

OTF Grant Application

Application Details

Application Type	Single Application	Applicant Contact	Jutta Mason
Created On	28/06/2010	Applicant Email	jutta.mason@sympatico.ca

Organization Details

Organization Name	The Centre for Local Research into Public Space	Organization Type	Registered Charity
Address	242 Havelock Street	City	Toronto
		Province	ON
Postal Code	M6H 3B9	Organization Email	mail@celos.ca
Phone	416-533-0153	Fax	

Summary Questions

Application ID	105125	Program	Community Grants
OTF Request Amount	\$100,000	Project Total Cost	\$104,000.00
Deadline hoping to submit for	1-July-2010	Request Term	12 to 24 months
When do you intend to start your project?			2010-11-15
Type of funding requested	Project or Operating Only		

[Click here to open the Workplan](#)

Budget

Expense Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
project coordinator/workbook writer	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,000
workbook printing	\$0	\$2,100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,100
web development (1)	\$15,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,000
web development (2)	\$10,800	\$1,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,600
sub-projects coordinator/ field work	\$21,000	\$8,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$29,000
legal researcher	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
environmental teacher/coordinator	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
consultation lead/building resource teacher	\$2,600	\$2,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,200
workbook production	\$2,500	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,500
office	\$700	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$700
apprentice researchers	\$4,900	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,900

Budget Year 1

Expense Item	Type	Notes	Requested
project coordinator/workbook writer	Salary	200 hours (contract)	\$5,000
workbook printing	Program Expenses		\$0
web development (1)	Salary	375 hours (contract)	\$15,000
web development (2)	Salary	432 hours (contract)	\$10,800
sub-projects coordinator/ field work	Salary	840 hours (contract)	\$21,000
legal researcher	Salary	250 hours (contract)	\$10,000
environmental teacher/coordinator	Salary	100 hours (contract)	\$2,500
consultation lead/building resource teacher	Salary	65 hours (contract)	\$2,600
workbook production	Salary	100 hours (contract)	\$2,500
office	Administration	office expenses	\$700
apprentice researchers	Salary	350 hours, 10 apprentices	\$4,900

Budget Year 2

Expense Item	Type	Notes	Requested
project coordinator/workbook writer	Salary	120 hours (contract)	\$3,000
workbook printing	Program Expenses	quote provided plus taxes	\$2,100
web development (1)	Salary	25 hours (contract)	\$1,000

web development (2)	Salary	72 hours (contract)	\$1,800
sub-projects coordinator/ field work	Salary	320 hours (contract)	\$8,000
legal researcher	Salary		\$0
environmental teacher/coordinator	Salary	100 hours (contract)	\$2,500
consultation lead/building resource teacher	Salary	65 hours (contract)	\$2,600
workbook production	Salary	200 hours (contract)	\$4,000
office	Administration		\$0
apprentice researchers	Salary		\$0

Total Request Amount: **\$100,000**

Your Organizational Contribution

Is your organization contributing any in-kind or cash resources to this project/initiative? Yes

Cash \$4,000

In Kind \$0

External Sources of Revenue for this Initiative (if applicable)

Number of External Sources of Revenue for this Initiative (list up to five main sources) 0

Project Description

What do you want to do with OTF funding? Provide a clear and concrete description, including: What do you want to do?

What we want to do:

- 1. build the database capacity** to (a) enrich the research data, (b) feature a friendly, simple “How do I...” section in connection with each of the issues addressed and (c) develop a function that allows users to comment and add information, a kind of local version of Wikipedia relating to public commons
- 2. show-and-tell:** collaborate with park users and city staff on ten limited projects exploring the possibilities in existing laws and policies, for strengthening neighbourhoods. We want to produce a how-to “workbook” about the projects, as well as documenting them on the database. The principle in every case is purposeful, informed collaboration between the people in charge and the people affected by specific issues. An important guide in this effort is the work of **Elinor Ostrom**, who won the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics for her lifetime study of diverse, collaborative approaches to using common resources. We want to see how her findings can be applied to the public commons, in this case, urban parks.

