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Employment Ontario Group Sponsorship Grant Program 2020-21

Program Guidelines

Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

Apprenticeship Branch

315 Front Street West, 17th Floor

Toronto, ON M5V 3A4

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1. Program Elements

1.1.   Overview and Purpose

As announced in the 2019 Budget, the province is committed to encouraging employer participation in the apprenticeship system through the creation of a new financial incentive program to support employers to come together and train apprentices. The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development ("the ministry") is committing $20M in 2020-21 to support the launch of the new Group Sponsorship Grant (GSG) program.

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 is intended to address employer and apprentice challenges in Ontario's apprenticeship and skilled trades system through group sponsorship by:

- Encouraging and expanding the use of apprenticeship in group sponsorship among employer-based consortia.
- Increasing the supply of skilled trades workers with additional registered apprentices and journeypersons, including participation from underrepresented groups such as women in non-traditional trades, Indigenous populations, newcomers, and persons with disabilities.
- Better engaging employers into apprenticeship by lowering administrative and/or training expenditures for small-to-medium sized employers, expanding access to readily available talent in the skilled trades, and reducing non-financial employer engagement barriers.
- Improving the quality of training to apprentices by providing wrap-around, multi-faceted supports for apprentices with comprehensive on-the-job mentorship, end of training support (e.g. pre-trade exam help provided by the sponsor), and employability services.
- Addressing pandemic-related labour and financial impacts.

1.2.   Background

Challenges in Apprenticeship and the Skilled Trades

Apprentices and small-to-medium sized employers are experiencing challenges in Ontario's apprenticeship and skilled trades system. These challenges include:

- **Administrative burden** for employers associated with taking on new apprentices.
- **Limited employer participation** in the apprenticeship system, resulting in a lack of training opportunities for apprentices.
- **Difficulty training in all aspects of a trade**, which can result in apprentices lacking certain skills and may impede them in passing their certification exams.
- **Pandemic-induced labour and financial impacts** that include reduced business operations that may force employers to layoff apprentices.
- Apprentices also face difficulties finding and registering with an employer if they are laid off during their apprenticeship, especially as a result of shrinking capital spending by small-to-medium sized employers.

Apprenticeship Group Sponsorship

A sponsor, as defined in the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 (OCTAA), means a person who has been approved by the ministry to enter into a registered training agreement and ensures that the apprentice is provided with the training required as part of the apprenticeship program as established by the Ontario College of Trades (OCOT). The sponsor need not be the direct provider of training but, as a sponsor, assumes the responsibility of ensuring that the appropriate training has been provided and completed.

A group sponsor is a sponsor comprised of two or more persons (including union or non-union employers) who form a group/consortium whose purpose is to act as a single sponsor to collectively provide training to apprentices with a greater breadth of skills and experience. Those participating in a group sponsorship arrangement share apprenticeship management and training responsibilities.

Common Group Sponsor Functions

Group sponsors commonly take on the following functions:

- Interview and select prospective apprentices and establish a training network.

- Coordinate and monitor the apprentice's on-the-job workplace training.

- Submit documentation for apprenticeship application, registration of training agreements and completion of the apprenticeship training programs.

- Oversee affiliated employers/organizations who provide apprenticeship training and ensure that they are appropriately delivering apprenticeship training to the apprentice in accordance with OCTAA, its regulations and training standards.

- Ensure that apprentices and affiliated employers/organizations adhere to the terms and conditions of the registered training agreements, including regulated wage rates and journeyperson-to-apprentice ratios as prescribed under OCTAA.

- Support apprentices through the complete apprenticeship cycle including registration, workplace-based and classroom-based training, completion and trade certification.

There are currently 119 active group sponsors in Ontario including:

- Union affiliated, such as Joint Training and Apprenticeship Committees (JTACs), Joint Apprenticeship Committees (JACs), Local Apprenticeship Committees and Employer Associations;

- Trade associations;

- Community-based agencies; and

- Not-for-profit service providers.

