



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

# Request for Proposal

Implementation and Marketing  
Strategy for the Mental Health  
Commission of Canada's  
National Mental Health App Library

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*Ce document est disponible en français*



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# Introduction

The [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#) (MHCC) is a not-for-profit organization focused on improving mental health services across the country. By addressing key gaps, the MHCC aims to enhance mental health outcomes for those living in Canada.

## Development of the National Mental Health App Library

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) is in the process of developing a National Mental Health App Library (hereafter referred to as the app library). This app library will feature a curated selection of mental health apps that have undergone rigorous evaluations for quality, safety, and effectiveness. This initiative is being carried out in collaboration with the [Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Apps](#) (ORCHA), ensuring that only apps meeting established global and national standards are included.

The app library will be a trusted, widely accessible resource across Canada, offering high-quality mental health and well-being tools.

This objective will be realized through the effective implementation and seamless integration of the app library into existing MHCC digital platforms, supported by a strategic marketing approach and robust engagement and partnerships with relevant collaborators.

Additionally, the project will incorporate ongoing monitoring and quality assurance processes to ensure the app library remains a reliable, current, and accessible resource for the Canadian public.

## Mental Health App Assessment

The mental health apps in the app library are assessed on the basis of the [MHCC Mental Health App Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps](#) and/or the ORCHA Baseline Review. The MHCC framework is designed to enhance the quality of mental health apps available to individuals in Canada. Before the publication of this framework, access to safe, secure, and effective mental health apps in Canada was largely undefined.

The MHCC framework outlines standards for mental health apps that are important to Canadian residents. Its development involved extensive collaboration with a diverse range of interested parties across the country, supported by Health Canada and by ORCHA in the United Kingdom.

The framework is publicly accessible and was formulated through evidence-based research, comprehensive consultations (including input from individuals with lived and/or living experience), and a public review process.

For further information on the assessment structure and answers to frequently asked questions about the process, please refer to Appendices A and B.

The MHCC is seeking proposals for the development of two key items:

**1. National Implementation Plan for Mental Health App Assessment**

- This plan will include a comprehensive communications strategy, an assessment document with a detailed scoring methodology, and guidance materials for app developers on the process for submitting mental health apps for review using the MHCC framework.

**2. Marketing and Promotion Plan for the National Mental Health App Library**

- This plan will develop a public call for app developers to submit mental health apps for assessment, along with communication strategies and materials for both the public and health practitioners on how to access and use the app library.
- The MHCC will leverage its e-Mental Health Collaborative and Stepped Care 2.0 Collaborative for promotion, as well as use email campaigns and social media platforms for broader outreach.

The primary goal of this work is to ensure clear communication, processes, and plans, in anticipation of the launch of the app library next year. It is essential that the communication is tailored to the group it is serving. Communication for the public should look different than that for app developers.

Special attention should also be paid to ensure inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility are worked into all communication and plans.

## Scope of Work

As part of this project, the vendor or consultant will be responsible for developing both **strategic plans** and **practical communications materials**. This includes creating materials specifically for app developers, drafting a public call for mental health apps, and preparing clear and engaging communication on how the app

library will be used by the public. The role requires the vendor or consultant to be adept in both strategic planning and practical, public-facing communication. They will need to ensure their plan aligns with the [MHCC's overall goals](#), while also crafting materials that are accessible and useful for both app developers and the public. Strong skills in both areas are essential for success in this project.

## National Implementation Plan for Mental Health App Assessment

The selected vendor will be responsible for creating a comprehensive implementation plan that includes the following components:

### 1. Project management

- The vendor will develop a comprehensive timeline and project management framework for the implementation of national mental health app assessments. This framework should encompass:
  - defined milestones
  - specified deliverables
  - risk management strategies

### 2. Technical integration:

- The vendor will collaborate with the MHCC and ORCHA to facilitate the integration of the app assessment process (refer to Appendices A and B), ensuring compliance with established [standards](#).
- The vendor will work in coordination with the MHCC Communications Department to ensure alignment throughout the project.

