

Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP)

Guidelines



Out of date

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For more information regarding this content visit: alberta.ca/step

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Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) Guidelines

About STEP

The Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) is a four to 16 week wage subsidy program that provides funding to employers to hire high school or post-secondary students into summer jobs, from May to August.

The program provides students with work experience, builds transferable skills and provides career awareness, while supporting Alberta employers.

New for 2019

This year, the STEP process will be completed online. Employers can apply and view the status of their application in real time.

No paper applications will be accepted.

Purpose of this Guide

The STEP Guidelines contain valuable program information that will assist you in successfully completing the STEP application. Review this entire document carefully to be sure you understand the terms and conditions of STEP.

Please fully read this document before applying.

Application and Reimbursement Overview

STEP is now an online process that can be accessed through alberta.ca/step. The online application makes applying for STEP easier and faster. Digital signatures will now be accepted, eliminating the need to mail in forms.

Employers need to complete and submit the following forms to complete the STEP process:

1. STEP Employer Application (Form A) and STEP Grant Agreement – submit by Feb. 8, 2019
2. STEP Student Hiring Application (Form B) – submit by Jun. 15, 2019
3. STEP Completion Form (Form C) – submit within 30 days of the end of the last STEP position

Employers will be notified by email if they qualify for funding.

Application and Assessment Process

All applications will be assessed according to the eligibility criteria. Submitted applications must be filled out completely and digitally signed by the employer or an authorized signing official.

STEP Employer Application (Form A) and Grant Agreement

This application determines employer and position eligibility.

- Complete the Employer Application (Form A) and the grant agreement online.
- Be sure the form has a digital signature from the authorized signing official.
- Both the Employer Application (Form A) and the grant agreement (described below) must be submitted online no later than Feb. 8, 2019.
- Once the application is assessed, employers will be notified of their STEP eligibility approval status via email.

STEP Grant Agreement

- This is a legally binding agreement which outlines the obligations of the Government of Alberta and the employer, and must be digitally signed by an authorized signing official for the employer.
- The agreement is not in force until it has been approved and signed by the Minister or the Minister's delegate, which will not occur unless/until the STEP Student Hiring Application (Form B) for the employer has been approved.
- The employer submits one grant agreement and the terms and conditions will apply to all of their approved STEP students.

STEP Student Hiring Application (Form B)

This application determines student eligibility and is submitted after receiving approval of Form A; it includes an employer section and a student candidate section.

- Complete Form B for the student candidate for each position.
- Form B should be submitted as soon as possible, or at least two weeks prior to the start date indicated in Form A.
 - The form must be digitally signed by the employer and the student must provide their email acceptance of the Student Hiring Application Form (Form B). Submitting the form two weeks before employment begins will ensure the employer has time to find a new student if one is not eligible for STEP.
- If Form B is not submitted by Jun. 15, 2019, your application may be cancelled and the funds reallocated to waitlisted employers after this date.
- The student candidate will be assessed for eligibility and the employer notified of final approval via email.

- If your student candidate is approved, the grant amount approved cannot exceed the amount calculated on Employer Application (Form A).
- If your student is found ineligible, STEP funding will not be provided and you will be responsible for all costs incurred for the time the student has been in your employ. You do have the option of submitting a new student for the position.
- Include your direct deposit information when submitting Student Hiring Application (Form B). Fill out the Request for EFT – Direct Deposit form available on the STEP website at alberta.ca/step and upload the form along with a copy of a void cheque into the STEP application.

STEP Employer Completion Form (Form C)

All employers must submit one STEP Employer Completion Form (Form C) once all STEP positions are finished. Approval of Form C initiates the payment.

The Employer Completion Form (Form C) must be accompanied with corresponding proof of payment (e.g. copies of paystubs or payroll information) for all STEP student employees.

- Payments will be based on actual hours worked for the duration of the STEP position, and therefore may not match but cannot exceed the estimated amount calculated on Form B.
- Information on the paystubs must include:
 - name of the student;
 - pay period covered by each statement;
 - total number of regular and overtime hours worked;
 - number of hours taken off in lieu of overtime;
 - wage rate and overtime rate;
 - earnings paid, showing each component of the earnings separately (e.g. wages, overtime, holiday pay); and
 - amount of deductions from earnings and the reason for each deduction.
- Please do **not** include documentation with Social Insurance Numbers. STEP does not require this information.
- The Employer Completion Form (Form C) must be received *no later than 30 days* after the final STEP position ends.
- If the STEP grant exceeds \$100,000, the Minister will require additional financial reporting. When applicable, additional details on reporting requirements will be provided to employers.

