2025 Summer Employment Opportunities* (SEO) Program Guidelines

*formerly known as Summer Experience Program

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Applications must be submitted online through Transfer Payment Ontario no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Wednesday, January 8, 2025.

All applicants are encouraged to read these guidelines before completing an application form.

First time applicants please contact your <u>Regional Development Advisor</u> before completing an application.

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Program Objectives

The Summer Employment Opportunities (SEO) Program provides funding to eligible not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, Indigenous organizations, and First Nation communities to create meaningful summer employment opportunities for students.

The summer employment positions must focus on activities supporting key sectors within the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming and the Ministry of Sport.

The objectives of the SEO Program are:

- 1. To provide quality, supervised work experience for students in summer positions that develop skills that are career-related and transferable to the general labour market.
- 2. To make positions available in communities throughout the province, particularly in areas of high unemployment (i.e., Northern Ontario).
- 3. To enable greater access to summer employment for students through an accessible and transparent recruitment process.
- To provide transfer payments to eligible organizations within the key sectors noted above to support their capacity to deliver summer service and specific projects that align with the Ministry priorities outlined below.

Ministry Priorities for SEO Program Positions

Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming works closely with the tourism sector to help stimulate economic growth and investment and create an environment that allows Ontario to compete successfully in the rapidly changing world of travel and leisure. Among our activities to strengthen Ontario as an internationally recognized tourist destination, the Ministry:

- Undertakes vital market research in the areas of marketing, product development, and investment to aid business decisions by both governments and industry.
- Encourages private sector investment and new product development to expand Ontario's tourism sector and promote regional tourism economic development.
- Supports and facilitates the development of new experiences and destinations.
- Markets Ontario as a best-in-class tourist destination.
- Invests in Ontario's tourism agencies.
- Reduces regulatory burdens, enhances digital offerings, leverages and integrates sport, tourism, and culture policies.
- Works with industry and organizations to support the maintenance and growth of tourism's economic contribution.

Tourism priorities for SEO Program positions:

- Work in the tourism sector to attract new tourism investment and provide support to tourism regions, sector associations and Indigenous tourism organizations.
- Support product development, marketing, workforce development and investment attraction programs and services.
- Provide tourists with educational, cultural, recreational, and entertainment experiences and opportunities.
- Support the tourism industry through establishing policies and programs that support tourism development.

Culture

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming is responsible for policies and programs that optimize the contribution of the entertainment and creative cluster, arts, libraries, museums, and cultural agencies and contribute to Ontario's economic vitality and quality of life. It collaborates with Ontario Creates and other organizations to strengthen Ontario's entertainment and creative cluster. The Ministry invests in cultural agencies to support innovative programming and collections; administers the Public Libraries Act; and provides funding and outreach to municipalities, libraries, and museums.

Culture priorities for SEO Program positions:

- Work for arts and culture agencies and organizations to support them in building and sustaining the sector.
- Support services or program development and delivery in the arts and culture sectors that enable stakeholders to protect and provide access to the arts, museums and libraries.

Sport and Recreation

The Ministry of Sport supports sport development, participation, excellence and safety in the amateur sport and recreation sectors. It provides financial assistance to amateur athletes, enhanced coaching, training, and competitive opportunities. Amateur sport, recreation and physical activity investments also support broader social objective, such as increasing youth participation in physical activity and sport and increasing the wellbeing of Ontarians. Hosting international sporting events strengthens Ontario's high-performance sport system, enhances sport infrastructure, contributes to economic development, and raises the profile of the province. The Ministry also supports programs that give working families with children an affordable, safe, supervised after school option; supports provincial interests in trails; and delivers programming to target diverse populations such as people with disabilities and Indigenous communities.

Sport and Recreation priorities for SEO Program positions:

- Contribute to delivery and sustainability of high-quality policies and programs that strengthen the sport and recreation sectors, encourage physical activity, and benefit all Ontarians.
- Contribute towards enhancement of the province's high-performance sport system, enabling athletes to achieve success.
- Support community-based organizations so they can deliver effective sport and recreation programming to diverse and vulnerable populations.