“Show-and-tell” project details:

- 1. Playground accessibility law:** new federal legislation says that playgrounds must become accessible for physically challenged children in 5-15 years. The City’s proposal is to send out a phalanx of inspectors to do a citywide inventory of equipment that must be replaced. But previous safety standards released in 1998, incompletely understood by inspectors, led to a \$6 million playground replacement project for city parks in the five years that followed. The project is widely seen as wasteful of public funds and an unintended “dumbing down” of the playgrounds. Moreover, many people would not like to wait for 5 to 15 years, to add accessibility features – they want to begin making simple improvements in their local playground now. *CELOS was asked for help in this regard by playground users at four city playgrounds. We want to work with them, using the new law even before the regulations come out, to test a local approach to accessibility.*
- 2. Food in parks, skate lending at city rinks, and the City’s Cash handling policy:** Toronto switched to outsourcing all food service in its parks in 2001. At Dufferin Grove Park, a different approach developed, using small community cafés, run collaboratively with recreation staff, to enliven the playground in summer and the outdoor rink in winter. The funds raised in this way pay for extra programs, and for staff support for other community events. However, City Parks management fears that the city’s “staff cash-handling policy” may not cover this approach, and will attract negative attention for the

park cafés, from the auditor. The same worry exists for low-cost skate rentals run by recreation staff at three neighbourhood outdoor rinks, even though the program has attracted many newcomers to skating. CELOS has begun to collaborate with the auditors and with city management to adapt the application of the cash-handling policy. *Three groups of rink users and four park groups have asked for help from CELOS, in using community cafés to enliven the social space of their parks with food and skates. We want to help them try out their versions, which includes working out the cash-handling challenges to everyone's satisfaction.* One interesting element will be *finding a way to informally include free food for those who can't pay*, including kids (already the practice at Dufferin Grove, but alarming to auditors).

3. Food diversity pertaining to parks:

Three years ago the Ontario government broadened the food regulations to encourage more farmers' markets and community gatherings. CELOS wants *to collaborate with the Thorncliffe Park women's committee and City management to test the new "enabling" home-cooking rules for community groups offering food in public spaces.* We also want *to catalogue other community kitchens and make contact with their users.* Such kitchens are common in recreation centres, but often not used, because of fears (sometimes unfounded) of the regulations. An overly narrow interpretation of the regulations can slow down fledgling economic efforts (and park fundraising) unnecessarily. CELOS has good experience with community cafes serving healthy food from many cultures, and *wants work with others so this approach can be an alternative option suited to neighbourhood parks.*

4. Community consultation for repairs to public park facilities:

A new city policy for state-of-good-repair capital projects says that community consultation in such cases is not longer needed unless the Ward Councillor specifically asks. This appears to apply to projects as large as the recently revealed \$1 million Greenwood Rink rebuilding plans. But rink users there want input, to enliven the social space of the rink, and have asked CELOS to help them work with councillors and city management.

The city's aversion to community consultation is based on a real problem: frustrating, time-consuming, often controversial processes that cause long delays and may not bring the desired results for anybody. *In the case of the Greenwood Rink rebuild, CELOS wants to test alternative ways of negotiating consultation, using Elinor Ostrom's work as a guide, to see if the outcomes are better, and repeatable.* One practical example we want to use is the community-inspired Wallace Rink renovation of 2007. (<http://cityrinks.ca/wiki/uploads/Media2009-2010/StarSharpenUpOurRinks270210.pdf>)

5. Environmental initiatives:

In 2005, hundreds of park users worked together, under the leadership of Georgie Donais, to build an outdoor kitchen and cafe at the Dufferin Grove Park playground. City staff helped at every step. But a follow-up plan to install a public bio-toilet at the playground got into difficulty. There were a number of building code blocks, and there was opposition by some park neighbours to the concept of a composting toilet, not connected to the sewer. CELOS has been working with Georgie Donais, Rohan Walters and City management to restart the project, with recent signs of real progress. CELOS wants *to foster friendly, informed, problem-solving negotiations between neighbourhood people, management, and builders, as the project now resumes. We want to create a lively public forum for increasing the public "environmental literacy" and "law literacy" of everyone involved, including the children.* The aim here is to lay the foundation for similar possibilities at other city parks.