### 3. Collaborator engagement

- The vendor will develop a strategy to engage key collaborators identified during the selection process for the app assessments. These collaborators include mental health professionals, health systems organizations, app developers, and Canadian residents. The goal is to ensure the app assessment process is effective and inclusive.

### 4. Quality assurance

- The vendor will establish a process for the continuous monitoring of app assessments and of apps already listed in the National Mental Health App Library, including regular reviews and updates to ensure relevance and quality.

## **5. Ongoing maintenance**

- The vendor will develop a process for the continuous upkeep of links and digital pathways leading to the library across various platforms and webpages.

## **6. Training and support**

- The vendor will develop training materials and support systems (for MHCC staff and collaborators to effectively conduct app assessments and promote the app library both online and in person).

### **Examples of training materials and support systems**

- Training materials:
  - user manuals and guides
  - Online training modules
  - video tutorials
  - webinars and workshops
  - FAQs and quick reference sheets
  - assessment checklists
- Support systems:
  - help desk support
  - mentorship and peer support networks
  - collaboration platforms
  - regular check-ins and feedback sessions
  - promotional toolkits
  - knowledge base

# Marketing and Promotions Plan for National Mental Health App Library

The selected vendor will be responsible for the development of a marketing and promotions plan that includes the following components:

## **1. Positioning**

- The vendor will develop a strategy that positions the MHCC National Mental Health App Library as a reliable resource for digital mental health tools in Canada. This includes the development of key messaging, visual identity, and brand guidelines, following MHCC branding guidelines.

## **2. Communication strategy**

- The vendor will design a communication strategy to promote the app library to a range of audiences, including mental health professionals, health systems organizations, app developers, policy makers, and the public. This strategy should incorporate digital marketing, public relations, social media, elevator pitches, conference presentations, talks, and webinars, as well as traditional media channels. The type of language used should be adjusted to the specific group to whom the communication is targeted. For example, communication for the public will look different from communication for policy makers.

## **3. Outreach and partnerships**

- The vendor will identify partnerships with key organizations in the mental health and digital health sectors to extend the reach and use of the app library.

## **4. User engagement**

- The vendor will create strategies to engage Canadian residents and promote the use of apps in the national library. This may involve educational presentations, brief pitches, campaigns, webinars, and virtual events.

## **5. Involvement of people with lived and/or living experience**

- The vendor will collaborate with individuals who have lived and/or living experience of mental health challenges, along with recipients of mental health care services, to actively contribute to the development, promotion, and ongoing evaluation of the app library. Their valuable insights will help ensure that the library is responsive and inclusive and that it meets the needs of those it serves.



- The vendor is encouraged to seek the expertise of the MHCC's [Youth Council](#) and [Hallway Group](#).

## **6. Monitoring and evaluation**

- The vendor will develop metrics and processes to evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing and promotion plan, focusing on user engagement and the overall impact of the library.

# Deliverable Requirements

- Deliverables will be in English only.
- All materials developed as part of this project must adhere to the MHCC's brand guidelines. These guidelines will be provided to the successful vendor upon project initiation and must be strictly followed to ensure consistency and alignment with the MHCC's visual identity and messaging. MHCC accessibility requires that all web-based content is Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA compliant.
- Upon completion of the project, all working files and materials, including but not limited to source files, assets, and any associated documentation, will become the sole property of the MHCC. The successful vendor must transfer all such files in their original and editable formats to the MHCC upon project completion.

