



DC TUTORING & MENTORING INITIATIVE COMMUNITY OUTREACH TEAMS



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. At the same time, we will also be creating a cadre of grassroots servant leaders able to act with kindness, courage, vision, and wisdom. 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.

How to Get Involved in a Team

How do we make this vision a reality? DCTMI needs 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 — 3-6 people each — who can volunteer together a couple of hours a month and share in the camaraderie of working and learning together. We also have a limited number of PAID positions available for Team Organizers or others taking on substantial leadership. (See p.2 for details.)

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 outdoor outreach at farmer's markets, festivals, outdoor movie nights, 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. Help match new volunteers to our partner organizations.
5. Work as a team to send out daily posts on social media or create the Civic Imagination podcast.
6. Create a “giving circle” to sponsor a Civic Leadership Fellow or several students.
7. Put on an outdoor special events or volunteer fair (outdoors or virtual).



Don't have time to join a team? We still need your help!

1. Serve as a tutor or mentor 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: 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.

Team Organizers: Responsibilities, Competencies, & Compensation

Responsibilities

Outdoor Outreach: Team Organizers will help recruit and lead the volunteer teams at outdoor events. This is our greatest need. DC Tutoring & Mentoring Initiative has more than 500 people who have signed up to help with either outreach (mostly) or with administrative tasks. However, we have not been successful in mobilizing large numbers of them since we haven't had the capacity to build relationships with them individually. Our hope is that the Team Organizers can change this!

Organizers will be responsible for managing the logistics as well as keeping team members engaged and (we hope) enthusiastic! We will work closely with you to make sure you have the training and support that you need to be successful!

Depending on the team's goals and your availability, Organizers might work as much as 5 hours per week or as little as 2 hours per month.

A typical large farmer's market tabling event could run from 8-1:30 (including setup) while informal canvassing might be only 1-2 hours in a morning or evening farmers market or free outdoor movie night.

Volunteer Matching, Phone/Text/Email Communication and Recruitment: We encourage volunteers to work in their teams to match and communicate with volunteers, both to add the social dimension to the work and to share feedback and answer questions. This could be done for an hour or two on weekday evenings or any time on weekends.

Compensation

We welcome volunteer Team Organizers but we can also pay \$15-22/hour based on experience.

Major Competencies

- Have a "servant leader" mindset: Lead by example and be willing to do the hard work, whether it's helping with setting up tables and a canopy or talking to a community member who looks to be in a bad mood.
- A commitment to continue to grow as a human being

and to help your team do the same. (See the Civic Leadership Pledge at <https://dcTutorMentor.org/civic-leadership>.)

- Ability to communicate a vision with courage, humor, warmth, empathy, and patience to both community and team members.
- Able to build trust and strong relationships with team members.
- Able to build good rapport with community members you meet.
- Adaptable and able to think on your feet and adjust based on unexpected weather and unpredictable people!
- Integrity and accountability: Honest, open, and good follow-through on commitments.
- Open and proactive in giving and receiving feedback, sharing problems, and generally being vulnerable.
- Able to manage details, too!

Details

- Responsible for coordinating transportation, setup, and take-down of tables and canopies as needed. (DCTMI can help but your self-sufficiency makes our job easier!)
- Responsible for showing up with buttons, pens, flyers, sunscreen, snacks, as needed. (DCTMI covers all costs.)
- Log your time worked using our CRM system.

What Does Success Look Like?

Our goals are balanced across three dimensions:

- *Short-term:* We recruit volunteer tutors and mentors.
- *Long-term:* We encourage a sense in people we interact with that there are good people in the community doing good work and that they, too, can get involved and make a difference.
- *Personal:* Team members and leaders feel that they further develop as leaders and as human beings.

How do I apply?

Send an email with a resume and cover letter to tom@dcTutorMentor.org. We strongly encourage you to volunteer at least once as a team member to get a feel for the work.

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

Conversation is (almost always) where we begin. We hand out a small flyer and explain that we are looking for volunteer mentors and tutors to help with students around the city. We have three goals:

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. When volunteers sign up, we ask them if they're available in person or virtually, 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 50+ tutoring and mentoring organizations that need more volunteers.

→ **1. It will transform education and our community.**

In 2008, a million people knocked on doors to help get Barack Obama elected. 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.

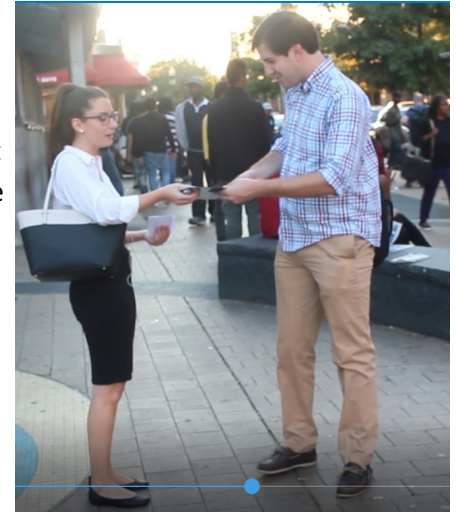
→ **2. Develop your communication & leadership skills, your empathy, and your wisdom!** It's hard to build a bond of trust with a stranger in a brief conversation. But it's doable and personally satisfying if you speak from the heart about why this work matters. Like shooting baskets or hitting a baseball, you won't succeed every time but that's okay and that's how we learn. Combine the work with time for deep reflection and you will develop in ways that transfer to all domains of your life.

→ **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, Bal-

timore'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, the Avengers, or Star Wars — and the real Freedom Riders who braved violence to desegregate interstate buses around the south.



FAQs

Can one-on-one canvassing and tabling 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 50+ partner organizations currently work with.

How does canvassing and tabling fit into our communications strategy?

Canvassing has been the 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 and table?

Canvassing and tabling 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 found, pre-COVID, 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 Outreach 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.