Contact Information

Ministry Contacts

Not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, Indigenous organizations, and First Nation communities, please contact your <u>Regional Development Advisor</u> for clarification on any program items, or to schedule a consultation.

You can also direct inquiries to <u>CommunitySEO@ontario.ca</u>

Technical Support

Technical support related to the Transfer Payment Ontario including assistance with enrolment and accessing an application please contact <u>Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) Client Care</u>:

- Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST).
- Toronto: (416) 325-6691
- Toll Free: 1-855-216-3090
- TTY/Teletypewriter (for the hearing impaired): 416-325-3408 / Toll free: 1-800-268-7095
- Email: TPONCC@ontario.ca

Application Submission and Deadline

It is your responsibility to ensure that your application has been successfully submitted.

Applications must be submitted online through <u>Transfer Payment Ontario</u> no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Wednesday, January 8, 2025.

 If you do not receive email confirmation of your grant submission within 24 hours, please contact Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) Client Care by email at <u>TPONCC@ontario.ca</u> or by telephone at (416) 325-6691 or toll free 1-855-216-3090.

Submission Checklist – What to Attach

Not-for-profit applicants must provide letters patent as proof of incorporation which must be attached to the case in Transfer Payment Ontario. (Municipalities and First Nation communities are exempt from this requirement).

If no proof of incorporation is attached (if required), your application will be deemed incomplete and will not be assessed.

Application Deadline:

Applications must be submitted online through Transfer Payment Ontario no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Applicants

Organizations eligible for SEO Program funding include not-for-profit organizations who have been incorporated for at least one year, municipalities, Indigenous organizations, and First Nations communities. Eligible organizations must be legally incorporated or be band councils established under the *Indian Act, Canada*.

Organizations must have commercial general liability insurance coverage of \$2,000,000 per occurrence on property damage, bodily injury and personal injury and valid Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage or equivalent coverage under their commercial general liability insurance, to be eligible for SEO Program funding.

Eligible Employment Opportunities

SEO Program positions must offer training, work experience and skills transferable to the general workforce and to future careers. The positions must focus on activities that support the key sectors of tourism, culture, sport, and recreation.

Position placements are expected to provide employment for a minimum employment contract length of 217.5 hours or 30 days at 7.25 hours per day.

Eligible Students

Students hired by recipient organizations must meet the eligibility criteria of the program:

- All students must be currently enrolled in a secondary, or post-secondary institution or within six months of graduation and have reached the age of 15 upon commencement of employment.
- Students must be employed full time for a minimum employment contract length of 217.5 hours or 30 days at 7.25 hours per day.
- Proof of student enrolment must be provided to the employer.
- Students must be residents of Ontario during the period of employment.
- Students must be eligible to work in Canada and have a Social Insurance Number (SIN).
- Students should be living in Ontario at the time they start work.

The intention of the program is to provide career-related experience to eligible students that are also eligible to work in Ontario.

Student Recruitment

- Students must go through a competitive process each year (e.g., students must apply for the position and be screened in). Rehiring a student without going through a competitive process is not allowed.
- The student's interests and career goals should relate to the job for which they have applied.
- Wherever possible, consideration should be given to hiring students from the local area. Funding received from the SEO Program cannot be used for relocation expenses.

Funding Criteria

As of October 1, 2024, the provincial minimum wage rate, according to the *Employment Standards Act*, 2000, S.O. 2000, c. 41 is \$17.20 per hour. The applicant employer must pay the SEO Program employee at least the applicable Ontario minimum wage.

- The maximum funding per position is \$3,741.
- To be eligible for the full grant amount, organizations must employ the student for the minimum employment contract length of 217.5 hours or 30 days at 7.25 hours per day.
- If the minimum employment contract is **not** 217.5 hours or 30 days at 7.25 hours per day, the organization will be required to submit a refund to the Ministry.

