

**Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills  
Development**

---

# **Skills Development Fund Training Stream**

## **Application Guide**

**July 2025**

# Table of Contents

<b>1. CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Workforce Development Challenges .....	4
1.2 Opportunities to Address Challenges through the SDF Training Stream .....	4
<b>2. WHAT IS THE SDF TRAINING STREAM? .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Objectives of the Program .....	5
<b>3. PROGRAM PARAMETERS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Eligible Applicants .....	6
3.2 Target Sectors or Occupations .....	8
3.3 Participant Groups and Their Eligibility .....	9
3.4 SDF Training Stream Focus Areas .....	14
3.5 Eligible Activities .....	15
3.6 Eligible Expenses .....	19
3.7 Ineligible Expenses .....	26
<b>4. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESSES .....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1 Application Process .....	27
4.2 Selection Criteria .....	29
4.3 Performance Measurement .....	32
4.4 Performance Management .....	36
4.5 Intellectual Property .....	39
4.6 VISUAL IDENTITY GUIDELINES .....	39
4.7 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy .....	39
4.8 Personal Information of Participants .....	40
<b>5. FUNDING ALLOCATION .....</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1 Funding Allocation, Distribution Terms & Conditions .....	41
5.2 Proposed Project Budget .....	43
5.3 Procurement, Travel & Hospitality Requirements and Public Sector Salary Disclosure .....	44

**The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (the “ministry”) is allocating funding in 2025-26 through the Skills Development Fund (SDF) Training Stream to support projects that will support Ontario’s growing workforce and protect Ontario workers.**

**In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the SDF Training Stream Application Guide (Application Guide) and any term or condition in an SDF Training Stream Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA), the SDF Training Stream TPA shall prevail. Not all sections of the Application Guide are applicable to all SDF Training Stream projects. Relevant sections of the Application Guide will depend on the type of SDF Training Stream project (e.g., research/prototyping-based, employer-based, or apprenticeship-related project) being proposed by the Recipient.**

**The Application Guide is not a legal document. It is intended as a resource for information and assistance only and should not be used as or considered legal advice. The Application Guide does not replace or modify any legislation, regulations, or contractual agreements, and is only intended to provide general information about the SDF Training Stream. The Application Guide does not cover every situation and the information provided in the Application Guide may not apply to all circumstances.**

**The Application Guide is not intended to provide interpretations of the law or identify all laws that may apply. Please consult the relevant legislation, regulations, and contractual agreements that apply to your situation as necessary. If you need help understanding your legal rights or obligations, you may wish to seek legal advice.**

## **1. Context**

The SDF Training Stream is an Employment Ontario (EO) program that initially launched as a COVID-19 pandemic response initiative in February 2021 and has since moved to focus on training, up-skilling, and economic growth. By investing in Ontario’s workforce and addressing ongoing labour shortages and workforce development challenges, the SDF Training Stream aims to support economic growth, which is central to the government’s agenda. Additionally, given the current challenges facing Ontario’s economy due to US-imposed tariffs, the upcoming round of SDF Training Stream will include a focus on projects that target those sectors most impacted. The program aims

to support employers in helping their workforces upskill or reskill in future-focused ways (e.g., pivoting), and projects that support reskilling individuals who have been laid off or are unemployed due to tariff impacts on their sector.

## **1.1 Workforce Development Challenges**

Ontario is facing tight labour market conditions, with employers reporting recruitment challenges, particularly related to finding workers with specific desired skills and experience.

Furthermore, people now more than ever will require training and up-skilling services because of ongoing economic growth in many key sectors. This includes securing the skilled talent to fill job vacancies in areas of technology, manufacturing, healthcare, and the skilled trades.

The need to innovate continues to be important for apprenticeship training delivery agents (TDAs) and workforce development training providers. Online and/or virtual training is a relatively new concept for many trades and some training providers might benefit from an investment in innovative approaches to in-class delivery.

## **1.2 Opportunities to Address Challenges through the SDF Training Stream**

The way people work, learn and train has been changing. Where work is done, how it is conducted, and the need to adapt to changes in society and technology are constant stressors. Access to stable, rewarding work allows Ontarians to participate in the economy and contributes to the building of strong communities. The government remains committed to investing in forward-looking, collaborative, and responsive solutions to bridge the gap between the knowledge that people have and the skills that employers need to build a talented, resilient, and vibrant workforce.

## **2. What is the SDF Training Stream?**

The SDF Training Stream is a transfer payment program that supports project-based, partnership-driven solutions to stimulate and provide the workforce needed for economic growth in emerging and key growth sectors of Ontario's economy. The program aims to increase the province's long-term economic competitiveness by

investing in workforce development strategies that build a resilient, sustainable, and future-ready workforce.

## 2.1 Objectives of the Program

The main objectives of the SDF Training Stream are to:

- **Develop a resilient workforce** by supporting access to the labour market, strengthening efforts to attract, train, and retain workers, and building employer capacity to adapt and innovate. This supports the broader objective of attracting investment and promoting job creation in the province through the development of a stable labour force that can keep pace with technological change and shifting work environments. This objective encompasses the following: bridging the skills gap faced by unemployed and underemployed individuals by training them with the skills they need to meet the requirements of current in-demand sectors and trades; supporting workers and job seekers who face barriers to entry or additional barriers in the workforce; and enhancing pathways to meaningful and gainful employment resilient workforce.
- **Encourage partnerships and drive innovation** through collaborative training initiatives that build local capacity and help communities respond to shocks in labour market conditions and pivot to in-demand, emerging and essential sectors. These partnerships accelerate market-led recovery and support growth by strengthening the talent development pipeline.
- **Support skilled trades and construction labour** to support increasing the housing supply in the province. This includes enhancing the adaptability, technical skills, and knowledge of participants to support key industries by working with community partners to help participants develop advanced skill sets.
- **Provide a targeted response to U.S. tariffs as support for in-demand skilled trades and industrial sectors** such as automotive and manufacturing. This includes enhancing the adaptability, technical skills, and knowledge of workers in impacted industries by working with community partners to help participants develop new or more advanced skill sets.

## 3. Program Parameters

To qualify for the SDF Training Stream, projects must support market-driven solutions that meet each of the following requirements:

1. Addresses one or more main objectives (see section 2.1).
2. Addresses one or more target sectors or occupations (see section 3.2).
3. Addresses one or more participant groups (see section 3.3).
4. Addresses one or more focus areas (see section 3.4).

The Primary Applicant must also meet the eligibility criteria described below in section 3.1. The ministry retains absolute and sole discretion to decide which eligible projects are funded.

### 3.1 Eligible Applicants

- a. The following entities are eligible to apply to the SDF Training Stream on behalf of themselves or as the lead organization for a consortium of partners (**Primary Applicants**):

- Employers in Ontario other than those listed in section 3.1 (b).
- Minister approved non-college apprenticeship training delivery agents (TDAs).
- Non-profit organizations in Ontario, including Indigenous band offices and Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISETs) agreement holders.
- Professional / industry / employer associations.
- Trade unions / union-affiliated organizations.
- Municipalities, District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs), Hospitals.

The **Primary Applicant** will be the primary contact for the ministry on all matters related to the submitted application.

If the application is selected, the Primary Applicant will be required to enter a binding TPA with the ministry as representative of the Government of Ontario (the Province). As a party to the TPA, the Primary Applicant will be the funding recipient (Recipient). The Recipient will be accountable to the ministry for managing and executing the development and delivery of the project, managing the funds provided by the ministry, and satisfying the performance and reporting obligations established by the ministry as set out in the TPA. The Recipient will also be obligated to adhere to all the other terms and conditions of the TPA.

Each Primary Applicant must also meet all of the conditions set forth in section 3.1 (c) as a condition of eligibility.

- b. The following entities are not eligible to apply for SDF Training Stream as Primary Applicants:

- Publicly assisted colleges, universities, or Indigenous Institutes in Ontario,

- Career colleges registered under the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005*; and,
- District School Boards.

