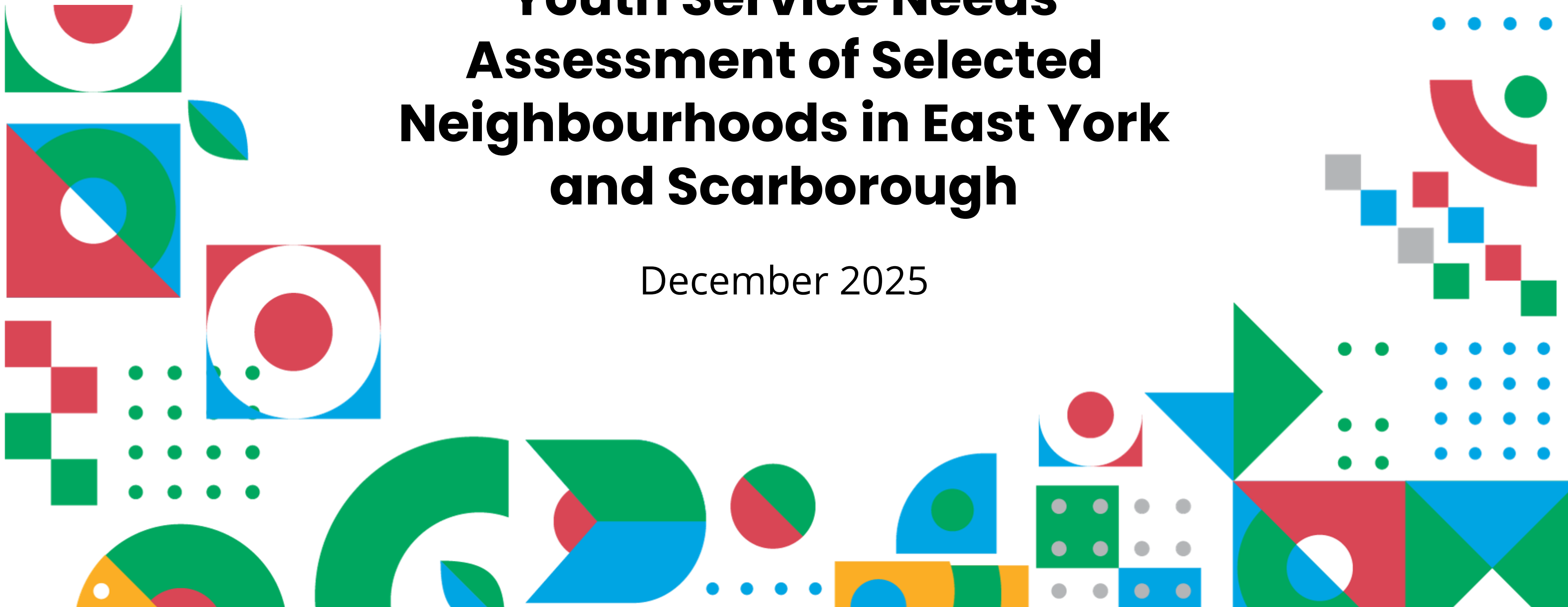


Youth Service Needs Assessment of Selected Neighbourhoods in East York and Scarborough

December 2025



Introduction

Objective: Establish a comprehensive understanding of the concerns, service requirements, and preferences of youth aged 16-24 years; findings and implications are designed to guide the improvement and development of programs and services that promote optimal youth health and well-being.

The project sought to address the **following questions:**

- What are the primary concerns and service needs of youth aged 16-24 living or attached to these neighbourhoods?
- Which programs and services are youth aware of and utilize?
- What is the current status (strengths and limitations) of existing programs and services, with a focus on the youth perspectives regarding timing and scheduling?
- How can the gaps between the current and desired states of youth services and programming be effectively addressed?

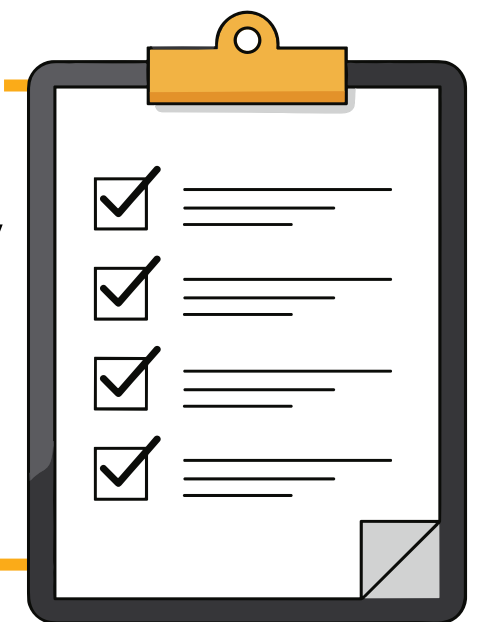
Methodology

- Mixed-methods community engagement approach: Retrospective quantitative data collected from reports and registry databases to create a community profile, and prospective qualitative data collected by focus group consultations and key informant interviews.
- Outreach from community organizations and agencies helped recruit participants by sharing materials, securing venues, and providing experiential insights.
- Snowball sampling method encouraged youth to refer peers to join the focus groups.