Group sponsors in Ontario support approximately 25 percent of all apprentices pursuing a skilled trade. However, nationally, only 19 percent of employers in the skilled trades participate in the apprenticeship program; small-to-medium sized employers find it especially challenging due to administrative requirements and training limitations (e.g., difficulty training in all aspects of a trade).

1.3. Objectives

The objectives of the GSG is to:

- **Increase the supply of skilled workers in the apprenticeship system** with additional apprentices and journeypersons, including participation from

underrepresented groups such as women in non-traditional trades, Indigenous populations, newcomers, and persons with disabilities.

- **Encourage and expand** the group sponsorship apprentice training model among employer-based consortia.

- **Better engage employers in apprenticeship** by lowering administrative and/or training expenditures for small-to-medium sized employers, expanding access to readily available talent in the skilled trades, and reducing non-financial employer engagement barriers.

- **Improve the quality of training to apprentices** by providing wrap-around, multi-faceted supports for apprentices through employability services, comprehensive on-the-job mentorship, and end of training support (e.g. pre-trade exam help provided by the sponsor).

- **Support group sponsor activities aimed at revitalizing** small-to-medium sized business and apprenticeship training participation impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4.   Key Activities

Applicants are required to include one or more of the following key activities that will be implemented to support their success in **acquiring new apprentices, supporting training progression, and enhancing their group sponsorship network and service**. Projects must consist of key activities that are finite in length and **incremental** to the applicant's existing or proposed programs and services.

Key activities can continue after the ministry Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) end date; however, funding is limited to the term of the agreement. The key activities eligible for funding support include:

1) Apprentice candidate pre-screening, on-the-job and in-class trades readiness and/or employability and life skills coaching.
2) Centralized on-the-job mentoring supports for apprentices.
3) Recruitment and retention of apprentices and employees, including those from underrepresented groups, facilitating registration with the ministry.

4) Marketing apprenticeship to small-to-medium sized employers including those in rural and remote communities.

5) Training for employers and journeypersons to encourage supportive workplace environments that result in higher completion rates.

6) Placement of apprentices with employers based on business needs, available training opportunities and the competency level of apprentices.

7) Rotation of apprentices in the group sponsorship model for exposure to all aspects of the trade, hours and skills tracking and additional training as required.

8) Apprentice end-of-training supports, including submission of completion documentation, pre-exam assistance and transition to journeyperson status.

Applicants may also identify additional elements that respond to their financial, operational and capacity needs to develop and/or enhance their operations as a group sponsor.

1.5. Applicant Eligibility

Prospective, new and existing group sponsors of all types, including workforce intermediaries[1], employer-unions and cooperatives[2] may apply for the GSG program. The following organizations are eligible to be funded as a recipient of the Group Sponsorship Grant program:

- Non-profit organizations (e.g., community development organizations, social enterprises, professional and trade organizations)
- Union affiliated organizations / Training Trust Funds
- For-profit businesses (e.g. private sector firm employers)
- Non-profit organizations or social agencies (e.g. Indigenous organizations, community development organizations, social enterprises, professional and trade organizations)

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[1] A third-party organization that pursues dual participant (i.e., both apprentices and employers) approach, advancing apprenticeship and skilled trades labour market outcomes.

[2] See Supplementary Fact Sheet on group sponsorship types in Ontario posted to the Employment Ontario Partners gateway.

- Professional / Industry / Employer / Sector Associations

- Employee Organizations

- Local planning groups/Community action group

- Charitable Foundations

- Indigenous organizations

- Municipal governments

In addition, applicants must:

- Be a Legal Entity (i.e., Sole Proprietorship, Ontario Corporation or Partnership) authorized to operate in the province of Ontario.

- Be in full compliance with all applicable laws.

- Maintain appropriate workplace safety standards.

