3.0 ACCESS PROPOSAL APPLICATION GUIDELINES

3.1 Project Sponsor Criteria

Project Sponsor refers to a group or organization that submitted the project proposal, has received the funds, and is managing the program.

Funding criteria for service providers of group employment and training initiatives is as follows:

a) The training or employment project must meet the client criteria of the Contribution Agreement (urban/off-reserve Indigenous people residing in the Greater Vancouver area).
b) The project must be employment-related or develop identified priority skills (supported by adequate research).
c) The project must not duplicate any current related programs and services.
d) The project must be based and conducted in the Greater Vancouver region.
e) The project must be cost effective and should be innovative, (i.e. numbers of participants are flexible but the service provider MUST justify and be prepared to verify economic cost effectiveness to ACCESS (i.e., cost per participant).
f) The sponsor must have a successful track record in the proposed program or project.
g) The sponsor group must:

- Be an urban Indigenous organization in Greater Vancouver region
- Be incorporated for at least one year
- Have a fully operational office in the Greater Vancouver region
- Provide adequate and appropriate financial statements using generally accepted accounting principles
- Provide reference letters
- And be willing and capable of entering into a contract.

3.2   Proposal Intake Procedures

Step One: Submit proposal by deadline.

a) Optional: Contact ACCESS to request an updated information package with program descriptions and to determine if funding is currently available and/or
b) Meet with ACCESS to determine suitability of proposed project

Step Two: The proposal is forwarded to the ACCESS Internal Review Committee.

Step Three: The applicant is informed of the results of the internal review process and is one of the following:

   a) Proposal accepted subject to due diligence by ACCESS
   b) Proposal accepted conditionally upon implementation of recommended revisions and due diligence by ACCESS
   c) Proposal rejected

Funding Amounts

The type and amount of funding available for programs is determined by ACCESS annual and long-term operating plan. Interested project sponsors/coordinators are encouraged to call for information.

Time-Frame

All projects must be reviewed and assessed for upcoming fiscal year. All projects will be delivered during ACCESS' upcoming fiscal year (April to March) and are not allowed to be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

3.3   Proposal Review Criteria

All applications and proposals must be designed to lead to the following:

   a) To an employable, or more employable, urban Indigenous individual
   b) To long-term employment that enables self-sufficiency
   c) Savings to EI, and social service federal programs are a desired by-product of these goals
   d) Further education or training for clients with disabilities, extensive employment barriers or for those who have been long-term unemployed

In order to develop a productive urban Indigenous labour force, ACCESS requires that all training programs be fully detailed and contain the following mandatory elements:

I. History of the Organization
   •   Organization's mission, vision statement, goals
   •   Organizational chart
   •   List of board members

II. Project Summary
   •   A two-page summary of the project including the amount requested and from which program

III. Project Goals and Objectives
- Overall goals of the project outlining measurable end results
- Objectives with measurable results that will lead to the achievement of the goal

IV. Partners Involved
- Name, address, contact person, telephone number of each partner and amount of contributions (in-kind and financial amounts)

V. Project Activities
- Description of project activities
- Recruitment process of clients (staff and participants)
- Outline of curriculum with course descriptions
- Weekly breakdown of activities
- Time-frame
- Job descriptions
- Biographies/resumes of key personnel should be submitted for approved projects (optional)

VI. Expected Project Outcomes
- Based on goals and objectives of the project

VII. Evaluation Plan
Monitoring process for project and participants
Evaluation process for project and participants (to determine success)

VIII. Budget
- Complete breakdown of costs of the project (itemized budget) in MS Excel spreadsheet format
- Monthly cash flow statement in MS Excel spreadsheet format

IX. Attachments
- Letters of Support or Reference Letters

*** NOTE: A minimum of 10 participants is expected in all programs. "Group" training may have a minimum of 6 participants, providing the program can be delivered to this number of people on a cost-effective basis.**

3.4   Assessment Criteria Guidelines

In order to meet the employment and training needs of the urban Indigenous community within the Metro Vancouver area, ACCESS utilizes the following criteria to rate all proposals. The rating system will ensure an equitable process is in place whereby funds are distributed based on the merits of the project.