Wage calculation for a SEO Program position:

Hourly Rat	te	Hours per day		Salary		Number of Days Worked		Total Salary (Rounded)
\$17.20	x	7.25	=	\$124.70	x	30	=	\$3,741

Please Note:

- Organizations can pay the student employee more than minimum wage at their own expense, provided the wage rate is relative to other summer contract positions and follows human resources policies or collective agreements in place within the organization.
- SEO Program student employees may be extended after the SEO Program contract expires; however, the SEO Program will not cover any additional costs for the period beyond that for which the funding was originally awarded.

For example, an organization could continue employing the student past the minimum contract requirement; however, funding would be only up to a maximum of \$3,741. Any costs for the contract length beyond that amount will be the responsibility of the organization.

Assessment Process and Criteria

Process

Once submitted, applications are checked for completeness and eligibility.

Applications that are incomplete, missing mandatory information, or that do not meet eligibility requirements will not be processed further.

Ministry staff will review all complete and eligible applications using a standardized assessment template to determine how well the application meets the program criteria.

Funding under the Summer Employment Opportunities Program is highly competitive and there is no guarantee of support. Due to the volume of applications received, the total number of positions awarded to successful applicants may be lower than the number requested. Priority may be given to applicant organizations that have not previously received SEO Program funding.

Criteria

All eligible applications will be assessed based on the degree to which they meet the following criteria:

- 1. Application addresses ministry priorities outlined in the guidelines for the selected target sector.
- 2. Orientation best practices are used by organizations to prepare students for the summer positions.
- 3. Application identifies student's key duties.
- 4. Application describes the student's training plan and identifies the trainer and their qualifications.
- 5. Application describes appropriate and adequate supervision that will be provided for the student.
- 6. Application demonstrates the business need for a summer student position and employment opportunity supports the work and mandate of the organization (i.e., revenue generating operations in tourism attractions, promotion of seasonal museum activities, summer sport and recreation programming).
- 7. Employment opportunity is in an identified area of high unemployment (i.e., Northern Ontario).

Grant Payment

If a grant is approved, approved applicants will receive a letter from the Ministry confirming the grant.

The grant payment to approved applicants will be made in one instalment in the amount of \$3,741.

Approved grant applicants should ensure the chief financial officer, treasurer or finance department is aware of the application and if approved, the pending financial transaction.

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming

Recipient Obligations

Reporting Requirements

- Recipient organizations must keep their <u>Regional Development Advisor</u> informed of any changes that affect the SEO program position.
- Organizations that are not able to use their SEO Program grant to hire a student must inform their <u>Regional Development Advisor</u> as soon as possible so that the funds can be reallocated.

Final Report

The Final Report template will be available on Transfer Payment Ontario. Grant recipients will be required to submit a Final Report by **September 19, 2025,** that includes:

- Actual number of hours worked
- Performance measures results
- A project evaluation indicating the results that were met by the end of the work term
- Any other details requested by the Ministry

Refund Calculation

To determine the refund amount owing, calculate the actual expenditures as follows:

- a. Total # of hours worked X \$17.20 per hour.
- b. Subtract the salary amount from 3,741. If the amount is greater than \$10.00, you must refund the full amount to the Ministry. If it is less than \$10.00, a refund is not required.

Example calculation below if the student worked 20 days at 7.25 hours per day, which equals to 145 hours.

Total # of		Hourly rate		Salary		SEO Program		Refund
Hours worked	х	\$17.20	=	\$2,494.00	-	Grant	=	\$1,247.00
145						\$3,741.00		-

To be eligible for the full grant amount of 3,741, organizations must employ the student for the minimum employment contract length of 217.5 hours or 30 days of fulltime employment (7.25 hours per day).

If the minimum employment contract is **not** met a refund will be required.

Reimbursement to the Province

If a refund is owing to the Ministry, the refund cheque must be payable to the "Minister of Finance, Ontario" and submitted by **October 17, 2025,** to:

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming Regional and Corporate Services Division Regional Services Branch 400 University Avenue, 2nd Floor Toronto, ON M7A 2R9 ATTN: Sergio Vazquez, Summer Employment Opportunities Program

Employer Responsibilities

- The employer is responsible for ensuring CPP, EI and other mandatory contributions are made to the appropriate level of government.
- Student statutory holiday compensation must be in accordance with the Employment Standards Act (ESA).
- Provisions for student's sick time should adhere to the employing organization's sick time policy for students.

