Aboriginal Affairs and
Northern Development Canada

Affaires autochtones et
Développement du Nord Canada

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy Skills Link Program

National Program Guidelines 2013-2014

Canada

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1   Introduction

The First Nations and Inuit Skills Link Program (SLP) is one of two programs that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) administer under the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES).

2   Objectives

The SLP has the following objectives:
- To promote the benefits of education as key to youth's participation in the labour market;
- To support the development and enhancement of young people's essential employability skills, such as communication, 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; and
- To support mentored school-based work and study opportunities (co-operative education).

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

3   Outcomes

Key expected outcomes/results of the SLP are:
- Enhanced employability skills for participating First Nation and Inuit youth;
- Increased awareness of the benefits of school;
- Enhanced ability to make employment-related decisions;
- Increased appreciation for science and technology as a viable career/education choice; and
- Improved attitudes toward the transition from school to work.

4   Activities

The key activities of SLP are:
- Wage subsidies for work placements and mentorship 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 (ICT);
- 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 (for example, co-operative education such as mentored school-based work and study opportunities for students in band-operated and federal schools);
- Career planning and counselling activities; and
- 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 Aboriginal knowledge.

5 Eligibility Requirements

5.1 Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients are First Nations and Inuit governments and organizations. For co-operative education activities, only First Nation schools or federal schools on reserve may submit proposals through their administering organization. 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. Youth means persons aged 15 to 30 inclusive. Mentored work placements, including ICT, are for youth who are not in school, unemployed or underemployed.

Co-operative education placements are for students in grades 7 to 12 (secondary 1 to secondary 5), enrolled in and attending a federal or band-operated school.

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 over the course of the agreement, clearly stating how the proposed activities will further the objectives and expected results of this program.

Eligible proposals must:
- Be in accordance with the FNIYES-SLP guidelines;
- Be gender-balanced;
- 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 share to be borne by partners; and
- Mentored work placements, including ICT:
  o May not exceed 11 months;
  o Youth may only participate once in the program;
  o Participants will be paid a wage rate at or above the applicable provincial/ territorial minimum wage;
  o Must be completed by March 31 of the fiscal year in which funding is received;
  o The non-profit sector is eligible to receive a contribution of up to 100% of the applicable minimum wage, plus mandatory employment-related costs (MERC), while the private sector is eligible to receive up to 50% of the applicable minimum wage only; and,

- o Where a participant with disabilities is hired**,** all employers are eligible to apply for 100% of the wage and MERC. In addition, 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.

Submission of Proposals

Only complete electronic proposal templates will be considered for assessment.

To access the proposal template, log on to the AANDC Services Portal. If you do not have access to the AANDC Services Portal, contact your regional office. The regional offices coordinates can be found at http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033694/1100100033695.

The proposal template can also be found at http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/dci/dcilog_e.asp . Please note that the password to the RRG is the same as the region selected (for example, if the region selected is Quebec, then the password is "Quebec").

Deadline for Submission of Proposals

May 15

Assessment Criteria

All proposals will be assessed by the following criteria:
- The extent to which the proposal furthers one or more of the program objectives; and,
- The degree to which the activity plan, including specific project activities, timeframe and budget, will result in the expected outcomes.

Note: Meeting these criteria does not guarantee funding from the FNIYES program.

Review and Approval of Proposals

The AANDC regional office will review proposals or the First Nations or Inuit organization managing the program will review and approve proposals from their member First Nations or Inuit communities. A written response will be sent to applicants to confirm whether, or not, their proposal has been approved for funding. Funding will be available in the form of a one year Set or Fixed contribution. The results of the General Assessment of each recipient may impact the recipient's ability to access certain funding approaches. Information on funding approaches and the GA can be found at http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010035/110010001003.

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, QPP, EI, vacation pay, WCB/CSST (Quebec) and where applicable, health insurance premiums. Wage costs per participant will meet or exceed the applicable minimum wage in the province/territory where the work placement occurs;
- Training experiences that support the acquisition of skills required for work placements may be included;
- Other necessary costs directly related to a proposed work placement including, but not limited to, travel to the job site, Internet hook-up, criminal record check, required uniforms, personal safety gear (e.g. work boots, safety hats, compasses, etc.) up to a maximum of $200 per participant;
- Costs associated with workers' compensation based on actual costs or assessment paid directly to the provincial/territorial workers' compensation authority on behalf of employers and co-ordinators for eligible participants or administrative staff;
- Actual costs for special equipment and facilities to accommodate the needs of a disabled individual, up to a maximum of $3,000 per participant; and
- Cost per participant of required daycare, including a description of the type of arrangements available in the community if applicable.