Proposals are assessed according to the following general program criteria guidelines:

a) The proposal is complete and it include objectives, detailed training plan, budget, job descriptions, organizational history.
b) The proposal meets the employment and training needs of both the Indigenous community and the participants
c) The proposal does not duplicate services already available in the Greater Vancouver regional Indigenous community
d) The organization owned is operated by Indigenous people and incorporated for at least one (1) year
e) The project leads to direct employment opportunities or advanced training for participants upon completion of project/training
f) The organization has the capacity to provide adequate financial and managerial accountability
g) The application is cost effective. It will be worthwhile to spend the funds asked for, considering what will be provided (costs vs. benefits)
h) The program meets local labour market priorities and the interests of priority target groups
i) The activities and curriculum enable the trainees to enter into the labour market. There is a match with demand and supply
j) The proposal encourages cost sharing with other agencies or organizations
k) The community supports the proposal
l) The proposal encourages long-term employment and reduction of dependency on income support programs
m) The proposal contains Indigenous specific content (i.e. cultural)
n) The undertaking of this project has a positive effect on the stabilizing and/or development of the community and its people
o) There is a positive track record of the individuals and coordinators involved in the project
p) The applicant has researched information and data on labour market priorities and needs and has included this in the proposal application

Note: Meeting the criteria does not necessarily guarantee approval of a submitted proposal.

3.5   Priorities

Priority will be given to applications that clearly demonstrate:

a) Actual employment or self employment upon project completion
b) Partnerships
c) Relevance to community and target market needs and priorities
d) Skills relevant to the local job market
e) Co-operative activities and apprenticeships
f) Real work experience and first-hand knowledge of the skills required to succeed
g) Provision of relevant levels of computer training
h) Provision of intermediate to advanced skills in emerging markets (examples: communications and technology)

3.6   Past Performance

Where applicable, applicants submitting proposals will be rated on past performance with employment and training program requirements and outcomes including:

- Timely submission of claim forms, participant information forms and other reports
- Responsible financial procedures and accounting practices
- Completion of participant follow-ups
- Positive and measurable outcomes (examples: employment or advanced training placements)

3.7   Projects Not Eligible

- Projects not related to employment and training
- Projects that are a duplication of existing services or funding
- Projects proposed by groups not located within Metro Vancouver and/or which do not serve the urban Indigenous population of the region

3.8   Revisions to Proposals/Applications

ACCESS staff will prepare a detailed assessment worksheet for every application received. Recommendations for changes to an application may be made to an applicant following or during the assessment. Applicants are to be consulted and given the opportunity to amend an application to fit eligible program criteria, or to withdraw an application.

Where proposals exceed funding available, proposals may be rejected or deferred pending requested changes. Where an application relates to an area of professional or technical expertise, ACCESS staff will consult with relevant agencies or professionals to ensure a fair and informed proposal assessment.

3.9   Legal Requirements

Successful applicants must agree to undertake criminal record searches for facilitators, staff and contractors upon request, or as otherwise necessitated by the nature of the project (e.g. involving children).

4.0   Financial Requirements

4.1   Use of Employment Insurance Funds for Participants

Employment Insurance (EI) Funds may be spent <u>only</u> on program participants who are EI eligible.

There are two categories of eligible EI clients that can receive financial assistance through the ACCESS:

- **Claimants** – individuals currently receiving Employment Insurance benefits

- **Reachback Clients** - individuals who are not current recipients, but are eligible to have EI funds spent on them because they:

  - Have received EI benefits within the last 36 months or
  - Received pregnancy or parental benefits within the last 60 months

It is important that the Project Sponsor contact ACCESS Employment Assistance Service Workers to verify the eligibility of potential participants

4.2   General Funding Requirements

Applications must include a detailed training and/or job plan, a detailed budget and additional information as outlined on the application form.

All client documentation must be received at least two (2) weeks prior to project start date. No advance will be made on contracts until all requested **client documentation** is submitted.

Contracts will be paid only to the maximum contracted amount.

Claims submitted must include the following:

a) Narrative Report including project progress and participant progress and monthly attendance sheets and withdrawals (reason for withdrawals should be included)
b) Participant Attendance sheet
c) Detailed Financial Report of all revenues and expenditures, a general ledger and the bank statements
d) Invoices for purchases of training, and any other program expenditures*
e) Inventory of any Capital Assets purchased by program funds (including location and status of assets, and serial numbers) that have been approved by ACCESS prior to start of program.