Assessment Considerations

The following considerations will be applied when assessing STEP applications:

- 1) An eligible application does not guarantee funding.
- 2) Applications will be assessed by employer types as the program allocates different levels of funding; Applications will be assessed by region to ensure there are STEP positions throughout the province.
- 3) Applications will be assessed on a first-come, first-approved basis.

All decisions regarding the eligibility of the employers, students and reimbursable costs will be made by the Ministry of Labour at the Ministry's sole discretion.

Employer Eligibility

Eligible Employers

- Non-profit organizations and public libraries
- Incorporated small businesses (1-49 employees)
- Municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements
- School boards (public, separate or francophone)
- Publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Alberta
 - Eligible institutions can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/types-publicly-funded-post-secondary-institutions.aspx>

Ineligible Employers

- Federal or provincial governments, including the Legislative Assembly and constituency offices
- Political parties
- Medium (50-499 employees) and large (500+ employees) sized businesses
- Franchises and corporately-owned chains
- Publicly funded organizations including but not limited to emergency services (e.g. police, firefighters) and health care providers (e.g. hospitals, long-term care facilities)
- Provincial or federal Crown agencies, boards and commissions or corporations
- Sole proprietors

Employer Requirements

To qualify for STEP funding, employers must meet all of the following requirements:

- be incorporated by, or registered under, an act of the legislature of a province or the Parliament of Canada;
- be located in Alberta;
- have been operating for no less than one year from the date of application;
- provide safe working conditions, be in good standing and comply with the Employment Standards Code, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Workers' Compensation Act* and all other applicable legislation and regulations;
- hire the STEP students directly, not employ them as contractors;
- **not** hire an existing employee for this program,
 - previous employees are eligible, provided it has been 30 days or longer since they last worked for you;
- **not** eliminate, reduce or otherwise impact the security of work hours of any existing employee as a result of this program; and
- **not** assign, subcontract or transfer the position to another employer during the STEP position term.
- The employment standards website has some information on youth that you may want to look at as well as this website which contains information regarding youth between 16 and 17 years of age, <https://www.alberta.ca/ESyouth>.

Employer Verification

- Small businesses must be incorporated in Alberta and have a valid Alberta Corporate Access Number (ACAN).
 - Your company's ACAN can be found on the Certificate of Incorporation document issued at an Alberta Corporate Registry office.
 - If you have previously filed an Alberta corporate income tax return with Tax and Revenue Administration, you can find your ACAN on the notice of assessment, reassessment or statement of account.
 - Federally incorporated or extra-provincial employers must extra-provincially register to obtain an ACAN and Certificate of Registration. This can be completed through Alberta Corporate Registries at: <https://www.servicealberta.ca/incorporate-a-business.cfm>.
 - Contact a registry agent if you have any questions about your ACAN number. <http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/find-a-registry-agent.cfm>
- Non-profit organization must provide either an ACAN, a Charity Number or a provincial Registration Number (e.g. Societies Number) as documentation demonstrating that they are incorporated, established or registered (e.g. certificate of incorporation).

- Under the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) rules, extra-provincial employers from NWPTA members can use their provincial corporate account number, although the location of the STEP position must be in Alberta.
- All employer requirements and eligibility criteria are subject to verification.

STEP Job Criteria

Eligible Positions

- Full-time positions (defined as an average of 30 hours per week or more) for a minimum of four weeks to a maximum of 16 weeks in duration.
 - **Note:** There are more than 16 weeks from May 1 to Aug. 31, 2019.
- Funding is only available for STEP positions between May 1 and Aug. 31. If employers choose to hire a student after STEP approval but prior to May 1 or extend them beyond August 31, STEP funding cannot be used to subsidize those wages beyond the timeframes.
 - **Note:** Students hired before the STEP grant is approved are not eligible for any STEP funding.
- Each position belongs to one STEP student at a time. A position can be shared only if one student has quit and another takes over the position.
- Positions can be under any National Occupational Classification (0, A, B, C or D). More information can be found at <http://noc.esdc.gc.ca/English/home.aspx>.

