

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

APPLICANT GUIDE

FOR

**SKILLS LINK AND CAREER FOCUS
PROGRAMS**

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GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

This *Guide* helps applicants develop proposals for federal funding offered by Service Canada under the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy. It also outlines the specific roles and responsibilities that must be met in projects approved for funding.

SKILLS LINK AND CAREER FOCUS PROGRAMS

The Government of Canada's Skills Link and Career Focus Programs are delivered by Service Canada on behalf of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. These programs reflect the Government of Canada's commitment to help young Canadians between the ages of 15 and 30 (inclusive), particularly those facing barriers to employment, access programs and services to help them gain the skills, knowledge, career information and work experience they need to find and maintain employment and make a successful transition into the labour market.

Thirteen Government of Canada departments and agencies¹ work in partnership with all levels of government, the private sector and community organizations to help youth prepare for and participate in the world of work. The Youth Employment Strategy promotes cooperation among Aboriginal communities, public health authorities, colleges and universities, businesses, and not-for-profit and voluntary organizations.

¹ The federal departments and agencies involved in the Youth Employment Strategy include: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Canadian Food Inspection Agency; Canadian International Development Agency; Canadian Heritage; Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Environment Canada; Service Canada; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; Industry Canada; National Research Council Canada; Natural Resources Canada; and Parks Canada.

SKILLS LINK

OBJECTIVE

Skills Link helps youth facing barriers to employment develop the broad range of skills, knowledge and work experience they need to participate in the job market. This program offers a wide range of activities that can be tailored to meet individual needs and provide more intensive assistance over longer periods of time.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program is a client-centered program, designed to respond to the individual needs of youth facing barriers to employment. During the client assessment process, employability skills, issues and needs are identified, as well as employment goals. Youth selected to participate in Skills Link activities then develop an employment action plan and are case managed by a case manager or project manager. The case manager's guide and support participants while they work through their employment action plans and develop their employability skills. Youth benefit from this client-centered approach and the ongoing support that helps them to successfully complete activities and, ultimately, find and keep a job.

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

To participate in Skills Link projects, youth must be:

- between 15 and 30 years of age (inclusive) at the time of intake/selection;
- out of school;
- a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or person on whom refugee status has been conferred²
- legally entitled to work according to the relevant provincial/territorial legislation and regulations;³
- not in receipt of Employment Insurance (EI) benefits;⁴ and

² Refugee protection must be conferred under the [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#). Persons awaiting refugee status, as well as those who hold a temporary visitor visa, student visa or work visa, are ineligible to participate in a Youth Employment Strategy initiative.

³ In those provincial/territorial jurisdictions where labour legislation states a different minimum age for employment, the age eligibility for Skills Link should be adjusted to reflect provincial/territorial requirements. Any underage participants will have to leave the program regardless of the point at which they are identified. Any other applicable legislation or regulations must also be observed.

⁴ Participants must not be in receipt of EI. Priority will be given to non EI-eligible youth (i.e., not entitled to Part 1 or Part II benefits). EI recipients wishing to participate in a Skills Link project should consult an EI agent and voluntarily withdraw from EI.

- in need of assistance to overcome employment barriers.

Skills Link participants are youth at greater risk of not making a successful transition to the workplace and establishing themselves within the labour market. The assessment of risk encompasses a broad range of social, economic and demographic factors. All factors considered must be documented in the participant's file.

The following list may be used as examples:

- high school non-completion;
- person with a disability;
- Aboriginal origin;
- visible or ethnic minority;
- health, drug and/or alcohol-related problems;
- residing in a rural or remote location;
- single parent;
- low levels of literacy and numeracy;
- language barriers;
- street involvement;
- contact with justice, child welfare or social assistance systems;
- homelessness, or at risk of becoming homeless;
- lack of social supports (family, friends or community supports);
- poor self-and/or behaviour-management abilities; or
- other reasons (to be specified and assessed as part of the proposal approval process).

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Financial assistance may be provided to cover all or a portion of the costs associated with operating and delivering approved activities. Costs may include:

- income support to individuals (allowances or wages) based on the prevailing provincial/territorial minimum wage rate;
- mandatory employment related costs;
- additional support to cover all or part of the incremental costs for individuals to participate, such as dependent care, travel or transportation;
- additional costs for persons with disabilities;
- completion bonuses;
- other support to cover the cost of items associated with the youth's participation;
- overhead costs including wages and employment related costs for staff, licenses, permits, fees for professional services, bank charges, utilities, material, supplies, travel, insurance, rental of premises, leasing or purchase of equipment, audits, assessment and evaluations;
- costs associated with the Workers' Compensation actual costs or assessment paid directly to the provincial/territorial Workers' Compensation; and

- costs associated with central administrative functions of the applicant organization that are used to support agreement activities.

CAPITAL COSTS

Any asset with a purchase cost exceeding \$1,000 requires prior written approval from Service Canada, and must include a plan for disposal upon completion of the project. Also, it is an excellent and sound business practice to obtain more than one quote when purchasing capital assets.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The following is a list of activities eligible for funding under the Skills Link program:

- A. Community-based Planning
- B. Pre-operational Assistance
- C. Employment Services for Youth:
 - i) Level One: Youth Outreach and Client Assessment Services
 - ii) Level Two: Case Management and Employment Sessions
- D. Employment Interventions for Youth:
 - i) Group-based Employability Skills
 - ii) Employability Skills through Community Service
 - iii) Employability Skills through Work Experience
 - iv) Employability Skills through Entrepreneurship
 - v) Work Experience
 - vi) Individual Skills Enhancement

Skills Link project activities can be supported individually or in combination, and should form part of the participant's return-to-work action plan. For example, both levels of Employment Services can be delivered as part of one contribution agreement. Employment Services can be combined with one or more of the interventions. Similarly, more than one intervention can be included in a single agreement, i.e. group-based employability skills and work experience.

A. COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

In communities where the nature and needs of youth have not been well-defined, community-based planning provides funding to facilitate a collaborative, community-based approach towards identifying and addressing youth employment issues, resulting in a long-term strategy to develop and introduce, or improve, a coordinated support network for young people seeking to enter the labour market.

Objectives

Funding for community-based planning must reflect the following objectives:

- to develop a local partnership in order to identify and address problems related to the employment integration of young people;

- to collect, consolidate and share available information on problems related to youth employment;
- to prepare, establish and implement action plans to enable the youth labour force to meet the demands of the job market; and
- to enable the implementation of an effective continuum of employment services to youth.

Eligible partners are individuals or groups of people who recognize that there are youth challenges in the community, specifically youth employment problems. They want to solve these problems and are willing to invest time, energy and resources to address the problems in a concerted manner.

Community-based planning **must** include in-kind and/or monetary contributions from other partners.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities under community-based planning include:

- identifying and reporting on labour market needs, problems and barriers facing young people trying to enter the local job market;
- identifying measures to reduce gaps between supply and demand in the local job market and, in turn, facilitating the employment integration of young people;
- identifying interventions or services that will allow young people to overcome employment barriers;
- identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the local service network with a view to better addressing the needs of young people; and
- engaging partners in preparing and implementing a local action plan to resolve the problems related to the employment integration of youth.

Community-based planning cannot be used to:

- create an agency or employer-employee relationship with Service Canada;
- establish a service contract;
- support the contribution recipient's regular activities;
- encourage dependence on Service Canada funding;
- replace an existing activity;
- duplicate pre-operational assistance, which is a separate activity under Skills Link; or
- develop planning documents solely for the purpose of Service Canada.

Funding Parameters

Funding from Service Canada for community-based planning is available for a maximum of thirty (30) weeks over a 3-year period. The maximum contribution will be \$50,000 over the entire 3-year period and the plan should be updated annually during the intervening years.

