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# *Community-Based Education Program*



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## **Promotional Copy**

### **#4226 – Evaluating a Social Enterprise**

#### **Organization Information**

The mission of host organization is to work with individuals, families and community partners in providing services to promote and enhance the mental health and wellness of those living within the communities served.

#### **Project Information**

The purpose of the project is to evaluate an alternative food service business (i.e. social purpose business) operated by the host organization - with specific focus on the benefit of alternative businesses toward an individual's recovery from mental illness and the factors necessary for ensuring the long-term viability of a social enterprise.

Students will research social purpose enterprise models in other jurisdictions and summarize common 'best' practices among them. Specific research questions include: What are the factors in a social enterprise that contribute positively and negatively to an individual's recovery from mental illness? To the long-term viability of the enterprise (i.e. what makes a social enterprise successful?)? Do the core principles and practices of a social enterprise models differ depending on the nature of the social enterprise? (e.g. catering business vs. clothes recycling)

Students will also examine the effectiveness of the local social enterprise model in relation to the level of contribution to an individual's recovery from mental illness and long-term viability of the social enterprise itself (i.e. what makes/will make this social enterprise successful?). Compare local research results to findings from other jurisdictions.

Students will be expected to provide a summary of their findings in a final report and present research results to the host organization upon completion.

#### **Benefit to the Host Organization and Community**

The catering business has been operational for the past four years under the host organization. An evaluation would enable the agency to make improvements to strengthen the financial viability of the business and increase the value to customers and the individuals with personal experience of mental illness who are employed as caterers at the business. Improvements to the business would, in turn contribute to a decrease in mental illness in our community and to the self-sustaining operation of a business that provides a valuable service in the community.

#### **What students might learn**

The student will learn about:

- Evaluation processes
- Alternative business models
- The food service industry
- Communication and organizational skills

## **Screening or Training Requirements**

Police and vulnerable sector check, confidentiality agreement, health and safety training.

## **Skills or Experience Needed**

- Work independently and as a team
- Business and evaluation background
- Knowledge of alternative business models and food services.
- Communication and organizational skills

## **Resources Required for Project Provided by Host**

If necessary, the host can provide office space, use of agency computer, phone and any photocopying or office supplies that are needed. All expenses must be pre-approved by the host.