

First Nations Education Steering Committee

First Nations Schools Association

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First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy 2020-2021 Skills Link Program Guidelines

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1. Introduction

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) are pleased to manage Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) 2020-2021 Skills Link Program (SLP) for the BC region. The SLP is a component of the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES).

Note: As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to evolve, FNESC is committed to adapting program delivery approaches accordingly. Please consult Appendix A. COVID-19 Recommendations & Support for more information to assist in the proposal process during these unprecedented times.

Confirmed funding for three categories is:

Science and Technology	\$ 175,000
Career Promotion and Awareness	\$ 175,000
Mentored/ICT Work Placements	\$ 1,234,341

We are anticipating that additional funding may be confirmed by ISC in the coming weeks. If additional funding is provided, we will send out a notification of the final funding amounts for these programs.

Please note: A call for proposals for Co-operative Education Program funding for on-reserve First Nations schools will be distributed separately.

2. Objectives

The SLP has the following objectives:

- to promote the benefits of education as key to labour market participation
- to support the development and enhancement of essential employability skills among First Nation and Inuit youth, such as communication and problem solving skills, and an ability to work with others
- to introduce youth to a variety of career options
- to help youth acquire skills by providing wage subsidies for mentored work experience opportunities
- to help First Nation and Inuit youth overcome barriers to employment

3. Expected Results

Key expected results of the SLP are:

- enhanced employability skills for participating First Nation and Inuit youth
- increased awareness of the benefits of education
- enhanced ability to make employment-related decisions
- increased appreciation for science and technology as a viable career/education choice
- improved attitudes toward the transition from school to work
- increased ability of First Nation and Inuit youth to participate in the labour market

4. Activities

The key activities of the SLP are:

- work placements and mentorships for youth who are not in school to enable them to develop employability skills and support their educational and career development
- work experience specifically in the field of Information and Communication Technology
- activities designed to support First Nations and Inuit youth entrepreneurs gain self-employment
- training experiences to support youth in acquiring skills needed for work placements
- career development information, including awareness and support activities like leadership projects which can be done remotely or in small sessions
- career planning and counseling activities, which can be conducted through zoom sessions
- activities that promote science and technology as an educational and/or career choice, including online and Zoom-based science/computer clubs, and/or activities that connect science and technology to traditional Indigenous knowledge.

Please note COVID-19 regulations are ever changing and we encourage First Nation communities to stay safe and follow Canada's Federal and Provincial guidelines.

5. Eligibility Requirements

5.1 Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients are First Nations communities, governments and organizations in BC region. Eligible recipients may enter into agreements with private sector and non-profit sector employers to access employment opportunities for youth. Private organizations may be eligible for participation provided that the nature and intent of the funded activity is non-commercial, not intended to generate profit, and supports the FNIYES program priorities and objectives.

5.2 Eligible Participants

Eligible participants are First Nations and Inuit youth aged 15 to 30 who are legally entitled to work in Canada and who are ordinarily resident on reserve, in recognized communities or on community lands.

- Mentored work placements, including Information and Communication Technology, are for youth who are not in school, or unemployed or underemployed.
- For career promotion and science and technology activities, youth may be younger than 15 years of age.

6. Proposal Process

Applicants must submit detailed proposals for the activities to be undertaken, clearly stating how the proposed activities will further the objectives and expected results of the program.

In light of COVID-19, programs must also follow federal and provincial health guidelines. It is recognized that program activities may require change as restrictions evolve. If revisions are needed, please contact FNEESC Program Officer, kyleem@fnesc.ca, to ensure new plans meet the guidelines.

Eligible proposals must:

- be in accordance with the FNIYES-SLP guidelines
- outline the activities that will be undertaken and how they will meet the program's objectives
- outline the results to be achieved
- provide an estimate of eligible costs to be incurred, including any portion to be paid by partners

For mentored work placements, including Information and Communication Technology:

- youth may only participate once in the program
- placements must not exceed 11 months
- participants will be paid a wage at or above the applicable provincial minimum wage
- work placements and activities must be completed by March 31, 2021

6.1 Submission of Proposal

Only proposals submitted using the electronic proposal form issued by FNEC will be considered. Please refer to the proposal form and the attached instructions for application details. Incomplete proposals will be ineligible.

2020-21 Skills Link Program proposals are due by Friday, July 24, 2020 at 4:30 pm. Please submit proposals by email to reception@fnesc.ca, or fax to 604-925-6097.

6.2 Assessment Criteria

Submitted proposals will be reviewed by a committee constituted for this purpose. This committee will review proposals based on the objectives of the program and the criteria described below. Every effort will be made to ensure a regional distribution of funds.

