

YWCA Toronto

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Technical Writer
Essential Skills for Employment, Compendium Development

Closing: August 5, 2022

Introduction

YWCA Toronto requires the services and contributions of qualified consultants, organizations, or companies to support the development of an innovative Leadership Development Training Curricula to be used as part of the [Building Sustainable Futures \(BSF\) Initiative](#) for our Essential Skills for Employment program. Under this Request for Proposals (RFP), YWCA Toronto invites technical writers and subject matter experts in the area(s) of Skills for Success (previously, Essential Skills) programming to build foundational skills for adult learners, collaborative communities of practice, employment training and life skills coaching to capture the learning in the form of a written compendium. The goal of the resources will be to build the capacity of stakeholders in Essential Skills for Employment across Canada. YWCA Toronto's Selection Committee will evaluate proposed content contributions and will conduct an interview process to award the RFP to the most suitable candidate. Please refer to Appendix A for further details on our approach, Essential Skills, Skills for Success and Emerging Skills.

Project Background and Description

As part of our five-year national BSF initiative, YWCA Toronto has been working with ten YWCA Collaborator Associations across Canada to build on the promising practices and lessons learned that emerged from the YWCA Toronto 2010 Essential Skills for Employment project, and the 2019 YWCA BSF project. The YWCA BSF model has shown to be valuable in contributing to building a skilled and inclusive workforce across Canada. Please visit our [website](#) to learn about our past projects.

The focus of this phase of the project is to enhance career advancement, essential skills knowledge and training of equity-seeking groups, specifically Indigenous, youth, mature workers and immigrants. YWCA Toronto and its collaborators are also piloting the integration of these capacity-building initiatives within their Associations. The Collaborator Associations include: YWCA Halifax, YWCA Hamilton, YWCA Moncton, YWCA Muskoka, Y des femmes de Montréal (YWCA Montreal), YWCA Saskatoon, YWCA St. John's, YWCA Thompson, and YWCA Metro Vancouver. This project has also expanded its reach to the Collaborator's communities, through various knowledge exchange initiatives, building capacity among partners, employers, and other stakeholders who are supporting vulnerable communities to gain access and engage in the workforce.

The project consists of three avenues of involvement in the ESE learning community:

I. YWCA Toronto: ESE Project Lead

The funding for Phase Three of the BSF initiative was awarded to YWCA Toronto's ESE project by the Federal Government through the Department of Employment and Social Development and the Canada's Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program. YWCA Toronto is responsible for granting the allocated government funding to Collaborator Associations and for the continual monitoring of the initiative's deliverables. The ten Collaborators report to YWCA Toronto.

II. Collaborators

YWCA Member Associations across Canada work with one another to share their promising practices in program models and curriculum, and to pilot different best practices, including the LinksToJobs Employer Engagement framework, the Life Skills Coach methodology and Leadership Development and the Emerging Skills. They also share their program model results, including how they are supporting un/underemployed individuals to increase their LES levels, bridging skill gaps, and improving employment outcomes with each other.

III. Contributors

Contributors have participated in the project through a variety of means including attending learning initiatives, engaging in community discussions, and sharing resources. Potential contributors include participants, employers, community partners, government and non-governmental entities, and other stakeholders. Contributors have been primarily engaged through online initiatives; in the near future, we hope to conduct some in-person meetings.

YWCA Toronto Role & Responsibilities

The role of YWCA Toronto will be to facilitate and support the development of the Compendium of Best Practices, similar to the one that was created in [Phase Two](#) of the BSF initiative. The ESE team will provide all necessary information, conduct any further data gathering needed to inform the various parts of the Compendium. We will also coordinate the design, production, marketing, learning events, brand management and liaison with internal and external stakeholders.

Technical Writer Role & Responsibilities

The role of the Technical Writer is to:

- Review and analyze the data collected and advise on any gaps in information;
- Collate and present the information in a written manner that showcases the Collaborators' capacity building initiatives, impact, and best practices to further develop Essential Skills professionals across Canada;
- Outline the project and Compendium background;
- Organize content to showcase the key frameworks employed throughout Phase Three;
- Highlight the Collaborators' pilot programs, including the impact of COVID on the programs;
- Include the research methodology;
- Showcase the project's impact on advancing practitioners' and organizations' capacity, touching on the future possibilities for the project;
- Collaborate with the ESE team on all aspects of the Compendium's development from inception to the publication scheduled to conclude June 30, 2023.