6. Capital projects:

The federal-provincial stimulus grants included funds for some park field houses in need

of repair. At MacGregor Park field house, CELOS helped park users to adapt the citywide one-size-fits-all work list to identifying fixes that were actually needed at this particular field house. Then collaboration with city staff began, and continues as construction proceeds, with promising results. Park users have contacted CELOS about *three other under-used park field houses in other parts of the city, wishing to reclaim them for greater community use. CELOS wants to collaborate with these park users and city staff, with a small scale "using-what-we-have" approach,* as an alternative to the customary decades-long planning for large, mall-like, multi-million-dollar community centres. This project also aims to help both park users and those in charge to get a working knowledge of the original intent of capital budget policies, which sometimes seem to constrain good use of existing public resources but may not have been meant that way.

7. Risk management:

Liability fears sometimes paralyze action in public spaces, and that issue needs attention. CELOS has been tracking a number of risk management policies to clarify their unintended bad effects. "Mandatory helmets for non-contact shinny hockey" is one such policy. In 2007, a policy requiring helmets for pick-up "pond hockey" resulted in plummeting attendance (and an alarming reduction in healthy exercise and public enjoyment) at previously well-used public outdoor rinks, i.e. those where enforcement was strict. City staff have agreed to collaborate on a study of the problem. This coming winter, *CELOS wants to use the issue as another opportunity for public "law literacy" and also "statistical literacy," particularly (but not only) among youthful shinny hockey players who have appealed for help.* The intent here is to (a) *address statistical puzzles* (rink injury claims for shinny hockey are astonishingly low, without evidence of a relationship with helmet use) and (b) *enlarge the scope of public negotiation between rink users and those in charge, about sensible risk management in public space.* In the following winter (2011/2012), *CELOS wants to follow up by working with rink users and those in charge, to apply the findings of this winter.*

8. Bake ovens, community gardens, music-making, pick-up sports, and other grassroots uses of parks

Community innovations at some neighbourhood parks have raised alarms for city management, resulting in the development of very specific new policies of the "thou shalt not" variety. These are generally written with very little and very late consultation with park users or even city council. They can be years in the making, with local innovations frozen in the meantime. *CELOS wants to work with one group particularly affected by the four-year, non-consultative process of developing a public bake-oven policy (still in limbo). Our object is to help this sample group get to "yes," testing an application of Elinor Ostrom's work as a practical alternative to writing new "thou shalt not" policies.*

CELOS has also been asked for help by both park users and park staff, regarding campfires, small non-commercial park performances using local talent, community gardens, and community pick-up sports (including bicycle polo, cricket, and dodgeball, as well as the more traditional ball hockey). All of these have been affected by recent interpretations of the city's permits policy. *CELOS wants to work with four of these groups to find more flexible ways to support community use of public space, with staff-and-user collaboration,* instead of new policies, whenever possible.

9. Conflict of Interest

Since it was founded, CELOS has been working side by side with front-line city staff to try new things in public space and solve problems. Some part-time recreation staff have also been part-time researchers for CELOS when not working at their city jobs. The close, local collaboration across the boundaries between park users, CELOS, and part-time staff has raised the question, for city management: are staff breaking the city's "conflict of interest" policy when they work so closely with outsiders? We want to enlarge public discussion about this important issue – what do citizens want of their

public spaces, and how closely can they work with city staff to achieve this? *We want to foster this discussion not in specific public meetings but in relation to all the practical projects enumerated here, so that the “conflict of interest” issue can benefit from a gradual working out among all the players, on the ground.*

10. Information bottlenecks

In the fall of 2009, Toronto started up its 311 information line, the one-call source for citizen inquiries. Because of our work with the city’s outdoor rinks, we soon found a problem – weather updates for ice conditions at the 49 compressor-cooled outdoor rinks were often slow or even non-existent. This was because the city’s policies require all information to 311 to come from a staff supervisor. But it meant that no one else (rink users or front-line staff) could contribute to updating the information – an information bottleneck. And since 311 is meant to be the single source of so much diverse information, wait times to get through have increased to the point where people are beginning to give up.

