Get to know the Office of Community Engagement
WHAT DOES THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DO?

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

The Office of Community Engagement connects the McMaster and Hamilton community as we learn how to work together to contribute to the public good.

Whether helping community groups navigate the University, advising or supervising students who are seeking to connect with the Hamilton community, or helping to catalyze a new research idea with McMaster faculty, office staff serve as partnership developers.

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OUR ROLE: SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS

Our staff are partnership brokers. With a wide range of expertise, we are a resource for the development of community-campus partnerships in Hamilton.

We can help you move your ideas into action by creating opportunities to build relationships, share knowledge, and to ultimately make a difference through your work. We work to develop and support multi-stakeholder collaboration because a variety of perspectives, skills, and approaches are required to address the complex challenges facing our communities.

In short, we can achieve more by working together.

We develop partnerships in the following ways:

**LIAISING**

- We help make connections between you and internal or external partners as well as share information about your event/initiative with our networks.

Submit a community-campus event to share in our monthly newsletter. We can also provide you with proactive support to connect and form relationships.

**SPONSORING**

- We provide small grants to support new or developing community-campus partnerships.

If you already have a community and campus partner present and are looking to develop your partnership, apply for a Community-Campus Catalyst Grant Fund.

**ADVISING**

- We meet with you to consult and advise on a community-campus project or initiative and help to build capacity at an individual level. Think of us as a critical friend!

If you have an idea with partnership potential that aligns with our mandate, connect with us to set-up a meeting to follow-up with your request. We can provide feedback on ideas, potential partners, and proposals.

**FACILITATING**

- We help build capacity for programs or organizations, where our office can play a small or large role in your project or initiative.

We can convene a meeting to connect potential partners, design a workshop to facilitate a dialogue, or link your initiative to one of our office’s existing programs.

**WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP BROKER?**

Partnership brokering involves individuals or organizations working in an intermediary role with partners to strengthen the partnering process and ensure that the collaboration between stakeholders achieves its shared goals and intended impact. Partnership brokers operate in a range of styles (often as ‘facilitators’ or ‘coordinators’). Some operate as ‘internal’ to a partnership (i.e., working from within one of the partner organizations) and others as ‘external’ to a partnership (i.e., as independent professionals working on behalf of all partners).

- Adapted from Partnership Brokers Association, 2010

**WHY DO WE NEED PARTNERSHIP BROKERS?**

Observation of, and research into, a wide range of partnerships over many years suggested that where there was one (or more than one) person active in the intermediary role, partnerships tended to have deeper engagement, greater focus, and more impact. It is increasingly clear that the intermediating role is critical - and so the idea (and the terminology) of partnership “brokering” is used today.

- Adapted from Partnership Brokers Association, 2010
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

WORKING TOGETHER FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE GREATER HAMILTON

In June 2016, McMaster’s Community Engagement Strategy was launched to set the direction for the next 5 years of community engagement at McMaster. The vision of this strategy is working together for an inclusive, sustainable greater Hamilton. McMaster’s Office of Community Engagement was formed to support the pursuit of McMaster’s Community Engagement Strategy, which includes 4 goals:

Action-oriented principles of community engagement were co-developed between community and campus partners to provide a framework for how to work together. The principles include: Relationships, Reciprocity, Equity, Continuity, Openness to Learning, & Commitment to Act. The primary goal of McMaster’s community engagement strategy is to establish these principles as the foundation of community-campus partnerships.

1. Establish the Principles of Community Engagement as the foundation of community-campus partnerships

2. Build bridges between the University and the greater Hamilton community, embedding the University in the community and inviting community into the University

3. Align with neighbourhoods, community groups, governments, and institutions to partner on joint ventures and collaborative projects that respond to community-driven issues and priorities

4. Assess and learn from the outcomes and impacts of our work on an ongoing basis
OCE STAFF

SHEILA SAMMON, CO-DIRECTOR (ACADEMIC)
Sheila works closely with senior administration to support the pursuit of the University’s community engagement goals. Sheila also oversees the Community Engagement Minor, including the CityLAB Hamilton Semester-in-Residence, and brings faculty expertise to the development of community-engaged education programs.

