

Community Connections Group Activities Planning Tool (CCAPT)

INTRODUCTION

Currently there are no agreed benchmarks or tests to track the progress of a client's journey to integration and many of the Community Connection results are said to be hard to measure.

If, from the beginning, there is clarity about the intent and the target audience for an activity it becomes much easier to plan, implement and evaluate it.

This planning tool was created in close consultation with many of the staff and managers involved in the delivery of Community Connections group activities.

It is intended to provide common denominators to express the outcomes of Community Connections group activities in a manner that is consistent with the Settlement Logic Model.

The CCAPT is not intended to replace any of the formal reporting mechanisms required by CIC.

Here are some ways to use the CCAPT template to advantage:

1. To decide if a proposed group activity is a good fit with the Settlement Logic model.
2. As an easy starting point to create evaluation surveys.
3. To review and continue/modify/refine the activities depending on the results achieved.
4. To refresh your memory when writing narrative reports that require more than simple numbers.
5. As a collecting place for "in-kind" contributions.
6. To share your Community Connections group activity ideas with your colleagues.
7. As a starting point in the discussion with your local CIC office.
8. To present your group activities to anyone who is not doing Community Connections and might need concrete evidence about the benefits of the program.

CCAPT consists of a template plus evolving notes with examples, tips and additional information.

The CCAPT is a "living document". CIN would appreciate feedback and receiving samples of how it is used. It will be updated periodically.

The latest version of CCAPT and some additional information can be found on the CIN Website at www.cin-ric.ca

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Community Connections Group Activities Planning Tool (CCAPT) – Template

Section 1. Brief description of the activity:		
	Planned	Actual
How many CIC eligible clients are expected to participate?		
How many volunteers are expected to participate?		
How many community-at-large persons are expected to participate?		
How many times will this activity take place during the fiscal year?		
Section 2. Outcomes		
Why and how does it help the clients? As a result of the activity, the clients:		
a) Improve their knowledge/confidence about adapting to life in Canada		
b) Become more confident in navigating/dealing with Canadian systems (legal, educational, political, etc.).		
c) Improve their own knowledge/confidence about general rights and responsibilities in Canada.		
d) Improve their own knowledge/confidence to seek employment		
e) Improve their own knowledge/confidence to access educational opportunities		
f) Improve their language proficiency in French or English		
g) Learn about public spaces and how to access them		
h) Learn about public services and how to access them		
i) Participate in activities in the community-at-large		
j) Become volunteers		
k) Participate in civic activities (consultations, voting, informal help etc.)		
l) Expand their social network		
m) Establish supportive relationships and networks		
n) Feel more at home/belonging/included		
o) Other (please specify)		
Section 3. Evidence of Results		
A) Why do we believe the activities achieve these outcomes?		
Clients report they achieved the intended outcomes		
Third parties report that the clients achieved the intended outcomes		
B) What will be reported?		
Number of CIC eligible clients with a positive outcome as a result of the activity		
Percentage of CIC eligible clients with a positive outcome as a result of the activity		
C) What will be used to collect information?		
Post activity evaluation/survey filled by CIC eligible clients		
Interviews with third party		

Section 4. Leveraged contributions <i>(add as many rows as needed)</i>		
“Inside” contributors/collaborators: Other agency services funded by CIC		
Who?	Doing what?	Approximate value
“Inside” contributors/collaborators: Other agency programs and resources not funded by CIC		
Who?	Doing what?	Approximate value
“Outside” contributors/collaborators: Contributing cash		
Who?	For what?	Amount
“Outside” contributors/collaborators: Contributing in-kind (goods)		
Who?	What is the contribution?	Approximate value
“Outside” contributors/collaborators:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributing in-kind (services, knowledge) 		
Who?	What is the contribution?	Approximate value

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Community Connections Group Activities Planning Tool (CCAPT) - SAMPLE

All sections of the template have been filled out and CIN added some tips in italics.

Section 1. Brief description of the activity:

The one essential item: What should clients expect to learn/achieve if they participate?

