Workforce Strategies Grants

Application Guidelines

Alberta

Contents

Classification: Public

Alberta at Work - Workforce Strategies Grant

Call for Applications (CFA)

Important Information

This call for application uses a two-stage process. The first stage involves an expression of interest submission (EOI), and the second stage is a full application. Only those short-listed from the EOI will be invited to apply for the grant.

a) Contact

All inquiries pertaining to this CFA should be directed to lbr.workforcestrategiesgrant@gov.ab.ca

b) Closing Date and Time

An Expression of Interest (EOI) application must be received electronically by **11:59 p.m. MDT on July 22, 2022.**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure their EOI form is received on time. An acknowledgement email will be sent upon receipt. If an acknowledgement email is not received, check your junk folder.

Hard copies will NOT be accepted.

Classification: Public

Application Guidelines

A. Grant Description

Alberta recognizes the need to create pathways to success for all Albertans. Workforce Strategies Grants will invest to help Albertans develop new skills and assist employers and industry to grow their workforce. Workforce Strategies grant funding is intended to provide eligible applicants the ability to implement solutions that support skills, and employment and workforce development needs by supporting innovative projects.

B. Project Stream Overview

The Workforce Strategies Grant has three funding streams.

1. Skills Development Stream is intended to support unemployed Albertans by providing them training and/or services resulting in skills development and employment.
2. Regional and Employer-focused Stream is intended to support projects that address regional workforce challenges experienced by regions and/or employers in hiring Albertans.
3. Industry-focused Stream is intended to support industry-led projects that address provincial workforce needs.

Please read this document in its entirety. Each stream has specific project criteria that pertains to the grant funding. An EOI application is available for download on the website. Once the guidelines are read and understood, complete the EOI application. Applicants will have opportunity to submit questions, see Stage 1: Expression of Interest.

C. Funding Streams

Please proceed to the stream you are applying for:

1. Skills Development Stream

a) Project Parameters

Projects must:

- demonstrate a need supported by labour market Information;
- include employer and/or industry involvement:
  o involvement may include: curriculum design, work experience opportunities, employment placement, and/or onsite training; and
- support two or more project priorities.

Projects must **not**:

- duplicate existing programs and services including those already supported by Alberta Labour and Immigration Training and Employment Services Directory
- fall within the Training and Employment Services - Programs and Services guidelines
- be training that is basic employer onboarding
- be to the benefit of a single employer
- Apprenticeship training, or anything considered pre-trade

b) Project Priorities

Projects must include training and/or services that leads to employment, and supports two or more of the following:

- Albertans experiencing long-term unemployment exceeding 27 weeks
- Provides sector and/or occupational appropriate professional skills and/or essential skills training
- Project supports some of the sectors and sub-sectors highlighted in the Alberta Recovery Plan:
  o New and emerging sectors such as technology (including fintech)
  o Agriculture (including agri-tech)

- Forestry
- Tourism
- Energy (including hydrogen)
- Aviation/Aerospace
- Logistics
- Culture

* Non-prioritized sectors may be considered for funding if a strong project rationale is provided.

- Skill development in occupations that have had an increase in automation and digitization
- Connects recent post-secondary graduates to employment in new and emerging sectors
- Regions outside of a [Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)](#) that have unique labour market need(s)
- Equity-deserving groups

It is an expectation that training and/or services would result in employment with sustainable income and long-term career potential.

c) Eligible Applicants

- Training providers
- Post-secondary institutions
- Indigenous organizations
- Employers
- Industry and sector associations
- Unions
- Non-profit organizations
- Sole proprietors

Eligible applicants must have a minimum of two years' organizational experience in:

- directly providing training or services; or
- have a demonstrated partnership with an organization that has two years of providing training or services

Ineligible Applicants

- Individuals
- Governments (municipal, provincial, federal, including crown corporations)

d) Eligible Beneficiaries

Albertans in training and/or a service must be:

- Unemployed Albertans who have not quit their job for the sole purpose of participating in training and/or services;
- Living in Alberta and legally entitled to work in Canada (Canadian Citizen, permanent resident of Canada, or a protected person under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act); and
- At least 18 years old.

