

# Skills Development/Community Coordinator Program Guidelines

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Department of Labour and Advanced Education /  
Employment Nova Scotia LAE/ENS

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## 1 Skills Development/Community Coordinator (SD/CC) Introduction

Skills Development / Community Coordinator is a Program administered by Employment Nova Scotia through the Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS). LaMPSS is a common method for administering Labour Market Programs in Nova Scotia, focused on providing consistency in processes and improving services to labour market agreement holders.

LaMPSS provides organizations with self serve capability, enabling them to apply for funding online for some labour market programs as well as submitting required financial and activity reports online.

All organizations entering into an agreement for delivering Labour Market Programs in Nova Scotia must first be registered as a LaMPSS organization. This is a one-time registration process. Once registered, we will provide you with the ability to utilize the LaMPSS self service capabilities. If your organization has not previously registered with LaMPSS, you can request a LaMPSS registration form from the Provincial contact identified in these guidelines.

Please read this entire Program Guidelines Document. The information contained in this Program Guideline document will become part of an agreement with the Province for delivery of Labour Market Programs.

**A Skills Development (SD/CC) Community Coordinator recipient receives a contribution to support the costs of a project designed to help eligible participants obtain the skills they need to gain employment by providing them with financial assistance, where required, to help them with certain costs associated with taking a training course. Eligible recipients include: businesses, federal crown corporations (where deemed appropriate) and comparable provincial crown corporations, individuals, organizations, public health and educational institutions, municipal governments and band/tribal councils.**

**Community Coordinators will be incorporated, non-profit or community-based organizations that are well established and with whom Employment Nova Scotia has had a successful history in contribution agreement administration. The Service Provider must also comply with all program criteria set out in the guidelines.**

### Program Guiding Principles

- SD-CC assists eligible individuals to obtain the skills they need for employment, ranging from basic to advanced skills through direct assistance to individuals.
- SD-CC is intended to support individuals whose Return to Work Action Plan (RTWAP) identifies that they need new or additional skills to facilitate their re-entry into employment.
- The CC-SD benefit provides a mechanism that allows Insured Participants to make an appropriate financial contribution to the cost of the intervention where required.
- CC-SD is designed to reinforce the concept that individual (insured) participants can take control of their future and supports the concept that clients who plan their own future, commit to an action plan and contribute to the implementation of the plan, are most likely to succeed.

## Guiding Principles

The funding process will be guided by the following principles:

- *Maximum benefits to unemployed clients:* Successful proposals/applicants will demonstrate benefits to clients with respect to their reintegration into the labour market;
- *Organizational appropriateness:* The organization/agency/business delivering the program/project must be experienced in providing the type of program or service applied for;
- *Demonstrated need:* The successful proposal will target the needs of unemployed Nova Scotia clients and will not duplicate but rather complement existing services;
- *Fairness and transparency:* Clear, published criteria are intended to give all eligible organizations an equal opportunity to access funding;
- *Balance:* Approved projects will benefit urban and rural areas, as well as Acadian and Francophone communities; and special interest groups;
- *Clear accountability:* Accountability measures will ensure that public dollars are invested wisely and results are achieved.

## **Funding review factors – an overview of how proposals will be reviewed**

| <i>Factor</i>   | <i>Description</i>   |
|---|--|
| <i>Compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the specific program applied for</i> | Application must meet the program requirements and program guidelines, and must include all necessary completed documentation.   |
| <i>Organizational appropriateness:</i>  | <p>Proposal must demonstrate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization’s vision, mandate and mission, along with overall objectives and goals are relevant to the proposed project to be delivered. For example, an organization that normally offers research services should not be offering to deliver client training</li> <li>• Organization’s experience in delivering direct client-specific programs;</li> <li>• Organization has good standing with the local registrar of societies or other governing body</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Organizational capacity/:</i>  | <p>To ensure that an organization is viable and has the capacity to deliver the proposed project, your proposal must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show alternate funding sources if applicable</li> <li>• Demonstrate financial viability</li> <li>• Demonstrate adequate client and budget tracking systems</li> <li>• Demonstrate community support and partnerships</li> <li>• Show previous experience administering a project of this nature</li> <li>• Demonstrate that staff are trained and experienced in the services offered</li> </ul> <p>Officers will also consider previous performance with respect to the submission of financial claims and activity reports, management of</p> |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
|                                    | slippage and HR issues and results achieved in comparison to goals and objectives.   |
| <i>Demonstration of need:</i>      | The proposal must demonstrate the need for the proposed project in your community, how these needs were identified and how the project does not duplicate existing services. Sources of information could include evaluation results or client feedback/surveys. |
| <i>Relevance and significance:</i> | ENS will only provide funding for projects that contribute to identified priorities  |
| <i>Availability of funding:</i>    | Decisions will be dependent on amount of funding available.  |

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Employment Nova Scotia (ENS)**

Defines the program, sets baseline standards for service delivery and quality.

