

# Non-Profit Guide

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# 1 Welcome to the Emerging Leaders Placement Project



# Message from the WIL Founder & President



Welcome to the Emerging Leaders Placement Project! I am so excited that you are here, and even more excited for what lies ahead.

In 2001, I started the Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation because, as a young woman starting my career, fresh out of university, I was searching for my life purpose. I wanted to do work that uplifted others and make a positive difference. I was also looking for mentors to help me build confidence, find clarity, and lead with purpose.

This is what the Emerging Leaders Placement Project is all about: believing in the leadership potential of youth, and giving them the tools, support, and opportunities to use their skills and make a difference in their community. This project connects youth across Canada with meaningful volunteer placements in nonprofit organizations doing incredible work. Youth from all backgrounds are given meaningful, purpose-driven opportunities to contribute, grow, and connect with their communities. Every act of volunteer service, no matter how small it may seem, adds up to something powerful.

This work would not be possible without committed partners like you! You play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of inclusive leaders by opening volunteer opportunities, providing support, and offering real-world experience. Our partnership is all about ensuring volunteer opportunities are both impactful for youth and responsive to community needs. We know that young individuals bring curiosity, energy, and fresh ideas. When paired with your guidance, experience, and organizational structure, the result will be a powerful exchange of learning and leadership.

At WIL, we believe in inclusive leadership, and, through this project, we have further expanded our mission to empower women and youth through leadership initiatives. This guide will help you understand how we will work together to support volunteer placements and foster a meaningful experience. The Emerging Leaders Project team is here to support you every step of the way, and we deeply appreciate your commitment to inclusive leadership, community-building, and mentorship.

Together, we are building stronger communities and a more inclusive future. Thanks for being part of this national initiative to empower Canada's emerging leaders! Together, we are building Rising Leaders, Lasting Change.

With gratitude,

**Maya Kanigan**

Maya Kanigan, BComm.

Project Manager, Emerging Leaders Placement Project

Founder & President, Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation



# About the Emerging Leaders Placement Project

The Emerging Leaders Placement Project, led by the Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation and funded by Canada Service Corps, is a national initiative that connects youth aged 14–30 across Canada with meaningful volunteer placements. This project will help youth to gain workplace-relevant experience and build important skills while giving back to their community. The Emerging Leaders Placement Project is empowering youth from all backgrounds to lead with purpose, volunteer with organizations that reflect their interests and passions, and support their community.

This project will see over 240 youth volunteers throughout Canada contribute more than 28,800 hours of service with 20+ nonprofit organizations including volunteer opportunities at WIL and its 10 chapters across Canada (Vancouver, Victoria, Okanagan, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal). We are especially committed to supporting emerging leaders from Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities. Their lived experiences, identities, and perspectives are welcomed, respected, and considered to be central to building a stronger, more inclusive Canada.

This project will equip young Canadians with skills, experiences, and opportunities to make meaningful contributions to their communities. The volunteer placements will focus on critical themes such as reconciliation, inclusivity, environmental preservation, civic engagement, and resilience.

Through orientation, workshops, mentorship, and collaborative volunteer placements, participants will build confidence, contribute meaningfully, and join a national network of young changemakers. Together, you are helping to build stronger, more inclusive communities while supporting young individuals to develop their leadership skills and ability to create positive impacts.



## *Rising Leaders, Lasting Change*

## Our Mission

We empower youth across Canada through meaningful volunteer placements that build leadership, foster mentorship, and promote personal and professional growth, in partnership with nonprofit organizations to strengthen communities.

## Our Vision

Empowered youth across Canada – unlocking their leadership potential, contributing meaningfully to their communities, and shaping an inclusive, equitable future through volunteer service.

## Our Values



### – Equity & Inclusion

Creating volunteer opportunities that celebrate diverse voices, foster a sense of belonging, and empower youth to make meaningful contributions to their communities.



### – Mentorship

Fostering resilience, cultivating future leaders, and accelerating personal and professional growth – building a generation equipped to lead with confidence, compassion, and impact.



### – Empowerment

Empowering youth to lead with purpose and confidence. Together, we're building stronger, more inclusive communities.



### – Reconciliation

Advancing truth, justice, and healing in building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.