Not eligible

- Refugee claimants, visitors, and those with no legal working status in Canada.

e) Outcomes and Measures

- Albertan is attached to the labour market and employed after the program and/or service;
- Participant satisfaction; and

- Alternative outcome measurements that clearly demonstrate the benefit to the individual accessing training and/or services, and the return on investment to the province, are also of interest.

f) Duration

- Up to 36 months for duration of grant agreement.
- Length of training within the grant can be up to 26 weeks, and could also include multiple intakes within the duration of the grant agreement.
  - Training and/or services that are shorter in length and smaller in scope are also encouraged.

g) Project Costs

The grant agreement can be up to $1.5 million.

Some participants attending full-time programming may require a source of income; therefore, a living allowance may be available and accessed outside this grant agreement. Additionally, participants actively collecting regular Employment Insurance (EI) may be eligible to take training while continuing to collect their EI benefit.

Eligible costs include:

- Costs associated directly with the delivery of the project

Ineligible costs include:

- Infrastructure development (i.e., office equipment, cell phones, rent)
- Day-to-day operational costs
- Employee/staff training

Classification: Public

2. Regional and Employer-focused Stream

a)   Project Parameters

To be considered for funding under this stream, projects must:

- address a demonstrated workforce need;
- indicate clear objectives and outcomes with a measurable impact;
- be regional in scope;
- be finite (up to a maximum of 36 months);
- describe how activities do not duplicate existing programs and projects; and
- support one or more priorities.

Partners

Project partners are strongly encouraged. A letter of commitment is required by each partner. Partner(s) project role and contribution (in-kind or monetary) must be indicated in the submission.

b)   Project Priorities

Projects must focus on addressing one or more innovative regional workforce initiatives:

- Regional, community or employer-focused initiatives supporting innovative workforce solutions.
- Initiatives that assist employers, regions and communities to build a resilient and diverse workforce.

Projects that support some of the sectors and sub-sectors highlighted in [Alberta's Recovery Plan](#) will be prioritized for funding.

- Aviation and erospace
- Construction
- Energy (including Cleantech and Hydrogen)
- Film
- Forestry
- Information and Communications Technology (including Fintech)
- Manufacturing (including Pharmaceutical)
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Transportation and Supply Chain

Non-prioritized sectors may be considered for funding if a strong project rationale is provided.

c)   Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for this grant, your organization must be a legal entity and one of the following:

- Profit businesses
- Non-profit organizations
- Industry/employer associations
- Employee organizations
- Charitable foundations
- Indigenous group, organization or community (on or off reserve)
- Municipal governments

Eligible entities must have a minimum of two years' organizational experience:

- supporting workforce needs in their particular area of expertise; or

- have a demonstrated partnership with an organization that has two years of experience supporting workforce needs.

Ineligible Applicants:

- Individuals
- Consultants
- Other governments (provincial, federal, including crown corporations)

d) Project Activities

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Initiatives that help attract and retain employees
- Initiatives to broaden employee knowledge which could include:
    - Adapting to changing job roles;
    - Pivoting to new roles within the organization;
    - Meeting changing organization priorities and/or values
- Initiatives that build employer and regional capacity to increase and enhance labour market participation of equity-deserving groups.
- Other workforce solutions, resources and tools to address regional workforce needs

Workshops, seminars and on-the-job learning may be included to complement the eligible project activities listed above.
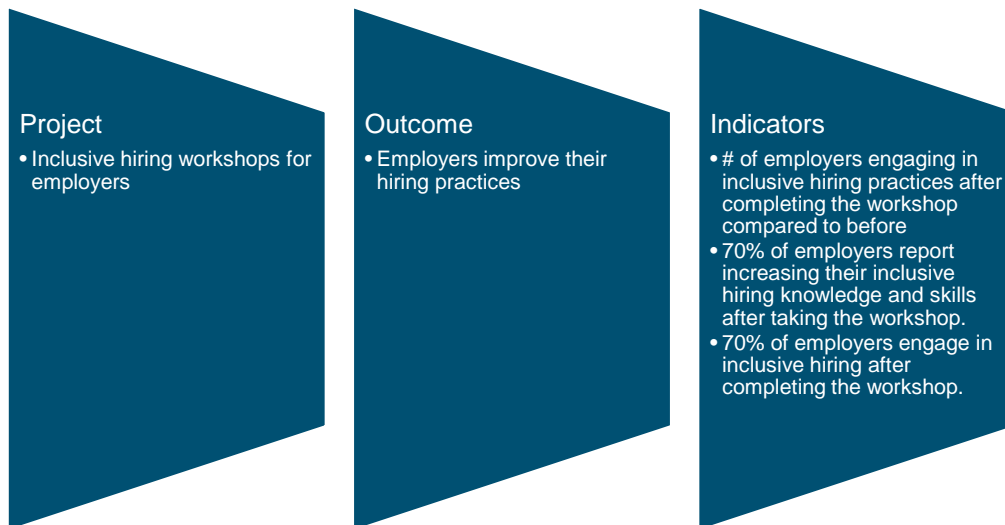
Ineligible activities are projects that:

- Duplicate and/or replace programs or services already provided by the Government of Alberta (GOA),
- Duplicate information/education products already available,
- Projects that will only benefit the GOA,
- Support an educational institution in developing its own curriculum,
- Create a long-term funding dependency,
- Address union-management collective bargaining issues, and
- Assist business/industry in research related to new products or product development.

e) Outcomes and Measures

To measure project success, applicants must provide outcomes and corresponding outcome indicators.

Example:

Project
- Inclusive hiring workshops for employers

Outcome
- Employers improve their hiring practices

Indicators
- # of employers engaging in inclusive hiring practices after completing the workshop compared to before
- 70% of employers report increasing their inclusive hiring knowledge and skills after taking the workshop.
- 70% of employers engage in inclusive hiring after completing the workshop.

Classification: Public

f) Duration

Project duration is up to 36 months. Projects that exceed this duration will not be considered.

g) Project Costs

Eligible organizations may apply for funding at a minimum of $50,000 and a maximum of $1.5 million. Funding requests outside this range will not be considered.

Eligible costs include:

- Costs associated directly with the delivery of the project.

Ineligible costs include:

- Infrastructure development
- Day-to-day operational costs

See Appendix B for information on travel costs and financial statements

Classification: Public

3. Industry-focused Stream

a) Project Parameters

To be considered for funding under this stream, projects must:

- address a demonstrated industry workforce need;
- indicate clear objectives and outcomes with a measurable impact;
- be industry led or have a letter of commitment from an industry partner;
- be sector(s)-focused;
- be provincial in scope;
- be finite (up to a maximum of 36 months);
- describe how activities do not duplicate existing programs and services; and
- support one or more priorities.

Partners

An industry partner is required for all projects **unless** the applicant is an industry/employer association. Additional project partners are encouraged but not required. If a partner(s) is identified, indicate partner(s) project role in your submission.

b) Project Priorities

 Projects must focus on addressing workforce challenges in one or more priority categories.

Supporting Industry to Enable Economic Growth

- Initiatives that can be established and launched within 2 - 4 months of project start and support workforce needs in priority sectors.

Investing in Alberta's Future Workforce

- Initiatives for sectors forecasting labour shortages due to rapid economic growth, aging workforce, and other evolving workforce challenges.

Building Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) through Innovation.

- Workforce projects that foster innovative DEI initiatives in priority sectors.

Projects that support some of the sectors and sub-sectors highlighted in Alberta's Recovery Plan will be prioritized for funding.

- Aviation and Aerospace
- Construction
- Energy (including Cleantech and Hydrogen)
- Film
- Forestry
- Information and Communications Technology (including Fintech)
- Manufacturing (including Pharmaceutical)
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Transportation and Supply Chain

Non-prioritized sectors may be considered for funding if a strong project rationale is provided.

c) Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for this grant, your organization must be a legal entity and one of the following:

- an industry/employer association;

- an employee organization with a letter of commitment from an industry partner;
- a community organization with a letter of commitment from an industry partner.

Eligible applicants must have a minimum of two years' organizational experience supporting industry, or in their particular area of expertise.

Ineligible Applicants:

- Individuals
- For profit businesses
- Health and education providers
- Other governments (municipal, provincial, federal, including crown corporations)

d) Project Activities

Eligible activities may include but are not limited to:

- resources, tools and best practices to address sector workforce needs;
- initiatives to increase the representation of equity-deserving groups and improve their career success in priority sectors; and
- supports for industry to build workforce capacity and awareness.

Workshops and seminars may be included to complement the eligible project activities listed above.