This includes:

- Designing the program and setting program policy.
- Providing service guidelines.
- Developing reporting requirements and tools.
- Providing advice and guidance that clarifies ENS expectations.
- Ensuring transparency and accountability by monitoring and evaluating delivery performance against agreement commitments and guideline compliance.
- Developing a strategy around the appropriate use of Community Coordinators under a specific employment benefit through its local business plan.
- Providing opportunities to eligible recipients to express an interest in developing proposals through transparent and fair competitive business practices.
- Ensuring that the Community Coordinator agreements are consistent with the criteria established for the specific employment benefit.
- Setting out explicit objectives and results to be achieved in the agreement.
- Negotiating and entering into agreements with selected Community Coordinators to deliver programming under a specific employment benefit.
- Conducting a thorough risk assessment to determine appropriate monitoring requirements.
- Monitoring the terms of the agreement including administrative and financial activities and client agreement activities.
- Ensuring that the Community Coordinator is compliant with privacy requirements as outlined in the terms of the agreement regarding personal information by obtaining the appropriate releases from clients for information sharing purposes.
- Ensuring that the claimant has provided adequate documentation to support the Section 25 referral.

- Providing the claimant with confirmation of the Section 25 Referral.

### **Community Coordinators**

In administering a project, the Community Coordinator is solely responsible for:

- Implementing the project as set out in the Agreement and guidelines.
- Promoting their services in a community and making them known to Employment Assistance Services (EAS) service providers, employers and/or insured participants
- Submitting reports as requested by Employment Nova Scotia.
- Making any and all payments and deductions required by law with respect to the staff employed to administer the project including those required for Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, Workers' Compensation and income tax.
- Making any and all payments and deductions required by law with respect to individuals for whom financial assistance has been provided under the program.
- Ensuring fair access to assistance under the project by applicants.
- Establishing a review process that will provide applicants, who are refused assistance and who think that the refusal was not justified, with an opportunity to have the decision of the Community Coordinator reviewed by an evaluator.
- Reconsidering the application, taking into account the evaluator's findings; and maintaining all appeal and review information and decisions on file and making it available to the Employment Nova Scotia for review upon request.
- Designing their own application forms and/or processes which would include a review of the case manager's statement for recommendations
- In consultation with the EAS Service Provider(s), making their CC application forms available to clients.
- Considering the "Return on investment" and "employed results" when determining the decision to provide financial assistance to an individual participating in a SD intervention.
- Contacting clients to provide support and necessary control during the intervention to ensure success. This does not preclude the Case Manager from also providing support to the clients.

### **Financial Assistance**

When providing financial assistance to an eligible participant, the Community Coordinator is solely responsible for:

- ensuring there is a written agreement which describes the obligations of the eligible participant and outlines the conditions under which the assistance is being provided;
- exercising due diligence in managing the funding of individual agreements, including:
  - monitoring the attendance, progress of each eligible participant through periodic contact with the student and training
  - Accounting for all dispersed funds

- Making all reasonable efforts to recover any overpayments made to insured participants (please refer to the Terms and Conditions-Assignment of Debt);
- Making proper deductions for income tax in accordance with CRA on payments to clients and timely remittance of these deductions
- ensuring that insured participants who are in receipt of active EI benefits request approval of a Claimant Referral Section 25 of the *EI Act* - Community Coordinator (EMP5267) from ENS prior to starting the training intervention; and supply the following information to the department :
  - SIN
  - Surname, given name and initial
  - Resident address including street address/PO box/City/Province/ Postal code
  - Telephone number
  - Name of training institution, course name, start date of training, end date of training
  - EI claim information, gross weekly EI rate and EI benefit period end date
- Keeping records of the client's progress and collecting required statistical data on target groups, etc., as set out in the contribution agreement with the Department.

### **Overview of Application Process**

Organizations who wish to apply for funding must be registered LaMPSS users, complete and submit an application form in its entirety, along with required supporting documents and meet organization eligibility requirements.

For information on how to become a LaMPSS user please call 1-877-223-0888.

### **Service Standards**

Internal service standards must be developed and monitored by the service provider and will be provided to Employment Nova Scotia upon request.

### **Participant eligibility requirements**

CC funded Skill Development training programs are available to individuals who meet the definition of an insured participant as outlined in Section 58 of the EI Act and have a Return to Work Action Plan (RTWAP) that identifies Skills Development as an appropriate intervention.

## 2 Applying for Skills Development / Community Coordinator Program Funding

All applicants must become LaMPSS users, for more information on this process please call 1-877-223-0888.

### Applying Using a Paper Application Form

Please Contact 1-877-223-0888 to obtain information on the application process. NOTE: The Self Serve application process is not available for Community Coordinator programs. The financial and activity reporting functions WILL be available once an agreement has been approved.

Applications should be submitted to a local Employment Nova Scotia office, and are subject to all of the terms of this document.

### Completing an Application Form

This section provides supporting information required in completing the application form contents for LWD/ENS/SD CC Program.

#### Organization Information

Enter the name and complete mailing address for your organization.

If your organization name or mailing address has changed since registering for LaMPSS, please contact your Provincial contact to obtain a Registration Change form to update your information for payment purposes.

#### Project Details

Please provide the following:

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>        | Provide a title specific to this project. Please include SD Community Coordinator in this title. |
| <b>Agreement Start Date</b> | Provide the proposed start date for project.   |
| <b>Agreement End Date</b>   | Provide the proposed end date for project.   |

#### Past Agreements

Indicate if this is a renewal of a past agreement, along with the agreement number.

