



Wheels of Courage Mentee Guide

What is Wheels of Courage?

Wheels of Courage (WoC) is a free, 8 month volunteer program at the WRENCH for young people (ages 15-30) who love bikes and want to use them as a tool for personal growth and social change.

As a WoC participant, you gain exclusive access to a diverse array of skill-building workshops, community outreach opportunities as well as support and funding to develop your own Community Project.

As a WoC mentee, you will be paired with a mentor who will help guide you through the program by connecting you with volunteer and skill-building opportunities, and assisting you with the creation and implementation of your Community Project.

In order to help support a diverse array of participants, our team includes a Newcomer Mentor, an Indigenous Mentor and a Women, Girls, Trans and Non-binary Mentor.

Volunteering regularly is a key part of the Wheels of Courage program. Over the course of 8 months, each mentee is working towards volunteering 120 hours. There are many ways that you can achieve these hours (see Logging Hours below).

If you like bikes, want to gain valuable skills, and become more engaged in community-building, this program is for you!

Workshops & Events for WoC Mentees only

Skills Workshops

- We do our best to offer hands-on workshops when possible (such as bike repair, carpentry, welding, etc.), given COVID restrictions.
- That said, **we anticipate that most skills workshops will be online**, as they were last round.
- Examples of online Skills Workshops from last round are:
 - Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression
 - Grant & Proposal Writing
 - Mental Health during COVID
 - Resume & Cover Letter Writing
 - Zine Making
 - Cooking
 - Budgeting & Financial Planning
- & Of course, Bikes! Some examples of online bike-related workshops from last round:
 - Bike Touring & Bike-packing
 - Social Justice & the History of Bike Activism in Winnipeg
 - Single-Speed & Fixed gear bikes
 - Bike Comfort & Fit

Community Outreach Workshops

- This is similar to Community Projects, but it is one that the WoC mentor team has organized for the group to do together.
- Examples include:
 - Pop-up Repair Stands
 - Beautifying a Community Space with Art
 - Building Garden Beds at a Community Garden

Group Rides

- When restrictions allow, we like to go on group rides together to explore the city and practice safe road riding skills.

Group Hubs

- These are monthly meetings wherein all WoC participants are invited to discuss ideas, share progress and learn skills directly relating to the participants' Community Projects.
- **Guest speakers or instructors can be brought in to help provide inspiration and foster important discussions surrounding community engagement, activism and leadership.**
- Online, unless restrictions allow for larger group gatherings.
- 2-3 hours long
- Meals provided!

One-on-One Check-ins with Mentors

- This is where you'll meet with your mentor to talk about the program, discuss your community project and come up with a **personalized plan** to make it happen.
- This can happen in-person or via video chat/zoom.
- Usually around 1 hour long
- Your mentor will send you an email with possible days and times to meet (Doodle Poll). You'll let them know if any of those days and times work, if none of them do connect with your mentor so you two can figure out something that does work for the both of you.

Logging Hours

Mentee Goal: Achieve 120 volunteer hours before March 31, 2022. This averages out to 3.5 hours per week. As you'll see below, our definition of volunteering is quite generous!

You can achieve these hours by:

1. Participating in Wheels of Courage programming (just for mentees):

- Community Outreach Workshops
- One-on-One Check-ins
- Group Hubs
- Skills Workshops
- Group Rides
- Bike Mechanics Training
- Planning / doing your Community Project
- Helping other mentees with their Community Projects
- Travel time, related to the program.

2. Volunteering / helping out at:

- The WRENCH
- Other Community Bike Shops
- Your school / university
- Any other community-serving organizations

3. Independent learning:

- Reading books or articles
- Watching videos or documentaries
- Taking a class / course / workshop

Expectations for Mentees

1. Participate!

As a WoC mentee, you are encouraged to participate in all WoC programming that you are able to. The more you participate the more you will get out of the program, both literally and figuratively.

You are aiming to **volunteer 120 hours** before March 31, 2022 which averages out to **3.5 hours each week**.

2. Think bigger than yourself!

As a WoC mentee, you **will be challenged to create one Community Project** that addresses a community need that you have identified. This is an opportunity to think about what kind of world you want to live in and how you can help build that world. You will have access to funding for specialized skill-building and materials needed to complete this project.

3. Communicate!

Always communicate with your mentor about what programming you want to sign up for, and let them know if you are no longer able to make it. Each mentee must attend regular check-ins with their mentor, at which time we hope you can communicate any questions you have or challenges you are struggling with.

