



Winter Break Community Engagement Program

McKeen Center 2025-2026

Info Session Agenda



- What is the Winter Break Community Engagement Program?
 - Why should I consider applying for this?
 - How can I prepare for the experience?
 - How can I prepare for the application?
- 



What is the Winter Break Community Engagement Program (WBCEP)?



Complete 50 hours of community engagement work at a nonprofit or municipal organization over winter break.



Reflect on reciprocity and impact in community engagement.



Receive \$750 stipend for writing & submitting reflection materials



Why should I participate?



Short term commitment.



Create an experience tailored to your interests and goals.



Receive funding for reflection.



Good preparation for summer internships and fellowships.



What's expected of me in the program if accepted?



Submit the WBCEP Commitment Letter before you depart campus for Winter Break



Complete the 50 hours with your community partner of choice



Complete a mid-Winter Break check-in survey (week of January 6th)



Document your work with a photograph and plan reflection materials



Submit final reflection essay and other materials, due 1/19/2026, and then receive stipend



Am I eligible to apply?

- Students must receive financial aid from Bowdoin to be eligible for this award.
 - If there are more requests than funds, the selection committee may consider factors, including whether students have received the funding previously and the strength of the case made in the application
 - International Students who are F1 Visa Holders are eligible to volunteer with a non-profit or municipal organization. International students should reach out to Dean [Danielle Hussey](#) with any questions about their status and eligibility.
-



Have you
participated
before?

Great news - you are still eligible to apply!

Returning applicants must answer an additional question in the application:

How will this year's Winter Break experience build off your past experience in this program or other past community engagement experience (through the McKeen Center or otherwise)? If you are applying with the same organization as in a previous year, please note any leadership or other new opportunities offered to you by your planned host organization this year.

Returning applications will be considered at the application deadline, not as part of the rolling admissions process.

How do I apply?

Info Session	Partner Search	Apply	Decisions
Attend - or watch the recording of - the info session If you've attended a past info session, you do NOT need to attend/watch again!	Search for and reach out to potential community partners. Secure confirmation from an organization that you will work with them for 50 hours over Winter Break	Apply by November 21st at 12 PM using this link.* • Personal Information • Community Partner Information, including confirmation that they will host you for this experience. • Statement of Interest	Applicants will be accepted on a rolling basis, starting on November 7th and the deadline to apply will be 11/21/25, unless stipend funds are fully committed before then.

Statement of Interest

(1 Page or Less,
Single-Spaced)

Why have you chosen this organization for your project?

How do you plan to volunteer with the organization during your 50-hour commitment?

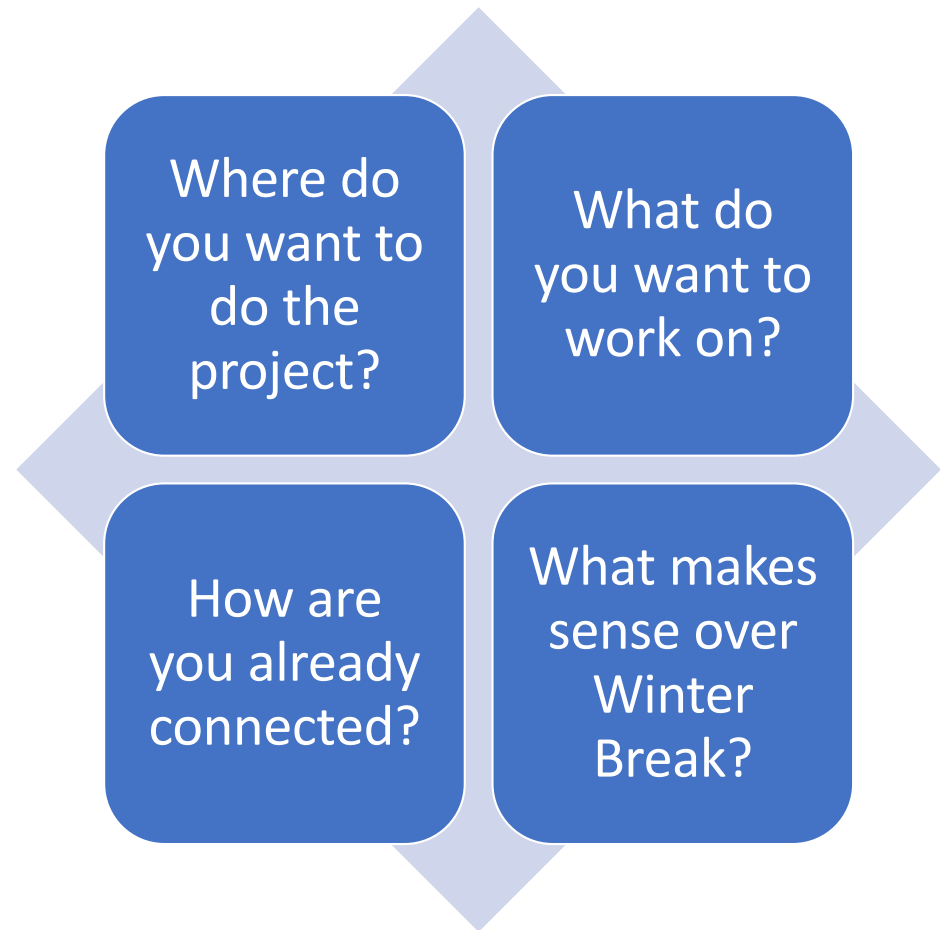
What do you hope to learn from this experience?

