2025/26

Community Workforce Response Grant

Program Guide

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Welcome to the Community Workforce Response Grant

The Community Workforce Response Grant (CWRG) is designed to provide flexible and timely responses to urgent labor market needs faced by communities in British Columbia. Communities can access the program to address workforce challenges due to a result of changing local economic conditions, emerging priorities or unexpected natural disasters.

As one of the many labour market development programs funded by the Government of Canada through the Canada–British Columbia Workforce Development Agreement, CWRG serves communities by funding cohort-based skills training that helps unemployed and underemployed individuals gain the skills and certifications needed to obtain sustainable employment, contributing to strong, resilient local economies.

By investing in local communities to address workforce shortages and emerging labour market needs through short-term occupational skills training, CWRG creates good-paying jobs for British Columbians while ensuring people from every background can reach their full potential.

CWRG funds a wide range of skills training projects — from health care aides to heavy equipment operators — depending on the needs identified by you, the applicant, whether you reside in a community or represent a sector.

CWRG Priorities

- Projects serving:
  - Indigenous communities;
  - Rural and remote communities; and/or
  - Communities impacted by the recent loss of a major employer; natural disaster; or sudden, significant economic disruption.

- Projects offering occupational skills training that addresses community-specific emerging priorities, economic diversification or innovation, or regional High Opportunity Occupations (HOO).

- Projects offering occupational skills training for the following sectors:
  - Health care
  - Social services
  - Education
  - Trades (foundations or trade samplers)

- Projects where a Community Transition Table has been established through provincial Community Transition Services. Eligible communities may submit applications at any time from April 1, 2025, to February 1, 2026, subject to funding availability. Please contact CWRG@gov.bc.ca before applying.

Program Highlights

Who can apply?

Local non-profit organizations, Indigenous and local governments, sector or industry associations, unions, and major employers in a single resource community are welcome to apply for funding to support occupational skills training that is 52 weeks or less.

Who can provide the training?

The applicant must engage a qualified 3rd party training provider.

What funding is provided?

CWRG funds cohort-based training (three or more participants receiving the same training at the same time for the same duration) up to a project total of $300,000.

The CWRG covers 100 percent of all training costs including:

- $11,000 per participant for skills training costs.
- Participant financial support depending on the length of training.
- Employment support services up to $400 per participant.
- Administration fees up to 10 percent of the total project cost (12 percent for Indigenous applicants).

How do I apply?

Apply directly online with your BCeID business-level account.

When can I apply?

CWRG accepts applications during set intake periods and provides funding decisions within a set window.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Please contact the CWRG program at CWRG@gov.bc.ca.

Before You Apply

- Applicants must have a Business BCeID Account to apply.
- It may take up to two weeks to receive your BCeID. Review Business BCeID Questions and Answers for more information.
- For application deadlines review the Key Dates table.
- Review the What's New section of the website for updates.

How to Apply

- Applications must be submitted through the Skills Training Grant System (STG).
- Review the Required Application Documents section of this guide.
- Review the STG User Guide: Applying for CWRG Funding.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Community Workforce Response Grant team at CWRG@gov.bc.ca.

Who Can Apply

Eligible Applicants:

- Local Non-Profit service providers*
- Indigenous and local governments
- Indigenous-owned or directed non-profit social agencies
- Union halls certified to represent employees under the B.C. Labour Relations Code
- Major employers (in a community with a single resource economy)
- Industry, sector and employer associations
- Skills Training Providers: In the case where a Community Transition Table has been established in a community and where the community has identified a skills training provider, that skills training provider may be considered an eligible applicant at the discretion of CWRG and in consultation with the community. Communities must contact CWRG before applying (CWRG@gov.bc.ca)

Ineligible Applicants:

- Public sector organizations, such as Crown corporations and agencies, hospitals, and health authorities
- Federal and provincial departments/ministries
- Employers
- Individuals seeking funding for personal skills training
- Skills training providers
- Organizations with unmet obligations for previously funded CWRG projects
- Organizations shown to have a conflict of interest (refer to Appendix B)

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*An organization incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation or society formed under an Act of Canada or the Province of British Columbia and in good standing under the relevant Act. A local non-profit organization has been established and has been providing services to the community for a minimum of one year and its mission closely aligns with the proposed training.