However, these entities are eligible to participate in the SDF Training Stream as a partner with an eligible Primary Applicant.

SDF Training Stream project partners must be Canadian partners or subcontractors. Limited exceptions will be allowable where a Canadian company is not available.

- c. In addition to being an entity described in section 3.1(a) above, as a condition of eligibility, Primary Applicants must:
- Be a legal entity;
  - Be authorized to operate or carry on business in the province of Ontario;
  - Have a physical location and be actively operating or carrying on business in the province of Ontario;
  - Comply with all legislation applicable to the Primary Applicant and its operations or business, including the Human Rights Code, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* (ESA), and the *Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021* (BOSTA);
    - For greater certainty, the receipt of SDF Training Stream funding does not mean that any SDF Training Stream funded programming constitutes a pre-apprenticeship program approved by the Minister within the meaning of clause 1(1)(c) of O. Reg. 877/21 under the BOSTA.
  - Maintain and declare appropriate Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) or private disability insurance coverage, as applicable, to cover the cost of work-related injuries/occupational diseases, as well as adequate third-party general liability insurance as advised by its insurance broker, and
  - Where it intends to deliver Level 1 apprenticeship in-class training as part of the project:
    - The Primary Applicant must be a Minister-approved TDA, or partner with a Minister-approved TDA;
    - The Primary Applicant must also ensure that the TDAs delivering Level 1 apprenticeship in-class training as part of the project comply with the following requirements:
      - Deliver all components of the Level 1 apprenticeship in-class training curriculum for the trade as approved by Skilled Trades Ontario (STO).

- Issue all participants who successfully complete Level 1 in-class training the same documentation of Level 1 completion (e.g., transcript) given to registered apprentices who successfully complete the same training.
- Note: these requirements apply to all Level 1 apprenticeship in-class training delivered through SDF Training Stream projects, including where some or all participants are not registered apprentices at the time the training is delivered.

Entities that are not eligible to be a Primary Applicant may be eligible to participate in an application or project as a participating and/or contributing partner(s).

Primary Applicants can submit more than one application; but not more than three applications [for each round of the SDF Training Stream. Each project and the project activities must be substantively different in each application. Entities may partner together on multiple projects, provided that no entity is the Primary Applicant for more than three projects. In cases where the same applicant(s) submit multiple applications, the applicant(s) must demonstrate how the project and project activities in each application differ in each of the following categories, and must identify different KPI's for each project:

- objectives,
- target sectors,
- participant groups, and
- focus areas.

Entities eligible to be Primary Applicants and who are not directly providing training must have no real or perceived conflict of interest with their training partner / provider.

### 3.2 Target Sectors or Occupations

As a criterion of eligibility, proposed projects must focus on in-demand and key growth **target sectors and occupations**. Projects must address occupational and regional demands that are responsive to employers' needs or align with core government priorities.

In order to maximize program effectiveness, project applications must provide data that clearly demonstrates the current or future anticipated need in the labour market for sector(s)/occupation(s) being targeted by the project such as data sets, labour market



research and/or letters of support from employers or other sector organizations. This ensures evidence-based decisions are able to be made to address the needs of the sectors and communities that require the greatest support.

The [Ontario Labour Market Information website](#) is a relevant tool to determine in-demand and growth occupations and sectors. It provides information on the top jobs currently in demand and those forecasted to remain in demand for the next five years in a particular region.

Target sectors and occupations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Skilled trades, other high-skilled occupations, technical occupations, and other occupations in high demand (e.g., heavy-duty equipment technician, technology-related jobs, etc.).
- Sectors that align with other core government priorities such as:
  - Manufacturing and advanced manufacturing.
  - In-demand health care occupations.
  - Infrastructure projects essential for both sustainability and fostering economic growth.
  - Skilled Trades, [Auto Sector Transformation](#), [Ring of Fire](#).
- Protecting Ontario sectors most impacted by U.S. tariffs such as:
  - Steel and aluminium production
  - Manufacturing and auto manufacturing

### 3.3 Participant Groups and Their Eligibility

All project proposals must support one or more participant groups within the parameters outlined below.

Participant Groups	Interpretation
Participant types include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employers, sponsors of apprentices. (See below for additional requirements).</li></ul>	The following definitions are used for the purpose of the SDF Training Stream program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Underemployed:</b> refers to individuals who work in jobs that</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered apprentices in <u>skilled trades prescribed in Ontario under the BOSTA</u>.</li> <li>• Unemployed individuals, including individuals on social assistance.</li> <li>• Employed individuals, including<sup>1</sup>, underemployed workers and workers at risk of job displacement.</li> <li>• Individuals with a 900 series Social Insurance Number (SIN) (denotes temporary authority to work in Canada) and an open work permit awaiting their official documents for permanent residency.</li> <li>• Individuals in Canada on a work permit who have been granted Permanent Resident status.</li> <li>• Individuals who face higher barriers of entry or who face additional barriers including but not limited to the following groups:</li> </ul>	<p>do not align with their education, skills, and experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Women:</b> individuals who are women. This includes women in skilled trades where they are traditionally underrepresented.</li> <li>• <b>Youth:</b> individuals who are between the ages of 15 and 29 when they apply to be a participant in the SDF Training Stream project. Includes full-time students and summer student programs.</li> <li>• <b>Justice-involved individuals:</b> individuals involved with the criminal justice system (i.e., have a criminal background).</li> <li>• <b>People with Disabilities:</b> individuals who self-identify as a person with a disability, including a disability as defined in subsection 10 (1) of the Ontario Human Rights Code.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
---	---

<sup>1</sup> Job seekers could include individuals on social assistance seeking employment.

<sup>2</sup> Section 10 (1) of the **Ontario Human Rights Code** defines “disability” as follows:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or,
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the **Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997**.

<p>women, youth, justice-involved individuals, people with disabilities (PwD), Indigenous peoples, Black and racialized persons, immigrants, and members of at-risk communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indigenous Peoples:</b> individuals who self-identify as belonging to one of three distinct groups in Canada: First Nations, Inuit, or Métis.</li> <li>• <b>Racialized Persons:</b> often used to stand in for “visible minorities,” this more fluid term acknowledges that race is a social construction that can change over time and place. It can be applied to people who have racial meanings attributed to them as a group in ways that negatively impact their social, political, and economic life.</li> <li>• <b>Immigrants:</b> refers to individuals who are, or who have ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such individuals have been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group.</li> </ul>
--	--

### 3.3.1 Additional Eligibility Criteria for Participants

#### i. Employers and Sponsors of Apprentices

In respect to SDF Training Stream funded projects that will provide support to employers and/or sponsors of Registered Apprentices (as participants), each of those employers and sponsors must:

- Be a legal entity;
- Be authorized to operate or carry-on business in the province of Ontario;

- Have a physical location in the province of Ontario where it is actively operating or carrying on business;
- Comply with all legislation applicable to the employer or sponsor and its operations or business, including the Human Rights Code, the OHSA, the ESA, and the BOSTA;
- Maintain and declare appropriate WSIB or private disability insurance coverage, as applicable, to cover the cost of work-related injuries/occupational diseases, as well as adequate third-party general liability insurance as advised by its insurance broker;
- As applicable, meet the requirements under BOSTA to: (1) only employ or engage an individual to practice in a compulsory trade if the individual is authorized to do so; and (2) meet apprenticeship-to-journey person ratio requirements. In addition, TDAs must be approved by the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to deliver apprenticeship in-class training in the trade(s) associated with the project.

## **ii. Individuals**

Individuals must be a resident of Ontario and must be legally authorized to work in Canada to participate in an SDF Training Stream funded project. International students and temporary foreign workers are not eligible to participate, as set out below.

Apprentices who reside outside of Ontario but who work and are registered as an apprentice in Ontario may be supported.