- Provide the ministry with proof of third-party general liability insurance coverage (i.e., certificates of insurance) confirming the organization has all the necessary and appropriate insurance. This includes commercial general liability insurance on an occurrence basis for third party bodily injury, personal injury and property damage, to an inclusive limit of not less than two million dollars ($2,000,000) per occurrence. The policy shall include the following:
    o The Indemnified Parties as additional insureds with respect to liability arising in the course of performance of the applicant's obligations under, or otherwise in connection with, the GSG program;
    o A cross-liability clause;
    o Contractual liability coverage; and
    o A 30-day written notice of cancellation, termination or material change.

The following organizations are not eligible to be funded through the GSG program; however, they may be eligible as a participating and/or contributing partner:

- Private consultants

- Other provincial government ministries

- Federal government ministries or agencies

- Training Delivery Agents (TDAs)[3]
- Any other organization that is not involved in the apprenticeship system.

1.6.   Funding Eligibility

In order to be eligible for funding applicants must demonstrate how grant funds will support the:

- Development and implementation of a prospective group sponsor arrangement; and/or
- Expansion of current services and programs provided by a new or existing group sponsor (e.g., enhance apprentice screening and recruitment services for employers).

As part of their overall project, applicants may propose to address labour and financial impacts in alignment with program objectives and key activities that support business operations recovery related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of their overall project, applicants may propose to address labour and financial impacts in alignment with program objectives and key activities that support business operations recovery related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applicants may submit a GSG Business Case Application for a **funding period between one to three years, with an annual maximum funding amount of $1,000,000**. Business Case Applications will be assessed based on criteria set out in section 2 of these guidelines.

Applicants must indicate in their Business Case Application the key activities listed in Section 1.4. that they intend to deliver, as well as proposed implementation timeline(s).

All Business Case Applications must **clearly include itemized eligible expenses planned for key activities**, including but not limited to:

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[3] Existing TDAs approved as group sponsors are eligible for funding provided they can demonstrate a separate and arms-length business line between in-class training delivery and on-the-job sponsor responsibilities.

Staffing:

- Planned staff (i.e., FTE) to be supported through this funding including title and pay range.
  - Any planned consulting or sub-contracting services must be included in this line item.

Travel:

- Travel expenditures for group sponsor staff.

Marketing:

- Marketing, promotion, distribution.

Mentorship and Training:

- Mentorship supports for apprentices that promote a successful apprenticeship, including in-class, on-the-job training, and overall skills upgrading supports.
- Train-the-trainer resources to support journeypersons who train apprentices and help employers create inclusive workplace cultures.

Employer/Apprentice Supports:

- Employer supports tied to apprentice on-the-job training that encourages high-level, comprehensive on-the-job training, mentorship and cross-employer collaboration.
- Wrap-around supports for group sponsor apprentices that could include:
  - Health and safety related 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.
    - 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.
  - End-of-training and pre-exam assistance supports, for example:

- Journeyperson mentorship
- Instructional website access
- Instructional supplies

Operational:

- Administrative and operational expenditures, such as:
  - Leasing of office space and legal/accounting fees.
- Audits:
  - Projects over $150,000 require an audit by the group sponsor's Chief Financial Officer or equivalent.
- Other expenditures:
  - Full disclosure of other expenditures charged to the project is required.

Expenses that do not directly support the project are **ineligible for funding and must not be included in the budget**. Examples of ineligible expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Wage subsidy for apprentices;
- Professional membership fees;
- Fundraising expenses;
- Profit generating activities;
- Expenditures associated with special events such as tournaments, conferences, receptions, festivals, parties;
- Capital expenses, such as renovations; and
- Expenditures associated with activities or operations performed outside of Ontario.

Funding Accountability

Funding for projects may be requested up to three-years to support applicants in developing and launching their proposed initiatives in a timeframe that allows the group sponsor to:

- Demonstrate apprentice training progression (i.e., on-the-job and in-class); and
- Transition to self-sustainable operations.

