compass rose

Better Supports, Better Futures

A feasibility study of the Adoption Council of Canada's proposed holistic hub for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of care

July 2021 - Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The economic and health insecurity of young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system has been identified as one of Canada's most pressing social issues.

The Adoption Council of Canada is seeking to identify and develop the most effective potential supports to address the needs of these young people. Based on extensive research and consultation, the Adoption Council of Canada has identified the creation of a holistic hub providing a wide range of services and supports as the optimum approach. The initial hub would be based in Ottawa as a pilot project for possible replication across the country.

Compass Rose was asked to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential partners and funders as well as to determine the financial viability of a holistic hub.

Objectives

Working with the Adoption Council of Canada's findings, Compass Rose gathered additional data and research.

The objectives of this feasibility study are:

1.	Determine whether creating a holistic hub with the necessary resources, experts and services is financially viable
2.	Identify potential stakeholders to partner with ACC on creating this holistic hub
3.	Identify funding opportunities and operational costs that would make the holistic hub feasible

To provide advice and analysis of the Adoption Council of Canada's hub proposal, Compass Rose conducted in-depth interviews with experts from six organizations including Canada Without Poverty, the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, Elizabeth Fry Society, Ottawa Centre for Resilience, Parkdale Food Centre and Concordia University professor Varda Mann-Feder. A survey was also conducted online with responses from CHEO, the University of Ottawa, the University of Toronto, Black Ladders Canada, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, John Howard Society of Ottawa, Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network, Causeway Work Centre and Operation Come Home. We have also connected with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition and discussions are ongoing.

The work of the Adoption Council of Canada's Youth Advisory Committee, which includes Rachelle Metatawabin, Marsha (Deja) Khadija and Reshma Shiwcharran, was invaluable.

Aging out: a national problem

Aging out is defined as when a youth in care reaches a certain age (ranging from 18 to 24 depending on the province or territory) and is no longer under government care and is cut off from supports such as permanent housing, social workers, financial support or some meaningful relationships.

The acute need for the services envisioned for the proposed hub is well-established in social service, academic and government circles.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system across the country because there is no standard for collecting this data.

The total number of youth ageing out of the child welfare system (all genders) could be between 2,736 to 7, 128 per year.

In Ottawa, it is estimated there are 534 youth in care on average annually.

The Blueprint for Fundamental Change to Ontario's Child Welfare System stresses that children and youth in and from care struggle more than other youth in the province.

The number of total youth aging out of the child welfare system (all genders) could be between 2,736 to 7,128.

For instance, only 44 percent of youth in and from care graduate from high school compared to 82 per cent of Ontario youth. Youth in and from care are over-represented in the youth justice system and are also more likely to experience homelessness. It is also clear that an effective services hub will have to take into account the needs of Indigenous, black and 2SLGBTQ+ youth, groups that are all over-represented in care.
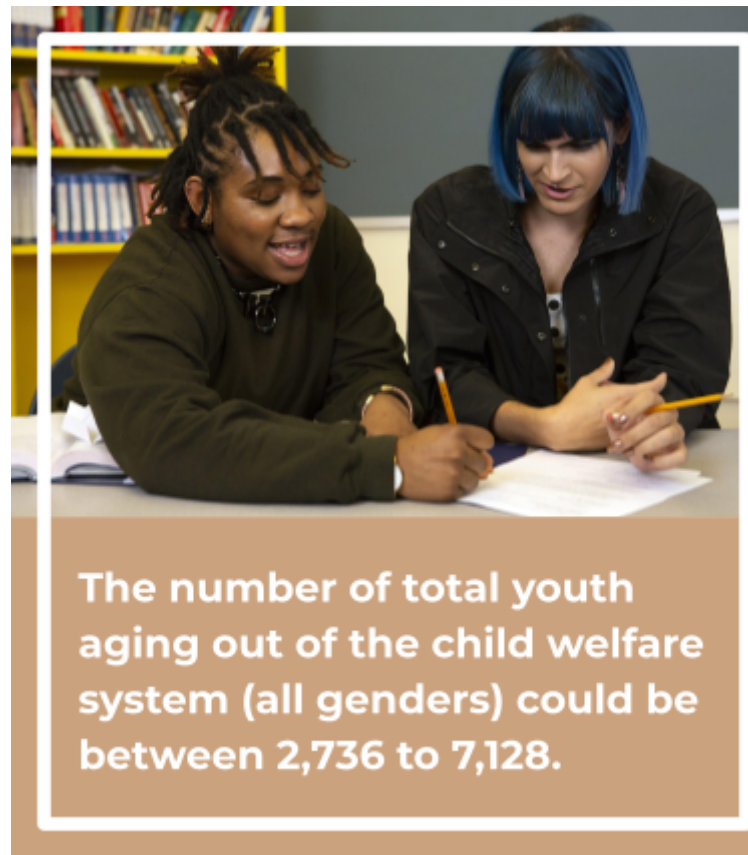
The Ontario government's strategy to reduce poverty states that "people require wraparound supports and services" to help "on the path to jobs, greater independence, and improved outcomes." The Child Welfare Institute and Children's Aid Society of Toronto published a report in 2014 outlining Best Practices in Transitioning Youth Out of Care. The authors identified four contributing barriers to the successful transitioning of youth out of care: Lack of supportive relationships, educational challenges, housing instability and economic challenges (unemployment).

In examining the feasibility of the proposed holistic hub, it is important to be aware of the priority given support for youth, and particularly youth aging out of care, by today's governments at every level.

The Ontario government, which has primary constitutional responsibility, introduced a child welfare redesign strategy last year that is in the process of being implemented. It focuses on improving children, youth and family wellbeing and enhancing prevention and early intervention to keep more families together.

> The acute need for the services envisioned for the proposed hub is well-established in social service, academic and government circles.

The federal government, through a wide array of cross-government initiatives and programs, has prioritized its commitment to address entrenched inequities and provide better services and opportunities for youth and others in under-represented groups, such as racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. The current Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, Bardish Chagger, has said the foundation of her portfolio is the effort to shine a light on systemic inequalities and ensure that the voices of underrepresented and underserved communities are heard.

The city of Ottawa, meanwhile, provides funding for poverty reduction, community development and social infrastructure, with priorities for youth, Indigenous people, women, those living in poverty, racialized persons and 2SLGBTQ+ people.

Consensus on the value of a holistic hub

In all feedback received, there was agreement that a holistic hub approach with wraparound services addressing barriers to economic and health security among youth aging out of care is needed.

"For all people aging out of the system, this would be beneficial," one stakeholder said. A holistic hub would have the benefit of making supports and resources more available to youth, streamlining communication between service-providers to facilitate collaborative efforts and enhancing cohesion in service provision, respondents agreed.

"Young people aging out of care are forgotten. They don't have a support system," the stakeholder said. "Even people who are thriving need help sometimes. The hub is about belonging — people who are engaged in their communities."

Besides improving the living conditions and outlook of those served, research has shown conclusively that there are overall social cost savings to be realized from extending support for transitioning youth, including a "housing first" and hub initiatives. Better services, particularly housing, reduce overall government spending by reducing encounters with the justice system, lowering social assistance outlays and reducing health service costs.

Compass Rose's analysis of the feasibility of a holistic hub took into account the extensive support for work in this area by numerous social service organizations, governments and charitable foundations, both nationally and locally in Ottawa.

"Even people who are thriving need help sometimes.
The hub is about belonging — people who are engaged in their communities."

Stakeholder feedback

Feasibility of the hub

Based on Compass Rose's research, examination of existing studies and outreach to experts and youth, developing and operating a holistic hub in partnership with other stakeholders to provide wraparound services for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of care is feasible.

The hub would be filling a significant gap in social services. And, as Canada's only national, non-profit, charitable organization serving adopted persons and adoptive families, the Adoption Council of Canada is in a position to provide leadership in this area in partnership with governments and the many stakeholders committed to addressing an issue that is seen as an urgent priority throughout Canadian society. Based on the funding opportunities available both in the private and public sectors, we believe a holistic hub is financially feasible.

Potential stakeholder partners

While all stakeholder organizations interviewed for this study would also be good partners because of alignment on issues, both Children's Aid Society of Ottawa and the Parkdale Food Centre specifically said they were interested in working with the Adoption Council of Canada further.

Other recommended partners include:

→ Ottawa Community Housing
→ Cornerstone Housing for Women
→ Youth Services Bureau
→ YMCA-YWCA of the National Capital Region
→ Minwaashin Lodge
→ Kind

→ Children's Aid Foundation
→ Mental Health Commission of Canada
→ Youth in Care Canada
→ Youth Wellness Lab
→ ACCESS Open Minds
→ Supporting Our Youth

Compass Rose understands that ACC is currently working with the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health on this project. CAMH would be a natural partner to continue working with in the development of a holistic hub. Additionally, a stakeholder referred ACC to NorWest Co-op Community Health and Futures Forward, saying they would have good feedback because of their experience in developing similar projects.

Non-government funding resources

The following are potential sources for non-government funding to develop the holistic hub:

- → Home Depot Foundation of Canada
- → Rideau Hall Foundation
- → Laidlaw Foundation
- → Molson Foundation
- → Danbe Foundation
- → TD Bank

- → Coca-Cola Foundation
- → Royal Bank of Canada Future Launch
- → TELUS Friendly Future Foundation
- → ScotiaRISE
- → SC Johnson Grants
- → Canadian Women's Foundation

The following organizations also appear to align with the goals of ACC's holistic hub, however, Compass Rose was unable to find direct contact information or information related to application criteria. These organizations include:

- → Houssian Foundation
- → Barrett Family Foundation

- → Amazon housing equity fund
- → United Way of Eastern Ontario

Government funding sources

The federal government funding at the moment is heavily focused on COVID-19 safety and economic recovery. However, there are several possible funding opportunities ACC can explore:

- → Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program
- → CMHC's National Housing Co-Investment Fund
- → Employment and Social Development has a Social Development Partnerships Program

- → The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy
- → Eastern Ontario Development Fund
- → Ontario Trillium Fund
- → City of Ottawa Community Funding Program

What can a holistic hub look like?

Based on stakeholder interviews and research of the services needed to close gaps for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of care, the following is a general idea of what a holistic hub could look like:

Construct a new centre with 20 private rooms to house those facing homelessness.

The centre could have communal areas for cooking/dining, educational workshops, relationship building and cultural continuity and programs to support cultural needs of youth.

There could be space for onsite, on demand health services (mental/physical).

There could be an office space for youth who need to use equipment such as computers/internet and referral services for navigating the system (eg: employment, housing, education, justice system etc.).

There could be outdoor space to gather or garden/grow food.

It could be a drop-in centre for those who need services/connections but not necessarily housing.

Its interactive spaces would be designed to facilitate mentorship opportunities.

Capital and operating costs

Operating a holistic hub of the kind outlined above could be accomplished on a $1.5 million minimum annual operating budget, according to Compass Rose's research. However, we recommend aiming for a $2 million operating budget to better incorporate services. The breakdown of expenses is provided in the report.

Compass Rose also projects a $5 to $7 million startup budget to physically construct and furnish the hub in addition to hiring resources to do fundraising and stakeholder relations. These projections are based on the development and operating costs of similar shelters. Details can be found in the report in Appendix 3.

Approach to creating a holistic hub

Compass Rose recommends the following approach to developing the holistic hub:

1.	Laying the foundation to communicate the need for a holistic hub with a strategic communications and stakeholder relations plan
2.	Conducting outreach and solidifying strong partnerships with private sector funders and other interested stakeholders
3.	Actively engaging with governments at the municipal, provincial and federal levels
4.	Strong community, inclusive consultation with youth
5.	Scale up gradually

The goal would be to immediately begin fundraising and develop a hub over five years with the following timeline:

IMMEDIATE TO YEAR 1	YEARS 1 - 2	YEARS 3 - 4	YEARS 4 - 5
→ Begin applications for fundraising → Secure $100,000 to develop communications and stakeholder relations plan → Secure commitment from one stakeholder to partner with	→ Implement communications and stakeholder relations plan → Secure $5 million startup cost to build holistic hub through public and private sectors → Ongoing stakeholder outreach and partnership building; including potentially a 'soft launch' → Begin consultations with community on hub design/services → Secure and finalize location for hub	→ Begin construction of holistic hub → Secure $2 million for first year of operation → Finalize hub structure (eg: charity status, board of directors etc.)	→ Open hub to youth with 'ribbon cutting' ceremony including government and all funders

Recommendations

The following are some key recommendations to ensure the holistic hub is feasible.

Stakeholder outreach

Stakeholder outreach will be pivotal, not only for funding but also for strength in numbers. It will be important to tap into the expertise and services that already exist.

Project Team

Of equal importance will be consistency and dedicated leadership to oversee the development of this project. The Adoption Council of Canada should consider seeking a small amount of funding to hire an experienced grant and proposal writer with fundraising expertise to begin applying for funding. This could be part time initially and as funding comes in, the position could become full time. ACC should also consider hiring a project manager with fundraising experience to oversee everything and to ensure consistent leadership.

Communications Plan

While the research shows there is a glaring need to address the barriers that young women and gender diverse persons face when leaving care, it needs to be communicated to all stakeholders as an urgent and economically sound investment. The Adoption Council of Canada will need to develop a comprehensive strategic communications plan that includes an approach to first communicate the need for a holistic hub (setting the foundation) and second, to generate awareness and support for stakeholder outreach and funding opportunities.

Strategic GR Plan

Consistent advocacy and engagement with governments is essential to raising awareness and urgency. To do so, we recommend the creation of a comprehensive and strategic government relations strategy with a full range of information, communications and stakeholder engagement tools. We recommend engaging a firm to assist with registerable advocacy efforts with the expertise to navigate all levels of government.

Fundraising Strategy

A fundraising campaign strategy should also be developed in order to reduce the 'piecemeal' aspects of developing the hub. Given the several funding opportunities from foundations and the philanthropic community, the strategy could include consideration around engaging a fundraising sponsor with an incentive to name the hub after the foundation or person. Grassroots campaigns could also be undertaken, for example starting a GoFundMe campaign.

Conclusion

As mentioned previously, the projected hub by the Adoption Council of Canada would align with the objectives and activities of a large number of social service organizations, presenting the opportunity to advance the hub's development by teaming up with an existing organization that would provide information, support and fund-raising suggestions.

Also, the aims of the Adoption Council of Canada's proposed hub tie in closely with the goals and priorities of many private sector grant-giving foundations and also with the priorities of the federal, provincial and Ottawa governments, which altogether offer numerous opportunities for funding and support. Compass Rose has done an extensive scan of funding options for the proposed hub and the report provides details on numerous government programs and their goals, funding levels and availability to support a holistic hub.

Young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system face significant barriers to thriving and need continued support in a variety of ways long after they leave care. The research, data and interviews with stakeholders and youth with lived experience show there is a clear need for a holistic approach to addressing these barriers. Following a thorough funding scan of private sector and government opportunities, Compass Rose believes that building a holistic hub with housing and wraparound services for these young people is not only necessary, but feasible.

Better Supports, Better Futures

A feasibility study of the Adoption Council of Canada's proposed holistic hub for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of care

Introduction

Background

Following a three year project with funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), the Adoption Council of Canada (ACC) is looking to develop concrete next steps and resources to address the economic and health insecurity of young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system.

Based on ACC's internal research, roundtable discussions, focus groups and interviews with stakeholders, including those affected by the system, ACC envisions a holistic hub approach to supporting the young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the system. This holistic hub would have the necessary resources, experts, mentors and services to help young women and gender diverse persons once they are no longer in the care of child welfare services. ACC envisions the hub will be based in Ottawa as a pilot for growth across the country.

Compass Rose was asked to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential partners and funders as well as to determine the financial viability for this holistic hub.

What we did

Compass Rose began its feasibility study in April 2021. After working with the Adoption Council of Canada to define the scope and objectives of the study, Compass Rose gathered data and conducted research to develop the background on whether a holistic hub would be feasible in today's social, political and economic climate.

This research consisted of:

→ The barriers young women and gender diverse persons face when aging out of the child welfare system

→ Existing public and private services for youth in general as well as for young women and gender diverse persons

→ Existing health and social hubs and their best practices

→ Stakeholder scan

→ Funding scan

ACC provided Compass Rose with data in addition to Compass Rose's own research. Because of the short time period for the feasibility study to be completed, we relied on the vast and extensive existing literature to form the basis of our recommendations. Compass Rose also conducted in-depth interviews with six experts and designed a general questionnaire to complement the research from which we received seven responses.