## **iii. Individuals Awaiting Permanent Residence Status**

Individuals with a 900-series SIN<sup>3</sup> and an open work permit who have received preliminary approval from the federal government and are awaiting their permanent residence status to be finalized are eligible for participation in SDF Training Stream funded projects, depending on the Primary Applicant and other eligibility and suitability requirements relevant to the project.

These individuals include:

---

<sup>3</sup> Social Insurance Numbers (SINs) are issued by the federal government. The following guidance is based on the federal government's current practice of issuing SINs. SINs that begin with a "9" are issued to individuals who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents but require a SIN for employment purposes. If the federal government changes its practices, this guidance may need to be revised.

- “Protected persons” as defined in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada); and
- Those in Canada on an open work permit who have received a letter or document from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements for permanent residence (i.e., approval in principle).

Proof of status is required. Individuals with a 900-series SIN and a work permit awaiting their official documents for permanent residency will usually have a letter to this effect and must present that documentation to support their change in status. Individuals must present their new SIN (replacing the 900-series SIN) once they receive it.

#### **iv. Refugee Claimants**

Refugee claimants with a 900-series SIN and an open work permit are also eligible to participate in an SDF Training Stream funded project, depending on the Primary Applicant and other eligibility and suitability requirements relevant to the project.

Refugee claimants with an open work permit must present their work permit as well as any updates to the status of their work permit.

#### **v. Visitors under Emergency Travel measures**

Visitors who traveled to Canada under emergency travel measures enacted by the federal government, including the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) measure, and who have a 900-series SIN and an open work permit are eligible for participation in an SDF Training Stream funded project, depending on the Primary Applicant and other eligibility and suitability requirements relevant to the project.

Visitors under Emergency Travel measures who do not have a 900-series SIN and an open work permit are **not** eligible for the SDF Training Stream.

#### **vi. Temporary Foreign Workers with an employer-specific work permit**

Temporary foreign workers with an employer-specific work permit and a 900-series SIN are **not** eligible for participation in SDF Training Stream funded projects.

#### **vii. International Students**

International students, and individuals who graduated as an international student from a designated learning institution and have been granted a post-graduation work permit are **not** eligible for SDF Training Stream.

### 3.4 SDF Training Stream Focus Areas

Although the SDF Training Stream supports a broad range of projects, submitted applications will be required to demonstrate how funding will support one or more of the following focus areas as a criterion of eligibility:

- Engage in researching/prototyping and developing innovative approaches and solutions to:
  - modernize skills development training that meets local employer and labour market needs (i.e., information, curriculum, tools, equipment, resources, service delivery models),
  - offer business models/solutions to support current and future labour market/workforce challenges and needs.
- Ensure a sustainable and resilient workforce by **enhancing employers' capacity** to:
  - adapt their businesses to the changing labour market, including the digitally driven economy, with additional support and tools,
  - develop partnership-driven approaches to their workforce development needs,
  - deliver employer-led training to recruit, train and retrain workers that are targeted to be laid-off,
  - enhance future focused skills development through experiential learning, workplace (on-the-job) training, and job placements to improve workers' employment outcomes and meet workforce needs now and in future, and
  - attract, develop, and retain groups or individuals facing additional barriers in the workforce.
- Stimulate economic growth by unlocking the full economic potential of **skilled trades and apprenticeship** to:
  - increase access to Ontario's apprenticeship system by encouraging greater employer participation and improving supports for apprentices on-the-job, and in-class through the provision of wraparound supports, up-to-date training equipment and increased capacity,
  - enhance the apprentice experience either on-the-job or in-class to increase apprentice registrations, progress, and completions and

- increase capacity of apprentice sponsors to attract, develop and retain groups or individuals facing additional barriers in the workforce.
- Build and sustain **partnerships** that identify and address **shared sectoral workforce development needs and labour market needs** in emerging and growth sectors in Ontario.

### 3.5 Eligible Activities

Funding provided under the SDF Training Stream is intended to support the activities outlined in this section. Other activities that may not strictly fall under the activities listed below, but that are designed to serve the focus areas outlined in this document, may be considered by the ministry.

#### **Workforce Development (Full-Service/Light Touch).**

Workforce development projects are designed to serve individuals as the end beneficiaries. Individuals can include unemployed individuals, employed individuals, Registered Apprentices and/or Journeypersons. Projects can be employer-led but serve the end goal of helping project participants who are looking to develop/advance their participation in the workforce.

**Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship projects** designed to provide workforce development training and supports to Registered Apprentices and/or Journeypersons are considered workforce development projects.

Workforce Development projects can be classified as Full-Service and Light-Touch projects. The main distinction between the two types of projects is the duration and intensity of the training/activities.

- **Full-Service Projects:** Full-service projects offer a comprehensive level of support and can offer a combination of skills development training/intervention, tools, equipment and/or wraparound supports.
  - a. Training/intervention can be offered in one or multiple key domains, including: re-skilling, upskilling, experiential learning (including job placements), and mentorship.
  - b. Training/intervention can also be tailored to support Registered Apprentices progress in their apprenticeship and, support Journeypersons, such as providing in-class training support for apprentices, tutoring, exam preparation supports, mentorship programs, end-of-training support, train-the-trainer services.

- c. Tools and equipment can include: Purchase of equipment or supplies that support resilient skills building or enhance in-class training.
  - Minister-approved TDAs must deliver apprenticeship in-class training in the trade(s) associated with the project in the fiscal year in which the project is taking place.
- d. Wraparound supports can include direct financial assistance to individuals to select, arrange and pay for training; accessibility accommodations; individualized case management services and counselling supports that monitor individuals' progression in implementing their action plan and/or provide specialized assessments and professional diagnostic services related to physical, social, intellectual, and/or psychological traits that may have an impact on their ability to participate in training or to occupy specific jobs. Supports must be tied to positive employment outcomes and/or apprentice progression, as applicable.
  - Participants enrolled in Workforce Development Full-Service Projects are required to be entered and have outcomes reported to the ministry using the ministry's Employment Ontario Information System-Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS) by Recipients. Additional information on EOIS-CaMS can be found in section 4.4.
  - **Light Touch Projects:** Light-touch projects offer a short duration of training (i.e., 2 days) to participants who require a minimal level of service or assistance based on their existing level of skills and qualifications in conducting informed job search activities.

Eligible activities can include individual or group assistance providing information on: Local labour market, career planning, education, and training programs, resume writing, interview and job preparation, occupational requirements, job finding clubs, job placements, and other activities focused on finding work.

### **Employer/Organization Focused**

Employer/Organization focused projects are designed to serve employers/organizations as the end beneficiaries. This is in contrast with workforce development projects, where individuals are the main beneficiaries.

Projects can include:



- Activities designed to enhance employers/apprentice sponsors' capacity to:
  - Adapt their businesses to the changing labour market, including the digitally driven economy, with additional support and tools
  - Develop partnership-driven approaches to meet their workforce development needs.
  - Deliver trainings that are future focused to meet workforce needs now and in future.
  - Attract, develop, and retain to their workforce individuals facing additional barriers.
- Engaging and developing collaborations with other key workforce development partners:
  - For the benefit of individuals (unemployed, employed, Registered Apprentices)
  - To identify and address shared sectoral workforce development needs and labour market needs in emerging and growth sectors in Ontario.

### **Research/Prototyping and Development Projects**

- Reports that identify innovative approaches and solutions to modernize skills development and build a resilient workforce.
- Innovative business models and workforce development solutions to support labour market challenges.
- Production of new or improved tools, models, software, e-learning modules, online assessments, virtual simulations, curricula and/or resources.
- Research, development and piloting of new and innovative approaches to delivering classes that are on the 2025-26 apprenticeship in-class training seat plan (e.g., e-learning delivery, online assessment, virtual simulation, other alternative methods to block release). Ministry approval is needed to deliver apprenticeship in-class training 100% online after March 31, 2022. For information about how to obtain ministry approval please see the TDA Approval Guideline and Application Form on the ministry's Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway website.