Applicants applying as prospective group sponsors (e.g., those who have yet to be approved by the ministry to register and train apprentices) **are required to demonstrate formal sponsor approval status through the ministry's Regional Offices by the completion of their first year of funding**. Failure to do so may result in holding back funds or the termination of their TPA.

Business Case Applications must include a breakdown and description of eligible project expenditures. The ministry will work with applicants to determine appropriate funding levels for new/expanded projects. Funding will be governed through the TPA and communicated through GSG financial reporting requirements.

2. Business Case Application Assessment

Business Case Applications will be reviewed against the eligibility requirements detailed in section 1.5. and evaluated through the five criteria listed below.

These criteria will inform funding decisions, reporting standards, and progress for successful applicants throughout the funding period. Applicants are encouraged to select projects that represent Ontario's diverse demographics and geography, including but not limited to the following:

- Group sponsor arrangements that target small-to-medium sized employers who are new to apprenticeship training;
- Traditionally underrepresented groups in the workforce (e.g., women in non-traditional trades, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, newcomers and francophone); and
- Populations in urban, rural/remote, and northern locations.

2.1.   Program Criteria

1. Project Overview (30%)

Applicants must identify and explain in their Business Case Application how their project encourages employer participation in apprenticeship training and promotes opportunities in all aspects of the trade(s); particularly:

- Trades that are targeted for their group sponsorship training model, along with the geographic catchment area of the training location(s).
- The scope and purpose of the project in alignment with selected GSG key activities and performance indicators.
- The client groups to be served (i.e., employers; apprentices, including underrepresented groups) and how the project will benefit them and meet their specific needs.
- Employers benefitting and/or contributing to the project, including new employers that have joined since the project's commencement.

To elaborate, GSG Business Case Applications from:

- **Prospective group sponsor applicants** must:
  - Demonstrate how funding will facilitate the start-up of their group sponsorship model leading to becoming an approved ministry group sponsor.
  - Provide letters from employers supporting the prospective group sponsorship.
  - Include responses to the ministry's prospective group sponsor assessment questions (see Appendix A).
- **New group sponsor applicants** (i.e., those who have been ministry approved to register apprentices within the past 5 years) must clearly demonstrate how funding will facilitate the development of their group sponsorship model.
- **Existing group sponsor applicants** (i.e., those who have been ministry approved to register apprentices five or more years ago) must clearly demonstrate how funding will enhance and expand their current apprenticeship activities.

2. **Project Impact (25%)**

Analysis must be included to predict outcomes of the group sponsor project, including organizational, economic and training impacts for employers and apprentices. The information must explain the project's impacts in the context of the program's objectives outlined in Section 1.3. through chosen key activities outlined in Section 1.4.

Applicants must highlight key activities that will contribute benefits to:
- Increasing the supply of skilled workers in the apprenticeship system with additional apprentices and journeypersons in trades that will be targeted through the GSG.
- Encouraging and expanding the use of apprenticeship group sponsorship among employer-based consortia.
- Better engaging employers and reducing non-financial employer barriers.
- Improving the quality of training to apprentices.
- Supporting recovery of business operations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. **Project Delivery and Budget (20%)**

Business Case Applications must provide a clear understanding of the implementation process and:
- Provide a work plan that sets out expected timelines for key activities and demonstrates effective use of resources to achieve objectives within the established timeframe.
- Clearly articulate anticipated risks and mitigations strategies associated with the implementation of key activities.
- Include an itemized budget that details eligible expenses for targeted key activities. The itemized budget must:
  - Demonstrate effective use of resources to achieve project objectives within the established timeframe for funded activities.
  - Link costs to key activities identified and aligned with project objectives and delivery timelines.
  - Detail eligible cost categories (where applicable):

Cost Category	Maximum Amount of Total Annual Budget
Staffing	30%
Travel	5%
Marketing	No maximum
Mentorship and Training	No maximum
Employer/Apprentice Supports	No maximum
Operational	No maximum

4. **Organizational Capacity (15%)**

Applicants must demonstrate how well their individual organization's capacity and strengths, including (if applicable) the combined capacity and strengths of their project partners, are suited to implement the intended key activities and apprenticeship service targets.

