

Request for Proposals for the Implementation of a Digital Platform Designed for Integrated Youth Services

Purpose:

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to identify and support ten integrated youth networks in Ontario, not currently receiving Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO) funding, who are highly motivated to implement a youth facing technology platform for the purpose of providing measurement-based care to youth aged 12 to 25 years. We are seeking to identify integrated youth networks who share our vision of Ontario's youth having access to outcome-focused, youth-friendly and youth-centred services.

Background:

YWHO is a provincial initiative with ten established integrated youth service hubs and four new integrated youth service hubs. YWHO provides and connects youth aged 12 to 25 years to a range of services, including mental health, substance use, primary care, education, employment, housing, peer support, family support, cultural services, and care navigation services. This model of service has been co-created with youth, families, service providers, researchers, cultural groups, and policy-makers and rests upon a core set of values and core components.

Across Ontario, youth have very different experiences seeking services for mental health, physical health, substance use and/or other concerns or needs. An important component in the service-seeking experience is how information is requested and gathered from youth, how that information is used in decision-making about the delivery of services, and how data are used to monitor outcomes over time and inform program and service provision. YWHO's vision is that all young people across Ontario aged 12 to 25 years know where to go for help and have positive, youth-centered, helpful and respectful service experiences, including during initial service entry and information gathering processes. An important part of this vision is also standardized use of sociodemographic and clinical screening information to inform consultation and care for youth, and allow for the benefit of consistent outcome monitoring over time.

Currently across Ontario, the youth (i.e., adolescent and transition-aged youth) mental health and substance use service sectors lack a common data strategy and platform. Having these commonalities across services can enhance both provincial and organization-level understanding of the shared and unique needs and outcomes of youth. Fragmentation has served to compromise the sectors' ability to ensure adequate system understanding of youth needs and appropriate allocation of resources commensurate with those needs, particularly for transition-aged youth.

YWHO is changing this. YWHO has initiated the implementation of a centralized youth-informed data strategy through YWHO integrated youth service networks. Across the 65+ mental health, physical health, and substance use organizations who are YWHO service providers in Ontario, YWHO has implemented consistent collection of standardized data to 1) guide services for young people; 2) allow for organizations to efficiently examine and share information about the needs and outcomes of youth; and 3) facilitate system-wide improvements in mental health and substance use services for youth.

YWHO's Youth Facing Digital Platform – My Wellness Passport:

YWHO emphasizes evidence-informed care, with a key element being the implementation of measurement-based care (MBC). Within the model of MBC, My Wellness Passport (MWP) is YWHO's youth facing technology platform that facilitates communication between service providers and youth as well as among integrated service providers.

MWP includes standardized screening tools completed by young people at the beginning of service and various follow-up points, that are clinically useful, meaningful to youth and their families, and provide relevant information that helps meet youth's needs for service and support. This allows for information regarding the needs of youth to be accessible in real time, and the ability to address symptom change and support stepping up or down to higher or lower intensity services, thus improving youth outcomes. MWP allows sites to personalize care to young people and promotes collaborative, integrated service provision.

Currently, MWP hosts youth registration, sociodemographic information, information collected through brief clinical screeners, as well as a few additional features such as 'progress tracker' graphs and visit summary checklists. Progress graphs and visit summary checklists help to inform care and support monitoring of individual youth over time. In addition, comma-separated value (CSV) file exports allow for local reporting on combined youth service visits, and data from MWP sites across the province is collated, allowing youth trends to be analyzed, compared, and used for quality improvement among all MWP and YWHO sites. User feedback informs ongoing enhancements to the MWP platform. MWP does not replace organizations' electronic medical records (EMR) or electronic health records (EHR) but, rather, is used in tandem with such systems.

As the YWHO model is no/low barrier access to service, YWHO's standardized screening tools within MWP replace any existing clinical screening instruments currently used by organizations at the beginning of hub-specific services (e.g., brief walk-in therapy), thereby reducing the burden of data collection among youth and families. The YWHO tools are youth friendly, and balance brevity and thoroughness. The YWHO standardized tools include screening of youth mental health and substance use, general health, suicide risk, life functioning, and an assessment of young people's goals for service. The YWHO

standardized tools also include sociodemographic questions and opportunities for youth to provide feedback on the services they have received.

The information collected within MWP is stored securely in a provincial database accessible by YWHO for reporting purposes, to further support YWHO's understanding of youth and service outcomes, and to inform treatment planning and network service offers. Provincial data summaries are shared with YWHO and MWP sites.

