

Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) Employer Questions and Answers

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1. General

1.1 What is the Canada-Ontario Job Grant?

On March 28, 2014, Ontario signed the Canada-Ontario Job Fund Agreement with the federal government. The agreement is a key source of funding for new, employer-driven, training initiatives and represents an opportunity for the province to engage more effectively with employers to support Ontarians in obtaining the skills required to fill and succeed in available jobs. Under the agreement, Ontario delivers the Canada-Ontario Job Grant.

The grant provides direct financial support for employers who wish to purchase training for their workforce. In this grant program, employers choose the individuals they would like to have trained, and the training that meets their workforce development needs.

This program is intended to support employers in taking a greater role in workforce development. The cost of training is a shared investment between employers and the government.

1.2 Who is administering the COJG?

Given the complexity and financial implications of large-scale grant applications, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) has divided roles and responsibilities for delivery between itself and Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) service providers based on the number of participants identified in an employer's grant application.

For training applications involving 25 or fewer participants, the COJG service provider will make grant funding decisions and manage/administer grant agreements with employers.

For training applications involving over 25 participants, MAESD will make grant funding decisions and manage/administer grant agreements with employers.

1.3 How much funding is an employer eligible to receive through COJG?

The Canada-Ontario Job Grant supports eligible training costs up to a maximum of \$10,000 per trainee, with additional flexibility for small employers. Moreover, small employers (less than 50 employees) who are training and hiring unemployed individuals may be eligible for 100% funding and up to \$15,000 per trainee. The 100% funding

eligibility will be automatically assessed by the ministry staff or service provider responsible for assessing the application.

Eligible training costs are as follows:

- Tuition or other reasonable training provider fees
- Textbooks, software and other required materials such as; training clothing, tools, equipment and disability supports (Maximum support is \$500 for each trainee)
 - Other required materials cannot be the price of new equipment or the combination cost of training and new equipment.
- Mandatory student fees
- Examination fees
- Travel costs (Maximum support is \$500 per trainee and is only supported if the trainee is travelling over 24 km each way)
 - If the employer has a travel costs policy, travel costs will be supported according to the employer's policy up to the maximum \$500 per trainee.

1.4 What kind of role do employers have in the COJG?

Employers that wish to access the grant are responsible for identifying the particular skills gaps they wish to address, the types of training that would address those gaps, and the specific individuals they would like to see trained.

Employers must provide a cash contribution towards the cost of training. Some additional flexibility is available for small employers (i.e., employers with 50 or fewer employees can make up-to-half of their contribution through wages paid to the employee).

Employers accessing the grant must also commit to having a job for the individual upon training completion. For exceptional circumstances, this may involve entering into a job placement agreement with an unemployed individual that would commence during or after training.

1.5 What is the required contribution an employer must make to be eligible for funding?

Employers are required to make minimum one-third cash contributions towards eligible training costs. Where an employer makes a contribution of one-third of the eligible training costs, the grant will pay remaining eligible training costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per individual.

Additional flexibility is available for small employers. Employers with 50 or fewer employees are required to contribute a minimum one-third towards the training costs of each individual participating in training funded through the grant. A minimum of one-half of their one-third contribution must be in cash and applied towards eligible training costs. In addition, small employers (less than 50 employees) who are training and hiring unemployed individuals may be eligible for 100% funding and up to \$15,000 per trainee. The application will be automatically assessed for 100% funding.

The remainder of the employer's contribution can be made in-kind through wages paid to the individual while they are participating in training. For employers applying for multiple grants, a minimum one-third contribution must be made for each participating individual (i.e., an employer cannot contribute more than one-third for some individuals and less than one-third for others).

2. Employer Eligibility

2.1 Which employers are eligible for the COJG?

Individual private and not-for-profit sector employers, First Nations and organizations acting on behalf of employers (including union training halls, industry associations, training coordinators and other employer consortiums that meet the requirements below) are eligible to apply for the grant. Eligibility criteria apply to all employers regardless of whether they are training one or multiple individuals.

