

# **Ontario Youth Matters (OYM)**

## **Terms of Reference**

*Draft: Oct 2008*

### **Mandate**

To establish a network to build a common call for a Provincial Youth Policy Framework. Such a Framework would provide clarity around common outcomes and objectives, lead to better alignment between governments, ministries, and community agencies, and address the broad developmental needs of youth. The primary focus of OYM will be to lead, create, and press for a public policy initiative.

### **Desired Outcomes:**

- Bring attention to the gaps and inconsistency in policies facing youth, and highlighting the need for a coordinated youth outcomes strategy.
- Raise awareness of a common framework as a way of coordinating investment to meet the needs of youth more effectively and to increase horizontal accountability.
- Greater recognition from government that a youth policy framework has tremendous value to the health and development of youth.
- Provide strategic and timely advice to the provincial government's development of a youth policy framework.

### **Structure, Members and Roles**

- A three-member co-chair structure is proposed, consisting at the beginning of Frances Lankin of United Way Toronto, and Nathan Gilbert from the Laidlaw Foundation, and one youth representative. This structure is seen as fluid and open to change.
- The role of the co-chairs will be to facilitate OYM meetings, provide direction to OYM activities, solicit support, and speak on behalf of OYM, as appropriate.
- Membership will be open to anyone representing an organization that is interested in working collaboratively in support of OYM goals and objectives.
- The role of members will be to contribute to a common call through a combination of the following activities:
  - Liaising with community partners and connecting with networks
  - Advocating to government
  - Bringing organizational support and resources to activities and events

- Supporting and participating in ongoing convening processes
- United Way and Laidlaw will provide administrative, convening and research support.
- OYM will generally meet once a month, as necessary, to fulfill proposed activities. Working groups will be established as required (e.g.: research table).

### **Proposed Activities**

- Sending an open letter to the Premier in support of the Roots of Youth Violence Review, and encouraging the provincial government to put resources into developing a youth policy framework.
- Conduct a public opinion poll to demonstrate public support for better coordinated investments in youth.
- A forum to bring together stakeholders and build consensus.
- Media relations to support the work of OYM.
- Strategic meetings with appropriate provincial, municipal and private sector representatives to advocate for a Youth Policy Framework.
- A working group to compile existing research and frameworks and to draft a proposed youth framework document.
- A symposium to connect groups across the province to share ideas about a youth outcomes strategy and coordinate advocacy efforts.
- A working group to develop a model of effective youth consultation.

### **Sunset**

This Terms of Reference will be revisited by September 2009, and can be renewed or revised.