CELOS wants to use the enriched access to our database to test whether it’s possible to augment the 311 information with public input, but without challenging the 311 policies (which are understandable). This coming winter we would like to encourage both rink users and on-site rink staff to post ice conditions updates on the database, linked to our cityrinks.ca website. If it works well, we want to work with the city to find remedies to other information bottlenecks. The rink information project is a way to test the waters for more citizen engagement in sharing information about public space.

A note regarding policy changes: None of our work plan is directed to changing the policies – we feel that’s the work of our elected representatives and it’s also against our mandate. *We want to clarify the intent and proper application of laws, policies, guidelines, and procedures, and help citizens try to adapt them to their aims in our public commons.* If some policies are found to be not adaptable, despite the best efforts of the people using parks and the people in charge, that will be part of our documentation, to be taken up by others.

How will it be done?

The Centre for Local Research into Public Space (**CELOS**) will be building on our existing connections in neighbourhoods and with city staff, set up over the past 17 years.

Henrik and Aseel will work on modifications of the CELOS regulatory database. Belinda, Mayssan, Aseel, and Jutta will work on city-and-legislative-reports database content, with the help of ten research apprentices. Georgie and Rohan will work on the environmental and building issues. All of us will work on posting what we find and what’s accomplished (and what didn’t work), and on the workbook content. Heidrun will produce the workbook.

We intend to build on current contacts and search out new ones, among those affected and those in charge;

to bring all information forward so everyone involved can become more knowledgeable;

to open up the channels to respectful and thorough negotiation;

to follow up on all questions and unsolved problems;

to work on making the plans a reality;

and to document the results in the workbook and on the database.

This is where we’ll use the work of economist Elinor Ostrom, adapting her accounts of participant “institutions for collective action” to the common resources of neighbourhood parks. <http://celos.ca/database/regpolicies/detail%3Fpolicies%5Bcode%5D%3Dpol00157> What’s at issue is *not* setting up a pile of meetings – parks have no walls, and therefore, a linked chain of open conversations, right where the action is, works pretty well a lot of the time. The database and even Facebook can also help.

Who will do the work?

The working group for this project:

Aseel Al Najim: web development

Henrik Bechmann: database software development

Belinda Cole: legal research and teaching

Georgie Donais: environmental education (alternative building methods)

Heidrun Gabel-Koepff: workbook layout and production

Jutta Mason: general co-ordination

Mayssan Shuja-Uddin: project coordination, field research, City staff liaison, workbook

Rohan Walters: community consultation, field house adaptation, environmental education (architecture)

small contracts for 10 field researchers, 5 hours a week each

Workbook printing: Eva's Phoenix Printshop

Resumes are attached below

Where will the work take place (e.g. which community, neighbourhood, etc.)?

In various parks in Toronto, representing every region. The regulatory database has some material that applies to all public space in Ontario, and some that applies to the country as a whole, in addition to material that's specific to Toronto. The workbook will be of interest beyond Toronto

If applicable, tell us which organizations will contribute to the work and what role they will play?

Our project is based on collaboration with the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, the Friends of Greenwood Rink, the Joseph J.Piccininni Advisory Council, the Stonegate Health Centre, the City of Toronto's Adapted and Integrated Program, Bloorview Kids Rehab, The Spiral Garden, Friends of Trinity-Bellwoods Park, the Swansea Hockey League, Friends of MacGregor Park, Women of Winter Shiny Hockey, and the Thorncliffe Park Women's Committee, as well as about 25 park users who are active advocates but not part of formal groups. Collaboration with city management is well advanced and already involves monthly-or-oftener meetings, with ongoing negotiations and two joint research efforts. Collaboration with front-line City Recreation staff is daily, and several of the part-time staff will be working on this project when not doing their other jobs (one would take a leave from the city). Collaboration with the community groups listed here ranges from almost weekly contacts and practical aid in both directions (Thorncliffe Park Women's Committee) to connections presently mediated by others (Bloorview Kids is a connection through several families and through Spiral Garden). In the case of the park users involved in our ten sub-projects, all will be helping to shape the outcomes in the way described, but they will not be contracted by CELOS.

