Scope of Work: Review of Summer Camps in Canada Serving Neurodivergent Children and Adults

The Azrieli Foundation (the Foundation) is one of Canada's largest philanthropic foundations, supporting initiatives in education, science & healthcare, research and the arts. Through strategic grants and partnerships, we strive to foster innovation, empowerment and drive positive change within these critical sectors in Canada and Israel.

We are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace and value diverse backgrounds, abilities and ways of thinking. Diversity and inclusion make our organization strong, productive and innovative. Applicants with lived experience who identify as neurodivergent are strongly encouraged to apply.

Background & Rationale

Overnight camps play an important role in fostering belonging, skill development, and personal growth for children and youth. However, the sector faces growing challenges, including rising demand, limited capacity, and declining government funding for recreation and leisure. Camps are trusted, long-standing partners in the disability ecosystem, providing tailored programming, respite for families and accessible environments that are often unavailable elsewhere. They also create pathways to employment and leadership for neurodivergent (NDD) youth and young adults, as the camp sector employs more than 42,000 seasonal staff each summer, most of whom are 17 to 25 years old.

The Foundation promotes inclusion and enhances the quality of life for neurodivergent individuals. Investing in overnight camps for NDD individuals, therefore, strengthens inclusion, expands capacity for life-enriching experiences and builds skills and independence.

The Foundation seeks a consultant to conduct a formal review and mapping of the overnight camp ecosystem in Canada to guide its strategic funding through the Neurodiverse Initiatives portfolio.

Purpose & Objectives

Purpose: To conduct a review and mapping of overnight camps across Canada, serving neurodivergent children, youth and adults, with a focus on 18+ individuals as campers and camps that have Leadership in Training/Staff in Training and pre-employment programs for neurodivergent youth and adults, as well as identify opportunities to increase capacity for serving the population in segregated and integrated environments. The review will inform the Foundation's funding strategy through an evidence-based approach.

Objectives:

1. Map the landscape of overnight camps in Canada serving NDD populations, including both specialized and inclusive models.
2. Identify barriers to access and gaps in service provision.
3. Identify infrastructure and program capacity, key service features and approaches to inclusion in programs.
4. Identify promising practices and develop 1-2 illustrative case studies.
5. Provide actionable, evidence-based recommendations to guide the Foundation's funding strategy.

Key Review Questions

- What types of camps exist and whom do they serve? (i.e. integrated models. segregated models, inclusive models etc.).
- What specific program design, staffing approaches and accommodations do camps use to support accessibility and neurodiversity-affirming practices?
    - Specifically, for NDD youth and adults attending as campers vs. those attending as staff.
    - What is the level of support available to campers?
    - Are best practices incorporated into program design?
- What are the key barriers to providing meaningful and sustainable camping options for NDD youth and adults as campers and as staff?
- What indicators (e.g., demand levels, waitlists, or unmet need) exist to demonstrate current demand for overnight camp programs?
- What are the additional financial requirements to adequately support neurodivergent campers? (e.g. staffing, accommodations, programming, trainings)

Scope of Work

In Scope: Overnight camps in Canada that serve neurodivergent children, youth and adults, with a specific focus on the 18+ age group as campers and camp staff, including specialized and inclusive camps, camps that provide Leadership in Training/Staff in Training and pre-employment programs for neurodivergent youth and adults.

Out of Scope: Full program evaluations, accessibility audits.

Methodology (Consultant to Refine)

Phase 1: Desk Review — environmental scan, classification, longlist of camps.

Phase 2: Stakeholder Input — consultations/interviews and/or surveys of camp operators, sector experts, camping associations, caregivers, neurodivergent adults and selected camp-affiliated or camp-partner organizations supporting neurodivergent youth and adults.

Phase 3: Analysis — gap identification, geographic mapping, promising practices.

Phase 4: Strategy — recommendations for funding streams and indicators for impact measurement (short, mid and long term).

Deliverables

- Inception Brief
- Stakeholder list and data collection tools for Azrieli Foundation review
- Ecosystem Map & Dataset
- Interim Findings Report
- Final Report (25–40 pages)
- Summary findings and recommendations presentation to the CEO and Senior Management team (10–15 slides)

Timeline

Estimated duration: 5 months and will include bi-weekly check-ins, an interim presentation and a final presentation.

Required Qualifications

- Experience in neurodiversity inclusion, recreation or disability services
- Research and environmental scan experience
- Strong synthesis and strategy skills
- **Bilingualism (English and French)**

Compensation

Compensation will vary significantly depending on the consultant's rate and qualifications.

Living Our Values

Our values are the bedrock of our culture. They shape how we work, how we collaborate and how we make decisions—every single day. Those who succeed at the Azrieli Foundation exemplify the core principles of:

- Integrity and respect
- Taking on big challenges
- Excellence
- Passion for making a difference
- Results-oriented mindset
- Sustainable impact

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Living our values means creating a workplace where everyone feels respected, supported and empowered to contribute. Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is one way we put those values into practice.

We are committed to creating inclusive and barrier-free recruitment and selection processes. If you require an accommodation during this process, please reach out to info@zrielifoundation.org.

