Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Expression of Interest: Providing Preventive Counselling Services

Contents

Expression of Interest: Providing Preventive Counselling Services 3

1. Invitation 3
2. Program Background and Objectives 3
3. Scope of Services 3
4. Eligibility and Mandatory Requirements for Service Providers 4
5. Service Delivery Expectations 5
6. Billing and Payment Model 5
7. Reporting and Privacy Expectations 6
8. Submission Requirements 6
9. Application Assessment and Selection Approach 7
10. Administrative Terms and Conditions 7

Appendix A: EOI Response Form / Checklist 8

Appendix B: Schedule of Service Rates 10

Appendix C: EOI Weighted Scoring Matrix 11

Expression of Interest: Providing Preventive Counselling Services

1. Invitation

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo ("Municipality") invites qualified and experienced service providers to submit an Expression of Interest ("EOI") for consideration and potential inclusion on a non-exclusive roster of pre-qualified service providers to provide preventive counselling services.

Through this EOI, the Municipality seeks to identify service providers with the qualifications, expertise, capacity, and experience necessary to deliver accessible, culturally responsive, professional, short-term, solution-focused preventive counselling services to eligible residents within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

2. Program Background and Objectives

The Municipality has established a Preventive Counselling Services Program to improve access to mental wellness support for eligible residents. Preventive counselling services are proactive, strengths-based supports designed to build resilience, strengthen protective factors, enhance well-being, reduce vulnerabilities, and empower individuals, families, and communities to successfully navigate life's challenges before issues escalate into crisis.

The Municipality intends to engage successful service providers through a direct-billing service model and establish a standing offer arrangement with a non-exclusive roster of service providers.

Core Objectives of the Program:

- Improve access to preventive counselling and mental wellness services;
- Reduce service waiting times and barriers to access;
- Promote client choice through access to a diverse roster of qualified service providers;
- Support coordinated community referral pathways; and
- Advance early intervention and preventative approaches that strengthen individual, family, and community well-being.

3. Scope of Services

The program provides short-term, solution-focused preventive counselling services.

This approach aligns with the prevention definition in the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Accountability Framework, the Family and Community Support Services Act and the regulation, which emphasize early intervention, capacity building, social inclusion, healthy relationships, community connectedness, and access to supports.

The program's primary goal and outcomes are focused on:

- Increased resiliency and capacity for coping among participants;
- Improved mental wellness and emotional well-being;
- Stronger interpersonal and family relationships;
- Enhanced social connectedness and sense of belonging;
- Increased knowledge and utilization of healthy coping strategies;
- Reduced risk factors associated with social isolation, stress, and mental health challenges; and
- Other preventive outcomes consistent with Section 2.1(1) of the Family and Community Support Services Regulation.

Service providers must collect program outcomes and report aggregated program outputs to the Municipality in accordance with program reporting requirements.

4. Eligibility and Mandatory Requirements for Service Providers

Preventive counselling services are distinct from clinical treatment, diagnosis, rehabilitation, or crisis-response interventions. Counselling Services provided must meet the program's primary objective as listed above.

To be eligible for consideration, service providers must demonstrate compliance with all mandatory requirements listed below.

Service providers must:

- **For regulated counselling services:** Ensure all team members delivering counselling services are currently licensed or registered with the appropriate professional regulatory body (e.g., Registered Psychologist, Registered Social Worker, Occupational Therapist) and remain in good standing with the applicable provincial and/or national regulatory authority.
- **For Indigenous cultural, traditional, wellness, healing, ceremonial, or land-based services:** Practitioners are recognized by a Nation, Indigenous community, Elders council, or Indigenous organization as qualified to provide Indigenous wellness, healing, cultural, traditional, ceremonial, or land-based supports (e.g., Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Cultural Advisors, Indigenous Wellness Practitioners).
- Demonstrate compliance with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws, regulations, and professional standards related to business operations, practitioner credentials, and privacy. Applicants must attest to compliance and provide supporting documentation upon request, such as business registration, professional licensing, insurance coverage, privacy policies, or other relevant records. Demonstrate a strong understanding of and commitment to privacy regulations governing client information (e.g., PIPEDA, PIPA). This can be done by providing a copy of the organization's privacy policy or confidentiality policy, Evidence of privacy or confidentiality training, or processes for securing, collecting, storing, and retaining information.