Expected Results

Expected results should be described in concrete terms, be realistic and be measurable. Examples include:

- number of partners recruited;
- network(s) established;
- number of reports produced;
- action plan produced.

B. PRE-OPERATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Funding can be provided through Pre-operational Assistance where the planning process has identified gaps in services to youth facing barriers in the community. Pre-operational Assistance allows Service Canada to work with proponents to provide assistance in the development of proposals to address these gaps. Skills Link allows for the provision of financial support, where needed, for the development of proposals that contribute to Skills Link objectives.

Eligible Activities

Typically, pre-operational assistance is provided where the development of the proposal involves a significant amount of effort and investment. There may be a need for the proponent to conduct literature reviews, surveys, or other research, or to consult with experts in order to obtain the information and insight needed to fully develop the proposal.

The proposal concept must clearly describe the specific activities that are to be undertaken (i.e. justifying the provision of pre-operational funding), as well as the responsibilities of the proponent, deliverables, timelines, and level of financial assistance that is being requested.

Ineligible Activities

Pre-operational funding is not to be used for the operation of a project or an organization, nor is it to be used for general research or capacity building for an organization. Any activity included as part of a pre-operational agreement must be necessary and clearly linked to the development of a Skills Link proposal.

Funding Parameters

The financial assistance provided through pre-operational funding will be based on the nature of the proposal and the extent of the organization's need. However, pre-operational funding can be provided for a period not exceeding 12 weeks and an amount not more than \$10,000.

C. EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR YOUTH

There are two levels of Employment Services for Youth under Skills Link:

- i) Level One: Youth Outreach and Client Assessment Services, and
- ii) Level Two: Case Management and Employment Sessions.

i) Level One – Youth Outreach and Client Assessment Services

Level One Employment Services provides a means to connect with young people and engage them in an assessment of their employability needs. As a result, young people who do not meet Skills Link eligibility criteria may participate in these activities. Level One funding parameters are \$400 per individual served per year.

Youth Outreach

Youth Outreach activities may be funded when the planning process identifies specific priority groups within the youth population (i.e. single parents who have dropped out of school, young persons with disabilities) who need but do not actively seek out employment services. This activity can be particularly useful in rural areas where there are identified labour market adjustment issues for young people but a lack of services or infrastructure to address those issues.

Outreach involves taking a proactive approach to working with young people. Rather than waiting for young people to visit an employment services office or youth centre, the Outreach organization will identify effective means to locate and connect with disenfranchised youth (i.e. by holding special events in areas frequented by these young people). These events would be designed to provide an opportunity for the organization to establish dialogue with the targeted youth group, and provide information such as labour market information (careers, occupations, employment and other related subjects), job listings and job search tips/aids, etc.

The outreach organization also may offer itinerant services where young people are unable or disinclined to visit a youth centre. The goal is to engage young people and encourage them to consider their futures, options and employment goals, and ultimately to participate in a structured process of identifying their employability needs (i.e. client assessment).

Once a collaborative relationship is established, there is a greater likelihood that a young person will decide to set employment goals, develop an action plan, and ultimately engage in employment interventions. Given this natural progression from outreach to needs identification and action planning, an organization funded to provide Youth Outreach also may be funded to conduct client assessment and/or case management.

Client Assessment

Client assessment is required for all potential Skills Link participants to ensure that funding is used for young people who require employability assistance, and that the interventions provided are appropriate to identified needs. Client assessment enables a clear identification of the needs, goals and gaps that are being addressed, and a better match of interventions with individual needs. As well, it provides a means for those young people not yet ready to deal with employability issues to be referred to appropriate sources of assistance within the community. For example, where an assessment reveals that the young person is not ready for Skills Link because of a personal, social or health issue, the individual is referred to an alternate service (e.g. addiction or personal counselling or housing assistance, depending on the nature of the issue/need).

The interviewing and information gathering that are part of the client assessment process enable the service provider to develop a profile of the young person's background and circumstances. The gained insight allows the service provider and youth to determine employment and skill enhancement needs, as per the four employability dimensions of career decision-making, skill enhancement, job search and employment maintenance.

In addition to identifying needs within the employability dimensions, the client assessment can bring to light other factors impacting on the young person's ability to participate in action plan activities and/or employment. Examples include difficulties with child care, family needs, and transportation. Where there are such constraints, the action plan will also include specific steps that the individual will take to deal with these issues and outline any assistance that may be contributed by the service provider.

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment also is an eligible service activity. It can be used by a service provider when there are indications of a physical, mental, social or educational condition affecting an individual's progression through an action plan and ultimate participation in the labour market.

Diagnostic assessment is conducted by specialists (diagnosticians) who select and administer the appropriate tests, and report the findings to the service provider and the individual. It is to be used only when needed to obtain critical insights about the individual capacities that cannot be obtained through other means. It will be funded under Skills Link only when it is otherwise unavailable through mainstream education/health/social service systems, and the costs not recoverable elsewhere.

Diagnostic assessment can only be conducted with the express, written consent of the young person; the results are for the benefit and use of only the service provider (i.e. the person who requested the assessment) and the individual.

ii) Level Two – Case Management and Employment Sessions

Level Two Employment Services includes case management and employment sessions (group or individual). Because these are assisted services, they are available only to young people who meet Skills Link eligibility criteria. While two activity types are included in this service level, an agreement may be developed for one or both of these activities. Level Two funding parameters are \$700 per individual served per year.

Case Management

Case management is a process that involves supporting an individual as he/she works through an employment action plan; it is required for each individual participating in a Skills Link intervention. It can be provided as well to eligible individuals participating in other employment interventions, whether funded by Service Canada or other entities.

The case manager tracks the participant's activity, and provides follow-up support as needed throughout the action plan. Progress is monitored and documented, and if problems are identified that affect the individual's participation in an intervention, then they are assisted to overcome these problems and continue the activities. This approach increases the participant's successful outcome.

Once a participant has completed planned interventions, he/she may need assistance with a job search, including résumé writing and interview techniques. The case manager will provide this assistance or refer the young person to an appropriate resource within the community.

As a principle, case management continues until the participant completes or abandons the action plan. Case management provided under Skills Link can continue for a maximum of 36 months (consecutive or cumulative) for interventions funded by Service Canada.

Employment Sessions

Employment sessions can be done at either a group or individual level.

Group Sessions

Group sessions are short-term activities designed to assist groups of young people in searching for and obtaining work. Group sessions must include employment-oriented subject matter, such as career and occupational decision-making, job preparation, job search, job maintenance, etc., and are provided in an established format with a facilitator. Participants are given an opportunity to acquire information and skills, and to apply these skills in a supported environment.

There is no minimum or maximum duration for a group session of this nature, but in order to be effective and allow time for participants to practice new skills, a minimum length of three hours is recommended.

Where there is a need to cover a wider range of employability skills and in greater depth, the Skills Link Group-Based Employability Skills Intervention can be used to provide workshops over a number of weeks.

Individual Sessions

In some cases, it may be determined through client assessment that a young person's needs in addressing employment barriers would best be addressed through one-on-one sessions. When there is such a need, individual sessions may be provided to cover the same types of subjects as available through group sessions.

There is no minimum or maximum duration for individual sessions. In most cases, a series of sessions will be required to deal with employability issues.

D. EMPLOYMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUTH

Employment interventions for youth can include income support, which is a means for the participants to support themselves while they are taking steps to become employed. Additional support to participants may also be provided on a case by case basis, and could include incremental expenses for dependant care, travel and additional costs for persons with disabilities. In determining additional supports, consideration must be given to financial support from other sources such as Social/Income Assistance.