#### Project Description

In this section provide a brief summary of the project. You should include such details as: a brief summary of the activities, intended duration of agreement (in weeks), client group and number of clients to be served (including a separate indication of carry-over clients if applicable), geographic area to be served. Please note that this section has a limit of 300 words, you will have the opportunity to provide more detail about each activity, as well as budget detail, policy information, client service, intake etc. through attachments. This will be explained in the mandatory attachment section of these guidelines.

#### *Attach a detailed project description / proposal to the application*

You may attach any other relevant information; this is not a mandatory attachment.

### Agreement Contact

Provide the appropriate primary contact for your organization including the title, contact phone numbers and e-mail address. Please note that this contact should be an individual empowered to negotiate all or some portions of the agreement.

### Language Preference

Provide your language preference.

### Project Location(s)

Please provide the address information for the location of the activities. If you have not yet secured a location, please enter your main organization address.

### Participants

Please indicate the expected number of clients in each participant group to be served. The actual number of clients served in each participant group will be required for activity reporting.

- African Nova Scotians
- Persons with Disabilities

### Project Activities

The table below outlines the required information for each eligible activity for the SD CC Program. This is the complete set of eligible activities.

| <b>Agreement Management – Community Coordinator</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Brief Description</b>                            | <p>Processes to manage SD agreements with individual clients</p> <p>Delivery of the CC-SD model should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of participant application/RTWAP</li> <li>• Negotiating and signing SD agreements with approved clients</li> <li>• Inform client case managers of intervention including the project number</li> <li>• Making direct payments to individual SD agreement holders</li> <li>• Monitoring financial commitments</li> <li>• Completion of close out processes for all agreement files</li> <li>• Follow-up with clients and evaluate success.</li> </ul> <p>Please describe the activities being delivered, the client group, plans for delivery including: how you intend to select participants, market services, negotiate and sign agreements with clients, make payments to clients, monitor</p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>client progress and agreement, close out client files, complete follow up and evaluate success.</p> <p>Provide a monthly breakdown of the number of clients</p> |
| <b>Where does this activity take place</b> | Identify the location for each activity.   |
| <b>Expected number of participants</b>     | Provide the expected number of individuals that you intend to enter into Skills Development Agreements with.   |

### Project Budget

The following table outlines the eligible costs and specific instructions for each budget category funded by the CC- SD Program. On the application, please provide complete project costs and requested amounts by budget category. HST should be included in each category. You must also provide the rationale and details for each requested amount in the “Itemized Budget Template” template. This can be downloaded from the ENS website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/employmentnovascotia/forms-resources/>

. This worksheet must be attached to your application as a Supporting Document.

| <b>Budget Category</b>                    | <b>Eligible Costs</b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Program Delivery</b>                   |   |
| <b>Salaries and Benefits</b>              |   |
| <b>Salaries</b>                           | <p>Staff Salaries</p> <p>Please refer to <b>Salary Policy</b> in the Terms and Conditions section of agreement.</p> <p>In this section of the application include the total budget for this category. Provide the details about each position in the Itemized Budget Template.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/employmentnovascotia/forms-resources/">http://www.gov.ns.ca/employmentnovascotia/forms-resources/</a></p> |
| <b>MERC</b>                               | Includes benefits; CPP, EI, Vacation Pay based on wages and non locked in RRSP employer contributions where applicable, considering maximum yearly contributions  |
| <b>Other HR Related Costs</b>             | Includes health, dental, insurance premiums, pension<br>NOTE: Maximum 50% employer contribution will be supported for such things as pensions and medical plans.<br>For more information, please refer to the Salary Policy in the Terms and Conditions section of this document.   |
| <b>Participant Program Delivery Costs</b> |   |
| <b>Participant</b>                        |   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b><i>Incremental Supports</i></b>           | Living expenses, dependent care, travel, Tuition, books, student fees. Other instructional costs should be considered in limited and exceptional circumstances only.   |
| <b><i>Disability Supports</i></b>            | Includes participant supports such as: note takers, sign interpreters, incremental costs, adaptive technology, applicable staff training.  |
| <b><i>Operational Costs</i></b>              |  |
| <b><i>Standard</i></b>                       |  |
| <b><i>Recurring</i></b>                      | Banking, utilities, telephone, fax, internet, postage, courier, printing, photocopier.   |
| <b><i>Professional Fees</i></b>              | Includes Building Maintenance, Bookkeeping, Equipment Maintenance, Security, Required Membership fees for staff, business licenses, permits, IT, legal fees  |
| <b><i>Staff Training and Development</i></b> | Can include conferences and short term training courses/programs for staff; must be relevant and reasonable according to the duration of the project. Diploma and complete degree programs are not applicable. Includes associated registration, mileage, meal allowances & accommodation. Limited to conferences in Nova Scotia and subject to negotiation.   |
| <b><i>Equipment</i></b>                      | Includes purchase /lease/repairs or rent of computers, fax machines, photocopiers, furniture, software, other.   |
| <b><i>Facility Lease/Rent</i></b>            | Includes applicable lease\rent costs for both non-applicant owned and applicant-owned premises. For applicant-owned premises, the following formula will be applied:<br><i>85% x fair market value</i><br>Although the applicant may use a variety of calculations to determine an amount to include in the proposal, in all cases the negotiated cost cannot be higher than the value of lost opportunity.  |
| <b><i>Advertising/Promotion</i></b>          | Includes advertising, brochures, promotion, and signage.   |
| <b><i>Facility Repairs</i></b>               | Includes applicable repair /leasehold improvements for either non applicant owned or applicant owned premises.   |
| <b><i>Office Supplies</i></b>                | Includes materials supplies used to run the day to day operations of the project such as paper, pens, pencils, binders, subscriptions (Negotiated based on historical costs or substantiated estimates)  |
| <b><i>Travel</i></b>                         | Travel for staff directly delivering the project, includes transportation costs, taxi, kilometeric charges, etc., per staff travel claims. Due diligence must be demonstrated in reimbursing for overnight accommodations and costs associated with out-of-province travel must be negotiated with ENS in advance. Provide details, including, mileage rate, reason for travel, number of trips, accommodation and meals, etc. Mileage and meal allowances must not exceed provincial rates. |
| <b><i>Insurance</i></b>                      | Includes fire, theft, accidental, WCB  |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>Exceptional</i>              |   |
| <i>Capital</i>                  | Items in excess of 1000\$ including HST   |
| <i>Administrative</i>           |   |
| <i>Administrative-Inclusive</i> | % of total agreement value. Covers ENS contribution to centralized administration costs, previously considered OI. Refer to the last page of the guidelines for a complete list of eligible costs in this category. |