Ineligible activities are project that:

- Conducting labour market research (i.e. labour force studies, environmental scans, needs assessments; (**NOTE:** Workforce planning activities such as action plans and strategies are eligible.)
- Duplicate and/or replace programs or services already provided by the GOA;
- Duplicate information/education products already available;
- Projects that will only benefit the GOA;
- Create a long-term funding dependency;
- Support an educational institution in determining its training needs and/or developing its own curriculum;
- Address union-management collective bargaining issues; and
- Assist business/industry in research related to new products or product development.

e) Outcomes and Measures

To measure project success, applicants must provide outcomes and corresponding outcome indicators.

Example:

Project
- Inclusive hiring workshops for employers

Outcome
- Employers improve their hiring practices.

Indicators
- # of employers engaging in inclusive hiring practices after completing the workshop compared to before.
- 70% of employers report increasing their inclusive hiring knowledge and skill after taking the workshop.
- 70% of employers engage in inclusive hiring after completing the workshop.

Classification: Public

f) Duration

Project duration is up to 36 months. Projects that exceed this duration will not be considered.

g) Project Costs

Eligible organizations may apply for funding at a minimum of $150,000 and a maximum of $1.5 million. Funding requests outside this range will not be considered.

Eligible costs include:

- Costs associated directly with the delivery of the project.

Ineligible costs include:

- Infrastructure development
- Day-to-day operational costs

See Appendix B for information on travel costs and financial statements.

Classification: Public

D. Stage 1: Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest is the first stage for the Call for Applications (CFA). The EOI submission will be reviewed to determine project eligibility. The EOI should address each of the criteria as outlined in the application guidelines. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application package for the second stage of the CFA process.

An eligible applicant may submit more than one EOI per stream, one for each stream or any such variation, but not exceed three submissions total for the Workforce Strategies Grant – Call for Applications. Subsequent EOIs from the same organization will not be considered. For example, a fourth submission will not be considered.

All applicants will be notified of the results of their EOI submission(s) by August 12, 2022. No updates will be provided during the review process.

a) Expression of Interest Questions

From the launch of the EOI until July 7, 2022, questions can be submitted to lbr.workforcestrategiesgrant@gov.ab.ca. The department will share information related to commonly asked questions to the [Workforce Strategies Grants webpage](#).

E. Stage 2: Application Package

Shortlisted EOI applicants will be notified and invited to submit an application package by **11:59 pm MST on July 29, 2022**.

Completed application packages must be received electronically by **11:59 pm MST on September 9, 2022**. **Only complete applications will be considered.** A complete application consists of **ALL** of the following mandatory components:

1. Signed Application for Grant form (EMP 0126)
2. Project Application
3. Budget Template (excluding Skills Development which is included in Project Application)
4. [Supporting Documents](#), as applicable:
   - [Letters of Commitment](#)
   - [Client flow chart](#)

No hard copies will be accepted.

b) Application Review Process

After applying, the following steps occur:

Initial Screening

Once the application package has been received, a notice of receipt will be sent to the applicant. An initial screening is done to ensure that the application is complete and meets the eligibility criteria.

Committee Review

Applications that pass the initial screening are reviewed and scored by a committee. Scoring is based on the overall application package and how it addresses selection criteria. Scoring criteria is contained within each stream's project application.

Internal Review

All applicants will be notified of the results of their application(s) upon completion of the evaluation process. No updates will be provided during the evaluation process

F. Expectations of Successful Applicants

Upon project approval, successful grant recipients will be required to:

- demonstrate sound financial and personnel management throughout the project;
- submit complete, timely, and accurate reports;

- respond to information requests regarding the project as requested; and
- comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.

In addition, if the grant recipient is required to collect or handle personal information, they must comply with the privacy requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* as it applies to the recipient's operations and the personal information the recipient has access to, collects, or uses in providing the services under the grant agreement.

All documents submitted to Alberta Labour and Immigration become the property of the Government of Alberta, and are subject to the disclosure provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This act allows any person right of access to records in the custody or under the control of the department subject to limited and specific exceptions. Should you wish to learn more about the application of the Act to the proposal you are submitting, please visit: http://www.servicealberta.ca/foip/resources/guidelines-and-practices.cfm

Classification: Public

Appendices

Appendix A: Supporting Documents

a) Letter of Commitment

A letter of commitment indicates the signatory's intent to commit resources to the project as specified in the letter if the project receives funding. The letter may also outline the partner's rationale for supporting the project and point to strengths of the organization that could be of value in implementing or sustaining the project.