About the Foundation

For more than 35 years, the Azrieli Foundation has been dedicated to strengthening communities and improving people's lives through strategic and impactful giving and programs in education, science and healthcare, research, community and the arts, across Canada and Israel. We are proud of our work, which is guided by Jewish values and supports people of all faiths, ages, backgrounds and abilities.

In addition to strategic philanthropic investments, the Azrieli Foundation operates several initiatives including the Azrieli Fellows Program, the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, the Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program, the Azrieli Music, Arts and Culture Centre and others.

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Plain Language Version

Review of Summer Camps in Canada for Neurodivergent Children, Youth, and Adults

About the Project

The Azrieli Foundation wants to better understand summer overnight camps across Canada that serve neurodivergent children, youth and adults. The findings will help guide future funding decisions and support more inclusive opportunities for neurodivergent people.

Why This Work Matters

Overnight camps help people:

- Make friends and feel included
- Build life and social skills
- Gain confidence and independence
- Access enjoyable and meaningful experiences

Camps also provide important support and respite for families and caregivers. Many camps create pathways to employment and leadership for neurodivergent youth and young adults.

At the same time, camps are facing challenges such as:

- Growing demand
- Limited spaces
- Rising costs
- Reduced government funding

Understanding these challenges can help identify ways to strengthen the camp sector.

Purpose of the Review

The review will examine overnight camps across Canada that support neurodivergent individuals, with a special focus on:

- Adults aged 18+
- Leadership and staff training programs
- Employment preparation opportunities
- Both specialized and inclusive camp models

The goal is to identify opportunities to increase access, capacity, and inclusion.

What the Review Will Look At

The review will explore:

Camp Programs

- What types of camps exist
- Who they serve
- How programs are designed to support neurodivergent campers and staff

Accessibility and Supports

- Accommodations and supports available
- Staffing approaches
- Inclusion practices
- Level of support provided to campers

Gaps and Challenges

- Barriers that prevent people from attending camp
- Challenges faced by camps in providing services
- Areas where more support or investment is needed

Demand

- Waitlists and demand for programs

- Unmet needs in communities
- Financial resources needed to support neurodivergent campers successfully

How the Review Will Be Conducted

The project will include four phases:

1. Research and Information Gathering

- Review existing information about camps across Canada
- Create a list of camps and programs

2. Stakeholder Engagement

- Gather feedback through interviews, surveys, or consultations
- Speak with camp operators, caregivers, neurodivergent adults and sector experts

3. Analysis

- Identify gaps in services
- Map programs across Canada
- Highlight successful and promising practices

4. Recommendations

- Develop practical recommendations
- Identify opportunities for future funding and investment
- Suggest ways to measure impact over time

What Will Be Delivered

The consultant will provide:

- A project plan
- A list of stakeholders and consultation tools
- A map of the camp ecosystem across Canada
- An interim findings report
- A final report with recommendations
- A presentation summarizing key findings and opportunities

Expected Impact

This review will help the Azrieli Foundation:

- Better understand the camp landscape in Canada
- Identify gaps and opportunities
- Support more neurodivergent children, youth and adults
- Strengthen inclusive recreation and employment opportunities
- Make informed funding decisions based on evidence and community needs

Key Outcome

A stronger, more inclusive overnight camp system that creates meaningful opportunities for neurodivergent people and provides valuable support to families across Canada.

Timeline

The project is expected to take about 5 months to complete.

During the project, the consultant will:

- Meet with the Foundation every two weeks to provide updates
- Share progress and early findings in an interim presentation
- Deliver a final presentation with key findings and recommendations at the end of the project

Qualifications

We are looking for a consultant who has:

- Experience supporting neurodivergent people or working in recreation, disability or inclusion services

- Experience conducting research and reviewing information from multiple sources
- Strong analytical and strategic thinking skills
- The ability to work in both English and French

Compensation

Compensation will be based on the consultant's experience, qualifications, and consulting rates.

Living Our Values

Our values guide everything we do. They help us make decisions, work together, and support the people and communities we serve.
At the Azrieli Foundation, we look for people who:

- Act with honesty, respect and integrity
- Take on important challenges and look for solutions
- Strive for high-quality work
- Care about making a positive difference
- Focus on achieving meaningful results
- Create lasting impact that benefits people and communities over time

In short: We value people who are committed, collaborative, and driven to make a meaningful and lasting difference

Inclusivity and Accessibility

We want everyone to feel welcome, respected, and supported at work. We believe that different experiences, backgrounds, and ways of thinking make us stronger.
We are committed to creating an inclusive and accessible hiring process. If you need accommodations or support during the recruitment process, please contact **info@azrielifoundation.org**.

About the Azrieli Foundation

The Azrieli Foundation works to improve lives by supporting organizations, ideas and programs that create positive change. We invest in projects that help solve important challenges and improve communities.

We believe that everyone has potential. Our goal is to create opportunities, build connections, and help people reach their full potential and contribute to society.

The Foundation supports a variety of programs and initiatives, including:

- the Azrieli Fellows Program
- the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence
- the Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program
- the Azrieli Music, Arts and Culture Centre
- other initiatives that advance learning, innovation and community wellbeing

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