

Frequently Asked Questions - Whānau Ora

What is Whānau Ora?

Whānau Ora is a different way of working with families, which builds on their strengths so they can take ownership of their own needs. It focuses on whānau as a whole, rather than dealing with individuals and their problems.

Why is Whānau Ora needed?

There is a better, more effective way of using the hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money already being spent by various government agencies trying to help whānau across New Zealand.

The Government has listened to feedback from families who are tired of having to deal with multiple agencies in an uncoordinated, fragmented way. This 'five cars up the driveway' approach is not giving whānau the results they want and need, so the government is trying a new approach.

How will Whānau Ora work for families?

Whānau Ora will work in a range of ways, influenced by the approach the whānau chooses to take. Whānau Ora is not a one size fits all approach. It is deliberately designed to be flexible to meet family needs.

Some whānau will want to come up with their own ways of improving their lives, and they may want to work on this with a hapu, iwi, or a non-government organisation (NGO). Other whānau will want to seek help from specialist Whānau Ora providers, who will offer them wrap-around services tailored to their needs. Whānau will have a champion to work with them to identify their needs, develop a plan of action to address them and broker their access to a range of health and social services.

How will it work for providers?

Through Whānau Ora, the Government wants to free up health and social service providers from the dozens of separate contracts for services that currently tie them up. Whānau Ora providers will have streamlined contracts that will be focused on results. They will be funded to work with whānau rather than just individuals.

Government agencies will coordinate efforts at the national and local level to integrate and convert existing contracts. Regional leadership groups will also work to promote effective working relationships between providers and government agencies at the local level.

Why will Whānau Ora be more successful than existing programmes?

Successive Governments have tried to get agencies to work together, and some of these initiatives have worked quite well. Whānau Ora takes this a step further by putting families at the centre, because they are the best people to make decisions for themselves. This is likely to be more successful because families will have real ownership of their solutions.

How much money will Whānau Ora be getting?

In Budget 2010, Whānau Ora will receive \$134.3 million of new funding over four years. In addition to this new money, participating providers will retain the funding they receive through existing contracts, which will be developed into Whānau Ora contracts. It's not possible to put a concrete value on this funding as the first 20 providers have not yet been selected. However, it is estimated the combined value of these contracts will be around \$100 million a year.

How will it be spent?

Some of the new money in the Budget will be used to invest in whānau capacity and capability. At the heart of the Whānau Ora approach is building and maintaining the capability of whānau to be self-managing. Funding will be made available for a range of activities that support local engagement with whānau as they transition to greater self-reliance, including building whānau capability; strengthening whānau connections and supporting the development of whānau leadership. In a practical sense this will mean providing funding to a range of non-government organisations, which will have submitted proposals to Te Puni Kōkiri. Funding will also be used to help providers to change their business models, train staff, and improve their IT systems.

Where is the money coming from?

Of the new money for Whānau Ora, \$120 million is coming from funds that were ring fenced by the previous government for community-based services, under a policy called Pathway to Partnership. Whānau Ora is a promising new approach worthy of investment, so part of that money has now been allocated to Whānau Ora. The money that is being used was not previously committed to any particular initiative or programme. The remaining \$14.3 million is being funded through reprioritisation within Te Puni Kōkiri's baseline.

Will other programmes be cut?

No. The new money for Whānau Ora is uncommitted. Some providers who are already contracted to deliver particular programmes may look to use their existing funding in a different way as they develop their own Whānau Ora approach. The Governance Group will consider those proposals on a case by case basis.

There has been speculation Whānau Ora might receive \$1 billion – why is it getting less?

The Government is rolling out Whānau Ora in a tight fiscal environment, in which it is seeking to better use existing funding where possible. The money invested in Whānau Ora will grow over time as further existing contracts are integrated and converted. Integrating contracts takes time and 20 is a realistic number for the first year.

While many providers have indicated their interest in being involved with Whānau Ora, not all will be in a position to hit the ground running in the first year. It is expected that there will be successive waves of providers, from those already suited to implement Whānau Ora, to those not yet ready but who will be able to engage in the process at later stages.

When and how will Whānau Ora start?

Decisions regarding the selection of providers will be made by the Whānau Ora Governance Group, following an open Expression of Interest process in June and July. Initial assessments will be completed by the end of September. The Governance Group will then work with providers who are selected through the Expressions of Interest process on implementation. It is expected that implementation of Whānau Ora will begin from October.

Regional Leadership Groups will have an important role in considering proposals for funding to support whānau to work with hapu, iwi and NGOs on their own initiatives. These groups will be established across 10 regions and will have representatives of local agencies including Te Puni Kōkiri, the Ministry of Social Development and District Health Boards, along with community representatives appointed by the Minister Responsible for Whānau Ora.

Who can apply for the funding?

Providers will be selected against specific criteria developed by the Governance Group, based on recommendations in the Whānau Ora: Report of the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives. Criteria may include providers who:

- are delivering effective health and social services direct to whānau;
- are effectively managing multiple contracts in the health and social services area; and
- have a demonstrable record of effective service delivery to whānau.

Who can access Whānau Ora?

Whānau Ora will be available on the basis of need. It is a Maori designed approach and it is likely to have high appeal in the Maori community. But it will be available to all.

How will families who need Whānau Ora become involved with it?

Families can get involved with Whānau Ora in a number of ways. For example, they may hear about a Whānau Ora provider in their community and decide to give it a go. Or, they may get referred to a Whānau Ora provider by a government agency like Work and Income or by someone like their local budget advisory service. Or, they might find their medical centre has become a Whānau Ora provider and is now offering Whānau Ora services. Some Whānau Ora providers and champions may also choose to be proactive, and get out in the community to talk to people about Whānau Ora.

How will you measure the success of Whānau Ora?

Success will be measured in terms of the outcomes achieved for whānau, for providers, for communities and for the New Zealand population. As whānau will be setting their own goals they will have the opportunity to track their own progress. Success will also be measured in terms of the value and benefits gained for government investment.

In keeping with the intent of the Whānau Ora concept, a research, evaluation and monitoring programme is being developed to provide concrete measures and a practical process for measuring and reporting achievements.

When will we see results from Whānau Ora?

It is expected that the Government will see changes in the way that providers do business at the end of year one. Proven results for families will be demonstrable by the end of year two through the Whānau Ora research programme.

How will providers be held accountable for the money?

Whānau Ora contracts will be focused on results. This means that providers will be held accountable for what they achieve with government funding, rather than just what they do.

Where providers have existing contracts with government agencies to deliver programmes and services, providers will continue to be accountable through those agencies for those contracts. For new contracts to support the development of new approaches, providers will be accountable through Te Puni Kōkiri for what they achieve with the funding provided.

The Whānau Ora Taskforce recommended an independent trust – why isn't there one?

The Government has decided that during the establishment phase of Whānau Ora, it is important that there is close Ministerial and departmental oversight and ownership of Whānau Ora.