### **Project Cash Flow**

Please provide monthly a projection of expenditures.

### **Legal Signing Offers**

Provide the appropriate signing officers for this project agreement as well as the legal signing requirements for your organization.

### **Supporting Documentation**

The table below outlines documents that must be included with the CC- Skills Development Program application. These attachments are mandatory. Your application will not be reviewed without these attachments.

NOTE: Electronic information should be submitted via email to an identified Officer. At time of application please confirm the responsible officer and email address with Employment Nova Scotia.

| <b>Document Attachments</b>      | <b>Requirements</b>  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Job Descriptions</i>          | Applicants should provide job descriptions for all positions requested to be fully or partially funded.  |
| <i>Organization Overview</i>     | Please provide the mission, vision or mandate of your organization. How is it structured (i.e., board of directors) how long has the organization been operating. Provide history of agreements with Employment Nova Scotia, or other funders including past results etc. Describe why organization is the appropriate service provider for this program. (Maximum 2 pages). |
| <i>Itemized Budget Breakdown</i> | Budget supporting document (retrieve from ENS website).  |
| <i>Policy</i>                    | HR policies. Please submit sections of your HR policy referring to all types of leave, travel policy/rates, employment benefits, etc.  |
| <i>Service Standards</i>         | Organizations Service Standards for wait times, client application and payment processing  |
| <i>Supplementary Information</i> | Client flow documents- please describe how clients are served from intake to close-out including application, assessment, financial negotiation, monitoring and close-out process. Provide copies of Client Agreement, Consent Form and Appeal Process   |

### **3 Skills Development/Community Coordinator Program Reporting Requirements**

#### **Reporting Online Using LaMPSS Self Serve**

Reports should be submitted online using LaMPSS self serve functionality at: [www.gov.ns.ca/lampss](http://www.gov.ns.ca/lampss).

The requirements for Activity and Financial reports for your Agreement for SD-CC are outlined in the agreement. Reports should be submitted online using LaMPSS self serve functionality.

NOTE: Organizations that submit paper applications are still able to submit electronic activity and financial reports.

#### **Completing an Activity Report**

This section provides supporting information required to complete the activity report.

## Project Activities

The table below outlines the information reporting requirements for each eligible activity for the SD- CC Program. Provide this information for each activity in your Agreement.

| <b>Agreement Management – Community Coordinator</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Update / Status this Period</b>                  | <p>Please provide information about the participant(s) progress to date achievements, issues/ concerns.</p> <p>Please provide the number of applications/ RTWAP assessed , agreements approved /signed, financial monitors completed, follow-up/ close out of files completed</p> |
| <b>Number of unique participants</b>                | Provide the actual number of participants you have signed SD agreements with during this reporting period.  |

## Participant Groups

Enter the actual number of participants during this reporting period for each target group. Include participants in all relevant target groups. (i.e., a participant may be part of more than one target group).

## Supporting Documentation

You can attach documents supporting your activity report.

## Reporting Notes

Provide any additional information.

## Financial Report

This section provides supporting information required to complete the financial report.

### Budget Flexibility

Sponsors may adjust spending within a cost category without prior Employment Nova Scotia (ENS) discussion or approval as long as the total budget amount for the cost category is not altered. ***The exception is the Salaries and Benefits category as the wage category has its own “Wage Policy”.***

Sponsors may adjust costs between categories of Operational Costs, Standard and Exceptional and Capital Assets by up to 10% without ENS discussion or approval.

Sponsors may move funds from the Operational Cost Categories to increase the Participant Program Delivery Cost categories by up to 10% without prior ENS discussion or approval. Sponsors must notify the department in writing of any adjustments to the Project Budget under this category.

Any adjustments to the Project Budget other than those noted above must be approved by ENS prior to the adjustment being made.