An employer must:

- make minimum cash and in-kind contributions towards training costs
- employ the individual selected for training. Higher priority is given to employers who are training and hiring unemployed individuals. If the employer has hired an unemployed individual to fill a vacancy, the offer of employment can be conditional upon the individual having completed training and subject to the employer's regular probationary period
- be licensed to operate in Ontario
- be applying for training that is delivered in Ontario and is related to a job that is also located in Ontario
- comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Employment Standards Act
- maintain appropriate Workplace Safety and Insurance Board or private workplace safety insurance coverage
- have adequate third-party general liability insurance, as advised by its insurance broker

- comply with all applicable federal and provincial human rights legislation, regulations, and any other relevant standards.

An employer must not:

- be a federal, provincial or municipal government and/or agency
- be a designated broader public sector organization, as defined by the [Broader Public Sector Accountability Act](#)
- be district social services administration boards established under the District Social Services Administration Boards Act (notwithstanding their exclusion under the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act)
- be a Canada-Ontario Job Grant service provider, or an Employment Service provider
- be currently in receipt of other government funds related to the same skills training for the same individual (e.g., Employment Service or Youth Employment Fund Job Placements)
- use training participants to displace existing staff or replace staff who are on lay-off.

2.2 What is a consortium and is it eligible for funding?

Organizations acting on behalf of a consortium of employers are eligible to apply for the Canada-Ontario Job Grant.

For the purposes of the Canada-Ontario Job Grant, an employer consortium is defined as an organization which has a formal agreement to represent and/or co-ordinate activities benefiting a specific group of two or more employers that will pool their resources to support common training activities and achieve common training objectives and goals.

Each employer within a consortium must meet the employer eligibility requirements in order for the consortium to be considered for grant funding.

Informal organizations of employers (i.e., employers not represented by a separate legal entity that have opted to form a consortium and prepare a joint grant application) are eligible to apply. However, one employer must be the “lead” applicant on behalf of the other employers within the consortium. If approved, the lead applicant would be the holder of the legal agreement with the ministry or service provider and would be accountable for all activities and outcomes.

2.3 What is a broader public sector organization?

As per the [Broader Public Sector Accountability Act](#), a “designated broader public sector organization” means,

- every hospital,
- every school board,
- every university in Ontario and every college of applied arts and technology and post-secondary institution in Ontario whether or not affiliated with a university, the enrolments of which are counted for purposes of calculating annual operating grants and entitlements,
- every approved agency designated as a children’s aid society under subsection 15 (2) of Part I of the Child and Family Services Act,
- every community care access corporation,
- every corporation controlled by one or more designated broader public sector organizations that exists solely or primarily for the purpose of purchasing goods or services for the designated broader public sector organization or organizations,
- every publicly funded organization that received public funds of 10 million dollars or more in the previous fiscal year of the Government of Ontario, and
- every organization that is prescribed for the purposes of this definition; (“organisme désigné du secteur parapublic”).

2.4 Are crown corporations eligible for funding?

Crown corporations’ eligibility depends on whether the organization is a government agency and/or designated under the [Broader Public Sector Accountability Act](#).

Crown corporations that are agencies and/or designated under the [Broader Public Sector Accountability Act](#) are ineligible for COJG funding. In all other cases, crown corporations would be eligible for COJG funding.

2.5 Can an employer access COJG funds more than once?

Yes. An employer may apply for the grant more than once, as long as they continue to meet the employer eligibility criteria.

As there is a limited budget for the grant, applications will be assessed on an individual basis and prior funding does not entitle an employer to future funding. However, employers who have not received funding in the past six months will be given a higher priority.

For the COJG program, organizations that share the same Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) number are considered to be the same employer. This applies to different branches of a company and franchises with the same CRA number.

2.6 Can a single employer have more than one training agreement running concurrently?

There is no specific policy that precludes employers from having more than one training agreement running concurrently. However, each training plan would be required to stand on its own merit and be assessed against the priorities of the program.

However, employers who have received funding in the past six months will be given a lower priority on the subsequent applications. In situations where funding is limited, lower priority applications may not be approved.