DAVE HEIDEBRECHT, MANAGER
Dave oversees the day-to-day operations of the office, supports staff members in their work, and serves as a sounding board for new partnership opportunities on and off campus.

C.A. KLASSEN, COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH COORDINATOR
C.A. responds to requests from community members and faculty to find the right person to talk to about a research project or need. C.A. oversees the McMaster Research Shop and is an experienced evaluator.

ASHLEY SHINDE, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Ashley ensures all administration in the office runs smoothly from Human Resources to Finance to tracking requests and event planning, while making sure everything remains organized and in order.

JEFF WINGARD, CO-DIRECTOR (COMMUNITY)
Jeff builds connections with Hamilton community organizations and brings a community lens to office activities. Jeff also works closely with staff to support community-engaged research partnerships and the McMaster Access Strategy.

SASHAINA SINGH, PROJECT COORDINATOR
Sashaina is a partnership developer who builds relationships between various community and campus partners on initiatives related to poverty and inclusion, as well as neighbourhood development in Hamilton. Sashaina manages the Office’s social media and newsletter communications.

JAY CARTER, COMMUNITY-ENGAGED EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGER
Jay works with Faculty, staff, and students to support McMaster’s commitment to more meaningful community engagement by developing resources, educating about community engagement, and by bringing the community into decision-making, course work, and co-curricular activities.

CELESTE LICORISH, ACCESS PROGRAM MANAGER
Celeste is developing and implementing an Access Strategy to foster and create pathways for underrepresented groups to access post-secondary education at McMaster. She acts as an expert and main point of contact for community groups, Faculties, student support departments, students, applicants, and their parents on issues related to access for underrepresented groups.
COMMUNITY-ENGAGED EDUCATION

Community Engaged Education is a type of experiential education that benefits both the community and the student; may occur both within a course as well as through a co-curricular experience; can be distinguished from other types of experiential education by focusing on both the community engagement taking place and learning that is occurring.

WHY DOES THIS PROGRAM EXIST?

Community engagement is one of the University’s three strategic priorities. McMaster’s Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) with the Ontario Government has already set the tone for increasing community engagement and experiential learning: “Ontario’s colleges and universities will drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, skills development and community engagement through teaching and learning, research, and service.” At McMaster, this focus has resulted in the development of an increasing number of curricular and co-curricular community-engaged education courses and programs that are seeking support and advice.

EXAMPLES FROM THIS PROGRAM:

- The Minor in Community Engagement was created in 2015 to provide students with an opportunity to more intentionally build community engagement into their undergrad experience.
- CityLAB Hamilton launched in 2017 to provide students with real-world experience working on City-driven challenges.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THIS PROGRAM?

Our community-engaged education team supports faculty and staff to develop new community-engaged courses and programs, helps to make connections with individuals, groups, organizations who may be interested in partnering on a new educational program, and points students toward community-engaged curricular and co-curricular opportunities.

How can you get in touch with the program?

Jay Carter, Community-Engaged Education Program Manager
cartej5@mcmaster.ca

Learn more: https://community.mcmaster.ca/education/overview/
CITYLAB HAMILTON

CityLAB works with city staff members to identify complex challenges related to the City of Hamilton’s strategic priorities and matches them with faculty and courses from Hamilton’s three post-secondary institutions—McMaster University, Mohawk College, and Redeemer University College.

WHY DOES THIS PROGRAM EXIST?

CityLAB is inspired by the CityStudio model of campus-city collaboration based in Vancouver, BC. Its co-founders closely supported the creation of CityLAB and provided valuable guidance throughout the development process. Launched in 2017, CityLAB is currently being piloted as a partnership. McMaster’s Office of Community Engagement is the primary liaison between McMaster University and CityLAB, and also leads the CityLAB Semester in Residence.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THIS PROGRAM?

CityLAB is an innovation hub that brings together student, academic, and civic leaders to co-create a better Hamilton for all. CityLAB creates the space to develop solutions that support the City’s Strategic Priorities by providing a rich experiential learning environment for students and city staff alike.

EXAMPLES FROM THIS PROGRAM:

• Pedestrian Mobility Hub Pilot: In Fall 2018, a group of CityLAB students partnered with the Hamilton Mobility Collective to develop plans to pilot a pedestrian mobility hub on King William St. The pilot was launched on 100in1Day Hamilton in June 2019.