With prior written consent of Employment Nova Scotia sponsors may also exercise budget flexibility beyond 10%, so long as the total agreement value is not affected, and project activities are not

impacted. ***The exception is the Salaries and Benefits category as the wage category has its own “Wage Policy”.***

Sponsors may not make adjustments if those adjustments result in any increase in the amount of total contribution from Employment Nova Scotia. Any increase to the agreement value requires a request for an amendment.

### **Project Costs**

Provide the actual costs for each eligible expense for this reporting period.

### **Project Cash Flow**

Please provide any updates to your cash flow projections

### **Supporting Documentation**

You can attach any supporting documents with your financial report.

### **Reporting Notes**

Provide any additional information.

### **Submitting Your Reports**

Once your organization has finalized the report including the attachment of any supporting documents, the report may be submitted to the Department using the LaMPSS self-serve system.

In this section of the report enter the following information that would have been received when your organization was registered as in LaMPSS: **organizations ID, username and password** and click the “submit” button. This will connect you with the LaMPSS system to submit the report.

## **4 Program Terms & Conditions**

### **Salary Policy**

The following approach will be used for identifying wages as negotiated.

Wages will continue to be negotiated with organizations by position based on a defined number of hours per week and an agreed hourly wage; however, once the wages are negotiated and approved, the Financial Budget will no longer show this detailed breakdown. The agreement enables budget changes provided they are mutually agreed to by the contracting Parties.

**NOTE: While position wages may be adjusted based on operational requirements, the total wages per annum cannot exceed the maximum amounts specified. Any wage adjustments, including temporary acting pay or temporary replacements will be guided by the following limitations:**

- **changes must not result in additional funds being added to the total annual wage budget or overall budget,**

- **project activities must remain consistent with original project objectives, and**
- **wage change decisions must not negatively impact project performance, expected targets or service to clients:**
- **re-allocation of wages from vacant positions to other positions will not warrant permanent rate increases to other positions;**

**AND:** No positions can be eliminated without ENS prior approval and a corresponding decrease in the budget as approved by ENS;

**AND:** Wage increases outside the negotiated approved amounts will not be considered for future negotiation purposes. ENS wage contributions and any increases will be based on the approved amount of the last previous agreement.

In addition to the wages, ENS is setting limits on the contribution toward employee pension, RRSP and other HR benefits and medical plans. The common contribution for the majority of private & public pension plans is 50% paid by the employer. We have determined that this is a reasonable contribution and have set this as a maximum.

Also note that if the contribution is for a private RRSP rather than a registered pension plan, the sponsor contribution is included in the employees overall income and is subject to income tax. Please verify with CRA how to report and tax this income.

**Centralized Administration (Organization Infrastructure) Eligible Cost Listing:**

- Professional fees to cover centralized administration salaries
- Meeting room rentals
- Board and Volunteer travel ( within Nova Scotia only)
- Director's liability Insurance
- Board expenses for meetings, food expenses in limited circumstances
- Training and Development for Board members
- Audit costs
- Additional leasehold improvements, equipment costs, office supplies, advertising, rent, repairs,

**Ineligible costs:**

- Costs associated with fundraising activities
- Canada Revenue Agency or payroll penalties
- Parking Tickets
- Parking Passes
- Food ( not typically an eligible expense except in cases where there is a modest offer of nourishment at a conference or if a working lunch is required)
- Legal fees and court awards for inappropriate dismissal
- Illegal activities
- Membership fees for private clubs, (i.e. gyms, golf courses, etc.)

- Staff salary bonuses
- Since there is flexibility to make adjustments to salaries under the new wage policy, no further salary top ups or increase in hours for individuals negotiated in the wage category is allowable under administration.
- Purchase of alcoholic beverages
- Purchase of illegal substances
- Unreasonable gifts for recognition
- Costs incurred before or after the start date of the project
- Losses and deficits incurred by funded organizations

### **Community Coordinator Terms and Conditions**

When carrying out a project described above, Community Coordinators are not agents of the Province. They are neither administering an employment benefit on behalf of the Province or providing services to the Province. The project is an activity of the Community Coordinator, which it is carrying out for itself within the range of activities eligible for support under the applicable employment benefit.

The Community Coordinator is independent of the Province and responsible for meeting the project objectives and obligations, including reporting results achieved and expenditures incurred within the terms of the contribution agreement. This arm's length relationship must be clearly understood by organizations funded for Community Coordinator activity and reflected in their business practices. The arrangement is a financial assistance arrangement only.

Like any other organization funded under a contribution agreement, Community Coordinators are not authorized to contract for, or to incur any obligation on behalf of, the Province of Nova Scotia, or represent themselves in any way as acting on behalf of the Province in their dealings with eligible participants or other organizations.

This means, among other things, that when disbursing funding to participants they must not use Employment Nova Scotia agreements, schedules and other forms. They must develop their own forms that do not in any way reference ENS or depict any appearance of an agency relationship between the Community Coordinator and Province.

It is also to be understood that while Employment Nova Scotia or an Employment Assistance Services (EAS) provider may refer individuals to a Community Coordinator, the Community Coordinator is under no obligation to accept their client's application for assistance. The Community Coordinator makes the ultimate decision to select which individuals to assist under the project, subject to meeting the following minimum eligibility requirements. Participants must:

- be insured participants (as defined under section 58 of the *EI Act*, Part II and in Chapter 1 of the Employment Benefits and Support Measures Operational Guidelines under HRSDC Programs);

- be case managed and have a Return-to-Work Action Plan (RTWAP) which identifies the need for an intervention consistent with the activity for which the Community Coordinator is receiving financial support under a benefit.

