

# August 2019 Call for Proposals

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### **1. How early should I apply?**

A complete Letter of Interest must be submitted on the [application platform](#) before the deadline (September 16, 2019 at 5 p.m. EDT). Late submissions will not be accepted. We recommend that prospective applicants begin the application process in advance of the deadline and allow yourself a few extra hours to upload your files, should you experience any technical difficulties.

### **2. If an organization has a current Funding Agreement with the Future Skills Centre, can it submit a new proposal under this Call?**

In order for the Centre to identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches regarding skills needs, we seek a range of proposals and encourage all eligible organizations to apply under this Call. Please refer to the Organization Eligibility section of the [Call for Proposals Guidelines](#).

An organization with a current Funding Agreement can submit one Letter of Interest as the lead organization to this Call. It can participate as a partner on one or several Letters of Interest.

Additional funds for the continuation of existing activities and/or to support substantive scope changes of currently funded projects are not eligible for funding under this Call.

### **3. How are the following defined: essential skills; skills development; skills development systems; skills development infrastructure; and, training methods?**

Essential skills include reading, writing, document use, numeracy, thinking, computer use/digital skills, soft skills (e.g. problem-solving, oral communication, working with others) and continuous learning skills.

Skills development is defined as the creation or strengthening of skills, which are relevant to the workforce system, that enable individuals to participate in trade(s) or occupation(s).

A skills development system includes the intellectual knowledge; human resources; organizations; networks; infrastructure; policies, institutions, procedures and practices; and physical assets that enable skills identification, transfer, application, testing, etc.

Skills development infrastructure encompasses the digital technologies, intellectual property, physical and other resources related to the formation of skills.

Training methods include in-person, through online platforms, coaching, experiential opportunities or a combination of approaches.

### **4. Is the Letter of Interest five sheets single or double-sided?**

The maximum limit is five pages, single-sided. The LOI must be submitted as a single PDF file (that does not require a password for access).

**5. Would my Letter of Interest be at a disadvantage if it is submitted in French?**

We welcome applications in either French or English. The Future Skills Centre is a bilingual organization and all application instructions are also available in both languages.

**6. Can I revise an application from a previous Call and submit a Letter of Interest for this Call?**

All submissions will be considered regardless of the outcome of previous requests for funding.

**7. My organization is planning an evaluation of the project and we have the relevant people and experience to do it. Do I still need to include the evaluation by Blueprint ADE as a project activity?**

The FSC is committed to generating evidence about what works in skills development. As part of this commitment, the Centre is requiring all funded projects to participate in evaluation activities funded by the FSC. Blueprint is a third-party evaluator that will be undertaking the evaluation of most projects supported by the Centre. It would collaborate with grantees to customize an evaluation plan that captures the Centre's common outcome indicators. This may or may not overlap with the evaluation activities that the organization planned and/or is responsible for. E.g. post-project evaluation of the efficacy of a mobile app.

**8. Is Blueprint ADE going to monitor and evaluate my entire project? Should I include or exclude the expenses of their evaluation in my budget?**

Blueprint ADE will only evaluate the portions of the project that are relevant to the FSC evidence generation mandate and that have been outlined in the project specific evaluation plan. Organizations that are funded by the Future Skills Centre are responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of their projects and reporting to the Centre and other parties as applicable. Organizations are also responsible for any evaluation activities above and beyond those that Blueprint and the FSC independent evaluator would undertake. The Blueprint and FSC independent evaluation expenses would be covered by the Centre.

**9. How can I receive updates or decisions regarding my Letter of Interest?**

The adjudication committee will be reviewing and evaluating LOIs in September and October. All applicants will be contacted directly by end of October and provided with the adjudication committee's decision. Shortlisted LOIs will be provided with details and timelines on next steps, and a formal invitation to submit a full application.