How will you know you have succeeded? What measurements will help you decide if you have been successful?

The database will be a kind of local Wikipedia for urban parks issues. It will have a minimum of 300 new searchable, cross-linked records pertaining to the public commons. Matching the pattern of the other two CELOS-run websites, the CELOS usage will have quadrupled the first year, and doubled again the year after.

The ten sub-projects will all be completed, with significant success in at least 8 of them.

The application of Dr.Elinor Ostrom's work will be inspiring and significant enough that she will want to visit Toronto and see why the public commons work so well (might as well aim high!).

Rationale

Rationale - This is your opportunity to tell us why we should fund your proposal. What will be different as a result of your work? Who will benefit? What the lasting impact of the initiative will be? Why this needs to be done now Why you are the right organization to do the work?

What will be different as a result of your work?

Our work will broaden the base of people who gain practical experience in finding solutions to public space dilemmas, and increase the number of people who can find out about it.

Who will benefit?

Park users in Toronto and possibly elsewhere, and people in the neighborhoods surrounding the parks.

Municipal staff in Toronto and possibly elsewhere.

Taxpayers, if these innovations reduce costs.

What the lasting impact of the initiative will be?

Neighbourhoods will become stronger and more inclusive with the help of better parks, and frustration among both park users and city staff will diminish, without the City Parks budget collapsing. A culture of neighbourhood stewardship of the public commons may grow, so that Toronto becomes known for it.

Why this needs to be done now?

1. The bad news: the City of Toronto's operating budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation this year is \$360 million, and yet there is no money to fix picnic tables. In many places, users of public space (including staff) are cynical, and mistrustful of each other. Programs shrink and extra fees increase, making the name "community centre" seem a misnomer for our tax-supported public facilities (including "community centres without walls," i.e. parks).

2. The good news: much good work has been done, with decades of collaboration, and it's not too late to draw more people into the task.

3. The bad news: Dufferin Grove Park has been a CELOS lab for trying to make parks work better (at low expense). One result is that now too many people come there, from all over the city. The park is struggling from being too crowded, and the problem has been getting worse.

4. The good news: Toronto has a wonderful supply of neighbourhood parks, so it's possible to spread the wealth. It's not necessary to have some parks so crowded and others so under-used. The City has recognized the Dufferin Grove Park phenomenon too, but last February, management responded by moving to "regularize" the park. That brought a public reaction. A Facebook page started by a park user got over 2000 members within a week, and there was media coverage. Hundreds of people from all over the city wrote letters to the ombudsman. At that point, Parks management began a different conversation with CELOS, which finally seems to be going somewhere.

Why you are the right organization to do the work?

In 2007, we got a one-year OTF grant for \$50,000 to "take the show on the road," i.e. to respond to the groups who wanted our help in enlivening their parks in simple, inexpensive ways (e.g. community campfires, gardens, farmers' markets, adventure playgrounds, community performances, etc.). This included helping such groups set up small websites. The project had good results – in 2009 it was selected as one of the four Toronto-area finalists for Trillium's Great Grants awards – and it continues to support some of the original groups as well as adding new ones. But we found that many of them ran into significant policy blocks.

In 2009, we got a smaller 10-month OTF grant for \$24,000 to create a database library on the laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines that help or hinder citizens' capacity to shape their public spaces (in their local parks). The database went "live" in May 2010 and by now has almost 300 searchable, cross-linked records, with new ones added almost every day. New software had to be developed to suit the project. This has now made available by our webmaster as open source software.

