

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

Regarding

A RESEARCH STUDY EXAMINING THE BARRIERS AND ENABLERS TO ADDRESSING THE PRIMARY, REPRODUCTIVE, AND SEXUAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE RECENTLY EXPERIENCED CRIMINALIZATION AND ARE LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

Background

Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) works to advance equality with respect to sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression through the inclusion of people of all genders, including women, in Canada's economic, social, and political life. WAGE works to uphold its mandate by providing expert advice and strategic support to federal departments and agencies in the development of policies, programs and legislation related to gender equality, including gaps in health research and care. Research at WAGE aims to support evidence-based decision-making by identifying drivers of and obstacles to gender equality. It also aims to improve the availability, accessibility and visibility of data, statistics and analysis related to key gender equality issues to support Gender Based Analysis Plus as well as to facilitate the coordinated measurement of progress towards gender equality.

Purpose of this Request for Information

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to identify suppliers that have the required experience and expertise to conduct a three-year research project that aims to understand and respond to the primary, sexual, and reproductive health needs of women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the community. Knowledge generated by this project supports WAGE's [joint mandate](#) with Health Canada to ensure that all Canadians have access to the sexual and reproductive health services they need by providing key insight into the barriers and enablers of accessing health services for this population.

This work requires the supplier to:

1. Have a multi-disciplinary research team
2. Conduct a primary research study examining the barriers and enablers of addressing primary, reproductive, and sexual health needs, as well as the health outcomes after receiving community-based health services, for women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the community.
3. Produce a research report on impacts, lessons learned, and implications for communities of practice.
4. Create and implement a knowledge mobilization strategy

Please review Annex A (Statement of Work) for details pertaining to this requirement. Interested suppliers must submit written responses to the information requested in Annex B (Information Requested from Potential Suppliers).

Nature of Request for Information

This is not a bid solicitation. This RFI will not result in the award of any contract.

Potential suppliers of any goods or services described in this RFI must then, not reserve stock or facilities, nor allocate resources on making any commitment to their parties, as a result of any information contained in this RFI. This RFI will not result in the creation of any source list. Responding to this RFI will not preclude any supplier from participating in any future opportunities to bid. To that effect, the procurement of any of the goods and services described in this RFI may not necessarily follow this RFI. This RFI is simply intended to solicit feedback from industry with respect to the matters described in this RFI. This RFI does not reflect a real or implied commitment on the part of WAGE to implement any or all of the application or infrastructure initiatives described herein.

Nature and Format of Responses Requested

Responses from potential suppliers to the information requested in this RFI will assist WAGE in identifying potential suppliers for WAGE's requirement. Respondents are requested to review Annex A, and to submit written responses to the information requested in Annex B.

Respondents must explain any assumptions they make in their responses.

In addition to providing responses to the information requested in Annex B, respondents may submit comments, concerns, suggestions, and, where applicable, alternative recommendations regarding how the requirements or objectives described in this RFI could be satisfied or improved upon.

Respondents should note that Annex A is a draft document and remains a work in progress.

Respondents should not assume that new clauses or requirements will not be added to any related bid solicitation(s) that could ultimately be published by Canada. Nor should respondents assume that any of the clauses or requirements will be deleted or edited.

Response Costs

The Government of Canada (Canada) will not reimburse any respondent for expenses incurred in responding to this RFI.

Treatment of Responses

- a) **Use of Responses:** Responses will not be formally evaluated. However, the responses received may be used by Canada to develop or modify procurement strategies or any draft documents contained in this RFI. Canada will review all responses received by the RFI closing date. Canada may, in its discretion, review responses received after the RFI closing date.
- b) **Review Team:** A review team composed of representatives of WAGE will review the responses. Canada reserves the right to hire any independent consultant, or use any Government resources that it considers necessary to review any response. Not all members of the review team will necessarily review all responses.

- c) **Confidentiality:** Respondents should mark any portions of their response that they consider proprietary or confidential. Canada will handle the responses in accordance with the *Access to Information Act*.
- d) **Follow-up Activity:** Canada may, in its discretion, contact any respondents to follow up with additional questions or for clarification of any aspect of a response. Canada reserves the right to invite any or all respondents to present their submissions to this RFI and/or perform a product/service demonstration.

Format of Responses

- a) **Cover Page:** If the response includes multiple volumes, respondents are requested to indicate on the front cover page of each volume the title of the response, the solicitation number, the volume number and the full legal name of the respondent.
- b) **Title Page:** The first page of each volume of the response, after the cover page, should be the title page, which should contain:
 - i. The title of the respondent's response and the volume number;
 - ii. The name and address of the respondent;
 - iii. the name, address and telephone number of the respondent's contact;
 - iv. the date; and
 - v. the RFI number.
- c) **Numbering System:** Respondents are requested to prepare their response using a numbering system corresponding to the one in this RFI. All references to descriptive material, technical manuals and brochures included as part of the response should be referenced accordingly.
- d) **Number of copies:** Respondents are requested to submit one softcopy, in PDF format, of their response.

