



DC TUTORING & MENTORING INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TEAMS AND OUR STRATEGY

*The idea is simple: Provide a tutor or mentor for the more than 60,000 students reading below grade level or in need of extra academic or non-academic support in the District of Columbia. Add in extra classroom and after-school support and extra mentoring or support for family members and we could transform educational outcomes in the city, develop our workforce, end intergenerational poverty, and create a vibrant, welcoming and safe city for all people. In short, this public campaign is the key to both transforming educational outcomes AND the civic life or culture of the city — and serving as a model for the nation. Call it **practical educational and civic transformation**.*

Join a Community Leadership Team

We can transform education and the civic culture in Washington and serve as a model for the nation, but we need sustained help from people across the metro area. We understand this is a challenge for many people, but if you can volunteer **only two hours a month**, we would welcome your help, even if you don't have time to be a weekly tutor or mentor.

We are building a network of small teams — 3-10 people each — who can volunteer together a couple of hours a month and share in the camaraderie of working and learning together.

Sign up now to join or create a team. We can help you put together your own team, find other volunteers to join, or connect you to an existing team. We want to do everything we can to make it as EASY as possible for you—because your help really makes a difference.

We especially need help with outreach at outdoor movie nights, farmer's markets, festivals, or other public events and spaces, but there are other ways your team can get involved:

1. Host a group of friends, neighbors, colleagues from work or school, or members of your congregation or club to learn more about our work and how they can get involved. (Let us know and we can send a representative to talk to your group.)
 2. Talk to your employer or other employers in your field about sponsoring employee teams.
 3. Talk to religious congregations or community groups about creating volunteer teams.
 4. Work as a team to send out daily posts on social media or create the Civic Imagination podcast.
 5. Create a “giving circle” to sponsor a Civic Leadership Fellow or several students.
 6. Put on a special event or help us with Civic Fest.
- If it's easier for you to work directly with us rather than through a team, we'd still love your help! How?
1. Serve as a tutor or mentor (of course) — usually a couple of hours per week.
 2. Write for our blog, website, or social media.
 3. Help with graphic designs, photos or videos.
 4. Help us or our partner organizations with your expertise or time, even if you can't tutor or mentor on a regular basis: volunteer management, event planning, fundraising, database or general admin work; develop training materials; research & evaluation.
 5. Work with our Civic Leadership Fellows (college interns) to help them improve their skills.
 6. Sponsor a Civic Leadership Fellow, a student, an activity, or make a donation. Every bit helps.



Go to <http://www.dcTutorMentor.org> to sign up to volunteer, join a team, find our list of partners, or learn more. Or contact us at info@dcTutorMentor.org or 202-688-1261.

5 Reasons to Help Us with Outreach at Outdoor Movie Nights, Farmers Markets & Public Spaces

Our goal: Plant a simple idea in people's minds, regardless of whether they sign up or not, that they can make a positive difference here and now. We hand out a small flyer and say, "We are looking for volunteer mentors and tutors to help with students around the city."

When volunteers sign up, we ask them what days and times they are available to help, where in the city they can conveniently work, and what age students they prefer to work with. We serve as the "matchmakers" connecting them to one of our 25+ tutoring and mentoring organizations that need more volunteers.



- ➔ **1. It will transform education and our community.** A million people knocked on doors and helped get President Obama elected in 2008. That's the equivalent of 1,000 to 2,000 people in DC. If we can build a grassroots effort like that today with even **600 people (100 teams averaging 6 people each)** talking to people at Metro stops, grocery stores, festivals, and farmers markets, **we could recruit 20,000 new tutors and mentors in a year — more than tripling the capacity of our partners** and reaching a transformational "tipping point" where tens of thousands of people are meeting the in-school and after-school needs of students and teachers.
- ➔ **2. Develop communication & leadership skills.** It's hard to build a bond of trust with a stranger in a brief conversation. But it's doable and personally satisfying if you speak from the heart about why this work matters. Like shooting baskets or hitting a baseball, you won't succeed every time but that's okay and that's how we learn.
- ➔ **3. Express yourself and what you believe.** Be part of the solution — really! Give voice and action to the feeling that there should be no more Ferguson's, Baltimore's, or demagogic politicians playing on our fears. Empower yourself!
- ➔ **4. Get to know your fellow community members.** Part of the satisfaction of the work is meeting people from all walks of life and learning a little about them. We encourage you to have a meaningful conversation with people who stop. When people sign up to volunteer or join our mailing list, we usually ask about what they do for a living or what they are studying as a way to both explore opportunities for engaging employers and colleges and, very simply, to understand who they are as people.
- ➔ **5. Join the Fellowship of Freedom Riding Jedi Wizards!** We are all on a journey into an unknown future. It feels right to embrace the challenge and the camaraderie (and the adventure and joy) in working together to make it a good one. We each have a choice: Help tackle the tough challenges we face and be a hero now! (And get your free "Fellowship" wristband for all who help with DCTMI! :) Think about why we are so moved by the fictional characters from Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, or Star Wars and the real Freedom Riders who braved violence to desegregate interstate buses around the south.



FAQs

How does canvassing fit into our communications strategy?

Canvassing is the vital foundation for our broader outreach campaign. Lots of organizations focus on social media, direct mail or special events, but our goal is not only to recruit volunteers but to **broaden the number of people who want to get involved in their community** and change the mindset of more people from “I’m too busy,” to a *civic mindset* that “I’m busy but this is really important so I’ll **make** the time.” The last thing we want is to compete with our organizational partners for the same small pool of people who are already looking for civic opportunities. We may be able to facilitate matching new volunteers with programs that have times and locations that match the volunteer’s availability, but we need to get MANY more people involved if we are to meet the needs of students in DC.

Our communications work includes social media, videos, a robust web presence, “earned media” in newspapers, radio and TV, as well as outreach to employers, universities, civic clubs and religious congregations. Marketers and public health experts understand that it often takes repeated exposure to a new idea or product combined with the power of one-on-one interactions before people change their minds or behavior.



Where do we canvass?

Canvassing can take place in many locations. Our best locations have been farmers markets, free outdoor movie nights, and street festivals but we have also canvassed on the sidewalks in front of DC grocery stores, downtown parks during the lunch hour, and Metro stops at rush hour — some with more success than others. But there are numerous locations that could be tried and we increasingly find that lower density locations where one can walk *with* community members briefly to talk about the Initiative is more effective than densely packed areas where conversations are more difficult.

How will Community Leadership Teams work in practice?

Each group can define its own approach. Action-oriented groups can stick with canvassing or other outreach activities — although we strongly recommend a short debriefing after canvassing over coffee or a cool drink to help everybody process the experience and learn from the work.

Teams that want to create more time for getting to know one another or that want to understand and explore the work more deeply can meet periodically for meals or discussion. We have an extensive list of videos, short and long articles, and books that you can organize a lively discussion around. These span a range of topics from a focus on how to organize one’s own life to broad social, economic and political themes and include leadership development, psychology, political philosophy, community organizing, sociology, and the history of social movements. See our website for a detailed list of materials.

Can one-on-one canvassing scale to change a city?

If we can create 100 teams across the city or metro area, each helping with outreach a few hours each month, we expect to sign up around 38,000 volunteers! Even if only half eventually become tutors and mentors, that is still nearly 20,000 new volunteers in one year compared to the 11,000 volunteers that our 35 partner organizations currently work with.