We held biweekly calls with ACC to discuss progress, provide updates and share intel.

Given the budget and tight timeline to complete the study, Compass Rose did not undertake a comprehensive assessment of risks and threats. There are several considerations listed in the environmental landscape section as well as in the overview of a strategic plan, however, a more detailed and encompassing SWOT analysis is recommended before beginning work on the project.

Compass Rose is pleased to present this feasibility study to the Adoption Council of Canada in its effort to close the gaps on the economic and health insecurity of young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system.

Objectives

1.	Determine whether creating a holistic hub with the necessary resources, experts and services is financially viable
2.	Identify potential stakeholders to partner with ACC on creating this holistic hub
3.	Identify funding opportunities and operational costs that would make the holistic hub feasible

Environmental landscape

Number of young women and gender diverse persons aging out

It is difficult to determine the exact number of young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system across the country because there is no standard for collecting this data.

Based on available information, the number of total youth aging out of the child welfare system (all genders) could be between 2,736 to 7,128.

According to Varda Mann-Feder, an applied human sciences professor in Concordia's Faculty of Arts and Science, every year approximately 6,000 young Canadians age out of the child welfare system and need support.

Aging out refers to when youth in care reach a certain age (ranging from 18 to 24 depending on the jurisdiction) and are no longer under government care and are cut off from supports such as permanent housing, social workers, financial or meaningful relationships. Mann-Feder says that many youth in care "were traumatised early on by adverse conditions, and cared for by strangers in the public system, and are then expected to adjust to the withdrawal of services and the necessity of taking on adult responsibilities."

Mann-Feder also says youth aging out of care are "thrust into independent living almost 10 years earlier than other young people. In some cases, there has been only minimal preparation to help them cope on their own, and they have access to little financial or emotional support."

For the purposes of this study, we will reference approximately 3,000 young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the system (half of the approximate total referred to above).

Additionally, according to Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, in 2019, there were 333 children and youth living in the care of the CAS of Ottawa. There were 145 children and youth living with a Continued Care and Support Agreement (Extended Society Care - ESC) until 21. Of 145 in Extended Society Care, 57 are 20-21 years of age and aged out in 2020 and 2021. Of the 333 children

and youth in care of CASO, 48 per cent are female, 52 per cent are male and one is gender non-conforming. Of those, 48 (14 per cent) are of Indigenous descent, 37 (11 per cent) are of African descent, 57 per cent are of European descent (underrepresented by 14.2 per cent of population).

However, the number related to aging out is an estimate as some youth may age out between 16 - 21 and are not included in the figures above. This is because they've either chosen to no longer be involved with the CAS or they do not qualify for ESC (enrolled in school or employed).

While it is difficult to determine an exact number, in order to build a more sound economic argument on the need for a holistic hub, **ACC should conduct this research as a foundation for seeking funding and engaging with governments and corporate funders.**

Inconsistent services across provinces

Because of the provincial jurisdiction of the child welfare system, there are inconsistent services provided for youth aging out of the system. A scan of provincial services also did not return services specific to young women and gender diverse persons in a holistic way.

This issue was also raised by Varda Mann-Feder, who noted that it is a big concern in establishing a holistic hub that would work across the country. "There's no national framework, there's no equity across the country," she said in an interview. "Establishing it in one place over others will be a problem. … You can't even talk about specialized services for women or gender diverse persons because there's no [extended] service for anyone. It's really really poor."

The acute need for the services envisioned for the proposed hub is well-established in social service, academic and government circles.

It's clear a holistic hub to addressing needs for young women and gender diverse persons is needed to fill several gaps (see research and data analysis section) however, there might be resistance from governments or funders to developing one specifically for this group when there is a bigger need across the country. **The Adoption Council of Canada will need to ensure that communications around a pilot in Ottawa for replication across the country following significant data collection is strong.**

Overrepresentation of BIPOC youth in child welfare system

In January 2013, the Youth Leaving Care Working Group issued a final report: Blueprint for Fundamental Change to Ontario's Child Welfare System. Many of its findings still stand today.

The report found: "[Indigenous] children and youth in care often face additional challenges, and are more likely to come into contact with the child welfare system in the first place: although only two per cent of Ontario's population is [Indigenous], [Indigenous] children and youth make up 22 per cent of Ontario's Crown wards."

The Ontario Human Rights Commission in a 2018 report called Interrupted Childhoods found:

→ Indigenous children were over-represented in admissions into care at 93 per cent of agencies we looked at (25 of 27), with many Children's Aid Societies showing extreme levels of disproportionality. Overall, the proportion of Indigenous children admitted into care was 2.6 times higher than their proportion in the child population. These figures likely underestimate the proportions of Indigenous children admitted into care, in part because the OHRC's sample only included non-Indigenous (mainstream) CASs.

→ Black children were over-represented in admissions into care at 30 per cent of agencies (8 of 27). Overall, the proportion of Black children admitted into care was 2.2 times higher than their proportion in the child population.

Black children were over-represented in admissions into care at 30 per cent of agencies

→ In contrast, at more than half of the 27 CASs, White children were under-represented among children admitted into care (15 of 27 agencies or 56 per cent).

→ Race-based data collection processes and practices are a patchwork across the sector. We looked at 38 mainstream CASs' data collection practices. These CASs' human rights-based (particularly race-based) data collection practices are widely inconsistent with each other and vary even within many individual agencies.

→ More than 40 per cent of CASs did not know the racial backgrounds or Indigenous identities of more than one in five children served by their agency, when considering referrals, cases opened for investigation, and admissions of children into care. Four agencies did not know the racial backgrounds or Indigenous identities of over half the children placed into care.

Any holistic hub developed must take into account these statistics and provide culturally appropriate and inclusive services.

Support for gender diverse persons

The number of youth who identify as gender diverse among the homeless has been increasing. Preliminary estimates put the portion of youth identifying as 2SLGBTQ+ among the homeless in Canada at between 25 per cent and 40 per cent. These youth have difficulties finding shelters where they are safe and respected. They experience high rates of discrimination and violence in shelters.

The number of youth who identify as gender diverse among the homeless has been increasing.

While ACC's intention for the hub is for young women and gender diverse persons, this feasibility study has not focused enough research on how to support specifically gender diverse persons who are aging out. As noted, there is very little data on the demographic as a whole and therefore there is even less data on the needs of and barriers faced by gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system. It will be extremely important to ensure that "gender diverse persons" is not an afterthought when developing the details of the hub. Adoption Council of Canada will need to consider if it will be prepared to support not just trans women, but also gender diverse people which may include trans men and non binary people (including those who may have been assigned male at birth). Of course, trans, non-binary, and other gender diverse people will need a lot of gender support if the hub is intended to support gender diversity. What works for cis women will not work for other non-cis genders.

The Adoption Council of Canada will need to conduct outreach and more research, which is outside the scope of this feasibility study, to determine whether services for gender diverse persons is truly feasible within this hub.

Support for people with disabilities

Any conception of a holistic hub as envisioned by the Adoption Council of Canada would require detailed consideration of services for those living with disabilities. Earlier research suggests that people with disabilities are about twice as likely to be homeless compared to the general population. But the homeless hub states that "there are no accurate numbers that tell us how many people who are experiencing homelessness also live with a disability, but experience and anecdotal information shows that it is quite high."

The homeless hub adds that ensuring that shelters and homeless services are responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities goes beyond accommodating physical needs — invisible disabilities should also be taken into account. Services need to take into account the unique needs of people who are deaf or blind, who experience developmental or cognitive difficulties (including acquired brain injuries and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder), people living with addictions and/or mental health issues. These accommodations could include changing the way a service operates – not requiring someone with health issues to leave the shelter during the day, for example. It also can include ensuring that all materials are available in Braille or large-print, that ASL interpreters are available (on-call) and that staff receive training in disability accommodations.

Similarly, planning for a hub to provide services for young women aging out of care will require special attention to the needs of those experiencing mental illness. According to the homeless hub, 30-35 per cent of those experiencing homelessness, and up to 75 per cent of women experiencing homelessness, have mental illnesses. And 20-25 per cent of people experiencing homelessness suffer from concurrent disorders (severe mental illness and addictions). People who have severe mental illnesses over-represent those experiencing homelessness, as they are often released from hospitals and jails without proper community supports in place.

Community-based mental health services play an important role, according to the homeless hub. Homelessness could be drastically reduced if people with severe mental illness were able to access supportive housing as well as other necessary community supports. They encounter more barriers to employment and tend to be in poorer health than other people experiencing homelessness. Housing outreach services that provide a safe place to live are a vital component of stabilizing the illness and helping individuals on their journey to recovery.

The Adoption Council of Canada should consult with disability advocates, experts and organizations in more detail in advance of developing a holistic hub to ensure the appropriate services and programs can be implemented.

Ontario government

The child welfare system is a provincial jurisdiction in Canada. In 2014, the province of Ontario celebrated the first Children and Youth in Care Day on May 14. Ontario has a Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and an Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues. On this year's Children and Youth in Care Day, then-Associate Minister Jill Dunlop said in a [statement](#): "Every child and youth in Ontario has a voice that must be heard and rights that must be respected. They deserve to feel safe and have access to inclusive services and supports that best meet their diverse needs. Children and Youth in Care Day is an opportunity for us to highlight and recognize the children and youth in the care of children's aid societies across Ontario, and to reaffirm their right to receive services that put their health, safety and well-being first."

Acknowledging that it has been a difficult year for everyone, especially those in and transitioning out of care, Dunlop said that "Every child and youth in Ontario deserves a safe, loving and stable home. And every child deserves to be supported as they grow and transition into adulthood."

Last year, the government announced that there would be a [moratorium](#) until Sept. 30, 2022, on youth in care aging out of the supports and services they receive during the pandemic. "Through our engagements on strengthening the child welfare system, we have heard valuable input about where the child welfare sector is now and where it should go in the future. The need for change is clear," Dunlop said. "We want all children and youth in care to know they are not alone and that we are committed to continue listening and collaborating with them and building a system that delivers the outcomes our children and youth deserve."

Further, the province introduced a [Child welfare redesign strategy](#) last year that is in the process of being implemented. It focuses on improving children, youth and family wellbeing and enhancing prevention and early intervention to keep more families together. It also focuses on amplifying youth voices and enhancing youth supports such as:

→ Expanding and increasing access to education and employment supports for youth (for example, postsecondary, employment and apprenticeship programs).

→ Providing youth with dedicated, targeted supports to meet their distinct needs and respond to their cultural identities. This includes those with disabilities and mental health needs as well as specific supports for Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth.

→ Supporting youth to transition successfully to adulthood.

The strategy notes: "There is a particular focus on Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ communities as they are overrepresented in the child welfare system and experience disproportionate outcomes. Discussion on eliminating such barriers and making services more inclusive and culturally appropriate for all children, youth and families is key. This wide-reaching level of engagement is a key component in redesigning child and family services in Ontario."

The issue of children and youth aging out of the child welfare system is squarely on the provincial government's radar. **ACC should use this awareness to engage the government on prioritizing these young people as well as for possible funding opportunities.**

Federal government, youth minister

The current federal government has put a priority on youth. Indeed, the Prime Minister previously appointed himself as the Minister of Youth and created a Prime Minister's Youth Council to help develop a national youth policy.

The current Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, Bardish Chagger, is a strong advocate for youth, shining a light on systemic inequalities and ensuring underrepresented and underserved communities' voices are heard.

"That's where it's essential, in all aspects of my portfolio, for that to be the underlying foundation. So whether it's my work with the youth secretariat or the 2SLGBTQ+ secretariat, or the anti-racism secretariat, it's essential that these voices inform, at minimum, through their lived experiences, the policies and programs we advance—so they help the very people that we are here to serve," she said.

Her 2019 mandate letter and supplemental letter priorities include:

→ Work with other Ministers, and economic development, agricultural and trade organizations as well as directly with industry, to ensure that under-represented people and

communities, such as racialized communities, are better served and more informed about the programs and services that can help them find economic opportunities.

→ Provide additional investments to 2SLGBTQ+ organizations to hire staff, expand services and reach more people. This includes hotlines and other support services for 2SLGBTQ+ communities, including those that provide sexual health information.

→ Consult civil society representatives of 2SLGBTQ+ communities to lay the groundwork for an 2SLGBQT+ action plan.

→ Enhance the Youth Employment Strategy and the Canada Summer Jobs program.

→ Lead the development of a signature national youth service program within the Canada Service Corps to allow youth to gain skills and leadership experience while making a meaningful difference in their communities.

→ Support the economic recovery of all Canadians, especially those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including by:

○ Significantly scaling up youth and student employment and supports to provide more paid work experiences in 2021 for young Canadians; and

○ Enhancing and expanding programs to improve employment opportunities for racialized communities.

→ As COVID-19 has intensified the health inequities and barriers to care for vulnerable populations, support the Minister of Health in their work to ensure that all Canadians have access to critical health services.

→ As part of our commitment to addressing systemic racism, support the President of the Treasury Board in building a whole-of-government approach for the better collection, analysis and availability of disaggregated data.

→ Launch a review of the Employment Equity Act, as we advance work on equity, diversity and inclusion for women, 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, Black and racialized Canadians, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups.

→ Introduce legislation and make investments that take action to address systemic inequities in the criminal justice system.

It will be important to ensure funding applications to the federal government and communications with federal government decision makers reflect some of these priorities.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Youth members of the Youth Leaving Care Working Group identified links between their recommendations and the articles of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](). In an interview with Compass Rose, Professor Mann-Feder also spoke about this convention and the need for governments to meaningfully implement it.

Canada is a signatory to the convention which states in the preamble that:

"Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

"Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

"Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity."

When engaging with governments, this convention could be a good angle from which to discuss the issues and needs for a holistic hub.

Research and data analysis

Aging out without a safety net

The Adoption Council of Canada is in the process of finalizing a study: Aging Out Without a Safety Net: Addressing the Economic Insecurity of Young Women in and from the Child Welfare System. The study is funded by the department of Women and Gender Equality Canada.

Thousands of children and youth in foster and group care in Canada are currently available for adoption; approximately half of those are girls/young women and gender diverse persons. The majority of these youths will age out of the child welfare system without permanency or a family.

Lacking a connection to a permanency is the root cause of economic insecurity for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system in Canada, affecting their economic insecurity for the rest of their lives. From this project, the Adoption Council of Canada is looking to understand and document the depth and the breadth of the problem of economic insecurity for young women and gender diverse persons who age out of the child welfare system across Canada.

According to the **Children's Aid Foundation**, "young people leaving care are expected to assume responsibilities like finding employment and a place to live, achieving a post-secondary education, paying rent and cooking meals – often facing barriers such as not having a high school diploma or a support network of any kind."

ACC has conducted a gap analysis of the issues and held focus groups with young women who have aged out of the child welfare system. The focus groups identified barriers to economic insecurity that young women and gender diverse persons have faced, and the solutions that they believe will help them. As part of this analysis, a national survey was also administered to reach a wider audience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data from these focus groups is currently being analysed in partnership with the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) and will be released at a national symposium this fall.

The symposium will review progress to date on identifying barriers, share best practices of policies that support these youth, and identify ways to collaborate on future policy development to ameliorate system barriers.

The idea of a hub was developed by the young women and gender diverse persons who attended the focus group discussions.

According to the Children's Aid Foundation, "young people leaving care are expected to assume responsibilities like finding employment and a place to live, achieving a post-secondary education, paying rent and cooking meals – often facing barriers such as not having a high school diploma or a support network of any kind."

Additionally, youth transitioning out of the system also face significant challenges that are "further exacerbated by the ongoing impacts of childhood trauma. Feeling isolated, alone and ill-equipped to manage life on their own, too many young people leaving the care of the child welfare system are simply unable to find the stability they need to build successful, independent lives."

> "We want to be independent but need support and stability. When I started hearing about hubs, it was really uplifting. Youth need this, they want it."
>
> — Young woman with lived experience

This was echoed by a youth who participated in the Ottawa session, who said it was not surprising to hear from other youth who experienced the same issues and barriers to thriving independently. "We want to be independent but need support and stability," the young woman said. "When I started hearing about hubs, it was really uplifting. Youth need this, they want it."

