Mental Health Commission of Canada
Commission de la santé mentale du Canada

Request for Proposal

Understanding Need and Amplifying What Works: Supporting the Development of a Mental Health Action Plan for Canada

Ce document est disponible en français

Health Canada Santé Canada

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Proposal Submission Deadline: September 30, 2026

Submit proposals electronically via email to: Katerina Kalenteridis, Senior Policy Analyst, Innovation at the Mental Health Commission of Canada

Introduction

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (the Commission) is a pan-Canadian health organization dedicated to improving mental health outcomes for everyone living in Canada. We connect evidence, knowledge, and lived experience to provide actionable insights and solutions that advance mental health to improve lives. Through collaboration with partners, decision-makers, diverse communities and voices of lived experience, we inform solutions and decision-making, transform knowledge and build capacity. The Commission acknowledges that reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, is central to achieving our goals.

Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada (the Strategy), was released in 2012 and provides a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the mental health system and outcomes across the country. It drew on the best available evidence and input from thousands of people across Canada to provide a blueprint for change, turning aspirations into reality. It has guided much of the Commission's work, setting the foundation for projects such as *At Home/Chez Soi, Roots of Hope, the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, Opening Minds,* and *Finding new pathways: An action plan for criminal justice and mental health in Canada.*

Since the release of the strategy, there have been significant shifts in the mental health and substance use landscape. Increased awareness and research, as well as evolving population needs and changes in service delivery, have highlighted both progress made and persistent gaps across mental health systems of care. The action plan is a sector-wide initiative to align priorities, amplify excellence from across the sector, and determine partnership-based best-practices for action. This will provide guidance to ensure the direction of mental health in Canada remains relevant, responsive, and aligned with current and future realities.

Purpose of the RFP

The Commission is seeking a consultant to develop an environmental scan and roadmap for a national mental health action plan that focuses on amplifying the exemplary work that has been happening across the country since the launch of the 2012 Strategy.

Scope of Work

The scope will focus on mental health, but substance use health and intersectional socio-economic determinants will still be an area of consideration. It will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Conducting a retrospective understanding of the systemic impact of *Changing Directions, Changing Lives* and *The Mental Health Strategy for Canada.* This retrospective will require the identification and critical analysis of sector successes, persisting gaps, and areas of needed improvement and considerations.
- An environmental scan of existing and developing strategies related to mental health across federal, provincial, territorial governments in Canada and internationally. The purpose of this scan is to identify and honour existing evidence, knowledge and wisdom that informs principles, priorities, gaps, as well as key implementation and evaluation metrics of the mental health system. Special consideration should be given to:
    - Strategies from populations who have experienced systemic exclusion and inequities including, First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities as well as other equity-denied populations living in Canada.
    - International contexts where implementation of mental health strategies has been evaluated with demonstrated success.
- A roadmap to inform development of the action plan using findings from the retrospective and environmental scanning. The roadmap should leverage existing resources related to strategic objectives, stage-based planning and continuous quality improvement.
- In partnership with the Commission, integrate opportunities for key interest holder insights into the roadmap through a targeted engagement plan. The consultant will support the plan for engagement opportunities, leveraging existing sector forums, networks, events, advisory bodies, and in-person and virtual convenings wherever possible. Interest holders may include people with lived and living experience, sector leaders, philanthropic partners, governments, researchers, service providers, and Commission governance and advisory groups.

Additional suggestions and recommendations regarding the overall scope will also be considered.

Deliverables

- **Project Charter:** Scope, approach, timeline, governance, roles, reporting, and budget.
- **Retrospective Report and Executive Summary Assessment** of the impact of Changing Directions, Changing Lives and The Mental Health Strategy for Canada (including key successes, gaps, lessons learned, and strategic considerations).
- **Environmental Scan Report:** Synthesis of Canadian and international MHSUH strategies, frameworks, evidence, and promising practices, including equity informed and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis perspectives.
- **Action Plan Roadmap:** Two-year roadmap outlining priorities, objectives, phased approach, implementation considerations, milestones, and continuous improvement mechanisms.
- **Engagement Strategy:** As part of the Roadmap, plan a short interest holder engagement approach, including objectives, priority audiences, methods, timelines, roles and responsibilities, and opportunities to leverage existing MHCC events, networks, and sector convenings.

