

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

EVALUATION OF RIDEAU HALL FOUNDATION'S CATAPULT CANADA ACCESS INNOVATION FUND

Section 1: Background Information

1.0 Project Timeframe

The Rideau Hall Foundation (RHF) is seeking an evaluator for its *Catapult Canada Access Innovation Fund* (the Fund). The evaluation will comprise outcomes for Fund grantees, and overall outcomes for the Fund itself. A comprehensive evaluation framework was built in the first year (2020 – 2021) of the fund and is ready to be further customized and deployed. We are now seeking an evaluator for Year 2 (the formative assessment stage) and Year 3 (the summative assessment stage).

1.1 Catapult Canada

Significant gaps persist in high school graduation and post-secondary participation and attainment across Canada. Groups of vulnerable and disengaged youth continue to experience specific, multiple, and systemic barriers. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased these gaps and deepened their impact on many communities across the country. Evidence supports that investing in a pan-Canadian approach towards collaboration and innovation within and across institutions, community groups, employers, governments and foundations will yield significant positive results.

To address this opportunity, the Rideau Hall Foundation and key partners launched *Catapult Canada*, a national platform that channels resources to support community programs to build know-how, capacity, funding, evaluation frameworks, partnerships, infrastructure, all to increase equity of educational access for youth. For smaller organizations and communities, *Catapult Canada* aims to reduce their isolation and connect them to a broader community of success and knowledge sharing. At the same time, larger organizations can extend their reach into new or smaller communities, providing key insights and supports while also improving their own practices.

Catapult Canada believes in supporting and encouraging a strong ecosystem of communities, and community and school-based organizations that support opportunity youth in their educational pathways. By activating the *Catapult Canada* community, the goal is to support an ecosystem that brings together practitioners and knowledge keepers working with youth-serving organizations, as well as to provide valuable and up to date resources ranging from new funding opportunities, evaluation supports, new research on best practices, and more. The platform will also serve as a base for other *Catapult* activities, such as an innovation fund and a mentoring/coaching resource for communities and youth-serving organizations.

1.2 Catapult Canada - Access Innovation Fund

The Catapult Access Innovation Fund supports youth-serving organizations in Canada to design, build, scale up and evaluate the impact of initiatives to better support Canadian youth in their learning goals,

especially those underserved by the education system and disengaged from education and/or career pathways.

The objectives of the fund are to:

- Support community organizations to scale-up current practices related to improving youth learning outcomes to increase reach and effectiveness;
- Support community organizations committed to improving the educational and career pathways of opportunity young learners;
- Support community groups and organizations interested in learning more about what works (and what doesn't work) in supporting opportunity youth (youth disconnected from career and learning opportunities);
- Build organizational capacity, particularly with respect to leadership;
- Support creative and effective practices for building organizational long-term sustainability;
- Support initiatives that foster greater community engagement and partnership across the sector;
- Distribute and disseminate promising practices related to improving youth learning outcomes across Canadian communities; and
- Foster a community that supports promising practices and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Open Call:

There have been two open calls for applications since the fund was launched. The first round of funding through the Access Innovation Fund was awarded to 12 community-based organizations from across Canada. [Learn more here.](#) The second open call is currently in the review phase and those projects will be announced in early 2022. A third open call is planned for the summer of 2022.

The combined priorities of the open call projects:

- Involve beneficiary youth in their design, delivery or evaluation
- Seek to learn and share what works, or did not work
- Demonstrate good value for money
- Demonstrate strong impact on their communities of focus
- Show strong relationship with the communities of focus
- Are Rural and/or Northern led
- Support youth living with disabilities

Section 2 – Scope of Work

2.0 Evaluation Objectives and Criteria

During the second and third year of the Access Innovation Fund, the winning applicant will work closely with the RHF to:

1. Refine the evaluation framework designed in Phase 1 as required. This may include, but is not limited to, customizing it to the grantees, and adjusting to any relevant and reasonable shifts in the scope of the projects.
2. **Complete** annual and mid-term reporting requirements for data on indicators (including but not limited to: number of youth served and their retention rates in the program; high school enrollment, absenteeism, and credit accumulation; high school graduation rates (e.g., on-time, +1 year, +2 years, +3 years); post-secondary education application).
3. **Complete targeted qualitative surveys** by gathering supplementary information from recipients and partners to enrich the quantitative indicator data through targeted qualitative surveys, with particular emphasis on organizational effectiveness and innovation. The nature, frequency and timing of these surveys is outlined in the evaluation framework. However, this may be modified during the evaluation phase as required.
4. Collect administrative data that will help evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of the Fund.
5. **Evaluate the fund at the grantee level by completing interim and final evaluations of each funded initiative. There will be approximately 40 initiatives at the start of this evaluation phase. Subsequent open calls will add 20 – 30 initiatives per calendar year.**
6. Evaluate the fund at the funder level by completing a **mid-point and summative evaluation of the impact of the Access Innovation Fund as an aggregate of the grants and capacity building opportunities created.**

Section 3 – Application Selection Process

3.0 Criteria for RFP applicants

All applicants will be reviewed by the RHF's Catapult Canada team. The team is not obliged to accept the lowest, or any, bid. Applicants will be evaluated on the criteria below. These criteria will be the basis for review of the written proposals and interviews.

The winning applicant will demonstrate:

- Proven track record of organizational experience with similar evaluation processes in scope and/or content;
- An appropriate methodology for conducting the evaluation;
- Knowledge and experience of the education and training sectors, in particular in regard to data availability and applicability;
- Knowledge and experience of community-based organizations (priority will be given to organizations with knowledge and experience with youth-serving organizations);
- Experience, reach or networks that support capacity to work in various communities across Canada; and
- Excellent facilitation and report-writing skills.

3.1 Proposal Submission

To apply for this RFP,

- (1) Download and fill out the application form, [available here](#);
- (2) Send your completed application form and supporting documents via email to Ikem Opara (Ikem.Opara@rhf-frh.ca);
- (3) Ensure that the subject line reads as “**Catapult Canada Evaluator RFP**”; and
- (4) For consideration, all applications should be sent to Ikem Opara no later than **January 20, 2022, 5:00 pm EST**.