The ministry will assess:

- Details of the applicant organization's leadership, staffing, existing network and day-to-day operational capacity in overseeing apprentice rotation and training by the employer membership in the targeted trades.

- How applicants demonstrate their organization's mission/vision statement and performance record are aligned with and best-positioned to help reach the ministry's group sponsorship goals and strategic objectives.

- Any previous experience delivering similar and/or related group sponsorship initiatives highlighted with supporting evidence of outcomes.

Applicants may partner with other organizations to deliver a project. There must be one "lead" proponent that enters into an agreement with the ministry and assumes accountability for deliverables and outcomes. Existing and targeted partnerships may include:

- Local employers;
- Trainers;
- Educators;
- Intermediaries;

- Industry; and/or
- Business development organizations.

Applicants who choose to apply as part of a partnership must indicate the number and type of project partners involved in the project and their specific roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the project. Proof of partnership through signed partner support letter(s) or signed memorandum(s) of understanding, will be required for project partners.

Applicants who choose to utilize other financial and/or in-kind contributions are required to provide details and explain how the values of these contributions were determined. This information can be included in Section 4.2 of the Business Case Application.

5. **Local Labour Market Demand (10%)**

Applicants must describe local labour market demand for apprentices in the trade(s) being offered for training.

The ministry will assess:

- Evidence of demand: Demonstration of project need for the trade(s) and sector(s) pursued by the group sponsor in a targeted geographical location.
  - o This can include a need from group sponsor membership for apprenticeship support to accomplish key activities identified in the Business Case Application.
  - o Applicants are encouraged to use publicly available resources, such as:
    - Ontario's labour market website: Includes information about work trends, job profiles and outlooks – including the skilled trades.
    - Workforce Planning Boards: Includes information and resources about the supply of labour and the demand side of the local labour market by working with local area employers.
    - Local chambers of commerce and/or boards of trade: Includes information and resources of local and/or overall labour market,

which may include applicable trade(s) and sector(s) pursued by the group sponsor.

- Other recognized labour market resources/research: Includes information on skilled trades labour market forecasts, outlooks and analysis at the regional and/provincial level that may further support the applicant's Business Case Application.

3. Recommendation and Approval

Once the ministry has received and assessed the GSG Business Case Application, it will summarize their findings in a concise, accurate manner and make a recommendation to the approval authority.

3.1.   Business Case Application Evaluation

Whether the project is receiving a positive or negative recommendation, a Business Case Application evaluation which includes the following elements will be prepared:

- The scoring of how well the project addresses GSG program objectives based on the five weighted program criteria outlined in section 2.1 of this program guidelines document. The recommendation will provide discussion of how the project's key activities addresses challenges being experienced by apprentices and small-to-medium sized employers in Ontario's apprenticeship and skilled trades system.
- Where applicable, a demonstration of consultation in support of the recommendation, including the names of those who have been consulted on this project, and the relevance of the consultation. Those consulted may include employers and/or representatives from partnering organizations providing letters of project support.

3.2.   Project Approval

The applicant will be informed of the reason for the decision.

4. Transfer Payment Agreement Development

The GSG TPA formalizes the understanding between the ministry and the approved applicant (grant recipient) regarding the GSG project and ensures accountability for the

use of public funds. Grant recipients are responsible for managing and executing their projects through their TPA with the ministry. The TPA will set out the terms and conditions governing the payment of the grant, and will include the following:

- Project budget,
- Project management requirements,
- Monitoring and reporting requirements,
- Audits and financial reporting obligations,
- Milestones and performance measures,
- Mode and schedule of payments, and
- Process for contract termination.