How can you get in touch with the program?

Jay Carter, Community-Engaged Education Program Manager (cartej5@mcmaster.ca)

Learn more: citylabhamilton.com
COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

Our office facilitates and supports research at McMaster with connection and benefit to Hamilton communities through the Research Shop, by supporting connections between faculty members and community groups, and liaising between partners and regional and national CBR networks.

WHY DOES THIS PROGRAM EXIST?

We understand that community organizations are under pressure to demonstrate value and relevance through evidence in a shifting funding environment. Students are also looking for experiential learning and transferable job skills to give them better chances of success as they enter a competitive labour market. Finally, national research funding bodies (like the Tri-Council) are increasingly funding community-based research for faculty, but building genuine relationships takes time, which isn’t always funded.

EXAMPLES FROM THIS PROGRAM:

• We supported knowledge mobilization activities for a community-based needs assessment of Two-spirit and LGBTQ+ community members in Hamilton, led by Dr. Suzanne Mills. This involved facilitating report printing, co-organizing a report launch event, and speaking to media about the project. We are now exploring opportunities to partner with the Faculty of Social Sciences to continue further mobilization.
• Read more: https://brighterworld.mcmaster.ca/articles/survey-says-hamilton-has-huge-gaps-in-lgbtq-support/

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THIS PROGRAM?

Through the Community-Based Research program, we offer friendly connections and navigation to students, faculty, and community members who want to use research to contribute to the public good, but don’t yet know how to find each other.

How can you get in touch with the program?

C.A. Klassen, Community-Based Research Coordinator
(borstadc@mcmaster.ca)
MCMASTER RESEARCH SHOP

The McMaster Research Shop is a co-curricular volunteer program where graduate and upper-year undergraduate students work on research projects in partnership with a community organization. We work with public, non-profit, and community groups to provide plain-language answers to their research questions.

WHY DOES THIS PROGRAM EXIST?

On the direction of the provost, the Research Shop has transitioned from the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) to sit within the Office of Community Engagement (OCE). Over 2017-2018, the OCE worked with the Coordinator and FSS to transfer program governance to the OCE, while also navigating potential long-term funding and partnership opportunities.

EXAMPLES FROM THIS PROGRAM:

- Student volunteers interviewed staff members at St. Matthew’s House in order to inform a redesign of their program data collection. The organization now has an accessible online spreadsheet that captures and summarizes relevant information about client needs and interactions, which they will use to connect participants to services more effectively.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THIS PROGRAM?

The Research Shop recruits, trains, and supervises an average of 25-30 students each semester. In this program, students develop and apply their research, teamwork, communication, and other professional skills to real-world problems, while also building their understanding of community. On the community side, organizations gain access to a pool of skilled and well-trained student researchers and get answers to their research questions. These organizations often don’t have the expertise or resources to conduct research themselves. In this way, the Research Shop is helping McMaster to build positive relationships with community partners and meet the demand for McMaster’s research expertise.

How can you get in touch with the program?

C.A. Klassen, Community-Based Research Coordinator
(borstadc@mcmaster.ca)

Learn more: https://community.mcmaster.ca/research/research-shop/
MCMASTER COMMUNITY POVERTY INITIATIVE

The McMaster Community Poverty Initiative (MCPI) is a group of faculty and staff dedicated to research, advocacy, education and action related to poverty reduction. The MCPI is coordinated by the Office of Community Engagement staff and together with our partners in the Hamilton community, we strive to use knowledge for social change.

WHY DOES THIS PROGRAM EXIST?

MCPI was formed in 2007 by concerned McMaster faculty and staff interested in expanding the University’s role in addressing local conditions of poverty. MCPI works cooperatively with other campus and community groups to enhance relationships between the University and Hamilton communities. MCPI seeks to enhance understanding of poverty and to advocate for systemic changes needed to eliminate it.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THIS PROGRAM?

MCPI demonstrates McMaster’s commitment to contributing to the public good by working with community partners in pursuit of a more equitable and just society. MCPI helps to build cross-faculty relationships and community-campus partnerships. MCPI educates campus and community members about the causes and impacts of poverty.