- The Summer Employment Opportunities Program application form includes Terms and Conditions that must be adhered to by all applicants that receive an SEO Program grant.
- When an employee turns 18, employers must start deducting and submitting Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions. Please follow the Canada Revenue Agency link for information on CPP deductions: <u>Canada Revenue Agency website.</u>
- The organization is required to carry commercial general liability insurance on an occurrence basis for third party bodily injury, personal injury and property damage to an inclusive limit of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence.
- WSIB coverage, or an employer's liability coverage endorsement under the commercial general liability insurance above, is a mandatory requirement.

Applying to the Summer Employment Opportunities Program through Transfer Payment Ontario

<u>Transfer Payment Ontario</u> provides you with one-window access to information about funding opportunities that are available to you, how to apply for funding and how to check the status of your submission.

<u>Transfer Payment Ontario</u> makes applying for funding opportunities easy. Enter your organization's information once, and it will remain safe and secure, ready for you to access any time you want to apply for funding – regardless of whether you're applying for one or multiple funding opportunities.

To get started, read more about How to Submit for Funding.

Applicants should enrol as soon as possible, as it may take up to two weeks to complete the enrolment process.

Tips for Completing the Application

- The SEO Program application has general instructions beside each heading, and by positioning the mouse cursor over a key word, additional information will appear.
- Since organizations must be enrolled with Transfer Payment Ontario to access the online SEO Program application, most of the information requested in the first few sections of the application form (e.g., address, contact information, etc.) will be pre-populated using data from the enrolment process.
- It is recommended that applicants print a copy of Appendix A in this guide or use a split computer screen to make sure they follow all specific application instructions for the SEO Program grant.
- Once a SEO Program application is started online, it may be saved at any point and returned to later to add additional information prior to submitting it in Transfer Payment Ontario. Applicants may also choose to download the application form and work on it offline, then upload the application form to submit.

Appendix A - 2025 Summer Employment Opportunities Program Application Sections

The 2025 Summer Employment Opportunities Program application comprises of the following sections:

Application Sections

- A. Organization Information
- B. Organization Address Information
- C. Application Contact Information
- D. Grant Payment Information
- E. Additional Questions
- F. Performance Measures
- G. Program Estimates
- H. Terms and Conditions
- I. Declaration / Signing

Section A to C – Organization Information, Organization Address Information, Application Contact Information

Sections A and B are pre-populated after the organization's enrolment with Transfer Payment Ontario. If this information has changed, please contact <u>Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care</u> (<u>TPONCC@ontario.ca</u>) or update your information in Transfer Payment Ontario.

Section C collects information about key people in the organization, including whether they have signing authority. Contacts should include the most senior unelected official in the organization (i.e., Executive Director, CAO, CEO) and the person in your organization (i.e., Manager, Director, Supervisor) responsible for this application. **Minimum of two different contacts to be provided.**

Section D – Grant Payment Information

If your application is successful, this information will be used to make payments. It is very important that this section is completed accurately.

- Please select your organization's payment address from the drop-down list. Once selected, the payment address fields will be populated with the information related to the selected address. If your organization's payment address does not appear in the drop-down list, please select "Other" and complete the name and address fields accurately.
- Please indicate the method of payment (Electronic Fund Transfer or Cheque). It is preferred that
 organizations select "Electronic Fund Transfer" for the grant payment to be deposited directly into your
 organization's account. Moving to direct deposit payments eliminates potential delays from mail delivery
 and the risk of lost or stolen cheques.