The following employment interventions are available to young people through Skills Link:

- i. Group-Based Employability Skills
- ii. Employability Skills through Community Service
- iii. Employability Skills through Work Experience
- iv. Employability Skills through Entrepreneurship
- v. Work Experience
- vi. Individual Skills Enhancement.

Funding Considerations

The following information is provided in addition to specific funding parameters outlined in the following sections describing each intervention.

For Skills Link projects, the maximum cost per participant, including all Employment Services and Interventions for Youth, is \$25,000, with the exception of: Group-based Employability Skills; Work Experience; and Individual Skills Enhancement. Where required, and based on the recommendation of the case manager, individuals can have access to other supports up to a maximum of \$500. For all interventions except Individual Skills Enhancement, the use of a \$500 maximum completion bonus for participants can also be considered, where deemed appropriate and where not detrimental to the social welfare of the participant. These bonuses are in addition to any allowances/wages that are paid, and should the contribution recipient choose to pay completion bonuses, they must be paid to all eligible participants at the end of their intervention(s). The participants receive this lump sum upon successful completion of a Skills Link intervention(s) with a minimum individual participation totaling 12 weeks per contribution agreement. The only exception to this, considered on a case by case basis, will be for participants who complete at least 12 weeks of a Skills Link intervention(s), but leave a project before it is completed to take the next step in their employment action plan.

Amounts needed to accommodate persons with disabilities may be in addition to the maximum cost per participant. A rationale for these additional expenses, including a description of the supports needed, must be developed by the case manager, documented and retained on file.

i) Group-Based Employability Skills

The Group-based Employability Skills intervention is a pre-employment activity for young people who are not yet prepared to enter the world of work, or who need some additional development before advancing to a work experience. This group-based intervention offers young people the opportunity to participate in workshops to learn or enhance skills transferable to the workplace, such as leadership, teamwork and communication skills, as well as develop personal qualities, including self-esteem and self-reliance. Group-based employability skills must help to prepare participants for future work or career decisions, and/or assist them with seeking, obtaining and maintaining employment. This intervention is **not** to be used to support occupation-specific skills development or accreditation. For example, a 15-week bartending course or a 24-week carpentry apprenticeship would not be eligible.

Financial support will be provided to participants where no other support (social assistance, municipal support) is being provided. Service Canada will pay an allowance equal to the provincial/territorial minimum wage. The use of a \$500 maximum completion bonus for participants can also be considered, where deemed appropriate and where not detrimental to the social welfare of the participant. Where allowances are provided, the maximum cost per participant is \$12,000.

The maximum duration for this intervention is 24 weeks; interventions of shorter duration are permitted as long as there is sufficient time for participants to build the required skills. Participation in this intervention should be full-time (i.e. 30 hours per week or more).

ii) Employability Skills through Community Service

The development of life and employability skills through community service is often appropriate for young people who face greater barriers to entering the labour market, and who are not yet ready for a work experience with an employer. The intervention provides participants with an opportunity to develop skills and apply them as a member of a team while providing service to others.

In serving others, participants are provided not only with a venue for applying new skills but also a means to experience personal development and growth. They contribute to the building of better, stronger communities by addressing issues of local concern and fostering a greater awareness of community needs. This experience enables them to strengthen their sense of accomplishment, self-reliance and self-esteem.

Service Canada will pay an allowance equal to the provincial/territorial minimum wage. The use of a \$500 maximum completion bonus for participants can also be considered, where deemed appropriate and where not detrimental to the social welfare of the participant. The maximum cost per participant is \$25,000.

Interventions are typically 52 weeks in length, but may be longer or shorter where justified by the needs of participants. Participation in this intervention should be full-time (i.e. 30 hours per week or more).

iii) Employability Skills through Work Experience

The Employability Skills through Work Experience intervention provides employability skills within an activity focused on the exposure of participants to the world of work. Workshops that help build participants' employability skills are blended with periods where participants work directly with employers. This intervention can be used for an individual or for a group of young people.

The focus is on exposure to work and the majority of the participants' time is, therefore, dedicated to work experience. For example, participants may spend three days per week in work experience and the remaining two days in employability skills workshops. There must be a clear link between the skills and the work experience portions, so that participants can apply what they learn in workshops to their work experiences. Ideally, work experiences will be supported by workplace coaching, to maximize the benefit to be gained by the participant.

Financial support to participants is in the form of wages during the majority of the time dedicated to the work experience. Wages must equal or exceed the provincial/territorial minimum wage rate; however, Service Canada's contribution will not exceed the minimum wage rate. The use of a \$500 maximum completion bonus for participants can also be considered, where deemed appropriate and where not detrimental to the social welfare of the participant. The maximum cost per participant is \$25,000.

Interventions are typically 52 weeks in length, but may be longer or shorter where justified by the needs of participants. Participation in this intervention should be full-time (i.e. 30 hours per week or more). Please note the hours spent in workshop/training are not insurable hours.

iv) Employability Skills through Entrepreneurship

This intervention provides entrepreneurial skills within an activity where groups of young people are given exposure to the world of self-employment. Through experiences focused on entrepreneurship, youth develop skills that will equip them to establish an enterprise and become capable business people, thereby helping them make a successful transition into the labour market.

Activities could include skill enhancement, assistance with business plan development and implementation, support during business start-up, mentorship, and aftercare. Workshops that help build participants' entrepreneurial skills could be blended with periods where participants develop business plans, then launch and operate their own businesses. While workshop topics would be based on the Conference Board of Canada's Life Skills and Employability Skills, they would be tailored to develop skills needed by entrepreneurs. Topics could include marketing, computer use, financial management, bookkeeping, communications, developing a business plan, and accessing loans/capital. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the participant is self-sufficient in operating their new business by the end of the project. If the business is not adequately established by that time, the contribution recipient can assist the individual in identifying other sources of financial support until the business begins to generate adequate revenue.

Business start-up costs such as legal fees, accountant and business registration fees, materials or supplies, rent/lease payments, etc. **are not eligible** under Employability Skills through Entrepreneurship.

Participants receive an allowance equal to or exceeding the provincial/territorial minimum wage rate. However, Service Canada's contribution will not exceed the minimum wage rate. The use of a \$500 maximum completion bonus for participants can also be considered, where deemed appropriate and where not detrimental to the social welfare of the participant. The maximum cost per participant is \$25,000.

The maximum duration for this intervention is 52 weeks in length; interventions of shorter duration are permitted as long as the needs of participants are met. Participation in this intervention is group-based and must be full-time (i.e. 30 hours per week or more).

v) Work Experience

Work Experience activities provide youth with opportunities to work with employers to develop and enhance employability and occupational skills through practical on-the-job experience. Ideally, work experiences are supported by workplace coaching to maximize the benefit to be gained by the participant. Work experience can be arranged on an individual or group basis.

Participants receive wages that equal or exceed the provincial/territorial minimum wage rate. However, Service Canada's contribution does not exceed the minimum wage rate. The use of a \$500 maximum completion bonus for participants can also be considered, where deemed appropriate and where not detrimental to the social welfare of the participant. Overhead costs are not eligible under an individual work experience agreement, but are allowable when a contribution recipient is coordinating work experience activities for a group of youth. The maximum cost per participant is \$18,000 for single work experiences, and \$20,000 for work experiences involving groups.

The typical duration is 52 weeks but an intervention may be longer or shorter, where justified by the needs of the participant. Participation in this intervention should be full-time (i.e. 30 hours per week or more) for groups of participants; part-time participation may be negotiated for individual interventions, where justified by the participant's circumstances and action plan.

vi) Individual Skills Enhancement

This intervention enables youth to participate in short term courses that fill specific, identified gaps in their education and skill development. The need for this intervention must be identified through client assessment and documented on the participant's employment action plan. It is to be used when there is no other means of support available to meet the individual's identified skill needs. Courses supported under Individual Skills Enhancement are pre-employment in nature or entry-level courses which are pre-requisites for longer term programs of study.

