Ontario ⏣

Ontario Job Creation Partnerships

Sponsor Application Guide

Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

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1. Purpose

The purpose of the Ontario Job Creation Partnerships (OJCP) Sponsor Application Guide is to provide instructions and support for applicants who wish to apply to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (the "ministry") for funding for an OJCP project.

This guide is designed as a resource to assist the applicant / recipient in carrying out, administering, and managing the OJCP project, however it does not cover every situation. The transfer payment agreement between the ministry and the recipient will prevail over the Sponsor Application Guide.

Employers that want to apply for funding for a project under OJCP must submit an online OJCP Sponsor Application for Funding, available on the Ontario.ca OJCP web page.

1.1. Overview

The OJCP program funds projects that provide participants with opportunities to gain meaningful work experience. The activities of each project should benefit the participant and the community and / or local economy, with the primary focus being on the participant.

1.2. Objective

OJCP is designed to improve the long-term employment prospects of participants. As a result of their involvement with an OJCP project, participants will develop and/or enhance their employability. This experience, together with the networking which participants do while part of a project, may increase their chances of successfully finding employment.

2. Project Criteria

OJCP projects must:
- provide meaningful work experience opportunities for participants
- provide participants with enhanced employability skills
- benefit the community and/or the local economy
- consist of activities that are not part of the sponsor's day to day operations.
- have definite start and end dates
- be appropriate to the needs and skills of unemployed workers
- be free from Conflict of Interest in the hiring process
- be in compliance with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws

OJCP Projects must not:

- result in any:
  - displacement of existing employees or volunteers
  - replacement of any employee on lay-off and/or awaiting notice of recall
  - replacement of an employee absence as a result of a labour stoppage or labour-management dispute
- lead to a dependency on ministry funding.

2.1. Project Duration

The project length must not exceed 52 weeks, including time for participant recruitment.

2.2. Sponsor Eligibility

Eligible sponsors include:

- not-for-profit organizations
- municipalities
- Indigenous councils, institutions, and organizations
- public health and educational institutions
- businesses

2.3. Sponsor Responsibilities

Once the project is approved, the sponsor will have to sign an agreement with the ministry, which will outline all sponsor responsibilities.

Sponsors are responsible for:

- providing appropriate supervision and workplace training
- advertising for, selecting and terminating participants
- establishing personnel policies to deal with absences due to illness or injury, overtime, and vacation, if not already in place
- ensuring OJCP participants are covered by workplace accident insurance as required by law
- provide WSIB coverage if required by law

The Sponsor's advertisement seeking participants must include language outlining the eligibility requirements for participants. Through the recruiting process, the sponsor selects the eligible participants they deem most suitable for the OJCP project.

As the intent of OJCP is to assist participants in returning to the labour market, the sponsor must allow participants reasonable time off to attend job interviews and participate in other job-search related activity (for example, one to two days off in a two-week period).

OJCP projects are intended to focus on work experience; however, a minimal level of orientation or training may be needed so that the participant can participate effectively in the project.

The ministry may outline additional responsibilities of the sponsor related to the ministry and / or participant.

2.4. Project Partners

Project partners are not mandatory; however, partnerships are encouraged as it ensures a greater commitment from the community partners to help ensure a project's success.

All project partners are encouraged to contribute in some material way to the project.

Partnership contributions may be in the form of financial, in-kind contributions or both depending on the nature of the activities and the capacity of the partners.

2.5. Supporting Documentation

Applicants are required to submit the following supporting documents with their OJCP Sponsor Application for Funding:

- Union consent letter, where a collective agreement is in effect in the workplace
- Letters Patent / Articles of Incorporation / Union Charter, whichever is applicable
- Certificate of Insurance (COI)
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) form and a void cheque or direct deposit bank letter
- Budget Sheet Template

All supporting documentation must be provided as a PDF file. See the Appendix for instructions on how to convert an Excel or Microsoft Word document to a PDF file.

2.6. Funding

Successful applicants may receive funding for eligible costs that the applicant cannot raise on their own or through other partnership sources.