The young woman said when young people age out of the system without a stable family to turn to, "you're technically supposed to be cared for by the government and then you have expectations that they'll be there, but access to the supports is hard," she said. "It's mentally and physically draining."

She said a holistic hub would give young women and gender diverse persons the opportunity to connect with people, to have safe space with people who will help you, someone to guide you when you don't have that guidance and being around others who have similar lived experiences.

Most importantly, a hub would mean connections and knowing "you're going to get somewhere instead of just surviving," the young woman said, adding that being able to thrive is essential.

"Youth in care don't get to achieve their dreams often. A hub will give people the opportunity to dream again," she said.

From her experience, the young woman said, access to support services is the most difficult when aging out without others to turn to — this is both physical and mental as well. For instance, not knowing which services are available is a barrier, but so is having to take long bus rides across the city to get to appointments.

> "Youth in care don't get to achieve their dreams often. A hub will give people the opportunity to dream again."
>
> — Stakeholder feedback

"Resources are hard to find," she said. "Many are going to school and working and trying so hard to not fall back into the life they grew up in. Dealing with that but then going all over the city to get ID or food because you don't have money to buy food — it's hard. When you're trying to navigate it's exhausting."

In some cases, youth receive an extended care agreement until age 21 and receive funding while living on their own. The young woman said while this is helpful, often times, youth are not shown how to use this funding while on their own.

This is why a "one-stop shop" or hub approach to addressing some of these barriers is important, she said. "When I think of a hub, it's like having a home, your own space but also having a community there where there aren't restrictions of an institution," she said. This would include aspects such as having elders to teach youth about their past like visiting grandparents would do, or having access to a computer to learn new skills like having a 'home computer' would do, or being able to come home from post-secondary school to a home cooked meal with tomatoes from the garden.

"When I think of alternatives, we've done it all already," she said. "This is the next step. There comes a time when you have to move on, try something new, adapt. The status quo isn't working for a lot of youth in care. A holistic hub will help the economy inevitably as the youth become

independent people, where they feel safe and stable and are thriving. They're out there doing things, changing the world."

The Child Welfare Institute and Children's Aid Society of Toronto published a report in 2014 outlining [Best Practices in Transitioning Youth Out of Care](#). The authors note that "while there seems to be substantial progress in developing more innovative options for youth transitioning out of care, challenges remain that need to be better understood regarding continued adverse outcomes for youth despite the added supports. Examples include continued risk of housing instability, and at worst, homelessness, ongoing food insecurity, and for many, a growing debt load."

The young woman said in the long term, a hub will help everybody in society. "I don't know of any other options right now," she said.

Needs of young women and gender diverse persons who are aging out of the child welfare system

The [Blueprint for Fundamental Change to Ontario's Child Welfare System](#) notes that children and youth in and from care struggle more than other youth in the province. For instance, only 44 per cent of youth in and from care graduate from high school compared to 82 per cent of Ontario youth. Youth in and from care are over-represented in the youth justice system and also more likely to experience homelessness.

The Ontario government's [strategy to reduce poverty](#) states that "people require wraparound supports and services" to help "on the path to jobs, greater independence, and improved outcomes."

Youth transitioning out of care need access to employment or further education, receive more focused supports from case workers, and people moving between support systems shouldn't need to complete multiple intake processes, according to the strategy.

The Child Welfare Institute and Children's Aid Society of Toronto published a report in 2014 outlining [Best Practices in Transitioning Youth Out of Care](#). The authors identified four contributing barriers to successfully transitioning youth out of care: lack of supportive

relationships, educational challenges, housing instability and economic challenges (unemployment). Please see Appendix 5 for more details.

These barriers were echoed by stakeholders who were interviewed for this study as well as survey respondents.

Return on investment

There is a significant amount of literature, data and evidence that supports the benefits of extending support for transitioning youth, a "housing first" and supportive housing approach and hub initiatives to address the economic and social barriers for youth to thrive.

Irwin Elman, former director of the Office for the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, says in a 2013 report that extending the age of child welfare support from 21 years old to 25 would cost the province of Ontario an extra $26 million dollars but it would save $132 million in the long run. This is because there would be reduced encounters with the justice system, decreased social assistance costs and increased tax revenue, as these youth are better able to complete their education and get good jobs.

"We have always thought that extending care to age 25 would benefit youth, but governments have been concerned about the cost," Elman says in the report. "This research shows that not only does it provide considerable benefits to youth, but it will not cost the province in the long term."

Similarly, the United Way's Journey Home initiative to provide housing first to vulnerable and chronically homeless people in Saskatoon showed dividends. By providing housing, there was an 82 per cent decrease in the inappropriate use of public system services that include emergency room visits, medical hospitalizations and contact with the police. The data also showed a return on investment of $2.23 saved for every $1 invested.

The Homeless Hub estimates that if we do nothing to address homelessness, 100 people will cost the public service system $7 million. A housing first approach would cost $2.7 million.

The success of housing first can be seen in the Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home/Chez soi study — the world's largest housing first initiative that followed 2,000 participants for two years in five Canadian cities. The study found:

> On average the HF intervention cost $22,257 per person per year for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) participants and $14,177 per person per year for Intensive Case Management (ICM) participants. Over the two-year period after participants entered the study, every $10 invested in HF services resulted in an average savings of $9.60 for high needs/ACT participants and $3.42 for moderate needs/ICM participants. Significant cost savings were realized for the 10 per cent of participants who had the highest costs at study entry. For this group, the intervention cost was $19,582 per person per year on average. Over the two-year period following study entry, every $10 invested in HF services resulted in an average savings of $21.72.

Other housing first initiatives can also be seen across the country, the United States, as well as Europe. The Homeless Hub highlights some successful projects, with tailored to local communities as the key:

> In British Columbia, the Streets to Homes project in Victoria demonstrates how large-city programs can be adapted to meet the needs of smaller communities. In Alberta, Nikhik Housing First/Homeward Trust highlights what agencies can do to integrate Aboriginal culture into a program. In Ontario, the Transitions to Home project in Hamilton provides a great example of how partnerships with police services can help identify individuals with high needs.

As the MHCC project notes, housing first is not simply providing housing, but also wraparound services and support for other unmet needs. The study showed a "general shift away from crisis and institutional services to community-based services" where "many individuals with previously unmet needs were able to access appropriate and needed services during the study."

Providing wraparound services showed improvements in the quality of life, and as previously mentioned, a bigger return on investment:

> Having a place to live with supports can lead to other positive outcomes above and beyond those provided by existing services. Quality of life and community functioning improved for

housing first and treatment as usual (TAU) participants, and improvements in these broader outcomes were significantly greater in housing first, in both service types. Symptom-related outcomes, including substance use problems and mental health symptoms, improved similarly for both housing first and TAU. However, since most existing services were not linked to housing, there was much lower effectiveness in ending homelessness for TAU participants.

In a pandemic context, evidence shows that the cost of a shelter bed has doubled and that supportive housing is less expensive and more safe.

According to a report by Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) and United Way of Greater Toronto, before the pandemic, the average cost to operate a shelter bed in Toronto was more than $40,000 a year, compared with roughly $24,000 annually for a supportive housing unit. If physical distancing continues to be required, the report estimates $15 million could be saved every month if it moved 3,000 shelter residents into supportive housing — this does not take into account the additional reduced costs in other areas such as health care and the justice system.

Other studies show that a heavier focus on preventative measures and programming that addresses the social service, housing and mental health needs would be more cost effective for society at large.

Best practices

When developing a holistic hub, experts say best practices should include:

→ Youth have strong relationships with families who are committed to them
→ Effective mentorships have been shown to provide improved outcomes across the spectrum of challenges faced by youth transitioning from care
→ Provide educational supports that include employment readiness & career planning
→ Ensure youth have access to quality housing with financial assistance
→ Incorporate effective 'readiness planning for adulthood', including job skills, life skills and financial management training. This should include a focus on supporting those with visible and invisible disabilities to ensure they don't fall through the cracks.

Additionally, the province of Ontario has a five-year plan to reduce poverty. One of the pillars is "connecting people with the right supports and services" which aligns with ACC's vision for a holistic hub.

Some key principles from the report to consider when developing a hub include:

- Person-centred: help individuals overcome barriers
- Outcomes-focused: measure and report on progress and focus investments on achieving outcomes
- Partnership-driven: work collaboratively and share responsibility
- Integrated: take a whole of government and cross-sectoral approach to create a better coordinated and digitally enabled service system
- Place-based: focus on locally designed and community-led solutions

International experiences

When it comes to what other jurisdictions are doing to support youth in care to transition out, there are a number of examples and alternatives to the hub approach. From creating independent living programs and funding follow-up services in the U.S. to legislating key reforms in the United Kingdom and providing basic incomes to youth aging out in Australia, there are policy levers available to address some of the gaps. Please see Appendix 5 for more details on these programs in an international context.

While the above approaches are one step — some stakeholders say something is better than nothing — more needs to be done. It's clear legislation is not enough and a holistic approach is needed to bring all elements of support together for young women and gender diverse people.

Stakeholder analysis

Overview of stakeholder feedback

Compass Rose conducted in depth interviews with experts from six organizations including Canada Without Poverty, the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, Elizabeth Fry Society, Ottawa Centre for Resilience, Parkdale Food Centre and Concordia University professor Varda Mann-Feder.

A survey was also conducted online and sent to approximately 30 other organizations for which we received responses from experts from CHEO, the University of Ottawa, the University of Toronto, Black Ladders Canada, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, John Howard Society of Ottawa, Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network, Causeway Work Centre and Operation Come Home.

We have also connected with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition and discussions are ongoing.

What does a holistic hub mean?

All stakeholders and survey respondents had similar understandings of what a holistic hub approach to addressing barriers to economic and health security meant: the idea that everything is in one place — from services and information to housing and food.

When asked what services would be required, they saw it as a "centralized hub with trauma-informed services" such as mental health resources, doctors, dentists or access to legal services. Basic needs would also be met such as housing and food.

For one stakeholder, the hub would be a collective community space where food security could be a priority. The stakeholder noted that women and girls are twice as likely to be food insecure and at greater risk of hunger. Today's social services are siloed and access to food should be a priority, not an afterthought. This could be in the form of community meals, residents cooking together, a community garden or cooking classes to acquire skills.

This stakeholder said that food is central because when people get together over meals, they are able to talk and understand what's going on in their lives outside of 'official government mandated professional support.' This is where, for instance, people would be able to notice if a community

member is in need of healthcare and they can then be referred to the health services within that hub. Similarly, if someone mentions around the 'dinner table' that they need a certain piece of information, the community is there to help them or they can be referred to the appropriate resources.

"Young people aging out of care are forgotten. They don't have a support system," the stakeholder said. "Even people who are thriving need help sometimes. The hub is about belonging — people who are engaged in their communities."

Other services mentioned as key to building the hub include (direct quotes):

→ Run a lot of entrepreneurial programs - social enterprise.
→ Access to housing support.
→ Financial support.
→ Addictions counselling.
→ Support for continuing education.
→ Experts to advise on a number of issues eg: rights as a tenant, accessing child welfare, custody, employment, government programs.
→ A digital hub with stories and resources by region and location, making it accessible and interactive with a chat option and providing real concrete information, not just links to other resources that the youth will have to navigate through themselves.
→ Dietitian.
→ Someone who can prescribe medication for example a nurse practitioner or a primary care physician.
→ Case management, coordination, advocacy, counsellors to support in a direct and on-going way, clearinghouse for resources.
→ A holistic hub would look like transition support workers, housing experts, EIA and financial support experts, health and mental health professionals, employment and education supports all being present in one space, open and accessible for participants, with emergency food and hygiene available, and a comfortable space to connect with tea and a snack.
→ I would say that it looks like a web of services across multiple focus areas having agreements to share information (with the consent of those involved), share training, resources, up to date program information and look to create joint initiatives that address mutual gaps.

→ Requires mental health, general health, housing, counselling (trauma) etc, programs/workers. It means a collaborative and coordinated effort to ensure all areas are being addressed. A "table" where workers come together, driven by client choice, to support success.

→ A holistic hub would provide a menu of programs and services all of which would be designed to break the cycle of poverty and to provide support services. Operation Come Home is a holistic hub and could be used as an example.

→ It means having a "one-stop-shop" approach. All the various support programs would be available under one umbrella. I believe some of the services required would be financial literacy, mentorship, social workers, medical.

→ A place where they know you and have many of the supports needed and a means to support connections to other systems and supports needed.

Stakeholders and survey respondents said the hub should be like a drop in centre that youth aging out would be entitled to access as they age out and when needed until they are 30 years old regardless of when they left the child welfare system.

They can show up because they want to see someone or access programs, not because they have to, one stakeholder said. Additionally, there shouldn't be an expectation that access is limited. For example, if a youth has already taken a skills learning course they should be able to continue accessing it as one class will not necessarily give them all the information they need. "We have to recognize that they're going to need lots of repetition and living in a situation and applying it," the stakeholder said.

> The hub should be like a drop in centre that youth aging out would be entitled to access as they age out.

Varda Mann-Feder noted that there would need to be a close collaboration between organizations that provide placement services as well and it needs to be seamless. She said most children in the system are already stigmatized and should feel as if they don't need to ask for more help; therefore the hub should be an 'entitlement' for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the system.

Is a holistic hub needed?

In all feedback received, there was agreement that a holistic hub approach to addressing these barriers to economic and health security is needed. "For all people aging out of the system, this would be beneficial," one stakeholder said.

Another noted that responsibility for youth to thrive "doesn't end when their child welfare status ends."

When asked if this hub was needed, others said:

→ Yes, a holistic hub would make supports and resources more accessible, and with the permission of participants, would streamline communication between service-providers so that collaborative efforts can be made.

→ Absolutely. I think the more collaboration and cohesion we have between services, the better equipped we all become to address needs.

One stakeholder raised an issue of possible duplication of services and keeping the youth 'in care' rather than allowing them to move on to their adult lives. The stakeholder said for example there are housing services available to young women and gender diverse persons, however, the hub needs to be cautious in saying "come live here instead of moving on."

"We need to do an inventory first rather than create a new organization," the stakeholder said. "It should be about building stronger bridges."

In response to the idea of duplication of services, several other stakeholders said this specific hub would not be a duplication, in the sense that it would be specifically for young women and gender diverse persons, as well as providing services from a 'trauma-informed' lens.

"I think the youth are going to say that we don't care that there are other organizations, we want a one-stop wraparound service. We don't want to have to go to 10 different stops," the stakeholder said. "It's not a duplication of services because everyone would be working together. Everyone would be talking to each other. It might look the same but it wouldn't be the same."

Another stakeholder pointed out that there wouldn't be a duplication of services because often other services are overstretched and people still need support. "The more resources and the more

support people have, the better. People always say that — it exists already why not use those — but there's not enough. We need to stop perpetuating the cycle," the stakeholder said. "A hub like this could help long term instead of putting on a BandAid. I want to see overlap."

Another stakeholder said "there is room for both" niche organizations and hubs. "I don't think it excludes niche organizations as long as they are connected to these hubs with the expertise they have," the stakeholder said. "I am a fan of the hub as it lessens the need for participants to qualify or tell their story."

Further, when asked what the appetite for a hub approach is, stakeholders said this isn't a new model of care:

→ I believe this is a common approach these days. For instance, there are a lot of health clinics that take that approach where you can have your MD, nutritionist, podiatrist, pharmacist all in one location (hub).

→ I feel that we are in a place where collaboration and partnership are being identified as invaluable solutions to gaps and silos of service.

"A hub like this could help long term instead of putting on a BandAid."

What age range should be served?

There is no consistent definition of youth in Canada. Members of the Prime Minister's own Youth Council ranges from 12 to 30. A variety of youth funding programs target 16 to 30 year olds. Statistics Canada defines youth as 15 to 29 year olds. Meanwhile, Elections Canada considers youth as 18 to 24 year olds.

When asked if the 16 to 30 years age range for the hub was appropriate, all respondents said yes. Many said this age was key because of the transitional changes from being in care to adulthood. Respondents said most 18 year olds, even if they've moved out to go to post-secondary, have parents or homes or mentors they can turn to when help is needed during this time in their lives. Therefore, a holistic hub should be available to youth leaving care who are going through the same issues and life changes without permanent relationships.