**10. What do "target sector (current)" and "target sector (proposed)" mean?**

The current sector refer to the industry(ies) in which the project participants currently work, or in which they were being trained to work, before the project intervention. The proposed sector is the industry(ies) in which the participants would work after the project interventions (if applicable). If there is no proposed change after the intervention, the current and proposed sector can be the same.

### **11. What does “estimated project budget per participant” mean?**

The estimated project budget per participant can be calculated by dividing the total project budget by the number of participants expected to engage in the project.

### **12. Can individuals, e.g. PhD students apply to the August 2019 Call for Proposals?**

Individual persons are not eligible under this Call. Please review page 15 of the [Guidelines](#) for the full list of eligible organizations. A PhD student could, however, apply under the banner of their host academic institution.

### **13. Our organization has a relationship with a university, the results of this partnership will directly feed into the project. Can funding that is supporting the university be further leveraged with federal agency funding, e.g. NSERC?**

Whether the FSC funds would be matcheable to another funding program would depend on the guidelines of the program to which the university would apply. The FSC funds are federal funds and the other program would have rules regarding government stacking. The use of federal agency funding is governed by those agencies and recipients of those funds should be guided accordingly.

The Future Skills Centre would not support funding for a project and/or activity that is already fully supported through other means. It would consider partial funding (i.e. in-kind or matching support) or full funding of activities not presently supported through other sources. All funding sources for a project should be disclosed in the application.

### **14. Our project involves costs associated with curriculum modification, assessment development, staff training, equipment, and physical infrastructure costs. Are these permitted?**

All of these costs appear to be eligible as they relate to the direct development and delivery of the project. A full list of eligible and ineligible costs will be shared with shortlisted projects for the application stage; and detailed project budgets will be reviewed at that time.

### **15. Will letters of support be accepted with the Letter of Interest?**

Letters of support will not be accepted at the LOI stage of the application process, as that falls outside of the scope of the application requirements. We will be asking for letters of support at the next stage in the application process (for all shortlisted projects who are invited to submit a full application.)

### **16. Who would own intellectual property arising from the project?**

The Future Skills Centre or Canada will not claim any ownership rights in any intellectual property arising from a funded project.

Project proponents must agree to allow FSC and Canada to use all data, information and documentary material related to the project that is necessary for the purpose of evaluation of the project, and verification of compliance with the funding Agreement.

The goal of the Future Skills Centre is to create and disseminate new knowledge and learning for the benefit of Canada and Canadians. As such, project proponents must agree to make public all research and evaluation information resulting from the project, including the project results, interim and final articles, papers, interim and final reports. This would include publication on the FSC website, and through other means that will achieve a wide distribution.

Given the goal of the Centre is to help identify new approaches, interventions and tools that will help Canadians succeed in the current and future workforce, project proponents must agree to use reasonable efforts to make beneficial approaches, interventions or tools developed or tested through the funded project available to the public. This could include making it available free of charge, or for a fee.

**17. Can newcomers to Canada or permanent residents of Canada be included in the target demographics of projects?**

Yes. The Centre has a particular focus on equity-seeking groups and underserved communities, including women, youth, Indigenous peoples, newcomers, racialized peoples, LGBTQ2S+ peoples, persons with disabilities, veterans, and people from rural, remote, and northern communities.

**18. What stream (innovation or evidence) would our proposal fall under if it is based on a series of assessments that have significant bodies of research and are not new to the marketplace, but the combination of approaches is unique?**

As part of the adjudication process for this Call for Proposals, the adjudication panel will assess Letters of Interest to determine whether they best fit in the innovation stream or evidence stream. This would be based on a review of existing substantive evidence (as applicable).

**19. What is the difference between the two streams?**

The Innovation Stream will support successful projects in any of the three themes that are in an early development phase. Projects in this stream will have access to technical advice and other implementation guidance to support the development of robust theories of change and exploration of the extent project activities produce target outcomes and identification of factors that contribute to success. The Evidence Stream will support approaches in any of the three themes that have existing evidence of their effectiveness and have potential to be a scalable solution to Canada's most pressing skills development challenges.