We used a "Conversation Café on Winter Activities" as an example of how to use the planning tool.

Conversation Café on Winter Activities.

November 18th from 6 pm to 8:30 pm at 219 Argyle Ave.

People who are new to Canada register to attend this gathering of newcomers and community members who will share their strategies to make the best of winter in Ottawa.

CIC eligible clients will:

- Improve their language proficiency in English (or French)
- Improve their knowledge/confidence about adapting to winter life in Canada.
- Learn about the public spaces and services in Ottawa.

	Planned	Actual
How many CIC eligible clients are expected to participate?	20	
How many volunteers are expected to participate?	4	
How many community-at-large persons are expected to participate? <i>(This includes anyone who is not a formal volunteer or a CIC eligible client).</i>	9	
How many times will this activity take place during the fiscal year?	1	
Section 2. Outcomes Why and how does it help the clients? As a result of the activity, the clients: <i>(Select only the statements that reflect the MAIN results you expect the clients to obtain).</i>		
p) Improve their knowledge/confidence about adapting to life in Canada	X	
q) Become more confident in navigating/dealing with Canadian systems (legal, educational, political, etc.).		
r) Improve their own knowledge/confidence about general rights and responsibilities in Canada.		
s) Improve their own knowledge/confidence to seek employment		
t) Improve their own knowledge/confidence to access educational opportunities		
u) Improve their language proficiency in French or English	X	
v) Learn about public spaces and how to access them	X	
w) Learn about public services and how to access them	X	
x) Participate in activities in the community-at-large		
y) Become volunteers		
z) Participate in civic activities (consultations, voting, informal help etc.)		
aa) Expand their social network		
bb) Establish supportive relationships and networks		
cc) Feel more at home/belonging/included		
dd) Other (please specify)		

Section 3. Evidence of Results		Planned	Actual
A) Why do we believe the activities achieve these outcomes?			
Clients report they achieved the intended outcomes		X	
Third parties report that the clients achieved the intended outcomes			
B) What will be reported?			
Number of CIC eligible clients with a positive outcome as a result of the activity		19	
Percentage of CIC eligible clients with a positive outcome as a result of the activity <i>(This is helpful to show how effective the activity is, regardless of the number of people attending)</i>		95%	
C) What will be used to collect information?			
<i>Create a very short evaluation survey and use it consistently. It should match the results outlined in section 2. (See Additional information section for samples)</i>			
Post activity evaluation/survey filled by CIC eligible clients		X	
Interviews with third parties			
Section 4- Leveraged contributions <i>(add as many rows as needed)</i>			
These are resources that are not funded by the CIC contribution agreement for Community Connections. They often contribute greatly to the success of the program.			
"Inside" contributors/collaborators: Other agency services funded by CIC <i>(Helps us to think about interdisciplinary/interdepartmental collaboration).</i>			
Who?	Doing what?	Approximate value	
Settlement Team	Referred participants, disseminated information about Community Connections.	4 hrs @ \$25 = \$100	
"Inside" contributors/collaborators: Other agency programs and resources not funded by CIC <i>(Think in the broader scope. (i.e. Board members attend agency activities and also contribute a lot of their time to carry out governance duties as a Board of Directors.)</i>			
Who?	Doing what?	Approximate value	
Program volunteers	Helped with registration, set-up the room, participated in presentations, sat at tables to facilitate conversation and information exchange	4 vols x 4 hrs x \$22 = \$352	
"Outside" contributors/collaborators: Contributing cash <i>(Donors, other funders, user fees)</i>			
Who?	For what?	Dollar value <i>(If annual funding, prorate it for the period that applies)</i>	
	N/A		
"Outside" contributors/collaborators: Contributing in-kind (goods)			
Who?	What is the contribution?	Approximate value	
Cupcake shop	Cupcakes for the event	40 cupcakes @ \$1.25 = \$50	
"Outside" contributors/collaborators: Contributing in-kind (services, knowledge)			
Who?	What is the contribution?	Approximate value	
City of Ottawa	Guest speakers	2 X \$50 = \$100	

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Additional information

Here is some additional information to help you design and evaluate your group activities.

