

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Program Criteria

The Workforce Development Program provides assistance to address specific workforce issues in primary agricultural production and agri-processing sectors. Financial assistance is provided to Alberta agri-processing companies and primary producers to:

- Retain workers and reduce worker turnover.
- Recruit workers within Canada and internationally.
- Assess and adopt technologies and automation, which will increase worker productivity.

Projects must be approved by January 1, 2010.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Retention

Retention of workers and reducing worker turnover is critical in Alberta's competitive labour market. Assistance is provided to help employers identify causes of turnover in their operations, options and best practices for worker retention and strategies to improve their programs for worker retention. Eligible costs include:

- Human resource consulting expertise to develop and implement retention strategies.
- Costs related to the implementation of pilot projects and new initiatives to improve worker retention.

Recruitment

In order to address worker shortages, employers must recruit workers elsewhere in Canada or from other countries. Selecting the right workers is critical. Assistance is provided to individual or groups of companies and producers. Eligible costs include:

- Participation in job fairs within Canada or recruiting missions internationally to interview and select workers.
- Staffing agency costs for representation of groups of processors or producers for international recruitment.

Workforce Productivity Improvement

Productivity improvement through technology and automation will help keep Alberta processors competitive and better utilize workers. Assistance is provided to assess and adopt new technologies and processes that improve worker productivity. Eligible costs include:

- Travel expenses to evaluate technology and automation options.
- Food processing engineering expertise to identify technology and automation options, analyze costs and productivity impacts.

Eligible applicants

- Alberta agri-processing companies.
- Alberta primary producers or producer groups.

Program Funding Levels

- Maximum is 50 percent of eligible project costs.
- Maximum is 50 percent to a maximum of \$25,000 for third-party consulting projects.
- Eligible travel expenses: Economy air fare and per diem rates for accommodation, meals, ground transportation and incidentals of \$400 per person per day in foreign countries and \$200 per person per day in Canada.

Other funding criteria

- The Minister of Agriculture and Food will have discretion in determining the eligibility of projects, project costs and levels of assistance.
- Funding below the maximum levels may be approved to reflect factors such as the financial capacity of the applicant, the impact of the project and availability of program funds.

Other general criteria

- Support from other government programs and other sources are encouraged. Any other assistance received for a project will be taken into consideration in the determination of the level of provincial assistance.
- Application for assistance must be made prior to undertaking a project. Allow at least two to three weeks for the grant approval process.
- The ability of an applicant to successfully carry out the proposed project is part of the assessment process. Applicants must provide financial information to support their application.
- Full costing documentation is required upon project completion. An audited statement of expenditures may be required. Funds must be used only for projects as approved by Alberta Agriculture and Food.
- A report on the project's impact on key measures and achievement of objectives is required.

HOW TO APPLY

Submit a completed Application for Financial Assistance form, with a detailed project proposal to your Alberta Agriculture and Food Development Officer.

The logo for the province of Alberta, featuring the word "Alberta" in a stylized, bold, sans-serif font. The letter 'A' is significantly larger and more prominent than the other letters.