

Future Skills Centre – Centre des Compétences futures

Frequently Asked Questions

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How is a mid-career worker defined?

The FSC-CCF defines a “mid-career worker” as an individual who has been working for several years.

What is the objective for this call?

The objective of this *Support for Mid-Career Workers* call is to test and evaluate innovative projects that have the potential to generate actionable evidence about how to better meet the skills needs of mid-career workers. FSC-CCF is seeking proposals from applicants to deliver projects that help answer the question: *how can Canada better support mid-career workers to succeed in the labour market?*

What are potential areas of focus for projects?

Potential areas of focus include:

- Supporting displaced workers – In the future Canadian workers will face new and changing skills requirements in the workplace. What are the most promising approaches for supporting these workers, and are there innovative solutions that could help these workers build resilience and adapt to future changes in the labour market?
- Building skills of workers in need of up-skilling – Many more mid-career workers are at risk of displacement or will face new job requirements in the future. How can stakeholders work together to support these incumbent workers to ensure they are prepared for the workplace of tomorrow?
- Ongoing learning and career progression – Current skills development systems are largely oriented towards helping people find jobs. Fewer supports exist to promote lifelong learning, career advancement, and resilience to labour market changes for mid-career workers, especially those with out of date skills. What can be done to better support ongoing learning and career progression for these workers?

What are examples of eligible project activities?

Eligible project activities include:

- Development and evaluation of new approaches for measuring or communicating skills to help facilitate more successful labour market transitions for mid-career workers;
- Development of new approaches or adaptation of existing models of potential skills development solutions for mid-career workers; and,
- Rigorous testing of innovative skills development solutions for mid-career workers to assess their effectiveness in improving participants’ labour market prospects.

Who is eligible to apply?

Applications may be submitted by a sole organization or with multiple partners, including:

- Legally incorporated non-profit organizations, including non-profit social enterprises and registered charities
- Publicly-funded post-secondary institutions
- Industry associations
- Professional associations
- An Indigenous organization that is a legal entity
- Municipalities or District Social Services Administration Boards
- For-profit companies (provided the project is undertaken at cost with no mark ups or profit incorporated)

For applications with multiple partners, one organization must be identified as the lead applicant. Applicants are only eligible to lead on one application, but may participate in more than one application.

The following types of organizations are not eligible to apply:

- Provincial or territorial government
- Federal government bodies
- Individual persons

What is the maximum budget and duration for selected projects?

Projects of all different sizes and stages of development will be considered. The maximum award for a project is \$1.5 million, and the maximum duration for a project is 24 months.

How will project proposals be evaluated?

Submissions will be reviewed by a selection committee according to the following criteria:

- Relevance and need
 - Projects must be designed to address a clearly defined and well-specified need related to skills development challenges faced by mid-career workers as outlined in this call.
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
 - Projects should align with the FSC-CCF's goals to create opportunities for underrepresented, marginalized and vulnerable groups and incorporate diverse knowledge, worldviews, and experiences.
- Innovation
 - Projects will use new approaches and ideas. This could include:
 - Testing promising approaches from outside of Canada;
 - Using new tools or approaches that have not been widely applied in skills training;
 - Piloting an established approach with a new target population; and,
 - Scaling a small-scale approach to rigorously assess impact.
- Impact and evidence

- Projects must be positioned to add to the knowledge base and generate actionable evidence that contributes to a better understanding of how to strengthen Canada's skills development ecosystem
- Capacity to deliver
 - Project proponents must have proven organizational capacity to implement innovative skills development approaches at the scale and scope required and to participate in research, evaluation, and knowledge mobilization activities
- Aligned scale and budget
 - The budget of projects will reflect their scale and complexity

Can you define acceptable in-kind contributions, and provide specific examples of contributions you deem acceptable?

The eligible and ineligible expenses for the projects are the same for the real costs and in-kind expenses. The list of eligible and ineligible expenses can be found on pages 5-6 of the Guidelines.

Can applicants include 12% overhead (expenses related to project administration)?

Yes. Eligible expenses can include expenses related to project administration, up to 12% of the funding requested.

If a proponent requests \$x in funding from the Future Skills Centre, would they would need to provide the exact amount in in-kind contributions?