### – Growth

Developing adaptability and pursuing learning opportunities for continuous improvement and leadership skill-building.



### – Engagement

Working together with youth and not-for-profit partners to ensure meaningful volunteer placements that create positive community impact.



# Overview of the Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation



## Building a Community of Leadership

The Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation is a national non-profit organization that has been championing equity in leadership since 2001. WIL helps women—including those from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) and underrepresented communities—build confidence, gain access to opportunities, and further develop their leadership skills.

With over 200,000 community members and local chapters across Canada, WIL offers mentorship programs, leadership forums, and skills development resources and events. WIL currently has 10 chapters across Canada (Vancouver, Victoria, Okanagan, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal). WIL highlights diverse role models, celebrates women's achievements, and brings together a wide network of passionate changemakers.

WIL is proud to lead the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, which you are now part of as a partner organization! This initiative helps young individuals throughout Canada explore leadership, gain hands-on experience, and build meaningful connections in their communities and beyond.

Each of us has the power to make a difference. WIL is about working together to get there.

WIL is a welcoming and inclusive space for women of all identities, non-binary individuals, youth, and allies of all genders who share the vision of creating more diverse leadership in Canada, as well as promoting equitable, diverse, and inclusive environments. By getting involved, you are providing meaningful opportunities for young individuals to lead and playing a vital role in their growth as future leaders!

📢 Be part of our growing community of 200,000+ women and allies advancing inclusive leadership and development across Canada! Get leadership content, event invites, and opportunities sent to your inbox. All of our partners and their employees are encouraged to email [leaders.wil@gmail.com](mailto:leaders.wil@gmail.com) to join our free newsletter.

🌐 You can also learn more about WIL at <https://www.womeninleadership.ca/>.



## 2 Partnering with Us

Together, we are strengthening communities and equipping the next generation with the tools to lead lasting change.



# Benefits of Partnering

Partnering with the Emerging Leaders Placement Project is more than just hosting volunteers. It is an opportunity to build capacity, inspire young individuals, and be part of a national initiative supported by Canada Service Corps that is shaping the future of inclusive leadership and civic engagement. This project connects you with emerging leaders who are eager and interested in contributing, learning, and growing.



## As a partner organization, you will:

- Expand your capacity without having to take on volunteer recruitment alone;
- Access ready-to-contribute youth volunteers who reflect Canada's diversity;
- Co-create meaningful volunteer roles that support your mission and impact;
- Receive ongoing support from the Emerging Leaders Placement Project team throughout the volunteer placements;
- Gain national visibility through WIL's communications platforms, including social media, newsletters, events, and webinars;
- Be recognized for your contributions;
- Join a growing network of purpose-driven individuals and organizations committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and youth empowerment.

This partnership is built to work for you.

Our team supports you every step of the way, from recruiting volunteers based on your needs to matching you with participants aligned with your mission and values. Volunteers arrive with orientation, leadership training, and a genuine commitment to community service.

By welcoming young volunteers into your organization, you are playing a vital role in shaping the next generation of leaders. These volunteer placements provide more than just hands-on experience. They offer youth the opportunity to build confidence, discover their strengths, and deepen their commitment to community and leadership. Your involvement is instrumental in shaping the skills, future careers, and lifelong community commitment of these emerging young leaders.

## The Role and Impact of Nonprofit Partners

What a successful partnership looks like:

- Providing support and guidance: Help youth grow by offering encouragement, constructive feedback, and clear expectations.
- Creating a supportive and inclusive environment: Ensure young volunteers feel safe, respected, valued, and included as part of the team.
- Facilitating meaningful learning opportunities: Engage youth in purposeful tasks that promote responsibility, initiative, and collaboration.
- Encouraging curiosity, learning, and growth: Share your knowledge, welcome their questions, and support their desire to explore and improve.
- Communicate with WIL Placement Staff on results, based on qualitative and quantitative outputs.



Your involvement will make a lasting difference as it will help build stronger communities and inspire young individuals to stay engaged in civic life well beyond their volunteer placement. By investing your time and care in these emerging leaders, you are helping them build a strong foundation for future success—whether in your sector or beyond. You are contributing to a more empowered, connected, and inclusive future for all. Help us foster a lifelong commitment to community engagement, connection, and leadership among youth.