**The SDF Training Stream is not intended to duplicate funding for expenses or activities funded by other sources. This includes provincial or federal funds and/or fees charged to project participants to participate in or benefit from project activities approved and funded by the SDF Training Stream. However, SDF**

Training Stream funding can be used to **supplement funding for additional costs of the project not covered by other public sources** (other than funding from the Ontario Together Trade Fund, as described below), in which case the Primary Applicant would need to clearly indicate which costs would be paid for using SDF Training Stream funds, and the proposed incremental/enhanced activities.

Of note for Round 6 is that SDF Training Stream projects cannot concurrently receive Ontario Together Trade Fund (OTTF) funding for the same project. However, OTTF-funded projects that have finished and are no longer receiving funding may seek SDF Training Stream funding to continue the project. The SDF Training Stream is intended to be responsive and nimble with a focus on quickly identifying and processing innovative market-driven projects that will address the identified focus areas and deliver outcomes within the project timeframes.

Before applying, applicants are encouraged to consider whether their projects are better suited to other [Employment Ontario programs](#) or if they could be funded by other provincial or federal programs.

All project activities eligible for funding must be carried out during the 12-month term of the TPA.

Primary Applicants that have been funded in any of the previous rounds (Rounds 1-5) of the SDF Training Stream may apply for funding. However, the Primary Applicant must demonstrate how their project continues to meet at least one of the program's focus areas and at least one of its objectives and must also show that it meets all eligibility requirements described in this Application Guide. Further, for projects that have received SDF Training Stream funding in previous rounds, Primary Applicants will need to show how ongoing funding will not reinforce dependency on government subsidization and that the project is sustainable without government funding. No eligibility requirements are deemed to be waived by the ministry by virtue of a Primary Applicant's (or project's) participation in prior rounds of SDF Training Stream funding.

## 3.6 Eligible Expenses

Applications must include a budget which clearly itemizes expenses planned for the aforementioned activities (see section 3.5). A list of categories and examples of eligible expenses is included below. These examples are not exhaustive. All eligible expenses claimed by a Recipient are subject to the ministry's review and approval.

All goods and services must be acquired through a fair and transparent process that promotes best value for money.

SDF Training Stream funds cannot be used for expenses or activities already being funded by other sources, including the provincial or federal government or fees charged to participants.

SDF Training Stream funding can be used under the following categories, **without duplication**, as set out in the TPA:

- 3.6.1 Operating Costs
- 3.6.2 Administrative Costs
- 3.6.3 Asset Costs
- 3.6.4 Employer / Participant / Apprentice and Trainer Costs
- 3.6.5 Travel Costs

### 3.6.1 Operating Costs:

Operating costs are on-going, day-to-day expenses that are directly related to carrying out the project. This also includes supplies that are consumed or expended in the delivery of the project.

- Staffing: salaries paid to staff members who conduct training, and the cost of planned consulting or sub-contracting services used to directly deliver the project.
- Marketing: marketing and promotion of the project, including distribution.
- Direct materials and consumables used in the delivery of the project by participants (supplies and equipment, parts, safety equipment for participants, cleaning supplies, etc.). These are generally physical items which have a useful expected life of less than one year, or do not meet a materiality threshold for individual tracking.
- Maintenance and support of equipment directly used to deliver the project.
- Leasing costs for a vehicle or mobile unit. This is the preferred approach, rather than purchasing a vehicle or mobile unit, unless the applicant is able to demonstrate better value for money for the purchase.

- Materials and office supplies (e.g., pens, pencils, paper, envelopes, subscriptions).
- Operational printing contracted externally (e.g., minor updates and/or printing of organizational or program brochures related to the project being delivered).
- Other non-participant-based costs (e.g., water where public water is not safe for drinking, staff, and volunteer recognition (other than gift cards and honoraria which are ineligible costs).
- A pro-rated portion of costs to lease real estate or the appropriate percentage of utility costs associated with the direct delivery of training. If the property is financed, a pro-rated portion of financing/interest costs only may be considered as operating costs and not capital repayment.
- Audits: Projects over a threshold (see section 4.4) will require an audit by an external auditor. Audit reports are required as part of the final report submission. A maximum of \$5,000 may be received for a third-party to conduct an audit of the project.
- Employability services and supports:
  - Overall skills upgrading, which promotes a resilient worker, for skills such as leadership, teamwork, communication, and community engagement.
  - Job search, matching, placement, etc. services and support, including job retention and career advancement services and support, which show direct placement outcomes.

### **3.6.2 Administrative costs:**

Administrative costs are limited to a maximum of 15% of the operating costs of the SDF Training Stream project. Administrative costs are indirect expenditures necessary for operating an organization but not directly associated with the delivery of the Project.

Administrative costs should be attributed to the project on a basis that is proportional to the size of the organization and the size and/or complexity of the project:

- For example, pro-rated portions of:
  - Salaries/benefits of the Executive Director, IT, and/or financial staff that work for the entire organization but may spend a portion of their time dedicated to administrative functions that support the project.
  - Legal and accounting fees.
  - Bank fees, postage, and courier fees; basic telephone fees and monthly internet fees.

- o Contracting (if not contracted specifically to support the project), bookkeeping, Information Technology (IT) used indirectly in project delivery, equipment maintenance services, security, translator, training fees, consultant fees, printing contracts fees.
- o Indirect/support equipment repair and maintenance (includes photocopy meter charges).
- o IT maintenance.
- o Lease or finance/interest costs attributed to administrative functions.

### **3.6.3 Asset Costs (e.g., Equipment and Vehicles):**

Asset costs are one-time expenditures on moveable assets that have an expected useful life of more than one year.

If a Recipient plans to dispose of assets acquired with SDF Training Stream funding, they must submit a plan for disposition of assets subject to ministry approval.

Asset costs may include costs for:

- New training equipment (e.g., computer hardware, printers)
- Software licenses, such as for digital platforms.
- Equipment required to facilitate training for participants with disabilities.
- Vehicle and mobile unit purchases and/or modifications, provided the following requirements are met:
  - o The vehicle or mobile unit is directly related to delivery of services to participants.
  - o The Recipient provides the ministry at least three quotes for procurement of the vehicle or mobile unit, or three quotes for modification where the service is purchased. Purchase or modification can only occur upon review of the quotes and approval by the ministry. Evidence of quotations and the expected purchase cost must be provided with the application.
  - o Mobile unit owners must purchase relevant vehicle insurance that includes coverage of the modifications. Documentation must be provided to confirm this coverage.
  - o Relevant vehicle insurance must include all perils coverage as per statutory requirements in Ontario, including Ontario Automobile Policy (OAP1) Owner's Policy Sections 3 and 4, auto liability for a limit not less than \$2,000,000 (two million) per occurrence including Accident Benefits and, where applicable, Section 7, Loss, or Damage Coverage.

- o The ministry will not fund modification of existing mobile units within 5 years of a government (federal or provincial) funded modification, unless the need is verified and rationale provided, with proper documentation e.g., installation of new equipment that has only come out in the last few years. Details and rationale must be provided as part of the application.
- o New vehicle or mobile unit purchase may not provide the best value for money if a project is not sustainable and unlikely to continue beyond the term of the TPA. If the decision is made to purchase a vehicle, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that the purchase provides better value for money than leasing.
- o Lease costs for mobile units are eligible expenses, if applicable, however, should be classified under operating expense.
- o Plan for disposition of the asset.