**20. Can you review our concept and tell us if it's worthwhile submitting a Letter of Interest? Can we present our proposed initiative and receive your feedback in regards to alignment with your funding interests (further to those outlined in the Call)?**

Staff at the Future Skills Centre can address general questions about the Call. Should you have a concept that you believe aligns with the Centre's mandate and Call themes, we encourage you to submit a Letter of Interest. The adjudication committee will then determine whether or not to invite you to submit a full

application for funding. Applicants that have been short-listed would have the opportunity to provide additional details and seek additional clarification during the application and interview phases.

### **21. Can an organization that is part of or affiliated with the Future Skills Centre or its partners submit a Letter of Interest?**

All eligible organizations may apply and Letters of Interest would be considered on their own merit. The Future Skills Centre follows strict conflict of interest protocols to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to identify and avoid unfair advantage and perceived conflicts of interest before and during the review, adjudication, due diligence and selection processes.

### **22. What budget items are eligible? Are the following eligible: student scholarships or stipends; indirect costs/overhead?**

Eligible expenditures include:

- Salaries, including benefits for personnel;
- Expenses related to project administration, up to 12% of the funding requested;
- Project participant costs (i.e. honorariums for surveys, focus group participation, etc);
- Office supplies and services;
- Equipment and software;
- Financial and professional services required for the delivery of the project;
- Telecommunications/courier charges (e.g., telephone, Internet, mail and courier);
- Production costs for resource development such as graphic design, printing, translation into other languages, alternative formats;
- Expenses associated with outreach events and training sessions directly related to program activities;
- Audit costs, notwithstanding they are incurred outside of the Project Period;
- The cost of travel, meals and accommodation in accordance with the rates for public servants set out in the National Joint Council of Canada's Travel Directive; and,
- Hospitality costs incurred in accordance with rates set out in the Directive on the Management of Expenditures on Travel, Hospitality and Conferences, Appendix A, section 2.3 of Canada's Treasury Board.

Ineligible expenses include:

- Costs not directly associated with meeting the deliverables and milestones;
- Costs related to proposal development (including personnel costs);
- Capital costs (e.g. land, building, vehicles, leasehold improvements);
- Entertainment expenses, gifts and alcoholic beverages;
- Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points programs;
- Fines and penalties;
- Donations in the form of goodwill and other intangibles;
- Opportunity costs;
- Standard discounts;
- Interest charges;

- Allowance for interest on invested capital, bonds, debentures, bank or other loans together with related bond discounts and finance charges;
- Depreciation of assets;
- Expenses and depreciation of excess facilities;
- Annual general meetings, budget deficits, membership fees, fundraising activities, committee and political meetings, or religious activities;
- Costs covered by other government funding;
- Profit;
- Contingency or unexplained miscellaneous costs; and,
- The portion of the cost of any goods and services purchased by the Recipient for which the Recipient may claim a tax credit or reimbursement.

**23. Is there a maximum percentage of direct costs that can be included in the budget?**

There is no prescribed maximum percentage for direct costs.

**24. What is the maximum percentage of overhead/indirect costs that can be applied to a request?**

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

**25. Can the Centre provide the full application budget template to help in the drafting the approximate budget in the LOI?**

If shortlisted, proponents will be required to submit a detailed budget as part of the full application. The full application budget template will be made available to those proponents. For reference, you can [download the budget template](#) from our previous call for proposals (for projects supporting mid-career workers).

**26. How many Question Sets are there to complete as part of the LOI?**

There is only one Question Set.

**27. What is considered innovative?**

An innovative project could entail the development and/or use of novel concepts, approaches and/or methods.

**28. What can be considered as evidence?**

Evidence would include data and/or information that supports or disputes the proposed intervention. It can be qualitative and/or quantitative.

**29. What resources are available to help my organization develop the Letter of Interest?**

If you require support at any stage in the application process, please reach out to [projects@fsc-ccf.ca](mailto:projects@fsc-ccf.ca) and we will connect you with helpful resources.