While direct matching funds are not required for this call, a demonstration of in-kind support is strongly encouraged. Funding decisions will be based on the overall strength and potential of the projects.

Do you have any preferences on the length of projects?

While there is no minimum, the expectation is that the projects would be longer than six months to be able to achieve the funding objectives. The maximum duration of the projects funded through the Support for Mid-Career Workers is 24 months.

Does the scope of the project have to be Canada-wide or can it be for or in one province only?

The scope of a project can include numerous provinces and/or territories, or it can be based in one province or territory. Projects should demonstrate the ability to scale.

For projects that are funded, can the applicant retain ownership of the intellectual property as a result of the project?

Ownership of intellectual property developed in the course of a FSC funded project is not affected by the FSC funding. Intellectual property created in the course of a project is owned in accordance with Canadian law.

Is the applicant able to freely use the intellectual property that are developed within the project?

The owner of intellectual property developed within a FSC project is free to use intellectual property as they see fit after the project. There is an expectation from the FSC and the Government of Canada that intellectual property created in the course of a FSC funded project will be made available by the owner for the benefit of Canada and Canadians through licensing or other means including the provision of services.

The FSC and the Government of Canada will be granted a license to freely disseminate the results of the projects in the form of evaluations, reports and stories, and to use the data and information arising from the project for their own internal purposes.

How will the Future Skills Centre make the findings public or disseminate the results?

A key pillar of the FSC's mandate is to publicly and widely disseminate information, analysis and evidence of in-demand skills and promising solutions, including the findings of the innovation projects. The Centre will leverage the Conference Board of Canada's national reach, in particular with Research Impact Canada, to ensure the work has a maximum impact across all sectors and communities.

Project results will be shared on the FSC website, through published reports, social media, and other channels. The Government of Canada may also choose to disseminate results. Project proponents are encouraged to share the results of their projects widely.

The application says that for-profit companies can apply (provided the project is undertaken at cost with no mark ups or profit incorporated). For the cost with no-mark up element, how does that work? Specifically, how do we price our time/salary/other costs in this context?

All costs should be priced at the actual cost to the organization with no additional mark-ups or overhead included. Personnel costs should be billed at the true cost to the organization and be supported by pay-stubs and time records.

Can partners be from outside of Canada?

Yes, partners can be from outside of Canada. The lead proponent should be from Canada. The goal of

the project should clearly be for the benefit of Canada.

Can the partners, in a consortium of organizations, applying for funding provide information as part of the application?

Yes. The application prompts applicants to provide information on the project partners (if applicable), including the letters of support from each partner. More details can be found in the Application Instructions.

If a proponent is a new entity, will Future Skills consider the previous experience of key personnel in assessing organizational capacity to carry out the project?

Yes. The evaluation committee would consider the previous experience of key personnel in assessing organizational capacity.

Must the lead organization of a consortium, applying for funding, have the required background in developing/delivering projects? (E.g. past 5 years of projects, etc.)?

Applicants are asked to include information on the organizations' qualifications and capacity to execute the proposed project. This information should include relevant experience with similar work, experience working in a partnership, and relevant projects (if applicable) that have been undertaken in the last five years. Please refer to the Application Instructions for more and related information.

Can proponents submit a preliminary budget that may be adjusted? Can fixed prices be provided for each project component/major activity?

Applicants are required to provide a detailed project budget breakdown with justifications. Funding requests should be commensurate with the level of effort required to successfully deliver on project outcomes. Please see the budget example on pages 5-7 of the Application Instructions.

The total direct project costs cannot be increased. The recipient must obtain Ryerson University's written approval prior to making an adjustment to the budget that (a) increases the subtotal amount budgeted for any administrative cost category in the budget by any amount, or (b) any other cost category by more than 10%; or (c) decreases the subtotal amount budgeted for any participant-related cost category by any amount; or (d) any other cost category by more than 10%.

Can project applications be submitted in French?

Yes.

How can I can receive notifications about future calls for proposals?

We use many methods to share information about calls for proposal, including the Future Skills Centre

website and newsletter, targeted email campaigns, news releases, and social media (including [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)). We encourage you to subscribe to the FSC newsletter mailing list to receive all updates, please visit <https://fsc-ccf.ca/#contact-us> to subscribe.