CELOS has been experimenting with what works in public commons for almost ten years, building on work that extends back almost twice that long. The co-worker relationship with city staff that's necessary to make this approach work has been challenged in many ways over the course of five centralized city restructurings. Nevertheless, collaboration has always recovered. Despite a particularly difficult time over the past three years, in the last four months our work has shown surprising (to us, too!) progress. With the help of our last OTF grant for the regulatory database, CELOS made new connections with policy-makers (mainly staff, plus a few of the committee members on City Council), and with park users citywide. Progress was better than anticipated, leading us to believe that this is the right time to expand collaboration -- the pendulum may be swinging back. By happy coincidence, the talent pool available to CELOS for

this project is pretty exactly what's needed. We are eager to use these people's gifts, and to discover more talent as the project proceeds.

Continuing Activities

Will the activities continue beyond the time of your grant request? If so, how will you ensure that the activities can continue?

The activities will continue long after this grant. We will collaborate with the city to allocate a share of the Dufferin Grove funds raised through food, for a CELOS website resource person over the next two years, to follow up as the project becomes established. Approximately \$2000 a year will do it, if we can use the OTF grant to get the database and community engagement projects on a solid footing.

Volunteers

How many volunteers will contribute to the work? 100-300

How many volunteer hours will be contributed? 900

What will be the role of the volunteers?

The "wikipedia"-style feature of the database will attract outside posts, assuming 200 posts (estimate) at one hour each Artist Jane LowBeer will contribute 20 hours of illustration work, in addition to our existing image bank of her illustrations Jutta Mason will contribute a minimum of 680 volunteer hours in addition to her paid contract hours

Board of Directors List

Do you have a list of the members of your Board Of Directors? Yes

#	File Name	Size	Date
1.	CELOS_board2.doc	29 KB	2010-06-26 16:36

I have a Board of Directors List, but only in hard copy, which I will submit by the deadline date, by fax

I have a Board of Directors List, but only in hard copy, which I will submit by the deadline date, by courier

Financial Statements

Do you have Financial Statements? Yes

#	File Name	Size	Date
1.	IncomeAndExpenses2009.pdf	2 KB	2010-06-26 16:16
2.	balance_sheet_2008.pdf	4 KB	2010-06-26 15:56
3.	balance_sheet_2009.pdf	5 KB	2010-06-26 16:09
4.	profit_and_loss_2008.pdf	4 KB	2010-06-26 15:58

I have Financial Statements, but only in hard copy, which I will submit by the deadline date, by fax

I have Financial Statements, but only in hard copy, which I will submit by the deadline date, by courier

Operating Budget

Do you have an Operating Budget? Yes

#	File Name	Size	Date
			2010-

I have an Operating Budget, but only in hard copy, which I will submit by the deadline date, by fax

I have an Operating Budget, but only in hard copy, which I will submit by the deadline date, by courier

Additional Information

Additional Comments

I had a list of references here (four including David Crombie), and press clippings, and links to our websites, and usage numbers, but each time I try to save (four times), the material disappears.

	#	File Name	Size	Date
Additional Attachments	1.	Aseel-RESUME.doc	33 KB	2010-06-28 08:45
	2.	HenrikBechmannWorkHistory.pdf	103 KB	2010-06-28 08:48
	3.	JUTTA_10050-1.pdf	4 KB	2010-06-28 08:53
	4.	JUTTA_10051.pdf	4 KB	2010-06-28 08:54
	5.	Jutta_C.V..doc	27 KB	2010-06-28 08:45
	6.	Resume_Mayssan.doc	28 KB	2010-06-28 17:24
	7.	Rohan_Resum_2010-1.doc	41 KB	2010-06-28 08:45
	8.	belinda_RESUME_trillium_grant-1.doc	36 KB	2010-06-28 08:45

Declaration Section

I confirm that:

- the information contained in this application and the accompanying documents is true, accurate and complete
- that our organization values diversity and the personal, cultural, social and economic benefit that it brings, and that we support and adhere to the Ontario Human Rights Code (as required under the Foundation's Program Guidelines)
- that our organizational representative with designated signing authority/decision making authority in our organization has authorized this application

I acknowledge that if this application is approved, our organization will be required to enter into a formal, legally binding agreement with the Ontario Trillium Foundation that will outline the terms and conditions of the grant.

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and updated our organizational profile.