

# Call for Proposal - Guidelines

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for the

## Workplace and Community Workforce Literacy & Essential Skills Projects

Issued: September 10, 2009

Submission Deadline: 3:00 pm (Toronto Time) September 25, 2009

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## 1.0 Background

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Literacy and essential skills provide the foundation for all other learning and skills development. They are the fundamental skills that people need to pursue technical training and to participate in and respond successfully to the emerging new economy.

The 2009 Ontario Budget announced an investment of \$90 million dollars over two years to expand literacy and basic skills training, including funding for community projects, distance learning and workplace literacy as a key component of an economic response strategy. This funding will help over 13,000 laid-off workers and other adult learners to train for more technical training and highly skilled jobs in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

On July 2, 2009 the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) announced the investment of \$25 million through the delivery of the Literacy and Basic Skills Program in colleges, school boards and community literacy organizations in the Employment Ontario network. In addition, \$5 million was provided to expand on-line literacy training to create more opportunities for learners living in remote communities.

This Call for Proposals (CFP) is the second stage of initiatives flowing from the 2009 Ontario Budget and from the enhancements to the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement. It is designed to enhance and expand current literacy and essential skills services to include employers, the workplace, communities and the workforce and their particular employment, education and training needs. We anticipate that another Call for proposals will be released in March 2010. The initiative ends March 31, 2011.

The projects funded through this Call for Proposals will contribute significant knowledge to all stakeholders invested in adult literacy and essential skills training, as well as MTCU. This initiative is designed and structured to enable an independent evaluation of the project services, outcomes and impact against the government's strategic goals. This analysis will provide information regarding effective practices being delivered in workplaces and communities and about new and innovative approaches to literacy and essential skills training workplace and workforce development. It will also point to service needs and models of delivery that need to be developed to provide access to the foundational training needed to participate in the emerging economy.

## 1.2 STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE INITIATIVE

- Meeting the training expectations of adults who have been impacted by economic conditions in the province and need to improve their literacy and/or essential skills to be successful in their education, training or employment goals
- Meeting the training expectations of employers who recognize the importance of workers having solid literacy and essential skills to work effectively and safely
- Meeting the training expectations of vulnerable communities (defined either by cultural affiliation and/or geography) who need skills training tailored to their specific circumstances to achieve workforce participation
- Building employer and community capacity to deliver effective literacy and essential skills services that lead to greater employment-based outcomes
- Establishing better linkages between literacy and essential skills training and Ontario's apprenticeship system to support greater completion rates for apprentices
- Informing government and literacy and essential skill stakeholders and government by:
  - Developing creative and effective approaches to integrating the delivery of literacy and essential skills services into broader community services and supports to improve workforce outcomes
  - Developing creative and effective community responses that consider cultural and linguistic needs and identify specific wrap-around supports such as financial counselling, mentoring and advocacy that lead to greater success in achieving the upgrading goals of learners
  - Integrating literacy and essential skills into workplace and technical training to provide a context for learning and to improve workplace performance

## 2.0 Information

### 2.1 PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL APPLICATION:

The purpose of this application is to fund workplace and community workforce literacy and essential skills training projects that will be delivered starting October 2009 up to March 31 2011. The Ministry anticipates releasing another Call for Proposals in March 2010.

### 2.2 DEFINITIONS

Literacy and Essential Skills Training is any combination of training in:

- Reading Text, Document Use, Numeracy, Writing, Oral Communication, Working with Others, Continuous Learning, Thinking Skills, Computer Skills

Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills training:

- Is employer based training designed to ensure that employees have the foundational skills to function effectively, efficiently and safely in their jobs
- Is delivered in or supported by the workplace (i.e. could include action centres, union training centres)
- Includes workforce upgrading, occupational and job-specific training

Community Workforce Literacy and Essential Skills training:

- Is delivered in a community setting – not in a specific workplace setting
- Includes training to gain eligibility requirements for further education and training, workforce readiness, occupational specific training and employment
- Includes the necessary wrap-around supports to ensure learning success for adult learners

## 3.0 Design Of The Projects

### 3.1 OBJECTIVES

Both workplace and community workforce projects are intended to provide services that primarily help individuals achieve learning that supports employment, education and training goals. However, this will also result in transferable outcomes that support the civic participation of learners (social engagement of people in roles such as parent, consumer and citizen in the context of home and community).