# Key Tasks and Deliverables

Task ID	Tasks	Description	Vendor's role	Due date
1	Communications plan	Develop a comprehensive plan for communicating the national mental health app assessment process to collaborators and the public	Create and finalize the communications plan, ensuring clarity for all collaborators involved in the national mental health app assessment	March 14, 2025
2	Marketing and promotion plan	Develop a detailed marketing and promotion strategy for the MHCC's national mental health app assessment system, in collaboration with key partners	Create and implement a plan that encompasses marketing strategies and collaborator engagement to promote the national mental health app assessment system	March 14, 2025
3	Materials for app developers	Create materials that guide app developers on how to submit their apps for review under the MHCC framework	Design and compile easy-to-understand materials to support developers in submitting their apps	March 14, 2025
4	Public call for mental health apps	Develop a public call inviting mental health app developers to submit their apps for assessment	Plan and execute a strategy to publicly call for app submissions, ensuring broad outreach	March 14, 2025
5	Communication on app library use	Develop materials to inform the public and practitioners on how to access and use the app library	Create clear and accessible communication to educate both the public and practitioners on app library usage	March 14, 2025

<b>Task ID</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Vendor's role</b>	<b>Due date</b>
<b>6</b>	Communication with the e-Mental Health and Stepped Care 2.0 Collaboratives	Support the MHCC in leveraging existing collaboratives to promote the app assessment and library	Work with the e-Mental Health and Stepped Care 2.0 Collaboratives to facilitate promotion efforts	March 14, 2025

# Proposal Requirements

## 1. Vendor qualifications

- **Experience and expertise:** Provide a description of your experience and expertise in implementing digital health solutions, marketing, and collaborator engagement.
- **Case studies/examples:** Include any relevant case studies or examples of similar projects.

## 2. Work plan

- **Approach:** Outline your approach to the implementation and marketing of the MHCC National Mental Health App Library.
- **Timelines and milestones:** Provide detailed timelines that outline key milestones and deliverables for the project. Additionally, incorporate scheduled project meetings or check-ins to maintain ongoing communication and alignment among the project team and collaborators.

## 3. Budget

- \$60,000 including all expenses and taxes
- **Breakdown:** Provide a detailed budget breakdown for the implementation and marketing/promotions plan, including all final files.
- **Additional costs:** Include any anticipated expenses related to advanced components or future testing.

## 4. References

- **Contact information:** Provide contact details for at least two references from similar projects.

# Submission Guidelines

- **Deadline:** Proposals must be submitted by **Sunday December 8, 2024**. Cite "RFP National Mental Health App Library" in the subject line of your email.
- **Format:** Proposals should be submitted in **PDF format** and should not exceed **10 pages**. Please make every effort to keep the information provided in your proposal brief and concise.
- **Contact:** For proposal submission, questions, or feedback, please contact:  
**Sapna Wadhawan**  
Program Manager  
**Email:** swadhawan@mentalhealthcommission.ca

# Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Details
<b>Vendor experience and qualifications</b>	The vendor's proven expertise in implementation science and marketing/promotional strategies for enhancing access to health or mental health and well-being services will be assessed.
<b>Work plan quality and feasibility</b>	The criteria will assess the clarity of deliverables and the vendor's understanding of meeting requirements, including timelines and resource allocations. Additionally, the vendor's relevant experience, communication strategies, and proposed metrics for monitoring the project's success will be evaluated.
<b>Cost-effectiveness and project management</b>	The efficiency of the budget and effectiveness of the project management approach will be assessed.
<b>Alignment with MHCC objectives</b>	The vendor's demonstrated understanding of the MHCC's goals and objectives will be evaluated.

Evaluation criteria	Details
<b>Understanding of digital health access in Canada</b>	The vendor's insight into the challenges and opportunities related to access to digital health tools within Canada will be assessed.
<b>Knowledge of global standards</b>	The vendor's familiarity with international standards for digital health tools will be evaluated.
<b>Methodology</b>	The criteria will evaluate the vendor's overall approach and theoretical framework for the project. Evaluators will examine whether the vendor has explained how the methodology aligns with the project's objectives and whether they have addressed potential limitations and risks, along with ethical considerations such as confidentiality and data protection.
<b>Experience working with diverse collaborators, including lived and/or living experience</b>	The vendor's experience working with diverse collaborators, including those with lived mental health experiences, advocacy groups, and/or underrepresented populations will be evaluated, including whether the vendor has demonstrated the ability to involve diverse voices in decision-making, fostering inclusive relationships, and has highlighted how their feedback led to improved engagement, services, or trust within communities.