Financial assistance will vary depending on the project scope, duration, participant activities, and contributions from the sponsor and other partners.

All applicants must declare amounts owing in default to the government of Ontario.

2.7. Proposed Budget

The applicant must complete a detailed budget of forecasted project costs, including any anticipated financial or in-kind contributions from partners, and the amount of funding requested from the ministry.

2.8. Eligible Costs for Project Sponsors

Eligible expenditures shall be claimed to the extent that they are reasonable and are within the intent of the project agreement in the opinion of the ministry. Evidence of payment through invoices or receipts must be maintained for audit purposes.

Eligible overhead costs are directly related to the development and delivery of the approved project, and include but are not limited to the following:

Project Related Costs

- wages and employment-related costs (for project staff who are not project participants but are employees of the sponsor – which may include experienced supervisory staff)
- licences
- permits
- professional service fees
- leasing or purchase of equipment
- travel
- utilities
- rental of premises
- audits, evaluations, and assessments
- materials and supplies
- insurance
- special needs of persons with disabilities (accommodations such as a ramp or an ergonomic chair)

- disbursements for research or technical studies

Participant Related Costs

- Orientation and/or Project Related Training, such as first aid, working with hazardous materials or specialized equipment orientation.

Capital Costs

- Eligible costs may also include capital costs if they are essential to the achievement of the project's objectives. All assistance provided for capital costs must be on a cost-shared basis.
- Capital Costs e.g., computer, desk, chair, etc.

2.9. Project Activities

Eligible Activities:

Below are examples of projects the ministry may deem eligible:

- community-based requests for infrastructure-related projects (parks, wharves, painting, etc.)
- one-time research project
- the development of a database
- a new, short-term service in the community

This is not an exhaustive list. The ministry encourages creative, community-focused applications that provide meaningful work experience to participants.

Ineligible Activities:

Below are examples of projects that the ministry would deem ineligible:

- Start-up costs for new organizations
- Activities which might result in an unfair competitive advantage
- Infrastructure projects based solely on benefiting a sponsor's marketing position or financial worth
- Activities such as increasing output of currently manufactured products or services, or similar research studies conducted yearly

3. Project Participants

3.1 Minimum Number of Participants

There are no restrictions regarding the number of participants that can take part in any single OJCP project.

3.2 Participant Eligibility

Eligible participants must:

- Be a resident of Ontario and
- Meet the Employment Insurance (EI) Act's definition of an "insured participant" and
- Be unemployed. Individuals will be considered unemployed if they meet the definition of an Insured Participant, and
    - are working less than an average of 20 hours per week
    - are actively seeking full-time employment

An "insured participant" includes:

- a person for whom an EI benefit period is established;
- a person whose EI benefit period has ended within the previous 60 months;
- a person who paid, in at least 3 of the last 10 years, employee's premiums (where earnings have been at least $2000 in each of those years); and
- a person who was in receipt of the employment insurance emergency response benefit within the previous 60 months.

3.3 Participant Funding

Funding for individual participants performing activities under an OJCP project comes from two sources:

- Employment Insurance benefits (EI Part I) for those participants who are active EI claimants.
- OJCP financial support from the province of Ontario.

    Note: Participants who are not active EI claimants but are "insured participants", as defined in section 3.2, receive financial support from Ontario as OJCP financial support.

3.3.1 Top-Up

Sponsors are encouraged to provide a top up to the financial support provided by the ministry to the participant. This may be appropriate when the job requirements specify a skillset, work experience or educational credential that demands higher

remuneration in order to attract participants to the project, or there is a prevailing wage rate for the type of work being conducted that is higher than the financial support provided by the ministry. In these cases, any additional financial support must come from the sponsor. The top-up, and any deductions applicable to this top-up amount, are the sponsor's responsibility.

The sponsor top-up is not considered as insurable earnings; as such, there is no deduction for Employment Insurance premiums. The sponsor top-up is, however, considered as earnings for all other purposes such as Income Tax, Canada Pension Plan, Quebec Pension Plan, and vacation pay.

3.3.2 Participant Work Hours

The number of hours a participant works on a project should be addressed in the initial negotiation of the agreement with the sponsor.

