

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Violence Against Women (VAW) Lead Organizations for the Canadian MARAC Pilot Project

Project:	Community Wellness – Canadian MARAC Pilot
Lead Organization:	WomanACT
Issue Date:	November, 12 th , 2025
Closing Date:	January 16 th , 2025

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For any inquiries, questions, accessibility accommodations, or to request a phone consultation regarding this Request for Proposals, please contact Harmy Mendoza, Executive Director at WomanACT, at hmendoza@womanact.ca

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 About WomanACT

The WomanACT is a leading organization dedicated to addressing intimate partner violence (IPV) and gender-based violence (GBV) through collaborative, evidence-based approaches. WomanACT works to strengthen the GBV sector and improve outcomes for survivors through innovation, capacity building, and coordinated community responses.

1.2 About the Canadian MARAC Model

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) model is an evidence-based approach to coordinating responses to high-risk intimate partner violence cases. Originally developed in the United Kingdom, the MARAC model brings together multiple agencies and service providers to share information, assess risk, and develop coordinated action plans to enhance survivor safety.

WomanACT has been piloting the Canadian adaptation of the MARAC model and is now expanding this work to scale the model both within Toronto and to eight pilot communities in Alberta.

1.3 Purpose of This RFP

WomanACT is seeking two (2) qualified Anti-Violence Against Women (VAW) organizations in Toronto to act as lead implementation partners for the MARAC enhancement model at the **Rexdale** and **York** FOCUS Toronto Situation Tables. The selected organizations will collaborate closely with WomanACT, community partners, and key stakeholders to implement MARAC protocols and provide coordinated, survivor-centered support for individuals experiencing intimate partner violence.

2. Project Overview

2.1 Project Description

The "Community Wellness - Canadian MARAC Pilot" is an 18-month project (October 1, 2025 - March 31, 2027). The project aims to:

- Scale the Canadian MARAC model to improve identification and response to IPV cases
- Strengthen the GBV sector through capacity building and coordinated responses
- Expand community partnerships and foster collaboration across sectors
- Develop standardized MARAC protocols and processes adapted to the Canadian context
- Pilot the MARAC enhancement model at the Rexdale and York FOCUS Toronto Situation Tables.
- Explore expansion to eight communities in Alberta
- Engage in knowledge mobilization and dissemination of lessons learned

2.2 Project Goals and Expected Outcomes

Short-Term Outcomes:

- Intended audiences access GBV-related evidence, programs and supports
- Increased number of targeted programs, resources and supports delivered
- Increased reach to people impacted by or at risk of GBV

Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Intended audiences apply GBV-related evidence in their policy and programming work
- Enhanced coordination among service providers responding to high-risk IPV cases
- Improved risk assessment and information sharing practices within privacy regulations

Long-Term Outcomes:

- People impacted by or at risk of GBV and their families are better supported
- Improved social and economic determinants that contribute to GBV
- Enhanced personal safety of women, gender minorities, and individuals from at-risk identity groups

3. Scope of Work and Responsibilities

3.1 Overview of VAW Lead Organization Role

The two selected VAW organizations will serve as lead implementing partners for the MARAC model at the Rexdale and York FOCUS Toronto Situation Tables. Each organization will dedicate staff resources to coordinate MARAC implementation, participate in FOCUS Situation Table meetings at their respective locations, provide direct support services to survivors, and establish collaborative partnerships with multi-sectoral stakeholders.

3.2 Specific Responsibilities

Fiscal Year 1 Responsibilities (January 2026 - March 2026):

- Participate in the equitable selection process and organizational onboarding
- Work with supervisory staff (approximately 20% time allocation) to set up the MARAC model and support project start-up
- Collaborate with WomanACT to develop MARAC operating guidelines and protocols
- Participate in training on information sharing, risk assessment, and the MARAC framework
- Engage in community needs assessment and service mapping activities
- Support the recruitment of dedicated MARAC project coordination staff for Year 2
- Contribute to the development of referral pathways and ethical information-sharing protocols
- Participate in stakeholder consultations with service providers, legal experts, and survivor advocates
- Support initial piloting of MARAC protocols at the Rexdale and York FOCUS Toronto Situation Tables.

Fiscal Year 2 Responsibilities (April 2026 - March 2027):

- Deploy dedicated full-time MARAC Project Coordinator to lead implementation activities.
- Attend all Rexdale and York FOCUS Toronto Situation Tables meetings and coordinate MARAC case reviews.
- Implement standardized MARAC protocols including case management, risk assessment, and decision-making procedures.
- Provide direct coordination and support to survivors identified through the MARAC process.
- Facilitate information sharing and coordination among multi-agency partners in compliance with privacy regulations.