7.2   For Co-operative Education Placements

- Salaries and employee benefits for teachers and education para-professionals not already covered by existing programs, such as the AANDC elementary/secondary education or band support/tribal council funding;
- Staff training on co-operative education;
- Items such as safety equipment or uniforms required by the workplace for the students;
- Travel to meet with potential employers;
- Transportation of students and teachers;
- Room and board for students who must live away from home during their co-op placement; and
- Costs related to administrative issues such as insurance coverage for students during co-op placement.

7.3   For Career Promotion and Science and Technology Activities

- Facility rental where not available in the community;
- Materials;
- Fees for guest speakers;
- Transportation; and
- Admission and event fees for students and chaperones.

7.4   Eligible Costs for All Activities

- <u>Administration Costs</u>: Administration costs cannot exceed 10 % of the sub-total amount requested before administration costs. The Data Collection Instrument (DCI) will automatically calculate the amount.

  <u>Further distribution of funds by AANDC's funding recipient</u>: When a funding recipient further transfers, to a Third Party, funds that were received under this program, the 10% allowed for administration costs must be divided between the parties, as agreed to between the parties. The total administration costs retained by all parties cannot exceed 10% of the sub-total amount requested before administration costs.

8   Ineligible Expenditures

- All programs:
  - Infrastructure or equipment purchases (e.g. computers and software);
  - Capital costs for the 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; and
  - Development and production of communication and information products;
- Career Promotion and Awareness, and Science and Technology activities:
  - Salaries; and
  - Training.
- Co-op education placements:
  - Salaries or wages for students; and
  - Daycare.

9   Maximum Program Contribution

The initiative is regionally based and proposal-driven. The maximum amount payable is set on a case-by-case basis, limited overall by total available funding both nationally and regionally.

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

AANDC is committed to providing assistance to recipients in order for them to effectively carry out the obligations contained in each funding agreement. Regional offices and other departmental contacts are available to answer questions and provide guidance related to AANDC programs and funding.

To ensure that program terms and conditions and funding criteria are being met, that funds are expended on the intended purposes, and that AANDC's accountability to Parliament is being met, in-office and on-site monitoring and compliance activities will be conducted with all recipients.

11   Reporting Requirements

The recipient's funding agreement lists the reporting requirements. To access the reports (Data Collection Instruments), log on to the AANDC Services Portal. If you do not have access to the AANDC Services Portal, contact your regional office. The regional offices coordinates can be found at http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033694/1100100033695.

Data Collection Tools for Community Use ONLY:

Do NOT submit the following forms to AANDC but keep them on file at the community level for evaluation purposes.

- CAREER PROMOTION AND AWARENESS ACTIVITY - SESSION EVALUATION
  This form is to be used to gather information and feedback from the youth who participate in career promotion and awareness activities as part of the SLP to gather the data needed by the First Nation and Inuit Community to report the performance indicators that will demonstrate that program objectives are being met.
- SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITY – GRADES 5 & UP SESSION EVALUATION
  This form is to be used to gather information and feedback from the youth in grades 5 and up who participate in science and technology activities as part of the SLP to gather the data needed by the First Nation and Inuit Community to report the performance indicators that will demonstrate that program objectives are being met.

12   Contact Information

For further program information, please visit our website at:
http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033627

The regional offices coordinates can be found at:
http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/110010033694/110010033695.

You can also write to:
Education Branch
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
10 Wellington Street
GATINEAU QC   K1A 0H4
Fax number: (819) 934-1478
education@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

These National Program Guidelines can be downloaded from the departmental website in the education section at http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033601/1100100033605. They can also be accessed through the *View Instructions* button on the first page of this program's Data Collection Instrument (DCI). To access the Data Collection Instruments (DCIs), log on to the AANDC Services Portal.