

## **Memorandum**

**To:** Employment Ontario Partners

**From:** **Cordelia Abankwa**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Employment and Training Division  
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

**Date:** **September 29, 2021**

**Subject:** **Skills Development Fund (Round 2) – Open Application**

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Dear Employment Ontario partners,

I hope all is well with you and your families. I am writing to share news about the launch of the second round of the Skills Development Fund.

Beginning today, organizations can apply for funding. The Skills Development Fund (SDF) was created to enable market-driven solutions and unlock the economic potential of skilled trades and broader workforce development initiatives to facilitate economic recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in new challenges for employers, workers, and the broader economy. These challenges include unprecedented job losses in key sectors, reduced employment opportunities, and significant displacement of workers. Round Two of the Skills Development Fund provides added flexibility that is necessary to support innovative, market-driven projects with a wide range of approaches and solutions that will enable the province's economic recovery.

### **Open Call for Applications**

For SDF round two, there is a continuous intake process for applications, and project proposals will be accepted on an ongoing basis for the 2021/22 fiscal year. The ministry is interested in a broad range of projects. Proposals should demonstrate how they will support one or more of the following objectives to:

- Ensure a resilient workforce by supporting access into the labour market, and/or retention and capacity-building for employers.
- Empower workers and job seekers who face higher barriers of entry and enhance pathways into meaningful and gainful employment.
- Encourage partnerships across the economy and support innovative ideas and training solutions to improve the capacity of communities to respond to shocks to labour market conditions in in-demand, emerging and essential sectors. Partnerships quicken market-led recovery, growth, and prosperity to enhance the talent development pipeline

### **What else is new in Round Two of the Skills Development Fund?**

The Skills Development Fund now has the following new features:

1. Expanded eligibility criteria, allowing even more organizations to benefit from the initiative
2. Increased focus on supports for people with disabilities and mental health initiatives
3. Expanded support for apprentices, trainers, employers, and other participants
4. Changes to eligible capital costs

### **How to Apply**

Applications should be submitted through [Transfer Payment Ontario](#). Prospective applicants can find more application information, including detailed eligibility criteria and target sectors and occupations in the program guidelines, available on the [Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway](#).

Applicants will be required to adequately demonstrate estimated costs and how they align with project objectives and focus areas.

Given the broad scope of the Skills Development Fund, organizations currently pursuing funding for new or existing projects through other Employment Ontario programming are encouraged to check whether their projects could be funded through Skills Development Fund and apply under this process. If you have further questions after reviewing program materials online, please contact [SkillsDevelopmentFund@ontario.ca](mailto:SkillsDevelopmentFund@ontario.ca) or your local ministry office.

Please share this information with organizations in your communities that may be interested in applying. Thank you for your commitment to supporting job seekers and employers through high-quality employment and training programs and services.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

Cordelia Abankwa  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Employment and Training Division  
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development