Ineligible Positions

- Positions not occurring between May and August.
- Positions in which the student is a contracted worker and not a direct employee.
- Positions where the wage subsidy will also be funded by other provincial or federal government sources (e.g. Canada Summer Jobs).
- Compulsory or optional apprenticeship trades and occupations, involving registration as an apprentice or completion of an Alberta Trade or Occupational Certificate. A list of these trades and occupations can be found at <http://tradesecrets.alberta.ca/trades-occupations/trades-occupations-list/>.
- Co-ops, employer internships and positions funded through existing employment programs/placements as the goal of STEP is to help employer's create new positions that would not have existed without STEP

Student Eligibility

An eligible STEP student is:

- at least 15 years of age, by the STEP position start date;
- a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident or protected persons under the [Canadian Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#) and legally entitled to work and study in Canada;
 - **Note:** Students in other immigration categories (e.g. International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers) are not eligible for STEP.
 - **Note:** Students with a Social Insurance Number starting with nine (9), must provide documentation confirming that they are a protected person under the *Canadian Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* with valid work and study permits.
- an Alberta resident with an Alberta address and living and/or attending school in the province;
- attended a high school or a post-secondary institution in 2018-19 Academic Year (September 2018 - June 2019) and is returning to school full time in the following year (no later than November 1, 2019);
 - **Note:** Eligible students must be enrolled in a program which will result in a credential (e.g. certificate, diploma, degree) and/or completing academic upgrading courses. Apprenticeship technical training programs are ineligible.
 - Home schooled students are eligible, provided they are following the Alberta Program of Study and working towards a recognized Alberta credential (e.g. High School Diploma).
- available for full-time summer employment;
- only to participate in one STEP position per calendar year;
- **not** currently employed with the organization in a paid capacity; and
- **not** immediately related to organization's owners or staff responsible for hiring.
 - **Note:** Immediate family includes but not limited to; spouse, common-law partner, adult interdependent partner, child (biological, step, adopted), parent, sibling, grandparents).
 - **Note:** staff responsible for hiring may include human resource representatives, interviewers, supervisors, management and owners.

Employer Placement Caps

The following caps have been set on the number of STEP positions a single employer is entitled to have per year. Caps are based on the number of positions, whether they are four weeks or 16 weeks in length.

Small Business

Type of organization	Maximum number of STEP positions
Small business	3

Non-Profit Organizations and Libraries

If a non-profit organization or library has multiple locations, the cap below will be applied to each physical location.

Type of organization	Maximum number of STEP positions
Non-profit organizations	3
Public libraries	1

Municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements

Municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements will have the following maximum STEP positions per year, based on community population size:

Population	Maximum number of STEP positions
1 – 2,500	2
2,501 – 30,000	5
30,001 – 150,000	10
150,001+	40

School Boards

School boards will have the following maximum STEP positions per year, based on student population size:

School Boards	Maximum number of STEP positions
Less than 30,000 student population	2
30,000+ student population	5

Post-Secondary Institutions

Caps for the publicly funded post-secondary institutions are based on institution size and are applied to the entire institution, regardless of whether there are multiple campus locations.

Post-Secondary Institution	Maximum number of STEP positions
Alberta College of Art and Design	
Ambrose University	
Athabasca University	
Bow Valley College	
Burman University	
Concordia University	
Grande Prairie Regional College	
Keyano College	
The King's University	
Lakeland College	
Lethbridge College	
Medicine Hat College	10
NorQuest College	

Northern Lakes College	
Olds College	
Portage College	
Red Deer College	
St. Mary's University	
MacEwan University	
Mount Royal University	
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	
University of Alberta	35
University of Calgary	
University of Lethbridge	

Employer Type Funding Targets

STEP will provide \$10 million to employers in 2019, allocated by employer type.

Employer Type	Funding Targets
Non-profit organizations and public libraries	40% (\$4M)
Small business	20% (\$2M)
Municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements	20% (\$2M)
Publicly funded post-secondary institutions and school boards	20% (\$2M)

Financial Contribution

The Government of Alberta will provide an employer with a wage subsidy of \$7 per hour for a minimum of 30 hours per week (on average) and a maximum of 37.5 hours per week. Additional hours may be offered to students but must be paid in full by the employer. STEP positions can range from a minimum of four to a maximum of 16 weeks. The wage offered for a STEP position will be determined by the employer, but they must pay at least minimum wage (currently \$15.00 per hour).

Pay Information

- Employees must be hired by the employer. Employers must place the STEP employees on their payroll budget and pay them directly. Contracted workers are ineligible for STEP.
 - Note: In circumstances where the municipality uses their payroll to pay STEP employees for non-profit organizations, the positions will be considered under the municipality's placement cap.
 - If the municipality has reached their placement cap, funding for these position(s) could be declined.
- Related costs such as Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, vacation or general holiday pay, taxes or benefits will be the responsibility of the employer.
- The employer cannot claim for any days that the position is vacant (e.g. sick days, vacation).
- The employer is responsible for providing the appropriate tax forms to the STEP employees.
- A STEP Employer Completion Form (Form C) and payroll information are required after the STEP position(s) is finished.
- For employers with multiple STEP employees, one combined STEP payment will be issued for all eligible STEP participants, upon approval of the one STEP Employer Completion Form (Form C).