Enquiries

Because this is not a bid solicitation, Canada will not necessarily respond to enquiries in writing or by circulating answers to all potential suppliers. However, respondents with questions regarding this RFI may direct their enquiries via email to: FEGC.Contrats-Contracts.WAGE@fegc-wage.gc.ca

Submissions of Responses

- a) **Time and Place for Submission of Responses:** Respondents should send responses electronically via e-mail to the Contracting Authority's address identified herein by the date specified on the front page of the RFI.
- b) **Responsibility for Timely Delivery:** Each respondent is solely responsible for ensuring its response is delivered on time to the correct location.
- c) **Identification of Response:** Each respondent should ensure that its name and return address, the solicitation number and the closing date appear legibly on the outside of the response.

ANNEX A – Statement of Work: A Research Study Examining the Barriers and Enablers to Addressing Primary, Reproductive, and Sexual Health Care Needs for Women and Gender Diverse People Who Have Recently Experienced Criminalization and are Living in the Community

1. Scope

1.1. Introduction

The mandate of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) is to advance equality with respect to sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression through the inclusion of people of all genders, including women, in Canada’s economic, social, and political life. Research initiatives undertaken by WAGE’s Research and Innovation division are designed to support its mandated activities, to deliver on departmental results, to improve the availability, accessibility and visibility of data, statistics and analysis, and to facilitate evidence-based decision-making as it relates to Canada’s priorities for gender equality.

1.2. Objectives of the Requirement

The objective of this project is to understand and respond to the primary, sexual, and reproductive health needs of women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the in the community.

Knowledge generated by this project will improve health and justice system responsiveness to the primary, sexual and reproductive health needs of women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the community. The project will enhance the understanding of the following:

1. The health needs of this population.
2. Improving uptake of health services for an underserved population.
3. Innovative collaborative pathways across service providers and systems of care.

Knowledge users in the health and justice systems, including policy makers, health system planners, and clinicians, will gain critical insight on the needs of this population and care delivery models which will inform the development and sustainment of services to improve the health outcomes and overall health status of women and gender diverse people experiencing criminalization. Knowledge gained through this project can help reduce re-incarceration associated with unmet health needs, therefore reducing the burden of health care delivery on the justice system. This study will provide insight and understanding of the factors that influence the uptake of health services and will enable the use of data gathered to inform ongoing policy, practice, and system changes to mitigate barriers.

1.3. Background

Globally, women, and gender diverse people are the fastest growing populations in prison. Most have experienced trauma stemming from childhood abuse and intimate partner violence. Studies in Canada have found high rates of unmet primary, sexual, and reproductive health needs for this population including lack of access to screening, counselling, education, contraception, and perinatal care. Transgender people also face issues of violence and stigmatization, and barriers to accessing gender-affirming care including hormones and surgery.

Despite legislation that requires collection of health status information and provision of health care for people in correctional institutions, incarcerated people experience barriers to care due to short stays, security concerns, high staff turnover, stigma and other logistical issues. Prison health infrastructure and services are furthermore not designed to respond to gendered health needs. Research has found people who are recently released from prison are less likely to be welcomed in primary care practices. Given that unmet health needs are a determinant of further criminalization, it is crucial for women and gender diverse individuals who are reintegrating into society to be connected to appropriate primary care.

2. Requirements

The three-year research project will 1) identify the unmet primary, sexual, and reproductive health needs of women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the community; 2) examine the barriers and enablers to addressing these identified needs; and 3) examine the health outcomes of the population after receiving community-based health services..

This work requires the supplier to:

A. Have a multi-disciplinary research team

To understand and address the complex socioeconomic and health needs of women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the community, the supplier must have a research team of diverse health, gender, and justice experts and community organizations invested in improving services and support for this population. This includes:

- key government policy and decision makers, such as members from a provincial health authority and department of justice
- a licensed Nurse Practitioner (NP)
- a member from a provincial correctional facility, and
- academic researchers.

An advisory committee must be struck with people with lived or living experience, including gender diverse people and Indigenous and racialized people to guide and inform each step of the project.

B. Conduct a primary research study examining the barriers and enablers of addressing primary, reproductive, and sexual health needs, as well as the health outcomes after receiving community-based health services for women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the community

To develop an understanding of key service gaps and their impacts, the supplier will invite people with lived and living experience, including current inmates, and relevant community organizations to participate in focus groups to gather their input. Based on the initial focus group findings and previous scoping reviews, the supplier will develop a primary research study examining the barriers and enablers of addressing identified service gaps, as well as the health outcomes of this population after receiving community-based health services.