The Agreement Development Process

The ministry will share copies of the GSG TPA with the grant recipient. When the grant recipient is comfortable with the content of the TPA, both copies should be signed and returned to the local ministry office. The local ministry office will collect appropriate approval signatures and forward a fully signed copy of the GSG TPA to the grant recipient.

4.1. Agreement Duration

The **proposed start and end (expiry) dates** of expenditures during the funding period must be written into the GSG TPA. If the project is approved and there is a TPA in place, no expenditures can be incurred outside the start and end dates of the agreement funding period. For this reason:

- Clear information must be included in the Business Case Application, if there will be a start-up and closeout period with essential project-related expenditures.
- Project activity follow-up and evaluation must be conducted before the expiry date of the agreement and related costs included in the TPA.

5. Performance Measures and Activity Monitoring

The GSG program seeks to:

- Address the skilled trades gap by increasing the number of apprenticeship registrations and demonstrate training progression;
- Increase group sponsor employer participation in apprenticeship and the skilled trades;
- Encourage the rotation of apprentices amongst the group sponsor's membership to allow apprentices to train in the full scope of a trade; and
- Provide relief and recovery funding for employers in a group sponsorship impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as necessary.

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

5.1. Activity Monitoring

Activity monitoring will be conducted by local ministry office staff to ensure that the activities outlined in the TPA are taking place and are in keeping with program objectives and outcomes.

- All GSG grant recipients will be asked to report on their apprentice activity including registrations, in-class completion, on-the-job training progress, and (if applicable) program completion and trade certification.
- Other activity reporting will be directly linked to the group sponsor's selected key activities funded through the GSG program. Please refer to section 6.1 for details on expected project outputs, outcomes and key indicators.

5.2. Financial Monitoring

Financial monitoring verifies that funds are spent as intended in the TPA, and that bookkeeping systems and accounting practices are in place to manage and control ministry funds. Project expenditures will be monitored through-out the duration of the TPA via ministry Estimate of Expenditure Reports (EERs) and Statement of Revenue and Expenditure Reports (SRERs). Grant recipients will be provided templates for these reports and instructions on the frequency they are to be completed and returned to their local ministry office.

5.3. Monitoring Methods

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

The service activity and financial data requirements support the ministry in monitoring progress on key activities. The ministry will maintain open dialogue with grant recipients throughout the funding period to provide ongoing feedback in order to support continuous improvement and a flexible design plan.

Project monitoring, depending on the degree of associated risk, may include:

- Verification of documents and other forms prior to processing.
- Direct contact with the grant recipient and/or participants/beneficiaries, other stakeholders, and partners.
- On-site/virtual visits to assess progress and achievement of activity milestones.
- On-site/virtual visits to verify expenditures and compliance to agreement terms.
- Utilizing program/project data for informed decision-making.

6. Performance Management and Accountability

Performance management in the Ontario Public Service (OPS) is a comprehensive, government-wide approach that informs decision-making, and ensures that all government-funded activities are aligned with and contribute to meeting government priorities.

Accountability is a joint responsibility between ministry staff and grant recipients. It is achieved when all parties fulfill their specified roles and responsibilities with respect to the GSG program guidelines, TPA, expected results and indicators.

Grant recipients are to:

- Be accountable to the ministry for all project funding and components, and the designated lead will be the final decision-making authority for the project.
- Manage their project plan and maintain responsibility for meeting all financial and accountability requirements and deliverables as identified in the TPA.

- Submit reports that will be used by the ministry to assess implementation and effectiveness, as well as compliance with financial and auditing requirements, as required by the funding agreement.

Funding will be allocated in installments based on a payment schedule as outlined in the TPA. Receipt of funding installments is dependent on the recipient meeting all deliverables and reporting requirements as indicated in the TPA. Successful applicants will be required to complete a financial statement at the end of each fiscal year outlining how the funds were used. This process verifies that the funding was solely applied to expenditures directly related to the proposed project.

6.1. Performance Management Framework

Grant recipients will be evaluated through reportable **outputs** and **outcomes**.