Employment Standards fact sheets that outline the rights and obligations of employers and employees are found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/employment-standards.aspx>.

Wage and salary information is available at: <https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/> and the Government of Canada Job Bank: jobbank.gc.ca.

Accessing Other Program Funding

If approved for STEP funding, the employer cannot accept any other federal, provincial or municipal government financial contributions for wage subsidies for the same STEP position, regardless of time period.

Employers can access training funding for the employee through other programs, such as the Canada-Alberta Job Grant. Online application forms for these programs can be found here: alberta.ca/canada-alberta-job-grant.

STEP Position Terminations

If the STEP position ends early, regardless of whether the termination is initiated by the employer or the employee, the employer must notify Government of Alberta immediately and include the employee on their Employer Completion Form along with proof of final payment to the student.

- Employers may have the option to replace that student with a different eligible student. This depends on the circumstances under which the STEP position ended early and requires Government of Alberta approval from program staff. Please contact the STEP processing centre for further instructions at step@gov.ab.ca.
- As STEP funding is based on actual hours worked by the participants, the grant amount will be adjusted accordingly.
- The employer will receive one lump sum payment after the Employer Completion Form (Form C) and payroll information is submitted for all approved STEP employees.

WCB Coverage

For the sole purpose of receiving workers' compensation benefits under the *Workers' Compensation Act*, students participating in the STEP program are deemed to be workers of the Government of Alberta. Employers must continue to carry WCB coverage for student(s) as required by law.

If a student is injured in an accident, he or she is entitled to claim Workers' Compensation Benefits and has resigned their right to take legal action against the Government of Alberta, or against any other employer or worker covered by the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

Non-Compliance with Terms and Conditions

The Government of Alberta may terminate the STEP Grant Agreement in certain circumstances. This may occur if the student or employer contravenes the program guidelines, the Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement or does not meet the eligibility requirements. Employers may not be allowed to find a different student within the current year or may be barred from accessing STEP funding in future years.

If the Minister or Minister's delegate is of the opinion that any false or misleading information has been provided or any relevant or significant fact was concealed in the applications, the Minister or Minister's delegate may decline the employer's application or terminate the grant agreement, and may require the employer to repay any grant funds received. The employer may also be banned from applying for future grants.

Information Collection and Program Evaluation

The Government of Alberta requires the collection of certain information from employers and employees. By participating in this program, employees agree to provide relevant personal information on the application to allow for data and information collection through reporting measures such as surveys, interviews, phone calls, etc.

If requested, employers must allow Government of Alberta program staff access to all documents and information relating to the STEP grant. Program staff may also interview employees on the job site, by phone or in writing, at any time during the program.

STEP Procedure

- Complete and submit Employer Application (Form A) and the Grant Agreement to determine your eligibility by Feb. 8, 2019
- Receive notification of approval via email
- Advertise your STEP position
 - Use the Canada Job Bank: jobbank.gc.ca or other job search methods
- Screen eligible student candidates, interview and offer conditional STEP employment to a qualified candidate
- Complete and submit Student Hiring Application (Form B) with your STEP candidate, after receiving approval for Employer Application, Form A, ideally two weeks before employment start date. Having the Student Hiring Application (Form B) submitted two weeks before the student's starts gives staff time to let you know if the student is eligible or not for funding. This will enable employers to switch to an eligible student in time. The form is required to be digitally signed by your organization and the student candidate must give their email acceptance
 - Include direct deposit information
 - Student Hiring Application (Form B) due date is Jun. 15, 2019
- Receive notice of STEP student eligibility via email.
- Place STEP employee on your payroll, making appropriate deductions, and issuing paycheques. Save copies as they will be submitted with the Employer Completion Form (Form C).
- Continue to comply with the Employment Standards Code, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Workers' Compensation Act* and any other applicable legislation
- Supervise and mentor your STEP employee(s)
- Submit Employer Completion Form (Form C) *within 30 days of the position end date.*
 - Include STEP employee(s) payroll information
- Receive payment

Important Note

If there are changes to your information during the year, please email step@gov.ab.ca to be sure your file is updated.

- Mark calendar for early January 2020 to apply for next STEP program

Contact Us

If you require further information that is not provided in this guide:

Phone: 780-638-4727

Toll Free: 1-866-338-4727

Email: step@gov.ab.ca

Website: alberta.ca/step

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