All proposals will be assessed according to the following criteria.

- **Capability:** the experience and capacity of the recipient to manage the implementation of the activities successfully and in a timely manner.
- **Implementation Activities;** the extent to which the proposal aligns with eligible activities, considering timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and the degree to which the activities will result in expected outcomes.
- **Project Management:** how the initiative/project will be managed, including project governance, human resources, risk management, and project monitoring, control and reporting.
- **Project Costs:** realistic estimate of costs and a justification of the funding request.
- **Cooperation and Partnership:** with other governments, employers, community-based organizations and interested organizations to encourage strategic partnerships, and minimize overlap or duplication with other related employment, entrepreneurship, economic development and social programs.

Note: Meeting these criteria does not guarantee funding. A written response will be sent to all applicants to confirm whether their proposal has been approved for funding.

7. Eligible Expenditures

7.1 For Mentored Work Placements, including ICT

- Participant wages and mandatory employment-related costs, including the gross employee share of CPP, EI, vacation pay, WCB, and where applicable, health insurance premiums. Wages must meet or exceed the BC minimum wage (\$14.60 as of June 1, 2020)
- The non-profit sector is eligible to receive a contribution of up to 100% of the applicable minimum wage, plus mandatory employment-related costs (MERCs), while the private sector is eligible to receive up to 50% of the applicable minimum wage only
- Where a participant with disabilities is hired, all employers are eligible to apply for 100% of the wage and MERCs, and a maximum contribution of \$3,000 per participant may be available on an actual cost basis, for special equipment and facilities to accommodate the participant's needs
- Training opportunities that support the acquisition of skills required for work placements (First Aid, computer training)
- Other necessary costs directly related to a proposed work placement including, but not limited to, criminal record check, required uniforms, and personal safety gear (e.g. work boots, safety hats, etc.) up to a maximum of \$300 per participant
- Participant costs, such as living expenses, travel, room and board
- Dependent care for participants (with documentation, including a description of the type of arrangements available in the community, if applicable)

Note for recipients: Travel expenses are to be claimed at actual cost, but cannot exceed Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's guidelines as specified in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's *Travel Directive* in effect at the time of travel.

Skills and Mentoring Programs Support

FNESC is providing additional support to First Nations and First Nations schools in offering youth meaningful skills development, work placement, and mentoring opportunities. Recognizing the evolving circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual/ remote supports will be available until further notice. The types of support that can be provided include, among other things:

- Support for the planning of work placement and skills development programs
- Workshops for work placement participants (e.g. career planning, resume building / job interview strategies, job readiness skills)
- Mentoring of work placement participants
- Resource materials to support work experiences and work-integrated learning

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please email the Program Coordinator Mentor and Skills Programs, Tino, at tinol@fnesc.ca.

7.2 For Career Promotion and Science and Technology Activities

- Facility rental
- Materials produced exclusively for students to promote specific careers and fields of study, such as testimonials, biographies, etc., but not including general program advertising

- Honoraria and speaker fees
- Transportation
- Admission and event fees for students and chaperones

7.3 For All Activities

Administration costs must not exceed 5% of the sub-total amount requested before administration costs.

Eligible administration costs include (but are not limited to):

- office/general expenses
- materials and supplies
- advertising, communication and printing costs
- professional services

8. Ineligible Expenditures

Ineligible expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- for all programs:
 - office infrastructure or equipment purchases such as computers and software
 - capital costs for construction of a building (other than small repairs or renovations to support the participation of persons with disabilities) or the purchase of land or buildings
- for career promotion and awareness and science and technology activities:
 - salaries
 - training

9. Maximum Program Contribution

The initiative is regionally based and proposal driven.

- The non-profit sector is eligible to receive a contribution of up to 100% of the applicable wage, plus mandatory employment related costs (MERC), while the private sector is eligible to receive up to 50% of the applicable wage only.
- Where a participant with disabilities is hired, all employers are eligible to apply for 100% of the wage. A maximum contribution of \$3,000 per participant may be available, on an actual cost basis, for special equipment and facilities to accommodate the student's needs.

10. Monitoring and Accountability

Funding recipients must deliver their programs in accordance with the provisions of their Contribution Agreement and the program delivery requirements outlined in these Program Guidelines. Funding recipients are required to exercise due diligence when approving expenditures and must ensure that such expenditures are in accordance with the eligible expenditures set out in these Program Guidelines.

The FNEESC Programs Officer is available to answer questions and provide guidance related to this program.