- Maintain case documentation and data collection in accordance with project evaluation requirements.
- Participate in ongoing training, capacity building, and quality improvement activities
- Collaborate with the external evaluator to assess effectiveness and impact of the MARAC model.
- Contribute to knowledge mobilization activities including case studies, presentations, and reports.
- Engage in inter-provincial learning opportunities with Alberta pilot sites
- Support sustainability planning and recommendations for ongoing MARAC implementation.

3.3 Key Activities by Project Phase

Activity Area	Description	Timeline
Selection & Onboarding	Participate in RFP process, organizational readiness assessment, and initial planning	Nov-Jan 2026
Protocol Development	Collaborate on developing MARAC operating guidelines, risk assessment tools, and information-sharing protocols	Feb - Mar 2026
Training & Capacity Building	Participate in MARAC training, information sharing protocols, and risk assessment workshops	Feb 2026 - Jun 2026
Staff Recruitment	Recruit and onboard full-time MARAC Project Coordinator for Year 2	Jan-Mar 2026
Pilot Implementation	Begin piloting MARAC model at Rexdale and York Situation Tables (as applicable) with initial cases	April 2026
Full Implementation	Full-scale MARAC implementation with dedicated coordinator attending respective FOCUS Toronto Situation Table meetings	May 2026 - Mar 2027
Evaluation & Learning	Participate in data collection, case reviews, and continuous quality improvement	Ongoing
Knowledge Mobilization	Contribute to documentation, case studies, and sharing lessons learned	Sep 2026 - Mar 2027

4. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply, organizations must meet ALL of the following criteria:

4.1 Mandatory Requirements

- **Organizational Status:** Be a legally constituted organization under the laws of Ontario (incorporated non-profit, registered charity, or equivalent legal status).
- **VAW Specialization:** Have a primary mandate focused on addressing violence against women and/or gender-based violence.
- **Service Area:** Provide services within the Greater Toronto Area, with demonstrated capacity to serve the Rexdale and York communities.
- **Experience:** Have a minimum of three (3) years of demonstrated experience providing direct services to survivors of intimate partner violence.
- **Capacity:** Have adequate organizational capacity, including supervision structures, to support dedicated project staff.
- **Collaboration:** Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively in multi-sectoral partnerships and coordinated community responses.
- **Privacy & Ethics:** Understanding of and compliance with privacy legislation (e.g., PHIPA, FIPPA) and ethical practices in working with survivors.
- **Cultural Competence:** Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion with demonstrated cultural competence in serving diverse populations.
- **Financial Management:** Sound financial management practices and capacity to manage project budgets and reporting requirements.
- **Good Standing:** Be in good standing with all regulatory bodies, funders, and have no outstanding compliance issues.

4.2 Preferred Qualifications

While not mandatory, the following qualifications will strengthen an application:

- Previous experience with coordinated community response models (e.g., domestic violence high-risk case coordination)
- Existing relationships with the Rexdale and York Situation Table or participation in community collaborative tables.
- Experience with multi-agency case conferencing or similar collaborative models
- Demonstrated capacity to serve survivors from diverse, underserved, and equity-seeking populations
- Experience with trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and safety planning approaches
- Understanding of risk assessment tools and frameworks for intimate partner violence
- Organizational commitment to innovation and evidence-based practice
- Capacity to contribute to research, evaluation, and knowledge mobilization activities

5. Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria. Each criterion will be scored, and the two organizations with the highest overall scores will be selected.

Criterion	Description	Maximum Points
Organizational Capacity & Experience (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational mandate and alignment with project goals - Years of experience providing IPV services - Staff capacity and supervision structures - Financial and administrative capability 	20
Collaborative Experience & Partnerships (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Track record of multi-sectoral collaboration - Existing relationships with community partners - Experience with coordinated response models - Commitment to partnership and shared leadership 	20
Service Delivery Approach (25 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trauma-informed and survivor-centered practices - Cultural competence and equity approach - Risk assessment and safety planning expertise - Quality of service delivery model - Demonstrated expertise in offering a variety of targeted and specialized services to meet the complex needs of individuals experiencing violence. 	25
Understanding of MARAC Model (15 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated understanding of MARAC principles - Proposed approach to implementation - Commitment to model fidelity and adaptation - Learning orientation and openness to innovation 	15
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity to serve diverse populations - Culturally responsive service delivery - Language capacity - Commitment to addressing barriers for underserved groups 	10
Knowledge Mobilization Capacity (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to contribute to evaluation and learning - Communication and documentation skills - Willingness to share lessons learned - Participation in knowledge exchange activities 	10

Total Possible Score: 100 points

A minimum score of 70 points is required for an organization to be considered for selection. WomanACT reserves the right to conduct interviews, site visits, or request additional information from shortlisted applicants before making final selections.