*Note: No second or third level bills will be accepted for reimbursement---only original invoices are allowable. All expenditures including rent and administrative costs are required to be at market rates (three (3) competitive quotes may be requested for validation)

4.3   Project Budgets

Project budgets are allocated within two broad categories: **Programs** (for training and employment assistance services) and **Administration.**

- **Programs**

  Program costs refer to the direct cost of training people. Eligible program costs include:

  a) Wages and mandatory employment related costs of project staff
  b) Purchase of custom courses from training institutes
  c) Purchase of training seats from such institutes or tuition costs to educational or training institutions providing training or instruction courses or program or certification training such as First Aid, WHMIS, etc.
  d) Participant wages or allowances
  e) Payment of qualified trainers, coordinators, and other direct client staff as needed on projects dealing with multiple clients
  f) Purchase/rental of equipment and materials needed for project activities including books and testing materials
  g) Transportation and travel cost directly related to program activities
  h) Rental of classroom/instructional space
  i) Wage subsidies and MERCS paid to employers to encourage them to hire individuals they would not otherwise hire

j) Completion bonuses paid to individual participants are not to exceed $500 per participant and these are considered taxable

k) Contributions to living costs of clients in training, including accommodation, food, laundry, local and long distance telephone calls, local transportation, and work clothes

l) Disability related supports such as attendant care, note takers, sign language interpreters, etc. required to facilitate participation of clients with disability in an ISETS intervention

- **Administration**

This refers to the direct costs incurred to ensure that training and employment initiatives will be effectively managed and implemented.

A **maximum of 15%** of program costs can be spent on administration, overhead costs and administrative staff wages and benefits.

Eligible administration costs include:

a) Office furniture, equipment, and supplies required to coordinate and administer employment and training monies from ACCESS

b) Wages and MERCS for employees to administer such monies, which would include overall coordination and financial administration---coordinators, bookkeepers, managers, etc.

c) Office rental costs to the extent necessary to house employees, furniture and equipment

d) Eligible travel costs must be related to delivery of the project, related to the ISETS, reasonable, and appropriate with original verifiable documentation on file. Documentation includes date, destination, purpose of travel, site/individual visited, distance of travel, and original receipts. Where participants are traveling from the same location every effort should be made to combine travel to minimize costs. A list of persons authorized to drive and receive travel expenditures must be maintained

e) Costs for communicating aspects of the delivery of employment and training programs to the community, such as newsletters, brochures, and advertising specifically for the program

f) Professional fees such as for audit, insurance, bookkeeping, janitorial services, internet, equipment maintenance services and bank charges

g) Office rent and utilities

h) Office materials and supplies

Any other administration expenses must be fully explained and justified in the project proposal.

Examples of costs <u>not</u> normally accepted as eligible

a) Accommodation, furniture, equipment, vehicles and the like which is beyond that required for the administration of program activities
b) Any monies applied towards effects or activities that are the ongoing normal responsibility or mandate of ACCESS or the sponsor
c) Charges for meetings or travel costs where the main object was not the program
d) Costs associated with fundraising activities
e) Canada Revenue Agency or payroll penalties and interest
f) Traffic fines and penalties
g) Parking/parking passes except for employees on travel status only
h) Monies paid out to clients that cannot be substantiated as relating to improving their employment prospects
i) Capital costs for the construction of a building, renovations and leasehold improvements except upgrades to accommodate clients with a disability
j) Capital costs for the purchase of land or buildings
k) Entertainment and hospitality costs; club memberships; fines or penalties; depreciation costs; fees or honoraria; salaries, wages, stipends or in-kind benefits for elected officials; flowers; board meetings; severance pay and related legal fees, lay-offs, termination and wrongful dismissal; non-ASETS related workshops or conferences; gifts or payment for recognition and contributions to cultural events, assemblies, publications and social events; second level billing or third or fourth party invoices
l) Legal fees and court awards for inappropriate dismissal or other inappropriate illegal activity
m) Bonuses and performance pay
n) Purchase of alcoholic beverages or any illegal substances

4.4   Capital Expenditures

All capital expenditures of $1,000 or more must be clearly stated and rationale for purchase of equipment rather than leasing the equipment should be provided. Such purchases will need to be pre-approved by ACCESS.   Upon completion or termination of a client or service delivery agreement, the disposition of all assets purchased with ACCESS/ESDC funds is at the discretion of ACCESS.