Employers are significant stakeholders in these projects:

- Workplace Projects must address needs of employers to hire and retain workers with literacy and essential skills necessary for business needs and the new economy
- Community Workforce Projects must address the needs of individuals to meet the requirements for workforce participation, retention or advancement, including access to higher skills training

Existing or new employees will have the necessary literacy and essential skills to adequately perform job tasks and to adapt to changes in the workplace i.e. perform new job tasks.

At risk employees or the unemployed will have the literacy and essential skills needed to successfully transfer to new employment opportunities or training.

Literacy and essential skills services will be linked to other social services such as housing, income support or financial counselling, enabling learners to access the support needed for learning success:

- Innovative models of delivery are developed and tailored to specific circumstances and needs of the community
- Better linkages are defined between Literacy and Essential Skills training and Ontario's Apprenticeship system

### 3.2 TARGETED CLIENTS

Given the strategic goals of the initiative and the project objectives, eligible participants in the projects are:

- Unemployed or employed adults 18 years of age and over who require literacy and essential skills training and/ or occupation specific literacy and essential skills training to transition to education, training or employment and/or to retain or gain employment in higher skill jobs
- Employers in Ontario who have identified the need to increase their employees' skills so they can adequately perform their job duties and contribute to overall better business performance

In addition, projects may target services to such individuals as:

- adults with less than grade 12 education
- adults who may have educational credentials but have experienced skills loss
- adults who voluntarily identify themselves as being from groups who are under represented in the workforce: i.e. Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, immigrants, Francophones, older workers
- employed adults who have received notice of lay off

And to such employers as those in:

- at risk sectors (e.g. manufacturing and forestry)
- communities experiencing economic downturn
- emerging and growing sectors (e.g. green jobs, mining)

### **3.3 SERVICES EXPECTED**

Funding can support both the delivery of literacy and essential skills training to achieve defined outcomes and the development and delivery of innovative, customer-centered tools, approaches and models of delivery.

Service for individuals:

- Identification of the individual's literacy and essential skills levels and goals related to education, training or employment
- Development and delivery of referral protocols that link individuals to community services (example: housing, income support, social services) to help access
- Participation and success in literacy and essential skills training
- Supported access to education or training or employment services
- Development/adaptation of learning tools and models
- Provision of literacy and essential skills training:
  - Embedded in technical skills training in the work place or in institutional setting
  - Tailored to specific trades and occupations to increase access to higher skill training and employment, such as apprenticeship

Service for employers and communities:

- Based on an employer's Workplace Needs Assessment (business needs), assessment of literacy and essential skills training needs and development of effective training responses
- Support for access to information about resources and supports for workplace training information ( i.e. employer tax credits, program resources, education and/or training services), including relevant workplace literacy and essential skills resources and tools
- Based on a community's workforce development goals, assessment of literacy and essential skills training needs and development of effective training responses
- Ongoing support for individuals and employers during training
- Facilitated linkages to other employers interested/involved in workplace training

### **3.4 OUTCOMES/EXPECTED RESULTS**

For individuals:

- Have transitioned to education, training or employment
- Have retained employment
- Can see their skill gain through measurement of their progress
- Have completed their project training plan

For employers (workplace projects):

- Employees have the foundational skills to function effectively, efficiently and safely in their jobs or future jobs

## 4.0 Project Funding

Proposals for Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills projects **must** include a contribution from the employer to the cost of delivering the project. That may include such things as:

- Cash contributions to direct operating costs or training support allowances
- Covering wages of staff who are released from work during working hours to participate in training
- Providing space/facilities for training in the workplace
- Meals/refreshments for training that takes place during lunch hours or after work

There are two types of project funding:

- Operating Budget
- Training Support Allowances

### 4.1 OPERATING BUDGET FUNDING

Funding is based on the number of individuals who participate in the projects. The following table highlights the operating budget funding ranges. These ranges provide funding guidelines for proponents that take into account the different service needs of learners and employers, and the range and level of literacy and essential skills training and additional wrap-around supports that are being proposed. The requested funding and the Ministry's funding decisions within the ranges will be informed by a number of variables such as:

- Learner profile: Who are your targeted clients and what are their unique characteristics and learning challenges?
- Training requirements: What type and level of training is required? (i.e. literacy and essential skills at a specific level or attached to technical training etc.)
- Support requirements: What level of wrap around supports must be delivered as part of the project, or provided through effective referrals?
- Project outcomes: What level of progress and outcomes are proposed for the project?
- Economies of scale. Can efficiencies be realized through higher levels of service activity?