A letter of commitment is stronger than a letter of support as it indicates the organization will use its resources to help the project be successful.

Preparing the Letter

Applicants should request letters in advance of the application due date to allow time for signatures. Letters should represent a true, collaborative partnership. Gaining project commitment works best when the partner(s) have been involved in the project planning and preparation stages so that their concerns and ideas are addressed.

Use the following guidelines in preparing letters:

- Keep letters short and to the point.
- Be specific about the nature of the commitment.
- If making a financial contribution, indicate amount and how the money will be used.
- Indicate concrete actions the signer is committed to provide during the project.
- Don't use form letters; make each letter unique.

b) Client Flow Chart

Include a flow chart of training and/or services from the client's perspective from first contact to last point of contact.

Appendix B: Budget Considerations

a) Travel Costs

Travel costs must reflect the Government of Alberta's travel rates.

b) Financial Reporting

Depending on grant amount, specific financial statements may be required. As a cost is associated with these statements, review the following and adjust your budget accordingly.

- For grants between $100,000.01 to $250,000: A review engagement report accompanying financial statements is required, which outlines the grant income and expenditures and the return of unused funds, if applicable.
- For grants over $250,000.01: An audited financial statement of the organization is required, which includes a schedule showing the grant income and expenditures and the return of unused funds, if applicable.

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

1. **Community -** locations and/or groups comprised of people with similar characteristics or goals (e.g. shared sense of belonging).
2. **Diversity** - is the demographic mix of the community, with a focus on the representation of equity-deserving groups.
3. **Equity** - is the fair and respectful treatment of all people and involves the creation of opportunities and reduction of disparities in opportunities and outcomes for diverse communities.
4. **Equity-Deserving Groups** - Communities who have faced significant systemic inequality or other barriers to full and equal participation in the labour market and society.
5. **Inclusion** - is the creation of an environment where everyone feels welcome, is treated with respect, and is able to fully participate.
6. **Infrastructure Development** – the purchase of capital expenditures to acquire or enhance assets. Examples include the purchase or rental of standard office equipment such as desks, chairs, filing cabinets, photocopiers, and cell phones.
7. **Industry-Led** – refers to projects initiated by industry as a direct response to the unique workforce needs of a given sector.
8. **In-kind Contributions** - contributions of goods or services, other than cash, such as space, equipment or financial services.
9. **Labour Market Intelligence** – is the strategic assembly, interpretation and use of information and resources that contribute to better planning, leveraging, implementation and evaluation in labour market development.
10. **Labour Market Development** - refers to the labour market, as well as the people and measures that promote the matching of labour market demand and supply. This could include skills acquisition to meet labour market demands, but could also include measures that increase the efficiency of the labour market.
11. **Operational Costs** – are the ongoing expenses incurred from the normal day-to-day of running a business. Common costs include: rent, utilities, insurance, maintenance and repairs, property taxes, and office supplies.
12. **Outcome** - is the impact or consequence from the products or services produced. It addresses the question: What has been achieved by the project?
13. **Outcome Indicators** – are specific items of data that track a project's success. Indicators describe observable, measurable characteristics or changes that represent the achievement of an outcome. Measurement tools include: administering a follow up procedure with each learner/client, administering a knowledge test to demonstrate improvement as a result of direct instruction, conducting a survey, organizing a focus group, etc. Good example: The # and % of learners who complete the program who increase their score by 10 or more points on pre-/post-questionnaire. Poor example: the # of learners attending the program. This is not an outcome indicator because we do not know what impact the program had on the learners. This would be an example of an "output" (total number of clients) rather than an outcome.
14. **Outputs** – Direct products or services that the project produces to achieve outcomes. Outputs answer the question, "What will the project produce?" Examples include: # of materials or resources developed, # of clients served, # of workshops delivered, # of community members who attended the workshops, etc.
15. **Partner** - is a collaborating organization who will have an integral role in the project. This may include cash or in-kind contributions such as expertise, staff time or use of facilities.
16. **Skills Shortage -** a situation of skill shortage occurs when, under existing labour market conditions and at any particular time and geographical location, the skills readily available within the labour market fall short of the requirements.