Individual Skills Enhancement may be delivered by Service Canada or contributions can be made to a Community Coordinator to carry out activities that meet the objectives of this intervention.

Provincial/territorial concurrence must have been obtained before this intervention can proceed. Presently, the following provinces conducting Individual Skills Enhancement through Skills Link are; Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, New Brunswick, Prince-Edward Island and Yukon.

Where the skills acquisition is for Aboriginal youth living in designated First Nations communities, financial support may be provided without the agreement of the government of the province or territory in which the activity will take place.

The types of courses that can be supported under Individual Skills Enhancement are:

- General employment readiness;
- Literacy and numeracy enhancement;

- Structured General Equivalency Diploma preparation and upgrading;
- Pre-employment courses;
- Occupation-specific courses.

The maximum contribution per participant is \$10,000 per 12 week course which is comprised of a maximum of \$5,000 for course-related costs including tuition, books, and mandatory student fees and a maximum of \$5,000, where there is evidence of need for income support, transportation, travel and dependant care.

Funds needed to accommodate participants with disabilities may be in addition to the maximum.

Unlike the other interventions under Skills Link, Individual Skills Enhancement requires the payment of financial assistance directly to the individual except when young people are being assisted through a Community Coordinator.

CAREER FOCUS

OBJECTIVES

Career Focus is a client-centered program for post-secondary graduate youth designed to meet the needs of a knowledge-based economy. The program links highly skilled young people with potential employers, and offers financial support to Canadian employers and organizations to provide a combination of career-related work experience and innovative skill development and learning opportunities.

Career Focus aims to:

- increase the supply of highly qualified workers;
- facilitate the transition of highly-skilled young people to a rapidly changing labour market;
- promote the benefits of advanced studies; and
- demonstrate federal leadership by investing in the skills required to meet the needs of the knowledge economy.

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

To participate in Career Focus projects, youth must be:

- between the ages of 15 and 30 (inclusive) at the time of intake/selection;
- post-secondary graduates⁵;
- a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or person on whom refugee status has been conferred⁶;
- out of school;
- legally entitled to work according to the relevant provincial/territorial legislation and regulations⁷; and
- not in receipt of Employment Insurance (EI) benefits⁸.

⁵ Graduates of degree or diploma programs from universities, colleges, post-secondary schools of technology, post-secondary institutes and CEGEPS. These may be either publicly or privately funded institutions.

⁶ Refugee protection must be conferred under the [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#). Persons awaiting refugee status, as well as those who hold a temporary visitor visa, student visa or work visa, are ineligible to participate in a Youth Employment Strategy initiative.

⁷ In those provincial/territorial jurisdictions where labour legislation states a different minimum age for employment, the age eligibility for Career Focus should be adjusted to reflect provincial/territorial requirements. Any underage participants will have to leave the program regardless of the point at which they are identified. Any other applicable legislation or regulations must also be observed.

Given the skills level of the post-secondary graduates, the number of work experiences available under the Youth Employment Strategy, and the number of youth needing experience, youth are limited to one Career Focus work experience opportunity.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Financial assistance may be provided to cover all or a portion of the costs associated with operating and delivering approved activities. Costs may include:

- income support to individuals (wages) based on the prevailing provincial/territorial minimum wage rate;
- mandatory employment related costs;
- additional support to cover all or part of the Incremental costs for individuals to participate, such as dependent care, travel or transportation;
- additional costs for persons with disabilities;
- other support to cover the cost of items associated with the youth's participation;
- overhead costs including wages and employment related costs for staff, licenses, permits, fees for professional services, bank charges, utilities, material, supplies, travel, insurance, rental of premises, leasing or purchase of equipment, audits, assessment and evaluations;
- costs associated with the workers' compensation actual costs or assessment paid directly to the provincial/territorial workers' compensation;
- costs associated with central administrative functions of the applicant organization that are used to support agreement activities.

CAPITAL COSTS

Any asset with a purchase cost exceeding \$1,000 requires prior written approval from Service Canada, and must include a plan for disposal upon completion of the project. Also it is an excellent and sound business practice to obtain more than one quote when purchasing capital assets.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The only activity supported under Career Focus is a career-related work experience. This activity is restricted to post-secondary graduates and should be tailored to meet the skill gaps of the young person. Client assessment is therefore required for all potential Career Focus participants. Work experience agreements can be for an individual work placement or involve a group of young people.

⁸ Participants must not be in receipt of EI. Priority will be given to non EI-eligible youth (i.e., not entitled to Part I or Part II benefits). EI recipients wishing to participate in a Career Focus project should consult an EI agent and voluntarily withdraw from EI.

Work experiences should be supported by workplace coaching and/or mentoring, to maximize the benefit to be gained by the participant. Costs incurred by the host employer related to coaching and mentoring (i.e. coach and/or mentor wages) will not be covered by Service Canada contribution funds.

Under Career Focus, Service Canada can support advanced employability skills for youth when they are offered in tandem with career-related work experience. Funding may be provided for advanced employability skill activities such as project management, entrepreneurial and leadership skills, communication, teamwork and career essential skills workshops. These workshops must be part of the project, and must never exceed 50% of the duration of the work experience.

FUNDING PARAMETERS

Participants receive wages at the applicable prevailing wage rate for the occupation. The maximum cost per participant is \$15,000. Amounts needed to accommodate participants with disabilities would be in addition to this maximum.

The duration of the work experience will vary in order for the participant to obtain the skills identified during the assessment. The maximum duration for a participant intervention under Career Focus is one year, including advanced employability skills workshops. Participation in Career Focus would normally be full-time (i.e. 30 hours per week or more).

EXPECTED RESULTS

Expected results should be described in concrete terms, be realistic and measurable. Examples include:

- the expected final outcomes, including how the project activities will assist participants in: acquiring advanced employability skills, finding employment, becoming self-employed, or returning to advanced studies;
- the target number of youth participating in the project and the anticipated number of participants who will have completed the project and achieved the results listed above (e.g. 20 youth will be participating in this project. Of these 20: 15 will have found employment, 5 will have returned to advanced studies, and all 20 will have acquired advanced employability skills); and
- other positive outcomes related to the proposed activities.

IMPORTANT - Under Career Focus, Service Canada has established a minimum success rate of 80% of participants being employed or returning to advanced studies upon completion of their work experience.

YOUTH PROGRAMS DELIVERED BY SERVICE CANADA

All youth programs delivered by Service Canada share similar guiding principles, eligibility requirements, contribution recipient roles and responsibilities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Youth program activities are based on the following principles:

- to provide youth with increased access and a broader mix of tailored programs and services that will encourage lifelong learning and their full participation in the labour market;
- to ensure youth have the information, skills and work experience they need to find and keep a job;
- to foster innovative approaches to developing improved employability skills and work opportunities for Canadian youth;
- to support collaboration and strengthen partnerships among federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, and businesses, employers, not-for-profit and voluntary organizations, Aboriginal groups, other youth-serving agencies and community-based organizations; and
- to respect the Government of Canada's *Official Languages Act* and *Employment Equity Act*.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants who are eligible to receive funding from Service Canada towards a Youth Employment Strategy project include:

- businesses;
- organizations (including not-for-profit, professional, employer and labour associations);
- public health and educational institutions;
- band/tribal councils, Aboriginal organizations;
- individuals; and
- provincial/territorial and municipal governments.

