

First Nations Education Steering Committee &
First Nations Schools Association
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Co-operative Education Program (COOP.EDU) 2025-2026 Call for Proposals

Summary of this Grant Opportunity

The BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) are pleased to announce that we are currently accepting proposals for 2025/2026 Co-operative Education Program (Co-op Ed Program) grants.

The Co-op Ed Program has the following objectives:

- Promote the benefits of education as key to labour market participation.
- Support the development and enhancement of employability skills among First Nations youth.
- Introduce youth to a variety of career options.

Overview of the Proposal Process

Interested First Nation schools should complete the attached proposal form. **Due to the limited amount of funding available, the review committee may not be able to fully fund all proposals.** Clearly connecting the planned activities with the budget request will significantly strengthen your proposal.

In reviewing proposals, the review committee will consider the eligibility of costs included in the proposal, student enrollment data, and rural and remote factors.

Eligible Applicants

First Nation schools in BC that enroll grade 7 – 12 students who meet the eligibility requirements for the Nominal Roll (i.e. are normally resident on-reserve or equivalent) are eligible to apply for this funding. This includes Adult Secondary Education Centres.

Given funding limitations for this program:

- For First Nations that operate more than one school, only one proposal will be accepted; and
- For First Nation schools that are affiliated with / serve multiple communities, only one proposal will be accepted.

Activities

Below are common categories of Co-op Ed activities. This list is not meant to be exhaustive; it is meant to help streamline the proposal process. If you plan to implement activities that are not listed below, please feel free to add them in the 'Other' section of the proposal template.

Activity Type	Examples
Work Experience (unpaid) <i>Opportunities for students to experience different employment opportunities.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work placements, ideally for a sustained time period, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every day for 2 weeks ○ Weekly for 2 months ○ Each morning for an entire semester <p>(Shorter opportunities to explore employment may fit better under the career exploration category)</p>
Activity Type	Examples
Career Exploration & Employment Readiness <i>Short-term employment exploration opportunities and training related to future employability of students.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training related to community strategic development (e.g. stewardship training related to a community tourism development plan or training programs related to natural resource management and extraction) • Training for cultural activities related to future employability (e.g. net making, carving, cedar weaving, tanning, fishing, hunting, gathering, medicine making, preserving) • Hosting a career day (speakers, demonstrations, catering) • Job shadowing/job site visits (travel costs, etc.) • Career planning resources (for example: career exploration online subscription) • Field trip to visit post-secondary institutions or job sites outside of the community • Employability skills (e.g. how to find and apply for a job, resume development, job interview preparation) • Job readiness training, including certificates that support future employment (e.g. First Aid, Foodsafe, Driver's License)
Activity Type	Examples
Student Projects <i>Special projects that help students develop job specific skills and/or provide leadership opportunities for students.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting an outside expert to provide a modular course opportunity for students (e.g. chef, carpenter, artist, musician, content creator) • Micro-grants for student entrepreneurship proposals • Student-led leadership projects (e.g. a community garden project or firewood program for community members) • Maker day • Trades trailer

Eligible Expenditures

Activity Expenses

- Materials and supplies related to Co-op Ed activities.
- Professional development for staff related to supporting Co-op Ed activities, up to \$5,000 including travel and professional development fees.
- Travel costs related to field trips, meeting with employers to support work experience or career exploration, and student travel to participate in relevant Co-op Ed activities.
- Living expenses for students while they are participating in program activities.
- Contractor fees to deliver training programs or support student projects.

Other Expenses

- All or a portion of the salary costs for a staff person to coordinate Co-op Ed activities. Please note, this funding is intended to cover costs not already covered by other ISC funding, including core funding or band support funding. The salary costs (e.g. full-time or part-time) should also be consistent with the number of students who are participating in the activities.
- Safety equipment costs, up to \$300 per eligible grade 7 – 12 student.
- Special equipment required to ensure students with exceptionalities can participate in Co-op Ed activities, up to \$3,000 per eligible student.

Ineligible Expenditures

- Major capital initiatives.
 - Building expansions resulting in increases to gross facility area, building acquisitions, site acquisitions, acquisition of furnishings, or vehicles and their accessories.
 - Fixed, one-time expenses incurred for equipment used in the production of goods or in the rendering of services needed to bring a project to a commercially operable status.
- Office infrastructure, software, and computer and tablet purchases for general education purposes (administrative, classroom, and student use)
- Salaries or wages for students
- Dependent care or daycare
- Costs not directly related to eligible expenditures that are connected to eligible activities (i.e., excursions on field trips for recreation)

Submitting a Proposal

Interested First Nation schools are asked to submit the 2025-2026 Cooperative Education Program Call For Proposals Form.

Please submit your proposal by email to co-oped@fnesc.ca by Thursday, September 25, 2025 by 12:00 pm (noon).

To support interested applicants, Zoom Info-Sessions will be hosted:

- **Session 1: Thursday, September 4 @ 12:00 pm (noon)**
- **Session 2: Tuesday, September 9 @ 3:30 pm**

Register for a session [here](#)

Anyone requiring further information is also welcome to contact co-oped@fnesc.ca.

Additional Important Notes:

- Applicants are encouraged to supplement this funding grant with other financial resources, if appropriate, including any surplus education funding remaining from 2025-2026.
- First Nations are invited to use this funding for one or more of the eligible activities described in this information package. The scope of the planned activities should reflect each First Nation school's expected circumstances and capacity in the coming year.
- Please submit plans that are consistent with your current expectations. If conditions change and revised plans are required, there will be appropriate flexibility to accommodate evolving circumstances. If your actual activities will differ significantly from your submitted plans due to new requirements, please inform FNEsc/FNSA of the program changes as soon as possible.

All grants must be spent by March 31, 2026. We will require a Final Report by Thursday, March 5, 2026 by 12:00 pm (noon) in order to process your final 25% payment.