# Indigenous Reconciliation and Cultural Safety Resource Materials

The Emerging Leaders Placement Project is grounded in a commitment to reconciliation and cultural safety. As a nonprofit partner, you will have access to some resource materials designed to help create inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environments for Indigenous youth volunteers and ensure cultural safety for all. These materials will offer some guidance on your reconciliation journey. We encourage all nonprofit partner organizations to review these resource materials and reflect on how they can support reconciliation, including through their volunteer placements.



An Indigenous Knowledge Keeper is a core member of the Emerging Leaders Placement Project team, providing insight and direction to ensure reconciliation is meaningfully woven into the project, its plans, training, and communications. They also support the development of resource materials to help you advance reconciliation and create spaces that honour Indigenous perspectives.

Additionally, youth volunteers participating in this project will gain access to a Leadership Development Webinar Series that includes sessions on reconciliation and cultural safety. This has been designed to help them deepen their understanding, grow as inclusive leaders, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Indigenous youth participants will also benefit from tailored opportunities and culturally grounded support through their journeys.

# 3 Volunteer Engagement and Placement

We take a youth-centered and community-informed approach to volunteer engagement by working closely with nonprofit partners to create placements that are meaningful, mutually beneficial, and culturally safe. This includes co-creating volunteer roles with youth, prioritizing culturally safe and accessible placements, and ensuring that every young person feels valued, respected, and supported. We are committed to ensuring that all placements are barrier free and accessible so that every young person, regardless of background or ability, can fully participate, contribute, and grow through their volunteer experience.



# Volunteer Recruitment, Selection, and Matching Process

At Women in Leadership (WIL) and the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, we believe that everyone belongs and everyone is valued. You are joining a project that values equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Each participant brings their own lived experiences, skills, and ideas. We are proud to collaborate with nonprofit organizations that prioritize and support inclusion, cultural safety, and the well-being of all volunteers. Our diversity is a strength. This includes differences among individuals and groups, including age, culture, faith, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

We begin the volunteer recruitment process by conducting a thorough needs analysis with your organization to understand the roles you need filled, the required skills, and your broader goals. This ensures that our volunteer placement efforts are aligned with your mission and that we attract young individuals who are genuinely positioned and passionate to contribute meaningfully to your work.

Our recruitment strategy is designed to be youth-friendly, inclusive, and responsive to the insights of our Youth Steering Committee. We promote volunteer opportunities through a wide range of digital and community channels to reach a diverse network of young individuals, including those from underrepresented backgrounds. Every applicant is interviewed by a project team member to assess readiness, interest, availability, and alignment with both the project and our nonprofit partner organizations. Once volunteers are selected, we prioritize your organizational needs in the matching process and then consider the interests, goals, and strengths of the youth volunteers for placement purposes. This approach ensures that each volunteer placement is well-suited for both the nonprofit partner and the individual volunteer.

If your volunteer needs evolve throughout the project, our Placement Coordinators are available to help adjust placements and provide continued support to make the experience as seamless and beneficial as possible. We invite you to contact us at [leaders.wil@gmail.com](mailto:leaders.wil@gmail.com) to discuss your volunteer recruitment needs.



# Volunteer Onboarding, Training, and Leadership Development



As part of this project, all youth volunteers complete a foundational onboarding and a series of mandatory online training modules before beginning their placement. These modules are designed to prepare them by covering key topics such as safety, volunteer responsibilities, inclusion, and collaboration. They are accessible and youth-friendly, emphasizing empathy, cultural awareness, and equity to ensure volunteers feel confident and ready to contribute meaningfully to your organization. Volunteers are also informed that they may be required to complete additional site-specific orientation or training provided by your organization before beginning their placement. This ensures they receive clear information about specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

In addition, we are committed to the ongoing leadership development of all participants. Young individuals involved in this project have exclusive access to a Leadership Development Workshop Webinar Series, which equips them with essential tips and skills such as communication, teamwork, resilience, and inclusive leadership. These leadership training sessions will support the growth of our volunteers both during their placement and beyond.