2.7 Do Schedule 2 employers under WSIB, still qualify under the COJG program eligibility criteria?

The difference between Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 employers under WSIB is simply a matter of classification as it relates to how claims are administered. Being Schedule 2 employer does not preclude you from being eligible for the program. This eligibility requirement under the program is to ensure that employers applying for the program have complied with legal requirements by having appropriate coverage for their employees in the event of an accident.

3. Training Eligibility

3.1 What kind of training is and is not covered by the grant?

Employers choose the training they wish to purchase to meet their workforce development needs.

Eligible Training

- Training must be provided by one of the following:
 - Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology
 - Publicly-assisted universities
 - School boards
 - Private trainers operating in compliance with the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005
 - Union-based training centres

- Product vendors*
 - Product vendors are ineligible to deliver training on how to use the product of service.
 - Product vendors are only eligible to deliver training that is unrelated to the use of the product or service.
 - For the purpose of the Canada-Ontario Job Grant, product vendor training is defined as any training where the vendor is involved in the creation/sale of the product and is also conducting the training. “Product” refers to business-related materials purchased by the employer.

Ineligible Training

- The ministry will not provide COJG funding to an employer for training the employer must provide according to law
- Product vendors are ineligible to deliver training on how to use the product or service.
- Executive training courses (specifically MBA, CFA)
- Preparatory training courses (specifically LSAT, MCAT, GMAT)
- Business Consulting services
- Attending conferences
- Business owners, including individuals with a controlling interest in corporations, are not eligible as trainees.
- Training requests for trainees who are in senior management positions with large organizations (over 500 employees) are ineligible for COJG funding.
 - Trainees who are managers at small and medium employers (less than 500 employees) are still eligible for COJG funding
 - Senior Manager positions are defined by the 2016 National Occupational Code (NOC); the positions with NOC “00” Senior Management Occupations are ineligible.
- Training that exceeds one year in duration

3.2 What is an eligible training institution?

- Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology
- Publicly-assisted universities

- School boards
- Private trainers operating in compliance with the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005
- Union-based training centres
- Product vendors(*Only eligible to deliver training that is unrelated to the use of the product or service).

3.3 How do you determine if a training institution is in compliance with the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*?

If an institution has been issued a notice, order and/or financial penalty that has not been rectified they are not in compliance with the Act and are therefore ineligible to be a trainer under COJG.

Information related to notices, orders and financial penalties issued under the *PCCA, 2005* can be found [on the Notices, Orders and Financial Penalties site](#).

If an institution is found on the Notices, Orders and Financial Penalties site, the employer must request proof from the institution that they have rectified the sited problems. It is the trainer's responsibility to demonstrate they have rectified the issue that generated the notice, order and/or financial penalty.

3.4 Why is training supported by the COJG limited to one year in duration?

Training supported through the grant focuses on occupation-specific skills that address more immediate gaps or needs identified by an employer.

Other Employment Ontario training programs, such as Second Career, support multi-year, post-secondary education and advanced credential obtainment.

Offering training of up-to-one year in duration minimizes overlap with programs such as Second Career, and allows grant resources to be directed towards addressing the immediate skills gaps identified by employers.

3.5 Does the training need to happen in 12 consecutive months, or can it be 12 months but extend over one year (e.g., multiple modules with breaks in between)?

The training agreement cannot exceed one year in duration (i.e. 52 weeks). Breaks or multiple modules are allowable within that one year (i.e., 12 months). Therefore, the

training must all take place within the year. If the employer would like further training or additional courses that exceed the year, they must submit a separate Employer Application Form. Applications are assessed on an individual basis and, because of the limited budget, there is no guarantee that additional training will be approved.

3.6 Is in-class apprenticeship training eligible under the COJG?

No. Apprenticeship training is not eligible for funding under the COJG. In-class apprenticeship training is already funded by the ministry through the apprenticeship seat purchase.

3.7 Is mandatory certification/training eligible for funding under the COJG?

COJG does not cover training that an employer would be required to provide according to law. In some cases, an employee is required to have a certification/training according to law but it is not the employer's responsibility to provide it. In those circumstances, the training is eligible for funding under COJG.

