

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION STRATEGY
2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR

1. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

On May 8, 2017, the Ontario government announced that the five-year graduation rate is now at a historical high of 86.5% and acknowledged that “a number of innovative programs introduced as part of the Student Success Strategy have helped improve the graduation rate.” While this marks a huge accomplishment, there is still work to be done in terms of supporting students with transitions and helping them see the value and possibilities of postsecondary education (PSE), including apprenticeship training, college and university, as an actual pathway.

The government has supported these efforts through recent changes to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to help eliminate financial barriers for low-income families. While the OSAP transformation will help ensure affordability of PSE, it does not address non-financial barriers to PSE access.

Non-financial barriers continue to inhibit PSE access, such as being made to feel excluded from PSE, not having family/peer support, not being taught the value of PSE and not receiving sufficient academic preparation.

2. VISION

Ontario’s Vision is that “Ontarians of all ages will receive the supports they need to pursue postsecondary education (apprenticeship, college and university), have a fair chance to fulfill their dreams, achieve their potential and thrive in the global knowledge economy.”

To achieve this vision, the Ministries of Advanced Education and Skills Development, Education and Children and Youth Services would like to build on existing practices to support students with equitable access to PSE by:

- Ensuring that, to the extent possible, all students understand the value of and are on a pathway to PSE; and
- Making the necessary systemic changes to remove barriers throughout the entire education system.

3. OPPORTUNITY

This Call for Proposals (CFP) is an invitation to boards and schools to propose enhancements to current initiatives to help students, who without supports might not otherwise go onto PSE, understand the value of pursuing a postsecondary education and gain awareness of the broad range of pathways, possibilities and supports available to them.

The ministry acknowledges the engaging programs and work delivered by boards and schools through Student Success. The additional funding is intended to augment the work these initiatives bolster.

Project Scope

The target audience of this project includes students from grades 10 to 12 who:

- Have low secondary school credit accumulation and/or are achieving below the provincial average;
- Are taking applied and/or locally developed courses;
- Are disengaged; and/or
- Without supports, may not otherwise consider a PSE pathway following completion of secondary school.

Students who are participating in credit programs at school board adult learning centres may also be considered for support through these enhancements.

To enhance the efforts already underway to support these students, dedicated board and/or school level staffing may be available to:

- Provide navigation support related to careers and PSE pathways planning, secondary school programming (i.e., OYAP, Dual Credits, cooperative education, etc.) and appropriate course selection to inform their PSE pathway and develop their Individual Pathways Plan (IPP);
- Help students navigate Ontario College Application Services (OCAS) and/or Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) websites and processes to complete their applications to PSE;

Additional enhanced programming related to PSE pathways, and wraparound support may include:

- Identifying and planning experiential learning, career and postsecondary exploration opportunities (i.e., short-term job-shadowing, personalized site visits to local PSE institutions);
- Delivering workshops and information sessions promoting the value of PSE and PSE pathways for students and parents/guardians;
- Connecting students with liaisons at the various PSE institutions to continue the wraparound supports once they graduate secondary school; and
- Delivering other enhancements that contribute to the vision and objectives related to advancing equitable access to PSE.

There is flexibility for school boards to customize their proposal to meet local needs.

Deliverables

Recipients of funding will be required to:

1. Spend the allocation for the project(s) by **August 31, 2018**;
2. Provide wraparound support and additional enhancements as outlined above;
3. Participate in ministry-led professional development sessions as required;
4. Submit **interim** and **year-end** reports through existing processes/tools used to track progress (e.g., Taking Stock). Boards will be required to report on, but not limited to, the following:
 - Quantitative information: # of students being served through program enhancements, # of students who participate in experiential learning, career and postsecondary exploration activities, # of students who participate in workshops, # parents who participate in information sessions, # of students who applied for PSE and/or received funding for PSE applications;
 - Qualitative information: Descriptions of information covered in workshops and information sessions; descriptions of the different experiential learning, career and postsecondary exploration activities offered.

Funding Criteria

Funding can only be used for expenses directly related to the delivery of enhancements to existing programs/initiatives to support student transitions and equitable access to PSE, including:

- Devoted resources to support students in PSE navigation, course selection, staffing and/or teacher release time;
- Expenses related to travel to and participation in ministry-led PD sessions;
- Expenses related to support student participation in experiential learning, career and postsecondary exploration opportunities/activities (i.e., transportation, admission fees, etc.);
- Funding to cover application fees to OCAS/OUAC for eligible students¹.

¹ Students who meet the following criteria may be eligible to have their OCAS/OUAC application fees covered:

- Participated in enhancements/receiving supports;
- Have an up-to-date Individual Pathway Plan (IPP) outlining PSE programs of interest;
- Are on track to graduate in June 2018; and
- Have the prerequisites that align with current program(s) of interest.

Many boards/schools are already engaging in approaches or delivering programs that support student transitions to PSE. Funding may be used to augment existing initiatives; however, the project must clearly articulate what the enhancements are and how they will be delivered.

Funding may not be used for:

- The purchase of capital equipment (e.g., machinery, large equipment);
- Travel outside the province; and
- Expenses unrelated to the scope of the project.

4. TIMELINES FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted by **June 22, 2017**.

5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

School boards and school authorities are asked to develop opportunities based on the above scope and project criteria, while customizing details to meet student and community needs. **Applications must be submitted using the following link:**
[Ensuring Equitable Access to Postsecondary Education Application](#)

Submit proposals by 4 p.m., June 22, 2017.

6. QUESTIONS

For questions regarding this Call for Proposals, please contact:

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