Participants will work the usual number of hours considered full time for that sponsor.

Although 40 hours per week is used to calculate OJCP financial support (40 hours multiplied by minimum wage), there is no requirement that participants must work 40 hours per week.

The number of hours worked per week must comply with Ontario employment standards legislation.

Projects that involve part-time work may also be acceptable in exceptional situations (e.g., for projects focused on Persons with Disabilities).

3.3.3 Overtime Hours

- Any hours worked above the total stated in the agreement shall be considered as overtime (extra duty).
- The ministry does not provide any financial support for overtime.
- If the sponsor requests the participant to work overtime, the sponsor must enter into a separate agreement with the participant.
    - o The overtime work would constitute regular employment for which the sponsor must pay wages and all mandatory related employment costs.
    - o For the participant, the overtime work would constitute a part-time job and as such the income would have to be reported if the participant is in receipt of Employment Insurance (EI) Part I Benefits.
    - o Pay for overtime work is not considered top-up.
- For overtime activities for the same OJCP project that the participant is taking part in, the income received for overtime activities are non-insurable – that is those

hours cannot be used to establish an EI claim.

3.3.4 Incremental Supports

OJCP participants may receive up to $1,000 in total for the following incremental costs:

- dependent care
- transportation
- costs of meeting employment needs because of a disability
- living away from home

Incremental costs considered for financial support must not overlap with any costs already paid for through direct training. Exceptions over the $1,000 limit are permitted for persons with disabilities to cover costs related to assistive devices and other placement-related accommodations.

3.3.5 Participant Recruitment

Once a project is approved, the sponsor must commence the recruitment process for participants by advertising the position(s)

A participant can commence their work experience on an OJCP project after:
- the sponsor selects and interviews the individual;
- the individual is assessed, and a plan is established by an Employment Service (ES) provider or Integrated Employment Services (IES) provider;
- the ES provider/IES provider sends to the ministry an OJCP package that includes among other documents the OJCP Participant Application; and,
- the ministry reviews, assess and approves the individual and enters into an agreement with the individual (participant).

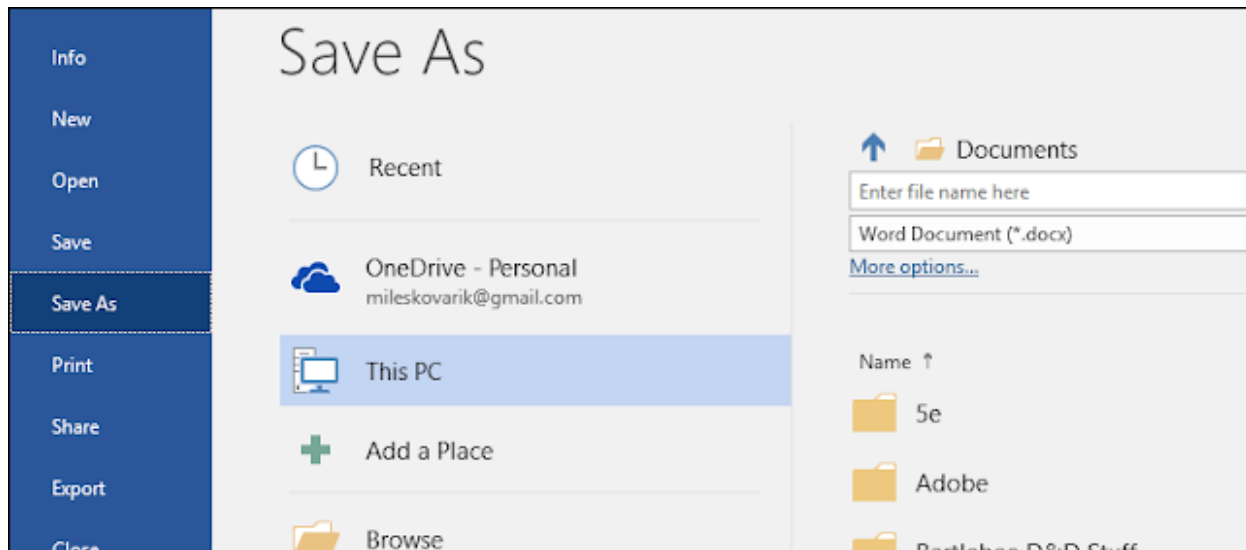**Appendix: Instructions on How to Convert an Excel or Microsoft Word Document to a PDF File**

