



Possibility grows here.

Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

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## **Request for Proposals**

### **Reaching New Audiences: Connecting the Greenbelt to New Canadians**

#### **Background**

Between 2011 and 2016, 39% of the 1.2 million newcomers who arrived to Canada settled in Ontario. More than three quarters of Ontario's newcomers settled in Toronto and its surrounding municipalities. As a result, municipalities in the Toronto CMA are exceptionally diverse: newcomers in Markham, Richmond Hill, Mississauga, and Brampton make up over 50% of their populations, while Toronto's foreign-born population is just under half of its total population at 47%<sup>1,2</sup>.

While New Canadians are becoming a significant proportion of the country's and province's populations, research and anecdotal evidence suggests that New Canadians visit parks and outdoor areas less than Canadian-born populations.<sup>3,4</sup> Lack of time, access to transportation, access to knowledge, as well as costs and fears of nature have been cited as some of constraints preventing New Canadians from visiting parks and engaging in nature-based recreation. Parks and natural areas have also been seen as exclusionary spaces for New Canadians, as the history of conservation and park systems is grounded in Canada's European heritage<sup>5,6,7,8</sup>.

Engaging with and designing programming that is relevant for more diverse populations is emerging as a priority among park operators and conservation authorities. Some organizations in the GTA and Ontario are creating strategies and programming for New Canadians that take into account the unique barriers they face in accessing parks and natural areas, including language, economic, and transportation-related challenges. Park Bus, for instance, runs a program called NatureLink that provides subsidized transportation to outdoor spaces and programming to

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Finance, *2016 Census Highlights: Factsheet 8, Immigration* (2017).

<https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/census/cenhi16-8.html>

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, *Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census, Immigration and ethnocultural diversity, Toronto, (CMA) - Ontario* (2017). <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=535&TOPIC=7>

<sup>3</sup> Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Governments of Canada, *2012 Canadian Nature Survey: Awareness, participation, and expenditures in nature-based recreation, conservation, and subsistence activities* (2014).

<sup>4</sup> Don Butler, Ottawa Citizen, *Call of the wild: The struggle to connect new Canadians to parks and nature* (2015). <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/call-of-the-wild-the-struggle-to-connect-new-canadians-to-parks-and-nature>

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Parks Council, *Connecting Canadians with Nature* (2014).

<sup>6</sup> Pamela A. Wright and Carling Matthews, *Parks Journal* 21(2), *Building a Culture of Conservation: Research Findings and Research Priorities on Connecting People to Nature in Parks* (2015).

<sup>7</sup> Alberta Tourism, *Parks and Recreation, Nature as a Second Language: Towards the Inclusion of New Canadians in Alberta's Provincial Parks* (2009).

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Lange, Peter Vogels, and Zenobia Jamal, *Learning a Language, Learning the Land: Newcomers, Parks, and Language Learning* (2011).

newcomers. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Credit Valley Conservation Authority also provide programming for New Canadians.

The Greenbelt is more than 2 million acres of agriculture and natural heritage in close proximity to the Toronto CMA municipalities with large New Canadian populations. It contains many agri-tourism, nature-based tourism, and other recreational opportunities throughout its parks, natural areas, and agricultural areas, including 10,000km of trails, a 475km cycle route, and a number of Pick-Your-Own farms. As such, the parks, natural areas, and agricultural areas in the Greenbelt can provide New Canadians with opportunities to participate in nature-based tourism, agri-tourism, and other recreational activities right next to their new home.

The Foundation has supported outreach efforts to New Canadian communities so that they may use and benefit from the Greenbelt. The “Into the Greenbelt program” connected New Canadians to the Greenbelt through world crop learning gardens and field trips into the Greenbelt’s natural areas and farms. In 2011, the Foundation ran a series of ten articles in seven of the GTA’s multicultural papers to grow support and spread information about the Greenbelt in different languages to diverse communities.

The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation is interested in continuing to expand our public outreach to New Canadians in order to increase their familiarity with the Greenbelt and the benefits it provides them and the region as well as increase their use of the Greenbelt’s natural assets.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to:

- Identify how to effectively target and reach diverse New Canadian populations with information about the Greenbelt, particularly regarding its agri-tourism and nature-based recreational opportunities; and,
- Identify what nature-based and agriculture-based programming is most of interest and relevant for New Canadians.

The results of the study will inform the Foundation’s strategies to reach and engage with diverse New Canadian communities and help agri-food and nature-based recreation tourism businesses in the Greenbelt expand their services and reach new customers.

## **Scope of Work**

The project is expected to involve two main research activities:

- Conducting key informant interviews with staff from organizations that provide services to New Canadians in the GTA, notably those that run nature-based and/or agriculture-based programming, in order to
  - confirm the target audiences;
  - gather preliminary information regarding New Canadians’ familiarity with the Greenbelt and use of Greenbelt parks, natural areas, agri-tourism destinations; and,

- gather preliminary information regarding general attitudes, perceptions, and interests related to farming and nature.
- Conducting focus groups with New Canadians—immigrants who moved to Canada between the 2011 and 2016 Census years—from all or most the top five places of birth of recent immigrants to the Toronto CMA: India, China, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Iran. The targeted geographies are the Toronto CMA municipalities with the highest shares of foreign-born population: Markham, Richmond Hill, Mississauga, Brampton, and Toronto. Consultants may provide comments or suggestions for the targeted groups and geographies.

Other research activities may be proposed by the consultant.

We will provide the consultant with a list of informants and organizations to target for the interviews and for focus groups.

### **Project Timeline**

The project should be completed by **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019**.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals should include the following:

- A description of your understanding of the assignment and the proposed approach, including likely topics to be covered in focus groups, to implement the scope of work;
- A draft project timeline with key decisions, touchstone meetings, milestones and project completion dates;
- CV for the consultant (and any other team members) that clearly outlines their qualifications relevant to this assignment;
- Three examples of similar projects completed (i.e. focus groups generally and focus groups with New Canadians specifically);
- Three references relevant to this assignment;
- A time/task breakdown by project team member (if more than one consultant); and,
- A proposed budget including reimbursable expenses as applicable.

The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation reserves the right to choose any or none of the vendors responding to this request for proposals.

Any questions and completed proposals should be directed to:

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**Proposals must be received by email no later than July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**