Outputs can be defined as the result of the applicant's project, such as but not limited to:

- Increased apprenticeship registered training agreements with the group sponsorship, with demonstrated instances of apprentice training progression (on-the-job and in-class).
- Increased promotion, marketing sessions and presentations on benefits of group sponsorship (greater efficiencies in training delivery; lower administrative and training costs).
- Increased number of group sponsors approved to register and train apprentices in Ontario.

Outcomes are the consequences or impact of the outputs in the immediate, intermediate and long-term, such as but not limited to:

- Increased proportion of under-represented groups registered to group sponsors as apprentices, Journeypersons, etc. (immediate).
- Improved apprenticeship in-class training completion and reduced barriers to apprenticeship employer participation (intermediate).

- Increased retention of apprentices and increased supply of certified workers (i.e., Journeypersons) in the Skilled Trades (long-term).

Expected results further define and help quantify the change(s) that the project will achieve, and they must be:

- Measurable and assessible.
- Aligned with the program objectives and project activities.
- Clear by describing who will benefit the most and how.

Performance Management Components:

Result Components	Result Component Details	Result Component Indicators
Outputs	- **Mandatory project service target:** Increased registered training agreements for group sponsor apprentices and demonstration of training progression. - Promotion/marketing sessions/ presentations on benefits of group sponsorship and apprenticeship. - Creation of group sponsor arrangements (applicable to prospective group sponsors).	- Number of registration agreements for group sponsors. - Apprentice status profiles including evidence of on-the-job and in-class progression. - Number and details of targeted (i.e., small to medium-sized employers, urban/rural/remote) program marketing activities. - Approved group sponsor (i.e., new ministry sponsor agreement signed).
Immediate Outcomes	- Increased proportion of under-represented groups registered to group sponsors.	- Number of apprentices from under-represented groups registered to group sponsors through the initiative.

Result Components	Result Component Details	Result Component Indicators
		• Number of apprentices from under-represented groups registered to group sponsors prior to initiative. • Percent change of under-represented apprentices in proportion to total registered apprentices in a group sponsorship.
	• Increased employer participation in group sponsorship training across all sectors, trades and regions.	• Number of employers participating in the group sponsorship. • Number and percent of employers participating in group sponsorships by sector and trade. • Number and percent of employers participating in group sponsorships by region and by urban/rural and remote.
	• Increased participation of small-to-medium sized employers in group sponsorship training arrangements.	• Number and percent of small-to-medium sized employers participating in group sponsorships.
Intermediate Outcomes	• Improved apprenticeship in-class training completion.	• Number and percent of apprentices in a group sponsorship that complete Level 1 in-class training.

Result Components	Result Component Details	Result Component Indicators

	• Reduced barriers to apprenticeship employer participation.	• Number and percent of employers in the group sponsorship satisfied with the services being provided by their group sponsor in the following areas:
		   o Registration administration support.
		   o In-class training coordination/scheduling.
		   o Apprentice pre-screening and assessment service.
		   o Coordination of on-the-job training placements aligning with skills development and business needs.
		   o Rotation of apprentices aligning with skills develop and business needs.
		   o Apprenticeship completion administration support.
		   o Pre and post Certificate of Qualification exam support for apprenticeship (if applicable).

	• Apprentice monitoring and quality of training.	• Number and stage (registration, mid-point, near completion) of group sponsor assessments/check-ins with

Result Components	Result Component Details	Result Component Indicators
		apprentices to determine challenges and supportive needs. • Percent of apprentices in the group sponsorship satisfied with accessibility, training quality and impact of group sponsorship support.
Long-term Outcomes	• Increased retention of apprentices • Increased supply of certified workers (i.e., Journeypersons) in the skilled trades. • Other post-certification, trade related career pathway.	• Percent of apprenticeship non-completers in proportion to completers in the group sponsorship. • Certification pass rate of apprentices in the group sponsorship. • Number and percent of apprentices certified in proportion to prior years (if applicable) in the group sponsorship • Number of completed apprentices who continue working in the trade and the group sponsorship as a Journeyperson. • Number of completed apprentices who continue working in the trade or a related trade in some other capacity

Result Components	Result Component Details	Result Component Indicators
		(e.g., supervisor, manager, advisor, instructor etc.).