**Step 1:** Open the document you want to convert, and then click the "File" tab.
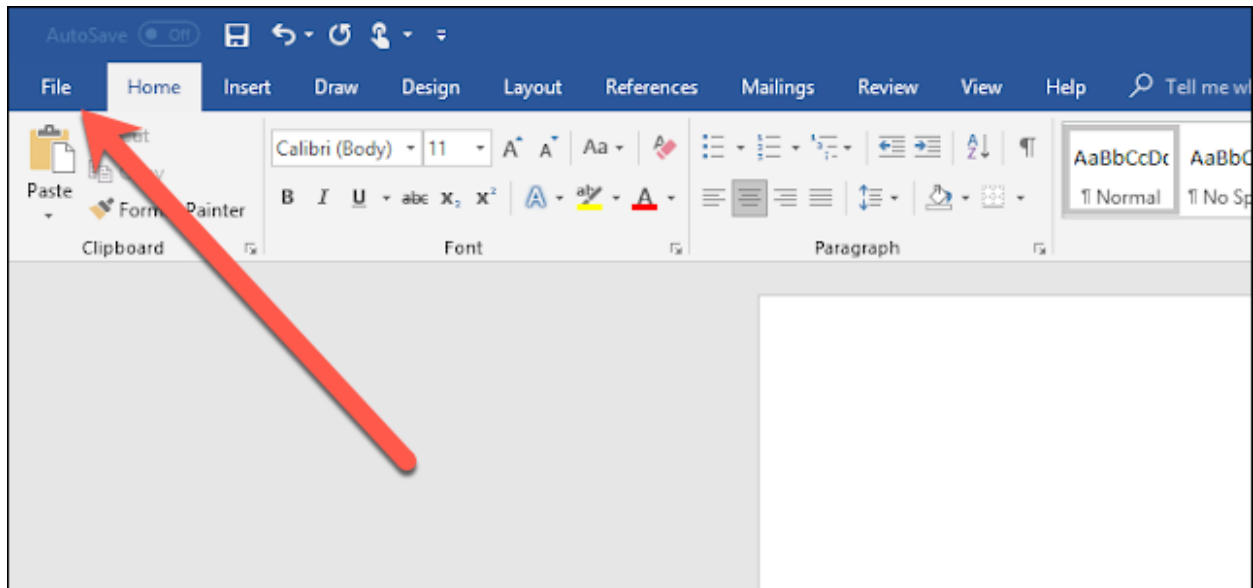
Step 2: On the backstage screen, select "Save As" from the list on the left.
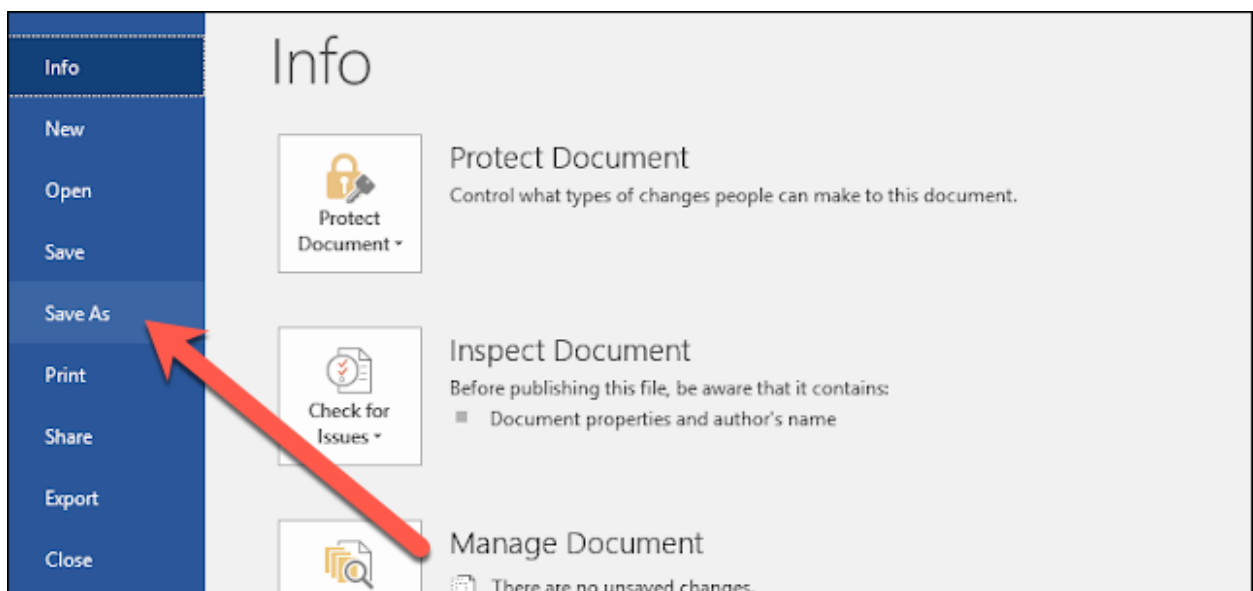
Step 3: On the Save As screen, select where you would like the PDF to besaved (OneDrive, your PC, a particular folder, etc.).