4. Individual Eligibility

4.1 Can an individual apply directly for the grant?

No. An individual is not eligible to apply directly. Individuals working with an employment service provider may be recommended to an employer to hire, however, it is the employer's choice who to hire and train.

4.2 Who is eligible to participate in training funded through the COJG?

All people who are: residents of Ontario and either a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or protected person, **and** meet the eligibility requirements below, are eligible to participate in training funded through the Canada-Ontario Job Grant.

Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Employed individuals must be identified by their employer.
- Unemployed individuals must also be sponsored by an employer, demonstrated through a permanent or conditional offer of employment.

- An individual **must not** be participating in full-time training or education or any other government training intervention that offers funding support for same tuition, books or other training related costs (e.g., Second Career).

In the COJG context, full-time training is defined by the training provider.

4.3 Are individuals paid on commission eligible for COJG?

To be eligible to participate in COJG, an individual must be either employed by the employer or have a permanent or conditional offer of employment. In the context of this program, an individual is eligible to participate in COJG if they are considered an employee of the organization and are (or will be) on the employer's payroll.

If an individual is paid on commission only, they may still be eligible if they are considered an employee of the organization.

4.4 Are individuals with 900-series Social Insurance Number (SIN) eligible to participate in the COJG?

No, they are not eligible, unless the participant is a protected person. According to Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, a protected person is a person who has been determined to be either (a) a Convention Refugee, or (b) a person in need of protection (including, for example, a person who is in danger of being tortured if deported from Canada). A protected person may have a work permit that does not specify employment conditions, also known as an open work permit (IMM5205).

4.5 Are business owners or shareholders eligible to participate in the COJG?

Business owners, including individuals with a controlling interest in corporations, are not eligible as trainees under COJG. Since the employer decides who the COJG trainees will be it would be a conflict of interest for a business owner (or majority shareholder) to be designated a trainee.

4.6 Can trainees participate in training more than once?

Trainees can only participate in one training course at a time and may not repeat the same training. Trainees may be put forward by their employer to participate in subsequent training through a separate application.

4.7 For individuals who are on Ontario Works, are they able to continue receiving their benefits if taking part in COJG?

Income support status is not an eligibility criteria for individuals to participate in the Grant. Decisions are made based on personal circumstances. It is up to the Ministry of Community and Social Services or Ontario Works delivery agents to determine whether participants will continue to receive their Ontario Works benefits while taking part in training through COJG.

4.8 Is there specific criteria (aside from self-identification) that will be used to determine whether a person with a disability qualifies for disability training supports, such as assistive devices?

Assessment on the provision of disability supports will be made on a case-by-case basis by the service provider. Each request should demonstrate that training would not be possible for the participant without the support being provided and it should be clear that the participant's success hinges on the requested supports being in place.

5. Application Process

5.1 Must an employer have all of the trainees chosen when submitting an application for funding?

No. The employer only submits information on the number of incumbent workers and new hires to be trained, and the impact this training will have on their positions. After the application form is approved by the ministry, employers will be asked to send the completed Participant Registration Forms.

5.2 Where does an employer submit a completed application?

Completed employer applications for over 25 training participants and all consortium applications must be submitted through the online portal. The application will then be directed to the appropriate ministry office.

For completed applications for 25 or fewer participants, applications will be submitted online to a COJG service provider. There are instructions on the application form as to where to submit your postal code in order to select a service provider.

If you have difficulties, please contact the Employment Ontario Contact Centre at their toll-free number: 1-800-387-5656, or through the TTY line: 1-866-533-6339.

5.3 What forms need to be completed for the program?

COJG Employer/Consortium Application Form: This form will be filled-out by the employer and it will act as the request for COJG funding. If the application is approved, it will act as the employer registration form to enter employer information into the data management system and for follow-up purposes. Please see the form for more details on privacy.

COJG Employer Registration for Consortium: This form must be completed for each employer represented in a consortium application. The ministry will request these forms as needed.

