

The following project proposal was created by a community partner of the Upstate Institute to describe the way they would like to engage with a Colgate student this summer. The research project proposed will be a full-time research project conducted by a Field School Fellow this summer. Below, the partner describes their organization and the research project, as well as a statement of benefit derived by the community for this project. The proposal also mentions logistical considerations and required skills for a student interested in doing this work.

Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees, Utica, NY

www.mvrcr.org

Community outreach and event planning to bring awareness of diverse cultures.

The Field School Fellow will work with MVRRCR staff with planning for two annual events: World Refugee Day and Unspoken Human Rights Festival.

The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (MVRRCR), an affiliate of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, is a not-for-profit corporation that has been the main service provider for refugees in Central New York for over 35 years. MVRRCR has assisted over 16,000 refugees from 34 different countries start new lives in this region. MVRRCR has a centrally located office and training facility in Utica, including classrooms and computer labs for an on-site adult ESL program that is administered by the local BOCES. The agency also retains a diverse and professional staff to effectively deliver linguistically and culturally appropriate services.

MVRRCR's comprehensive resettlement services address new arrivals' most immediate needs so they may focus as soon as possible on achieving self-sufficiency. These services include housing, health screenings, cultural orientation, and comprehensive case management. Other agency services that support the successful resettlement of refugees and immigrants include employment, immigration and citizenship, and community programs such as traffic safety education, and health promotion. The agency operates Compass, the professional interpretation and translation division that provides language services 24/7 supporting 42 languages, via in-person, telephone, or video relay. MVRRCR also administers the Office for New Americans program, which facilitates ESL training, citizenship services and entrepreneurship workshops. In addition, MVRRCR provides professional cultural competency training and consulting for a variety of sectors including healthcare, education, government, and businesses.

Mission: Many Cultures, One Community -The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (MVRRCR) assists refugees, immigrants, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals throughout the integration process and helps them achieve independence and self-sufficiency by developing products and services that enable us to build community with many cultures.

Project Description

The proposed research project is centered on the following research questions:

1. What is the local impact of human rights topics on community policy development and inclusion and integration of immigrant and refugee communities in the Mohawk Valley?
2. How can human rights education and forums be used in advocacy on behalf of MVRRCR and its clients at a community and national level in support of refugee resettlement?

The Field School Fellow will work directly with the Coordinator of Events & Volunteers to plan and assist with organizing the World Refugee Day event in June, 2019 and the Annual UNSPOKEN Human Rights Festival that will be held in October 2019. UNSPOKEN is an annual human rights forum that combines film, art and a provider training into one festival.

Based on information and data collected through the guiding research questions, the student will assist with developing a marketing strategy to advertise these and other agency events, including the development of print materials, educational activities and displays and social media campaigns, and other aspects of event planning.

Statement of how the proposed research will advance your organization's work and how it relates to or may benefit the Upstate region.

The proposed research will assist MVRRCR staff to determine the focus for education and outreach for the various components of the events that will be relevant and interesting for the community that will ensure that community members attend MVRRCR sponsored events.

Logistical considerations

The position would be full-time and the Field School Fellow would primarily work on-site at the agency, however components of the research required for the project could be accomplished on campus at Colgate. Background information regarding refugee resettlement would be helpful for candidates prior to starting the position, much of which can be found on the website of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) <https://www.unhcr.org/> or MVRRCR's website www.mvr-cr.org. The Manager of Grants & Community Engagement would supervise the Field School Fellow.

Training & Skills

Students will be required to have strong research skills and the ability to synthesize data into an organized written format. Experience or interest in marketing, graphic design, and social media preferred. Students should also be self-directed and able to work independently. The Field School Fellow would also need to have an interest in working in a multicultural environment and interacting with individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences. The student will gain the knowledge and skills to work effectively with diverse populations and will have the opportunity to have additional experiences in other departments of the agency if interested.