Qualifications

The successful candidate will require:

- The proponent must be an entity operating within Canada with registration under Canadian legislation.
- Demonstrated capacity to review research, strategies, frameworks, government documents, and policy reports in English and French.
- Experience with creating guidance, frameworks, or resources to support the implementation of health, mental health and substance use health programs or services.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience in the areas of intersectionality, decolonization, health equity, anti-racism, sex and gender-based analysis+, and/or the social determinants of health across policy and research.
- Demonstrated expertise in co-design approaches and principles, including the meaningful engagement of people with lived and living experience.
- Strong knowledge of and experience with implementation science and evaluation methods, including the ability to design, apply, and interpret frameworks to support planning, measurement, and continuous improvement.
- Familiarity with MHSUH policy and programs across Canada and the Commission’s role.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Applicants must limit their submissions to a maximum of eight pages, including any attachments or appendices. The following is a checklist of items to include in your submission:

- A project plan for all deliverables with a focus on approach/methodology, activity timelines, and budget (including GST/HST/PST).
- A statement on how you will incorporate a commitment to co-design, decolonization, intersectionality and meaningful engagement with people with lived and living experience.
- Background of the individual(s), company, institution, or organization as well as biographies of project team members and relevant mental health sector expertise.
- Description of relevant experience and expertise, including two examples of related prior projects.
- A list of all organizational affiliations and two relevant references that the Commission may contact.
- Optional additional materials, such as letters of support from community organizations, to demonstrate community relevance or alignment with equity goals.

Budget

The maximum allowable budget for this project is **C$60,000** including all applicable taxes. Please submit a detailed budget that includes the allocation of money across the different elements outlined in this request, plus any additional indirect costs/fees or in-kind contributions.

Timeline

- September 2, 2026: RFP issued
- September 30, 2026: Proposal submission deadline
- October 19, 2026: Selection of proposal
- October 26, 2026: Earliest potential project start date
- March 15, 2027: Completion and submission of project deliverables

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

#	Evaluation criterion	Description	Weight Total (100%)
1	Methodological Expertise	• Ability to apply appropriate and rigorous research and program methods to support the development of deliverables, such as implementation science and program evaluation.	18%
2	Mental Health Knowledge, Background and Experience	• Demonstrated experience and proficiency in formulating guidance, frameworks, or resources to support the implementation of health, mental health or substance use health programs or services. • In-depth knowledge and practical experience in mental health and substance use health care practices across the Canadian and international landscape. • Experience working with collaborators in the field of MHSUH.	18%
3	Intersectional, Anti-Racist, Decolonizing and Co-design Approach	• Expertise in the application of intersectionality, decolonization, health equity, anti-racism, sex and gender-based analysis+, and/or the social determinants of health across policy and research. • Practical experience co-designing with people with lived and living experience and/or other diverse collaborators.	18%

4	Affordability and proposed budget	• Clear justification of the proposed budget and overall affordability of the project.	11%
5	Proposed approach and work plan	• Demonstrated clarity and feasibility of the proposed approach. • Alignment of the proposed approach with the project objectives and scope of work. • Quality and appropriateness of the proposed deliverables.	35%

Useful Links

- **Commission Website:** mentalhealthcommission.ca
- **The Mental Health Strategy for Canada**: Changing Directions, Changing Lives
- **A Youth Perspective:** The Mental Health Strategy for Canada
- An E-Mental Health Strategy for Canada
- **Mental Health Indicators for Canada**: Informing the Future

Contact Information

For additional information or questions regarding this RFP, please contact:

Katerina Kalenteridis
Senior Policy and Research Analyst
Mental Health Commission of Canada
kkalenteridis@mentalhealthcommission.ca

Mental Health Commission of Canada
Commission de la santé mentale du Canada

Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2026
Suite 1210, 350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON. K1R 1A4
Tel: 613.683.3755
Fax: 613.798.2989

@MHCC_ /theMHCC
/1MHCC @theMHCC
/Mental Health Commission of Canada
/theMHCC