### 3.6.4 Employer / Participant / Apprentice and Trainer Costs

Employer/Participant/Apprentice and Trainer Costs include:

- Pre-screening candidates (i.e., readiness and/or employability assessment).
- Provision of health and safety-related equipment and other trade-specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Apprentice on-the-job training expenses.
- Train-the-trainer resources to support journeypersons who train or wish to train apprentices.
- Development of training materials/resources.
- Hospitality costs such as food and refreshments **only** in cases where the cost removes barriers to participation by individuals that face additional barriers (e.g. justice involved individuals). These costs must be considered on a case-by-case basis and the reimbursement rates from the Ontario Public Service [Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive | ontario.ca](#) apply. For example, the Directive allows a maximum cost of \$12.50 for a lunch, with tip and taxes included.
- Mentorship and mental health services to support individuals with on-the-job training, employment, or apprenticeship training, including individualized case management services and counselling supports (see Full-Service Projects in section 3.5 for further details).

- Financial support to employers and participants, as described below.
- In-class wraparound supports not claimed as financial support to employers and participants.

### **Financial Support to Employers and Participants:**

Financial support (i.e., funding to pay for wraparound supports, wage subsidies, training stipends) can be provided to eligible participants and employers. The type of support provided depends on the participant's level of need, as determined by the Recipient and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the TPA, where applicable.

A Primary Applicant requesting funding for financial supports, must provide a documented rationale (i.e., business case) in their application for ministry approval, indicating which participants or employers would be eligible for financial supports and identifying how these supports would contribute to employment outcomes. The Primary Applicant is also required to submit to the ministry a proposed payment structure detailing the timing of financial support payments.

A Recipient cannot claim expenses for financial supports without prior written approval from the Province. Funds spent on financial supports prior to the written approval from the Province will not be considered eligible expenditures. Additionally, financial supports must be paid out by the Project End Date, as defined in the TPA.

If financial support is provided to a participant, the Recipient must ensure that the participant's file contains:

- the reason for the financial support;
- the amount of financial support;
- validation of the participant's income, if paid to an individual; and
- a signature from an authorized representative of the Recipient on the document authorizing payment to the participant.

The ministry reserves the right to audit all records associated with financial support payments. Additional requirements may be set out in the TPA.

Recipients cannot claim the same expense over multiple categories for SDF Training Stream eligible expenses (e.g., the same expense cannot be claimed as both a wraparound support and a wage subsidy) and an operational cost

The Recipient will be required to sign an attestation confirming that there has been no overlap, or duplication for any eligible expenses claimed under the SDF Training Stream and claimed under any other funding sources, including from the provincial or federal government (e.g., expenses covered under the Ontario Student Assistance Program cannot be claimed under the SDF Training Stream).

For projects delivered by a consortium, the Recipient will be required to sign an attestation confirming that all partners responsible for providing financial supports to participants will follow the payment structure requirements in the TPA.

#### **a. Wraparound Supports**

Wraparound supports are a set of supports or services provided to a participant, that are necessary to support their participation in the project and depend on the individual's level of need, as determined by the Recipient.

Wraparound supports are intended to enable project participation for training or job placement for participants experiencing barriers. The costs for wraparound supports must be directly related to the project. Examples include costs incurred for the following:

- Workplace disability-related services and accommodating supports.
- Other personal/employment supports such as work clothing, uniforms, or special equipment.
- Childcare and dependent care costs.
- Training tuition fees and expenses, including licensing fees for participant access to pre-existing online training websites.
- Other training provider fees and materials required to complete skills training (e.g., training clothing, tools, equipment), temporary relocation and/or temporary housing expenses of the participant to access the learning centre/training facility.

#### **b. Wage Subsidies**

Wage subsidies are financial supports to assist an employer in covering a portion of wages paid during training or placement. Job placement wage subsidies can be funded for employers who require financial assistance to train or hire individuals who are eligible participants, in accordance with section 3.3, for an SDF Training Stream project. A Recipient may claim costs of up to 100% of wages paid, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per participant or job placement. Wage subsidies may not be used as replacement for tuition fees.



### **c. Training Stipends**

Training stipends are a form of taxable benefits or allowance payments that are paid out to the participants in a training program – that are not earmarked to a particular wraparound support.

- Training stipends can be paid up to a maximum of \$5,000 per training participant.
- Training stipends can be paid only to the unemployed who are non-EI eligible clients.
- Training stipends can be paid to those who are employed, but who will be unpaid for the duration of their participation in training, if that training is required to reskill or upskill an employee (e.g., on a new piece of equipment), promotes job retention or is linked to higher wages.
- The Recipient cannot provide an individual who is participating in an SDF Training Stream project with a training stipend and wage subsidy at the same time.
- Expenses claimed for training stipends must not overlap with any other expenses claimed under SDF Training Stream, such as wraparound supports and other participant funding (e.g., the training stipend must not be used for equipment already funded under SDF Training Stream).

#### **3.6.5 Travel costs:**

Some travel (also referred to as transportation) costs can be eligible for funding under SDF Training Stream, as part of the cost of doing business and to support participants, if applicable. Travel costs should be tracked separately from Operating Costs, Administrative Costs and Employer/Participant/Apprentice and Trainer. The following outlines the parameters for claiming travel costs:

#### **Travel Costs as part of Business Expenses**

- Travel costs can include staff and volunteer transportation costs required for the delivery of project activities (e.g., single-use bus fare).
- Travel costs cannot be included as part of salaries/wages (i.e., cost of employment, cost of travelling to and from work).
- Monthly parking fees and transit/bus passes are not eligible for funding under the SDF Training Stream program as a program cost.

#### **Transportation Costs for Participants**

- Transportation (e.g., travel or commuting expenses for the participant to access a learning centre/training facility or place of employment.)

- For participants who require mobility support to participate in an SDF Training Stream project, travel costs can include travel for participants and support persons. The ministry has the flexibility of approving, on an application-by-application basis, additional travel support costs for participants with disabilities and staff support persons requiring special accommodations.

Travel costs for apprentices attending full-time, in-class training are ineligible for funding under the SDF Training Stream, if they are already covered by another program. <sup>4</sup>

### 3.7 Ineligible Expenses

- TDAs may not request funds for expenses that are already covered in their Apprenticeship In-Class Enhancement Fund TPA.
- Activities that are already funded or will be funded through other sources of funding such as Federal or other Provincial programs.
- Regular or ordinary costs related to other activities carried out by the organization.
- Insurance.
- Costs related to the development of the SDF Training Stream application or the TPA, including negotiations, as well as any associated documents.
- Salaries of executives or senior management who do not directly contribute to project delivery.
- Out-of-province travel costs for project staff or participants or expenditures associated with activities or operations performed outside of Ontario.
- Costs for any materials, tools, techniques, approaches, developments, or salaries used in training, work placements or other project components that have already been reimbursed or will be reimbursed by government funding to the applicant.
- Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points programs.
- Reimbursement of any airfare above the lowest fare available when purchasing a ticket unless otherwise approved by the ministry.
- Fines and penalties.
- Interest charges on debts related to financing the Project.
- Losses on other projects or contracts.

---

<sup>4</sup> Apprentices attending in-class training can apply to the Apprentice Development Benefit for support with travel expenses. Therefore, expenses for travel to the training center are ineligible under SDF Training Stream. See section 5.3 for additional travel directives.

- Any costs, including taxes, for which the Recipient has received, will receive or is eligible to receive a rebate, credit, or refund.
- Costs for annual general meetings, budget deficits, membership fees, fundraising activities, tournaments, conferences, committee and political meetings, receptions, parties, festivals, or religious activities.
- Mandatory training under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (health/safety training) and modular training that employers are required to provide by law (i.e., mandatory training for an organization's current / incumbent workers).
- Fees to attend or organize conferences, trade shows or summits.
- Contingency or unexplained miscellaneous costs.
- Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) for tax exempted organizations.
- Apprenticeship In-Class Training beyond Level 1.
- Any expenses that are not permitted and/or are inconsistent with the terms and conditions of the TPA and any other applicable directive, policies, or guidelines of the Government of Ontario.