Through this comprehensive approach, you can feel confident that the volunteers you receive are trained, engaged, and committed to making a positive impact aligned with your mission.

# Ongoing Support from the Project Team

At the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, we believe that meaningful support leads to enriching experiences for both youth participants and nonprofit partner organizations. Our team is here to guide, assist, and collaborate with you throughout the duration of your involvement. Regular check-ins, open feedback channels, and a spirit of continuous improvement are central to how we operate. Your perspective as a partner organization is essential to the success of this initiative. We are here to listen, respond, and help strengthen the overall volunteer experience.

Should a challenge arise during a volunteer placement, we recommend starting with a conversation between the youth participant and their volunteer supervisor or coordinator. If further support is needed, our project team is always available to provide assistance. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to discuss a matter further, we ask that you contact us at [leaders.wil@gmail.com](mailto:leaders.wil@gmail.com). We are committed to timely, respectful communication and will gladly work with you to find solutions or offer guidance.

Throughout the project, members of our team, including Placement Coordinators, may reach out to check in on your experience and the progress of volunteer placements. These conversations will help us learn from your insights, celebrate successes, and ensure that every volunteer placement is progressing in a way that is safe, productive, and aligned with shared values.

Your work matters, and so does your experience as a partner. Thank you for being part of this national initiative to empower the next generation of inclusive, community-driven leaders.





# 4 Health, Safety, and Wellness for Volunteers



# Duty of Care



The health, safety, and well-being of the volunteers are top priorities throughout their placement. Whether volunteering in person, remotely, or within local communities, we are committed to partnering with nonprofit organizations that provide safe, respectful, and supportive environments. Every volunteer deserves to feel valued, heard, and protected.

We encourage volunteers to speak up if they ever feel unsafe or uncomfortable. They are informed about who to contact and the steps to take in various situations to ensure their safety. For example, in emergencies, volunteers know to call 911 immediately. If a safety concern arises during their volunteer placement, they are advised to speak first with their volunteer supervisor or coordinator at your organization. All nonprofit partners and volunteers are encouraged to also reach out to the Emerging Leaders Placement Project team if they wish to escalate a concern.

At all times, reports of safety concerns or unsafe situations are handled with the utmost care, confidentiality, and respect. Volunteers are assured that they will never face negative consequences for raising a concern.

The Emerging Leaders Placement Project team also prioritizes mental health and well-being with physical safety. Volunteers are encouraged to reach out if they need support or accommodations to help them succeed in their roles. The Emerging Leaders Placement Project team fosters a culture of care and understanding and is ready to work with participants and partner organizations to adjust volunteer placements as needed.



# Reporting Procedures for Safeguarding Concerns

We trust and respect that our nonprofit partners share our commitment to providing safe, supportive, and inclusive environments for all volunteers. In the event that a health, safety, or wellness-related incident occurs involving a youth participant placed through the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, we ask that your designated volunteer supervisor, coordinator, or organizational representative promptly notify our team.

This step ensures that we are informed and able to provide any necessary follow-up and support to both the volunteer and your organization. We are not asking you to change or duplicate your internal reporting procedures for safeguarding purposes. Rather, this coordination helps us uphold our collective duty of care and maintain alignment across the project.

We thank you for your collaboration and your continued commitment to the safety, support, and well-being of the young individuals participating in this project.



# 5 Partnership Agreements





# Needs Analysis

At the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, we prioritize strong, collaborative relationships with our nonprofit partners. A key part of this process is taking the time to understand your organization's goals, priorities, and volunteer needs. To support this, we complete a brief **needs analysis** and partnership discussion with you. This discussion helps us learn about your ideal volunteer profile, the communities you serve, and any specific skills, timelines, and/or onboarding practices for your placements. This process ensures that youth placements are intentional, well-supported, and set up to benefit both your organization and the volunteer.

We are deeply committed to matching youth volunteers who are aligned with your mission and ready to make a meaningful contribution to your organization. Should your volunteer needs shift at any point throughout the project, we are on-hand to support you. Our team will work with you to reassess, adjust, and continue placing volunteers who are available, prepared, and committed to your mission and success.



# 6 Contact Information



# Key Contacts

## Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation

General Inquiries



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