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

Each youth program targets the participation of specific youth groups. For detailed information concerning participant eligibility by program, please refer to the Skills Link, and Career Focus sections of this guide.

APPLICANTS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Applicants are responsible for:

- designing and delivering the project;
- recruiting and selecting eligible participants;

- securing the involvement of partners;
- managing the overall finances of the project, including paying income support to participants when required;
- adhering to good management practices by maintaining accurate progress reports and financial records;
- providing support and supervision to participants; and
- ensuring accountability by reporting, tracking and maintaining participant information for follow-up.

PARTNERSHIPS

Young Canadians have very complex needs which require the expertise of many partners. The Youth Employment Strategy encourages cooperation among various community stakeholders such as Aboriginal communities, public health authorities, colleges and universities, businesses, as well as not-for-profit and voluntary organizations.

When developing a proposal, the applicant should also demonstrate that a partnership has been formed with several other organizations and clearly outline the commitment, expertise and resources that each partner will contribute to the project.

THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

An application package **must** be completed and signed, as required, by authorized representative(s) of the organization. Where a deadline has been established, no additional documents will be accepted after this date unless requested by Service Canada. In order to be included in the assessment and recommendation process, application packages **must** include the following completed documents:

- Application for Funding [**EMP 5209 (2006-01-005) E**]
- Forecast of Cash Flow [**EMP 5216 (2005-11-004) E**]
- Environmental Pre-Screening Questionnaire [**EMP 5213 (2004-08) E**]
- Proposal Description (see Proposal Description section)
- Budget Template for Contribution Project Proposal.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicants **must** submit their completed and signed application package to their local Service Canada Centre.

Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of their submission within two weeks of receipt.

Service Canada is not obligated to enter into any contribution agreements with any applicants. For projects that are national in scope, applicants should visit youth.gc.ca for information on application deadlines. Only project activities that take place in Canada will be eligible for funding.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title - will be used when referring to the proposal.

Project Summary - provide a summary of the project, including the number of participants, the location, the duration and the nature of the project activities.

Project Objectives - provide a clear and measurable description of:

- Project objectives, activities, goals and measurable milestones;
- Expected outcomes, including how project activities will benefit the community and assist participants in acquiring employability skills, finding employment, becoming self-employed, or returning to school;
- Targets for the number of youth completing the project and the number of participants achieving the results listed above; and
- Other positive outcomes related to proposed activities.

For more information regarding the objectives of the Skills Link and Career Focus programs, please refer to the relevant sections of this guide.

Proposed Activities - are key components of the proposal and should be clearly defined. Only project activities that take place in Canada will be eligible for funding. For further clarification about eligible project activities for Skills Link and Career Focus programs, please refer to the appropriate program section.

Evaluation Criteria - should provide a description of how each participant's progress and achievements, and/or the overall success of the project will be measured, monitored and reported during and after the project.

Expected Results - should clearly define the expected outcomes the project will achieve. For more details, please refer to the Skills Link and Career Focus sections in this Guide.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant's Background, Mandate and Expertise

This section should include a description of the applicant's:

- history and number of years in business;
- mandate and traditional ongoing activities;
- ability to manage the proposed project (e.g. human resources, financial planning/budgeting experience, etc.); and

- experience in dealing with youth.

Past Projects and Achievements

This section should include a description of:

- Previous experience in delivering youth-related projects funded by Service Canada and by other federal departments, municipal, provincial, or territorial governments (include department, responsible project officer, project name, date length, funding, proposed targets and outcomes); and
- Previous projects.

If you are applying for funding from other areas of Service Canada and/or other government departments under the Youth Employment Strategy, please indicate: the name of the government department, the amount of funding requested and/or approved, the number of participants and how the activities differ from the ones requested in the proposal for funding under Service Canada.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Targeted Participant Profile (where applicable)

Participant information should describe the:

- Participants' recruitment method, (i.e. through interviews and/or information sessions, referrals from youth serving agencies, case managers and other community organizations) and based on links between the employment action plan and project activities;
- basis for selection of participants (i.e. eligibility criteria, interests, commitment, education and/or readiness for participation in a project);
- participants targeted (i.e. youth facing barriers to employment and employment equity designated groups); and
- means by which participants' eligibility will be verified.

Skills Assessment Process of Participants (where applicable)

This section should include a detailed description of the methodology to be used to determine the employability needs of each participant. Client assessment and case management are required for all Skills Links participants. For Career Focus participants, the assessment process will be brief as all will be post-secondary grads who have identified a career path. The assessment process will enable a better match between participants and their career goals. Please refer to the detailed descriptions found further in the Guide.

Key elements of the assessment process include:

- gathering information on participants' background, education, skills and goals;

- determining eligibility;
- identifying needs for work experience and/or employability skills support;
- matching work experience with participant's needs;
- confirming participants' interests and motivation; and
- documenting assessment results.

PARTNER INFORMATION

This section should specify details concerning the:

- employers' participation and other partners (i.e. type of organization, location, experience dealing with the target group, etc.);
- proposed job descriptions outlining the roles and responsibilities of partners involved; and
- relationships between the various partners and the applicant, including monetary and/or in-kind contributions, and details concerning the specific involvement and relevant experience (if applicable) of each partner in the project.

Applicants and/or partners (including employers) must provide monetary and/or in-kind contributions that reflect a commitment to the success of the project. This funding could come from the private sector, not-for-profit organizations and/or other levels of government. In addition, private sector employers must make either a cash or in-kind contribution to the project.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

This section should provide a description of the community, including information and planning activities concerning:

- geographical, socio-economic and labour market factors;
- the relationship between the various partners and the applicant, including monetary and/or in-kind contributions, and details concerning the specific involvement of each partner in the project;
- any support and cooperation the community would provide;
- any relevant community consultation carried out; and
- how the project meets labour market needs in the community.

BUDGET

It is important that the monthly budget reflects as closely as possible the projected financial requirements and any explanations as needed (without use of abbreviations).

Key elements to consider in determining the project budget are: contributions from other sources, duration of the project, occupations, prevailing wage rates and type of project activities. Please note that applicants **must** also detail monetary and/or in-kind contributions from other sources that reflect a commitment to the success of the project.

Application for Funding (EMP 5209) and Forecast of Cash Flow (EMP 5216) Forms

Applicants **must** also complete the Application for Funding (EMP 5209) and the *Forecast of Cash Flow* (EMP 5216) forms and submit it with the application package. Both forms **must** be signed by authorized representative(s) of the organization. It is important that the monthly budget reflect as closely as possible the projected financial requirements and any explanations as needed (without use of abbreviations).

Successful applicants may be required to provide a revised budget and Forecast of Cash Flow. Key elements to consider in determining the project budget are: contributions from other sources, duration of the project, occupations, prevailing wage rates and type of project activities. Please note that applicants must also detail monetary and/or in-kind contributions from other sources that reflect a commitment to the success of the project.

Cost Listings

Applicants **must** submit proposals and applications with the budget portion structured into 11 categories of costs. The eligible cost categories provide instruction on the eligible costs listing, the categorization of those eligible costs and the parameters of budget flexibility, all of which constitute this particular administrative improvement. These categories and budget flexibility apply to the following youth programs:

- Career Focus
- Skills Link

For information on eligible and ineligible costs for each of the programs, please refer to the Skills Link and Career Focus section of this Guide.

The list below has been developed as a guide for all Service Canada programs in determining whether costs described in the proposal are to be considered eligible for negotiation, and is not to be considered exhaustive and all-inclusive. Inclusion in this list does not suggest that those cost items must be automatically allowed in whole or in part. However, completely disallowing any cost item included in this list **must** be substantiated. It is important to note that the existing principles of negotiation remain. Costs **must** be determined to be a reasonable use of public funds, reasonable in amount, and contribute to the success of the project.