## 4. Application and Selection Processes

### 4.1 Application Process

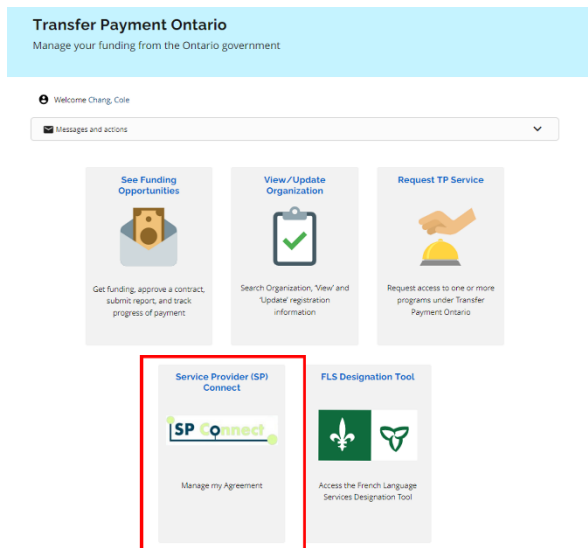
Beginning July 29, 2025, organizations can begin to apply for funding through Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON). Applications will be accepted for ministry review on a continuous basis until October 1, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). Applicants are encouraged to apply and submit their completed applications early.

TPON is the Government of Ontario's online application system for grant funding. It is important for applicants to understand the steps for registering with TPON prior to application submission.

- Information on registering and accessing TPON is available at:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-funding-ontario-government>
- TPON website: <https://www.app.grants.gov.on.ca/tpon>

Primary Applicants must register with TPON to access the SDF Training Stream 2025-26 application form. Once registered and logged in to TPON, applicants must click on

the Service Provider Connect icon to locate the SDF Training Stream application (see screenshot below).



All Primary Applicants must have up to date contact information in TPON, to ensure that decisions and communications from the ministry are received. For information on how to update organization or contact information, please refer to: [Get funding from the Ontario government | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/get-funding-from-the-ontario-government).

**Questions or issues related to setting up a TPON account or updating contacts in TPON:**

- Contact the TPON Customer Service Line at (416) 325-6691 or 1-855-216-3090, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, or by email at [TPONCC@ontario.ca](mailto:TPONCC@ontario.ca).

**Questions or issues related to completing the application in Service Provider Connect (SP-Connect):**

- Contact the ministry at [SkillsDevelopmentFund@ontario.ca](mailto:SkillsDevelopmentFund@ontario.ca).
- Contact the Employment Ontario Contact Centre at 416-326-5636 or 1-800-387-5656.

The ministry, at its discretion, will conduct ongoing assessments of applications as they are received.

Applications will be assessed using the evaluation criteria set out in section 4.2. The ministry retains sole and absolute discretion to assign scores using these criteria and to select applications to move to the TPA negotiation stage. The ministry, at its discretion, may host virtual information sessions with interested applicants during the application period to address questions or provide clarification/updates.

Questions regarding the SDF Training Stream program, submission process, or any other inquiries should be directed to [SkillsDevelopmentFund@ontario.ca](mailto:SkillsDevelopmentFund@ontario.ca)

## 4.2 Selection Criteria

The ministry will review submitted applications and assess eligible applications against the program criteria outlined below. The ministry will have sole authority to decide which eligible projects are funded.

Eligible applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting	Interpretation
Demonstrated Innovation	7%	The application clearly indicates how the project is innovative. If applying for a project that primarily supports PwD, the application clearly indicates how the project will support PwD in an innovative way that does not duplicate programs funded by other sources.
SDF Training Stream Objective(s) and Focus Area(s)	15%	<p>The application clearly indicates how it is aligned with at least one of the objectives <u>and</u> one of the focus areas of the SDF Training Stream. (See Section 2.1. for information on program objectives)</p> <p>The application clearly defines outcomes of the project, including how it plans to meet Key Performance Indicators (KPI) (see section 4.3: Performance Management, below), provide value for</p>

Criteria	Weighting	Interpretation
		money, and achieve expected impacts, including benefits to the project target group.
In-demand Sector (e.g., skilled trades, housing, health care, manufacturing, etc.)	15%	The application clearly supports an in-demand sector and key government priorities, providing compelling rationale with labour market evidence. (See Section 3.2 for information on target sectors.)
Project Need	15%	<p>The application clearly defines the issue that it is seeking to address through the project (e.g., sector, region and/or participant group impacted by the issue are identified); and includes compelling rationale with adequate labour market evidence to support the need for the intervention being proposed.</p> <p>The application clearly describes how the activities of the project will lead to the intended changes and desired outcomes.</p> <p>The application clearly identifies the KPIs that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the project (see section 4.3). The application includes the proponent's projections and a plan for the collection and analysis of the data that will be used for reporting on achievement of KPIs.</p>

Criteria	Weighting	Interpretation
Organizational Capacity	13%	<p>The application demonstrates how the Primary Applicant's strengths and experience (as well as those of any applicable partners), are suited to design, implement, deliver, and monitor the proposed project and expenditures, while meeting SDF Training Stream program integrity and accountability requirements.</p> <p>Applications that include a sustainability plan to continue without SDF Training Stream funding or secure alternative sources of funding for the project after the SDF Training Stream funding period ends will be prioritized.</p>
Project Delivery Plan	20%	<p>The application provides a detailed delivery plan that includes a feasible timeline for all key activities, identifies who is responsible for tasks, and clearly articulates risks and reasonable mitigation strategies.</p>
Budget	10%	<p>The application includes reasonable costs and provides a clear and detailed breakdown of all expenditures, and of any funding from other sources, if applicable.</p> <p>The application demonstrates effective use of resources to achieve project objectives within the established timeframe.</p> <p>The application demonstrates the attribution methodology of administrative costs. Administrative costs do not exceed</p>

Criteria	Weighting	Interpretation
		15% of operating costs for the proposed project, not including amounts that are funded by other sources.
Cost Sharing	5%	The application demonstrates the ability to make cost sharing or other in-kind contributions toward the project. This must be reflected in the project budget.

### **Notification of Selected Applicants and TPA Negotiations:**

The ministry retains sole and absolute discretion to decide which eligible applications are selected for SDF Training Stream funding. Applicants selected by the ministry for funding (“selected applicants”) will be contacted by the ministry to finalize project activities and a budget to be set out in a TPA.

Our goal is to have all SDF Training Stream TPAs fully executed by March 2026.

If a binding TPA is executed, the funds will be distributed conditional upon and subject to the TPA. The ministry retains the sole and absolute right to not enter into a TPA with any selected applicant, notwithstanding any negotiations.

The Government of Ontario is not responsible for reimbursing any cost incurred by any Primary Applicant should the application not be approved, or if the selected applicant fails to enter into a binding TPA with the ministry for any reason.

## **4.3 Performance Measurement**

Recipients will be required to report to the ministry on the KPI targets set out in their TPAs.