Lack of permanency is one of the most serious challenges confronting youth who are no longer in care, and it is clear that addressing youths' need for permanency must be a prominent issue in the organization of services for a holistic hub. Assisting youth in making connections and in the development of permanent trusting and caring relationships, including kinship care, legal guardianship, adoption and lifelong connections, is extremely important in the optimal transition to adulthood for youth leaving care. "Mentors can play a key role in reducing stigma for mentees who have been in care by normalizing their experiences and providing unconditional acceptance," according to a "toolkit" on effective mentoring developed by the Ontario Mentoring Coalition.

"This seems to me to be the most critical age where young women and gender diverse persons would need the most support in order to have a better start in their lives as young adults," said one stakeholder.

Some noted that that age coincides with employment programs for youth and that ACC could consider lowering the age to 14 or 15 in order to begin speaking to youth about their futures. "Those are often crucial years for determining future directions," said one stakeholder.

Another stakeholder added: "Bringing the age down to 15 would be good, because in most provinces, child welfare agencies are supposed to begin conversations with youth in care about their plan for life after 18 at 15. Welcoming youth as young as 15 may ensure that they are exposed to their rights and responsibilities around transitions from care."

Who should take the lead in developing this hub?

When asked who should take the lead in developing this hub, stakeholders for the most part said it should be a collaborative effort by non-profits, the charitable sector and governments.

"All of the above. A collective impact approach should be across sectors," was the sentiment from several stakeholders.

Another key theme was that it should be funded by governments and run by local organizations who are embedded in the community; however the funding cycle from governments takes too long and is sometimes not reliable as they are often short term rather than long term agreements. Others said the private sector should play a role but not necessarily lead.

Are there alternatives to a hub approach?

In our research, Compass Rose asked whether there were alternatives to a hub approach to determine how successful a holistic hub would be. Several stakeholders said it wasn't surprising a hub idea was what the youth from the roundtables recommended. "The concept sounds creative, inclusive," one person said.

Other alternatives to a hub that were identified include:

- → Systems navigator roles
- → Coordinated access table
- → Shared services
- → Creating a digital hub (pivoting in COVID-19 era)
- → Universal basic income
- → Increased public housing with models that prioritize youth in care

One stakeholder said an openness for a "hybrid" system is needed wherein there would be a centre for youth with core staff in place but there would be agreements with other organizations or "micropartnerships" in the community for specialized services.

"Sometimes we're on site, but we could also be connected outside," said the stakeholder. "If the goal is to get the best possible professionals, most are already involved in other things and wouldn't leave to go work there; but they're well suited to play a role."

Another person said partnerships with community groups are key and then the hub could connect people to other services with guaranteed access.

One stakeholder, who noted that there should be no duplication of services, said they were "in favour of using services that already exist rather than creating new ones." Additionally, they said, they "wouldn't want to take money away from what's already there" and a single residence "wouldn't be my choice of model."

Another person said they agreed with that assessment. "Services are already out there," they said. "Expanding on the services already and making sure there are connections between youth and adult services" could be an alternative.

Meanwhile, one stakeholder said it's not necessarily about talking about alternatives, rather it's about just starting. "Unless it's a mandated opportunity, no one's just going to take it on," the person said. "Kids are being left to figure it out. But if you build it, they will come."

How can you ensure a successful hub?

The biggest consideration stakeholders mentioned when considering the success of a holistic hub is funding and agency capacity. "So many of us are already doing more work than we can manage with so few resources. It would require dedicated resources and staff," said one stakeholder. Along those lines, another stakeholder said it's important to not be volunteer run and have dedicated, paid staff to ensure reliability and consistency.

One stakeholder noted: "Collective impact is a great approach. Having a group of organizations signed on to provide collaborative service. Ensure that there is a stewardship committee to make decisions and sub committees involved in specific activities. Communities of practice are also essential for knowledge exchange."

Engaging and consulting not only with community stakeholders but with youth themselves in the design and implementation of the hub in order to ensure that the various services are meeting their needs is also essential. User-centred design is imperative.

"Ensure that there is a person-centered approach in the development and implementation of a hub in which the people that you are supporting are consulted on their needs and how the hub can help address them," said one stakeholder. "The hub should also have an ongoing advisory group with this

background who can provide context and content expertise to help guide informed decision making."

Another stakeholder noted that in developing the hub, ACC should "talk to young people about their rights under the UNCRC, and transition that to the UDHR as they get older and then attach the relevant right(s) to any of the advice or services they are given."

Diversity and inclusion is also a key element for success. All stakeholders noted this requirement:

→ Staffing, policies, diverse voices and decision makers should be at the table from inception of the idea to delivery of services.
→ Ensure that the staff reflect that diversity and that management instills the values, ethics and morals required to ensure that clients are comfortable gaining access to the hub.
→ Culture and gender need to be front of mind with representation from all communities. Clients need choice to access appropriate services to suit their needs.
→ Put diversity and inclusion in your terms of reference/bylaws/strategic plan — whatever guiding documents you have. Include equity, diversity and inclusion folks on your committee/board.

Accessibility is also important. One stakeholder noted that often these services are in church basements that have stairs and they are not physically accessible or religiously accessible. The hub should be a 'neutral,' inviting space, the stakeholder said. "Finding an appropriate space is a challenge. The space will be key - having a welcoming space is so important," the stakeholder said.

When it comes to key performance indicators, stakeholders said that a baseline evaluation is needed and data on a number of outcomes is essential to measure.

This includes data at regular intervals regarding:

→ The youth themselves (gender, age, race, stage in life, self reporting of satisfaction etc.)
→ Mental health
→ Education
→ Finance
→ Stability
→ Relationships developed
→ Employment
→ Housing
→ Stakeholders and partnerships
→ And more as necessary

As one person said, "Tell the data story."

Recommendations on potential stakeholder partners

As the Adoption Council of Canada knows well, there are several stakeholders and organizations already providing services and programs to address some of the issues and barriers identified. Many of these stakeholders are well-established with government and private sector funders.

Governments may be trying to hold the line on funding for a few years after the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the ACC is an important organization and should be in a position to obtain funds with a dedicated, steady effort, as the feasibility study shows. Partnering with one or more significant stakeholders would make the holistic hub more feasible, in terms of providing expertise and services as well as showing funders that there is a base for success.

The following are some recommendations on potential stakeholder partners that ACC could approach in a variety of ways to ensure a smooth transition for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system. This includes reaching out to consult and gather more information on best practices in developing a hub; service delivery, and/or possibly funding.

Please see Appendix 1 for more detailed information.
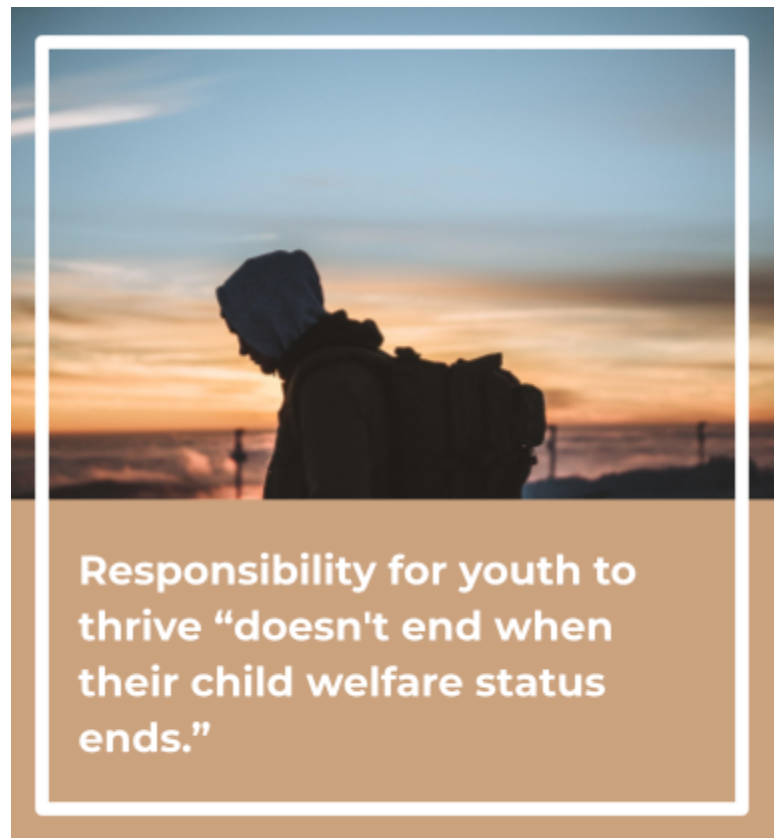
Responsibility for youth to thrive "doesn't end when their child welfare status ends."

Local Ottawa organizations

Children's Aid Society of Ottawa and Parkdale Food Centre

While all stakeholder organizations interviewed for this study would also be good partners because of alignment on issues, both Children's Aid Society of Ottawa and the Parkdale Food Centre specifically said they were interested in working with the Adoption Council of Canada further. ACC should follow up with them in order to maintain momentum.

Ottawa Community Housing

Ottawa Community Housing is the largest social housing provider in the city and could possibly partner with ACC on locating sites for the hub that would be appropriate for housing as well.

Cornerstone Housing for Women

Several stakeholders referenced Cornerstone Housing for Women as another stakeholder to reach out to when considering how to develop a holistic hub. Cornerstone provides emergency shelter and affordable housing for women of all ages and from diverse backgrounds, but the organization also has wraparound services. Cornerstone would be a good stakeholder to learn from, both from a housing and cultural perspective.

Youth Services Bureau

The Youth Services Bureau in Ottawa provides mental health, community and housing, employment and youth justice services. It could be approached for input in starting a hub, or partnering with them to provide distinct services. This would be an example of 'not duplicating services' but rather 'expanding.' ACC could do outreach to assess interest in working together.

YMCA-YWCA of the National Capital Region

The YMCA-YWCA has a second stage housing program for youth as well as a supportive housing program for women. The Adoption Council of Canada could reach out to YMCA-YWCA to partner with for services or to learn more about its experiences in developing these programs.

Minwaashin Lodge

Minwaashin Lodge is an Indigenous Women's Support Centre that provides a range of programs and services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and children (regardless of status) who are survivors of domestic and other forms of violence, and who may also be suffering the effects of the residential school system.

Kind

Kind is a community space for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bi, pan, trans, gender diverse, queer, questioning, ace, intersex, etc. (LGBT2SQ) people of all ages.

National organizations

Children's Aid Foundation

As ACC knows, the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada is a charity "dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth involved with the child welfare system." ACC should consider partnering with the Children's Aid Foundation, not only as a funder, but possibly as a founding partner as the foundation is also committed to supporting youth transitioning out of care.

Mental Health Commission of Canada

The Mental Health Commission of Canada would be a good pan-Canadian organization with the resources and the reputation to partner with. MHCC's programs and advocacy centre around children and youth, diversity, Indigenous, substance abuse, the justice system and stigma and discrimination among others and align with ACC's vision for a holisitic hub.

Youth in Care Canada

Youth in Care Canada has assisted in the development of over 70 provincial and community-level youth in care networks in Canada. It could be consulted on how to establish the hub as well as provide some funding or services related to education.

Youth Wellness Lab

The Youth Wellness Lab (YWL) connects youth with service providers, advocates, and other community stakeholders who are passionate about partnering on youth-led, youth-centred, and youth-focused research. The Adoption Council of Canada could partner with YWL to focus on the necessary data collection and analysis to ensure hub outcomes are measurable.

ACCESS Open Minds

ACCESS Open Minds is a youth mental wellness hub that operates in various cities across Canada, with several in Indigenous communities. The hubs are locally driven by youth and its model of care has shown significant benefits. ACC could consider partnering with ACCESS Open Minds to provide the mental health service model within the holistic hub.

Other

Compass Rose understands that ACC is currently working with the [Centre for Addictions and Mental Health](#) on this project. CAMH would be a natural partner to continue working with in the development of a holistic hub. Additionally, a stakeholder referred ACC to [NorWest Co-op Community Health](#) and [Futures Forward](#), saying they would have good feedback because of their experience in developing similar projects. [PARC](#), which works specifically with youth aging out of care in Toronto and has dedicated support workers, can be a valuable partner.

Additionally, gender diverse and 2SLGBTQ+ organizations should also be involved either through consultation or as service providers. [Supporting Our Youth](#) (SOY), based in Toronto, is an innovative community development program that supports LGBT2SQ youth and young adults, many of whom are homeless, racialized and newcomers to Canada. They also support [youth in transition from care](#) up to 24 years old.

Review of funding opportunities

Non-government resources

The following organizations are related to or have community programs that may be of interest to youth, women and gender diverse persons, and some of the barriers they face that the Adoption Council of Canada could potentially partner with in order to raise money. Several of these organizations, however, do not fund operational costs and are project based. Please see Appendix 2 for more detailed information of these organizations.

The Home Depot Foundation of Canada

The Home Depot Canada Foundation has two programs, both of which align with ACC's holistic hub; and which fund renovations, prevention and employment/life skills programs.

Rideau Hall Foundation

The Adoption Council of Canada has had past governors general as Adoption Ambassadors including former Governor General David Johnson who is also on the Rideau Foundation Board. The foundation has recently launched a $6.3 million Catapult Canada Access Innovation Fund (CCAIF) to improve educational outcomes for youth through innovative approaches."

Laidlaw Foundation

The Laidlaw Foundation has a funding stream that closely aligns with ACC. The Youth Action Fund aims to tackle barriers facing young people in the justice, education and child welfare systems.

Molson Foundation

The Molson Foundation supports projects and institutions that advance the physical, mental and social well-being of all Canadians.

Danbe Foundation

There is little information available online about the foundation, focus areas or criteria for funding, however, a look at the foundation's Canada Revenue Agency information shows $2.4 million was given to 50 organizations last year on a wide range of issues.

TD Bank

The TD Ready Commitment has committed $1 billion by 2030 to help make community investments in four themes: financial security, vibrant planet, connected communities, better health.

Coca-Cola Foundation

The Coca-Cola Foundation donated more than $186 million to community organizations in 2020 around the world. As a company, Coca-Cola is committed to giving back at least one per cent of the prior year's operating income annually. While the majority of the donations have been in the U.S., Canadian non-profits also benefited from the Coca-Cola Foundation.

Royal Bank of Canada Future Launch

RBC supports several Canadian initiatives to support youth in Canada. RBC's own youth support program is called Future Launch and its focus is on preparing young people to succeed in the new economy.

TELUS Friendly Future Foundation

TELUS provides youth supports through its Friendly Future Foundation.

ScotiaRISE

Scotiabank has committed $500 million over 10 years in community investment by 2030 through its ScotiaRISE community program.

SC Johnson Grants

SC Johnson has a corporate philanthropy branch and is committed to giving back to the communities in which it operates.

Canadian Women's Foundation

The Canadian Women's Foundation funds programs focused on preventing violence, addressing poverty, empowering girls and increasing inclusive leadership.

Others

The following foundations also appear to align with the goals of ACC's holistic hub, however, we are unable to find further information. ACC should contact these foundations individually, either through existing contacts or through the information provided on third-party websites if there is interest in furthering the discussion.

- Houssian Foundation
- Barrett Family Foundation
- Amazon Housing Equity Fund
- United Way of Eastern Ontario

Government funding sources

Federal government

The federal government funding at the moment is heavily focused on COVID-19 safety and economic recovery.

Budget 2021, however, outlines a commitment to invest $100 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to the Public Health Agency of Canada to support projects for innovative mental health interventions for populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including health care workers, front-line workers, youth, seniors, Indigenous people, and racialized and Black Canadians.

ACC should monitor for announcements regarding this funding.

Infrastructure

The federal government has a big priority on infrastructure funding and has committed $33 billion to provinces and territories for projects under four streams. The Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure stream of Infrastructure Canada's Investing in Canada program could apply to the Adoption Council of Canada's holistic hub, however, it must first be prioritized by the Ontario government. More information can be found here.

Meanwhile, the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative (CHCI) is providing up to $31 million in existing federal funding to support communities as they deploy new ways to adapt spaces and services to respond to immediate and ongoing needs arising from COVID-19.

The initiative is supporting projects under three main themes:

→ **Creating safe and vibrant public spaces**
  - Projects that create or adapt existing public places such as parks, main streets, and indoor spaces that encourage safe cultural or physical activities, and local commerce.