Implementation of My Wellness Passport:

Successful applicants will receive dedicated training and support from YWHO to learn and implement MWP within current service pathways, as well as training and resources on MBC, the YWHO standardized clinical screening tools, and the collection of sociodemographic and equity data. Training commitment for successful applicants can be up to six hours (delivered virtually) and monthly coaching and support sessions will be offered, and applicants are expected to attend. Networks must use a YWHO common consent form and should also develop additional agreements such as a memorandum of understanding or data sharing agreements within their network.

Funding Available:

Successful integrated youth service network applicants will be eligible to receive the required data platform licenses, iPads/tablets, and \$25,000 in funding for hub staffing costs plus implementation support to rollout YWHO's MWP over the course of one year. This funding opportunity is available for ten new sites.

Eligible Applicants

- Applicants must be organizations/networks with integrated youth networks that provide comprehensive, evidence-based services as described above to youth aged 12-25 years.
- Applicants cannot be a current YWHO site.

Eligibility Criteria

YWHO strongly encourages applicants to demonstrate their capacity, commitment, and willingness to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- **Integrated youth service network** offering integrated, evidence-based/generating, developmentally-appropriate mental health, physical health, and substance use services to young people aged 12-25 years, and family support. There is a youth mental health or substance use Network Lead agency, partner organizations, and a robust inclusion of many diverse young people involved in governance and service design and implementation.

- **Meaningful youth and family engagement at the organizational/policy level.** Networks have local, diverse youth and family members engaged in organizational and policy development, decision-making, service planning and development, and evaluation of services through consultation with youth/family. This includes consultation for the development of service pathways for youth.
- **Learning organizations/network.** Network demonstrates willingness and responsiveness to change, as well as aptitude towards innovation and evaluation.
- **One-stop shop model of service delivery.** Networks offer comprehensive, co-located evidence-informed service delivery (in person/virtually) for mental health, substance use, and health services, as well as employment, education, housing and/or other social and community support services.
- **Accessibility.** Networks offer walk-in and self-referral options for services, minimal wait times, and flexible service hours that are convenient for youth needs and schedules.
- **Inclusive and culturally diverse services.** Anti-racist, anti-oppressive services offered through the networks are accessible to youth with varying needs, identities, and abilities corresponding to the community (e.g., 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous youth, youth with neurodiversities, etc.) and the organizations employ service providers from diverse groups, including cultural backgrounds. There is a focus on equity-based principles and culturally-specific services that reflect the community population group.
- **Network commitment to use technology.** Networks are committed to using electronic means of screening for both in-person and remote service delivery (iPads/tablets will be provided/funded for in-person service delivery) within a simple screening process at intake with youth, and various other screening points along the service pathway. There is a functioning Wi-Fi connection at the sites.
- **Network commitment to implement measurement-based care.** Networks are committed to MBC to monitor youth's progress and use data to inform care decisions in a collaborative way with youth.
- **Identification of a local MWP champion.** Networks are willing to have a local champion(s) who initiates the process of change that the implementation of MWP requires, facilitates the support of the technical components involved in the platform, and works closely and collaboratively with all service providers and YWHO to ensure a smooth and efficient implementation. This champion would be supported and trained by YWHO.
- **Network capacity to expedite relevant agreements and common consent forms efficiently.** Networks can develop or modify common consent forms and memorandums of understanding among service partners, outlining commitments related to MWP data collection and sharing of information such as YWHO's minimum data set. Networks commit to enter into formal data sharing agreements

with the YWHO Provincial Office to allow for the provision of implementation support and access of data for standard provincial reporting and quality improvement purposes.

Application Information:

Submission Date: All proposals must be submitted through info@youthhubs.ca, with attention to Dr. Joanna Henderson, in PDF format by June 30th, 2021 no later than 5:30 pm. Successful applicants will be notified of a decision by July 16th, 2021.

Application Word Limit: Applicants are encouraged to respond to this request for proposals in less than 2000 words within 3 pages maximum.

Resources: Applicants are encouraged to visit youthhubs.ca and <https://confluence.camh.ca/display/YKB> for more details about YWHO, My Wellness Passport, and Measurement-Based Care.

Application Review Information:

- Proposals will be reviewed through a confidential process by a panel of YWHO team members that include youth and families, current YWHO site representatives, implementation specialists, evaluators, clinical staff, managers, and the executive director.
- Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on applicants' demonstration of meeting the eligibility criteria outlined in this call.
- Applicants may be requested to participate in an interview, after the initial review of applications, with a panel of YWHO team members.
- All applicants will be notified of the decision of funding by July 16th, 2021.

Additional Information

Questions about this funding opportunity can be sent to info@youthhubs.ca. Questions, and their responses, will be made available to all applicants within a 48-hour period.