The applicable performance measures and targets will be determined based on the project, and will be selected from the following tables:



**Table 1: Participant Performance Measurements**

<b>Performance Measures in Application/TPA</b>	<b>Target</b>
Total # of participants	#
# of participants who self-identified as a member of an underrepresented group (e.g., women, youth, people with disabilities, Black and racialized persons, justice-involved individuals, Indigenous peoples, Immigrants, and members of at-risk communities)	#
From the total # of participants, the # of participants who are unemployed at the start of the project	#
From the total # of participants, the # of participants who are employed at the start of the project (i.e. incumbent workers)	#
From the total # of participants, the # of participants who are Journeypersons at the start of the project	#
From the total # of participants, the # of participants who are Registered Apprentices at the start of the project	#
From the total # of participants, the # of participants in workforce development full-service projects	#
From the total # of participants, the # of participants in workforce development light-touch projects	#

**Table 2: Partnerships Performance Measurements**

<b>Performance Measures in Application/TPA</b>	<b>Target</b>
# of partners actively engaged in the project	#
From the total # of partners, the # of employers/industry associations partners	#
From the total # of partners, the # of education and training providers	#
# of employers/sponsors reporting improved capacity to recruit, retain and/or retrain workers	#
# of employer/sponsor partnerships resulting in job/trade training placements	#

Performance Measures in Application/TPA	Target
# of employer/sponsor partners adopting innovative tools, business models or processes	#

**Table 3: Research/Prototyping and Development Projects Performance Measurements**

Performance Measures in Application/TPA	Target
# of end-user beneficiaries of research/prototyping and development projects	#
# of participants engaged or interviewed	#
# of collaborators involved in research/prototyping and development projects	#
# of draft or final reports summarizing findings from research/prototyping and development projects	#
# of innovative tools, models or processes developed	#

**Table 4: Workforce Development Performance Measurements**

Performance Measures in Application/TPA	Target
From the total # of participants, the # of participants who completed workforce development full-service projects	#
From the total # of participants, the # of participants who completed workforce development light-touch projects	#
# of participants who completed experiential learning (including job placement) opportunities	#
# of participants who were employed post-training with the same employer who hosted an experiential learning (job placement) opportunity	#
# of full-service workforce development participants who indicated improved industry and local labour market employability skills as a result of training	#

Performance Measures in Application/TPA	Target
# of light-touch workforce development participants who indicated improved industry and local labour market employability skills as a result of training	#
# participants who report industry/sector recognized credential, certificate, diploma, or other formal recognition received as a result of training	#
# of unemployed individuals who obtained employment post-training	#
# of employed individuals who advanced their careers (e.g. attained a promotion or wage increase) post-training	#
# of employed individuals who completed upskilling or reskilling service plans/interventions	#
# of employed individuals who retained a job post-training	#
# of participants that self-identified as persons with disabilities who completed training	#
# of participants that self-identified as persons with disabilities who achieved employment after completion of SDF Training Stream initiative	#
# of participants, excluding participants who self-identified as persons with disabilities who completed the program	#
# of participants, excluding participants who self-identified as persons with disabilities who achieved employment after completion of SDF Training Stream initiative	#
# of participants trained/served as a result of equipment/assets purchased	#

**Table 5: Apprenticeship Performance Measurement**

Performance Measures in Application/TPA	Target
# of Registered Apprentice participants who completed training/intervention	#
# of trainers (e.g., journeypersons) who completed training/intervention	#
# of new apprenticeship registrations	#

# of apprentices who successfully completed Level 1 in-class training	#
# of participants who completed apprenticeship	#
# of Registered Apprentices who reported progression with apprenticeship as a result of training	#

Applicants must identify KPIs they will use to evaluate the effectiveness of their project in their application. The application must clearly identify the applicant's performance targets, and plan for the collection, analysis and reporting of the data. If selected, a minimum participant program completion and employed target will be negotiated with the ministry. The applicant may add project-specific indicators and targets, in addition to the above-required ministry-provided metrics. The ministry may include additional indicators and targets in the TPA at its discretion.

In addition to reporting on KPIs, Recipients may be asked to submit demographic information about participants (e.g., age, education). Recipients will be provided with reporting templates and the timeline for reporting will be detailed in the TPA (see section 4.4).

#### **4.3.1 Third-Party Evaluation**

The ministry may hire a third-party consultant to evaluate funded projects during or after their implementation. The TPA between the Primary Applicant/Recipient and ministry will include this as a part of monitoring activities (see section 4.4).

### **4.4 Performance Management**

Recipients will be required to adhere to the reporting requirements set out in their TPA. Failure to do so may result in funds being held back or recovered.

The reports received by the ministry are used to monitor progress on key aspects of projects and compliance with the TPAs. The ministry maintains an open dialogue with Recipients throughout the term of the TPA in support of continuous progress towards achievement of project goals and outcomes.

## **1. Activity Reports**

Recipients must provide activity reports to the ministry on the progress achieved in carrying out the project and expenditures incurred in relation to the expected outcomes, milestones, KPIs, project timeline and budget set out in the TPA. It is expected that Recipients, where feasible, will provide status updates on project-specified and ministry-specified program evaluation metrics. Recipients will be provided templates for these reports and instructions on the frequency in which they are to be completed and returned to their local ministry office.

## **2. Final Report**

Recipients must submit a final report outlining the achievement of project objectives and any other content that may be required as set out in the TPA.

## **3. Financial Reports**

Financial monitoring verifies that funds are spent in accordance with the terms and conditions of the TPA and that bookkeeping systems and accounting practices are in place to manage and control funds. Project expenditures will be monitored via Estimate of Expenditure Reports (EERs) and Statement of Revenue and Expenditure Reports (SRERs). Recipients must use the provided templates for these reports and comply with instructions on the frequency of submission to the ministry. Unspent funds must be explained and, upon demand, must be returned to the ministry. Funds that remain unspent or unaccounted for will be pursued by the ministry for collection.

## **4. Auditor's Report**

To ensure that funding awarded is used judiciously, Recipients who receive funding of \$150,000 or more from the ministry will be required to engage the services of a third-party auditor to assess the financial statements of the project and submit a report to the ministry. The report is typically due to the ministry sixty (60) calendar days after the completion of project activities, as outlined in the TPA. Applicants should include the cost of this audit in their budget application.

## **Monitoring by the Ministry**

In addition to reviewing reports submitted by Recipients, as set out above, the ministry may monitor the project and the Recipient's compliance with its TPA through various

means. The monitoring activities will depend on the degree of associated risk, and may include:

- Verification of documents and other forms prior to processing.
- Direct contact with the Recipient and/or participants, other stakeholders, and partners.
- On-site/virtual visits to assess progress and achievement of activity milestones.
- On-site/virtual visits to verify expenditures.
- Utilizing program/project data for informed decision-making.

### **Data collection from employers**

The ministry may contact employers and/or employer partners working with an SDF Training Stream Recipient to gather information on individuals who have participated in SDF Training Stream funded projects. The purpose of this outreach is to determine if employers have benefitted from the SDF Training Stream program in terms of retaining employees, upskilling their workforce, and/or recruiting trained participants to meet their needs.

Performance data collected from employers include the following KPIs (see performance measurement section above for reference):

1. # of employers reporting improved capacity to recruit, retain and/or retrain workers.
2. # of employer partnerships resulting in job/trade training placements.
3. # of employer partners adopting innovative tools, business models or processes.

### **Employment Ontario Information System-Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS)**

EOIS-CaMS is a web-based, real-time software solution that supports the administration and management of clients participating in EO programs and services. Authorized ministry and service provider staff access the system, making specific information available across the province.

All full-service SDF Training Stream projects are required to report participant data and outcomes through EOIS-CaMS, and this should be accounted for when planning and budgeting for project implementation. Recipients will be required to collect and provide to the ministry participants' names, addresses and SINS for full-service projects.

Participant level data must be provided to the ministry for all projects, including light touch projects. For light touch projects, client level data collection may be limited to name, email, and phone number, as well as details of the activities in which individuals / clients participated.

Collection of personal information is subject to privacy standards and legislation (see section 4.7).

## **4.5 Intellectual Property**

All materials created using funding from the SDF Training Stream must abide by Creative Commons [Attribution-NoDerivs 4.0 International License \(CC BY-ND 4.0\)](#). Under this license, intellectual property remains with its creator, but others are free to copy and redistribute the material for any purpose, even commercially.

The ministry will consider other Creative Commons licences if the selected applicants can provide a clear and compelling rationale.

## **4.6 Visual Identity Guidelines**

Recipients must abide by the ministry's [Visual Identity and Communication Guidelines](#) in both English and French.

For equipment or vehicle purchases, the ministry will provide a sticker that is to be placed on the asset. This sticker will identify the funder (e.g., Government of Ontario), similar to the language that is to be used on other promotional materials.