COJG Participant Registration Form: This form will need to be completed only after the application is approved for funding, by each individual participating in training. Please see the form for more details on privacy.

Placement Agreement: For exceptional circumstances where there will be a job placement for an unemployed individual, the placement agreement will be completed and agreed to between the employer, placement individual and service provider.

Electronic Funds Transfer Form: Employers requesting training for over 25 participants and all consortiums must complete this form.

6. Application Assessment

6.1 How will applications be assessed?

Each application received for funding under the Canada-Ontario Job Grant is assessed to determine eligibility. Each application must meet all the eligibility requirements to be considered for funding.

It is important to note that meeting all eligibility requirements does not necessarily guarantee funding of the application

COJG applications are assessed by ministry staff and service providers, to ensure:

- Validity of applications and training
- Funding decisions provide value for money and are in line with ministry priorities

After an application is deemed as eligible, valid and good value for money, a consistent framework is in place to assess and prioritize all applications based on the strategic priorities for the COJG program. The Ontario government is using an assessment tool to give the highest priority to employer applications that are hiring unemployed

individuals or allowing incumbent employees to take on a new or better job, and training that will allow trainees who have received a lay-off notice to retain their position. For all applications, priority will be given to employers who have not received Canada-Ontario Job Grant funding in the past six months.

All considerations for funding are based on current demand for funds and the number of applications in the community.

More information on the assessment tool can be found on the [employer window page](#). For further information, please contact the Employment Ontario Contact Centre. Call toll-free (no charge): 1-800-387-5656 or through the TTY number: 1-866-533-6339 or e-mail at EmploymentHotlineInquiries@ontario.ca.

6.2 If the employer meets all eligibility criteria, does this mean that they are guaranteed funding?

No. Employers are not guaranteed funding solely on meeting the eligibility criteria. There is a limited budget for this grant program.

6.3 How long will it take to assess the application?

Employers will receive acknowledgement of receipt of their application within 24 hours of submission.

Applications will be reviewed on a continual basis and employers will be notified of the decision within twelve business days of the application being submitted through the online application platform. The length of the application process will vary depending on the number of applications received by the same ministry office or service provider.

7. Application Form

7.1 What does company-specific training mean?

This is training that is specific to a company's processes and/or equipment, proprietary software, etc.

7.2 What are the definitions of the training categories listed in the application form?

Career or Development Training: This type of training is designed to upgrade the knowledge, skills, and ability of employees to help them assume greater responsibility in higher positions.

Maintenance and Refresher Skills Training: This training is offered to update and maintain the specialized subject-matter knowledge of the beneficiaries. Refresher training keeps the specialists, administrators, subject-matter officers, extension supervisors, and frontline workers updated and enables them to add to the knowledge and skills they have already. Maintenance or refresher training usually deals with new information and new methods, as well as a review of older materials.

Essential Skills Training: These are the skills needed for work, learning and life. They are the foundation for learning all other skills and are used in every job. They help people to find and get a job, as well as to adapt and succeed in the workplace.

7.3 What are the definitions of the type of skills listed in the application form?

Essential skills: they are the skills needed for work, learning and life: reading, writing, document use, numeracy, oral communication, thinking, digital technology, working with others, continuous learning.

Specialized or technical skills: skills required to operate a particular machine or use a particular technology.

Management and business skills: strategic planning, leading and motivating, allocating and controlling resources, evaluating, co-ordinating and organizing, recruiting and hiring, supervising.

Soft skills: job readiness skills, personal management skills (e.g. personal goal setting, time management), working as a team, etc.

7.4 The application form asks for information on “incumbent” and “new hires”. What does that mean?

An incumbent is an existing employee in your organization who is on the payroll.

A new hire is an individual not on the organization’s payroll. This individual is sponsored by the employer through a permanent or conditional offer of employment.

7.5 Why does the application request information on the future state of the trainees?

These training details are requested because they are part of the evaluation criteria of the program. At completion of the program, service providers will follow-up with both employers and trainees to collect outcome information. The information in the application will help with the outcome analysis.