7. Submission Process and Documentation

The Group Sponsorship Grant Program Business Case Application can be found on the Employment Ontario Partners Gateway (EOPG) webpage.

7.1. Application Process

Applicants are required to complete and submit a Business Case Application for review and are to note the following:

- Successful applicants will work with ministry representatives over the two-month review period to discuss program design parameters, set expectations for a performance management framework, and negotiate a detailed budget.
- Applicants must ensure all mandatory fields in the Business Case Application are complete and all applicable attachments are included.
- Business Case Applications will be accepted through an ongoing continuous intake process that includes a ministry review period that may take 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—which will include contractual service targets, performance measurement, funding, and accountability requirements identified in the Business Case Application and confirmed during negotiations with the ministry during the review process.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be notified after the ministry's review process and are eligible to re-submit a revised Business Case Application.

A list of questions and answers compiled from applicants will be posted on the EOPG. For additional support, please email **GroupSponsorshipGrant@ontario.ca**.

8. Milestones

Activity	Description	Timeline
Business Case Application Submission	Applicants submit their Business Case Applications for ministry review.	Ongoing through out the fiscal year
Ministry Review (Conclusion of Review and Evaluation Process)	The review period for Business Case Applications may take up to two months, including negotiations for successful applicants.	Up to Two Months
	Successful applicants will enter negotiations with the ministry during the two-month review period to identify program parameters and set expectations for a performance management framework.	
	Unsuccessful applicants will be notified concluding the ministry's review. Unsuccessful applicants may re-submit a Business Case Application for a new round of review.	
Formalize TPAs	Applicants will sign a TPA for up to three years which will include the contractual service targets agreed upon during the negotiation phase with the ministry.	Ongoing through out the fiscal year

9. Appendix A: Questions for Prospective Group Sponsors

Local ministry staff engage with prospect group sponsors by gathering the information attained through the below questions. Prospective group sponsors applying for the GSG are required to provide responses to these questions as part of their Business Case Application to help ensure they are prepared to be approved as group sponsors by the ministry to register and train apprentices within the first year of their GSG project term.

1) Does/will the membership of the group include any educational institutions (e.g., public/private colleges, school boards) and/or a union that is approved as a training delivery agent for apprenticeship?

2) Does/will the group have a business manager/coordinator in place responsible for arranging and tracking apprentice placements, schooling, and progress?

3) Does/will the group have a strong connection to the labour market in the requested trade? (e.g., employers willing to hire apprentices)

4) Do/will the group members have a plan to meet regularly to discuss apprenticeship matters? (recommended at least quarterly)

5) Has previous consultation occurred with other ministry offices or regions based on the geographical area where the group plans to sponsor apprentices?

6) Are there or will there be any fees involved in being a member of this group, for the affiliated employers or the apprentices? (Note: this does not include union fees, OCOT fees)

7) Does/will the group have a process in place that ensures apprentices receive the required workplace-based training in the time recommended/specified by OCOT for the program?

8) Does/will the group have a process in place that ensures apprentices have opportunities to attend classroom training?

9) Does/will the group have a process in place to support the completion of apprentices?

10) Does/will the group have a process in place to ensure that trainers are qualified to provide the training for the apprenticeship program?

11) Does/will the group have a process in place to track journeyperson-to-apprentice trade ratio for trades subject to ratios?

12) Is the group aware of the obligations of compliance with the sponsor agreement and all applicable legislation and regulations?

13) Does/will the group have a process in place to ensure progress updates, membership updates or ministry requested reports will be submitted in a timely manner?

14) Is the group aware of the role of OCOT and the membership requirements for apprentices and journeypersons?