## **4.7 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy**

### **Information Provided by Applicants/Recipients**

Please note the ministry is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("FIPPA"). FIPPA is a provincial statute which regulates the collection, use and disclosure of personal information and access to information in the custody and/or control of governmental institutions.

Part II of FIPPA provides for a right of access to records in the custody or under the control of the ministry, subject to certain exemptions. Notably, section 17 of FIPPA provides a limited exemption for third party information that reveals a trade secret, or scientific, commercial, technical, financial, or labour relations information supplied in confidence where disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to result in certain harms. Any information submitted to the ministry in confidence should be clearly marked by the Primary Applicant/Recipient.

The ministry will provide notice before granting access to a record that might contain information that is exempt for disclosure under FIPPA so that the affected party may make representations to the ministry concerning disclosure. Should the ministry decide not to disclose certain records, the requester has the right to appeal that decision to the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who will make a decision on the disclosure of the record.

Applicants are advised that the names and addresses of transfer payment recipients, the amount awarded, and the purpose for which the transfer payment is awarded is information the ministry makes available to the public.

#### **4.8 Personal Information of Participants**

In accordance with FIPPA, the ministry must ensure that any individual whose personal information is indirectly collected by the ministry is provided a notice of collection.

Recipients are therefore obligated to provide each participant a notice of collection, in the form mandated by the ministry, and obtain his or her consent to the indirect collection of personal information by the ministry.

Recipients have several additional obligations under the TPA with respect to the personal information of participants collected for the purpose of delivering project activities and meeting TPA obligations. Among other things, TPA Recipients must:

- Maintain a privacy policy that meets certain standards and complies with all applicable privacy laws;
- Designate an experienced official to be responsible for ensuring the Recipient's compliance with its privacy policy and the privacy provisions of the TPA;
- Train any staff, contractors, or subcontracts who will have access to personal information on the requirements of the privacy policy and the privacy provision of the TPA; and have them sign an agreement agreeing to be bound by the privacy policy and the privacy provisions of the TPA;



- Limit collection, use and disclosure of personal information to only what is needed to carry out Project activities, and not use personal information collected for delivery of the Project for any other purpose;
- Use appropriate products, tools, measures, and procedures to protect the security of personal information, including storing the data in Canadian data centres that meet certain security standards;
- Give individuals access to their own personal information; and
- Notify the ministry of any breach of the Recipient's privacy policy or the privacy provisions of the TPA and cooperate with the ministry in any investigation of the breach.

## 5. Funding Allocation

SDF Training Stream funding will be paid to the Recipient during the term of the TPA, subject to the terms and conditions of the TPA (including compliance with same by the Recipient).

**There are no maximum or minimum funding amounts. However, SDF Training Stream is intended to have a significant impact, so the ministry will first consider applications with a project budget greater than \$150,000. The ministry may choose to fund all or only a portion of the Primary Applicant's proposed project.**

Although not required, Primary Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek additional funding sources to support their application and their proposed project for the duration of their TPA term and beyond.

The ministry reserves the right to adjust the amount of funding the selected applicant may receive, which may differ from the funding requested.

### 5.1 Funding Allocation, Distribution Terms & Conditions

All funding will be conditional on the Recipient satisfying the terms and conditions for funding contained in their TPA.

Funding will be paid to Recipients in instalments according to the payment schedule set out in the TPA. Payments may be subject to a holdback of 15% of the funding amount, which will be distributed to the Recipient following project completion and fulfillment of all obligations under the TPA, including reporting requirements.

The Province is not obligated to pay any funds until the Recipient provides proof of the requisite insurance. The Province is also not obligated to pay any instalments of funds

until it is satisfied with the progress of the project. The Province may adjust the amount of funds it provides to a Recipient based on the Province's assessment of information the Recipient provides in its reports; and may recover funds if the Recipient breaches any term of the TPA, including failing to carry out the project or use the funds in accordance with the terms and conditions in the TPA.

The TPA will set out the terms and conditions governing the project and the payment of the funds, and will include the following:

- Recipient responsibilities.
- Project budget.
- Project management requirements.
- Monitoring and reporting requirements.
- Accountability requirements, audits, and financial reporting obligations.
- Milestones and performance measures.
- Mode and schedule of payments.
- Process for contract termination; and
- Other performance and accountability provisions identified by the province and agreed upon with the Recipient.

In accordance with the TPA, Recipients will be expected to:

- Be accountable to the Province for all funds and performance of project components.
- Manage their project plan to meet financial and accountability reporting requirements and deliverables.
- Engage and manage relationships with any third-party service providers (if applicable).
- Coordinate project partners and all activities.
- Be responsible for performance measurement of the project, including ensuring data quality, establishing targets, and aggregating information collected from recipients.
- Meet reporting requirements (see section 4.4).

- Maintain records pertaining to the project, the funds or both, in accordance with TPA requirements.
- Collect, use, disclose and store any and all personal information collected during and for the purposes of the SDF Training funded project in compliance with all privacy provisions of the TPA and applicable laws (see section 4.7).
- Put in effect and maintain for the duration of their TPA term, all necessary insurances for the initiative, including Commercial General Liability Insurance to an inclusive limit of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence, and provide the ministry with a copy of their Certificate of Insurance. Coverage under two million dollars (\$2,000,000) may be considered based on prior approval by Ontario. (See section 3.6.3 for additional insurance requirements applicable for purchases of a vehicle or mobile unit.)
- Adhere to all other terms and conditions of the TPA.

Prior to signing a TPA, the ministry, in its sole and absolute discretion, may undertake additional due diligence review of the selected applicant, including by requesting that the selected applicant submit any additional information related to the application that the ministry requests.

## **5.2 Proposed Project Budget**

Primary Applicants are required to submit a detailed budget with their application. The budget must include all costs directly related to delivering the project, including any proposed cash and in-kind contributions being contributed to the project by the Primary Applicant and/or their partners, where applicable.

The project budget must clearly identify where applicable:

- All costs directly related to delivering the project, within market value.
  - Any goods or services supplied by non-arm's length parties must be valued at their established arm's-length equivalent market value.
  - Equipment rental, lease or purchase costs must be included in the budget. The value for money proposition of each approach should be evaluated, with the most cost-efficient option being preferred for one-year projects.
- Participant contribution for cost-sharing purposes. A breakdown of charges to participants is required, if applicable.

- All costs including in-kind contributions (e.g., donated space, time donated by instructors, etc.).
- Funding received from partnerships and/or collaborations; and
- Other funding sources, including federal and provincial government funding.

**Applicants are not to take any action and must not incur any costs related to their project prior to entering into a TPA with the ministry and the project commencement date.**

The Government of Ontario will not reimburse any cost incurred by any applicant related to their proposed SDF Training Stream project should the application not be approved, or if the selected applicant fails to enter into a TPA with the ministry for any reason. The ministry aims to have TPAs fully executed by March 2026.

### **5.3 Procurement, Travel & Hospitality Requirements and Public Sector Salary Disclosure**

For Recipients that are considered Broader Public Sector organizations under the [\*Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010\*](#), two directives regarding procurement practices and expenses are in effect: the [\*Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive\*](#) and the [\*Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive\*](#).

All Recipients are also required to comply with the terms and conditions of the TPA with respect to procurement, travel, and hospitality.

Some public and non-profit Recipients may be subject to the **Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996** which will require the disclosure of names, positions, salaries, and taxable benefits of employees who were paid a salary of \$100,000 or more.

- Recipients receiving at least \$1 million in funding from the Government of Ontario in a year are subject to this legislation.
- Recipients receiving between \$120,000 and \$1 million are subject to this legislation if the funding they receive from the Government of Ontario for the year is 10 percent or more of their gross revenues for the year.
- Recipients receiving less than \$120,000 from the Government of Ontario for the year are not required to disclose unless they are one of the entities explicitly covered by the Act.

Please review [the background and frequently asked questions on public sector salary disclosure](#) for more information.