How do you plan to bring your experience back to the Bowdoin community?



How do I secure a placement?

Considerations for a WBCEP Placement



Geographic Considerations

Where will you be over the winter break?

Do you want to do a project that is remote, in person, or hybrid?

Can you leverage this connection into a longer-term internship or relationship?

What
organizations
can I work
with?

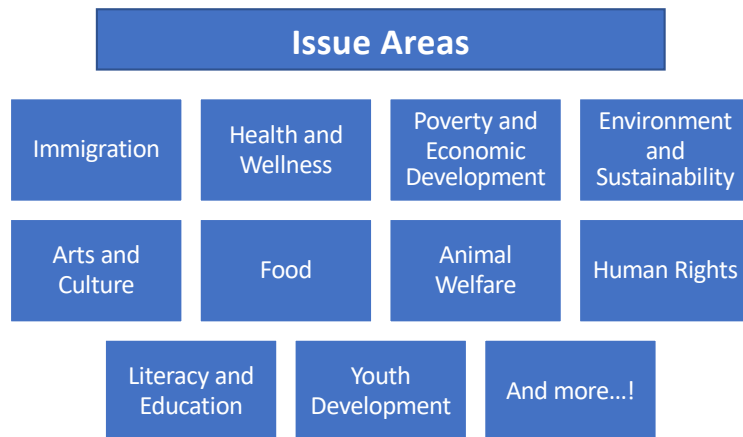
Non-profit org(s)

Municipal org

Religious org

Government Office/Official

Considering who to work with?



Your Academic Interests

- Major
- Minor
- Random classes that changed your perspective on life

Passion and your WHY?

- Your identity
- Your personal story
- Your big dreams
- What you've been involved with before?

How are you already connected?

- Organizations you have worked with in the past before (or at) Bowdoin on a one time or ongoing basis.
- McKeen Center connections
- Connections through family, friends, and faculty.
- Organizations you have heard about but haven't had the time to connect with.



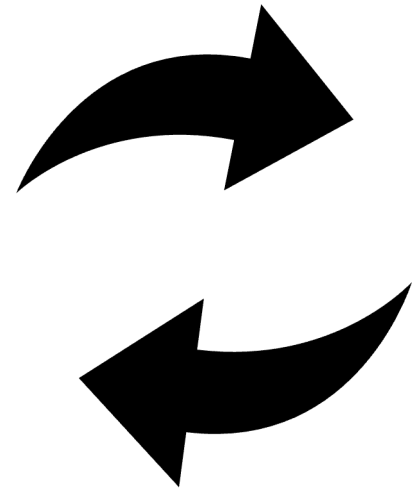
Local Opportunities

- **In Person:**
 - These may be with local organizations that are walkable or bikeable from campus
 - Students may be eligible for on-campus housing – check ResLife Break Housing info when live after Thanksgiving
- **Remote:**
 - Some local organizations have provided remote opportunities.



Check the McKeen Center Local Opportunities spreadsheet on the WBCEP website and feel free to reach out to any organizations!

What is Reciprocity?



Communicating with community partner about the opportunity

- Tone: Collegial & deferential, short and snappy
- Do your homework & legwork
- Hosts may not want short-term help
- If cold-outreach, your ask will vary depending on volunteer procedures
- Flexibility, not favors
- "Shopping" for specialized needs? Act fast, have backup.
- Phone call may be most efficient



Communication continued!

- [Sample Emails to Communicate with Partners](#) (this is a template, so make sure to update information for you specifically!)
 - Information to include in initial communication
 - A little bit about you (name, Bowdoin student, etc.)
 - Why you are interested in working at the organization and what you'd like to do while you're there.
 - Timeline, number of hours, and any other relevant requirements from the Bowdoin side.
 - Mention that there is funding available from Bowdoin if you complete the work and submit a reflection. If your participation hinges on receiving this funding, be upfront that you will need an acceptance from us before you decide to participate.
 - Your contact information.
 - Confirmation from a community partner-- what does this mean?
-



Questions?

- Connect with Tom Ancona
 - Email: tancona@bowdoin.edu
 - Office Hours: [Set up a time to chat with me!](#)