Eligible Projects

Projects must:

- Demonstrate that training meets emerging or urgent labour and skills needs in the community or sector.
- Lead participants to sustainable employment in the community.
- Provide occupational skills training resulting in a recognized certificate or diploma.
- Be delivered to a cohort of at least three participants who receive the same skills training at the same time for the same duration.
- Be comprised of a cohort size that reflects the community's needs and employment possibilities (minimum cohort size is three participants).
- Not be longer than 52 weeks in duration.
- Not start before the application is approved by CWRG and the applicant has accepted the offer of funding issued by the CWRG.
- Adhere to all Occupational Health and Safety regulations for any training in the workplace.

Ineligible Projects:

- Projects where a private training institution has been engaged, and its skills training program is not approved by the B.C. Private Training Institution Regulatory Unit (PTIRU), or is designated as an "employer provided program"
- Projects proposing training for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Note: Preference will be given to training projects that offer credit, required licensing, accreditation and clear advancement pathways to further education.

Eligible Participants

Eligible Participants should:

- Be Canadian citizens, permanent residents or protected persons (as designated under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act) entitled to work in Canada.
- Be at least 16 years old.
- Reside in B.C.
- Have a Social Insurance Number (SIN).
- Be unemployed, or employed Part-time, Seasonally, Casually, or Precariously (see Appendix D for definitions).
- Have basic life and essential skills necessary to enter training.

Note: Individuals who are currently receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits or Income Assistance (IA), may be eligible (see Appendix A).

Ineligible Participants:

- Are employed full-time, permanent (for employment definitions, see Appendix D).
- Are currently enrolled in other federally or provincially funded training programs.
- Have participated in a CWRG project in the same fiscal year (April 1-March 31).

Eligible Skills Training Providers

- B.C. public post-secondary institutions

- SkilledTradesBC-designated trade schools, including union-affiliated trainers recognized by SkilledTradesBC

- Industry/sector associations

- Trade- or industry-recognized personal safety training providers

- B.C. private training institutions certified under the Private Training Act by the B.C. Private Training Institution Regulatory Unit (PTIRU) of the Ministry.
  - If the applicant is engaging a PTIRU-certified institution, the institution's program must be either approved by PTIRU or have been reviewed by PTIRU. The training delivered under the CWRG application must match the program listed with PTIRU.

- o CWRG will only fund a private training institution that is fully recognized, including PTIRU approval of the training location and approval by any applicable regulatory body.*

- Other private training providers may be eligible if:
  - o The costs of training are competitively priced with similar courses offered in the sector and by PTIRU-designated institutions in B.C.
  - o Training providers that have the necessary expertise, skills and experience to deliver the occupational skills training.

Where available, projects should engage local service providers.

The occupational skills training provider must be an independent third-party to the applicant.

For projects providing training in professions where certification is required for employment, the skills training provider must be on a list of qualified institutions designated by the regulatory body or approved by the regulatory body to deliver training in the proposed location.*

Instructor qualifications must meet the standards of the regulatory body.

Eligible Employment Support Services Providers

Eligible Employment Support Services (ESS) providers include:

- B.C. public post-secondary institutions
- Trades or technical schools designated by SkilledTradesBC
- Private training institutions registered by the PTIRU
- Private training institutions designated by the PTIRU
- Social service organizations
- Indigenous training and employment organizations
- Employment or training organizations

The ESS provider must be an independent third-party to the Applicant and in good standing per BC OnLine.

The ESS provider must actively be delivering ESS services as part of their organization's ongoing operations.

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*Please note that any institution, including public post-secondary institutions, holding interim recognition will not be funded. Similarly, any institution whose training location is not fully recognized or fully designated will not be funded.

Eligible Services and Costs Summary

- A participant must not be required to pay any funds to complete skills training or to receive certification.
- Only the costs of skills training and ESS providers, who are listed in Schedule A of the CWRG Agreement, will be eligible for reimbursement.
- The skills training and ESS providers must not subcontract their services to another person or organization.
- The Applicant must specify if any of the project components will be paid for by other funding sources.
- Costs for all training must be competitively priced and demonstrate value for money.
- Expenditures that are not related to the project and project delivery are considered ineligible. (See Appendix C.)
- Costs cannot be added once a CWRG funding agreement has been accepted.

Creating a Budget

When creating a budget, we recommend obtaining quotes from multiple third-party providers to ensure the costs are competitive or comparable to other training providers.

The total funding an applicant will receive is based on the number of eligible participants trained in the project, up to the maximum allowable under the agreement. If the number of eligible participants in training is less than originally planned, the total grant funding amount will be reduced.

Eligible Costs: Total maximum project cost is $300,000.