Settlement logic model – Updated April 1, 2013

Immediate Outcomes

1. Clients receive appropriate information and services to address settlement needs
2. Clients attain awareness of community and other resources to deal with settlement issues
3. Clients gain knowledge of life in Canada, including laws, rights and responsibilities
4. Clients learn official language skills and other skills for adapting to Canadian society
5. Clients acquire knowledge, skills and connections related to the Canadian work environment
6. Clients have connections to communities and public institutions

Settlement logic model- Intermediate Outcomes

1. Clients make informed decisions about life in Canada, enjoy rights and act on their responsibilities in Canadian society
2. Clients use official languages to function and participate in Canadian society
3. Clients participate in local labour markets, broader communities and social networks

Practical things you probably already know aboutOutcomes

Most evaluations of Community Connections Activities are able to consider only the Immediate Outcomes listed in the Settlement Program Logic model unless you are able to follow-up the clients over a period of time. Even then, without a sophisticated evaluation system, it would be hard to demonstrate and document cause and effect.

If the results you hope will be achieved by the clients are not reflected in the CCAPT outcomes list, think twice before you do it. If you believe the clients would have a hard time answering YES when asked to evaluate, think twice about implementing the activity. In the end, regardless of how valuable we think an activity is, what matters is how much the client and the funders believe it was of benefit within the prescribed framework.

Practical things you probably already know about Evaluation

Don't get too ambitious. It is true that YES-NO answers do not provide a lot of nuance but all you need is to demonstrate that the activity helped the client to move forward.

The more questions, the less answers. Keep it really simple and ask them to evaluate ONLY the strongest potential outcomes.

Sample post activity evaluation survey:

Dear participant,

Thank you for coming to the Conversation Café on Winter Activities today

	YES	NO
Did it help you to improve your English?		
Did it improve your knowledge/confidence about adapting to winter life in Canada		
Did you learn about public spaces and services in Ottawa?		

Anything else you would like to add? _____

Sample third party evaluation survey:

Dear participant,

As a result of participating in the Conversation Café on Winter Activities today

	YES	NO
Did it help the student/your child to improve her/his English?		
Did it improve the student/your child knowledge/confidence about adapting to winter life in Canada?		
Did the student/your child learn about public spaces and services in Ottawa?		

Anything else you would like to add? _____

Be careful if you choose this method because most likely it will require chasing teachers and parents. (We think this is hard to do consistently. Think twice before committing to it)

Leveraged Contributions:

How do you calculate the value of in-kind resources?

Example	Approximate value (Be consistent)
Student placements. Internships	Minimum wage if basic tasks. If more complex, compare to your staff cost for similar level and price it about 20% lower than the starting salary for that position since they will need significant support from program staff.
Research projects of direct benefit to the program	Investigate the cost of hiring someone to do the research (Ask the researchers to give you an approx. cost)
Training for staff/volunteers	Ask the facilitators to estimate the value of their presentation. (If not available, it is not unreasonable to assume \$100/hour with a minimum \$50. This takes into consideration prep time and is a very conservative estimate)
Space in schools, community centres, places of worship, ethnic associations	The cost of renting that space
Loans of office equipment. Loans of sports equipment	The cost of renting the equipment
Food from a grocery store. Snacks (cupcakes) from a private business	Cost of the items
Craft supplies and other donations that are used for the specific activity	Cost of the items
Guest speakers from another agency or business	Ask them to estimate the value of their presentation. (If not available, it is not unreasonable to assume \$100/hour with a minimum \$50. This takes into consideration prep time and is a very conservative estimate)
Volunteer time	Some possibilities (remember to remain consistent) Compare it to what it would cost to hire someone to do a similar job. If similar to what front-line staff would do, use the starting rate for staff and discount by 20 to 30% since they will need significant support from program staff.
Promotion, free ads	Ask for an estimated cost
Tickets for events	Cost of the items

Keep all the calculations as backup in case you are asked to explain how you arrived at the approximate dollar value.