Your Community Project

Throughout the course of this program you will design and implement a project that helps address an issue that you have identified within your community.

Examples of Community Projects from the past:

1. BIKE-O-TROPE - A Bicycle Powered Animation Machine

Community need: Community needs more art! *"I wanted more interactive art in the community. I love bigger pieces that you are encouraged to touch and interact with."*

Community Project: With help from a retired machinist and core volunteer at the WRENCH, Bridget designed and welded a magnificent rideable animation machine out of upcycled bicycle frames and parts from the WRENCH.

Quotes from Mentee: "I cannot state strongly enough how much this project helped me with my own self confidence, my ability to exist comfortably in a community and also feel like i have contributed to that community as well."

"This project has steered me towards the trades as a viable career option, I knew I liked building and fixing for as long as I can remember but this is the first time I've been given the chance to actually experience these things in practice and it's helped me realize I love these things even more. Hopefully one day I will be good enough to help the next group of builders and fixers."

2. Bicycle Storytelling & Art Workshop with Seniors

Community need: The need for strengthened connectivity between youth and seniors, in particular the need for youth to take the time to listen to and learn from their elders.

Community Project: With help from his mentors, Dylan organized a workshop at a local seniors home in which youth mentees drew artistic maps based on stories shared by the seniors, about memorable bike rides from their lives.

Quotes from Mentee: *“This project gave me a feel for what i could do in the future. Before I started Wheels of Courage, I had no idea how I could contribute to the community, I just thought I was too young! With a little help, that all changed!”*

3. Strike Bike

Community need: The 1919 General Strike is a profoundly important part of our history with lasting impacts, and yet many people in the community are not aware of the significance of what went on.

Community Project: A historical bicycle tour about Winnipeg's 1919 General Strike. Two "Strike Bike" tours occurred in September, and the idea is that there will be more next year. The organizers want to decentralize the knowledge by creating a free bicycle map that includes important locations, as well as information, regarding the 1919 General Strike in order to enable anyone to lead their own tour. This project benefits those interested in labour issues, history, as well as cycling in Winnipeg by making local labour history accessible and interactive by bicycle.

4. Starting a Bike Shop at Maples Met High School

Community need: *“I want to try and get more students to ride their bike to school”* **Community Project:** With help from his WoC mentors and Met School advisor, Noah set up a small bike shop in the back of one of his classrooms at his high school. The shop, which is complete with all the tools you'd need to do basic bike repair, will be a place where Noah can share all the knowledge he has learned at the WRENCH over the past year by helping his fellow students fix their bicycles.

Quotes from Mentee: *“Everything I ever learned to start up [the bike shop] was from the WRENCH.” “The WRENCH helped me communicate more with people in my community.”*

Ideas for Community Projects (these are up for grabs!):

- **Community Need:** Urban Youth are Disconnected from the healing qualities of nature.
Project Idea: Organize a ride to Fort Whyte where you share knowledge of plants and animals.
- **Community Need:** Our community's waterways are polluted and covered in trash.
Project Idea: Create a guided bike tour that educates people about the issue, inform them about environmentally responsible choices, and give them an opportunity to safely clean up trash on the riverbank along the way.
- **Community Need:** Organizations that serve the community need extra funding, usually by donations from the public, to make their programs happen. (Example: sponsoring refugee families or feeding the homeless.)
Project Idea: Build high end bikes or sculptural art pieces to be auctioned off and use the funds to support an organization that does community building work.

Making your Community Project happen

To help make your Community Project happen, each mentee will have access to up to:

- **\$250.00 for project materials** (things you need to make your project happen)
- **\$200.00 for skill-building** (paying for experts to help you, workshop/course fees, membership fees, etc.)

Ways to know what's going on (events, workshops, etc)

- **Facebook - "Wheels of Courage!" Group** - This is a great place to let each other know about cool stuff happening in our communities, job opportunities, and of course upcoming WoC workshops and projects.
- **Google Calendar - "Wheels of Courage"** - All WoC events are on this calendar
- **Email - this is the main way that we communicate.**
 - Every Friday, your mentor will send you a "Weekly WoC Updates" email with a full run-down of all programming coming up that week.
 - The email will also include suggestions for other ways you could gain volunteer hours, such as volunteering at or attending events put on by other organizations, watching fun videos, etc.
- **Phone/Text** - if this is the way you want to be informed about what's going on let your mentor know

Wheels of Courage is generously funded by the Government of Canada under the Canada Service Corps program.