



MAKING THE SHIFT^{INC}
youth homelessness social innovation lab

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Project Name: Strategic Communications Plan

Deadline for Submission: October 28, 2022

1. BACKGROUND

The [Canadian Observatory on Homelessness](#) (COH) is a non-partisan research and policy partnership between academics, policy and decision makers, service providers and people with lived experience of homelessness. The COH, which is hosted by [York University](#), works in collaboration with partners to conduct and mobilize research designed to have an impact on solutions to homelessness. The COH also operates the Homeless Hub, the world's largest repository of homelessness research.

[A Way Home Canada](#) (AWHC) is a national coalition reimagining solutions to youth homelessness through transformations in policy, planning and practice, that has inspired an international movement for change under the banner of A Way Home. AWHC works with all orders of government, communities, services providers and philanthropy to create a policy, investment and service environment that enables a shift away from simply “managing” the problem of youth homelessness through emergency services to a more proactive, rights-based approach that focuses on prevention. AWH's collective work is evidence-driven and solutions-focused.

Together, A Way Home Canada and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness co-lead the [Making the Shift Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab](#) (MtS), which is a Networks of Centres of Excellence funded by the Government of Canada. Making the Shift funds, conducts, prototypes, and mobilizes cutting-edge research to prevent and end youth homelessness in Canada. As a social innovation lab, MtS uses the principles of co-creation, co-ownership and deep collaboration between researchers, policymakers, service providers and people with lived experience of youth homelessness to identify what works and for whom. Making the Shift contributes to the transformation of how we respond to youth homelessness through research and knowledge mobilization specific to youth homelessness prevention and housing stabilization. By generating solutions to such an important problem, MtS will enable better outcomes for youth, including housing stability, enhanced health, well-being, and inclusion, engagement with school and employment, and successful transitions to adulthood.

In addition, in 2021 the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe established the Toronto Centre of Excellence on Youth Homelessness Prevention at York University (Toronto Centre of Excellence). Hosted by [York University](#) and co-led by the [Canadian Observatory on Homelessness](#) and [A Way Home Canada](#), the launch of the [Toronto Centre of Excellence](#) (TCE) presents an important opportunity to work internationally to contribute to the transformation of how we respond to youth homelessness through a greater focus on prevention. The TCE is part of a broader network of Centres of Excellence under the coordination of the UNECE with a mandate to engage in the exchange of research knowledge, experience and best practices in order to support the implementation of the GENEVA UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. This designation enhances opportunities for international partnership and collaboration on research, knowledge mobilization, advocacy and training activities focused on the prevention of youth homelessness and sustainable housing. Through engaged international research, the Toronto Centre of Excellence provides opportunities to assess the state of youth homelessness and prevention in the UNECE's 56 member states, and to get youth homelessness and homelessness prevention on government policy agendas, catalyzing change and improved well-being and housing outcomes for youth and their families.

2. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

AWHC, COH and MtS (“the collective”) are looking to build broader awareness and support for their collaborative work on youth homelessness prevention. We are at an important inflection point in our work. Over the years, we have developed a significant body of knowledge through evidence-based research and testing at the community-level. We are ready to share our solutions-focused approach and advance policy to drive uptake nationally. As the collective, we want to ensure we are leveraging our individual strengths to drive collective communications impact. While each of the three organizations have various communications resources, we are looking for a consultant who can support the partner organizations to define and articulate their collective narrative and deliver one consistent message about the importance of youth homelessness prevention to government decision makers, program partners, funders, local community influencers and other stakeholder groups.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

We are looking for a consultant to work with the collective to develop a cohesive 3-year communications and media relations strategy and implementation plan (including internal resource assessment, identification and allocation) that will enable the collective to communicate more effectively with their stakeholders to drive awareness and action.

It should be noted that we did do a preliminary stakeholder analysis that would be made available to the successful consultant. Eight stakeholder groups were identified which include government, community entities (CEs), service providers, funders, Indigenous groups, allied and aligned organizations in related policy areas, organizations in other policy areas, and international organizations in similar policy areas.

4. PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

A. Proposal Sections

Respondents are required to submit a written application that includes the following sections:

- Section 1: Description of applicant's understanding of the scope and purpose of the project
- Section 2: Description of applicant's previous experience completing projects of a similar scope and nature (a minimum of three examples that identify the activities carried out and the impact of the project)
- Section 3: Timeline including milestones and deliverables
- Section 4: Listing of project team members

B. Budget Breakdown:

In addition to the components listed above, applicants are required to provide a detailed budget that is structured in the following way:

- Breakdown of hours and cost for each aspect of the project:
 - The hourly rate of each project team member
 - The hours required to complete each aspect of the project
- A list of any ancillary costs associated with the project (cannot exceed 10% of the total budget)

C. Submission Process

Applicants are required to email their completed proposal, including the specified sections listed above, in PDF format to makingtheshift@yorku.ca by October 28, 2022 at 5 p.m. EST. Please include: "RFP Response: Strategic Communications Plan" in the subject line.

D. Questions

Applicants can submit questions to makingtheshift@yorku.ca and expect a response within one business day.