

Skills Training Infrastructure Program

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General

Q: What is a proponent?

A: A proponent is the organization applying for funding, with which the ministry will enter into a legal agreement if the proposal is approved.

Q: Why is the timeline for the preparation of submissions so short?

A: A shorter submission period will give proponents more time to source, purchase and install equipment before March 31, 2008.

Q: Will there be a future call for proposals if the \$25 million is completely allotted in the first call?

A: If the \$25 million is completely allotted there are no plans for a future call for proposal.

Q: Will a list of successful proponents be made available?

A: Yes. The list will be made available at the request of proponents. For more information, contact the STIP Coordinator at stip@ontario.ca.

Q: What happens if the approved equipment is not delivered by the required deadline?

A: All equipment must be delivered by March 31, 2008. The use of Skills Training Infrastructure Program funds for unapproved expenditures, such as the delivery of equipment after March 31, 2008 may result in

- The termination of the agreement referred to in section 10 of the Guidelines
- Recovery of funds
- The deduction of these funds from future payments, if any, and/or
- The exclusion of the centre from participating in this or other ministry programs.

Q: Is there a formal appeal process for unsuccessful proponents?

A: There is no formal process; however proponents may appeal the ministry's decision.

Q: Will all proposals be reviewed or will they be evaluated on a first come first served basis?

A: The Skills Training Infrastructure Program call for proposals is a competitive process. All proposals received by September 28, 2007 at 17:00 will be evaluated before any are approved.

Q: If the Skills Training Infrastructure Program is oversubscribed will the ministry use a prorating formula to give some funding to each applicant?

A: No prorating formula will be used. However, the ministry reserves the right to provide partial funding for selected proposals.

Eligibility

Q: Are non-union training sites eligible for infrastructure costs? Is there a separate call for proposals for non-union trainers?

A: Yes non-union training centres are eligible. There is no separate call for proposals for non-union training centres.

Q: What is the definition/criteria to be eligible to be considered as a qualified "Union-Employer Training Centre"?

A: The Skills Training Infrastructure Program is available to union-employer training centres and/or mobile training units operated by union-employer training centres in Ontario. "Union-employer training centres" means:

- Union training centres
- Employer training centres
- Union-employer partnered training centres.

Q: Do proponents have to train individuals in a registered Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act (TQAA) trade to apply for funding?

A: No, the Skills Training Infrastructure Program is open to union-employer training centres for all occupations, trades and apprenticeships.

Q: Is the Skills Training Infrastructure Program restricted to training for journeypersons?

A: No, the Skills Training Infrastructure Program funding is available to purchase training equipment for the training of any individual in any occupation, trade or apprenticeship.

Q: If the proponent's training centre is in the process of being built but the construction has not been completed, can the organization still apply for funding?

A: Yes, as long as the purchase and delivery of any equipment obtained through Skills Training Infrastructure Program occurs between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008.

Q: Is the creation of a new mobile training facility eligible for funding?

A: Yes, as long as the purchase and delivery of any equipment obtained through Skills Training Infrastructure Program occurs between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008.

Q: Does a proponent have to be a ministry-recognized training delivery agent to submit a proposal?

A: No. Proponents can be union training centres, employer training centres or union-employer partnered training centres.

Q: Are training centres for industrial trades eligible for funding?

A: Yes.

Q: What constitutes a training centre?

A: A training centre is a facility or mobile unit established to train individuals.

Q: If new or additional facilities are acquired after the proposal is approved, can equipment be moved and utilized in a new training centre?

A: Yes, as long as the purchase and delivery of any equipment obtained through Skills Training Infrastructure Program occurs between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008.

Q: Does an employer association qualify as union-employer training centre?

A: Yes, if it is a union training centre, employer training centre or a union-employer partnered training centre.

Q: Can multiple trades in a mobile training centre submit a proposal?

A: Yes, but proponents may only submit one proposal per training site or mobile training unit.

Financial Contributions

Q: If a proposal is approved based on an estimated cost, is a cost overrun allowance available? Alternatively, if a centre underspends in one area (actual costs are lower than estimates in the proposal), can the training centre then reallocate those funds into another area (for example to cover a potential overrun in another area)?

A: Estimates should be as accurate as possible. With the signing of the legal agreement estimates will be finalized. Cost overruns will therefore not be accepted. Any change to the legal agreement requires the written consent of the ministry.

Q: If cost reductions are negotiated on equipment after the contract with the ministry is signed, can excess funds be used for other purchases?

A: Estimates should be as accurate as possible. With the signing of the legal agreement estimates will be finalized. Any change to the legal agreement requires the written consent of the ministry.

Q: Can a proponent submit a proposal where the 25 per cent contribution comes from a private outside source, such as a letter of credit from a bank or statement of accounts from a private non-government-funded institution (for example, local union)?

A: Yes, however the proponent may not receive any funding or support related to eligible costs from other government sources.

Q: How do proponents prove they can make a 25 per cent contribution?

A: In the proposal proponents must demonstrate they can finance the 25 per cent contribution. As part of the legal agreement the proponent must attest in writing that they are able to finance the 25 per cent contribution.

Q: Is there a maximum dollar amount for proposals or eligible purchases?

A: No.

Eligible Costs

Q Are the following costs eligible: GST, PST, duty, shipping, building permits?

A: Yes, if they are related to approved equipment purchases and direct costs.

