

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

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This document provides messaging and information for the Foundry network that can be used in communication materials regarding the Foundry Works! program. Please note that when using content from this document it should be revised appropriately for the intended material, purpose and target audience.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer than 25 percent of young people in Canada received appropriate mental health support. COVID-19 has exacerbated this, with dramatic increases in rates of anxiety, posttraumatic stress, depression and behavioral challenges across all age groups with a concentration among young people ages 12 - 24. Meanwhile, in British Columbia overdose deaths in 2020 were the highest since the toxic drug epidemic began. And now, the group most affected by loss of employment due to the pandemic are young people aged 15-24 – over 123,000 BC youth. Truly, this is a time of a “triple threat” for young people. The risk is clear: ignoring the unmet needs of our youth, at this moment in time, has implications that will last for generations.

Foundry offers health and wellness resources, services and supports — online and through centres across BC and aims to remove barriers and increase access to health and wellness services for young people ages 12–24 and their caregivers across British Columbia. At Foundry, young people can easily access our integrated services by walking into a local Foundry centre, exploring our online tools and resources at foundrybc.ca, or connecting virtually through our new Foundry BC app. Referrals are not required to visit a centre or to receive online support, and all services are free and confidential.

Within this model, Foundry Works! is an integrated supported employment program, which provides mentoring, education, skills development and job placement. With a province-wide reach, Foundry Works! is poised to catapult young people into a more promising future. Taking a non-diagnostic approach, Foundry Works! aims to inclusively help youth who are not in education, employment or training to succeed in school, find a job and meet their own personal social goals.

Foundry Works! is a BC-made social innovation designed to respond to a range of labor market challenges faced by youth with barriers to employment. Foundry has already successfully piloted and evaluated this partnership-based supportive employment model at Foundry Vancouver-Granville from October 2019 to March 2021. Of the 88 participants, 70 had improved employment or education outcomes, with 68 (77%) maintaining their employment or training outcome at six months. This is significantly higher than results reported in literature, which ranges from 10% to 30%. As well, youth self-reported improved ratings for community engagement, mental health, and quality of life. Based on this outcome and years of evidence about the benefits of service integration, Foundry is now poised to successfully scale this model and its evaluation across its network of centres and virtual services.

PRIMARY MESSAGES

- Foundry Works! is a new youth supported employment program being launched across the Foundry network. The program will provide flexible, wrap-around services to help youth who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) to realize their education goals, develop work skills and gain paid work/study experience to successfully transition into the labour market.
- At Foundry, we believe all young people should have access to meaningful education and employment opportunities. Through this program, Foundry will support young people by coordinating and aligning their health, wellness and education/employment goals.
- Foundry Works! will be available through Foundry's provincial virtual service and in 11 Foundry centre communities, including Abbotsford, Kelowna, North Shore, Prince George, Ridge Meadows, Terrace, Vancouver-Granville, Victoria, Penticton, Campbell River and Richmond by Summer 2021.
- By using an integrative model guided by Foundry's values and principles, employment supports are embedded within existing Foundry centres and our provincial virtual service. The program will deliver evidence-based employment supports to assist up to 1500 youth across British Columbia who face multiple barriers in becoming or staying employed over the next three years.
- The Foundry Works! program is funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Service Canada's Youth Employment & Skills Strategy (YESS) and Future Skills in partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Ontario.
- While Foundry Works! has three distinct funders, each with their own unique reporting needs, the delivery of the Foundry Works! program will be consistent across all centres and Foundry Virtual BC.

SECONDARY MESSAGES

- Since 2017, Foundry has served over 20,000 unique youth, of whom 80% face barriers to employment. Foundry Works! aims to provide flexible, wrap-around services to help NEET youth realize their education goals, develop work skills and become competitively employed.
- Foundry Works! services are based on the premise that employment is a core component of personal recovery and that meaningful employment can increase quality of life for youth and contribute to improved mental health outcomes.
- Foundry Works! will embed the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model for service delivery. IPS is an evidence-based model widely used across the world, which includes: (1) offering work/study support within and alongside our team, (2) meeting clients where they are at, and (3) helping clients gain mainstream employment/study experience.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Foundry Works! service model?

The underlying model for Foundry Works! is “Individual Placement Support” or “IPS.” IPS is an evidence-based model widely used across the world. The model has core features that include: (1) offering work/study support within and alongside our team, (2) meeting clients where they are at, and (3) helping clients gain mainstream employment/study experience. At Foundry, we believe all young people should have access to meaningful education and employment opportunities. This program will allow Foundry to support young people to coordinate and align their health, wellness and education/employment goals. The evidence for IPS in mental health is strong. However, we are one of the first teams in the world to implement IPS within an integrated youth service model.

Where does Foundry Works! fit in the overall Foundry model?

Foundry Works! will form a core element of Foundry’s social services offerings. Employment supports will be integrated with existing mental health, substance use, physical health and peer support services currently provided to youth across BC. Foundry Works! uses a team approach guided by the values and principles of Foundry. Providing employment services through Foundry’s network of centres and virtually will further enhance Foundry’s ability to support young people across BC to succeed.

When and where will Foundry Works! be made available?

Foundry Works! will be available in the following Foundry centres: Abbotsford, Kelowna, North Shore, Prince George, Ridge Meadows, Terrace, Vancouver-Granville, Victoria, Richmond, Campbell River and Penticton. In addition, young people will be able to access Foundry Works! virtually through the Foundry BC app. The Foundry Works! Service will be available to young people in Summer 2021.

How will this program be evaluated?

Our commitment to evaluation and to offering evidence-based practice means we are keen to capture learnings and outcomes as we implement Foundry Works!. There are two types of evaluations: (1) Data gathered for Service Canada, and (2) data gathered to support ongoing quality improvement efforts and sharing of innovation across the Foundry network. We look forward to working closely with each centre and our virtual service team to learn about the implementation process and outcomes, and to co-design ways to share this knowledge more broadly.

How is Foundry Works! funded?

A significant investment into this provincial program has occurred in the form of a 3-year grant from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction as well as an expansion of the funding from a Future Skills grant in partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Ontario.

Foundry has also received funding through the Youth Employment & Skills Strategy (YESS), which is the Government of Canada's commitment to help young people gain the information, skills, work experience and abilities they need to make a successful transition into the labour market. The YESS is a horizontal initiative involving eleven federal departments and agencies. The previous streams offered by the YESS were merged to create a more integrated and

flexible service delivery network. These past services were: Skills Link, Career Focus, and Summer Work Experience.

What makes this program different from other employment supports?

Foundry Works! is unique from other employment services because the program is informed by young people and the service model is backed by research. The program will employ an IPS model that will be integrated with the stepped care service model at Foundry. Additionally, the program is provincial in scope and is supported by Foundry's central office but driven by each Foundry centre community and the provincial virtual service. The aim is to ensure the program adds value to each community, to help support, work with and integrate with other employment services available. Youth will be supported to navigate the myriad employment services available in their community to reduce confusion, duplication and create wrap around care which is needed.