Eligible Project Services

Occupational Skills Training

Occupational skills training that provides participants with the skills required for obtaining sustainable employment in a specific job or occupation. For example:

- Training to develop the skills required to operate a particular machine or use a particular technology
- Sector-specific skills
- Apprenticeship Foundation Programs

Training must result in an employer recognized certificate or diploma.

Eligible Costs: Up to $11,000 per participant. Costs should include any tuition or training fees, examinations, certificates, books, training software and other course materials.

Employment Support Services

Employment Support Services (ESS) are optional services provided to participants to increase their success in the training and employability at the end of training. For example:

- Job-readiness skills such as job search, resume writing and interview skills

Essential skills training may be included as a component of the ESS but not as a stand-alone component or separate cost.

Ineligible ESS costs:

- Costs for ESS if a PTIRU-approved curriculum already includes an ESS component
- English as a Second Language training

Eligible Costs: Up to $400 per participant with an expected instructional time of approximately 40 hours.

Participant Financial Supports

Participant financial supports (PFS) are provided to participants during their participation in the project that are intended to remove barriers to their success in the project, such as costs for childcare, transportation, personal protective gear, required uniforms, travel and accommodation.

Ineligible PFS costs:

- Completion Bonuses/Honorariums/Cash/Training Allowance/Stipend
- Interest charges
- Purchase of alcoholic beverages or cannabis products
- Participant wages
- Purchase of capital assets intended for exclusive use in the Applicant's organization and the long-term operational support of that organization
- Costs for employment support services (ESS)
- Losses on other projects or contracts
- Staff salary bonuses
- Textbooks (must be included as part of skills training cost

Eligible Costs:

Skills Training Duration	PFS Maximum Average per Participant
1-12 weeks	$1,800
13-24 weeks	$3,600
25-36 weeks	$5,400
37-52 weeks	$7,800

Note: All applicants approved for funding must track PFS expenditures during the course of training. The PFS tracker must be submitted together with a PFS attestation prior to completing the Completion Report. All applicants approved for funding can use and submit their own PFS tracker or use a version of this sample PFS tracker which includes the important parameters that should be tracked.

Administration Fees

Costs directly related to project management that include, but are not limited to:

- Outreach and recruitment of participants
- Job fairs and job placement
- Administration of Participant Financial Supports (PFS) when required
- Participant support during training and practicums
- Monitoring the relationship between participants and the skills training provider and monitoring any concerns that may arise
- CWRG Claims and reporting

Only Agreement Holders are eligible to receive Administration Fees.

Eligible Costs:

- Up to 10 percent of all project components (Skills Training + Employment Support Services + Participant Financial Supports).
- Indigenous applicants are eligible to apply for up to 12 percent of all project components (Skills Training + Employment Support Services + Participant Financial Supports) to cover any additional costs such as cultural supports.

Required Application Documents

For your application to be considered complete, please ensure all required documents listed below are uploaded with your application at the time of submission.

Required:

1. **Project Description Form**
    Please complete and upload the provided Project Description Form. It is important to provide as much information on your intended project as possible to assist in the assessment of your proposed project's needs and training components.

2. **Employer Support Form**
    Please provide each employer supporting your project with the Employer Support Form, along with the training project curriculum/outline provided by your skills training provider. Diligence should be taken to collect and supply these forms as they speak to the rationale for training. While the number of forms does not need to match the number in the cohort, it must reflect the potential job openings in the community or sector for successful participants to fill.

3. **Course outline**
    A detailed course outline is required for all skills training programs delivered by public or private training providers or institutions.

4. **Skills Training Quote**
    All training for a CWRG funded project must engage a third-party skills training provider. At time of application, a quote from the skills training provider must be uploaded. For the information required on the quote, please review the provided sample.

5. **Employment Support Services Quote**
    Employment support services are not a mandatory component for a CWRG funded project. If you are requesting funding for employment support services, a quote from a third-party provider must be uploaded. For the information required on the quote, please review the provided sample.

Optional at time of application:

6. **Instructor qualifications** (Public-post secondary calendar courses are exempt) Before a training project is approved, instructor qualifications are required for all training delivered by private training providers or institutions, or any training delivered through the Continuing Education department of a public post-secondary institution.