Insured participants who are active EI claimants must also receive approval under section 25 of the EI Act. Employment Nova Scotia has retained approval authority under Section 25; it has not been designated to Community Coordinators.

Selection and approval of applicants should reflect regional/ local priorities and be based on local labour market needs. SD must be identified as an appropriate intervention in the applicant's RTWAP. The candidate must satisfy the SD Coordinator that the skills training is appropriate and falls within the criteria below:

### **Eligible Training Providers**

Training institutions must be either registered, not required to be registered or be exempt, in keeping with provincial/territorial regulations and standards.

### **Eligible Training**

Agreements for training cannot exceed three years in duration. The actual funding assistance cannot exceed each school term and future funding must be based on results achieved as well as budget availability.

Training supported by a Community Coordinator must be considered 'institutional' training (part of a defined curriculum).

Eligible Training is defined as:

- Skills training (part of a defined curriculum) which provides trainees with the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain employment in a given occupation.
- Adult Basic Education defined as below the post-secondary level, consisting of elementary and secondary school courses (academic upgrading) including numeracy and basic literacy courses.
- Second language training (in English or French) is defined as language training specifically designed to remove an employment barrier because of a lack of fluency in one of the two official languages and should only be considered where the client can function in neither.
- Stand-alone training such as safety, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS) and Industrial First Aid can be considered if the request is supported by a bona-fide requirement for employment and will directly enable the participant to become employed.
- University training can be supported if it is occupationally specific and leading to a degree, certificate or diploma. When the University training is multi-year, the Community Coordinator will only support the final year of the program.

- For correspondence, web-based and distance education, the Community Coordinator shall ensure that a documented rationale addresses the following considerations: availability and accessibility of other training institutions and training methods; industry recognition of certification and training provider; ability and motivation of applicant to work independently; and the reason why the applicant cannot still maintain their ability to seek work while participating in this type of training. The training must take place in a structured and interactive environment where benchmarks and timelines are present to measure progress and completion.
- A Community Coordinator may support a participant in a work placement or practicum that is a required part of the course of study (part of curriculum) and is necessary for graduation.
- A Community Coordinator may support a clinical placement only when is it a requirement for graduation and is not more than 50% of the total program duration.
- The main priority is that clients will access training at Nova Scotia institutions. Training outside of Nova Scotia can only be supported if the program is recognized in Nova Scotia and applicable to the Nova Scotia labour market and one of the following conditions is evident:
  - Training program is not available in Nova Scotia.
  - Requested training is more cost-effective than if taken in Nova Scotia.

The Community Coordinator shall not support insured participants requesting approval for training that is provided by or in consultation with employers if any of the following situations are present:

- Clients who are employed (i.e., on the employer's payroll, including those on a leave of absence) while being trained.
- In situations where it is suspected that employers have laid off individuals to upgrade their skills before they return to the same employer, and these individuals have marketable skills.
- If the training provider is also an employer then the training they offer must be an ongoing activity of the organization. The training being delivered should be part of their business line in addition to their regular business. An employer who is involved in training only their own staff would not be considered an eligible training provider.
- In situations where training will prepare clients to work for a specific employer, one of two conditions must be met in order to be eligible for support:
  - The employer guarantees, in writing, employment which is full-time, non-seasonal and long-term in nature, if the applicant completes the training successfully, or
  - The applicant will acquire transferable skills that will prepare him/her to move directly into occupations with other employers, without further training.

**Eligible Costs (only eligible after approval of the client application) : Tuition** as defined by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is determined as:

- Admission fees
- Charges for the use of library or laboratory facilities
- Exemption Fees

- Examination Fees
- Application Fee (only if the student subsequently enrolls in the institution)
- Confirmation Fees
- Charges for certificate, diploma or degree
- Membership or seminar fees that are specifically related to an academic program and its administration
- Academic fees

**Other Instructional Costs** which are imposed by the training institution, excluding regular tuition fees, which can be associated with and considered essential for the participant to participate in the course.

**Basic Living Expenses** (excluding Employment Insurance income benefits)

Cost associated with basic living expenses such as food, clothing, shelter and utilities. Costs such as credit card payments, car loans, recreation/entertainment cost, should be taken into consideration only to determine if the individual is in a financial position to attend training but should not be considered in the amount of financial assistance that the Community Coordinator will contribute.

**Dependent Care Costs**

Incremental costs incurred for the care of a child or other person who is dependent on the insured participant for care while participant is in school or employment program.

**Other Personal Supports and Transportation**

Incremental costs associated with the individual's participation in training such as uniform, footwear and safety equipment. Transportation costs are those costs incurred for incremental daily commuting expenses to and from the training institution. Accommodation costs may be incurred while attending training when the training institution is located at such a distance from the client's ordinary place of residence that necessitates the individual to maintain both a primary and secondary place of residence.