6. Budget and Funding

6.1 Funding Available

WomanACT will provide funding to each of the two selected VAW organizations to support their participation in the MARAC pilot project. The funding structure is as follows:

Period	Per Organization	Total (2 Organizations)	Suggested Purpose
Fiscal Year 1 (January - Mar 2026)	\$9,600	\$19,200	Supervisory staff time for model setup and start-up
Fiscal Year 2 (Apr 2026 - Mar 2027)	\$86,000	\$172,000	MARAC Project Coordinator salary, benefits and supervision
Maximum Total per Organization	\$95,600	\$191,200	

6.2 Eligible Expenditures

Funding may be used for the following eligible expenditures:

- Salaries and benefits for supervisory staff (Year 1) and dedicated MARAC Project Coordinator (Year 2).
- Salary ranges must be reasonable and aligned with sector standards.
- Benefits should include mandatory employment benefits (CPP, EI, WSIB) and extended health benefits where applicable.
- Administrative costs directly related to project implementation (maximum 15% of total funding).
- Travel expenses for inter-provincial learning or project-related meetings (if required).
- Training and professional development directly related to MARAC implementation.
- Materials and supplies for project activities.

6.3 Payment Structure

Payments will be made according to the following schedule:

- **Fiscal Year 1 Advance:** Upon execution of the agreement and submission of the approved work plan and cash flow forecast.
- **Fiscal Year 2 Advance:** April 2026, upon submission of Year 1 progress report and updated cash flow forecast.
- **Final Payment (Holdback):** Upon submission and acceptance of the final report and all required deliverables.

6.4 Reporting Requirements

Selected organizations will be required to submit:

- Bi-annual progress reports on activities and outcomes.
- Quarterly financial statements showing expenditures against the budget.
- Case documentation and de-identified data for evaluation purposes.
- Final report and financial statement upon project completion.
- Participation in external evaluation activities as required.

7. Timeline and Deliverables

7.1 RFP Timeline

Milestone	Date
RFP Released	November 11 th , 2025
Proposal Submission Deadline	January 16 th , 2026, at 5:00 PM EST
Application Review & Evaluation	January 19 th to January 23 rd , 2026
Interviews with Shortlisted Organizations (if required)	January 23 th to January 30 th , 2026
Notification of Selection	January 30 th , 2026
Agreement Negotiation & Execution	February 2 nd to February 6 th , 2026
Project Start Date	February 9 th , 2026

7.2 Key Project Deliverables

Deliverable	Description	Due Date
Organizational Readiness Assessment	Complete assessment of organizational capacity and readiness	February 2026
Workplan and Budget	Detailed workplan and budget for project activities	February 2026
MARAC Operating Guidelines	Contribution to the development of standardized protocols	March 2026
Staffing Plan	Recruitment and onboarding of MARAC Coordinator	March 2026
Year 1 Progress Report	Report on activities, outcomes, and financial expenditures	April 2026
Year 2 Quarterly Updates	Brief updates on implementation progress	Quarterly
Case Documentation	De-identified case data for evaluation	Ongoing
Final Report	Comprehensive report on implementation, outcomes, and lessons learned	May 2027
Knowledge Mobilization Products	Case studies, presentations, or other materials	March 2027

8. Proposal Submission Requirements

8.1 Submission Format

Proposals must be submitted in the following format:

- Electronic submission via email to info@womanact.ca
- Subject line: "MARAC RFP Proposal - [Organization Name]"
- Proposal submitted as a single PDF document (maximum 13 pages, excluding attachments)
- File naming convention: OrganizationName_MARAC_RFP_2025.pdf

8.2 Required Proposal Contents

Proposals must include the following sections:

Section	Description	Page Limit
Cover Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expression of interest- Summary of organization's qualifications- Authorized signing officer signature	1 page
Executive Summary	Brief overview of proposal highlighting key strengths and fit with project requirements	1 page
Organizational Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mission, mandate, and history- Organizational structure and governance- Current programs and services- Service area and target populations- Annual budget and funding sources	2 pages
Experience & Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Experience providing IPV services- Collaborative experience and partnerships- Relevant expertise and past projects- Staff capacity and qualifications	2 pages
Service Delivery Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Theoretical framework and practice approach- Trauma-informed and survivor-centered practices- Equity, diversity, and inclusion approach- Risk assessment and safety planning expertise	2 pages
Understanding of MARAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understanding of MARAC model and principles- Proposed approach to implementation- Anticipated challenges and mitigation strategies- Value-add and unique contributions	2 pages
Organizational Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Staffing and supervision structures- Financial management capacity- Privacy and ethical compliance- Quality assurance practices	2 pages
Budget Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Detailed budget breakdown for Year 1 and Year 2- Administrative cost allocation- Cost-effectiveness considerations	1 page

8.3 Required Attachments

The following documents must be attached to the proposal (NOT included in page count):

12. **Certificate of Incorporation or Legal Status:** Proof of incorporation as a non-profit organization or registered charity
13. **Most Recent Audited Financial Statements:** Most recent audited or review engagement financial statements (within last 2 years)
14. **Insurance Certificate:** Proof of general liability insurance (minimum \$2 million coverage)
15. **Coordinator Job Posting Sample:** Describing qualifications and professional skills to be considered for the position.

8.4 Submission Deadline

Proposals must be received by January 16th, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST

Late submissions will not be accepted. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure proposals are received by the deadline.

9. Evaluation Process

9.1 Review Committee

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of:

- 1 WomanACT staff with expertise in IPV service delivery and program management
- 1 Community stakeholder(s) with expertise in equity and serving diverse populations
- 1 independent evaluator or research partner
- 1 Woman with lived experience of Gender Based Violence.
- 1 Member of the FOCUS Coordinating Team.

9.2 Evaluation Stages

Stage	Description
Stage 1: Administrative Review	All proposals will be reviewed to confirm completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will be disqualified.
Stage 2: Technical Evaluation	Eligible proposals will be scored by committee members using the evaluation criteria and scoring rubric (Section 5). Each criterion will be independently scored.
Stage 3: Consensus Discussion	The committee will meet to discuss scores, identify top candidates, and reach consensus on shortlisted organizations.
Stage 4: Interviews (if required)	Shortlisted organizations may be invited for interviews, presentations, or site visits. Additional questions may be asked to clarify proposals.
Stage 5: Final Selection	The committee will make final recommendations. WomanACT's Executive Director will approve final selections.

Stage 6: Notification & Contracting	Selected organizations will be notified and invited to enter into formal agreements. Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified.
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9.3 Evaluation Principles

The evaluation process will be guided by the following principles:

- **Fairness and Transparency:** All applicants will be evaluated using the same criteria and process. WomanACT is committed to a fair and transparent selection process.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** The selection process will prioritize organizations with demonstrated capacity to serve diverse, underserved, and equity-seeking populations.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Committee members will declare any conflicts of interest. Individuals with conflicts will be excluded from evaluating specific applications.
- **Confidentiality:** All proposals and evaluation materials will be kept confidential. Only authorized personnel will have access to submitted materials.
- **Merit-Based Selection:** Organizations will be selected based on merit, qualifications, and alignment with project goals. Existing relationships with WomanACT will not provide preferential treatment.
- **Right to Reject:** WomanACT reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, request additional information, negotiate terms, or cancel this RFP if deemed in the best interest of the project.

10. Terms and Conditions

10.1 Agreement Requirements

Selected organizations will be required to enter into a formal funding agreement with WomanACT. The agreement will include terms and conditions aligned with WomanACT's master agreement with the funder, including but not limited to:

- Scope of work, deliverables, and timelines
- Payment terms and budget provisions
- Reporting requirements (financial and narrative)
- Confidentiality and privacy obligations
- Insurance and liability provisions
- Intellectual property rights
- Audit and monitoring provisions
- Recognition of funding and communications protocols
- Termination and default provisions
- Indemnification requirements
- Record retention (6 years post-project)