- Demonstrate the operational capacity to provide timely access to services, including an ability to schedule initial appointments within fourteen (14) calendar days of referral/initial assessment whenever reasonably practicable.

5. Service Delivery Expectations

Successful service providers shall:

- Accept referrals originating from designated community access points (community organizations) and other referral pathways established by the Municipality
- Conduct intake and eligibility assessments utilizing an approved Municipal assessment tool
- Adhere to a maximum of five (5) counselling sessions for adults and up to seven (7) for children, youth, and Families per client/family per twelve-month period (unless otherwise approved in writing by the Municipality), for all services funded under this Program
- Provide services through in-person, virtual, or hybrid delivery models, where applicable
- Applicants must provide services within the geographic boundaries of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and operate a physical office, facility, or established place of business within the municipality.
- Maintain professional standards of practice and ethical conduct consistent with applicable regulatory requirements; and
- Demonstrate cultural competence, inclusivity, and responsiveness when serving diverse populations.

The Municipality reserves the right to establish service standards, referral protocols, intake criteria, and program guidelines that successful service providers will be required to follow throughout the term of any resulting agreement.

6. Billing and Payment Model

The program employs a direct-billing, pay-per-service model.

- Service providers must submit a detailed schedule of proposed service rates for all counselling and wellness service modalities offered under the program, including but not limited to individual, group, family, in-person, virtual, hybrid, and culturally responsive wellness and healing services, where applicable.
- The Municipality will review proposed rates against market conditions, industry benchmarks, and program budget considerations.
- The Municipality reserves the right to:
    - Negotiate rates with one or more service providers;
    - Establish standardized rates for all successful service providers;
    - Reject rates deemed unreasonable or inconsistent with market conditions; and
    - Enter into agreements with multiple service providers.

- Approved providers will invoice the Municipality directly for services delivered to eligible clients in accordance with the negotiated rates set out in the service agreement.
- The Municipality will make reasonable efforts to process payments promptly upon receipt and approval of complete and accurate invoices.
- Invoices must include client and service information specified by the Municipality for program monitoring, performance measurement, and financial reconciliation purposes.

7. Reporting and Privacy Expectations

Service providers should maintain complete and accurate records of services provided under the Program and shall provide reports in the form, frequency, and format specified by the Municipality.

All personal information collected, used, stored, disclosed, or otherwise handled under any resulting agreement shall be managed in accordance with all applicable privacy legislation, including the Personal Information Protection Act, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, and any successor legislation.

Results from mandated standardized assessment tools will be included in the data submitted for program evaluation.

8. Submission Requirements

Table 1 Applicants are requested to submit documentation as listed in this table.

Requirement	Description
Completed Response Form (Appendix A):	Including all requested contact and organizational information.
Organizational Profile	A brief overview of your practice or organization, including mission, values, and service philosophy
Professional Credentials	Copies of current professional licenses and registrations for all counselling professionals who would provide services under this program.
Resume(s)/CV(s)	For all counselling professionals proposed for the program, highlighting relevant experience in short-term, preventive, or solution-focused counselling.
Proposed Rates	A schedule of proposed hourly or session-based rates for counselling services.
Declaration of Compliance	A signed declaration confirming adherence to all mandatory requirements outlined in Section 4.

Submission Instruction:

Interested applicants must complete and submit the required application package, including all supporting documentation, through rmwb.ca/counselling or by email to Community.Services@rmwb.ca.

Application materials, submission requirements, and program information are available on the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo website. The Municipality may request additional information or clarification from applicants during the review process.

9. Application Assessment and Selection Approach

The Municipality intends to establish a flexible, non-exclusive roster of qualified counselling service providers. Refer to Appendix C for the assessment criteria.

Inclusion on the roster does not guarantee work, referrals, minimum service volumes, revenue, contract award, or exclusive service provision rights. The Municipality reserves the right to accept or reject any submission, request additional information, conduct reference checks, negotiate with any applicant, and make selections in the manner deemed to be in the Municipality's best interests.

