

November 13, 2009

Dear Second Career Partner,

I am writing to update you on the status of Second Career.

Second Career is an overwhelming success. It was designed to offer retraining to 20,000 laid-off workers over three years. In just 16 months, it has helped almost 21,000 people begin a retraining program.

The high demand has created challenges for the program. In September of this year, there was an approximate increase of 800% in applications over the previous year. For that reason, we conducted a review of Second Career to ensure it can continue to help workers affected by the global economic recession, in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner.

We appreciate your hard work and dedication to making Second Career a success. Moving forward, we need your continued support to help us implement changes that are fiscally responsible. We are working with a finite amount of funding and need to make sure we are helping the people who will benefit the most from skills training.

New guidelines for Second Career will be in place, effective November 20, 2009. Applications that are not yet approved by the ministry will be reassessed under the new guidelines.

In order to simplify the delivery of Employment Ontario training programs, the new guidelines will apply to both Second Career and Ontario Skills Development clients. Clients will still be able to apply for short-term or long-term training.

Under the new guidelines, the program will focus on supporting people in need who will benefit the most from skills training. Several criteria will be used to objectively assess an applicant's level of need. Applicants will be considered to have a higher level of need when they:

- Are gaining new skills for a high-demand occupation;
- Have been unemployed for a longer period of time;
- Have a high-school education or less, or postsecondary education credentials that are not recognized in Ontario; and
- Are working toward a college certificate, diploma or licence.

The new guidelines will provide increased flexibility by allowing clients to pursue either full-time or part-time training. Second Career will continue to offer laid-off workers support for tuition, books, travel and other expenses to help them participate in training.

An information sheet is attached outlining the changes to Second Career. Where necessary, please share these changes with Second Career and Ontario Skills Development applicants. All assessment centres should also post a copy of the information sheet in a public area of the office.

We need to work together to manage expectations and ensure that clients continue to be realistic in setting start dates. Priority will be given to clients whose applications have been in the system the longest, with a focus on clients who have applied for January training starts. Potential participants are not to begin training until they get final approvals in writing from MTCU.

A training session for service providers will be organized next week. In the meantime, for more details about the guidelines and other changes, including answers to frequently asked questions, please visit the Second Career website: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/secondcareer/>. If you have any other questions, please contact your local ministry office.

I understand that this has been a challenging time for our Employment Ontario and training partners. We appreciate your continued support and cooperation as we work to implement the new guidelines.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Laurie LeBlanc
Assistant Deputy Minister
Employment and Training Division

Attachment