

**Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development**

**Second Career Redesign: Phase 2 External Questions and Answers**

**For Service Provider Use Only**

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## General Overview

### **1) The Second Career program underwent changes in December 2020. Why is the program being changed again?**

The first phase of the Second Career (SC) redesign, where the Ministry implemented the Fast Track Stream, was launched in December 2020 to address the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Phase 2 builds upon the program changes made in Phase 1 and the government's continued commitment to strengthen and simplify the program while improving participant experience.

### **2) When will Phase 2 of the redesign launch?**

The second phase of the SC redesign launches on July 13, 2021.

### **3) What are the key changes for Phase 2?**

Phase 2 of the SC redesign will focus on improving participant access to the program by simplifying the application process and by increasing the financial support amounts lower-income participants can receive.

Changes will include:

- A new funding model that uses a mixture of actual costs and flat rate amounts, adjusted based on need, to simplify the application process,
- Updated support amounts to reflect the current cost of living, and
- A streamlined PDF application form.

These changes will reduce the administrative burden, improve the participant experience, and enable the program to more efficiently respond to participant demand. It is important to note that Phase 2 of the redesign will maintain the overall funding cap of \$28,000.

### **4) Will there be any changes to the Second Career guidelines?**

As part of Phase 2, the SC Program Guidelines have been updated and will be posted on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG).

### **5) Will the SC Manufacturing Initiative and the Fast Track Stream still be available to applicants after Phase 2 launches?**

Both the SC Manufacturing Initiative and the Fast Track Stream will continue to be available to applicants as options under the SC program. More information about both can be accessed through the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG).

**6) After new SC application forms have become available, how long will the ministry continue accepting older versions of forms?**

Applicants, service providers and ministry staff are expected to begin using new/updated forms once they have become available at Phase 2 launch. To provide flexibility for applicants who are in the process of completing SC applications prior to the launch, the ministry has established a grace period where applicants may continue to submit their SC application using the previous versions of forms until August 13, 2021. (i.e. one month after the launch date of July 13, 2021).

During this one-month grace period, ministry staff will review applications submitted on older versions of forms but will be required to assess them under new guidelines as of the launch date. Ministry staff will be provided with a Grace Period Desk Aid to assist them with converting applicant information onto the new forms.

**7) When are ministry staff and service providers expected to begin using new Phase 2 guidelines?**

Ministry staff and service providers are expected to begin using new guidelines starting from the launch date on July 13, 2021.

**8) Will tuition caps be brought back as a part of Phase 2?**

Tuition caps based on institution type are no longer part of SC.

**[Second Career Redesign Phase 2: Key Changes](#)**

**9) Will any cost categories change in Phase 2?**

**Flat rate** funding is being introduced in Phase 2. Flat rate funding is being updated for cost categories that include Basic Living Allowance (BLA), transportation, and the Living Away from Home Allowance.

SC will continue to fund **actual costs** for cost categories that present a wide range of costs, such as tuition, program fees and books. Funding for computers will also be funded via actual costs up to a maximum of \$500.

The table below provides the SC cost categories and any changes as a result of Phase 2, where applicable:

<b>Cost category in Phase 2</b>	<b>Change from Phase 1?</b>	<b>Description of change</b>
<b>Basic Living Allowance (BLA)</b>	Yes	This is now a flat rate of \$500/week reduced by income adjustment as per the SC Income Threshold. Participants receiving EI use \$500/week minus EI income per week before applying an income adjustment. Participants not receiving EI use \$500/week before applying an income adjustment.
<b>Transportation</b>	Yes	This is now a flat rate of \$45/week for participants with in-person classes and/or practicums reduced by income adjustment as per the SC Income Threshold.
<b>Training Access Payment (formerly Other Personal Supports)</b>	Yes	This is now a one-time payment of \$350 for personal training supports (not covered by other instructional costs) for participants at or below the SC Income Threshold.
<b>Living Away from Home Allowance</b>	Yes	This has been increased to a flat rate of \$240/week for participants who need to maintain both a primary and secondary residence near their training institute.
<b>Direct Training Costs</b>	No	N/A
<b>Disability-Related Costs</b>	No	N/A
<b>Dependent Care</b>	Yes	This is now funding of actual costs for dependent care up to weekly maximums by care type. Maximum rates of coverage per dependent per month and per household per month have been removed.