7.6 What does an employer do if there is only one viable training provider? (Three quotes are required if the total cost of application exceeds \$25,000 or \$700 per participant per day)

Under exceptional circumstances, there may not be three viable institutions. In order to be considered for funding, the employer must provide a clear rationale on the application form as to why they have not provided three options.

7.7 Can an employer request more than one training type on one application?

No. Each COJG Employer Application is restricted to one course. Multiple modules of an individual course may be accepted but must be delivered by the same training provider.

8. Employment Insurance

8.1 For COJG trainees that are on Employment Insurance (EI), should service providers fill-out Section 25 forms for the trainees attending training?

Yes. Service providers should fill-out the Section 25 form and send it to MAESD to process, so that clients will not be cut-off during their participation in training.

If the client's EI claim is pending, the service provider should submit the form to MAESD and the ministry will action (as appropriate) once a decision has been made regarding the EI claim.

8.2 Can unemployed individuals receive income support while they are on training?

No. There is no income support for trainees provided by the COJG program; however, trainees may be able to continue their Employment Insurance benefit while in training under COJG. The Canada-Ontario Job Fund Agreement specifies that the Grant may only be used to support training costs such as tuition, textbooks software and other required materials, mandatory student fees and examination fees. Costs outside of these categories are not permitted.

9. Funding

9.1 What financial incentives and supports are available through COJG?

In exceptional circumstances where a job placement has been identified as an appropriate service, participating employers and individuals may receive financial incentives.

10. Taxes

10.1 Do people who have their tuition paid from the COJG have to pay income tax?

The grant is not taxable to individuals if the **employer** pays the tuition. However, if a third party pays the tuition on behalf of the employer, it may become taxable.

10.2 Do employers have to pay tax on the money they receive from the ministry?

An employer in receipt of a Canada-Ontario Job Grant must declare the grant as revenue on their tax return. An employer receiving the grant through a consortium must also declare the grant as revenue. Employers are encouraged to consult with their accountant for any tax advice.

10.3 Can the cost of training funded under COJG include sales taxes?

Taxes can be included in the cost of training covered under COJG if the employer is paying them and will not get those taxes reimbursed.

If the employer is getting the taxes back, they can only claim the portion of training cost they will not be reimbursed on.

11. Job Placements

11.1 Are job placements eligible for COJG funding?

Under exceptional circumstances, job placements are available to employers hiring unemployed individuals to fill job vacancies, and who wish to use the grant to purchase existing training for their new hires.

Individuals who the employers feel require a placement need to be assessed by a service provider.

11.2 What are the exceptional circumstances for placing an unemployed individual?

Job placements would only be available to employers and the individuals they have identified for training if **all** of the following exceptional circumstances are met:

- The employer has hired an unemployed individual to fill a job vacancy (i.e., job placements **do not apply** where a new hire has not taken place and incumbent workers are training for same or new position).
- The individual has barriers to employment that have been identified by the service provider and that may impact the individual's long-term labour market attachment.
- The employer has indicated that the offer of employment is conditional upon the individual's completion of training, and that they would like to assess the individual's performance on the job prior to hiring them permanently.

Job placements offered as part of Canada-Ontario Job Grant must not exceed four months in duration and may begin during or following completion of training, (based on occupational requirements and the nature of skills training). Exceptions to the maximum four months duration may be made for persons with disabilities.

11.3 Can an employer receive placement incentives for the same individual through Employment Service or Youth Job Connection and COJG?

An employer cannot receive multiple incentives for the same individual. A placement incentive is meant to offset additional costs the employer might incur as a result of the placement (e.g., additional supervisory costs, administration, job orientation, etc.) so it would not be appropriate to receive ministry funds more than once for the same individual. Placement incentives are not to be used to offset wages.

12. Additional Questions

12.1 If an employer has questions about Canada-Ontario Job Grant and application process

Please contact the Employment Ontario Contact Centre at their toll-free number: 1-800-387-5656, or through the TTY line: 1-866-533-6339, or on the [ministry's website](#). General information on the grant can be found on [the employer window](#).