No costs are eligible as a contingency option. Costs must be foreseeable to be negotiated in the original agreement and will otherwise require a negotiation and amendment of the contribution agreement.

1. PROJECT COSTS

- A. Activity Related Direct Project Costs:** These are specific costs related to the functions of the projected activities which have been itemized, cost estimated and supported in the proposal,

i.e. wages/salaries and related office costs of management or other staff whose time is spent specifically on management or delivery of project activities. Reimbursement will be supported by invoices (and/or travel claims, as appropriate) and will be subject to monitoring and audit.

Examples of costs for which a contribution can be considered include, but are not limited to:

1) Staff Wages

- a) Staff wages and Mandatory Employment Related Costs;
- b) Other employment-related benefit costs (Workers Compensation Benefit (WCB), medical, dental, pension, etc.) where warranted by current organizational Human Resources (HR) policies;
- c) Other HR costs such as extended illness and maternity leave, vacation leave pay out, severance pay, etc. where warranted by current organizational HR policies and provincial labour standards. (This is not a contingency option. Costs must be foreseeable to be negotiated in the original agreement and will otherwise require a negotiation and amendment when incurred.);

2) Professional Fees

- d) Professional fees - contracting (e.g. bookkeeping, janitorial services, Information Technology (IT), equipment maintenance services, security; audit costs and legal fees are noted separately below);
- e) Legal fees (i.e. reasonable allowance for costs related to review of lease for new project site premises);

3) Travel

- f) Staff and volunteer travel (transportation costs, taxi, kilometric charges, etc. as per staff travel claims; includes international travel where warranted; transportation is noted in category 1C);

4) Capital Assets

- g) Capital assets (any asset requiring agreement of disposition, as per program specific Terms and Conditions (Ts and Cs) value; may be any of the assets included in this listing);

5) Audit Costs (departmentally mandated)

- h) Audit costs related to departmentally mandated audits;

6) Other activity-related direct project costs

- i) Furniture;
- j) Staff disability supports (duty to accommodate);
- k) Staff training for disability-related issues (e.g. sign language training);
- l) Conference attendance fees;
- m) Conference costs (meeting room rental, guest speakers, etc.);
- n) Rent, lease (including applicant owned premises) and repairs and leasehold improvements (insurance is noted below, in category 1C);
- o) Signage;

- p) Utilities;
- q) Equipment lease, rental or purchase (including computers, fax machines, etc.; copy charge for photocopies is included in the “Equipment repair and maintenance” cost item below, in category 1C);
- r) Computer software;
- s) Costs associated with use of applicant-owned assets other than premises (e.g. computers and other equipment, furniture, etc.);
- t) Memberships (professional and organizational), affiliation fees and business licenses and permits;
- u) Advertising (newspaper ads, flyer production, etc.);
- v) Reference materials (books, periodicals, subscriptions, etc., which cannot be easily traced/tracked back to usage by project participants);
- w) Significant project costs associated with the following types of expenditures (i.e. one-time, non-recurring, non-standard/non-basic amounts over and above the regular, day-to-day operational costs):
 - i. Telephone (installation and extraordinary costs related to telephones and/or fax lines required over and above regular operating requirements);
 - ii. Postage (significant costs associated with project activities, which increase expected costs of postage beyond normal operating requirements);
 - iii. Internet (web page design, etc.) and other IT requirements (significant costs associated with project activities, which increase expected internet related costs beyond normal operating requirements);
 - iv. Printing (significant costs associated with project activities, which increase expected printing costs beyond normal operating requirements); and
 - v. Staff professional development (courses required by staff, which are not part of the routine development courses required by the organization’s policies);
- x) Costs related to transition/wind-down (severance pay, other HR related costs, penalties for breaking leases, etc.).

B. Participant Related Direct Project Costs: Expenses associated with the participant of a particular project. Reimbursement will be supported by invoices and will be subject to monitoring and audit.

Examples of costs for which a contribution can be considered include, but are not limited to:

7) Participant Wages

- a) Participant wages and Mandatory Employment-Related Costs (MERCs);
- b) Stipends, bonuses;
- c) Other employment-related benefit costs (WCB, medical, dental, pension, etc.) where warranted by current organizational HR policies and/or provincial labour standards;

8) Participant Tuition Costs

- d) Tuition costs – public;
- e) Tuition costs – private;

9) Other Participant Related Project Costs

- f) Living expenses;
- g) Disability-related supports (attendant care, note takers, sign language interpreters);
- h) Disability-related incremental costs (i.e. additional per diems for fees for assistance provided, etc.);
- i) Professional fees related to participants – sub-contracting (i.e. vocational assessments, needs assessments, guest speakers, etc.);
- j) Dependant care;
- k) Adaptive-technology set-up;
- l) Materials and supplies, books and testing materials, to be used by/for participants;
- m) Travel, transportation; and
- n) Participation and completion of recognition activities.

C. Other Direct Project Costs: Expenses associated with the project under this heading can be included in payments that are based on a formula.

10) Other Direct Project costs

Examples of costs for which a contribution can be considered include, but are not limited to:

- a) Insurance (fire, theft, liability);
- b) Standard, regular, day-to-day, operational, recurring costs related to:
 - i. Basic telephone charges (including fax lines);
 - ii. Postage and courier;
 - iii. Monthly internet fees;
 - iv. Operational printing contracted externally (business cards, letterhead, ad hoc unanticipated print jobs, minor updates and/or printing of organizational or program brochures, etc.);
 - v. Equipment repair and maintenance (includes photocopy meter charges); and
 - vi. Staff professional development - amount to cover basic training needs as per organization's existing policies; employment related requirements, which can include, but is not limited to, health and safety, first aid, **cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)**, self-defense, crisis intervention, anti-racism, anti-oppression, sensitivity, conflict resolution, etc..
- c) Materials and supplies (e.g. pens, pencils, paper, envelopes, cleaning supplies, subscriptions);
- d) Bank charges;
- e) IT maintenance;
- f) Other non participant-based costs (e.g. water where public water not safe for drinking, staff and volunteer recognition);
- g) Staff and volunteer transportation (bus fare, taxi and parking required for delivery of project activities but not part of travel claims; does NOT include monthly parking fees; travel is noted in category 1A).

2. ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS

Also known as centralized administrative costs, these are expenses incurred for “main office”, “head office”, or “administration office” type costs, which guide and enable effective program delivery and contribute to the success of the project by providing support through overall organization governance, management, planning, finance, communications, human resources and information technology. These are costs related to functions which are not project specific i.e. wages/salaries and related office costs of management or other staff whose time is not spent specifically on management or delivery of project activities.

11) Organizational Infrastructure Costs

Examples of costs for which a contribution can be considered include, but are not limited to:

- a) Staff wages and MERCS;
- b) Other employment-related benefit costs (WCB, medical, dental, pension, etc.) where warranted by current organizational HR policies;
- c) Other HR costs such as extended illness and maternity leave, vacation leave pay out, severance pay, etc. where warranted by current organizational HR policies and provincial labour standards. (This is not a contingency option. Costs **must** be foreseeable to be negotiated in the original agreement and will otherwise require a negotiation and amendment when incurred.);
- d) Rent, lease (including applicant owned premises) and minor repairs and leasehold improvements;
- e) Utilities;
- f) Furniture;
- g) Signage;
- h) Equipment purchase, lease or rental (including computers);
- i) Costs associated with use of applicant-owned assets other than premises (e.g. computers and other equipment, furniture, etc.);
- j) Equipment maintenance and repairs;
- k) Software;
- l) Professional fees – contracting (e.g. bookkeeping, janitorial services, IT, equipment maintenance services, security);
- m) Audit costs;
- n) Staff disability supports (duty to accommodate);
- o) Telephone costs;
- p) Postage and courier;
- q) Internet costs (web page design, etc.) and other IT requirements;
- r) Printing costs;
- s) Advertising costs;
- t) General insurance (e.g. directors’ liability insurance);
- u) Travel and transportation (including board members);
- v) Training and development costs (volunteer and staff);
- w) Office supplies;

- x) Bank charges;
- y) Memberships and affiliation fees (professional, inter- and intra-organizational, etc.).