- Compliance with all applicable legislation

10.2 General Conditions

- **No Legal Obligation:** This RFP does not commit WomanACT to award funding or enter into an agreement. WomanACT reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time without liability.
- **Costs of Proposal Preparation:** WomanACT will not reimburse applicants for any costs associated with preparing or submitting proposals, including participation in interviews or meetings.
- **Negotiation of Terms:** WomanACT reserves the right to negotiate terms with selected organizations before finalizing agreements. Final budget and scope of work may be adjusted through mutual agreement.
- **Confidentiality of Proposals:** All proposals will be kept confidential during the evaluation process. However, as WomanACT receives public funding, information may be subject to disclosure under applicable legislation.
- **Ownership of Materials:** All proposals submitted become the property of WomanACT and will not be returned.
- **Intellectual Property:** Any intellectual property created through the project will be owned by WomanACT and the funder, retaining rights for knowledge mobilization and reporting purposes.
- **Compliance with Legislation:** Selected organizations must comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws and regulations, including employment standards, human rights, occupational health and safety, privacy, and accessibility legislation.
- **Insurance:** Selected organizations must maintain appropriate comprehensive general liability insurance coverage (minimum \$2 million) throughout the project period.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Organizations must declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest and ensure ethical practices in all project activities.
- **Communications:** Selected organizations must acknowledge funding sources for this project in all relevant communications and materials, following guidelines provided by WomanACT.

10.3 Inquiries

For any inquiries, questions, accessibility accommodations, or to request a phone consultation regarding this Request for Proposals, please contact Harmy Mendoza, Executive Director at WomanACT, at hmendoza@womanact.ca

11. Contact Information

Lead Organization:

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Appendix A: MARAC Model Overview

What is MARAC?

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is an evidence-based model originally developed in the United Kingdom to improve outcomes for survivors of high-risk intimate partner violence. The model brings together representatives from multiple agencies - including police, health services, child protection, housing, VAW services, and other relevant sectors - to share information and coordinate responses to cases where survivors face the highest risk of serious harm or homicide.

Key Principles of MARAC:

- Focus on high-risk cases identified through validated risk assessment
- Information sharing among agencies within legal frameworks and survivor consent where possible
- Development of coordinated action plans to increase survivor safety
- Survivor-centered approach with emphasis on autonomy and choice
- Regular meetings to review cases and monitor progress
- Accountability mechanisms to ensure action plans are implemented
- Continuous quality improvement and evaluation

Canadian MARAC Adaptation:

The Canadian MARAC model adapts the UK approach to the Canadian context, including:

- Integration with two existing FOCUS Situation Tables structures in Toronto.
- Alignment with Canadian privacy legislation (PHIPA, FIPPA)
- Cultural adaptations to serve diverse populations
- Incorporation of Indigenous perspectives and trauma-informed practices
- Flexibility to adapt to different community contexts (urban, rural, etc.)
- Focus on capacity building and sustainability within existing systems

Expected Benefits:

- Improved identification of high-risk IPV cases
- Enhanced coordination and information sharing among service providers
- Increased survivor safety through multi-agency action plans
- Reduced duplication and improved efficiency of services
- Better understanding of risk factors and patterns in the community
- Strengthened relationships and trust among partner agencies
- Evidence base for what works in coordinated responses to IPV

Appendix B: Sample Budget Template

Applicants should use this template as a guide for preparing their budget narrative. Actual budgets should be tailored to your organization's needs while remaining within the funding allocations specified.

Budget Category	Year 1 (Jan 2026-Mar 2026)	Year 2 (Apr 2026-Mar 2027)	Total
SALARIES & BENEFITS			
Supervisory Staff (Year 1 - 20% time)	\$9,600	\$0	\$9,600
MARAC Project Coordinator (Year 2 - Full-time)	\$0	\$86,000	\$86,000
Subtotal - Salaries & Benefits	\$9,600	\$86,000	\$95,600
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (Max 15%)			
Supervision and management	\$	\$	\$
Financial administration	\$	\$	\$
Office space allocation	\$	\$	\$
Technology and communications	\$	\$	\$
Other administrative costs	\$	\$	\$
Subtotal - Administrative Costs	\$	\$	\$
OTHER DIRECT COSTS (if applicable)			
Training and professional development	\$	\$	\$
Travel (if required)	\$	\$	\$
Materials and supplies	\$	\$	\$
Subtotal - Other Costs	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST	\$9,600	\$86,000	\$95,600

Budget Notes:

- Salaries must be reasonable and aligned with sector standards
- Benefits should include mandatory employment benefits (CPP, EI, WSIB) and extended health benefits
- Administrative costs should not exceed 15% of total funding
- All costs must be directly related to MARAC implementation
- Detailed justification should be provided for all budget lines