The MHCC looks forward to receiving your proposal and partnering with you to launch and promote this important resource for e-mental health services in Canada.

# Appendix A

## Assessment Details

1. ORCHA Baseline Review (OBR)
  - **Overview:** The ORCHA Baseline Review is a prerequisite process designed to evaluate mental health apps.
  - **Focus areas:** The review assesses data privacy and security, clinical assurance, usability, and accessibility.
  - **Criteria:** Apps that score 65% or higher in the OBR proceed to the next assessment stage.
  
2. MHCC Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps
  - **Standards:** The MHCC Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps evaluates apps on the basis of the following criteria:
    - Data and privacy.
    - Clinical evidence.
    - Usability and accessibility.
    - Cultural safety, social responsibility, and equity.
    - Enhanced data sovereignty.
  - **Criterion for passing:** Only apps that achieve 70% or more on these criteria meet the framework's assessment standards.
  - **Score carryover:** Scores for data and privacy, clinical assurance, and usability and accessibility are carried over from the OBR.
  
3. Enhanced Review – MHCC Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps
  - **Additional domains:** The enhanced review includes two additional domains:
    - Enhanced Clinical Safety.
    - Enhanced Security and Technical Stability.
  - **Badges:** Apps that pass the enhanced review receive special badges displayed prominently on their app card within the app library.

# Appendix B

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Who assesses the apps?

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), a Canadian not-for-profit organization, works to effect meaningful change through initiatives that support community mental health and address gaps in mental health services. To evaluate mental health apps, the MHCC collaborates with the Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Apps (ORCHA).

ORCHA, based in the United Kingdom, is a leading global provider of health and care app evaluations. It offers an objective, independent assessment of health and medical apps. Although ORCHA does not provide regulatory services, it highlights potential regulatory issues that may require further consideration. ORCHA's mission is to enhance care through the safe integration of digital health solutions, fostering more person-centred and effective care.

Apps that score 65% or higher in ORCHA's Baseline Review proceed to the MHCC assessment.

### 2. How is the ORCHA Baseline Review carried out and scored?

- **Data privacy and security:** Assesses protocols for managing, sharing, storing, and securely deleting data, and specifies who has access to the data.
- **Clinical assurance:** Evaluates user risk management, the involvement of qualified professionals in app development, and the substantiation of the app's claims.
- **Usability and accessibility:** Reviews the app's ease of use and compliance with accessibility standards.

### 3. How is the MHCC assessment carried out and scored?

- The MHCC Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps rigorously evaluates apps against criteria to ensure their efficacy, safety, and quality. This includes examining evidence-based content, user experience, and data privacy measures. The assessment assigns scores on the basis of performance against predetermined standards, with a minimum threshold required for endorsement. The framework includes additional criteria specific to Canadian standards, such as cultural safety, social responsibility, equity, and enhanced data sovereignty.



**4. What is the difference between the ORCHA Baseline Review (OBR), the MHCC Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps, and the MHCC Enhanced Review?**

- **ORCHA Baseline Review:** Provides a comprehensive global evaluation based on established international standards for mental health apps.
- **MHCC Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps:** Builds on the OBR by incorporating Canadian-specific standards, including cultural safety, social responsibility, equity, and enhanced data sovereignty.
- **MHCC Enhanced Review:** Includes two optional advanced assessments:
  - **Enhanced Clinical Safety.**
  - **Enhanced Security and Technical Stability.**

The enhanced review offers additional scrutiny, with potential extra costs for advanced testing, such as penetration testing for security. Developers choosing enhanced components are responsible for any associated expenses.



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