Eligibility Criteria and Evaluation of Applications

Technical Writers must meet the following criteria:

- Over five years' experience of writing for national projects, employment and training programs or similar capacity building initiatives;
- Experience developing reports and/or documents that are related to projects that have provided support to at least one of the following communities: immigrant, Indigenous, youth and mature workers;
- Experience publishing documents for LES organizations, employment and training programs and/or organizations;
- Strong analytical skills, having worked with quantitative and qualitative data to draw connections and conclusions that serve practitioners and front-line staff;
- Strong communication (both written and oral) and teamwork skills;
- Must be proficient in working with digital technologies and in online environments;
- Experience working in multi-stakeholder environments and communicating across departments;
- Experience working with women and non-binary people and/or other equity-seeking groups;
- Additional experience in monitoring, evaluation and stakeholder management is an asset;
- Knowledge of written and oral French is an asset.

The ESE Selection Committee will be responsible for reviewing the applications and the selection of candidates. Selection will be based on the applicant's expertise in the field, the innovative approaches taken in their submissions, and the relevance of the content in responding to one or more of the following groups: *Indigenous, youth, mature people, and immigrants*. We thank everyone for their applications, however, only those who qualify for the next round will be contacted by the ESE team.

Application Process

To apply, please provide us with the following:

1. A detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV)
2. A completed RFP Application Form. This application will provide us with an overview of your experience and potential contributions. If invited to contribute, YWCA Toronto might request more details and the content proposed in this application.
3. Approach to working with YWCA Toronto, the BSF learning community, and Collaborators in the data collection, analysis, planning and writing of the Compendium. Identify strategies that will be utilized to accomplish RFP goals and requirements.
4. Anticipated challenges and your approach to addressing these challenges.
5. Budget including an hourly rate for service.
6. Two references for work similar to the proposed project.

Remuneration of Contributions

The Technical Writer will be remunerated for their contributions based on the number of hours and deliverables. The payment will be maximum CAD \$70,000. Please note, all published works in the compendium and curricula that are submitted by stakeholder or practitioners will be cited appropriately.

The deadline for applications is Aug 5, 2022. Submit your complete application to Pallak Arora, Manager for Essential Skills for Employment (parora@ywcatoronto.org).

For further questions, contact:

Pallak Arora
Manager, Essential Skills for Employment
YWCA Toronto
parora@ywcatoronto.org
416-970-3875

RFP Application Form

Application: Technical Writer

Deadline for Submission: Aug 5, 2022

Name and Address:

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1. Describe how this project relates to the vision and mandate for your work.

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2. Describe your qualifications and previous experience developing similar written records of national collaborations or capacity building initiatives working with LES organizations, practitioners, facilitators, and any other stakeholder groups. How do you plan to use your expertise to support this project?

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3. In your own words, describe what makes a partnership such as the one proposed successful.

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4. Please provide in the chart below, details regarding any other resources (minimum 2) that you have developed. Please feel free to share links or copies of resources wherever possible.

Title of Resource	Type of resource (i.e. Compendium, project reports, summaries, evaluation reports etc.)	When and where has it been implemented or shared?	Demographic(s) Served	Additional Information
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

5. This project focuses on four groups of women and non-binary people: *Indigenous, immigrants, mature workers, and youth*. In what capacity have you worked with these demographic groups before? Please detail the principles that helped you work with the identified groups.

6. Due to the critical timeline of the project, YWCA Toronto requires all successful applicants to submit the finalized written version of the Compendium by June 2023. Is this a feasible timeline for you?

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Program Objectives and Approach

In the current phase, Collaborators are piloting and delivering the YWCA Toronto LinksToJobs Employer Engagement Framework, are trained to integrate the YWCA Toronto Life Skills Coach methodology and Leadership Development, and are exploring and integrating Emerging Skills for Employment into their program models and curricula. The goal is to support marginalized women and gender-diverse people to increase their literacy and essential skills (LES) levels, bridge skill gaps, improve their employment outcomes, and to build the capacity of organizations across Canada that want to strengthen their supports for equity-seeking groups of women and non-binary people.