EXAMPLES FROM THIS PROGRAM:

- Homelessness Film Night – As an experiential learning opportunity for students to learn more about issues related to poverty in the Hamilton community, we hosted a film night where students were able to watch films made by front-line workers or people who have experienced homelessness first hand to see what homelessness looks like from their perspective.

How can you get in touch with the program?

Sashaina Singh, MCPI Coordinator
(singhs37@mcmaster.ca)

Learn more: poverty.mcmaster.ca
MCMASTER ACCESS STRATEGY

McMaster’s Access Strategy assists academically qualified students from underrepresented groups in Hamilton and surrounding communities to access university education at the undergraduate level. We work with students to help navigate the application and admissions process and are here to ensure success through to graduation.

WHY DOES THIS PROGRAM EXIST?

In 2017, after extensive consultation with key campus and community stakeholders, McMaster University committed to “developing a formal access strategy that would both align existing initiatives across McMaster while also identifying additional resources needed to improve pathways and supports to McMaster for underrepresented groups in Hamilton and beyond”.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THIS PROGRAM?

This strategy, which is being led by the Office, will help students from marginalized and underrepresented groups gain access to post-secondary education at McMaster. The goal is to “increase the number of students from under-represented groups and non-traditional backgrounds who gain admission to and graduate from McMaster University and, as a result, will be better positioned for work and life success.”

1 See McMaster Building Bridges: McMaster University Access Strategy 2018 by Jeff Wingard (Co-Director, OCE)
2 See footnote above.

How can you get in touch with the program?

Celeste Licorish, Access Program Manager (access1@mcmaster.ca)
HOW CAN YOU CONNECT WITH THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Whether you are McMaster faculty, staff, or student or a member of the Hamilton community, the Office of Community Engagement is here to help you as you develop relationships, ideas, and strategies towards new or developing community-campus partnerships. If you would like to connect with someone from our team, this is the process to expect:

- **Contact us with your request:** In order for us to understand who best to connect you with, please reach out with your request and as much detail as you can provide through one of the following routes:
  a. Email - community@mcmaster.ca
  b. Phone - 905 525 9140 ext. 26279
  c. Website - Submit a request via the contact form on our website.

- **Assessment:** After you contact us, our staff team will assess your request and determine who best to connect with you. Some requests may be very clear and we may be able to follow-up shortly after you contact us. However, our staff also meet weekly to review requests that require more discussion in order for us to best serve your needs. During this time, we may also follow up with you for more information.

- **Initial consultation:** Based on our assessment, we will follow up with you (and any partners or colleagues if requested) to arrange an initial consultation. During this meeting, we will seek further information from you while also beginning to outline possible ways in which we can help or identify if we are unable to help.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AS A RESULT?

As a result of the initial consultation, the staff member who met with you will follow up to reaffirm recommendations noted during the meeting, as well as any next steps that were discussed. Though each request is unique, the following are examples of common next steps:

- **Connections or Introductions:** Many times we play the role of liaison by connecting people and ideas. In these cases, we will provide introductions that are discussed during the consultation.

- **Advice:** In some cases, a meeting is all that is needed. In these situations, we advise on a project or concept during the meeting rather than get actively involved. Otherwise, we may continue to advise in future meetings or through formal committees.

- **Sponsorship:** If you are looking for funding, we may point you to resources available through our office or identify other grant or sponsorship opportunities aligned with your request.

- **Facilitation:** If there is a need for further support to convene a future conversation or facilitate a workshop, we will discuss this and suggest possible options going forward.

WHAT LEVEL OF SUPPORT CAN I EXPECT?

Through the process outlined above, we will collectively gain clarity on what our office can do to support the development of your community-campus partnership going forward. That being said, our office does have a limited amount of staff time and resources, and as such, we are not able to guarantee any specific levels of support until we have assessed your request, how it aligns with the University’s community engagement goals, and met with you to better understand what you are doing and whether we can further your work.

Sometimes requests may not align at all with our role or mandate, and as such we will not be able to move forward with any support at all. In other cases, a request may result in much more in depth support that involves a combination of connections, advice, sponsorship, and facilitation. However, our support will likely land somewhere in the middle of this range.