3. **INELIGIBLE COSTS**

- Costs associated with fundraising activities;
- Canada Revenue Agency or payroll penalties;
- Parking tickets;
- Legal fees and court awards for inappropriate dismissal or other inappropriate/illegal activity;
- Membership fees for private clubs, etc. (golf clubs, gyms, etc.) unless part of existing (non-monetary) employment benefits package;
- Staff salary bonuses if not originally negotiated into agreement;
- Purchase of alcoholic beverages;
- Purchase of any illegal substances;
- Mentor wages (under Youth projects);
- Unreasonable gifts or unreasonable payments for recognition;
- Other costs ineligible as per program terms and conditions.

Costing Options for Skills Link

Service Canada has developed an approach whereby applicants to Skills Link can choose one of three costing options. Two of these costing options include a flat percentage rate developed to represent actual costs of delivering a project and/or operating a business. Contribution recipients **must** keep receipts and supporting documents that support the expenditures under the flat rate as they could be subject to an audit; and if chosen must supply supporting documentation for the amounts indicated in 1C and 2. The three options available to applicants are:

1. Departmental Flat Percentage Rate: a flat percentage rate that is offered by the department for Other Direct Project Costs (type 1C in the Eligible Costs Listing) and, if applicable, Organizational Infrastructure Costs (type 2). The rates offered by Service Canada to applicants for Skills Link projects are:
 - **4% for Other Direct Project Costs (Type 1C)** = multiplied by the sum of cost type 1A + 1B; and
 - **10% for Organizational Infrastructure Costs (Type 2)** = multiplied by the sum of cost types 1A + 1B + 1C; or
2. Organization Specific Flat Percentage Rate: an independent flat percentage rate for Other Direct Project Costs (type 1C) and, if applicable, Organizational Infrastructure Costs (type 2), which is established through an assessment of a submission (based on an applicant organization's own methodology) to a centralized group in the department; or
3. Reimbursement of Actual Costs: reimbursement is based on actual expenditures incurred.

The applicant will select a costing option and submit a proposal and application based on that chosen method. The costing option cannot be changed over the course of an agreement.

Also, choosing a costing option using a flat percentage rate requires that a flat percentage rate be used for cost type 1C as well as, if relevant, type 2 costs. In other words, applicants cannot choose a flat percentage rate for cost type 2 and request reimbursement for actual costs incurred for cost type 1C.

The departmental flat rates can currently be applied for Skills Link (Project) agreements delivered by Service Canada that include:

- Skills Link Employment Services for Youth:
 - Youth Outreach,
 - Client Assessment,
 - Case Management, and
 - Employment Sessions; and/or

- Skills Link Employment Interventions for Youth:
 - Group-based Employability Skills,
 - Employability Skills through Community Service,
 - Employability Skills through Work Experience,

 - Employability Skills through Entrepreneurship,
 - Work Experience; and/or
 - Individual Skills Enhancement (Community Coordinator only); and

- Any combination of the Employment Services and/or Employment Interventions listed above.

The departmental flat rates **cannot** be applied for Skills Link agreements that include the following activities:

- Community-based Planning
- Pre-operational Assistance
- Individual Work Experience
- Individual Skills Enhancement (with/for an individual)

For more information about Skills Link activities, please refer to the Skills Link section of this Guide.

Costing Options for Career Focus

Presently, the flat rate options are not available for the Career Focus program. Therefore, reimbursement is based solely on actual expenditures incurred. Service Canada is in the process of developing a departmental flat percentage rate for Career Focus.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

The criteria-based assessment process for evaluating proposals ensures that all project proposals are evaluated objectively against the Terms and Conditions of the respective program, client and community needs, availability of funds, and themes and priorities of the current year. To obtain information about local, regional and/or national priorities, applicants should contact their local Service Canada Centre.

Proposals are assessed, recommended and approved based on the following criteria:

- eligibility of the applicant;
- experience in delivering this type of activity;
- results achieved in delivering any previous projects under the Youth Employment Strategy;
- quality of the proposal;
- extent to which the project will assist participants in making a transition into the labour market;
- extent to which the project will meet identified community and labour market needs;
- means to measure the progress of the participants and the success of project activities;
- adherence to local, regional and/or national priorities;
- clarity of objectives, outcomes and scheduled time frames;
- potential of project to address employability gaps;
- involvement and commitment of partners;
- demonstrated administrative procedures for the management of the project; and
- demonstrated bookkeeping and financial controls.

Following the assessment and approval of proposals, applicants will be notified in writing of Service Canada's decision. Please note that project recommendation and approval are subject to the availability of funds. In addition, funding of proposals may be approved in part or in their entirety.

CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

Approved proposals become the subject of a formal contribution agreement between Service Canada and the applicant. Project activities **must not** commence until an agreement is signed by the applicant and Service Canada. Costs incurred prior to both parties signing the contribution agreement will not be reimbursed.

Both Skills Link and Career Focus allow for multi-year contribution agreements, up to three years in duration. The duration of each agreement will vary depending upon factors such as strategies identified during the planning process, types of activities, the applicant's previous experience with program delivery, financial viability, and organizational capacity, and the availability of funds.

PAYMENT AND ADVANCES

To avoid delays in processing claims, the contribution recipient **must** ensure that:

- expense claims are submitted in a timely manner and;
- all expenses claimed are allowable under the contribution agreement.

MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP

Contribution recipients will be instructed to submit both financial and progress reports to assess the project's effectiveness. Contribution recipients will also be required to provide reports on participant results following the project's completion.

Contribution recipients can expect Service Canada to monitor the project, reconcile expenses against the contribution funding paid and to verify the results achieved. This may include on-site visit(s), direct contact with the contribution recipient and/or participants, or a paper-based review of any claims presented to Service Canada for payment.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Environmental Impact of Proposed Activities (if any)

Applicants **must** provide a description of any environmental impact of the project and the environmental assessment that has been undertaken, where required under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. For further information about the requirements under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, visit the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's Web site at www.ceaa.gc.ca/index_e.htm, or contact the nearest Service Canada Centre for details.

General Liability Insurance

Applicants **must** provide general liability insurance coverage that covers all participants, coordinators and staff for damages they might cause to third parties in carrying out project activities. Service Canada, however, makes no warranty or representation as to the adequacy of the policy coverage. Applicants are solely responsible for determining the policy's adequacy and for obtaining any additional insurance required.

Service Canada may cover participants for physical damages and/or personal injury. The comprehensive general liability insurance provided by the department is subject to certain exclusions, in particular the use of a vehicle. In such cases, sponsors should ensure that they have adequate automobile insurance coverage, whether public or private.

If applicants already have comprehensive general liability insurance, they **must** ensure their insurance is valid for the duration of any funding, or contribution agreement.

Workers' Compensation

Applicants **must** arrange for workers' compensation coverage, or similar coverage, which is an eligible expense to the project, to cover participants and staff where required by law in each province or territory. In some provinces and territories, Service Canada may have a global agreement to cover participants and staff. Departmental officials will be able to tell applicants if a global agreement is available for projects in their area.