→ **Improving mobility options**
  - Projects that permit physical distancing through permanent or temporary changes that make it easier for people to get around in their communities, whether walking, biking, accessing public and private transit, or other modes of transportation.

→ **Digital solutions**
  - Innovative digital projects that address changing community needs through the use of data and connected technologies.

The first round of funding has been awarded and the second round closes on June 25. It's unclear if there will be a third round, however, it is worth monitoring.

CMHC's National Housing Co-Investment Fund

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has a National Housing Co-Investment Fund for organizations to build "energy efficient, accessible and socially inclusive housing for mixed-income, mixed-tenure and mixed-use affordable housing uses" including funding for transitional housing for women and children.

There is $5.19 billion available through low-cost repayable loans over 10 years and $2.26 billion available through forgivable loans over 10 years. Projects must have support from another level of government (such as municipalities, provinces and/or territories, Indigenous government) to ensure a coordination of investments.

All projects must:

→ have a minimum of five units/beds
→ have primary use as residential
→ meet minimum requirements for partnerships, financial viability, affordability, energy efficiency and accessibility

Details of the application process can be found here.

Employment and Social Development

The Department of Employment and Social Development (ESDC) has a Social Development Partnerships Program with two streams of funding that ACC could apply to.

Eligible organizations can apply for up to $3 million in funding to support projects that focus on one of two objectives:

→ Financial Empowerment: services and supports to help increase the financial wellbeing of low-income adults; or,

→ Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Children and Youth: services and supports to help increase the social inclusion of children and youth who may be experiencing impacts to their physical and mental wellbeing due to social isolation.

The Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Children and Youth stream is extremely applicable to ACC. Compass Rose understands ACC is in the process of submitting an application.

Applicants can only apply to one stream. Applications close on July 6.

There are several other funding opportunities that are currently open for programs for jobs, training, and social development projects, including a focus on apprenticeship in the trades, women and youth. While some of these programs would align with the holistic hub, the application deadlines are June and July 2021 and therefore will be closed when ACC is ready to begin the project. ACC should monitor subsequent budgets and the page referenced above to ensure timely awareness of new rounds of calls for proposals.

The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) was a program to fund proposals for support for young people (under 30) to gain work skills and employment. The government is investing an additional $5.7 billion over the next five years to help young Canadians pursue and complete their education, acquire new skills and access more work opportunities. ACC should continue to monitor this funding program as well to ensure timely awareness and application in subsequent years.

Enabling Accessibility Fund

The Enabling Accessibility Fund supports projects that address the following objectives:

→ improve accessibility and safety for persons with disabilities in Canadian communities and workplaces, and

→ increase access to programs, services or employment opportunities that focus on a holistic approach in addressing the social or labour market integration needs of persons with disabilities.

The application is open until July 29, 2021 at 5 p.m.

Health Canada

Current Health Canada funding opportunities may not match with goals, however, past recent funding has focused on healthy living, mental health, gender-based violence, and specific assistance of issues like substance use, autism, fetal alcohol syndrome. There are currently only three open opportunities: the Intersectoral Action Fund, Healthy Cities Implementation Science (HCIS) Team Grants, and Infectious Disease and Climate Change Fund. Health Canada also works with Indigenous Services Canada to offer resources on Indigenous mental health and substance use. ACC should continue to monitor for open opportunities.

Women and Gender Equality

Currently no Women and Gender Equality Canada funding programs are open. Historically, WAGE has operated capacity-building funds for women, LGBT2SQ, and gender-diverse organizations, as well as for groups combating gender-based violence. ACC should continue to monitor for open opportunities.

Ontario

As with most public sector funding at the moment, the Ontario government is focused on funding projects that deal with COVID-19 and economic recovery. A possible alignment could be through the government's **Eastern Ontario Development Fund**; however more research would be needed to determine project scope and eligibility.

The **Ontario Trillium Fund** supports non-profits through the Community Building Fund as part of pandemic recovery, and has many funds open for organizations looking to deliver new programming, especially with youth.

The Community Investments Capital Grant stream is most suited for constructing ACC's holistic hub as it aims to improve community buildings and spaces. This stream supports projects that:

- Improve access to community spaces, programs, activities and services, and facilitate community members' full participation in the life of the community
- Improve and build community spaces
- Make programs better and more efficient
- Make better use of technology

Under the Capital Grant stream, projects can be for equipment, new construction, renovations or repairs to community spaces, purchase of land or building.

Successful applications meet the grant results laid out in the Fund's [Investment Strategy.](#)

ACC's holistic hub aligns with three priorities and related grant results:

→ **Connected People: Building inclusive and engaged communities together**

Priority Outcome 1: Diverse groups work better together to shape community
Grant Result: Diverse groups work together and improve community life

Priority Outcome 2: Reduced social isolation
Grant Result: People who are isolated have connections in their community

→ **Promising Young People: Supporting the positive development of children and youth**

Priority Outcome 1: More children and youth have emotional and social strengths
Grant Result: Children and youth who are facing barriers develop strong emotional and social skills

Priority Outcome 2: More youth are meaningfully engaged in the community
Grant Result: Youth are involved in creating solutions for challenges facing their community

→ **Prosperous People: Enhancing people's economic well-being**

Priority Outcome: Increased economic stability
Grant Result: People who are economically vulnerable are able to meet their basic needs

Capital grants provide funding over one year with a minimum grant of $5,000 and maximum of $150,000.

This year's application process has closed, however, updated deadlines for applying can be found [here](#).

For programming, the [System Innovations Stream](#) of the [Youth Opportunities Fund](#) "supports collaboratives that are strengthening the quality and responsiveness of systems, so they work better for youth facing systemic barriers. In this stream, collaboratives will deepen their understanding of how specific systems work and will implement strategies that lead to system-wide changes that go beyond any single organization or isolated program."

The System Innovations Stream invests in the work of collaboratives who are designing and/or implementing systems change strategies to address the most pressing issues facing young people today.

The six priority outcomes that drive this stream are:

→ Creating safe spaces for Indigenous and/or Black youth to build strong community and cultural connections

→ Addressing racism and its impacts on youth in urban, rural and/or Northern communities

→ Supporting Indigenous, Black, and/or newcomer youth to enter the labour market and transition to sustainable career pathways

→ Supporting youth who are not connected to education programs, employment programs, and training programs (i.e. NEET) to exit poverty and social assistance

→ Empowering girls and young women to lead, including women's economic empowerment initiatives

→ Providing mentorship opportunities for youth in and leaving care and/or youth involved in the justice system

The fund prioritizes projects that are collaborative and ultimately benefit youth, aged 12 to 25 years, who face barriers to full participation in community life, including:

- → Indigenous youth (i.e., First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit)
- → Black youth
- → Racialized youth
- → Newcomer youth
- → Francophone youth
- → Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (2SLGBTQ+) youth
- → Youth living with disabilities or special needs between the ages of 12 to 29
- → Youth living in rural, remote and/or Northern communities
- → Youth in conflict or at risk of being in conflict with the law
- → **Youth in care or leaving care**
- → Youth in low-income situations or from low-income families
- → Youth who are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- → Youth at-risk of dropping out or have dropped out

Up to $250,000 per year for two to six years is available.

City of Ottawa

The city has a Community Funding Program, with three funding streams available, however some of the streams are on hold due to COVID. The below streams are closed for applications, however, the city will be implementing a new Community Funding Framework in 2022 that the Adoption Council of Canada should keep its eyes on for opportunities.

The Community Funding invests in a sustainable social infrastructure of community non-profit social services that:

- → provides equitable access to programs and services;
- → responds to community needs;
- → demonstrates measurable outcomes and financial accountability;
- → collaborates to build community capacity and development; and
- → aligns with City of Ottawa strategic priorities

Priority groups for this funding include:

→ <u>Francophone</u>: Persons with French as their first official language spoken and persons who understand French but can no longer conduct a conversation in that language. This definition was adopted by the Ontario government in 2009.

→ <u>Indigenous</u>: Persons who identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

→ <u>LGBT2SQ</u>: Individuals who identify as belonging to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or Two-Spirit communities.

→ <u>People living in poverty</u>: Poverty is deprivation of the resources, choices, and power necessary for civic, cultural, economic, political and social participation in society.

→ <u>Racialized</u>: Persons who are ascribed a non-white racial, ethnic, and/or cultural identity because of the colour of their skin and who experience racism, discrimination and/or stigmatization as a result of this ascription.

→ <u>Women</u>: Persons who identify with the female gender.

→ <u>Youth</u>: Residents between 13 and 29 years of age.

Funding priorities include:

→ **Poverty Reduction**: Poverty is deprivation of the resources, choices, and power necessary for civic, cultural, economic, political and social participation in society. Poverty reduction involves both addressing the root causes and alleviating the effects of poverty in the community.

→ **Community Development**: Community development is an inclusive process whereby community members become engaged, educated and able to generate and implement collective solutions to shared concerns.

→ **Social Infrastructure**: Social infrastructure refers to facilities, assets, and services that help residents and communities meet their social needs, maximize their potential for development and enhance community resilience and wellbeing.

The ACC holistic hub is most suitable to the **Sustainability Funding** stream which is a renewable five-year operational and program grant to maintain a strong social infrastructure and sustainable community non-profit social sector that ensures equitable provision of services for residents facing the greatest barriers/challenges.

The **Community Fund stream**, a one-year and three-year project fund aims to build the capacity of the non-profit social services sector to respond to unmet, complex and/or emerging community needs and pressures.

And finally, the city's **Major Capital Funding Program** could also be in alignment.

The Major Capital Funding Program is an initiative to implement major capital improvements and additions to facilities related to Community Health Resource Centres (CHRCs) on a cost-sharing basis between the City and community partners. The project may relate to an asset that is owned by the City, or owned and operated by a community partner (CHRCs) who delivers service on behalf of the City or assists the City in the delivery of programs and services. The funding program applies to major capital projects for new facilities, renovations and expansions. It will only apply to fixed assets. It will not fund other components such as furniture, equipment, feasibility studies, fundraising studies, soil testing and architect fees.

Financial projections/needs

Based on the above data and research, Compass Rose believes ACC would be filling a much needed gap with its holistic hub to address barriers that young women and gender diverse persons face when aging out of the child welfare system. Based on the funding opportunities available both in the private and public sectors, we also believe a holistic hub is feasible.

There are several considerations that would make the holistic hub successful and sustainable that should be taken into account before moving forward. Below is a recommended budget projection and recommended strategic approach to building a holistic hub.

Framework of holistic hub

The Adoption Council of Canada already has numerous programs that would be central to the mission of the hub and incorporating them would of course help to anchor and strengthen the services provided by the hub. These include Journey Home, a program with a five-hour bus tour that educates stakeholders and youth in care about the in-care experience; the advocacy program Youth Speak Out; and Connect-A-Kid, a mentorship program for adoptees 6-12 years old that could be expanded as a service for youth in care.

While it is essential that the hub be designed by community members, stakeholder organizations and youth who will be using it, the following is a frame of what a holistic hub could look like in general based on feedback from interviews.

What can a holistic hub look like?

- Construct a new centre with 20 private rooms to house those facing homelessness.

- The centre could have communal areas for cooking/dining, educational workshops, relationship building and diverse/inclusive programming.

- There could be space for onsite, on demand health services (mental/physical).

- There could be an office space for youth who need to use equipment such as computers/internet and referral services for navigating the system (eg: employment, housing, education, justice system etc.).

- There could be outdoor space to gather or garden/grow food.

- It could be a drop-in centre for those who need services/connections but not necessarily housing.

- Interactive spaces should be designed to facilitate mentorship programs.

The above is the basis of the **$1.5 million minimum budget for annual operating costs**, however, we recommend aiming for a $2 million operating budget to better incorporate services. We don't, in normal circumstances, recommend 'short-changing' ACC's funding opportunities, however, in the current post-pandemic fiscal reality, it is a tactic that requires consideration. The lower amount could ensure commitments from a variety of funders and shows the programs can only scale up from there. It's better to scale up rather than negotiate down.

Compass Rose projects a $5 to $7 million startup budget to physically construct and furnish the hub in addition to hiring resources to do fundraising and stakeholder relations. These numbers are based on the development and operating costs of similar shelters. Please see Appendix 3 for more details.

Proposed strategic plan

The following proposed strategic plan is modest and takes a long-term view to getting funding to develop a new holistic hub as described above. Based on experience, the need and the political landscape, Compass Rose believes it is feasible to achieve the objectives in the timeline below.

Objective

Create a new holistic hub to address barriers that young women and gender diverse persons face when aging out of the child welfare system.

Considerations

→ While funding is available, it will be piecemeal and mostly project based. This will require extensive, dedicated work to secure the resources necessary to develop and sustain the hub.

→ This is a long-term project. The plan below is a **general overview** of a five-year plan with high level goals. A more comprehensive strategic plan will need to be developed with specific details on concrete tactics, timelines and budgets.

→ To succeed, consistency will be important. That means ensuring the appropriate leadership is in place to see this project through.

→ The nature of the project is community-based and as such will require significant outreach and support from like-minded stakeholders.

Approach

To reach the goals and targets listed below, Compass Rose recommends the following approach:

→ Laying the foundation to communicate the need for a holistic hub with a strategic communications and stakeholder relations plan

→ Conducting outreach and solidifying strong partnerships with private sector funders and other interested stakeholders

→ Actively engaging with governments at the municipal, provincial and federal levels

→ Strong community, inclusive consultation with youth

→ Scale up gradually

Timing

As we set timing goals it is important to consider the following timelines:

→ If there is an election this fall, the following election could be fall 2025. For political reasons, the federal government may want to participate in a ribbon cutting before the election.

→ The House of Commons Finance committee has issued a call for 2022 pre-budget submissions with a deadline of Aug. 6, 2021.

→ The Ontario election is scheduled for June 2022.

→ Most funding opportunities in the private and public sectors are closed for this year, so the next opportunities would be for 2022. The best case scenario is two years before any significant funding flows.

→ Consider doing a 'soft launch' to build momentum in building a holistic hub in year two. For example, building a website that is run from Adoption Council of Canada offices with referral services or working with a partner to have a drop in presence in anticipation of building the new centre with housing support. This could be used to further fundraising activities, to show need and demonstrate what can be done.

Goals

IMMEDIATE TO YEAR 1	YEARS 1 - 2	YEARS 3 - 4	YEARS 4 - 5
→ Begin applications for fundraising → Secure $100,000 to develop communications and stakeholder relations plan → Secure commitment from one stakeholder to partner with	→ Implement communications and stakeholder relations plan → Secure $5 million startup cost to build holistic hub through public and private sectors → Ongoing stakeholder outreach and partnership building; including potentially a 'soft launch' → Begin consultations with community on hub design/services → Secure and finalize location for hub	→ Begin construction of holistic hub → Secure $2 million for first year of operation → Finalize hub structure (eg: charity status, board of directors etc.)	→ Open hub to youth with 'ribbon cutting' ceremony including government and all funders

Ongoing

→ Continue raising funds for ongoing operational costs

Projected expenses

The following is an overview of projected expenses to develop a holistic hub as outlined above. A more detailed budget of revenues and expenses should be developed once project work begins.

Expense	Immediate to Year 1	Years 1-2	Years 3-4	Years 4-5
Hire part-time staff dedicated to overseeing and drafting grant applications	$40,000			
Hire firm to help develop communications and stakeholder engagement plan (including government) to set foundation	$100,000			
Full time grant writer and fundraising lead, stakeholder outreach		$85,000	$85,000	$85,000
Implement communications plan (including website and soft launch)		$150,000	$75,000	$30,000
Community consultations		$25,000	$25,000	
Construct hub			$5,000,000 - $7,000,000	
Furniture and equipment			$350,000	
All shelter services (staff, utilities, potential loan payments etc.)				$650,000
Full time hub director				$150,000
Full time referral services expert				$75,000
Other staff (eg: administrative, finance, communications, tech, legal, child care etc.)				$225,000
Onsite mental health therapist or social worker				$80,000
Onsite Registered Nurse				$80,000
Other activities (eg: workshops, presentations etc.)				$50,000
Contingency/reserve fund				$75,000
Total	**$140,000**	**$260,000**	**$5,535,000 - $7,535,000**	**$1,500,000***

*This is the minimum ongoing operational costs

Recommendations

The following are some key recommendations to ensure the holistic hub is feasible.