<b>Learner Service Activity Levels Number of participants</b>	<b>Operating Budget Funding Range</b>
Up to 100	\$80 000 – \$500 000
101 to 400	\$218 000 – \$864 000
Over 400	To be negotiated

## 4.2 ELIGIBLE FUNDING

Direct Operating Expenditures: to cover the costs directly related to delivering and meeting the reporting and documentation requirements of the project:

- Staff and management salaries
- Staff orientation and training
- Outreach, marketing and service referrals
- Facilities
- Learning materials
- Equipment and furniture directly related to the project

Indirect Expenditures: Administrative fees or overhead costs no greater than 15% of the direct operating budget.

Project funds cannot be used for capital expenditures such as the purchase, construction or renovation of facilities.

### Training Support Allowances:

Some individuals may need financial supports to remove barriers to participation and support learning. Projects may provide up to \$500 to individuals who need these supports during their participation in the projects to offset costs of:

- Transportation, temporary childcare, examination or certification costs

Project deliverers will determine eligibility for supports using on the Low Income Level Cut-Off levels for their community/area and will determine the level of support needed based on individual circumstances. MTCU assumes that not all participants will be eligible for or require Training Support Allowances.

## 5.0 Mandatory Requirements For Proponents Submitting Proposals for Workplace or Community Workforce Literacy and Essential Skills Projects

Only proposals that meet the mandatory requirements will be scored against the Evaluation Criteria (see Section 6.0)

### 5.1 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Projects must be submitted as partnership proposals. The application **must** include a description of roles and responsibility for each partner to the proposal, and a letter of agreement signed by all partners
- Depending on the scope and focus of the proposed projects, the partnerships **must** include representation from relevant combinations of such stakeholders as employers and employment services, labour organizations and labour training centres, colleges, school- boards, cultural and community-based organizations
- Workplace Literacy and Essential Skill projects **must** include an employer as a partner to the proposal, and **must** indicate a contribution of resources from the employer
- At least one of the partners to the proposal **must** currently be under contract with MTCU through Employment Ontario

### 5.2 SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Projects **must** commit to measuring learner skill gain with assessment tools with a record of success in measuring learning progress such as:

- the Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) tool or,
- the Prose Document and Quantitative Profile Series (PDQ) tool or,
- other International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) tools or,
- other Human Resources and Skills Development Essential Skills tools.

Services targeting specific populations or communities **must** be culturally and linguistically appropriate.

## 6.0 Evaluation Criteria

A panel of MTCU representatives will evaluate the proposals based on the following evaluation criteria. All decisions relative to the degree to which an application meets the evaluation criteria are the sole judgement of the MTCU.

### *Effectiveness (50 points)*

- The proposed services are aligned with the strategic goals of the initiative and objectives of the project
- There is evidence of experience in delivering literacy and essential skills training with a focus on achieving employment and /or training and/or education goals, outcomes, results
- There is evidence of systems that support measurement of progress and results as well as planning and allocation of resources to meet contracted commitments
- There is a commitment to a level of outcomes relative to proposed target group and services

### *Customer Service (30 points)*

- There is evidence of need and/or community support for the proposed project
- There is evidence that services are responsive to the needs of relevant clients (individuals, employers, specific client groups, communities)
- There is evidence of a commitment to tracking customer feedback
- There is evidence that the proponent has a publicly available privacy policy based on the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, if applicable, or the Canadian Standards Association Model Privacy Code
- There is evidence that the proponent has an experienced official responsible for ensuring compliance with the privacy policy, including providing individuals with access to their own personal information

### *Efficiency (20 points)*

- There is a commitment to provide services to a number of learners within the funding ranges identified in the CFP
- There is a commitment to building the proposed project services into the local service environment with effective referrals and service coordination
- Proposed costs are aligned with eligible expenses identified in the CFP

## 7.0 Communications

To ensure fairness and transparency in the CFP process, all questions will be compiled and answered through a single method. All questions regarding the CFP must be sent to:

Aris Engelhard [aris.engelhard@ontario.ca](mailto:aris.engelhard@ontario.ca) or by fax 416 325-6162  
by **September 15, 2009, by 5:00 pm. (Toronto time)**.