Q: Are audit fees an eligible cost?

A: Yes, audit fees are an eligible cost. Please identify audit fees as a line item in Section C of the application.

Q: Are the following eligible costs: building expansion, instructor wages, and curriculum development?

A: No.

Q: Will the ministry provide specific guidelines regarding procurement procedures? For example are three quotes necessary?

A: No, specific procurement guidelines will not be provided. It is the proponent's responsibility to use a fair and transparent process and ensure value for money for all products or services acquired with the funding. The ministry reserves the right to require the proponent to provide the ministry with their procurement procedures.

Q: In a leased facility, does the duration of the lease matter? Would an agreement to transfer equipment to another educational institute such as a community college or high school in the event the lease is not renewed suffice?

A: The duration of a lease does not matter if the proponent identifies how the equipment will continue to be used for skills training upon the expiry of the lease. A prior agreement with another training institution would be appropriate.

Q. Are capital expenditures to erect space or renovate existing interior space eligible? If not, would they be eligible if they are critical to the placement of the purchased equipment?

A: Capital expenditures for buildings are only eligible if they are:

- Facility improvements related to the removal of accessibility barriers to the equipment for persons with disabilities.
- Facility improvements that are critical to the placement of purchased equipment, such as ventilation.

Q: Does the proponent's share of the funding have to be dedicated to the equipment purchase? If the equipment purchase is part of a specific training project, can the proponent's share include related capital and operating expenditures?

A: The proponent's contribution must be 25 per cent of all **eligible costs** identified in the proposal. Operating costs are NOT eligible. Please see page 2 of the Guidelines for a further description of eligible costs.

Q: Can the applicant's share of the eligible cost include in-kind contributions? If so, what are the criteria for determining the monetary value of in-kind contributions?

A: In-kind contributions are not eligible. The proponent's contribution must be 25 per cent of the eligible costs.

Q: Is equipment currently being used but installed after April 1, 2007, eligible for reimbursement?

A: Yes, if the purchase and delivery and installation was on or after April 1, 2007.

Q: Are items such as computers, smart boards, and projectors eligible equipment?

A: Yes.

Q: Are desks and chairs covered under the Skills Training Infrastructure Program?

A: No.

Q: How much money will be allowed for installation and labour costs?

A: There is no maximum amount for installation and labour costs. Proponents must use a fair and transparent process and ensure value for money for all products or services acquired with the funding. Proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria outlined in the Guidelines, including the following:

- Costs must be appropriate to outlined purchases (15 per cent)
- Cost-effective use of funds (10per cent)

Q: Is Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) or other training eligible?

A: All equipment for training individuals in up-to-date occupational skills, apprenticeships and trades is eligible.

Proposal Requirements and Format

Q: Should proposals rank equipment in order of importance?

A: Ranking equipment is not a proposal requirement. If the proponent chooses to prioritize their proposed equipment please indicate this clearly.

Q: Can a proponent submit one proposal for all requirements at multiple training sites?

A: No, the ministry will accept only one proposal per training site or mobile training unit, as decisions will be made on a site-by-site basis.

Q: What is the required level of detail for the equipment listed in Section C of the application?

A: Please be as specific as possible in the description, cost and purpose of the equipment identified in the proposal.

Q: What are the expectations regarding the “demonstration of industry support”?

A: Proponents must demonstrate industry support with documented sources including (but not limited to) reports, letters of support and statistics.

Q: Do performance measures have to be identified in the proposal? What types of performance measures are required?

A: Performance measures are identified in Section C of the application and include new training spaces and the expansion of existing training capacity.

Q: Can proposals be submitted in formats other than Microsoft Word?

A: No, all proponents must submit four hard copies and one electronic copy in Microsoft Word of the proposal. Please use the templates provided.

Q: Can proponents use and refer to appendices in their proposal?

A: Proponents must use the format provided.

Q: How can applicants maximize training capacity increase? If shorter term training is undertaken, this will demonstrate greater increased capacity than longer term training.

A: Proponents should consider the full range of evaluation criteria.

Evaluation Criteria and Process

Q: When will the ministry make funding decisions and inform successful proponents of the results?

A: The ministry expects to make decisions by the end of June.

Q: Who will evaluate the proposals?

A: A team of ministry staff with expertise in program guidelines, skills and trades training requirements, and local demand for training will evaluate the proposals.

Q: What process is used to determine which trades and occupations have greater need?

A: This is a competitive process. All proposals will be evaluated against all of the criteria outlined in the Guidelines.

Q: What if the purchased equipment will not result in increased training capacity? What if you want to maintain current capacity and upgrade equipment?

A: In addition to the other criteria listed on page 5 of the Guidelines, the ministry will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

- How the proposal will improve current training offerings and/or enable new training offerings (15 per cent)
- Increase/maximize training capacity in existing and new trades and occupational skills (20per cent)
- Modernization of hands-on equipment to meet industry standards and requirements (10per cent)
- Meeting unmet demand - new skills training spaces and training offerings to meet existing and future demand (10per cent)
- Improved training in skilled occupations or trades that have undergone technological change, are new, whose scope has broadened, have new curricula, are construction trades or are in the Interprovincial Red Seal Program (10per cent)

Q: Will approved training delivery agents have priority?

A: No, this is a competitive process open to all union-employer training centres.