Section E – Additional Questions

In this section, please complete the following questions:

- 1. **Duties:** List the specific duties to be performed by the SEO Program employee. Identify how the employee will interact with the public or industry/sectoral partners. (maximum 4,900 characters)
- 2. **Skills gained:** Indicate what skills the employee will gain through their employment with the 2025 SEO Program. Identify how these skills will be transferrable to longer term employment and/or the student's current field of study. (maximum 4,900 characters)
- 3. **Training and orientation:** Referencing the skills mentioned in question 2, please provide a **training and orientation plan** outlining the training the employee will receive and your plan to orient the employee into your organization. For your training plan, indicate who the trainer will be and their qualifications. (maximum 4,900 characters)
- Supervision: Provide the position name of the individual within your organization who will be responsible for supervising the SEO Program employee (i.e., Camp Coordinator). Please also indicate
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frequency and format of employee supervision and performance evaluation that will be provided. For example: *On-site daily supervision throughout student's employment with performance evaluation at completion of employment.* (maximum 4,900 characters)

5. **Business need**: Outline the business need for the organization hiring a summer student. Identify how the business need was determined and how the applicant organization will benefit. Provide any additional information which you feel is relevant to your proposal. (maximum 4,900 characters)

Section F – Performance Measures

In this section applicants are required to enter the following information:

- 1. The total number of positions requested. For example, if your organization is requesting 2 positions and 1 of the 2 positions is bilingual, you will indicate 1 for the number of **bilingual** positions and 2 for the **total** number of positions requested.
- 2. The total number of bilingual positions (if applicable).
- 3. The number of training opportunities offered.
- 4. The number of health and safety specific training sessions planned.

Client Provided Performance Metrics

Complete this section of the Application form **only** if you have additional specific performance measures which you hope to achieve by the end of the work term. For example:

Metric:Number of children supervisedDescription:Total number of children supervised at sports campGoal:(the number of children supervised will be identified as a measurable outcome in the
Final Report)

Section G – Program Estimates

Please provide the number of positions you're requesting in the box beside Number of Positions Requested. An automatic calculation will be generated in the box beside the Grant Amount Requested once the number of positions requested is entered.

The projected position expenditure is \$3,741 based on a minimum employment contract of 217.5 hours or 30 days at 7.25 hours per day.

- **1. Position Title**: Enter the title of the position (i.e., Camp Counsellor).
- 2. Start Date: Enter the employment start date. < Earliest start is May 1, 2025>
- 3. End Date: Enter the employment end date. <Latest end date is Labour Day, September 1, 2025>
- 4. Indicate if SEO Program (SEP) funding has been received within the past 2 years.
- 5. Location of Position: Enter the position location (city/town/village).
- 6. Target Sector: Select sector using drop down menu (tourism, culture or sport/recreation).
- Note: Only one application is required if one or more positions are requested under the same sector. If the application is for two or more positions under different sectors, a separate application is required for each sector (i.e., one position for culture and one position for tourism will require two separate applications).
- Please select the target sector that most aligns with the purpose/mandate of your organization. For example, if you are a cultural organization, library, or museum, select *culture*, even if some of the duties could be considered tourism promotion.
- For municipalities and Indigenous communities or other organizations that serve multiple sectors, choose the target sector that aligns with the duties and responsibilities of the position. For example, if you are a municipality offering a summer sport program, select **sport** as the target sector.

7. Summer Employment Opportunities Program Summary (1000 characters maximum)

Please provide a brief description of your proposal. For example:

"The Summer Employment Opportunities Program will enable (organization's name) to hire a camp counsellor, who will plan and coordinate age and content appropriate community recreational activities for children and youth camps."

8. Summer Employment Opportunities Program Description (4700 characters maximum)

Please describe how the application aligns to Ministry priorities and how the position will support one of the Ministry's key sectors of tourism, culture, sport and recreation. Please see pages 3 to 4 of these guidelines for Ministry priorities.

9. Commercial General Liability Insurance and Workers' Compensation coverage

To be eligible for a SEO Program grant, organizations must have commercial general liability insurance coverage of \$2,000,000 per occurrence on property damage, bodily injury and personal injury and valid Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage or equivalent coverage under their commercial general liability insurance.

It is **mandatory** that both boxes are checked to certify that your organization has commercial general liability insurance and WSIB coverage. You will not be able to submit your application if these boxes are not checked.

Section H – Terms & Conditions

All grants awarded by the Ministry are governed by terms and conditions. The general terms and conditions governing grants awarded under the 2025 Summer Employment Opportunities Program are contained in this section. By clicking on the "I Agree" button in Section Z, Declaration / Signing, applicants are also agreeing to abide by these Terms and Conditions.