Answers will be posted to the Employment Ontario Partners Gateway website,  
[www.eopg.ca](http://www.eopg.ca) by **September 18, 2009, 5:00 pm. (Toronto time)**.

No questions will be accepted by phone, and individual email responses will not be provided.

## 8.0 Submission Requirements

Each proponent will submit one electronic and two signed original copies of the proposal.

The electronic and paper copies must be submitted **by 3:00 p.m. (Toronto time) on September 25 2009 to:**

[aris.engelhard@ontario.ca](mailto:aris.engelhard@ontario.ca)

**Aris Engelhard  
Service Delivery Branch  
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities  
33 Bloor St. E. 2nd Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 2S3**

Any proposals received after the deadline will NOT be considered.

Proposals submitted in any other manner will NOT be considered.

All proponents will be notified of the results of the evaluation process by phone and email no later than October 30, 2009.

## 9.0 Schedule Of Events

EVENT	DATE
Guidelines and Proposal Application Issued	September 10, 2009
Deadline to fax/e-mail questions to Ministry	September 15, 2009
Ministry response to questions posted to <a href="http://www.eopg.ca">www.eopg.ca</a>	September 18, 2009
Application closing date	September 25, 2009
Selection process completed; successful applicants notified	October 30, 2009

**Note:** At its sole discretion, the Ministry reserves the right to modify or cancel any of the scheduled dates and the right to modify or cancel this proposal application process at any time for any reason.  
The Ministry is not responsible for any costs incurred by proponents for the preparation of proposal applications.

This Proposal Application neither expresses nor implies any obligations on the part of the Ministry to enter into an agreement with an organization submitting a proposal. The Ministry reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, in its absolute discretion.

## **10.0 Additional Requirements**

### **10.1 NEGOTIATION OF AGREEMENT**

No program services/activities will be delivered before reaching an agreement with MTCU for the provision of the approved services/activities. The agreement will be in a format provided by the Ministry. The Ministry expects to begin negotiations for the specific services/activities to be detailed in the agreement no later than October 26, 2009.

### **10.2 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Ministry will require successful proponents to regularly collect and submit in a timely manner required data/information. The Ministry will provide relevant instructions, forms and will detail the data/tracking requirements.

### **10.3 AUDIT REQUIREMENTS**

All projects totalling \$100,000 and over will be required to submit a final detailed accounting statement that has been independently audited within 90 days of project completion.

### **10.4 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT (FIPPA)**

FIPPA applies to information in the custody or under the control of the Ministry and any information provided by a proponent can be the subject of an access request. A proponent should identify any information in its proposal or any accompanying documentation supplied in confidence for which confidentiality is to be maintained by the Ministry. The confidentiality of such information will be maintained by the Ministry except as otherwise required by law or by order of a court or tribunal, including the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Proponents are advised that their proposals will, as necessary, be disclosed on a confidential basis, to the Ministry's advisers retained for the purpose of evaluating or participating in the evaluation of their proposals.

### **10.5 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The proponent must disclose any information pertaining to any situation that may be a conflict of interest in submitting the proposal or, if selected, the contractual obligations.

### **10.6 COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE**

The proponent who will sign the agreement (the successful proponent) must secure comprehensive general liability insurance to an inclusive limit not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence on property damage, bodily injury and personal injury prior to receiving the funds.

## **10.7 MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS**

Organizations may not at any time directly or indirectly communicate with the media in relation to this proposal application or the awarding of the same or any resulting agreement(s) without the consent of the MTCU and then only in coordination with the MTCU.

Marketing and Promotional Materials:

- Full acknowledgement of Ontario government support must be provided in all marketing and promotional material