Fundraising strategy

A fundraising campaign strategy should be developed in order to reduce the 'piecemeal' aspects of developing the hub. This includes hiring an experienced grant and proposal writer and/or professional fundraiser. The Adoption Council of Canada should consider seeking a small amount of funding to hire someone part time initially to begin writing grant proposals. As funding comes in, the position could become full time.

Given the several funding opportunities from foundations and the philanthropic community, the strategy could include consideration around engaging a fundraising sponsor with an incentive to name the hub after the foundation or person. Grassroots campaigns could also be undertaken, for example starting a GoFundMe campaign.

Stakeholder outreach

As mentioned, stakeholder outreach will be pivotal, not only for funding but also for strength in numbers. It will be important to tap into the expertise and services that already exist, to avoid the perception of duplication.

Staffing, consistent leadership

Because of the piecemeal approach to stakeholder engagement, grant writing and funding opportunities, it will be extremely important to have consistency and dedicated leadership to oversee this project. This is a large undertaking and needs a coordinated effort. If there is no capacity internally, the Adoption Council of Canada should consider hiring a project manager with finance and fundraising experience to oversee the project.

Setting the foundation, awareness

While the research shows there is a need to close gaps in the child welfare system and address the barriers that young women and gender diverse persons face when leaving care, it needs to be communicated as an urgent and economically sound investment. The Adoption Council of Canada should develop a comprehensive strategic communications plan that includes an approach to first communicate the need for a holistic hub (setting the foundation) and second, to generate support for stakeholder outreach and funding opportunities.

Awareness of the need for and of the holistic hub will be essential for success. This communications plan should also detail key messages on why the Adoption Council of Canada is the best organization to lead this partnership. Some tactics in the plan should also include an advocacy lens. A more detailed plan is needed, however, some elements should include:

→ Developing a narrative and key messages
→ Media engagement, including writing and publishing an op-ed and/or earned media
→ Increased social media presence
→ Paid advertising campaigns
→ Making use of ambassadors and existing networks

Active advocacy for funding at the municipal, provincial and federal levels

Having a good story and good funding application is often not enough for governments to notice the need for important public policy solutions such as the holistic hub. Consistent advocacy and engagement with governments is essential to raising awareness and urgency. An active government relations campaign is recommended in order to push the needle forward.

A comprehensive and strategic government relations strategy should be developed and should include tactics such as:

→ Creating an infokit, backgrounders and sharing widely with decision makers and media
→ Participating in the pre-budget process and crafting a compelling submission to governments at all levels to create a new program or to help fund a holistic hub through existing programs

→ Holding lobby days and meetings with government decision makers to raise awareness and develop champions

→ Creating an "adoption caucus" or "youth caucus" in federal and provincial parliaments to raise awareness of some of the issues and barriers that young women and gender diverse persons face when aging out of the system

→ Leveraging existing relationships to build momentum and help advocate

→ Engaging in upcoming elections

→ Holding public policy roundtables or events with youth who have lived experience

We recommend engaging a firm to assist with registerable advocacy efforts with the expertise to navigate all levels of government.

Please see Appendix 4 for a short outreach list.

Collect baseline data

As noted, ACC is working with CAMH on some data, however, collecting baseline data specifically for the demographic ACC wants to support through the hub is imperative to make an economic analysis and argument for this service. The findings will also help in any strategic communications. This data should be tracked over the life of the hub as well in order to show progress, return on investment and best practices for growing the holistic hub in other cities.

CONCLUSION

Young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system face significant barriers to thriving and need continued support in a variety of ways long after they leave care. The research, data and interviews with stakeholders and youth with lived experience show there is a clear need for a holistic approach to addressing these barriers. Following a thorough funding scan of private sector and government opportunities, Compass Rose believes that building a holistic hub with housing and wraparound services for these young people is not only necessary, but feasible.

Details of recommended stakeholder partners

Local Ottawa organizations

Children's Aid Society of Ottawa and Parkdale Food Centre

While all stakeholder organizations interviewed for this study would also be good partners because of alignment on issues, both Children's Aid Society of Ottawa and the Parkdale Food Centre specifically said they were interested in working with the Adoption Council of Canada further. Outreach should continue.

Additionally, the CAS Ottawa mentioned they are also working on a similar program to the hub for all youth in their care, including more bridging of programs that help youth transition into adulthood.

The Parkdale Food Centre's vision and mission also align with the ACC's vision for a holistic hub:

> Vision: At the Parkdale Food Centre, we believe in an Ottawa where everyone has the means and opportunity to live a healthy, connected, and fulfilling life.

> Mission: To build healthier, more connected neighbours and neighbourhoods through good food, innovative community partnerships, and by challenging inequalities in order to create lasting impacts.

Ottawa Community Housing

According to its website, the Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) is a "social housing provider [that] works daily to ensure we are 'more than a landlord' by supporting residents to achieve successful tenancies and to build healthy and safe communities. To maximize the benefit from specialized programs and services available in the broader community, OCH works with many different agencies and groups to help our tenants meet their individual needs and make their communities healthier places to live. These partnerships, which range from on-site services (e.g. Community Houses, Aging in Place) to referral agreements to the lease of entire OCH buildings,

have led to numerous programs and services aimed at meeting the diverse and changing needs of OCH tenants and communities."

OCH is also the largest social housing provider in the city and could possibly partner with ACC on locating sites for the hub that would be appropriate for housing as well.

Cornerstone Housing for Women

Several stakeholders referenced Cornerstone Housing for Women as another stakeholder to reach out to when considering how to develop a holistic hub. Cornerstone provides emergency shelter and affordable housing for women of all ages and from diverse backgrounds, but the organization also works to "help them build a meaningful life that fits their individual needs. For some women, that means assistance going to school, finding work, or volunteering, once their basic needs are met. For others, it's providing the support to live as independently as possible at one of our residences."

Additionally, according to its 2020 Annual Report, there is an Indigenous Cultural Program. Given the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system, Cornerstone would be a good stakeholder to learn from, both from a housing and cultural perspective.

"Indigenous peoples have experienced substantial historical traumas that still impact their communities to this day. In response, [Cornerstone at] Princeton has dedicated 10 per cent of apartments to Indigenous peoples as a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. At this time, Princeton's population is 40 per cent Indigenous. However, housing is only one component of servicing Indigenous Peoples," the report says. "By focusing on education and connection, relationships are built between all residents as they participate in cultural crafting and activities. Indigenous residents are able to explore pieces of themselves and their culture in a safe space, and all other residents can learn alongside them. Activities include beading, painting, storytelling, cooking, and more. Additionally, the partnership between Cornerstone and Minwaashin Lodge brings more supports for Indigenous residents, such as food resources and counseling. The Indigenous Cultural Program, for many women, is the first step to accessing more services that fit their needs."

Youth Services Bureau

The Youth Services Bureau in Ottawa provides mental health, community and housing, employment and youth justice services. It also owns and operates supportive housing units that can accommodate 39 formerly homeless youth with a youth services hub on the ground floor.

The Youth Services Bureau Foundation raised $1.9 million last year, with its signature event, YSB's SleepOUT for Youth, raising $190,000 for youth shelters and housing programs. Support came from Home Depot Canada Foundation, The BRICK and Britton Smith Foundation demonstrated their core values through investments that helped us further serve homeless youth.

YSB could be approached for input in starting a hub, or partnering with them to provide distinct services specifically for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system. This would be an example of 'not duplicating services' but rather 'expanding.' ACC could do outreach to assess interest in working together.

YMCA-YWCA of the National Capital Region

The YMCA-YWCA has a second stage housing program for youth as well as a supportive housing program for women.

According to its website, "The Second Stage Housing Program for Youth is a supportive transitional housing program for youth aged 16-24 who are no longer able to live at home and need some assistance as they move towards independence. The program provides safe, supportive housing and life-skills programs for youth currently involved in a full time combination of school, training, treatment or employment."

Additionally, the TRY Supportive Housing Program for Women provides 43 private rooms and wraparound services to support women who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Clients will have access to crisis counselling, community resource information and support in order to achieve their long term goals to move on to permanent housing.

The Adoption Council of Canada could reach out to YMCA-YWCA to partner with for services or to learn more about its experiences in developing these programs.

Minwaashin Lodge

Minwaashin Lodge is an Indigenous Women's Support Centre that provides a range of programs and services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and children (regardless of status) who are survivors of domestic and other forms of violence, and who may also be suffering the effects of the residential school system.

Minwaashin Lodge has a Transitional Support and Housing Program designed to help with supports such as:

- safety planning
- finding and maintaining housing
- advocating for your rights
- accessing basic financial assistance
- court support
- accompaniment to appointments
- connecting women and their children to community support services

Minwaashin Lodge also offers a youth program called Spirit Movers and Fire Keepers. This program provides youth with the awareness, knowledge, information and teachings about Indigenous culture, and promotes and initiates the development of healthy friendships and relationships with other youth. The program supports and provides at-risk Indigenous youth with ties to their culture through sacred teachings and by promoting holistic healing. This includes:

Promoting healthy peer relationships between youth through positive role-modeling, teachings and social activities;

Promoting links and establishing connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, agencies and organizations that provide service to youth in the Ottawa area; and

Encouraging and facilitating the healing of relationships between youth and their families of origin and extended families.

Kind

Kind is a community space for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bi, pan, trans, gender-diverse, queer, questioning, ace, intersex, etc. (LGBT2SQ) people of all ages. It is a drop in centre with a variety of programming and resources, including peer groups and mental health support. It also works to build partnerships and participates on or leads local, provincial, or federal networks on issues related to LGBT2SQ identities and experiences. It is the co-chair of the Rainbow Service Providers Network and Unsafe At Home Ottawa.

National organizations

Children's Aid Foundation

As ACC knows, the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada is a charity "dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth involved with the child welfare system." It recently launched a successful

$60 million national campaign for child welfare, Stand Up for Kids and has identified priorities around ensuring that "every young person involved with the child welfare system in every part of Canada has every opportunity to thrive."

ACC should consider partnering with the Children's Aid Foundation, not only as a funder, but possibly as a founding partner as the foundation is also committed to supporting youth transitioning out of care.

Mental Health Commission of Canada

Because of the trauma-informed services and the mental health aspects of aging out of the child welfare system without a permanent home or support, the Mental Health Commission of Canada would be a good pan-Canadian organization with the resources and the reputation to partner with.

MHCC's programs and advocacy centre around children and youth, diversity, Indigenous, substance abuse, the justice system and stigma and discrimination among others and align with ACC's vision for a holisitic hub.

Its recently released 10-year strategic plan highlights the need to "uplift our partners" and "challenge the status quo." Specifically:

- As a sector we rise when we work together. In a field as diverse and complex as mental health, we need to leverage the strength of grassroots change makers, high level policy makers, and corporate thought leaders to level the playing field in pursuit of mental health parity.
- To effect meaningful change, we cannot be afraid to take calculated risks, welcome fresh ideas, and be willing to fail forward. A prescription for improved mental health care in this country requires the courage to tear down silos, work collaboratively, and challenge assumptions.

The plan's strategic objectives include:

- Identify what works to erase the duplication of effort and multiply the impact of innovation
- Drive system transformation through the development of meaningful mental health measures.
- Achieve mental and physical health equity by uplifting the strong stakeholder community and amplifying the voices of lived and living experience.

- Improve resiliency and mental health literacy to build greater informal support networks to augment strained clinical services.

The commission also had a deep understanding of housing first principles, following a $110 million project to undertake research on mental health and homelessness. The [At Home/Chez Soi](#) project "demonstrated and evaluated the effectiveness of the '[housing first](#)' approach, where people are provided with a place to live and then receive recovery-oriented services and supports that best meet their individual needs."

It is worth reaching out to the MHCC to see how you could work with them organizationally or financially to ensure the holistic hub is successful.

Youth in Care Canada

As ACC knows, [Youth in Care Canada](#) "provides training and support to individuals wanting to establish and develop local youth in care networks.To date, the organization has assisted in the development of over 70 provincial and community-level youth in care networks in Canada. Youth in Care Canada administers the Ken Dryden Scholarship which assists youth who are currently or formerly in the care of the Canadian child welfare system to complete an undergraduate university degree.The organization also provides social service programming in the areas of networking, advocacy, and sensitivity training."

Youth in Care Canada could be consulted on how to establish the hub as well as provide some funding or services related to education.

Youth Wellness Lab

The [Youth Wellness Lab](#) (YWL) is a "research collaborative that brings together academic researchers, community-based partners, and youth advisors with a shared goal of improving services and outcomes across multiple intersecting domains by, with, and for youth."

Based in Toronto, YWL "aspires to create knowledge that speaks to the intersectional identities of young people ages 29 and younger and engages youth as authentic partners and leaders in designing, developing, and translating research that impacts service delivery to improve youth outcomes."

YWL connects youth with service providers, advocates, and other community stakeholders who are passionate about partnering on youth-led, youth-centred, and youth-focused research. The

Adoption Council of Canada could partner with YWL to focus on the necessary data collection and analysis to ensure hub outcomes are measurable.

ACCESS Open Minds

ACCESS Open Minds is a youth mental wellness hub that operates in various cities across Canada, with several in Indigenous communities. The hubs are locally driven by youth and its model of care has shown significant benefits. Its data shows that for every dollar invested in ACCESS Open Minds, there are about $10 in service costs avoided, including a decrease in hospitalizations, emergency room visits, outpatient clinic visits, specialist visits, GP visits, public residential admissions and prescription drug dispenses from community pharmacies.

Its approach is useful for ACC's holistic hub:

> Each ACCESS Open Minds site looks a little different; we believe that each youth and community is unique and that our approach works because it is built from the ground up – starting with community assets and strengths to create sustainable, effective services.

> What is the same across our sites is how the impact of the services are evaluated and measured at individual, service and population levels. This standard approach to evaluation means that youth receive high quality, evidence-based care and allows services to use data to respond to the needs of their clients. It also means that decision makers and funders are able to understand the real impacts using apples to apples comparisons.

> Most importantly, it means that we can understand how youth are doing, and how services are operating across the country. For example, by using the same definition of wait times, we are able to track and understand what wait times look like in urban Alberta compared to rural Cape Breton. We are also able to understand how youth are doing across the country, and what the impact accessing services has had on their well being and individual outcomes.

As a research project, it also created "the first pan-Canadian online data repository that feeds information back to clinicians and service providers in real-time and allows for national level insights."

The Adoption Council of Canada could consider partnering with ACCESS Open Minds to provide the mental health service model within the holistic hub.

Other

Compass Rose understands that ACC is currently working with the [Centre for Addictions and Mental Health](#) on this project. CAMH would be a natural partner to continue working with in the development of a holistic hub. Additionally, a stakeholder referred ACC to [NorWest Co-op Community Health](#) and [Futures Forward](#), saying they would have good feedback because of their experience in developing similar projects.

NorWest is a healthcare co-operative which delivers community-based services and programs in primary health care, community development, counselling and support services, early learning and childcare. It provides services in the areas of family violence, immigrant and refugee matters, substance abuse during pregnancy, nursing foot care and Indigenous issues.

Futures Forward is a "collaborative partnership of three community agencies coming together to provide wrap-around transition services to youth (15 to 29) in or from care in Manitoba."

It would be helpful to ACC to reach out and learn from NorWest and Futures Forward's experiences.

Gender diverse and LGBT2SQ organizations must also be consulted. [Supporting Our Youth](#) (SOY), based in Toronto, is an innovative community development program of Sherbourne Health. SOY is a set of health promotion services and programming centered on supporting the health and well-being goals established by LGBT2SQ youth and young adults, many of whom are homeless, racialized and newcomers to Canada.

They also support [youth in transition from care](#) up to 24 years old, including housing.

According its website, SOY provides:

- 20 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units of housing, available to LGBT2SQ youth 27 years old and under to apply for when units become available. (The length of the program is up to three years, or up until someone's 30th birthday—whichever comes first.)
- Support so that LGBT2SQ youth can work on their other self-identified life goals, such as: navigating immigration and settlement; finding income; pursuing education; looking for work; exploring career goals; exploring gender and sexuality; navigating familial relationships; defining their health and wellness; and growing as people.

Details of non-government funding opportunities

The Home Depot Foundation of Canada

The Home Depot Canada Foundation is committed to supporting initiatives that prevent and end youth homelessness in Canada. The foundation supports youth at-risk or facing homelessness by "helping them realize their full potential and build a brighter future."

