

**First Nations Education Steering Committee**

**First Nations Schools Association**

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# **First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy 2026 - 2027 Summer Work Experience Program Guidelines**

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## 1. Introduction

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) are pleased to manage Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) 2026-2027 Summer Work Experience Program (SUMMER.WORK) in the BC region. The Summer.Work is one of two programs that ISC administers under the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES).

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of the Summer.Work are:

- to help First Nations youth acquire employability skills by providing wage subsidies for their summer work experience.
- to assist First Nations secondary and post-secondary students in preparation for future entry into the labour market by facilitating access to summer employment
- to help students acquire employability skills.
- to support students in financing and furthering their education
- to provide students with career and labour market information and assistance in finding summer or short-term employment.

These objectives are consistent with, and support, the overall objectives of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) Summer Work Experience Program.

## 3. Expected Results

The desired outcome for the Summer Work Experience Program is that secondary and post-secondary First Nation students further their education and acquire employability skills.

Key expected results of the Summer.Work are:

- increased awareness of the benefits of education
- enhanced employability skills for participating First Nations students
- reduced barriers to employment for First Nations and Inuit youth
- to enable First Nations students to earn wages to help finance their post-secondary education
- to provide opportunities for First Nations students to gain career-related summer work experiences that, upon graduation, ease their transition from school to labour market

## 4. Activities

The activities will support work experience opportunities for First Nations secondary and post-secondary students until **September 30, 2026**.

## 5. Eligibility Requirements

### 5.1 Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients are First Nations in BC.

Eligible recipients may enter into agreements with private sector and non-profit sector employers to access employment opportunities for youth.

### 5.2 Eligible Participants

Eligible participants are:

- First Nations secondary and post-secondary students aged 15 to 30 at the start of the program's activities
- ordinarily resident on reserve or in recognized communities or on community lands
- legally entitled to work in Canada
- registered as full-time students during the preceding academic year and who intend to return to school on a full-time basis in the next academic year

## 6. Proposal Process

FNESC will issue each First Nation community a 2026-2027 SUMMER.WORK allocation letter via email stating the **specific funding amount** per First Nation organization, which is determined using a base amount plus per capita formula. Once your specific funding amount has been received, we encourage recipients to utilize the full amount of funding to maximize the benefits and success of the program.

All funding for the 26-27 SUMMER.WORK will be based on approved workplans. Applicants must submit a detailed workplan for the activities to be undertaken over the course of the agreement, clearly stating how the proposed activities will further the objectives and expected results of this program. Applicants will complete their workplan by the deadline and the FNESC, Officer, Funding Programs will follow up to confirm that your workplan is approved and your Summer.Work activities can begin.

### 6.1 Eligible Workplans must:

- meet the 26-27 SUMMER.WORK Program guidelines
- outline the activities to be undertaken and explain how they will meet the program's objectives
- demonstrate that the activities will provide assistance only to eligible participants
- provide an estimate of eligible costs, including any share to be incurred by partners
- outline the results to be achieved

**Note: The placement must provide a minimum of 80 hours of work.**

## 6.2 Submission of Workplans

Only workplans submitted in the workplan online form issued by FNEESC will be considered for assessment. Refer to the workplan online form and the attached instructions for submission details. Incomplete workplans will be returned to applicants.

While completing the workplan, be sure to note the specific allocation amount provided to your First Nation via email and show those funds allocated out within the budget breakdown.

2026-2027 SUMMER.WORK Program workplan is due **Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026**.

## 6.3 Assessment Criteria

All workplans will be assessed by the following criteria:

- **Capability:** The experience and capacity of the recipient to manage the implementation of the activities within their workplans successfully and complete the proposed employment initiatives in a timely manner;
- **Implementation Activities:** The extent to which the workplan aligns with eligible activities and meets program objectives. The assessment will consider timelines, cost-effectiveness and the degree to which the activities will result in expected outcomes;
- **Project Management:** How the initiative or project will be managed, including project governance, management of project scope, human resources, risk management and project monitoring, control and reporting;
- **Project Costs:** Realistic assessment of estimated total costs and a justification of the level of funding required; and
- **Cooperation and Partnerships:** With other governments, employers, community-based organizations and interested organizations to encourage strategic partnerships, minimize overlap or duplication and operate in partnership with other related employment, entrepreneurship, economic development, and social program.

## 7. Eligible Expenditures

The wage rate for participants will be determined by the individual completing the workplan. It must be at or above the applicable provincial minimum wage.

Eligible expenditures include:

- participant wages and mandatory employment-related costs including the gross employee share of CPP, EI, vacation pay, WCB and where applicable, health insurance premiums; wage costs per participant will meet or exceed the applicable minimum wage in BC which is **\$18.25** (as of June 1, 2026)
- other necessary costs directly related to a work placement, including (but not limited to): criminal record check, required uniforms and other office attire required by the workplace, and personal protective equipment (e.g. work boots, safety hats) up to a maximum of \$300 per participant;
- actual cost for special equipment and facilities to accommodate the needs of a disabled individual up to a maximum of \$3,000, if applicable;

- administration costs that 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
  - supplies
  - advertising
  - communication and printing costs
  - professional services

## 8. Ineligible Expenditures

Ineligible expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Infrastructure or equipment purchases (e.g. computers and software); and
- 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 building.

## 9. Maximum Program Contribution

The maximum amount of funding to be provided to a funding recipient in a fiscal year will be set out in the funding agreements signed by the funding recipient.

The non-profit sector employers are eligible to receive a contribution of up to 100% of the applicable wage, plus mandatory employment-related costs (MERC), while the private sector employers are eligible to receive up to 50% of the applicable wage only.

Note: Where a participant with disabilities is hired, all employers are eligible for 100% of the wage expenses. A maximum contribution of \$3,000 per participant may be available, on an actual cost basis, for special equipment and facilities to accommodate a disabled student's needs.

## 10. Monitoring and Accountability

To ensure that program delivery requirements are being met, that funds are expended on the intended purpose, and that ISC's accountability to Parliament is being met, activities including audits, evaluations, as well as desk and on-site compliance reviews may be conducted with all funding recipients.

## 11. Reporting Requirements

The SUMMER.WORK final report must be submitted to FNEC no later than **Wednesday, September 30, 2026**.

The reporting requirements are listed in the recipient's funding agreement. Recipients are responsible for ensuring that reporting requirements are met, and reports are accurate and submitted on or before the established due date. If a report is not received, the final 25% program payment will be forfeit.

Reporting requirements include not only the overarching program report, but also the completion of a youth evaluation form for each participating youth. The form will be provided by FNEESC and is to be submitted along with the final report.

## **12. Contact Information**

If you have any questions, please contact Sonia Okogbaa, Officer, Funding Programs, by email to [soniao@fnesc.ca](mailto:soniao@fnesc.ca) or by phone (604) 925-6087.

For further information and where you can find copies of the program guidelines and forms, please visit: [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca) or [www.fnsa.ca](http://www.fnsa.ca) under the 'Funding Programs' tab.

**Workplan Deadline:**  
**June 26, 2026**

**Final Report Deadline:**  
**September 30, 2026**