Occupational Health and Safety

Applicants **must** ensure that participants are working in a safe environment throughout the project. It is the applicants' responsibility to supervise the participants' work, provide health and safety information, and provide information sessions and safety equipment (if required) for all participants employed. Also it is the applicants' responsibility to follow provincial/territorial labour standards.

For further information about health and safety, please refer to the brochure *Are You in Danger? Health and safety in the workplace*, available at the nearest Service Canada Centre or on-line at youth.gc.ca under the Publications section.

Official Languages

It is the applicants' responsibility to provide any services and activities, and offer any notices, advertisements or other materials relating to the project in both official languages according to instructions issued by Service Canada officials.

Conflict of Interest

All apparent or actual conflicts of interest, existing or potential, **must** be disclosed in the proposal. During the operation of the project, any conflict of interest that may arise **must** be disclosed to Service Canada and resolved to the satisfaction of Service Canada.

Nepotism

No participant who is a member of the applicant's immediate family, or a member of the family of a director or senior officer of the applicant, may be recruited unless there is prior approval by Service Canada.

To further clarify, the term "immediate family" refers to:

- father, mother, stepfather or stepmother
- foster parent
- brother or sister
- spouse or common-law partner
- child, including child of common-law partner, stepchild, ward
- father-in-law, mother-in-law
- any relative permanently residing with the coordinator or a director or senior officer of the applicant.

Sub-contracting

Project applicants may choose to seek the assistance of another organization in achieving the objectives or delivering the activities necessary to support the proposed employment intervention. The costs associated with this assistance would then become project costs and could be charged to the project, and paid by Service Canada.

If an applicant intends to have portions of the proposed activities completed by an independent party, prior approval by Service Canada officials is required if the amount is \$25,000 or more. The approval process for the above-mentioned activity will require at least three bids and the applicant must select the one offering the best value (or lowest costs).

Any intention to enter into such an agreement with another organization **must**:

- be disclosed to Service Canada,
- may require prior written approval of Service Canada, and
- represent fair market value. Depending on the value of the contract, a fair and competitive process with at least three bids may be necessary.

Applicants **must** declare any conflict of interest related to the use of possible contractors or sub-contractors. Examples of conflict of interest may include, but not be limited to organizational affiliations, forms of ownership arrangements, shared board members, etc. Service Canada must be informed of these types of scenarios, and sponsors must receive formal written approval from Service Canada prior to entering into such contracting or sub-contracting arrangements.

Project Participation Fees

Applicants shall not request the payment of any charge or fee from the participants for their participation in the project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Service Canada makes use of a number of delivery channels for reaching Canadian youth, employers, community service providers, parents and educators with information on youth-related programs and services, including those offered under the Youth Employment Strategy:

- 1 800 O-CANADA - provides information about federal programs and services available for youth, businesses, community organizations and the general public.
- Youth Info Line (1 800 935-5555) - provides information about Youth Employment Strategy programs and services available for youth, businesses, community organizations and the general public.
- youth.gc.ca - provides information about Service Canada's Youth Employment Strategy programs and offers employment and career-related information for youth. The Web site also includes information for youth, parents, educators, career counsellors and community groups.
- Job Bank – provides information on services for employers and job seekers.
- To find the nearest Service Canada Centre and/or the Service Canada Centres for Youth, visit the web site at www.servicecanada.gc.ca or consult the Blue Pages of your local telephone directory.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Applicant: an individual or group applying to Service Canada for funding under one or more of the Youth Employment Strategy programs.

Case management: a process by which a participant is provided with guidance and support while working through an employment action plan.

Career-related work experience: a type of activity through which participants gain employment experience and skills related to their field of studies and/or employment goals.

Client assessment: a process by which an individual's employability assets, issues and needs are identified, as well as their employment goals.

Coaching: within a workplace setting, coaching is a way of transferring knowledge and skills from an expert to a learner. Typically, it is through coaching that the participant learns to perform a particular role or function within the employer's organization while also developing employability skills.

Community: a town or city served by a Service Canada office, or a group of stakeholders that has a particular interest in a given client group, i.e., a community of interest.

Community service: a type of activity through which a participant develops life and employability skills while working in a team and providing a service to the community.

Contribution: a conditional transfer payment to an individual or organization for a specific purpose pursuant to a contribution agreement that is subject to being accounted for and audited.

Contribution agreement: an undertaking between a donor department, such as Service Canada, and a prospective contribution recipient which describes the obligations of each.

Contribution recipient: a generic term used to describe an individual or group that has been successful in receiving Service Canada funding and therefore begins to receive contribution funds as agreed to under the terms of a contribution agreement. A recipient may be an individual, community group, business, workers' association, non-profit organization, voluntary organization or an eligible government department/agency.

Coordinator: an individual or group that enters into an agreement with Service Canada to carry out contracted activities.

EI client: an unemployed individual:

- a) in receipt of Employment Insurance (EI) benefits; or

- b) for whom an unemployment benefit period has been established or has ended within the 36 months prior to the date of requesting assistance; or
- c) for whom a claim for maternity or parental benefits has been established within 60 months prior to the date of requesting assistance, after which the individual remained out of the labour market in order to care for a newborn or newly adopted child and is now seeking to re-enter the labour force.

Employability skills: skills needed to enter, stay and progress in the world of work.

Employment action plan: a record of the activities an individual will undertake to achieve employment.

Entrepreneurial skills: skills that enable an individual to effectively organize, manage and assume responsibility for a business or other enterprise.

Intervention: an activity in which a young person participates in order to significantly advance toward an employment goal. The young person usually receives income support (allowance or wage) while participating in an intervention.

Life skills: a range of behaviours and abilities needed for an individual to function effectively within society.

Living expenses: includes only 'basic' living expenses such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention (necessary—as opposed to optional medical expenses—that are not covered by the provincial health care plan) and utilities (water, heat, telephone and hydro).

Mentoring: a person-to-person relationship that fosters personal and professional development through guided learning. The mentor is an experienced person who agrees to help and support someone who is in transition or planning their career. The protégé is a less experienced person who benefits from the help and support of a volunteer mentor in carrying out a career plan.

Overhead costs: include costs such as wages and employment-related costs for staff, licenses, permits, fees for professional services, bank charges, utilities, material, supplies, travel, insurance, disbursement for research and technical studies, disability needs, rental of premises, leasing or purchase of equipment, audits, assessment and evaluations.

Participant: an individual who actively participates in project activities.

Person with a disability: someone who voluntarily identifies him or herself as having a permanent physical or mental impairment that restricts his or her ability to perform daily activities.

Planning: a process through which youth issues and needs within the geographic community are identified and strategies are developed to meet these issues and needs.

Project: a generic term applying to all aspects of the administration of a contribution agreement.

Service: a form of assistance that helps a young person establish and/or progress toward an employment goal. The young person usually does not receive income support (in the form of an allowance or wage) while being provided with a service.

Skill enhancement: the improvement of generic competencies required for most occupations, and specific competencies associated with performing in a particular occupation.

Stakeholders: private businesses, associations, non-governmental organizations and/or government departments that have a clear interest and role in addressing labour market issues. This relationship does not imply a financial investment.

Unemployed: youth are considered unemployed when they:

- a) are not employed at all; or
- b) are in receipt of a notice of imminent lay-off; or
- c) must leave their current occupation due to medical reasons; or
- d) i) are working no more than eight hours per week and are being paid low wages (minimum wage or slightly more), and demonstrate that they have been actively seeking increased employment; and
ii) are unable to support themselves and/or their family financially with the income from their employment.

Work experience: a type of activity through which a participant can gain employment experience and skills in an on-the-job learning environment.