) and helpful for refugee claimants, rather than focusing on barriers they experience
4. Focused in, but not necessarily limited to, BC

### IV. Instructions to Applicants

1. The call for proposals is now open. Proposals will be reviewed and applicants interviewed on a rolling basis, as they are received. The deadline to submit a proposal is Friday May 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm Pacific time.
2. Please direct inquiries related to this RFP to Loren Balisky, Director of Engagement ([loren@kinbrace.ca](mailto:loren@kinbrace.ca)) no later than 3 business days before the RFP deadline.
3. Proposals must be submitted
  - a. electronically in a single PDF file
  - b. by email to [apply@kinbrace.ca](mailto:apply@kinbrace.ca)
  - c. with the subject line: "Your / Company Name - RFP Response WRC"

### V. Application Elements

Please include each of the following elements in your application. *Incomplete applications will not be considered.* In total, your submission should be no more than 10 pages maximum.

1. Applicant CV and cover letter that describes how you meet the Qualifications (Section VI).
2. Details of up to 3 past projects that have prepared you to undertake this project, including your role(s) in each project (1 page max).
3. Research project proposal (4 pages max) that demonstrates alignment with the approach outlined in the RFP and includes:
  - a. A description of methods, which must include Listening Sessions (e.g. interviews or focus groups) with current or former refugee claimants who entered Canada since 2013. Ability to include current or former refugee claimants as peer- or community-based researchers would be an asset.
  - b. A detailed recruitment plan (how specifically you will identify potential participants).
  - c. Project timeline with major milestones.
4. Detailed budget which must include honoraria of \$50 for each refugee claimant who takes part in a listening session. Note the total maximum budget for this project is \$20,000.00.

### VI. Qualifications

1. Demonstrated experience conducting qualitative, community-based research.
2. Proven strong understanding of the refugee determination system and refugee claimant journey in Canada and in BC specifically.
3. Demonstrated experience and understanding of relevant sensitivities and effective approaches to conducting community consultations with refugee claimants.
4. Lived experience of being a refugee claimant would be an asset
5. Demonstrated ability to use engagement processes that will effectively promote participation from refugee claimants.
6. Experience conducting qualitative interviews using Zoom or similar software would be an asset.

#### *Additional requirements*

- Working computer with high speed internet and communications equipment to conduct interviews, attend meetings, and so on (e.g. camera, mic).

## **VII. Duties and Deliverables**

1. Attend meetings at project initiation and per an established meeting schedule - likely one meeting per month for the duration of the project.
2. Maintain day-to-day contact with the RSC or delegates as necessary.
3. Submit drafts and progress reports to the RSC on an agreed upon schedule.
4. Submit a final report that includes a literature review, summary of methods, key findings and actions/recommendations on an agreed upon date which will be sufficiently in advance to allow for review & any needed revisions.
5. Make a presentation with the RSC and key stakeholders in a public presentation in November 2021 (date TBD).

## **VIII. Evaluation and Selection**

1. Proposals are welcomed from teams or individuals.
2. Proposals will be reviewed and applicants interviewed on a rolling basis, as they are received. The deadline to submit a proposal is Friday May 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm Pacific time.
3. The Hiring Committee will evaluate each proposal using the following criteria:
  - a. Experience, capability, and resources of the proponent
  - b. Creativity and feasibility of the project for achieving the intended goals
  - c. Soundness and appropriateness of research project budget
  - d. Any other criteria the Committee deems necessary
4. All criteria considered will be applied evenly and fairly to all proposals.
5. The Hiring Committee may, at its discretion, invite some or all of the candidates for an interview.
6. The successful applicant will be notified as soon as possible in May to start by June 1, 2021.

## **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

### **(How this project came to be....)**

In the Fall of 2020, Kinbrace applied for and received a \$20,000 [Develop Grant](#) from the Vancouver Foundation, one of their systems change grant streams.

*Develop grants are short-term grants to help teams to unpack a complex issue and to identify the systemic behaviours that have created that issue, or that are holding the issue in place. Develop grants help teams to generate ideas for a project plan to influence or change these behaviours that can then be submitted to funders in the future. They offer up to \$10,000 towards the project's process, and up to an additional \$10,000 to support community's participation in the process. Develop grants are a one-stage application.*

Kinbrace is interested in exploring a number of interlocking issues that impact refugee claimants.

This is the high level descriptive statement we submitted to the Vancouver Foundation for the project:

*In a world increasingly marked by forced displacement, it is imperative that we ask the question, What would a values-based, human-centred, and transformational welcome for and with people seeking refuge and protection in Canada look like? Answering this question will lead to a more human welcome of refugee claimants, increase the capacity to welcome those seeking asylum, and create transformative communities where refugee claimants and Canadians flourish together. This project will listen to the voices of refugee claimants who have sought protection in Canada and Canadians who want to accompany those on their refugee journey.*

The systemic behaviours we seek to better understand and build a case and process for changing are the humanitarian approach, the charitable mindset, and the organizational model/response, as articulated in the Vancouver Foundation application and described here:

*Humanitarian approach*

The core principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality are laudable, yet may not address questions of power and neo-colonialism that are easily exploited in the context of forced displacement. In addition, the sheer number of people displaced ignites concern in the humanitarian model about the scarcity of resources.

*Charitable mindset*

Alleviation of poverty is one of the four pillars of charitable law in Canada - incredible! - and yet we wonder if it limits our imaginations about the potential for mutual transformation? In the same vein, a worldview approach to policy, practice, and being promotes ideas (politics, religion, my idea, your idea) sacrosanct to the exclusion of other ways of operating or thinking.

*Organizational model*

Over-reliance by the citizenry of Canada on charitable organizations to solve the problems faced by society at large. Funding and reporting paradigms enforce neoliberal organizational efficiencies toward warehousing and commodifying desperate people.