

**OFFICE OF LITERACY AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS:  
COMMUNITY-BASED ADULT LITERACY AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

**JANUARY 2009**

**APPLICANT GUIDE**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### **The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills in Brief**

The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) works to improve the literacy and Essential Skills (LES) of adult Canadians to help them to:

- Enter the workforce;
- Succeed and make transitions in the workplace; and
- Participate in community and family life.

To accomplish these goals, OLES focuses on:

- Understanding what works;
- Developing practical tools and supports; and,
- Providing employers, practitioners and trainers with the tools and supports they need to improve the LES of adults.

### **Literacy and Essential Skills in Brief**

LES are the skills needed for work, learning and life. They include:

1. Reading text (prose)
2. Document Use
3. Numeracy
4. Thinking Skills
5. Writing
6. Oral Communication
7. Working with Others
8. Computer Use
9. Continuous Learning

For more information on LES, see:

[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/oles/olesindex\\_en.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/oles/olesindex_en.shtml)

### **Why a Community-Based Call for Proposals (CFP)?**

The community is an important environment for acquiring skills. Whether based on geography, demographics, or on common interests, community-based approaches help adults get the skills they need to get a job and to contribute to their communities and to their families.

### **Employability**

With even entry-level jobs requiring higher skills, many adults with low levels of LES are shut out of the labour market. Others, though employed, lack workplace training opportunities to improve their LES skills so they can find better jobs or advance in their

current workplace. OLES is interested in exploring how community-based approaches can help these individuals get the LES they need to improve their job prospects.

**Community Participation**

Adults with lower levels of LES are less able to find and act upon the information they need for daily life, such as applying for social services or interacting with the school system. They are also more likely to be marginalized and excluded and not to be involved in community activities that provide support networks. OLES is interested in exploring how community-based approaches can help adults get the LES they need to participate more fully in their community and improve their quality of life.

**Family**

Adults with lower levels of LES are less able to provide a home environment rich in learning opportunities and may struggle with family activities, such as helping children with homework. OLES is interested in exploring how community-based approaches can help adults get the LES they need to be able to support the development of literacy and essential skills of their children and support positive intergenerational effects related to a family environment that is supportive of skills and knowledge transfer.

**II. THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS PROCESS**

**1. THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS AT A GLANCE**

<b>Summary of Objectives</b>	<p>Applications must clearly demonstrate how community-based approaches will address one or more of the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Employability: Improve the LES of adults<sup>1</sup> to obtain jobs and/or to improve their employment prospects.</li> <li>B. Community Participation: Improve the LES of adults so they are better able to participate in their communities</li> <li>C. Family: Improve the LES of adults so they are better able to contribute to their families</li> </ul>
<b>Eligible Activities</b>	<p>OLES will support three types of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The integration of LES into community-based initiatives</li> <li>B. The adaptation and testing of LES tools and models<sup>2</sup> to help adults improve their employability, community participation or family life</li> <li>C. Where gaps are proven to exist in available resources, the development of new tools and models that help adults to improve their employability, community participation or family life</li> </ul> <p><b>OLES cannot support the direct delivery of service. Projects may have a component of service delivery supported by the funding recipient or another partner, but this must be clearly stated in the proposal.</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this CFP, “adult” is defined to be persons 16 years of age or older and outside of the formal education system.

<b>Activities <u>not</u> Eligible for OLES Funding under this CFP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct purchase and/or delivery of training</li> <li>• Activities specifically designed for children</li> <li>• Ongoing activities of the organization</li> <li>• Duplication of previous or existing activities</li> <li>• Development of products that will be for the use of only one organization</li> <li>• Capital improvements, such as the construction or renovation of buildings</li> <li>• Annual or recurring conferences</li> </ul>
<b>General Requirements</b>	<p>All projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have clear objectives, activities and measurable outcomes</li> <li>• Specify which of the LES are addressed</li> <li>• Include at least one partner</li> <li>• Be applicable and accessible to other organizations across Canada</li> <li>• Have a dissemination plan for the knowledge, models and tools developed by the project</li> <li>• Ensure any models and tools developed by the project are accessible to potential users.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligible Recipients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-profit organizations</li> <li>• Voluntary sector organizations</li> <li>• Workplace organizations, including chambers of commerce, unions and business associations</li> <li>• Professional organizations</li> <li>• Universities, colleges and other educational and training bodies</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> </ul>
<b>Maximum Funding Level</b>	<p>\$2,000,000 per year, for a maximum of three years. Typically, funding per project is significantly less than this amount.</p>
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>	<p>A contribution agreement or a grant agreement. Please note that only voluntary organizations are eligible for grant funding.</p>
<b>Can an organization apply more than once?</b>	<p>Yes, organizations can submit more than one proposal. Each proposal requires a separate application.</p>

## 2. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this CFP, “tools” are instruments or means to help in learning or assessing LES. Examples of tools include: learning modules to build problem solving skills, guidelines to help mentors support learners or a written test for individuals with low levels of English language comprehension. “Models” are examples that can be copied or adapted to different situations. Models could include: a mentor-learner skill matching program, a community literacy curriculum that uses up-to-date material, or a process for tracking and recognizing essential skills acquired through paid and non-paid work.

