



Workplace Essential Skills Saskatchewan (WESS) 2011 Request for Proposals

General Information:

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration (AEEI) is seeking proposals to deliver the Workplace Essential Skills Saskatchewan (WESS) for the 2011-12 fiscal year. Projects will assist unemployed and under-employed workers with the development of workplace essential skills. The outcomes for WESS are enhanced labour market attachment for individuals and increased opportunities for employers to develop the skilled workers they need to maintain and expand their business.

Background:

While employment rates are continuing to remain high and job opportunities are remaining plentiful, many people continue to experience barriers to employment or are unable to make a permanent attachment to the labour market. Ensuring more people in Saskatchewan, particularly those under-represented in the labour market, have the skills and knowledge they need is key to labour market inclusion and the province's current and future economic prosperity.

Saskatchewan, like other jurisdictions, is shifting to a "knowledge-based" economy, which requires highly educated and skilled workers. However, results from the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey indicate that:

- 42% of adults (16 years and over) in Saskatchewan do not have the skills needed to fully participate in society. Over half of this group are employed.¹ However, their skill levels may prevent them from moving to other jobs, engaging in career laddering opportunities, learning new skills related to technological change, and adapting to other workplace changes.
- 63% of urban First Nations and Métis people scored below the level needed for successful labour market entry and/or participation in further lifelong learning opportunities (Literacy Profile of Off-Reserve First Nations and Métis People Living in Urban Manitoba and Saskatchewan: Results from the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, 2008).

To improve the supply of skilled labour to meet the growing needs of the provincial labour market, action must be taken to enhance the skill set of unemployed and current low skilled employees. To achieve the goal of a highly skilled and literate workforce, workplace essential skills need to be increased.

Workplace essential skills are the skills needed for work, learning and life. They are foundational to learning all other skills and enable people to perform tasks associated with a particular occupation, job or other activities associated with daily living. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has identified nine essential skills that underpin all other skills: reading text; document use; numeracy; writing; oral

¹ Brink, Satya, Ph.D. April 2006. Literacy in Saskatchewan Implications of Findings from IALLS 2003.



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communication; working with others; thinking skills; computer use; and continuous learning.

The WESS Initiative will support business and industry to successfully prepare inexperienced job seekers and existing lower skilled employees to gain the workplace essential skills needed for sustainable long-term employment and/or advancement.

In addition, the Ministry would like to ensure that proposals consider inclusion of the following equity groups:

- First Nations;
- Métis;
- Social assistance recipients;
- Immigrants;
- People with disabilities;
- Visible minorities; and,
- Women.

To support this, the Ministry is allocating 40% of the WESS budget for projects that focus on First Nations and Métis individuals.

Who can apply?

Any employer, industry association, union, community-based organization, First Nation, or post-secondary institution may submit proposals.

Inquires:

- All inquiries must be submitted in writing to: wess@gov.sk.ca
- All inquiries will be accepted and responded to in writing and posted on our website www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/wess/rfp/inquiry within 4 working days
- The deadline for submitting inquiries is **5:00 pm May 13, 2011**

We thank all applicants for submitting proposals.

Proposal Approval Process:

To be considered by the Approval Committee:

- Proposals must be submitted electronically, using the templates provided, **by 5:00 pm, Thursday May 19th** to: wess@gov.sk.ca. Proposals received after this timeframe will not be considered in the initial approval process. (Note: the subject line on your email submission should read: 2011-12 WESS Proposal);
- Proposals must be built around a partnership(s) between industry and/or an employer and a training institution and clearly demonstrated in the proposal with letter of support;
- Applicants must be registered with the Saskatchewan Corporations Branch;



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- Proposal must have an in-kind contribution from industry and/or community partners equalling 25% or more of the total project costs; and,
- Projects must be completed by June 30, 2012.

Project approvals will be made by an evaluation committee. It is expected that successful applicants will be notified by June 16, 2011.

Proposal Criteria:

A detailed evaluation form is available online for applicants to review. Each proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Proposal contained all information required in the template;
- Proof of needs assessment for workplace essential skills development;
- Organizational capacity to develop and implement the project, specifically what outcomes and deliverables will the project achieve;
- Training plans, including the number of participants, activities planned, assessments that will be used, recruitment plan and length of the project;
- Evaluation plan, including pre-and post-assessments of individual participants, work assessments, and project evaluation criteria;
- Commitment to First Nations, Métis, Social Assistance recipients; people with disabilities, women and visible minorities;
- Provision for job mentoring and/or work placements;
- Partnerships, specifically evidence of partnerships through description of roles/responsibilities and letters of commitment; and,
- Budget is included.

The Ministry may request references to verify the information provided in the proposals. The Ministry will also take into consideration the location of project in relation to needs.

Funding:

The WESS Initiative will fund up to \$75,000 for the development and delivery of a WESS project in partnership with an employer or group of employers. Participating industry, employers, training institutions and other partners will be required to fund a minimum of 25% of the WESS project through in-kind contributions.

In-kind contributions may include but are not limited to income support, human resources, administration, advertising and facilities.

Eligible Project Participants:

- Unemployed or under-employed individuals requiring workplace essential skills
- Participants may be employed full- or part-time with the participating employer



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- Participants could include individuals who are part of a “Workforce Development Project” funded by Career and Employment Services (CES) or another funding agency and have a commitment to hire from an employer
- All participants must be legally entitled to work in Canada

Eligible Project Costs:

The eligible costs are those that are accepted as being part of a normal training project. Examples of such costs are: instructional costs; course materials; counselling and student assessments; program development; training needs analysis; program coordination and rental of facilities and/or equipment. WESS will not cover the costs for capital purchases.

Funding is for programs only; **income support will not be available for participants** unless it is provided as part of the in-kind contribution.

Project Reporting Requirements:

Selected proposals will be required to use templates to report on projects. Below is a description of the reporting requirements:

- **Participant Registration Forms** – all individuals who participate in the project must complete and sign a registration form. This allows for the sharing of information between the Ministry and the Federal Government;
- **Participant Completer/Leaver Forms** – the program delivery agency will need to complete a Participant Completer/Leaver form for all participants upon exiting the program;
- **Interim Report** – participating organizations must complete an interim report that provides a synopsis of what activities have taken place, the challenges that have occurred, any lessons learned and the budget information to date; and,
- **Final Report** – participating organizations must complete a detailed final report within 30 days of the completion of the project that includes the number of participants, project outcomes and deliverables, results of pre-and post-assessments, best practices, lessons learned and a detailed financial statement of expenditures incurred.