    Instructor resume must demonstrate:
    - Trainers hold, at minimum, a diploma or recognized certification relevant to the subject matter being taught.
    - A record of instructor experience recently providing a minimum of one year of the same or similar training.
    - For training in trades or technology, instructors hold a certificate, diploma or post-secondary degree relevant to the subject matter and have two years of full-time work experience in a career relevant to the subject matter of the training, or 10 years of full-time work experience in the relevant subject matter.
    - For projects providing training in professions where certification is required for employment, instructor qualifications must meet the standards of the regulatory body.

7. **Certificate of Insurance**
    The B.C. Certificate of Insurance (COI; form FIN 173) is optional at the time of application, but, if requested, it should be forwarded within 3 business days to CWRG@gov.bc.ca. This form must be completed by the applicant's broker, and it is required prior to approval for funding. The certificate must demonstrate at least $2 million in general commercial liability insurance that covers the term of the agreement. Prior to completing the form, the broker may wish to review the insurance requirements found in a CWRG agreement (section 8 of Schedule B).

Final Notes

Please note:

- Funding decisions are at the Ministry's sole discretion. CWRG may:

  o Decline incomplete or ineligible applications.

  o Refuse to fund, or require repayment of costs (curriculum development, administration, marketing and promotion, capital or training) or grant funding to parties who provide misleading or incorrect information to the program.

  o Contact employers or industry associations, trainees, training providers or any other person to substantiate training activities, trainee counts, outcomes, partnership involvement/contribution or other related matters.

- While an applicant can submit multiple applications, CWRG is unable to provide ongoing funding or funding leading to a degree or full apprenticeships.

- Approval of applications is subject to funding availability.

- Any funding received from the CWRG program for skills training that has not been spent during the course of a training project is considered an overpayment and these remaining funds must be returned to the Province by the term end date stated in your CWRG agreement. The term end date is located in Schedule A of a CWRG Agreement.

  o Agreement holders may not withhold unspent CWRG funding to use on future projects or for deferred training.

Appendix A: Requirements for employment insurance and income assistance clients participating in the CWRG program

The goal of the CWRG program is to increase labour market participation of British Columbians by supporting relevant and responsive skills training that is needed for sustainable employment in local labour markets. It is a priority of the Provincial and Federal governments to support unemployed individuals, including those on Employment Insurance (EI) and Income Assistance (IA), to obtain employment.

A CWRG Agreement Holder has the responsibility to:

1. Ensure participants are eligible to participate in a CWRG-funded project.

2. Identify which participants currently receive EI or IA benefits and inform CWRG as soon as possible. Failure to do so could severely impact the participants' EI or IA benefits.

Agreement Holders training participants receiving EI must:

- Ensure the training dates stated in the online application system are accurate.

- Communicate the correct and confirmed training dates to those participants currently receiving EI benefits.

- Request the participant indicate on the Participation Information Form (PIF) if they are "currently receiving" EI benefits.

- Inform the participant that the CWRG program, which funds the training, will contact the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and submit a Section 25 EI referral on their behalf.

- Instruct the participant to clearly indicate the correct training dates on their bi-weekly report.

- Contact CWRG immediately when there is a break in training, or if a participant leaves the project. Any break in training for a week or more needs to be reported, as well as the last day of attendance for a participant who leaves training early.

- If a participant becomes an EI recipient after training starts, the agreement holder must contact CWRG immediately to initiate a Section 25 referral submission on behalf of the participant and ensure EI benefits are not terminated. Contact CWRG@gov.bc.ca.

Agreement holders training participants receiving IA must:

- Ensure the training dates stated in the online portal are accurate.

- Identify during recruitment which potential participants are IA recipients.

- Communicate the correct and confirmed training dates to the IA recipients.

- Prior to enrolling an IA recipient as a participant in the training project, inform them that:

  o If they are not a WorkBC case-managed client, it is their responsibility to contact the Service Delivery Division (Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction) at 1-866-866-0800 to give them the dates of training and have them approve their enrollment in CWRG training. Failure to do so could impact their IA benefits.

  o If they are a WorkBC case-managed client, the IA client must notify their WorkBC Manager about participating in CWRG training and give them the training dates. They do not have to call the Service Delivery Division directly.

- Once the IA recipient has confirmed approval from the Service Delivery Division or their WorkBC case manager to enroll, instruct the IA recipient to submit a Participant Information Form with the correct training dates and remind them to indicate they are "currently receiving" IA benefits.

- Agreement holders should always direct participants who are IA recipients and have questions about their benefits to contact the Service Delivery Division directly at 1 866-866-0800.

- Should a participant become an IA recipient while in training, instruct them to inform the Service Delivery Division of their training participation directly at 1 866-866-0800.