10. Administrative Terms and Conditions

- This EOI is issued solely for information gathering and pre-qualification purposes and does not constitute an offer, tender, request for proposal, or other contractual commitment by the Municipality.
- The Municipality reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submissions, cancel this EOI process at any time, or modify its terms without prior notice or liability.
- All costs incurred in preparing responses and submitting a complete EOI will be borne solely by the proponent.
- All information submitted in response to this EOI will be treated as confidential, subject to applicable public privacy information laws.
- Proponents must maintain professional liability insurance with a minimum coverage limit of two million dollars ($2,000,000). Proof of insurance coverage, in the form of a certificate of insurance, will be required within thirty (30) days of entering into a contract with the Municipality.
- Any questions regarding this EOI must be submitted in writing to community.service@rmwb.ca

Appendix A: EOI Response Form / Checklist

Please complete this form and submit it along with all required documentation.

Proponent Information:

Table 2: Organizational Information

Field	Response
Organization Name	
Legal Name (if different)	
Business Address	
City, Province, Postal Code	
Primary Contact Person	
Title	
Email Address	
Phone Number	
Website (if applicable)	

Declaration and Checklist:

Proponent Declaration

By signing below, the Proponent represents, warrants, acknowledges, and certifies that:

1. The information contained in this Expression of Interest submission is true, accurate, complete, and current to the best of the Proponent's knowledge.
2. The individual signing this declaration is authorized to bind the Proponent.
3. The Proponent meets all mandatory eligibility requirements set out in this EOI.
4. The Proponent maintains all required licenses, registrations, certifications, permits, and professional accreditations necessary to provide the services described in this EOI.
5. The Proponent maintains or will maintain throughout the term of any resulting agreement the insurance coverage required by the Municipality.
6. The Proponent agrees to comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal legislation, regulations, standards, and professional practice requirements.
7. The Proponent agrees to comply with all privacy, confidentiality, record management, and data protection requirements applicable to the Program.
8. The Proponent has disclosed any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest related to this EOI.
9. The Proponent acknowledges that submission of a response does not guarantee inclusion on a roster, referral of clients, award of a contract, or any minimum volume of work.

Document checklist:

Table 3: The Proponent acknowledges and accepts all terms and conditions of this EOI.

Requirement	Met	Included in Submission
Copies of Professional Licensing	☐	☐
Cultural Competency Training / Certification	☐	☐
Conflict of Interest Disclosure (if applicable)	☐	☐
Ability to Meet Intake Timelines (within 14 days)	☐	☐
Agreement to Outcome Reporting Requirements	☐	☐
Agreement to Direct Billing Requirements	☐	☐
Completed Response Form (Appendix A)	☐	☐
Organizational Profile	☐	☐
Proposed Service Rates Schedule	☐	☐
Signed Declaration of Compliance (this form)	☐	☐

Signature:

Print Name:

Title:

Date:

Appendix B: Schedule of Service Rates

Provide the proposed rate for each service type. We will use rates submitted through this EOI for evaluation and contract negotiations. Final approved rates will be established through negotiation in the resulting Service Agreement.

Service Type	Proposed Rate
Individual Counselling (60 min)	$
Couples Counselling (60 min)	$
Family Counselling (60 min)	$
Group Session (per session)	$
Virtual Session (60 min)	$

Provider Declaration

The proponent acknowledges that:

1. Rates submitted are the provider's standard or proposed rates for services offered under the Preventive Counselling Services Program.
2. Submission of rates does not guarantee acceptance of the proposed rates.
3. The Municipality reserves the right to negotiate rates with successful proponents.
4. Final approved rates will be established through a Service Agreement between the Municipality and the provider.
5. The Municipality may establish maximum reimbursable rates for services under the Program.

Appendix C: EOI Weighted Scoring Matrix

This matrix provides the criteria, weighting, and scoring for evaluating qualified service providers.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight (%)	Application Section(s) to Review	Score (0-5)
Relevant Experience	20%	Section 2: Organizational Profile; Years of Experience; Service Areas; Resumes/CVs	
Service Delivery Capacity	20%	Section 4: Program Delivery Capacity; Initial Assessment, Intake Timelines; Service Delivery Modal; Office Locations; Languages Offered, Virtual Option	
Alignment with FCSS Outcomes	30%	Section 5: Understanding of Preventive Counselling Services; Program Alignment Narrative	
Cultural Responsiveness and Accessibility	15%	Section 2: Service Areas; Section 4: Cultural and Community Expertise; Certifications; Proposed Service Delivery Approach	
Value for Money / Proposed Rates	15%	Section 7: Schedule of Service Rates	
TOTAL SCORE	**100%**		