In 2020 the foundation granted $2.9 million to organizations working to address youth homelessness. It has supported the Youth Services Bureau and YMCA/YWCA in Ottawa.

The foundation has two programs, both of which align with ACC's holistic hub.

The Community Impact Grant Program is closed but will reopen on Aug. 3, 2021

> As part of our commitment to continue supporting our partners through COVID-19 in their missions to prevent and end youth homelessness, The Home Depot Canada Foundation has established a Community Impact Grant Program. This funding will provide support to Canadian registered charities that continue to offer services to youth across Canada during these challenging times. The Community Impact Grant Program provides grants for affordable housing, community-based improvement projects and/or emergency response because of COVID-19 that benefit Canadians in need. Preference will be given to repair, renovation and/or improvement projects to housing and/or other support facilities such as employment services for homeless youth.

The Orange Door Project Grants is closed and will reopen in 2022.

> The Orange Door Project Grant program will consider applications from Canadian registered charities who are dedicated to preventing and ending youth homelessness in Canada through **renovation, prevention, and employment/life skills programs**. The Orange Door Project Grant provides grants of up to $50,000.

Renovations: repairs, refurbishments and/or modifications to a housing accommodation or other support facility that benefits homeless youth

Prevention: programs that reduce the likelihood that youth will experience homelessness. Alternatively, programs that support youth who have been homeless that allow them to stabilize their housing, enhance integration and social inclusion and reduce their risk of recurring homelessness. The program to which you are applying for funding must address one of the following:

- Early intervention support to help young people (and their families) who are at risk of homelessness
- Support to ensure young people transitioning from child protection services, foster care and/or group homes corrections or healthcare avoid homelessness
- Sustainable support for young people exiting homelessness that focuses on health, well-being, and social inclusion

Employment/Life Skills: Programs that focus on critical supportive services with an emphasis on job readiness and employment programs

Rideau Hall Foundation

The Adoption Council of Canada has had past governors general as Adoption Ambassadors including former Governor General David Johnston who is also on the Rideau Foundation Board. The foundation has recently launched its Catapult Canada Access Innovation Fund (CCAIF). The fund received $6.3 million from the federal government for "a three-year project that will fund community-based organizations to improve educational outcomes for youth through innovative approaches. Funded projects will focus on how young people learn, how they engage at school and the tools they use to learn."

According to its website, "The Catapult Access Innovation Fund is designed to support youth-serving organizations in Canada to design, build, scale up and evaluate the impact of initiatives to better support Canadian youth, especially youth underserved by the education system and disengaged from education and/or career pathways."

Given education and career pathways are one of the barriers for young women and gender diverse persons aging out of the child welfare system, this fund could have great alignment.

The purpose of the fund is to invest directly into the non-profit, community and grassroots groups that are eliminating barriers and connecting Canadian youth to learning opportunities. Its objectives are:

- Support community organizations to scale-up current practices to increase reach and effectiveness;
- Support community organizations committed to improving the educational and career pathways of opportunity youth (youth between 16 and 24 who are disconnected from education and work);
- Support community organizations interested in learning more about what works (and what doesn't work) in supporting opportunity youth;
- Support organizations to increase capacity and leadership infrastructure;
- Support creative and effective practices for building organizational long-term sustainability;
- Support initiatives that foster greater community engagement and partnership across the sector;
- Distribute and disseminate promising practices across Canadian communities; and
- Foster a community that supports promising practices and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

There are two funding streams, both of which are closed for this year; however, there will be subsequent calls for proposals.

ACC's holistic hub would fit into Funding Stream Two: Innovations in supporting NEET youth (youth who are Not in Education, Employment or Training) which offers grants to grassroots initiatives and non-profit organizations supporting youth who are underserved, disengaged or have dropped out of the education system.

The funding stream's objectives are:

- Promote innovative and promising ideas in supporting NEET youth;
- Support organizations working on creative, practical and community-based initiatives to re-engage youth in their educational and career pathways;
- Support initiatives working on or advocating for early intervention;
- Promote equitable and accountable institutions and systems;
- Support initiatives that are informed by youth, families and communities; and,

- Develop a community of practice to support peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

For applications to the NEET Stream, requests must clearly describe their innovative idea for better supporting NEET youth, and must be to pilot an innovation with the objective of re-engaging youth in their educational or career pathways.

Grants are available for a minimum of $25,000 for a one-year project, and a maximum of up to $300,000 for a three-year project.

Laidlaw Foundation

The Laidlaw Foundation supports young people impacted by the justice, education, and child-welfare systems to become healthy and engaged by investing in innovative ideas, convening interested parties, advocating for systems change, and sharing learning across the sector.

In addition to promoting equitable and accountable institutions and systems and advocating for evidence-based policy, the foundation's five-year plan includes a priority to "elevate the priorities of youth with lived experiences in the criminal justice, education, and child welfare systems to achieve their full potential by putting their lived experience, aspirations, and voices to the forefront of our grant-making and leadership activities."

The foundation has a funding stream that closely aligns with ACC. The Youth Action Fund is a funding opportunity to tackle barriers facing young people in the justice, education and child welfare systems. It offers grants to grassroots initiatives working with youth who are underserved by the education system and overrepresented in the justice and child welfare systems. This funding stream provides operating and project grants to organizations and initiatives working in Ontario.

Priority funding areas under this stream include:

- Initiatives supporting youth that have lived experience with at least one or more of these systems: justice, child welfare and education
- Initiatives that are Black youth-led and/or Indigenous youth-led
- Initiatives that take on a youth-centred approach
- Initiatives that engage families and communities and/or promote healthy relationships with caring adults
- Projects working to combat systemic racism and discrimination presented across all three systems

- Collaboratives that demonstrate trusting partnerships
- Initiatives that connect services and advocacy across all three systems
- Projects that promote or develop better practices for supporting youth disadvantaged by the justice, education and child welfare

Funding up to $100,000 per year for up to three years is available.

The current round of applications is closed. ACC should monitor for when the next round opens.

Molson Foundation

The [Molson Foundation](#) supports projects and institutions that advance the physical, mental and social well-being of all Canadians. There is little information available on their website, however, there seems to be good alignment with the foundation's objectives of bringing "together community organizations and institutions from across Canada to shape innovation and create lasting change for the benefit of society" and ACC's holistic hub.

Their focus areas under health are:

- Recreation programs that promote a healthy lifestyle
- Youth programs that encourage physical activity
- Community services
- Healthcare and rehabilitation

This would be the best stream to apply for funding and could focus on community services as it relates to mental health. The foundation does not grant funds for operational costs "unless directly linked to a project that meets our other granting priorities."

There are no details under the 'education' category, however, it could also be aligned with the holistic hub.

ACC has previously applied for project funding from the Foundation. Although the application was not successful, the foundation encouraged ACC to reapply. In this way, ACC already has contacts and an understanding of the application process, making inroads easier.

Danbe Foundation

The Adoption Council of Canada has received some funding from the Danbe Foundation and therefore is familiar with the application process. There is little information available online about the foundation, focus areas or criteria for funding, however, a look at the foundation's Canada Revenue Agency information shows $2.4 million was given to 50 organizations last year on a wide range of issues.

The majority of the donations were small ($5,000 to $20,000). The larger donations included to the:

- Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation $210,000
- Queensway Carleton Hospital Foundation $229,000
- Royal Ottawa $103,000
- United Way Ottawa $125,000
- University of Ottawa Heart Institute $50,000

Shirley Greenberg is vice-president of the foundation and is very well known in Ottawa for her support of women's issues. She helped found the Ottawa Women's Centre, from which subsequently developed the Rape Crisis Centre, the Women's Career Counselling Centre and Interval House, a refuge for abused women. She also helped establish the Shirley E. Greenberg Centre for Women's Health at the Riverside campus of the Ottawa Hospital.

Given the hub's focus on young women and gender diverse persons, there could be good alignment with the Danbe Foundation.

This year's funding has gone towards COVID-19 initiatives, but the 2022 round of funding is a good opportunity to apply.

TD Bank

The TD Bank has a fund to give back to communities it serves. The TD Ready Commitment aims "to help create the conditions so everyone has the chance to succeed in a changing world." To do this, TD is investing $1 billion by 2030 towards community giving in four areas that support change, nurture progress and contribute to making the world a better, more inclusive place. These areas are:

- Financial Security: To help people feel more confident about their financial future

- Vibrant Planet: To help improve the environment so people and economies can thrive
- Connected Communities: To help people participate and be included in their community
- Better Health: To create more equitable health outcomes for all

Within the Financial Security stream, TD focuses on affordable housing among other priorities. Its goal is to help people transition to affordable housing and independent living as well as ensuring more affordable housing options are available for those in vulnerable living situations.

TD outlines that the types of programs it will support are "Ones that help those in vulnerable housing situations transition to stable housing and independent living" as well as "those that help increase the affordable housing supply by building and/or refurbishing affordable housing units."

Successful recipients of funding under this stream "provide support services and resources to help people live independently in the long-term."

TD says it believes "when people are included and empowered to participate in their community, good things happen. That's why [it's] committed to helping increase access to the opportunities people need to participate and feel a sense of belonging in their community." Within the Connected Communities stream, there is a focus on local needs and "initiatives that will help groups vulnerable to social isolation build connections in their community."

The types of programs funded within this stream are:

- Those that work directly with socially isolated groups and demographics
- Ones that aim to build meaningful relationships between participants and community members
- Those that help build the capacity of participants to maintain community connections after the initiative ends

There is a preference for programs that "can demonstrate that new and strengthened relationships are formed with community members" and that "can demonstrate positive change in one's sense of belonging to their local community."

The Better Health funding stream also seems to align with ACC's holistic hub. One of its goals is to improve access to health education, screening and early interventions that improve health status as well as improve adolescent (10-18) health and wellbeing. Funded programs would include those that:

- Focus on specific efforts, such as early detection and intervention, aimed at reducing the development and severity of chronic diseases and other illnesses.
- Aim to improve on existing healthcare practices, and services to help reach underserved populations.
- Aim to create safe and supportive environments for adolescents during recovery from illness.
- Support adolescents during transition from pediatric to adult care.
- Aim to address health issues of top concern to adolescents.

There is a preference for programs that demonstrate benefit for underserved populations; demonstrate ability to find innovative solutions to adolescent health concerns and provide timely interventions to improve long term healthcare outcomes for adolescents.

The grants seem to be large amounts, as the website notes TD has invested more than $8.2 million to support affordable housing in North America in 2018, and more than $19 million in grants to support diversity and inclusion programs. It recently donated to Youth Impact Jeunesse, therapeutic housing for youth in New Brunswick which supports youth with emotional challenges and helps them finish school, find work and achieve stability. It also previously donated $500,000 to establish the TD Women's and Children's Health Centre in Mississauga.

There is no information available online regarding deadlines to apply, however, ACC can start an application here.

Coca-Cola Foundation

The Coca-Cola Foundation donated more than $186 million to community organizations in 2020 around the world. As a company, Coca-Cola is committed to giving back at least one per cent of the prior year's operating income annually. While the majority of the donations have been in the U.S., Canadian non-profits also benefited from the Coca-Cola Foundation.

The following is an overview of the Canadian organizations the foundation granted funds to last year to show the Adoption Council of Canada the range of successful applications.

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada received $750,000 for COVID-19 Relief to provide continued support to the most vulnerable families by providing food for families and Club

employees who are struggling due to the health crisis. It also received another $150,000 for its Keystone 2020 project to support a youth development program for youth ages 13-18.

- Canadian 4-H Council received $30,000 for youth development.
- Ducks Unlimited received $185,000 to help restore wetlands in Ontario.
- Empowering Indigenous Youth in Governance and Leadership received $50,000 to help train Indigenous youth ages 15-29 to acquire and maintain employment.
- Food Banks Canada received $750,000 to address COVID-19 relief.
- Special Olympics Canada received $100,000.
- George Brown College Foundation received $50,000 to provide 20 scholarships to students who are the first in their families to attend college.
- The Remix Project received $50,000 to help deliver arts training programs for youth 16-24 from marginalized and underserved communities in the Greater Toronto Area.
- Trent University received $20,000 for a remote learning initiative.

The foundation has outlined what it will not fund, however there are no further details on criteria, funding amounts or process, however, ACC can create an account to possibly see more information here.

Royal Bank of Canada Future Launch

RBC supports several Canadian initiatives to support youth in Canada. RBC's own youth support program is called Future Launch and its focus is on preparing young people to succeed in the new economy. This initiative focuses on four opportunities to help young people succeed:

- Get work experience
- Grow their network
- Gain new skills
- Enhance their mental well-being

RBC has committed 10 years of hard work and partnerships and $500 million in investments to Future Launch, making it RBC's largest-ever commitment to a social issue. Applications for grants under the Future Launch initiative can be found here.

RBC's funding and donation eligibility guidelines state their willingness to donate to charities and charitable organizations that provide direct community benefits and programs with measurable

social outcomes. They also accept applications for sponsorship from organizations in the field of arts and culture.

RBC also provides funding through their [Youth Mental Well-Being Project](). This project funds programs that address youth and families' immediate need to access mental health services. The application for this fund can be found [here]().

TELUS Friendly Future Foundation

TELUS provides youth supports through its [Friendly Future Foundation](). The foundation is focused on building brighter futures for young people by enhancing public health initiatives through health and technology programs. The foundation helps over 2 million at-risk Canadian youth, contributes over $8 million to local charities and supports over 500 charitable grants in Canada every year.

Registered Canadian charities are invited to apply single-year funding of up to $200,000 for health and technology initiatives for at-risk youth. To qualify for funding, organizations must meet the following criteria:

- Organizations must have charitable status (registered by the Canada Revenue Agency) and be directly involved in the delivery of the program;
- Eligible programs must be national, territorial or provincial in scope, or be part of a coalition of organizations that will jointly undertake activities;
- Programs should offer innovative approaches to addressing the needs of those being served, preferably through the use of technology;
- Due to the continued public health crisis, the TELUS Friendly Future Foundation will prioritize applications from charities providing COVID-19 support to vulnerable populations through public health care, social services and mental health and well-being programs.

[Applications]() are reviewed three times a year. The next deadline is Sept. 1, 2021.

TELUS recently [donated $200,000]() to the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada as part of its pandemic-related support to provide grants for many of these now unemployed youth, helping ensure that they can provide for themselves when food insecurity is at an all-time high.

ScotiaRISE

Scotiabank has committed $500 million over 10 years in community investment by 2030 through its ScotiaRISE community program.

According to its website, Scotiabank believes "it's important that everyone has the ability to do more than simply recover from times of uncertainty, but instead rise from them stronger than before. Building economic resilience is about helping individuals, households, communities and economies to thrive under a range of circumstances. … By working together to remove barriers to advancement and increase access to opportunities, we can create a more inclusive and resilient world for everyone. And for every future."

Its focus areas that align with ACC's holistic hub are "increasing high school graduation and post-secondary participation," and "removing barriers to career advancement for disadvantaged groups."

The goal for these focus areas is to build economic resilience and more specifically, to help "disadvantaged youth to increase their employment prospects, life opportunities and full participation in the economy" and "to enable their full inclusion and financial success."

Scotiabank says it will spend at least half of its committed funding to invest in these areas.

More information can be found here.

SC Johnson Grants

SC Johnson has a corporate philanthropy branch and is committed to giving back to the communities in which it operates. There are five focus areas including community and economic development, social services, health and well-being, education and sustainability and environmental programs. The company also donates products.

The community and economic development and social services streams are best suited for the ACC's holistic hub as it focuses on "programs that improve the quality of life in the areas of economic and community infrastructure, capacity building, economic development, safe neighbourhoods, cultural experiences and job training."

The social services stream focuses on "programs that provide supportive services for low-income/at-risk individuals or families to help them on the road to self-sufficiency, such as

services for families, disabled or elderly citizens, domestic disaster prevention, temporary shelter and support for those who are disadvantaged or living in poverty."

Applications are on a rolling basis and take 90 to 120 days to review. The application form can be found here.

Canadian Women's Foundation

The Canadian Women's Foundation funds programs focused on the following issues:

- Out of Violence: For all women and girls to live free of violence.
- Out of Poverty: For women living on low incomes to have opportunities to move themselves out of poverty
- Empower Girls: For all girls to believe in themselves and realize they matter.
- Inclusive Leadership: For all women and girls to realize their potential for leadership.

