

Request for Proposal to Develop a Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention Tool Kit for the Transgender Community in the Waterloo Region

# Request for Proposal

**Project:** Development of a Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention Tool Kit for the Transgender Community in Waterloo Region

**Requestor:** SPECTRUM, Waterloo Region's Rainbow Community Space

**Released:** April 12, 2021

**Proposals Due:** 5PM on May 7, 2021

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## **SPECTRUM Background**

SPECTRUM is an organization that serves, affirms, and supports the well-being of LGBTQ2+ individuals in Waterloo Region and the broader community through peer support, community partnerships, education and training, resources, and events.

To learn more about SPECTRUM see our about page at <http://ourspectrum.com/about-us> or visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SpectrumCommunitySpace>.

Over the last five years SPECTRUM Transgender Services has grown to provide seven support meetings a month supporting the needs of three transgender demographics in Waterloo Region. To learn more about SPECTRUM Transgender services visit <https://ourspectrum.com/trans-services/>.

## **Funding**

This project is being funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation aimed at gender based violence support and services programs.

## **Project Overview**

Based on documents like the Trans Pulse Study and the Outlook Symposium Report, as well as anecdotal information from our drop-in groups, we have seen many examples that suggest a large population in the transgender community, including those in Waterloo Region have not come out as transgender. Of those who have, a significant portion feel unsupported or experience abuse. This subjects these people to high levels of mental health stress if they are in the closet, and risk of abuse (mental and physical) if they are out of the closet. This is especially true of people in racialized groups. This situation has been aggravated by the isolation due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and the resulting close contact of individuals living in unsupportive or abusive environments.

The purpose of this project is two-fold:

1. Develop, publish, and analyze a survey directed at the transgender community in Waterloo Region. The survey will ask in an anonymous way about the effects that COVID-19 isolation is having on their mental and physical health. We also want to find out if they are experiencing higher levels of abuse from people within their social bubble or if they are practicing self-harm or if they are having suicidal thoughts. We want to use this information to shape the second component of the work this grant will fund. Note that a sub selection of respondents could be requested to do follow-up interviews helping us to gain further insight, if possible, into these abuses.
2. Based on this information, supported by research into information generally available on this subject, develop a tool kit focused on mental health promotion and suicide prevention to be used by transgender identifying folks, mental and medical health professionals, and transgender allies.
3. During the assessment, where gaps are discovered in programs and services list ways that SPECTRUM can improve its offerings to address these shortfalls.

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This information and resulting tool kit will be useful both during the public health emergency and in the post COVID era.

For an example of what we envision a tool kit might look like please refer to the document found at [https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd/Services/SP/Documents/2017/heard-Tool Kit-07-01-17.pdf](https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd/Services/SP/Documents/2017/heard-Tool%20Kit-07-01-17.pdf). While this document is for a different type of audience it shows a structure and a quality of content that we believe will be useful for our target audience.

## Project Goals

The goals of this project include:

- i. Develop a survey measuring levels of abuse, violence, self-harm, and suicidal ideation for the local transgender community. Distribute, collect, and evaluate the survey results to determine trends and needs. Ask in the survey if a respondent is willing to be interviewed to gather more details that will help us create a set of tools that would be helpful. Develop, schedule, conduct, and evaluate the personal interviews.
- ii. Use the survey and interview results to help inform a deeper level of research and create a toolset to be used by transgender folks, mental health, medical, and social work professionals.
- iii. Research and develop the content of a tool kit. Develop a feedback form and have the tool kit evaluated by members of the trans community and people in the mental health, medical and social services professions.
- iv. Produce finalized content ready for both electronic and printed publication.

## Scope of Work

The scope of work for this project is as follows:

- Develop community surveys that gather information from the transgender community within Waterloo Region focused on physical and mental abuse and self-harm including suicidal thoughts. Include in the survey a request if a respondent is willing to do a personal more in-depth survey.
- Develop personal in-depth interview questions surrounding physical and mental abuse, and self-harm to create deeper understanding of the issues and inform research for solutions.
- Perform research that can be used to develop a tool kit (see the reference document in the project overview for a model of what we are looking for).
- Create content based on the research and develop outputs suitable for electronic and print publishing. SPECTRUM will manage the printing and distribution of the tool kit.
- Create a document outlining methods to improve SPECTRUM program and service offerings.

## Proposed Schedule

- Due Date for Submissions: May 7, 2021
- Review of Submissions: May 10 – May 12, 2021

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- Project Award and Contract Signing: May 13 – May 14, 2021
- Survey Development, Publication and Analysis: TBD in contract
- Research: TBD in contract
- Tool Kit Creation: TBD in contract
- Review, Edits and Final Approval: TBD in contract
- Final deadline for electronic and print publishing ready output: September 1, 2021
- Posting and printing deadline: September 15, 2021
- Final Invoices and Payments deadline: September 27, 2021

**Project Completion Deadline:** All work must be completed, output created, and invoices paid (including for printed materials) by September 30, 2021 (this end date is non-negotiable).

## Existing Roadblocks or Technical Issues

The main roadblock to success is getting good answers to well-formed questions provided to the transgender community in the form of a community survey regarding various forms of abuse, violence, and self-harm. It is necessary to perform the surveys in a purely anonymous way. These surveys can be both in the form of a Google forms-type of electronic questionnaire, as well as a limited number of personal interviews to get more detailed but anonymous information.

Due to the nature of this abuse and/or self-harm it may be challenging to get respondents at all and those who may respond may be challenged to answer completely so we must ensure that this is constructed and executed in a way that 100% protects the anonymity of the respondents. Respondents must be provided with protections and assurances during the process.

## Budget Constraints

The contractor budget, including HST cannot exceed \$65,000 for the entire project. Costs for paper printed booklets will come from a separate budget.

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## Evaluation Metrics

SPECTRUM will evaluate bidders and proposals based on the following criteria:

- Previous experience/past performance history.
- Samples and/or case studies from previous projects.
- Projected costs.
- Experience and technical expertise.
- Responsiveness and answers to questions in the next section.

## Questions Bidders Must Answer to Be Considered

Based on what has been described in this request for proposal:

What do you believe are the greatest benefits of the outcome of the work being requested?

What do you believe will be the biggest challenges?

Do you have any alternative suggested formats for the presentation of this information?

## Submission Requirements

Bidders must adhere to the following guidelines to be considered:

- Proposals must be received no later than noon May 7, 2021. Bidders who are interested in submitting a proposal should email their proposals to Melissa Paige Kennedy, Development Officer, SPECTRUM Waterloo Region's Rainbow Community Space, [development@ourspectrum.com](mailto:development@ourspectrum.com).
- Include samples of past work and references with your proposal.
- A brief outlining how you would approach this problem should be included in your submission.
- Proposals should not be more than ten pages.[1] Attachments and inclusions can exceed the ten-page limit of the proposal.
- A proposed schedule and budget must be included.

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## **What We are Looking for in Potential Vendors**

An ideal candidate for this project is a proposer who has had experience in developing, executing on, and doing deep analysis of community surveys and community interviews. The candidate should also have strong capabilities in conducting research into social and mental health related problems especially in the areas of mental and physical abuse and self-harm. The candidate requires strong experience in taking research and transforming it into a form that can be used by the transgender community, as well as those who support them to improve their life. The candidate will be empathetic and aware of the resources in our community to which participants can be referred, as necessary.

## **Contact Information**

For questions or concerns connected to this RFP, we can be reached at:

Melissa Paige Kennedy  
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226-750-0534