11. Reporting Requirements

2020-2021 Skills Link final reports are due no later than Friday, March 19, 2021. Reporting requirements will be listed in each recipient's funding arrangement. All funds must be expended and all activities completed by March 31, 2021.

12. Contact Information

For further information, please visit the FNEESC website at: www.fnesc.ca/slp or the FNSA website: www.fnsa.ca/slp. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Kylee Mayers, Programs Officer by email, kyleem@fnesc.ca or by phone at (604) 925-6087.

Proposal Deadline:

4:30 pm on Friday, July 24, 2020

Please submit complete proposals to:

First Nations Education Steering Committee

113-100 Park Royal South. West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2

Email: reception@fnesc.ca

Final Report Deadline:

4:30 pm on Friday, March 19, 2021

Appendix A. COVID-19 Recommendations & Support

FNEESC and FNSA understand that preparing proposals during the uncertain times of the COVID-19 pandemic is especially difficult. Planning and implementing programs that are meant to help students explore work-related opportunities and skills development activities pose particular challenges, given that restrictions on travel and closing of businesses may limit program options.

Please consider these as ideas only; all activities should be considered carefully with the safety and well-being of participants in mind, and recognizing any related First Nations' directives related to social distancing.

As COVID-19 regulations are ever changing and future developments can't be fully anticipated, we understand that programs may need to be changed in the course of their implementation. In such cases, please contact the Program Manager kyleem@fnesc.ca, to make sure any program changes meet the guidelines.

It is also suggested that Covid-19/ pandemic awareness training be provided in an orientation before the start of Skills Link program activities. Some resource material and training courses can be found here:

<http://www.fnesc.ca/covid19/>

https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/pandemic_aware/,

<https://worksitesafety.ca/product/training/online/coronavirus-covid-19/>,

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/health-and-safety>

Career Promotion

- As an alternative to large scale career fairs, individual business operators / education institution representatives could share virtual visits or presentations. Virtual visits can be enhanced by having students prepare questions and conduct related research before or after the visits.
- Students could interview community role models about a career, including developing their own ideas and questions for the interview. Questions may include:
 - What are the main tasks in your job?
 - What do you like most/ least in your job?
 - What qualification do you need to work in...?
 - Please tell me about your journey to become a...?
 - What advice would you give someone who wants to work as ...?

For additional information see FNEESC/FNSA Resource: Suggestions for Continuous Learning. Activity 6

- A virtual Speaker Series could involve career role models, small business owners, or education institution representatives for a presentation or panel discussion.
- Career planning activities could be implemented through online career planner/career development options, such as career cruising. Funds can be used toward online registration or admissions but unfortunately not toward equipment purchases or software.
- FNEESC Career Journeys / videos can be used as a stand-alone activity or in combination with other career promotion activities.

Science and Technology Activities

- Students can be supported in creating projects with robotics, science, or other types of kits. If necessary, these projects could be done independently by students at home with remote support.

- Land-based science programs, such as fish and wildlife observations and recordings (e.g. with cameras, hydrophones, trail cams, etc.) could be linked with traditional knowledge keepers and STEM studies. Programs could be arranged in blended learning modes, with some independent tasks and small group work.
- Service providers could be used for online science workshops, interactive experiments, and hands-on activities. Sample free resources include:
 - FNESC/ FNSA: Suggestions for continuous learning (e.g. Outdoor Walks Activity 7)
 - <https://www.madsciencepromo.com/>
 - <https://geeringuonline.apsc.ubc.ca/online-resources/>
 - Openschool BC: <https://www.openschool.bc.ca/keeplearning/>
 - Middle years
 - [Science World](#) – Science activities for students.
 - [SFU Science](#) – Science activities for students.
 - Secondary School
 - [GenomeBC Resources](#) -Science activities and case studies for grades 9-12
 - [Create to Learn@Home](#)- Video tutorials on digital skills and/ or traditional knowledge created by First Nations, Metis and Inuit artist

Mentored Work Placements

- Mentored work placements that are safe and follow provincial health guidelines can still be implemented. Any work placements should be considered carefully with the safety and well-being of participants in mind, and recognizing any related First Nations’ directives related to social distancing.
- Acquiring job related certificates online may be possible, including: Food Safe, Serving it right, WHMIS, Fall Protection, H2S, etc.
- Adding to hands-on learning during work placements, students can gain job-related skills through online training courses, either before or during their placements, such as Basic MS-Office course or typing courses. Youth in ICT work placements also might benefit from foundational courses such as PC/MAC trouble shooting or software/hardware installation.