There is one open grant at the moment. The Community Needs Grants is open until Aug. 6 and funds up to $20,000 "to cover program costs and/or operational expenses, such as covering staff salaries or relief staff, adapting services for an online environment, piloting a new approach, etc."

Applicants' programs must align with one of the four priorities above. There is no other information on any other open funding streams. ACC should monitor for other grants and can sign up to do so here.

Others

The following foundations also appear to align with the goals of ACC's holistic hub, however, we are unable to find further information. ACC should contact these foundations individually, either through existing contacts or through the information provided on third-party websites if there is interest in furthering the discussion.

Houssian Foundation

Created by the Houssian family in 2005, the Houssian Foundation has supported institutions and projects both in Canada and worldwide, including hospitals, schools, refugee resettlement, and local organizations in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. In its first 15 years, the foundation gave to capital campaigns, infrastructure projects, and dedicated support to local organizations and continues to invest in local community-based organizations.

Barrett Family Foundation

The Barrett Family Foundation has focused on educational initiatives, including funding the Rideau Hall Foundation's Catapult Canada Access Innovation Fund mentioned above. There is no direct contact information available to the public, however, contact information of the company founded by the Barrett family can be found [here](#).

Amazon Housing Equity Fund

Amazon has a housing equity fund to build affordable housing in the United States, however, we were unable to find Canadian information for this specific fund. The company does have a presence in Canada, however, and has made investments in community organizations especially through the lens of [COVID relief](#).

United Way of Eastern Ontario

United Way of Eastern Ontario helps fund [programs to end youth homelessness](#). There is an annual call for proposals for a variety of [programs](#) including for culturally, age-appropriate programs that provide housing and wrap-around services to at-risk youth, however, information for 2021 or 2022 is not available. ACC should monitor for if or when the call opens.

Financial comparisons to other shelters, hubs

The Adoption Council of Canada as well as stakeholders in interviews expressed a preference to have a physical hub with housing as an option. Based on the below, Compass Rose recommended developing a 20-room option as a relatively smaller project that could potentially grow with time.

Both Interval House and Youth Services Bureau, noted below, operate a 30-bed and 39-bed (respectively) emergency and transitional shelter for women.

Federal government investment

The government of Canada is investing $20 million to construct five new shelters for Inuit women and children, with a $10.2 million a year operating budget, making the construction costs $4 million and annual operating costs $2,040,000 per shelter.

Women's shelter

In comparison, Interval House of Ottawa, a women's shelter that provides 30 beds for women and their dependents fleeing violence, has an operating budget of $1.2 million. Its 2019-2020 annual report notes that the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS) provided $1,023,953 in operating funds for 20 of those beds and private donations and grants provided $192,403 to fund the additional 10 beds.

The breakdown of expenses were as follows:

- 43 per cent to shelter services
- 8 per cent transition and housing support services
- 9 per cent administration
- 2 per cent capacity building
- 1 per cent public awareness
- 37 per cent counselling and support services

Youth services hub with shelter and wraparound services

In another example, the Youth Services Bureau's [annual report](#) shows an operating budget of more than $30 million in 2019-2020.

YSB Revenues

- Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services $10,318,631
- Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development $6,260,278
- Miscellaneous $2,975,925
- Ministry of Health $6,714,886
- City of Ottawa $3,764,131
- United Way East Ontario $ 168,916
- Total: $30,202,767

Expenses are broken down as follows:

- Salaries and Benefits $19,167,668
- Client Services $3,650,741
- Professional Services $1,232,648
- Building Occupancy $2,555,843
- Supplies $739,842
- Administration $2,669,134
- Travel and Communications $351,096
- Total: $30,366,972

Preliminary target list for government outreach

The following is a preliminary target list for outreach to key government decision makers at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. A more comprehensive target list should be developed in the context of a government relations plan.

Name/Title	Contact Information	Relevance
City of Ottawa		
Jim Watson Mayor	613-580-2496 Jim.Watson@Ottawa.ca	
James Armbruster City of Ottawa	James.Armbruster@ottawa.ca	Special Assistant to Mayor Watson, Community Relations at City of Ottawa
Catherine McKenney Ottawa City Councillor—Somerset Ward	613-580-2484 catherine.mckenney@ottawa.ca	Ottawa City councillor who moved a motion to declare a housing and homeless emergency in the national capital
Rawlson King Councillor—Ward 13 Rideau-Rockcliffe	613-580-2483 rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca	Former Board Member at the Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre Rawlson was also a volunteer Board Member at the Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre from 2011 to 2019, where he served as Treasurer from 2015 to 2019. The $1.8 million Centre is a provider of youth counselling and crisis intervention services, emergency food programs, home support services, along with community development and health promotion in the ward.
Legislative Assembly of Ontario		

Jane McKenna PCP MPP—Simcoe North	416-325-4910 jane.mckenna@pc.ola.org	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues As a new associate minister, we recommend writing a congratulations letter to her and introduce her to the Adoption Council of Canada and possibly the idea of a holistic hub.
Jeremy Roberts Progressive Conservative MPP Ottawa West—Nepean	613-721-8075 jeremy.roberts@pc.ola.org	Vice-Chair, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs Member, Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services (Community and Social Services) Adoption Council of Canada riding MPP
Jill Andrews NDP MPP Toronto—St. Paul's	416-325-0071 JAndrew-QP@ndp.on.ca	Critic for Women's Issues
Theresa Armstrong NDP MPP London—Fanshawe	416-325-1872 tarmstrong-qp@ndp.on.ca	Critic for Children and Youth Services
Monique Taylor NDP MPP—Hamilton Mountain	416-325-1796 mtaylor-qp@ndp.on.ca	Critic for Mental Health and Addictions
Lucille Collard LPC MPP Ottawa—Vanier	416-325-0007 lcollard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org	Critic for Women's Issues
Michael Coteau LPC MPP Don Valley East	416-494-6856 mcoteau.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org	Critic for Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Labour, Training and Skills Development, Children, Community and Social Services, and Anti-Racism Directorate He is running for the federal Liberal nomination, however, and therefore outreach should be done early to lay a foundation that he can pass on to his successor.
MPs and Federal Ministers		

Catherine McKenna Liberal MP Ottawa Centre, Ont.	613-996-5322 Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca	Current Minister of Infrastructure and Communities; however she is not running in the next election
Bardish Chagger Liberal MP Waterloo, Ont.	613-996-5928 Bardish.Chagger@parl.gc.ca	Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth
Adam van Koeverden Liberal MP Milton, Ont.	613-996-7046 Adam.vanKoeverden@parl.gc.ca	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth and to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Sport)
Anita Vanderbeld Liberal MP Ottawa West—Nepean, Ont.	613-996-0984 Anita.Vandenbeld@parl.gc.ca	Adoption Council of Canada's riding MP.

Supporting information and references

Barriers to successful transitioning youth out of care

Source: [Barriers to transitioning out of youth care](#):

1. **Lack of supportive relationships:** Youth are at risk if they don't develop and maintain long-term supportive relationships with adults.

2. **Educational challenges:** Lack of educational achievement and training opportunities will likely hinder the transition process (e.g., poor educational outcomes).

Only 42 per cent of 19 and 20 year-olds in care of a CAS appear to be successfully completing high school; this is significantly different from the provincial graduation rate of 81 per cent. Further evidence that education counts in the transition process is found in the statistic that only one-in-five (21 per cent) of the 18-20 year-old youth in CAS care had participated in post-secondary education, and those who did enrol in post-secondary school, eight-in-ten (84 per cent) lean towards apprenticeship or community college versus 16 per cent who enrolled in university; this is a reverse trend for non-CAS, community youth, where 33 per cent attend a college and 41.7 per cent are enrolled in a university (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Research finds there is a clear link between those who advance their education and an ability to secure employment and higher earnings compared to those who did not pursue education. The ramifications for adulthood are significant in that education not only increases job security and earning potential, education also reduces the likelihood of housing instability and homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2005). Employment also reduces reliance on social assistance and realizes other benefits, such as improved health status.

The 2009 study by the Society for Research in Child Development found youth for whom foster care is extended do better educationally and earn more than youth where it was not extended.

Mentoring programs can be an important piece to a successful transition.

3. **Housing instability:** It is difficult to go to school or maintain a part-time job after school or prepare for an agency interview if one's accommodation is unstable and/or unsafe and/or non-existent.

4. **Economic challenges (unemployment):** Securing employment was a pivotal factor between securing housing or experiencing homelessness. Helping youth in care acquire work experience and partnering with the job sector to offer such work and placement opportunities is an area for great potential to improve youth outcomes in the area of acquiring employment in the post transition period that meets a "living wage" level.

Without question, youth in care who are transitioning into adulthood face many challenges and require a range of supports that will optimize their successful transition to adulthood. The first step is in recognizing much more needs to be accomplished for that goal to be reached.

Best Practices in Transitioning Youth Out of Care

Government of Ontario poverty reduction strategy

Source: [Building a Strong Foundation for Success: Reducing Poverty in Ontario (2020-2025)](#)

Pillar: Connecting people with the right supports and services

The government recognizes that not everyone is ready to enter the labour market. Many people face physical and mental health challenges, homelessness and/or other barriers to employment. Addressing these issues is a first step towards helping people find a job and contribute to their communities. In addition, providing services that address the social and economic conditions that impact good health can help support individuals and build stronger communities.

This strategy will help people access supports that improve health and well-being and enable them to move forward on the pathway to education, training, employment and participation in their community. The government is committed to creating a more coordinated, integrated and digitally-enabled system of supports and services that help people better address their needs, from housing to mental health. By working together with its partners, especially those in the non-profit sector, the government can help people build a strong foundation for success in the future.

Key initiatives for this pillar include:

- A Roadmap to Wellness – building a connected mental health care system to improve the patient and caregiver experience and strengthen local services to make it easier for people to navigate the system.
- Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan – transforming social assistance so case workers can focus on people, not paperwork, and help people access the supports they need to stabilize their lives, including employment and training, and drive the best outcomes for social assistance clients, including people with disabilities. A separate plan will be developed with First Nations delivery partners.
- Community Housing Renewal Strategy – focusing on affordable housing for low-income households and supporting the sustainability of the non-profit, co-operative and municipal housing sectors. The strategy will help sustain, repair and grow the community housing system, making it work better for the people it serves.
- Ontario's Strategy to Redesign the Child Welfare system – redesigning the child welfare system to focus on prevention and early intervention, keeping more families together, and supporting successful youth transitions to adulthood. This includes a focus on providing culturally-appropriate supports that reflect Indigenous customs, heritages, and traditions to Indigenous children, youth, and families.
- Creating child care spaces – adding over 19,000 new child care spaces so that more families can choose the kind of care that is best for their children.

For this pillar, success will look like:

- People are supported by inclusive and coordinated services that support life stabilization and improve employment outcomes.
- Supports are available to help people keep a job, for example, access to child care by adding new child care spaces.

- Supports and services are available no matter where people live in the province.

People require wraparound supports and services

Work is currently underway to transform the province's services and support systems that help recipients on a path to jobs, greater independence, and improved outcomes.

To achieve this, the government is:

- better connecting health, social, and economic systems
- enhancing access to employment and training programs
- reducing red tape so that service providers can spend more time with clients
- improving the availability of digital services to increase access

As a result of this work, people will be able to access the supports they need when they need them. For example, youth transitioning out of care will be better able to access employment or further education, people on social assistance will receive more focused supports from case workers, and people moving between support systems will not need to complete multiple intake processes.

International programs: Excerpt from Transitions from Child Protection

Source: [Homeless Hub](#)

The U.S. government enacted the Independent Living Program in 1986 and Title I of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. These programs are designed to help older youth who are leaving care develop the life skills and habits necessary for independent living. States are required to fund follow-up services for young people who have aged out of care, and of those funds up to 30% are earmarked for supportive housing. These acts have been very [successful](#) and resulted in the implementation of [independent living programs](#) across the country. In addition, the American Bar Association has also produced examples of [Model Reforms to Child Protection](#) laws that can be adapted at the State level.

The U.K. has also attempted to address the problematic discharge of children and youth from care to homelessness through legislation and key reforms to child welfare. After [extensive review](#) child welfare services were mandated to provide support for young people up to the age of 18, and in some cases up to 21, in order to support a smooth transition from care. A key piece of legislation

was the Children (Leaving Care) Act of 2000, which was further reinforced by the Homelessness Act of 2002 and the Children's Act of 2004, which prioritized the need for services and support for young people exiting the child welfare system. The Children (Leaving Care) Act ensured that local governments were directly responsible for youth aged 16 and older (up to the age of 18) who left care. Three key supports included: 1) benefits – young people living independently are entitled to income supplements; 2) assessment – to be done when the young person reaches 16, to aid with the transition process, and 3) planning – young people are to be assigned personal advisors, who would help establish a 'pathway plan' that lasted until the young person reached 21 years of age (to be reviewed with the young person at least every six months). In commenting on the legislation in the context of an international review of best practices, Reid suggests:

"This legislation is effective because it targets core concerns for youth leaving care such as housing, education and employment, finances, and social support with flexible approaches to engage youth in the decision-making processes. The legislation also requires agencies to work cooperatively with each other to meet the needs of youth."

In Australia, child protection legislation, policies and practices are the responsibility of community services in each state and territory. Different jurisdictions have different programs, and some are supported at the national level. Young people at risk of leaving care, either because they 'aged out' or left due to problems with their foster care experience, are offered a more intensive form of support, which is often referred to as the 'Lead Tenant' program. This model incorporates elements of treatment foster care, where specially trained caregivers are recruited (and receive higher than usual remuneration) to provide intensive placement support and wrap-around services. Youth are able to stay in the program from 12 months to 24 months. Finally, The Transition to Independent Living Allowance is a national program that provides particularly vulnerable youth who have left care up to $1,000 a month in support for an additional year.

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- Black Ladders Canada
- Canada Without Poverty
- Causeway Work Centre and Operation Come Home.
- Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
- Concordia University, Professor Varda Mann-Feder
- Elizabeth Fry Society
- John Howard Society of Ottawa
- Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition
- Ottawa Centre for Resilience
- Parkdale Food Centre
- The University of Ottawa
- The University of Toronto
- Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network

Possible stakeholders

Local Ottawa organizations

- Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- Cornerstone Housing for Women
- Kind
- Ottawa Community Housing
- Minwaashin Lodge
- YMCA-YWCA
- Youth Services Bureau

National organizations

- [ACCESS Open Minds](#)
- [Centre for Addictions and Mental Health](#)
- [Children's Aid Foundation of Canada](#)
- [Futures Forward](#)
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#), [At Home/Chez Soi](#) (([housing first](#))
- [NorWest Co-op Community Health](#)
- [Supporting Our Youth](#)
- [Youth in Care Canada](#)
- [Youth Wellness Lab](#)

Funding sources

Non-government resources

- [Amazon Housing Equity Fund](#)
- Barrett Family Foundation
- [Canadian Women's Foundation](#)
- [Catapult Canada Access Innovation Fund](#)
- [Coca-Cola Foundation](#)
- Danbe Foundation
- [Friendly Future Foundation](#)
- [Good Food, Good Life Community Program](#)
- [Home Depot Canada Foundation](#) [programs](#)
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- [Laidlaw Foundation](#)
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- [ScotiaRISE](#)
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- [United Way of Eastern Ontario](#)
- [Youth Action Fund](#)

Federal government

- [Canada Healthy Communities Initiative](#)
- [Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure](#)
- [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, National Housing Co-Investment Fund](#)
- [Employment and Social Development Canada funding opportunities](#):
  - [Financial Empowerment](#)
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  - [Enabling Accessibility Fund](#)
- [Health Canada funding opportunities](#):
  - [Intersectoral Action Fund](#)
  - [Healthy Cities Implementation Science (HCIS) Team Grants](#)
  - [Infectious Disease and Climate Change Fund](#)
  - [Indigenous mental health and substance use](#)
- [Youth Employment and Skills Strategy](#)
- [Women and Gender Equality Canada](#) (no programs currently open)

Ontario

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- [Community Building Fund](#)
- [Community Investments](#)
- [Eastern Ontario Development Fund](#)
- [Ontario Trillium Fund](#)

City of Ottawa

- [Community Funding Program](#)