#### 10) What is the Second Career Income Threshold?

The Second Career Income Threshold is a key component of the new funding model being introduced for Phase 2. Prior to Phase 2, Basic Living Allowance (BLA) funded the difference between monthly household income and monthly recognized household expenses, up to a maximum of \$410 per week.

BLA and transportation support will now be provided at an amount that brings participant and spousal/partner income to no more than the Second Career Income Threshold. The Second Career Income Threshold is based on the federal

government's Moderate Standard of Living (MSOL) threshold and varies depending on household size.

**11) Has the funding amount for Basic Living Allowance (BLA) changed?**

Yes, SC will provide eligible participants with a flat rate of up to \$500/week for living expenses, in alignment with the current federal EI minimum rate and SC's 2008 program BLA maximum adjusted for inflation. This amount will be adjusted based on participant weekly EI and participant and spousal/partner income, using the SC Income Threshold.

**12) Has the funding amount for transportation changed?**

SC will provide a flat rate of \$45/week for transportation related costs to participants with in-person classes and/or practicum. This amount will be adjusted based on participant and spousal/partner income, using the Second Career Income Threshold.

**13) Will participants be eligible to receive transportation funding if their program consists of a mix of virtual and in-person training?**

Any participant who is required to travel for any portion of their skills training is eligible to receive transportation funding for the entire duration of their skills training.

Participants attending virtual only training should not be considered for transportation funding.

**14) Will participants be eligible to receive transportation funding if they have moved to a secondary residence to attend skills training?**

Any participant who is living away from home to attend skills training and is eligible to receive the Living Away from Home Allowance may also be eligible to receive transportation funding for the entire duration of their skills training. The transportation flat rate of \$45/week for transportation related costs will also cover costs incurred by eligible participants who must move to their temporary residence at the beginning of training and move back to their primary residence at the end of training.

**15) What is the Training Access Payment and when should it be applied?**

The 'Other Personal Supports' funding category has been renamed as 'Training Access Payment' and is now a one-time upfront payment of \$350 for participants whose household income is at or below the SC Income Threshold. The one-time

Training Access Payment will assist with up front training-related costs, regardless of skill training duration.

Examples of training-related costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Uniforms,
- Footwear, and
- Safety equipment not already covered under other instructional costs.

**16) Will there be any funding changes made to dependent care costs?**

Dependent care rates have been updated to weekly maximum amounts by care type. Financial assistance for incremental dependent care costs may be provided if they are incurred by the SC participant while they are participating in skills training. Eligible costs include care of a child under 14 years of age or person with a disability who is dependent upon the participant for care while they participate in skills training.

**17) For the purposes of Second Career, what is household size?**

Household size is defined as:

- the participant, and
- their spouse/common law partner, and
- their dependent children under the age of 18.

**18) Is the income of dependants 18 years and older or other family living at home factored into the Second Career household income?**

Only income from the participant and their spouse/common law partner will be considered when calculating household income. Any income from other individuals living within the household will not be considered when calculating the participant's household income.

**19) Does the SC Income Threshold vary depending on the size of a participant's household?**

Support levels for participants will be adjusted based on combined participant and spousal/common law partner income. BLA funding will only be provided at an amount that brings household income to no higher than the following before-tax income thresholds:

Household Size	Income Threshold
1 – person	\$1,055/week
2 – person family	\$1,200/week
3 – person family	\$1,491/week
4 or more – person family	\$1,698/week

The participant's household size for the purposes of SC includes the participant, their spouse/common law partner, and their dependent children under the age of 18.