Financial assistance for living expenses must not be provided to clients serving the traditional two week waiting period for EI benefits even if the waiting period falls in the middle of the course, except in cases of hardship. Hardship is defined as being deprived of the necessities of life such as food, clothing, medical attention, shelter and utilities.

The Community Coordinator will not provide financial assistance for capital assets (i.e., a computer), unless it is specifically for disability needs required to enable the client to take the identified training.

**Non-Eligible Insured Participants**

Insured participants who have already started training on their own are not eligible to receive financial assistance from the Community Coordinator, except in exceptional circumstances. An example of an exceptional circumstance would be where an individual commenced training and was being supported financially by his/her spouse. As a result of a marriage breakdown (separation, divorce or death) the individual no longer has the financial resources to complete training without assistance. Financial assistance would not be retroactive but would commence from the start date of the agreement.

Insured participants meeting the definition of a "full-time student" will not be eligible for financial assistance. A full-time student is defined as a person who, at the time of requesting assistance from the

Community Coordinator is/was registered full-time (as defined by the educational institution in question) at an educational institution during the present/last academic year who is intending to return to school in the upcoming academic year and who has not made the 3 years transition from school to work.

Insured participants who are seasonally employed shall not be eligible to receive financial assistance, except in extenuating circumstances where the training will:

- Lengthen the period of seasonal employment thereby decreasing the lay-off period
- Provide skills that lead to year-round employment
- Provide skills necessary to find alternate work in the off-season
- Prevent job loss where the seasonal job will change and the employee will need new skills that the employer cannot provide. Training will occur while the client is unemployed
- Provide a worker with higher wages needed to avoid drawing government transfer of social assistance

### **Financial Assistance**

The Community Coordinator, with the written agreement of the insured participant, may forward cheques for tuition made out to the participant in care of the training institution.

### **Privacy Considerations**

Community Coordinators are required to collect personal information from individuals in order to verify their qualification as insured participants, as well to enable the department to evaluate the CC activities in assisting qualified individuals to obtain employment.

Community Coordinators are also responsible for informing individuals of the purposes for which their personal information is being collected, and obtain consent for the sharing of that information with the Province and or Employment Assistance Service (EAS) provider. They must also inform clients of their rights under the provincial *Privacy Act* to view their personal information when it is held by the Province as a result of the disclosure.

Community Coordinators must clearly document in their application forms and agreements that individuals have been informed on how and for what purposes their personal information will be used and with whom it will be shared. It must be documented also that the individuals have provided consent to the use and sharing of that information as it has been explained to them.

The Community Coordinator will be required to treat all collected participant information as confidential and ensure that all necessary measures have been taken to protect the information against unauthorized release or disclosure. This includes appropriate care in their use of electronic forms, information record keeping, information sharing, and the disposition of computers and similar electronic storage devices when being replaced or no longer used for project purposes.

The Community Coordinator will:

- a. Make inquiries of the individual to confirm that they are unemployed
- b. Where the individual is confirmed to be unemployed, collect from the individual and provide to the department the following information about the individual
  - SIN
  - Surname, first name
  - Date of birth
  - Street address, including apartment number, city, province, postal code
  - Date that the client requested assistance from the CC under this employment benefit
- c. Obtain from the department confirmation of whether or not the individual qualifies as an insured participant.

### **Financial Management and Accountability Considerations**

Agreements with Community Coordinators most often involve contributions with substantial annual dollar values. Community Coordinators provide financial assistance in support of costs that employers and participants incur in carrying out an activity. This is done using funds provided to the Community Coordinator by the Province. As the arrangement with Community Coordinators involves the further distribution of federal contributions to third parties, there are obviously greater financial risks and accountability challenges involved in these types of arrangements. It is important to ensure that Community Coordinators have the capacity to manage the funding and that they have a proper financial management and accountability framework as well as acceptable policies and procedures to manage the funding that is provided to them under the agreements.

The SD Community Coordinator model allows the further distribution of funds by the Community Coordinator to one additional level only, SD participants.

The Community Coordinator model does not allow the Community Coordinator to fund other organizations that in turn fund another tier of recipients - either employers or participants.

An effective working relationship between Community Coordinators and EAS providers is critical for the Community Coordinator delivery model to work effectively.

A Community Coordinator cannot assist an eligible participant unless the participant has a RTWAP that has been mutually agreed to by the insured participant and his/her Case Manager (EAS). The EAS provider remains the client's case manager and is responsible for overall support to the client from needs determination through to participating in interventions and the ultimate goal of employment. Clients are referred to the Community Coordinator from an EAS provider based on the intervention identified in the client's RTWAP.

The Community Coordinator will then enter into individual agreements with insured participants.

