

**First Nations Education Steering Committee**

**First Nations Schools Association**

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# **First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy 2019-2020 Skills Link 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 the Department of Indigenous Services Canada (DISC) 2019-2020 Skills Link Program (SLP) for the BC region. The SLP is a component of the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES) for the BC region.

Funding is available in three categories:

Science and Technology	\$ 540,000
Career Promotion and Awareness	\$ 530,000
Mentored/ICT Work Placements	\$ 1,506,107

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

The 2019-2020 SLP funding must be expended and all activities completed by March 31, 2020.

## 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 skills, problem solving and working with others
- to introduce youth to a variety of career options
- to help youth acquire skills by providing wage subsidies for mentored work experience
- to help First Nation and Inuit youth overcome barriers to employment

These objectives are consistent with, and support the overall objectives of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES) Skills Link Program.

## 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:

- wage subsidies for 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 that support youth in acquiring skills needed for work placements
- career development information, including awareness and support activities like career fairs and leadership projects
- career planning and counseling activities

- activities that promote science and technology as an educational and/or career choice, including science camps, computer clubs, and activities that connect science and technology to traditional Indigenous knowledge

### **Promoting Work Placements in Information & Communications Technology (ICT)**

As First Nations and First Nations schools are interested in strengthening their capacity in the area of Information & Communications Technology (ICT), FNEESC will be providing additional support for ICT work placements for youth under the Skills Link Program for First Nation communities.

The Skills Link Program work placements are intended to assist interested youth in enhancing their ICT skills, increase their awareness of careers in ICT, and prepare themselves for future employment. Ideally, First Nations that may have limited access to local support for ICT maintenance will directly benefit from the sponsored positions.

This pilot initiative aims to assist First Nations and First Nations schools in offering meaningful work placements related to ICT. The types of support that can be provided include, among other things:

- Assisting with establishing and implementing ICT work placements for Skills Link participants
- Coordinating with FNEESC/ FNSA's ICT Technicians to mentor youth in work placements
- Identifying training opportunities in ICT
- Guiding participating youth in their work placements
- Facilitating connections with First Nations schools and communities, resource people, and ICT companies

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

**Please note:** proposals for funding for Skills Link ICT Work Placements will undergo the standard review process described in these guidelines. Proposal approval cannot be guaranteed.

## **5. Eligibility Requirements**

### **5.1 Eligible Recipients**

Eligible recipients are First Nations and Inuit communities, government and organizations in the British Columbia (BC) region. Eligible recipients may then enter into agreements with private sector and non-profit sector employers to access employment opportunities for youth.

### **5.2 Eligible Participants**

Eligible participants include First Nations and Inuit youth ordinarily resident on reserve, in recognized communities or on community lands. Eligible participants have to be legally entitled to work in Canada. Youth means persons aged 15 to 30 inclusive.

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

Proposals are selected on the basis of meeting program objectives.

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

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 borne by partners

For mentored work placements, including Information and Communication Technology:

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

### 6.1 Submission of Proposal

Only proposals submitted in the electronic proposal form issues by FNEESC will be considered for assessment. Refer to the proposal form and the attached instructions for application details. Incomplete proposals will be returned to applications.

2019-20 Skills Link Program proposals are due by May 10, 2019. Please submit proposals via online submission, by email to [reception@fnesc.ca](mailto: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 by the following criteria:

**Capability:** the experience and capacity of the recipient to manage the implementation of the activities within their proposal successfully and complete the proposed employment initiative in a timely manner;  
**Implementation Activities;** the extent to which the proposal aligns with eligible activities and meets program objectives. The assessment will consider 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, 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 requested;

**Cooperation and Partnership:** with other governments, employers, community-based organizations and interested organizations to encourage strategic partnerships, minimize overlap or duplication and operate in synergy with other related employment, entrepreneurship, economic development and social programs.

**Note:** Meeting these criteria does not guarantee funding from the First Nations and Inuit Skills Link Program. A written response will be sent to all applicants to confirm whether, or not, 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
- wage costs per participant must meet or exceed the applicable minimum wage in BC of \$13.85 (as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019)
- training experiences that support the acquisition of skills required for work placements (First Aid, Computer Training) may be included
- 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
- actual cost for special equipment and facilities to accommodate the needs of a disabled participant, up to a maximum of \$3,000 per participant
- participant costs such as living expenses, travel, room and board
- dependent care for participants (documentation is required 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. Expenses which exceed the rates set out in the Directive will not be paid.

### 7.2 For Career Promotion and Science and Technology Activities

- facility rental
- materials produced exclusively for students to promote specific careers, subjects, 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

**Administrative Costs:** 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:

- 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
- 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.

Note: 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 the programs in accordance with the provisions of their Contribution Agreement and the program delivery requirements outlined in these Program Guidelines while also ensuring that the necessary management controls are in place to manage funding and monitor activities. 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.

FNESC and the FNSA are committed to providing assistance to recipients in order for them to effectively carry out the obligations. The FNESC Programs Officer is available to answer questions and provide guidance related to this program.

To ensure that program delivery requirements are being met, that funds are expended on the intended purpose, and that DISC'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.

- The department's collection and use of personal information and other records for the purposes of program compliance reviews will be limited to what is necessary to ensure program delivery requirements are met.
- The department is responsible for all information and records in its possession. The confidentiality of the information will be managed by DISC in accordance with the *Privacy Act* and other related policies on privacy. Recipients are responsible for the protection of personal information per the privacy legislation, regulations and/or policies that govern them.

## **11. Reporting Requirements**

2019-2020 Skills Link final reports are due no later than Friday, March 15, 2020, please note this date in your calendar. Reporting requirements will be listed in each recipient's funding arrangement. All funds must be expended and all activities completed by March 31, 2020.

## **12. Contact Information**

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

**Proposal Deadline:**  
**4:30 pm on Friday, May 10, 2019**

Please submit complete proposals to:  
**First Nations Education Steering Committee**  
113-100 Park Royal South  
West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2  
Fax: 604-925-6097  
Email: [reception@fnesc.ca](mailto:reception@fnesc.ca)

**Final Report Deadline:**  
**4:30 pm on Friday, March 15, 2020**