Three types of activities are eligible under this CFP:

**A. Integrating LES into Community-based Initiatives**

Projects focus on integrating LES into existing community-based initiatives. The modified initiative must be evaluated in terms of its success in supporting the objectives of employability, community participation or helping adults to contribute to their families.

**B. Adapting and Testing Tools and Models**

Projects focus on adapting and testing existing LES tools and models to new contexts to meet the needs of practitioners or learners. Tools and models must be evaluated in terms of their success in helping adults improve their LES to get a job, to participate in their communities or to contribute to their families.

**C. Developing New Tools and Models**

Projects focus on developing and piloting new LES tools and models. Proposals must demonstrate that existing tools and models cannot be used or adapted to address the needs of practitioners or adult learners in meeting project objectives. Tools and models must be evaluated in terms of their success in helping adults improve their LES to get a job, to participate in their communities or to contribute to their families.

**3. ELIGIBLE COSTS**

Major eligible cost categories include:

- Salaries and wages and Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCs) for permanent staff or temporary services, according to time spent directly on the project
- Professional service fees (e.g. accounting, research and analysis)
- Only the portion of rent, normal utilities, maintenance of offices and other buildings, and taxes directly related to the project (proposed overhead costs more than 15% of the OLES contribution will be considered only as an exception)
- Supplies and materials, postage, licenses and other fees
- Travel related to the project (international travel must be authorized in advance by OLES)
- Computer services, library expenses, research costs, collection and analysis of statistics
- Other administrative expenses that are agreed to by OLES and the applicant (printing, translation, and distribution of project reports)
- Learning tools necessary for the project or program, including computer hardware and software, **if** explicitly authorized

The following costs are not eligible for funding from OLES:

- Lobbyist fees
- Travel allowances in excess of Treasury Board guidelines
- Consultant fees for individuals who are receiving a salary from the applicant or partnering organization
- Capital acquisitions, with the exception of learning tools (see Eligible Costs)

- Expenditures outside the start and end dates of the contribution agreement
- Costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal
- Contingency fees
- Entertainment costs
- Fines or penalties

#### 4. MAXIMUM FUNDING

The maximum amount of funding available per project is \$2,000,000.00 per year, for a maximum of three years. Typically funding per project is significantly less than this amount.

Funding from all levels of government (federal, provincial/territorial and/or municipal) must not exceed 95% of project costs. Your organization must contribute at least 5% of the total project value in cash and/or in-kind. A larger investment on the part of the applicant and any partner organizations is encouraged.

Not all proposals submitted under this CFP will be approved for funding. The assessment process is competitive. Funding is limited, and is subject to:

- Year to year budget considerations of OLES and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC); and
- Allocation of funds by Parliament.

### III. HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

The Application Kit is available online at: [The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills \(OLES\)](#). It contains the documents and instructions that you need to prepare and mail your application.

Your completed and signed funding application must be submitted or post-marked by March 13, 2009, 4 p.m. (EDT). HRSDC assumes no responsibility for submissions that are misdirected or delayed. **Late applications may be immediately screened out.** It is the sole responsibility of applicants to ensure their proposals satisfy the outlined requirements.

### IV. PROPOSAL SELECTION

Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of their proposal within two weeks of receipt. Proposals will go through a rigorous assessment process. As part of this process, the executive summary and budget may be shared with representatives of other federal departments, provincial and territorial government departments and/or external organizations, and are subject to the Access to Information Act.

Assessments will be based on:

- How well the project meets the objectives of the CFP

- How well proposed activities fit the targeted activities of the CFP
- Whether the proposed activities, deliverables and outcomes represent good value for money
- Whether outcomes are measurable and will be evaluated
- Whether the budget is realistic, clearly explained and directly linked to project activities
- The quality of the contributions by partners and proposed partners
- The sustainability of partnerships
- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the experience and capacity to carry out the proposed activities

Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision. Decisions are final and applicants have no right of appeal. However, if for some reason, applicants feel that the CFP process was not fair, open and transparent; they may contact the responsible OLES official.

OLES officials will work with successful applicants to prepare a formal funding agreement outlining the conditions under which project activities and funding payments may proceed.