Are the following types of activities eligible: language instruction programs; needs assessment studies; curriculum development; and, development of software applications?

Yes, please review page 3 of the Guidelines for examples of eligible activities.

Please note that this call is not designed to fund existing, ongoing service delivery activities. Consideration would be given to projects which develop and deliver new programs, as well as projects which develop new and innovative approaches or adaptations to existing programs or existing solutions.

What types of activities or tasks are related to evaluative capacity building?

Examples can include:

- Collaboration with the external project evaluator to develop an evaluation approach, plan, tools, etc.;
- Creation or customization of data collection files/software/platforms;
- Collection and analysis of participant data, related to indicators, in order to measure progress towards achieving the objective(s) of the project;
- Knowledge mobilization - Sharing of findings within and between key project stakeholders; and,
- Organization capacity building - Building the capacity of staff and/or partners to plan or execute future evaluations (e.g. participation of the relevant staff in meetings with the FSC evaluation, incorporating evaluations into the organization projects, creation/updating of an evaluation plan, development of a training plan for new staff about evaluations, sharing of findings, etc.)

Will there be an evaluation of projects funded through the FSC or are the applicants expected to include the cost of an evaluation in the project budget?

The FSC-CCF is committed to generating evidence about what works in skills development. For the projects selected under this call for proposals, evaluation activities undertaken by the FSC-CCF will be self-funded by the FSC. Any involvement in the evaluation activities by the proponent (which may include the collection analysis of data, etc. should be accounted for in the project budget.

Will the Future Skills Centre collect and analyze the participant-level data for my project?

Organizations that are awarded funding are responsible for internal project monitoring, which may include data collection and cleaning, at the level of the participant. Successful proponents will work with the FSC evaluation team to determine and implement the appropriate evaluation framework for the project. Proponents will be expected to work with the FSC to analyze the data.

Should the project budget be based on executing activities for the minimum or maximum potential number of project participants?

Project proponents are recommended to determine the realistic number of project participants (beneficiaries/end-users) that can be accommodated within the project scope and duration, informed by other factors including the organization's capacity. The budget for that activity would be informed by that number of project participants. The overall budget for the entire project would be commensurate with the level of effort and resources required to successfully deliver on all the project outcomes.

Project proponents are recommended to include risk mitigation measures to ensure that targets are met.

If you budget for a maximum number of participants but are unable to meet those targets your budgets will potentially be reduced during the project. There will be no ability to increase budgets once projects are started.

Are an organization's overhead expenses considered eligible expenses under this call?

Overhead calculated as a straight percentage of direct costs is not an eligible expense under this call.

Certain individual project administrative expenses (which could be considered overhead expenses) are eligible; for example: office supplies and telecommunications. The list of eligible and ineligible expenses can be found on pages 5-6 of the Guidelines.

The total amount claimed in respect of administrative costs cannot exceed 12% of the total budget.

How should the 12% of project administrative expenses be included in project budget, as a lump sum or detailed expenses?

Details regarding the proposed expenses should be included, especially with regard to salaries claimed. Certain administration expenses such as 'office supplies' can be lumped together in one line item.

Can I upload multiple files for each application section?

The application portal enables the submission of multiple documents per section however it is preferred if you combine the related files into one document. For PDF files, the maximum file size is 1,000 MB. Please be cognizant of the page limits per section.

Can applicants be permitted to add more pages to the application sections?

All project application attachments are expected to follow the presentation instructions according to the criteria provided in pages 1-2 of the Application Instructions, including the maximum page allowance per

section.

Do projects have to start in 2019?

The FSC-CCF funded projects must launch by June 30, 2019 (and must be completed by June 30, 2021).

Do the project beneficiaries have to be from a particular industry, gender and/or age?

No. The project beneficiaries or end-users can represent various ages, gender, fields and sectors.

Please note that projects funded under this specific call for proposals must support mid-career workers, defined as individuals who have been working for several years.

Does my project have to be executed across Canada?

The scope of a project can include numerous provinces and/or territories, or it can be based in one province or territory. Projects should demonstrate the ability to scale.