YWCA Toronto is facilitating the learning community through designing and delivering a thoughtful and inclusive work plan that considers the emerging labour market and community needs. In the spirit of collaboration, YWCA Toronto's approach has been to collectively develop and implement this project. Throughout the project, YWCA Toronto has worked with Collaborator Associations through a multi-disciplinary partnership approach that recognizes the mutual responsibility to support positive employment and training outcomes for the four distinct groups.

As a learning community, through programming we strive to offer choice, accessibility, flexibility, and new opportunities. We have been committed to educating and training people in a meaningful way to help build strong and vibrant communities. By working together and exchanging information and expertise, we aim to stimulate innovation in Skills for Success (previously, Essential Skills) training and support Canadians as they move towards sustainable employment, personal fulfillment, and broader participation in the economy and society.

Essential Skills for Employment Overview

Workplaces increasingly require employees to have strong literacy, numeracy and essential skills. The Government of Canada and other national and international agencies have identified nine essentials skills needed for work, learning and life: reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy, thinking, working with others, document use, computer use, and continuous learning. These skills provide the foundation for learning all other skills, and enable people to evolve in their jobs and adapt to workplace change. At a very basic level, essential skills enable people to carry out different tasks, give them a starting point for learning other skills, and help them adjust to change. They are used in the community and the workplace in different forms and at different levels of complexity.

Figure 1: What are Essential Skills? ¹

Essential Skill	Description
Reading	Understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs (i.e. letters, manuals).
Document Use	Finding, understanding or entering information (i.e. text, symbols, numbers) in various types of documents, such as table or forms.
Numeracy	Using numbers and thinking in quantitative terms to complete tasks.
Writing	Communicating by arranging words, numbers and symbols on paper or a computer screen.
Oral Communication	Using speech to exchange thoughts and information.
Working with Others	Interacting with others to complete tasks.
Continuous Learning	The ability to participate in an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge.
Thinking	Finding and evaluating information to make rational decisions or to organize work.
Computer Use	The ability to use different computer applications and other related technical tools.

Skills for Success Overview

In 2021, the Government of Canada revamped the Essential Skills to Skills for Success. These skills are foundational for building other skills and knowledge, and important for effective social interaction. These skills overlap and interact with each other and with other technical and life skills. They are inclusive and can be adapted to different contexts. While most of our programs are based on Essential Skills for Employment, we hope to support programs that are adapting to the new Skills for Success: Writing, Numeracy, Communication, Creativity & Innovation, Problem Solving, Reading, Digital, Collaboration and Adaptability. More information can be found [here](#).

¹ Adapted from What Are Essential Skills? Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2009, pp.1-2. For more information about Essential Skills, visit the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills website: http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/les/docs/tools/what_are_es.pdf

Emerging Skills Overview

In order to keep training current with labour market trends, and to promote continuous learning, we have been researching some new skills and integrating them intentionally into our YWCA BSF model, informed by feedback from our staff and our LinksToJobs Employers Network. We also pay close attention to participant feedback about what they consider they need to learn, in order to build the skills for success. Among these important skills are the four Emerging Skills listed in the chart below.

Figure 2: What are Emerging Labor-Market Skills?

Emerging Skill	Description of Skill
Motivation/Self-Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation is a willingness to learn and grow, resulting in action-oriented behaviour. - Provides a drive needed to engage or adapt in an environment, in a problem-solving way. - Self-direction enables individuals to make informed plans and decisions for themselves.
Flexible/Adaptable Digital Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital skills exist along a spectrum, covering a wide range of knowledge, expertise and training. - Defined as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information.
An Entrepreneurial Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entrepreneurial skills encompass creativity, initiative, tenacity, teamwork, understanding of risk and a sense of responsibility. - An entrepreneurial approach can enable individuals to take an empowering attitude towards sustainable livelihoods as it includes planning and managing to achieve a desired outcome.
Emotional Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional intelligence involves the ability to recognize, manage and understand our own emotions as well as the emotions of others. - It includes an awareness of our behaviour and its impact on others especially when under pressure.