Agreement holders should not direct participants to contact the CWRG Program.

Appendix B: Conflict of Interest Guidelines

Where the Ministry determines that there is a real or perceived conflict of interest in the choice of a participant, training provider or Employment Support Services provider, the Ministry reserves the right to deny an application or claim based on that conflict of interest. If the Ministry becomes aware of a real conflict of interest, as determined by the Ministry in its sole discretion, the Ministry may revoke an Agreement.

The following are examples of situations where the Ministry may determine there is a real or perceived conflict of interest. **These examples include but are not limited to:**

- Where there is evidence that the training provider is not a third-party, or adequately arm's length from the applicant, and that the choice of the provider is based on other factors than having the best expertise and qualifications to provide the training.

- An applicant chooses a particular training provider because the provider holds either a salaried or non-salaried position with the applicant organization.

- The applicant stands to gain financially from the choice of training provider or Employment Support Services provider. For example, the applicant receives a fee from the third-party training provider delivering training or Employment Support Services.

- The third-party training provider or Employment Support Services provider assumes management of the CWRG Agreement from the original applicant.

In recognition of the traditional role of Elders in supporting formal education of Indigenous learners, these conflict-of-interest guidelines may not apply.

Appendix C: Ineligible Costs

- Costs related to the development of the proposal or project application.
- Costs not directly associated with the delivery of the project or not directly required to meet the project deliverables.
- Costs incurred before the start date or after the end date of the project.
- Administrative salaries that are not directly tied to project management or project delivery.
- Staff salary bonuses.
- Legal fees, court awards, fines and penalties (e.g., parking tickets).
- Out-of-province travel costs for project staff or participants.
- Annual membership fees to associations or private clubs (e.g., gyms, golf courses).
- Costs related to annual general meetings, budget deficits, membership fees, fundraising activities, committee and political meetings or religious activities.
- Costs for any materials, tools, techniques, approaches, developments, or salaries used in training, work placements or other project components that have already been reimbursed to the agreement holder under any other funding agreement.
- Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points programs.
- Losses on other projects or contracts.
- Interest charges.
- Purchase of alcoholic beverages or cannabis products.
- Participant wages, stipends and living costs.
- Participant completion bonuses and honorariums.
- Training allowances
- Purchase of capital assets intended for exclusive use in the applicant's or training provider's organization and the long-term operational support of that organization.
- Costs for Employment Support Services (ESS) if a PTIRU-approved curriculum already includes an ESS component.

Appendix D: Definitions

The following definitions are provided to assist applicants in applying for CWRG funding. For the comprehensive list of definitions that define CWRG Agreements, refer to Schedule B of a standard CWRG Agreement.

Applicant: the organization that applied for a grant under the CWRG Program.

Agreement holder: the organization that applied for a grant under the CWRG Program and to whom an approval letter or CWRG Agreement has been addressed.

Employment Statuses:

- **Casual or on-call work:** refers to persons working only when needed, often on short notice.

- **Full-time:** refers to those persons working 30 or more hours per week.

- **Part-time:** refers to those working less than 30 hours per week.

- **Precarious:** employment that is unstable due to circumstances such as having just cause to leave one's employment, having received a lay-off notice, self-employment income is below the poverty line, the job is likely to be replaced with automation, an industry shutdown is imminent or there have been changes in the marketplace due to a natural disaster like a pandemic.

- **Seasonal:** those persons working steady, possibly long hours for some but not all months of the year (e.g., landscaping, tree planting, wildland firefighting, etc.)

- **Unemployed:** refers to persons with barriers to entering the workforce, persons currently receiving EI or IA but searching for work, or persons working less than 20 hours per week.

Indigenous: refers to all First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

Participant: each individual that the applicant has enrolled in the project and that is receiving, or has received, project services.

Project: As expressed in this guide, a project is a proposal submitted by an applicant to provide skills training to their community or sector. This proposal includes all the activities that ensure the successful delivery of this training. These activities include, but are not limited to, marketing, recruitment, assisting participants with PIFs, organizing training spaces, skills training, including Employment Support Services.

Project Services: all the employment support services, participant financial supports, and skills training provided to participants as set out in a CWRG Agreement.

Sustainable employment: employment that provides an opportunity for growth by creating a pathway that secures a participant's long-term attachment to the workforce.

Third-party service provider: a provider that is eligible, in accordance with the CWRG program requirements, and at arm's length from the applicant and is chosen by the applicant.