



Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI)

An initiative of the Canada-Nova Scotia Job Grant

Program Guidelines

1. Summary

The Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI), *an initiative of the Canada-Nova Scotia Job Grant*, provides eligible employers with a funding incentive to invest in employee skills through workforce training to:

- improve productivity
- increase innovation
- support the introduction of new technology, machinery and equipment, or work processes
- increase inter-provincial and international competitiveness
- foster workplace diversity

The incentive is applied to eligible training costs (Section 4).

2. Eligibility

Training must be based on a valid business case. The training incentive is available for employees permanently located in Nova Scotia.

Businesses, social enterprises and revenue-generating non-for-profit organizations (See Note Below) are eligible under Streams 1 and 2 as described in Section 3 if:

- the business/social enterprise/not-for-profit is located in Nova Scotia and is either registered with an “active” status in the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies (as a business, partnership, company or society) or incorporated by an Act of the Nova Scotia Legislature;
- has been in existence for more than one year;
- demonstrates the need to undertake the training initiative; and
- Has at least \$25,000 in wages or owner remuneration. (Owner remuneration may include the following: where the business is incorporated, dividends and bonuses paid to shareholders; where the business is a sole proprietorship, the amount claimed as self-employment income on lines 135 to 143 of the sole proprietor’s T1 Tax Return; where the business is a partnership, partner drawings.)

Note: Social enterprises and not-for-profit organizations must be generating at least 30% of revenues from commercial activity to be eligible for funding.

Businesses not generating revenue from commercial activity are not eligible for WIPSI funding unless they are in a sector identified as high strategic value or having strong economic benefit to the Province of Nova Scotia. These will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Each application is reviewed on its own merit and assessed against how well it meets eligibility, training fit and return on investment (both for applicant and the Province).

Businesses primarily involved in wholesale, retail, and accommodations and food services are excluded from Streams 1 and 2 of WIPSI, as described in Section 3. However, organizations, associations and private sector unions representing these sectors may be eligible to negotiate WIPSI funding for member businesses under Stream 3 provided the training meets identified industry needs and Stream 3 eligibility criteria.

If an eligible employer is receiving other federal or provincial government funding related to workforce support (referred to herein as “other government workforce funding”, which may include for example: payroll rebate, wage subsidies, labour market attachment funding,) the maximum training funding under WIPSI will be 50% of the eligible training costs (see section 4) less all other government workforce funding. All other government workforce funding must be declared on the application form.

Business, industry and sector organizations and associations, and private sector unions, may also apply for WIPSI funding for group training for member businesses and organizations.

3. WIPSI Incentive Streams

WIPSI is administered in three streams based on the size of business and level of funding requested. (Eligible costs are outlined in Section 4).

Stream 1: Small business/social enterprise and revenue-generating not-for-profit (50 or fewer employees)

- Minimum application \$5000
- \$5,000 to \$10,000:
 - No cash contribution is necessary with respect to the applicant’s first application per fiscal year. (Applicants provide in-kind contribution (e.g., employee time release).
- Over \$10,000:
 - Applicants are required to contribute 50% of eligible costs that exceed \$10,000.
 - Maximum WIPSI contribution is \$10,000 per employee.

Stream 2: Medium & large businesses/social enterprise and revenue-generating not-for-profits (More than 50 employees)

- Minimum application \$10,000.
- WIPSI contribution is 50 % of eligible costs.
- Maximum WIPSI contribution is \$10,000 per employee.

Stream 3: Business Industry and Sector Organizations and Associations, and Private Sector Unions, representing industry and business in the Province

- Minimum application \$10,000.
- WIPSI contribution depends on size of participating businesses/organization, for example:

- Businesses with 50 or fewer employees - no cash contribution is required
- Businesses with more than 50 employees - WISPI contribution is 50% of eligible costs.
- Maximum WISPI contribution is \$10,000 per employee.
- Funding is available (up to 15% of eligible Training costs) to compensate for communications, marketing and administration costs incurred in managing the training program.

Note: The applicant cannot be the training provider, and funds will not be provided to any trainer directly.

4. Eligible Training Providers

The following are considered to be eligible training providers:

- Recognized learning institutions such as community colleges, private training centers and universities
- Industry associations or private sector unions may provide employer-endorsed training to their membership (e.g. sector-based productivity training such as lean manufacturing)
- Other training providers, where the applicant demonstrates that a training provider is qualified to deliver the training and meets the program objectives

5. Eligible Training:

Training must be formal, structured, and delivered by an eligible training provider (see Section 4); may be provided off-site or in-house; and may be up to 12 months in duration.

Examples of **eligible** training costs:

- registration, tuition, or course fees, examination fees
- manuals, books, and support materials
- costs to accommodate for disabilities (e.g., voice recognition software)
- In some instances employee travel costs are eligible. Travel costs must be preapproved. Provincial mileage and per diem rates apply: mileage \$0.42 km; meals: Breakfast \$8; lunch \$15; dinner \$20).