Step 4: Next, click the dropdown arrow on the right side of the "Save astype" box, and select "PDF (*.pdf)" from the dropdown menu.
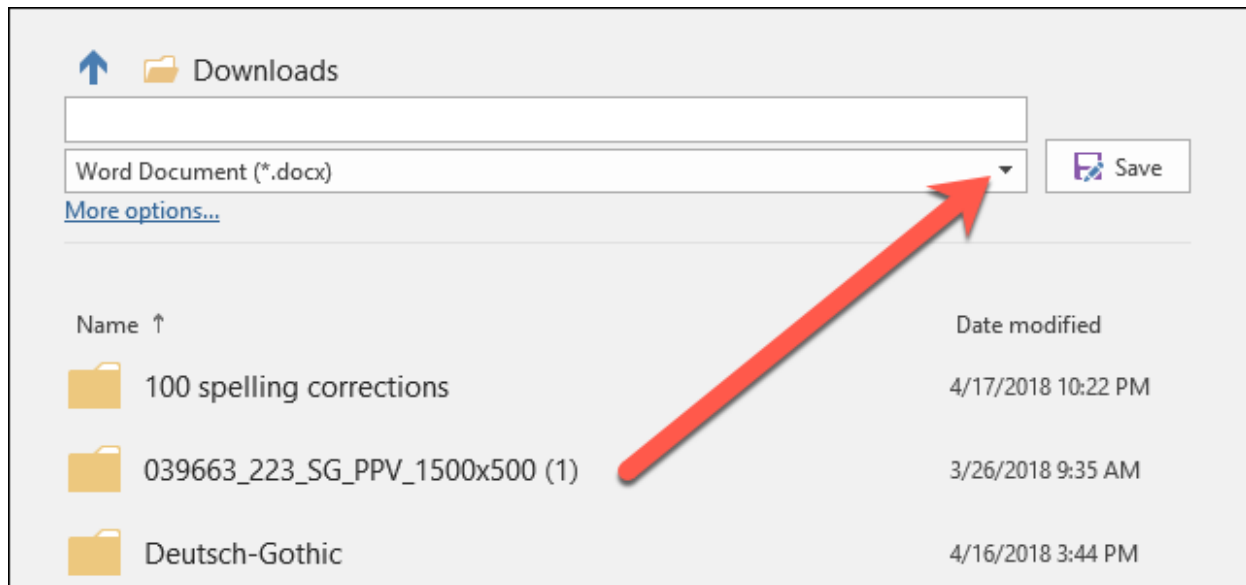
Step 5: After saving the PDF, you'll be returned to your Word document,and the new PDF will open automatically in your default PDF viewer.

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