The supplier will be required to develop, implement, and regularly convene a Steering Committee made up of a Community of Practice (CoP) and consisting of primary care providers, including Registered Nurses (RNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs), working in community health across the province. The study should aim to inform CoPs by providing key findings and insights that aim to strengthen the skills of health care providers, processes, and resources pertaining to the sexual, reproductive, and primary care of women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the community. The supplier will be expected to share key learnings with other primary care providers and foster professional connections essential for mentorship, collaboration, and continuity of care.

C. Produce a research report on impacts, lessons learned, and implications for communities of practice

The supplier will conduct descriptive analyses on de-identified health information of study participants to monitor the use of community-based health services. The supplier will use descriptive statistics to analyse primary, sexual and reproductive health service use and trends over a specified amount of time, including health outcomes. Additionally, the supplier will conduct semi-structured key informant interviews with clinic participants and stakeholders in the provincial justice and health systems to qualitatively capture their experiences related to community-based health services. The semi-structured interviews and overall evaluation process will be ongoing during the implementation phase in order to examine reoccurring themes, to track input regarding services, and to reincorporate feedback into the implementation of services.

D. Create and implement a Knowledge Mobilization Strategy

Planning for the knowledge mobilization (KM) strategy must be conducted by the supplier through all phases of the project. The KM Strategy will identify knowledge mobilization products (e.g., presentations, technical reports, multi-media products distributed through social media), and relevant venues (e.g., conferences and events) for varying audiences (e.g., stakeholders, federal, provincial, and territorial government departments/agencies and partners, the general public), through which key research findings can be shared. The KM Strategy must include an outline of key components and a detailed cost estimate for the

development of knowledge mobilization products. All final decisions related to knowledge mobilization activities will be made by the Project Authority.

2.1. Tasks, Activities, Deliverables and Milestones

The following table describes the anticipated deliverables for this research project.

Deliverable	Description
Research ethics application and approval	Documented evidence of the Research Ethics Board approval to conduct this research
Security Clearance (Wave 1)	Security attainment first wave of identified individuals (e.g., Principle Investigators, NP and Research Coordinators)
Privacy Impact Assessment	WAGE will conduct an assessment of the privacy and security implications for the project, identifying privacy risks and recommended mitigations for the supplier.
Recruitment strategy for focus groups and interviews	A detailed recruitment strategy will explicitly state how participants for the focus groups and semi-structured interviews will be contacted. This will include highlighting their roles (e.g., stakeholder, person experiencing criminalization, person with lived experience). The recruitment strategy will also include their communications plan for advertising the clinic.
Security Clearance (Wave 2)	If required, security attainment for additional stakeholders.
Annual reports (Year 1 & 2)	A comprehensive Annual Report will be completed at the end of years 1 and 2, describing key project activities and accomplishments; a project progress overview summarizing the current state regarding budget and deliverables; and a description of interim findings and/or insights based on analyses on de-identified health information, the steering committee, focus groups, and interviews.
Final Research Report	Research findings will be compiled in a comprehensive research report.
Knowledge Mobilization Products	The supplier will prepare a knowledge mobilization (KM) strategy, including a list of potential events/conferences and products to enact its KM strategy. The knowledge produced in the previous research phases will be put together in products that could be used to inform varying audiences.

ANNEX B – Information Requested from Potential Suppliers

Respondents are requested to read Annex A (Draft Statement of Work) before answering the questions below.

1. Clearly identify how your organisation will meet each of the four project requirements as outlined in Annex A, section 2, *Requirements*:
 - i. Have a multi-disciplinary team
 - ii. Conduct a primary research study examining the barriers and enablers of addressing primary, reproductive, and sexual health needs, as well as the health outcomes after receiving community-based health services, for women and gender diverse people who have recently experienced criminalization and are living in the community.
 - iii. Produce a research report on impacts, lessons learned, and implications for communities of practice.
 - iv. Create and implement a knowledge mobilization strategy
2. For each listed deliverable in Annex A, subsection 2.1., *Tasks, Activities, Deliverables, and Milestones*, indicate if your organisation can meet the requirement as well as the associated timeline.
3. Describe how your organisation has the required experience and knowledge in the following areas:
 - i. Health services implementation and evaluation
 - ii. Policy research
 - iii. The health needs of women who have experienced criminalization
 - iv. The health needs of gender diverse people who have experienced criminalization
 - v. Anti-oppressive, gender-inclusive, trauma-informed, decolonized service provision