

# **Employment Ontario Group Sponsorship Grant Program 2020-21**

## **Questions and Answers**

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## **General**

### **What is the Group Sponsorship Grant (GSG) program?**

The Group Sponsorship Grant (GSG) initiative is a new financial incentive designed and developed to support employers in coming together to hire and train apprentices.

The GSG program will encourage employers, particularly small-to-medium sized, to hire, register and train apprentices as part of a group sponsorship training model.

By sharing apprenticeship management and training responsibilities, employers can streamline administration, structure training, and reduce the pressure on any one employer to see an apprentice through the completion of training within a trade.

### **What is a group sponsor?**

A group sponsor is two or more persons (including union or non-union employers) who act as a single sponsor for apprentices by sharing apprenticeship management and training responsibilities. Training provided through these arrangements often provide a greater exposure and breadth of skills and experience to apprentices.

Apprenticeship training agreements are signed by the group sponsor entity, but apprentices are employed by one or more employers who are part of the group sponsorship training model.

Please refer to the [GSG Program Guidelines](#) for a detailed list on eligible applicants for funding through the GSG program.

### **Why is the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (the “ministry”) introducing the GSG program?**

The ministry has introduced the GSG program to increase both the labour market readiness of tradespeople (i.e. flexibility to labour market changes), and the overall number of people training and working in the skilled trades. The government recognizes the challenges that employers and apprentices face in the current economic conditions.

Research shows that apprentices registered to group sponsors are better supported throughout their training journey and are more likely to complete their programs and become registered journeypersons.

The GSG includes supports for group sponsors and individual employers who are part of the group sponsorship training model. The GSG program will allow employers to share the costs of sponsoring and training an apprentice and will also help employers respond to the changing labour market resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Will the grant be responsive to the current challenges faced by employers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

The ministry recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has created various challenges for Ontario businesses. The grant will allow applicants to request funding to support group sponsor activities that are aimed at helping businesses resume their operations, including the purchase of health and safety equipment.

## **Program Overview**

### **How will the GSG program benefit employers and apprentices?**

The GSG program will support new and existing group sponsor arrangements that foster collaboration, innovation, and inclusion in Ontario's labour market. This financial incentive aims to maintain and increase the supply of talent developed through apprenticeship training to meet the demands of employers.

Group sponsors can apply for funding to better support apprentices in accessing more mentoring supports and a wider range of work experience to broaden their training and reduce administrative tasks associated with becoming an apprentice.

Please refer to the [GSG Program Guidelines](#) for details on the benefits that employers and apprentices could utilize from the GSG program.

### **When can applicants submit Business Case Applications?**

The ministry will begin accepting Business Case Applications as of October 2020.

Applicants with an existing GSG Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) will not be eligible to submit an additional Business Case Application until they have completed their active GSG TPA. This is contingent on continued growth and performance during the existing funding period.

### **How long will it take to process a Business Case Application?**

Business Case Applications are accepted through an ongoing continuous intake process that includes a review period of up to two months from the date of submission.

Successful applicants will sign a TPA for a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years. TPAs will include contractual service targets, performance measurement, and funding and accountability requirements identified in the Business Case Application and confirmed during budget negotiations with the ministry during the review process.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified at the conclusion of the ministry's review and will have the opportunity to re-apply.

### **What documentation is required for the Business Case Application?**

Applicants are required to include detailed information regarding the project's overview, delivery, and an itemized budget along with an implementation timeline.

Applicants are also expected to include information detailing their organizational capacity, existing and anticipated partnerships and collaboration, and the demand for the trades they in which they offer sponsorship.

## **Eligibility**

### **What are the eligibility requirements?**

The GSG program supports prospective, new and existing group sponsors of all types, including workforce intermediaries (i.e., third-parties), employer-unions and cooperatives, provided their Business Case Applications are aligned with the program's objectives. Please refer to the [GSG Program Guidelines](#) for details on eligible and non-eligible organizations.

**Note:** Organizations may not submit multiple Business Case Applications as a lead applicant. However, applicants may collaborate through more than one Business Case Application.

## **Funding**

### **How much funding can a group sponsor receive through the GSG program?**

The GSG program will provide funding with an annual maximum funding of \$1,000,000. Grants will be provided over a maximum of three years.

Business Case Applications will be assessed based on reasonable timeframes to complete and demonstrate the effectiveness of key activities.

Funding amounts may vary; as a result, the GSG program does not indicate a fixed amount per applicant based on parameters. Instead, applicants are required to provide itemized budgets for their proposed project(s) for the ministry's review, consideration and negotiation.

### **What can group sponsors be funded for through the GSG program?**

Applicants will be eligible for financial support related to the key activities they intend to deliver. These key activities are listed in the [GSG Program Guidelines](#).

Applicants may identify additional elements that respond to their financial, operational and capacity needs to develop and/or enhance their operations as a group sponsor. This could include expenses associated with safety and regulatory protocols as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as:

1. Related health and safety equipment (e.g., safety harnesses, protective eye-wear, work gloves, etc.) including other trade-specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required to work on the job and other PPE as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. The Business Case Application should indicate whether safety equipment is a one-time project expenditure or whether the equipment will also be used for potential future training offerings.

Applicants are encouraged to utilise GSG funding for the recruitment and retention of apprentices and employees from traditionally underrepresented groups in the workforce (e.g., women in non-traditional trades, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, newcomers, racialized groups and Francophone).

**Note:** Funding through the GSG program cannot be used towards capital projects.

### **Can a group sponsor that is funded through the GSG program re-apply in subsequent years?**

Yes. Applicants may re-apply after completing a prior TPA provided their Business Case Application demonstrates continued growth and includes key activities.

## **Performance Measurement and Management**

### **How will the performance of applicants be measured and evaluated?**

Applicants will be required to submit reports to their local ministry office on project activity and financial expenditure to inform performance benchmarks and track contractual service targets agreed upon in the TPA.

Applicants will be required to submit an Estimate of Expenditure Report (EER), a Statement of Revenue and Expenditure Report (SRER), Interim and Final Reports to inform performance benchmarks and track contractual service targets set out in the TPA.

Applicants will be contractually obligated to communicate their progress through the reports noted above. Failure to do so may result in funds being held-back or recovered.

Prospective group sponsor applicants are required to attain formal approval of their group sponsor status from their local ministry office within the first year of GSG funding.

### **What information are applicants required to include in activity reporting?**

Applicants are required to report on indicators categorized through required outputs and additional outcomes (immediate, intermediate and long-term) where applicable. For details, please refer to Section 6.1 in the [GSG Program Guidelines](#).

## **Contract Management and Reporting**

### **How can applicants submit reports?**

Reporting templates will be posted on the [Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway](#) when they are available.

Applicants will be required to submit reports via email in the frequency determined in their TPA to their local ministry Regional Office.