## Financial and Performance Report

The Community Coordinator will submit to Employment Nova Scotia (ENS), a financial and performance audit report for the period, prepared by an independent auditor and containing the following information prior to the final payment is made on the project:

- A statement certifying that all costs claimed as Eligible Costs by the Community Coordinator were in accordance with the agreement, except as noted in the report;
- An identification of unexpended balances of advances of the contribution;
- An identification of GST rebates;
- A list of claimed costs which are not supported by adequate documentation or where ineligible;
- An opinion on the adequacy of Community Coordinator's internal financial procedures and controls. The auditor should conduct a sample account verification of documentation that supports further distribution of funds to an additional level or tier recipient to ensure that the Community Coordinator has adequate controls in place to ensure that funds are used as intended under the agreement. The size of the sample should be based on relative risk;
- An opinion on the effectiveness of the community Coordinator's monitoring of the funds distributed and related activities. At a minimum, the auditor should review the Community Coordinator's monitoring plans and document the basis and frequency for monitoring, review the tools for documenting monitoring visits to assess their effectiveness and review actual monitoring reports for comparison to plans; and
- Suggestions for improvements to remedy any deficiencies noted in the opinions referred to in paragraph (v) and (vi)

## Assignment of Debt

This section applies to all debts arising from agreements between insured participants and the Community Coordinator. The "date of establishment of the debt" refers to the date the insured participant has been notified in writing of the debt amount owing.

The Government of Nova Scotia agrees that it may accept an assignment of the debt owing to the Community Coordinator by an insured participant provided the following conditions are satisfied:

- a) The Community Coordinator has met all of its obligations to maintain a financial management regime, prepared and maintained its financial records as set out in this Agreement and has properly approved and identified all funds provided to the insured participant in accordance with the written agreement between the insured participant and the Community Coordinator;
- b) The Community Coordinator has sent a written notice to the insured participant within 60 days of establishing the debt, identifying the reason(s) for the debt, detailing the amount and has informed the insured participant that it must be repaid immediately and has obtained written evidence of receipt of the notification;
- c) The Community Coordinator has attempted to collect the debt in a prompt and diligent manner by all reasonable means and must at a minimum, include the following steps:
  - (i) If no response or payment is received within three weeks after the date of the notice of debt (first demand letter), a follow up demand letter must be sent to the insured participant

specifying that the debt may be assigned to the Province within six (6) months of the notice of debt;

(ii) The Community Coordinator will have attempted to speak to the insured participant to discuss the repayment of the debt and in appropriate circumstances, negotiate a repayment plan with the insured participant which may include a schedule of payments for repayment of the debt.

(iii) The Community Coordinator must keep copies of all correspondence with the debtor, including the signed acknowledgement of receipt, maintain notes on all telephone calls including the date and time of calls, name of person contacted, the name and position of any person representing the insured participant, summary of the discussion(s), and outcome; and

(iv) In the event an insured participant disputes the amount owing the Community Coordinator shall confirm the reasons for the debt and address the concerns of the insured participant in writing.

d) The Community Coordinator has provided the Province with the following material within **six months of the establishment of a debt\***:

(i) a signed copy of the agreement with the insured participant;

(ii) proof of the payments to the insured participant;

(iii) an updated statement of account;

(iv) a copy of all of correspondence and notes of telephone conversations related to the debt;

(v) a copy of the insured participant's initial application package to the Community Coordinator;

(vi) a certification by the Community Coordinator that

-the debt is currently legally due and owing to the Community Coordinator

-the debt has not been compromised in any way by the Community Coordinator

-the Community Coordinator is not aware of any legal or equitable defenses to the enforcement of debt;

(vii) a copy of any other relevant material that will aid in the Province's enforcement of the debt; and

(viii) a copy of the record documenting the receipt or notification of the demand letter(s) to the insured participant.

\*Even if the Community Coordinator is working with the insured participant regarding the repayment of the overpayment, these documents must be sent to the Province within 6 months of establishing the debt.

Upon receipt of the material the Province will promptly review it to determine whether it is complete and conditions indicated have been satisfied and upon completion of its review the Province will notify the Community Coordinator of its acceptance or non-acceptance of the assignment of the debt. The decision to accept assignment of the debt is entirely at the discretion of the Province. In the event the Province does not accept the assignment of debt, the Community Coordinator remains responsible for the debt and the obligations of the Community Coordinator under this Agreement continue to apply. In the event the Province accepts the assignment of the debt the Community Coordinator will be credited the amount of the assigned debt.

Upon notice of acceptance of the debt, the Commission will prepare the Assignment of Debt Agreement and Notice to Debtor for signature by the Community Coordinator and the Province. Once an assignment of the debt has been made, all enquiries from the insured participant must be referred immediately to the Province.

The Community Coordinator also agrees that it shall use its best efforts to cooperate with the Province in collecting the debt. The Community Coordinator will make its complete records with respect to a debt open for inspection by the Province at any time and will also provide access to its employees in order to investigate the debt. Further the Community Coordinator agrees and acknowledges that, from time to time, its employees may be required to attend at Court as witnesses.

If, after the assignment, the Province discovers that the collection of the debt has been compromised by the Community Coordinator or that the facts certified by the Community Coordinator in relation to the debt are incorrect, the Coordinator will be provided a written notice and an overpayment will be created under this Agreement in the amount that the Province is not able to collect as a result of any action or inaction of the Community Coordinator.

## 5 Contact Information

For further information please contact 1-877-223-0888.

## 6 Definitions

| <b>Term</b>                       | <b>Definition</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Case Manager</i>               | Case management begins when an EAS staff member (the case manager and a participant agree to develop a RTWAP and continues with participant follow-up. It is the EAS provider acting as case manager, who will decide what tool best fits their service. |
| <i>Return-to-Work Action Plan</i> | The Return to Work Action Plan is a mutually agreed upon plan of action to take participants from a situation of unemployment to finding and maintaining employment.   |