Section I – Declaration / Signing

Please click "Sign Document". Once the "I Agree" button is clicked, the signing authority's name and date will appear. By clicking the "I Agree" button, the applicant is agreeing with the Ministry to be bound by the general terms and conditions if a grant is awarded.

Appendix B – Terms of Employment

The period of employment for SEO Program funding falls between May 1 to Labour Day (September 1, 2025). This period of employment may begin and end at any time during these months as agreed to by the supervisor and the student.

A position may not be split between two students, (i.e., each working part time), unless the employee has a disability. In the case of employees with a disability, if both the employer and the employee agree that the full work term would be too strenuous, the position may be split between two employees.

If a student does not complete the term, a replacement may be hired to do so.

Students may be hired on separate employment contracts once their SEO Program work period ends. This cost is not funded by the Ministry.

To develop skills for future work opportunities, employers are encouraged to extend the student's work term to between 10 and 16 weeks, at their own expense.

Training

A training plan outlining student employee's training and including the trainer and their qualifications **must** be provided, as part of the SEO Program Application.

Training must focus on career-related transferrable skills the employee will gain through their employment with the 2025 SEO Program in preparation for a longer term of employment and/or the student's current field of study.

Recruitment and Assessment of Potential SEO Program Employee Applicants

Successful grant recipient organizations are responsible for all aspects of recruiting suitable candidates. Recipient organizations must ensure fair hiring practices and compliance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Recruitment for suitable candidates should be made through public notice which could include job posting boards at Canada Employment Centres; advertisements in newspapers; information sent to high schools, colleges, universities; postings with local disability employment services; job ads in local newsletters, etc.

Recipient organizations must not use the grant to displace regular employees or contract employees normally hired by the Recipient organization during the summer.

All publicity materials or job advertisements related to the position must acknowledge the Government of Ontario and indicate that the position is part of the Government of Ontario's Summer Employment Opportunities Program.

Advertisements or job notices for any SEO Program position must include eligibility criteria. (See Eligible Employment Opportunities and Eligible Students, page 6 in these guidelines).

SEO Program participants may not be hired or supervised by a person associated with the project who is a member of his or her family and is able to benefit financially from his or her involvement in the project.

Recipients should also advise employee applicants that under the SEO Progran guidelines, they must be a student and at least 15 years of age to be eligible for employment. Employers are entitled to request proof of age and proof of student enrolment **only upon a conditional offer of employment**.

Supervision

Every student participant must be adequately supervised to ensure that the student's assigned duties are consistent with the approved job description and that job safety requirements are met.

Student Safety

Workplace health and safety is important for student employees. The first stage of safety orientation should include familiarization with workplace emergency procedures, first aid procedures and workplace health and safety policies and procedures. As well, student employees should become familiar with the rights and responsibilities of workers, employer's duties, workplace hazards and procedures for reporting hazards and

concerns.

Employers must ensure that the location at which the student performs the work adheres to any applicable provincial laws and municipal by-laws related to the performance of that work (for example, the maximum number of employees allowed at the location).

Liability Insurance

All applicants must certify that they have Commercial General Liability insurance coverage to an inclusive limit of not less than **\$2,000,000** (two million dollars) per occurrence on property damage, bodily injury and personal injury and will provide copies upon request (See Grant Application Form, Section G – Program Estimates).

Workers' Compensation coverage for employees

All applicants must certify that they have valid Workplace Safety and Insurance Board coverage or equivalent coverage under their commercial general liability insurance and will provide copies upon request (See Grant Application Form, Section G – Program Estimates).

If your organization is excluded from coverage under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, then your insurance must include a policy endorsement for Employers Liability and Voluntary Compensation.

Potential applicants are advised to contact the WSIB to discuss potential coverage and/or their insurance carrier to determine the necessary coverage.

In addition to the student safety measures outlined in these guidelines, SEO Program employers may wish to provide an opportunity for their SEO Program student(s) to take the online safety awareness training available through the Ministry of Labour: <u>Worker Health and Safety Awareness website.</u>