Participants who have an overall income (including spouse/common law partner income, where applicable) that exceeds their related income threshold will not be eligible for BLA, transportation funding, or the Training Access Payment.

## **20) Will EI income be considered as part of the financial assessment?**

Participants in receipt of EI Part 1 benefits will have their funding adjusted based on the SC Income Threshold, and will subtract their EI income from the base BLA amount, as described in the following formula:

**[(Base BLA – \*EI income) + (\*\*transportation) + (participant gross EI and non EI income + gross spousal/partner income) – (income threshold)] = reduction in funding applied to (Base BLA – EI income) + (\*\*transportation).**

- \*EI income up to \$500.
- \*\* transportation amount of \$45 if participant is eligible, if not \$0 would be entered.

## **21) Are participants still required to contribute to program costs through Participant Contribution?**

The Participant Contribution cost category has been replaced with an income adjustment that only applies to the Basic Living Allowance (BLA), transportation and the Training Access Payment funding categories. Participant contributions towards skills training and incremental costs will no longer apply in determining SC financial assistance.

### **Application for Financial Assistance**

## **22) Why is the Application for Financial Assistance form being updated?**

The Application for Financial Assistance form has been updated to reflect Phase 2 changes. In addition, the form has been updated to streamline the application process, reduce duplicative questions and decrease potential for errors. Digital enhancements have been added to the form to provide a more intuitive experience for applicants and service providers when they are filling out the form.

Applicants will still be able to print the application form and complete it in paper format. As the hover-over hints will not be available for applicants who print out the document, these individuals are asked to also print out the supplementary Information Sheet that includes details about the SC program and definitions for important terms.



**23) Will applicants still be required to work with service providers to complete the application?**

The service provider’s role remains an integral part of the application process. Service providers will continue to provide support to applicants completing the application.

**24) Where can the Application for Financial Assistance form be found?**

The Application for Financial Assistance can be accessed from the Employment Ontario Partners’ Gateway (EOPG) The form is available in a PDF format that can be filled out electronically or printed out and completed manually.

The supplementary Information Sheet can now be found as a separate document on the EOPG.

**25) Will applicants for both regular Second Career and the Fast Track Stream fill out the same updated Application for Financial Assistance form?**

The updated Application for Financial Assistance form is applicable to both sets of applicants. The fillable PDF form will automatically show the appropriate questions to complete upon selecting the relevant stream. If an applicant fills out this form manually, they can refer to the supplementary Information Sheet for further information on which questions must be completed.

Applicants who are unsure which program stream they can participate in should connect with their service provider to discuss which stream they are eligible for.

**26) What has happened to the Estimate of Financial Assistance form?**

The updated Application for Financial Assistance form now includes elements of the SC Estimate of Financial Assistance form. Therefore, the Estimate of Financial Assistance form is no longer required.

**Second Career Supplementary Forms Changes**

**27) What are the maximum rates of coverage for dependent care in Phase 2?**

Most rates for dependent care costs have increased and are based on actual expenses incurred by participants up to the following weekly maximum rates of coverage:

Care Types	Weekly Maximums
Infant (younger than 18 months)	\$341

Toddler (between 18 months and 2.5 years)	\$279
Preschool (2.5 years to school age)	\$235
School Age (school age to 14 years)	\$210
Other Types of Care (i.e. person with a disability who is dependent upon the participant for care while he/she participates in skills training. )	\$341

**28) Will there be changes to dependent care forms?**

Dependent care forms have been updated to clarify completion instructions and required supporting documents, to update dependent care rates and content on the collection and use of personal information, and to better align the forms as a package for applicants to complete when requesting financial assistance for dependent care costs.

**29) Will there be any changes made to financial assistance for disability-related costs?**

Financial assistance for disability-related costs will remain status quo. Financial assistance for disability-related costs have no maximum and is exempt from the overall program cap of \$28,000.