

Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center  
*Supplemental Information for First-Time Community Building Partner Applicants*  
April 2019

All new and existing community-based organizations are required to complete a space application to be eligible for application review. The following information is offered as background information about the CEC, its unique mission and values, and the shared expectations of its campus/community environment. Potential new community building partner applicants should consider this information before submitting an application using the [CEC Long-Term Space Application for New Community Building Partners](#).

**SECTION 1: OUR MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES**

As a potential community building partner of the CEC, it is important that each applicant reviews, understands and aligns with the mission, vision and values of the CEC for effective long-term UNO-community collaboration.

**The CEC mission:** To contribute positively and measurably to the community's quality of life by creating, supporting, and expanding mutually beneficial partnerships, engaged scholarship, and academic and student programming that create tomorrow's leaders and agents of change.

**CEC Vision:** The dynamic programs, initiatives and partnerships fostered and supported by the CEC will inspire generations of leaders, groundbreaking solutions, and synergetic collaborations to transform our community and campus into world-class metropolitan partners.

**CEC CORE Values:** Each applicant's ability to align with the core values of the CEC's UNO and community partnership spaces is a key factor in determining their eligibility and priority to be a CEC building partner. Applicants seeking building partner space in the CEC must indicate how they will address the seven core values of the CEC as described below:

- 1. DIVERSITY:** The CEC actively seeks to represent the many diverse ideas, backgrounds, and cultures that comprise Omaha and the UNO community. It encourages nonprofit, government, educational, private and organizations from both within and outside of UNO and throughout the community to apply for space. Applicant organizations should indicate how they will contribute to the spirit of diversity in the CEC through their presence and actions.
- 2. CIVIL AND OPEN DIALOGUE:** Diversity of thought fosters innovation and creativity. The CEC is a space where all opinions are heard and diverse ideas are not only respected, but also encouraged. Applicant organizations should indicate how they intend to contribute to this atmosphere if housed in the CEC.
- 3. COLLABORATION:** More than simply sharing space, collaboration implies that applicant organizations actively seek ways to work with UNO and their CEC neighbors to achieve common goals and community benefit. We will place significant value on organizations that are committed to working in this manner to identify, address, and solve problems facing our metropolitan area, and that have a demonstrated history of working collaboratively in our community, or the clear potential to do so in the future. Potential applicants must be committed to being visible and present residents of the building. While all CEC building partners have outreach and engagement as part of their missions, intra-building and intra-campus relationships cannot occur when building occupants are not present. Successful building partner organizations are those that attend CEC building partner events and building events, have reasonable office hours, utilize the building for informal and formal meetings, actively seek opportunities for collaboration, etc.
- 4. COMMUNICATION:** The CEC encourages thoughtful, respectful, and transparent communication between all individuals who use the building, including community partners, faculty, staff, and students. The environment of the CEC

## Supplemental Information for First Time Applicants

### CEC Building Partners

is energized and ever-changing, with new partnerships, initiatives, and activities frequently arising from co-location and new connections. We give preference to potential new partner organizations that are open to organizational learning, new interactions and open channels of communication with the UNO community, their CEC neighbors, and the broader metropolitan community. This includes but is not limited to sharing news and lessons learned from the CEC experience through UNO public relations materials, social media, and organizational communications.

5. **RECIPROCITY:** The CEC is a portal by which the community and UNO can exchange resources, ideas, and solutions. Through reciprocal relationships, community and UNO organizations interact with and benefit from each other. For our community partners, reciprocity is defined by a willingness to collaborate with organizations located within both the CEC and the UNO community. This includes working with students, faculty, staff and community organizations in ways that derive reciprocal benefits. Examples include:
  - Offering student internships and/or service learning opportunities
  - Participating in special lectures and seminars open to selected students
  - Providing guest lectures
  - Participating in mentoring programs
  - Utilizing students and faculty for research and consultation
  - Participating in special events to expose students to the operations of the community partner and its impact on the community
  - Informally exchanging information and best practices
6. **A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE:** The CEC values everyone who uses the building, and shows that by creating an environment that is clean, easy to access, filled with friendly faces, comfortable for all, and meets people's physical needs. Building partner organizations contribute to this atmosphere by respecting the shared space nature of the CEC.
7. **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** Basing decisions for improvement on direct feedback and concrete data ensures that organizations can continue to have positive impacts on the community. The CEC leadership hopes that community and university partners will grow in many different ways, but mostly that all partners will be better equipped to serve the Omaha community as a result of being in the CEC. Building partners are encouraged to engage in capacity building activities that take place in the CEC as appropriate as well as share skills and network to ensure a work environment where all organizations flourish.

### ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

**PLACE OVER SPACE:** The CEC seeks building partner organizations that demonstrate an authentic and clear purpose for being in the building. Applications should explain obvious benefits from being in the CEC that go beyond the need for physical office and meeting space. The CEC is more than just available campus-based office space. It is a unique place where university and community organizations work side by side in a collaborative environment. Organizations seeking to be located in the CEC should indicate how they will benefit from being part of the CEC environment and how they will contribute positively to its success.

**ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH:** Organizations seeking placement in the CEC should have a history of effective leadership and operations, in terms of a board of advisors or directors and/or its management team. Applicants should provide evidence of the following in their application:

- Strong leadership and strategic thinking
- Financial viability
- Transparency in governance

## **Supplemental Information for First Time Applicants**

### **CEC Building Partners**

- Flexibility in problem solving to resolve operational differences
- Community support and involvement in programming

**Additional information about the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center can be found on the [CEC website](#) or by contacting:**

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