



Building Evaluation Capacity through an Online Certificate Program

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In early 2025, the **Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR)** launched its [Certificate Program in Community-Based Research](#) to build the capacity of community leaders, non-profit staff, students, academics, and government employees to conduct community-based research and evaluation.

This blog was created as a collaborative effort between the Centre for Community Based Research and the Evaluation Capacity Network

Offered in partnership with Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo, the program is a practical resource for using research to drive change and build more responsive and equitable organizations, programs, and communities.

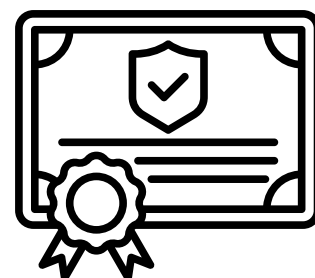
The **Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN)** has supported the launch of this program by offering additional capacity and resources to promote courses, expand the number of bursary spots for participants with financial need, and provide honoraria for guest speakers to bring even more expert content to the curricula.

Program Options

The certificate program allows learners to choose their depth of study, with three paths available:

- **Single Course Certificate:** Available to participants who complete a single CCBR course.
- **Basic Certificate of Community-Based Research:** Requires the completion of four courses.*
- **Advanced Certificate of Community-Based Research:** Requires the completion of eight courses.*

* More details apply. To learn more, visit the [CCBR Certificate Program webpage](#).



Current course lineup



Essentials of Community-Based Research

elaborates the fundamentals of conceptualizing, planning, and conducting research in a community-driven, participatory, and action-oriented way.



**Step into the
virtual classroom**
gain hands-on learning in...

Developing a community-based research proposal



Principles and Strategies for Community Engagement

, an experiential and applied course, provides an overview of core principles and strategies for community engagement in research.



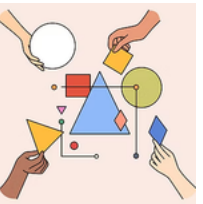
Trialling creative engagement strategies through "Design Labs"



Community-based Evaluation equips you to proactively use evaluation to assess processes and outcomes within simple programs or more complex interventions working for collective impact.



Designing an evaluation framework



A Menu of Community-Based Research Methods

provides a comprehensive overview of methods available to researchers following a community-based approach.



Navigating the range of methods options



Research Ethics in Community Settings provides ethical considerations and best practices for doing research in community settings, drawing on principles of the Community Research Ethics Office.



Working through ethical problems and applications



Arts-based Methods for Collective Action

, through interactive and experiential sessions, gives students practical skills in the "why" and "how" of using participatory art-making for community dialogue and research.



Creating a cell-philm (short videos captured on a cellphone in response to a prompt)



Acting on Findings explores practical frameworks and approaches for sharing knowledge in ways that are accessible, relevant, and responsive to community priorities.



Students are invited to **actively engage** in the virtual classroom, **question systems of power and inequity**, and **connect learning to the real world**. By learning together through peer exchange, dialogue, and creativity, students increase their capacity to use research to collaboratively drive change and build more responsive, supportive, and equitable communities.

Impact so far

Since March 2025, 128 people have enrolled in CCBR courses. One individual has already completed their Basic Certificate, while others are working toward their chosen program track. Ongoing course evaluations demonstrate the program's success:

75%

of respondents report that the course they took *met or exceeded expectations*.

84%

of respondents rated the content as *extremely useful* or *very useful* for workplace and educational contexts.

95%

of respondents found the course activities *engaging* or *very engaging*.

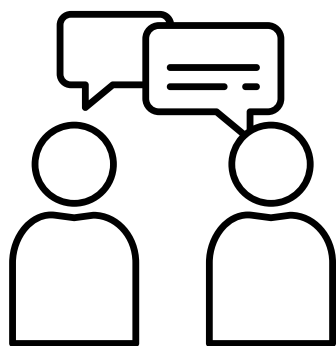
What participants are saying

"Throughout this course, I became acutely aware of how evaluation frameworks must be culturally sensitive, linguistically appropriate, and mindful of resource constraints."

"Having concrete examples of applications helped me to better understand the process and the challenges of community-based evaluation and see how I could apply them in the future."

"I really appreciated working in a small group each week [...] We supported each other in the activities and shared ideas that helped me apply what I was learning in real time."

"[The] CBR course has allowed me to learn from and build skills with like-minded professionals in the field of CBR [...] I feel more inspired to continue to do the work we are doing in the community."



"In my consulting work, I often engage with communities to inform program design and policy recommendations. Now, I feel a lot better equipped to advocate for evaluation methods that are co-developed with participants and to prioritize local knowledge."

"The range and depth of the [arts-based methods] course, while packed into 14 hours or so, was impressive. It gave attendees a lot to think about [...] cumulating in a sense of awe about the work and its resonance with community."

A promising pathway to evaluation capacity building

The success of CCBR's certificate program highlights how online pedagogy can effectively build evaluation capacity across Canada and internationally. By removing geographic barriers, virtual courses allow anyone with a stable internet connection and a device to learn together across rural, remote, and urban communities. This approach improves access for organizations that cannot otherwise attend traditional, in-person training.

For the ECN and other capacity-building networks, the online course format offers a blueprint for long-term sustainability. Synchronous online learning can build sector capacity and move away from one-off or piecemeal consulting.

Learn more and register

CCBR is accepting registration for Fall 2026, Winter & Spring 2027 courses, with early bird discounts and ECN-funded bursary spots still available.

Browse course offerings on the [CCBR Certificate Program webpage](#):



Learn more about ECN-funded bursary options in the [Bursary Application Form](#):