Examples of activities and costs **not eligible**:

- training that is considered mandatory, such as legislated or regulated training (Example: health and safety)

- o This is training required to be completed by the business or an employee may be required to have such training in order to assume a position.
- corporate or organizational orientation training
- training considered to be regular professional development
- informal training (e.g., employee mentoring)
- training included in the purchase of equipment or new business processes, orientation training, onboarding, apprenticeship training
- employee wages and salaries during training
- conference costs
- any internal training including corporate or orientation training
- training completed by internal staff / internal trainers
- training/travel costs outside of the province for training that is readily available within Nova Scotia

Note: Training that is considered to be mandatory, such as legislated or regulated training (Example: health and safety) **is not eligible** as this is required to be completed by the business or an employee may be required to have such training in order to assume a position. Training included in the purchase of new equipment or new business processes, orientation training, onboarding, mentoring, conference costs and apprenticeship training are also not eligible.

6. Application Process

Applicants must apply for funding by submitting an application to the Department of Labour and Advanced Education prior to the start of training.

Applications are submitted through an online application process. (A PDF application form is available in the event the applicant does not have Internet access.) An acknowledgement email will be sent when the application is received.

Each application is reviewed on its own merits and will be assessed for its strengths in how well it meets eligibility, training fit and return on investment (both for applicant and the Province). It is the responsibility of the applicants to articulate all relevant strengths of their proposal.

Preference will be given to applications that align with the Province's economic priorities and promote workplace diversity. The Province reserves the right to prioritize applications based on established criteria and availability of funding.

If the application is approved, a Letter of Offer will be issued. This letter must be signed and returned to the address provided in the Letter of Offer.

Applicants may start their training at any point after submission of their application. However this is with the understanding that they may or may not be approved.

7. Information Requirements:

Business/Organization Details: name; mailing Address; Registry of Joint Stocks Number; Business ID Number (Canada Revenue Agency); industry sector; description of the organization; numbers of years/months business has been in business; # of employees with breakdown showing full-time, part-time and seasonal employees and wages paid; amount spent on training in each of the last three fiscal years; a most recent financial statement is required (If the business is a sole proprietorship and financial statements are not available, the sole proprietor's most recent T1 Tax Return).

Training Details: Name of training program(s); name of training provider(s); rationale (business case) for training; description of training; cost of training; (A training quote and supporting information is required); other training related costs; anticipated start date and end date

Participant Details: number of employees receiving training by position and type of training; number of hours in training; **additional information (required after approval) such as: name, gender, age and education level (pick from options in the application), employment status (full or part-time), salary, voluntary declaration as a member of a designated group, and social insurance number (optional).**

Itemized Funding Request: direct training related costs – a detailed list and breakdown of cost is required (see Section 4); employee travel costs; organization contribution - cash/in-kind (e.g., employee time release/wages paid during training); total WIPSI funding requested

Anticipated Training Outcomes: A list of potential outcomes is provided in the application form and applicants are asked to identify and describe anticipated training outcomes.

Other information: government funding received in the last 12 months (e.g., wage subsidies, payroll rebates, skills development funding); outstanding or pending litigation/claims against the organization.

8. Payment Schedule

Successful applicants will receive funding according to the following payment schedule:

- 50 % of eligible costs when approved training commences and all reporting requirements are met
- 50 % of eligible costs upon completion of training, submission of final report, including all reporting requirements, **and** completion of online survey by employer and **all** training participants

In certain circumstances, the WIPSI incentive may be withheld until the project is completed. If this is the case, the Letter of Offer will include this as a condition of the contract.

9. Requirement to Provide Requested Information

The Province requires specific information to process payments and evaluate the success of the skills development incentive including, but not limited to, financial information related to the training program, personal information related to the training participants, certifications achieved, and impact

on productivity levels, sales, and business performance. This information will be used for evaluation purposes and shall remain confidential.

10. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Information collected in connection with this program is subject to, and will be treated in accordance with, the Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. For additional information see: <http://www.foipop.ns.ca/>

11. Program Change or Termination

The Province reserves the right to amend, or to terminate WIPSI at its sole discretion. In such event issued Letters of Offer will be honoured.

In the event the applicant becomes insolvent or makes an assignment under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, makes a proposal to creditors (whether voluntary or involuntary) under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, has a petition under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act filed or presented against it, takes or proposes to take the benefit of any provision of the Businesses Winding Up Act of Nova Scotia or the Businesses' Creditors Arrangement Act of Canada or such similar legislation, or ceases to carry on business in the Province of Nova Scotia, the issued Letter of Offer shall become null and void.

12. Public Announcements

Approved applicants must consent to participate in any public announcement, public ceremony, reports, promotion and/or marketing relating to the awarding of the skills development incentive and related accomplishments, at a mutually agreeable time. Where marketing or promotional opportunities exist, successful applicants will give credit to the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI), *an initiative of the Canada-Nova Scotia Job Grant*.

13. Contact Us

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