Eligibility Criteria

Youth aged 16-24 years who live, attend school, participate in recreational activities, use health and social services, or have other vested interests in any of the following neighbourhoods of interest: Taylor-Massey, Oakridge, O'Connor Parkview, Woodbine Lumsden, East End Danforth, East End Danforth, Birchcliffe-Cliffeside, and Clairlea-Birchmount



Summary of Youth Needs & Concerns



Issues and Challenges Faced by Youth	Related Service Needs
<p>Health: Mental health challenges, difficulty finding a physician, no health card/alternatives, substance use, need for enhanced sexual health education, food insecurity and nutritional/dietary deficiency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible health services and supports: Free and low-cost services, different formats of care, increased awareness of confidentiality policies, culturally-safe practices, promotion of preventative and interventive initiatives, application of a life course model and social determinants of health framework, increased collaboration among youth serving agencies • Support attaching to a primary healthcare provider; accessing health coverage • Youth service providers identifying confirmed or potential instances of self-harm; directing youth to appropriate supports • Harm reduction, addiction, and recovery supports and services • Increasing education on safe sex, including information about preventing STIs, offering safe and open spaces for youth to ask questions • Nutrition education; information about and access to free, low-cost local food programs
<p>Unemployment, inflation, rising unaffordability, and increase in homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career readiness services: Information and guidance on traditional and non-traditional careers paths; support with university/college applications • Life skills training (e.g., “learning how to learn”, CPR, financial literacy) • Referral to social service programs and resources

Summary of Youth Needs & Concerns



Issues and Challenges Faced by Youth	Related Service Needs
<p>Program cuts and discontinuation, lack of maintenance of shared resources and facilities, low visibility and promotion of programs, limited hours of operation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable funding and consistent staffing through improved hiring, employment and retention policies • Supports during transition phases (e.g., facilitating connections to alternative services and spaces) • Ongoing and up-to-date maintenance of facilities to ensure safety, accessibility, and functionality of resources • Enhanced communication and promotion of programs through channels accessible to youth (e.g., social media, agency representatives connecting with youth at schools) • Expanded hours of operation, particularly during the evenings and weekends
<p>Lack of safety in digital and physical spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education on safety protocols • Counselling for affected youth, peers, and their families • Legal supports for affected youth and their families
<p>Limited supports for newcomer youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based legal services for youth and their families • School-based supports and tailored community supports

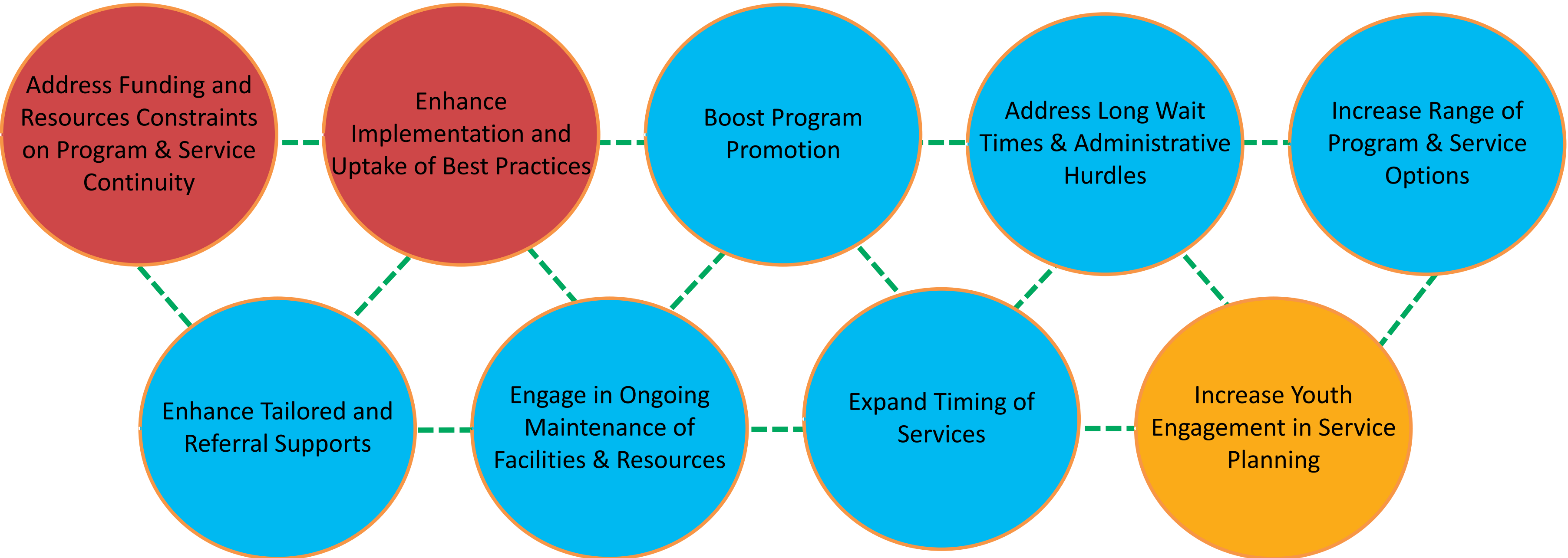
Program Gaps

- Insufficient sustainable funding and resources for youth initiatives.
- Inconsistent staffing levels and low remuneration for youth workers and related positions
- Limited opportunities for collaboration hinder effective implementation of the Integrated Youth Services framework
- Need for more targeted attention to broad social determinants affecting youth health and wellbeing, including poverty, homelessness, access to nutritious food, and financial supports for educational attainment.
- Disparities between youth needs and preferences and the current suite of services provided
- Inadequate information campaigns concerning accessible programs and services
- Extended wait times and administrative barriers for accessing essential services.
- Inaccessible service delivery hours

Program Strengths

- Broad spectrum of programs and services offerings – e.g., health, social services, education, employment, recreation and leisure, cultural or religious identity, or family supports.
- High accessibility: Proximity, availability of programs free of charge or at a nominal fee, accessible registration processes and flexible attendance/participation policies
- Incentives and motivational factors – e.g., TTC tokens/Presto tickets, food, established/positive organizational reputation, volunteer and leadership-building opportunities, letters of reference
- Welcoming environments & supportive staff

Recommendations



Thank You

Contact us to learn more
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