That is, Capital Assets must be:

a)   Returned to ACCESS for use in other programs/service delivery; or
b)   Disposed of in a manner as directed by ACCESS.

4.5 Payment Schedule Procedures

At the election of ACCESS, the program will be reimbursed according to one of the following schedules:

a) 50% Initial advance, 40% second payment, 10% holdback payment until submission of final documentation.

The above schedules are the main basis of payment. A final payment of any amount due will be paid following receipt of a final claim, and if considered necessary, following the completion of a financial monitor or audit.

Ten percent (10%) of the agreement value is withheld to ensure that the contract is adhered to and satisfactory reports are received from sponsors. When the ACCESS Program Officers and ACCESS Finance Department are satisfied with compliance and reports, the final 10% will be paid.

All Project Sponsors/Coordinating Groups must submit monthly (due the 20th day of the following month) financial and narrative reports to ACCESS for the duration of their project, regardless of scheduling arrangements for the release of funds. The project May submit reports quarterly if the project extends for 8 to1 2 months of the year or if agreed to by ACCESS.

The Sponsor is responsible for ensuring that all participants complete all phases of an ACCESS-funded training program, failing which the Sponsor contribution amounts will be determined and deducted for each participant who fails to complete the training program as follows:

a) For pre-employment/job readiness types of training programs, payments will be based on numbers of participants retained in a training program at the cost per participant rate as stated in the Sponsor's contract and will be dependent on the certificates and courses that the participant has completed during the month, if a participant fails to complete the certificates or withdraws from the program in a particular month that he/she is enrolled.   ACCESS will deduct the cost per participant from the monthly financial clam report.

b) For skills enhancement training types of programs, payments will be based on numbers of participants retained in the training program at the cost per participant as stated in the Sponsor's contract and will be dependent on the certificates and courses that the participant has completed during the month. Enumeration of participants for payment determination will be in force up to the third month of the training program. Payment determination thereafter will remain at the number of participants retained in the program after the third month.

To determine number of participants that are retained in the training program, each participant in an ACCESS-funded program will fill in an intake form at the start of the program and projects are to submit attendance monthly with claim reports with information on withdrawals for the month from the program. ACCESS will use the cost per participant amount as stated in the Sponsor's contract and payments will be adjusted at that rate.

4.6   Payment Verification

The following points will be checked prior to issuing any payments other than the first advance:

a) The claim and all supporting documentation is submitted including progress report, bank statements, invoices, general ledger
b) The claim has been submitted and is consistent with forecast
c) The Project Sponsor is submitting timely activity and monitoring reports, and
d) The claim has been signed by the Project Sponsor and is mathematically correct

5.0   General Project Operational Requirements

5.1   Project Obligations

Project Sponsors must fulfill the following obligations:

- Meet the needs of the participants
- Obtain all permits and licenses and any other legal requirements for operating the program, including appropriate insurance
- Meet the federal and provincial acts and regulations including income tax, Canada Pension Plan, vacation pay, minimum wage, EI premiums, workers' compensation; and issue all employees T4 slips showing deductions for EI, CPP and income tax
- Meet all ACCESS/ESDC requirements including: reports, method of payments, procedures
- Evaluate your projects on an ongoing basis and submit 6 months and 12-months report on employment and further education results of clients completing project interventions and to ensure that project objectives have been followed and completed

5.2   Selection of Program Participants

Selection, referral, and decline of applicants must be well documented. The following procedures must be adhered to:

a) Initial information session is to be conducted by sponsor
b) Referral of client to ACCESS or sponsored EAS sites by sponsor for determination of eligibility under ACCESS guidelines
c) If appropriate, referral of client by ACCESS back to sponsor to determine eligibility for program.
d) Sponsors are to use appropriate screening and assessment methods to ensure candidates are suitable for their program.

5.3   Client Reporting

Participant status reports must be recorded, maintained, and submitted to ACCESS by the Coordinators. These track participant involvements in training and employment program funding provided by ACCESS.

5.4   Workers' Compensation

Coordinators have legal responsibilities related to the safety of program participants. Where mandatory under law, sponsors are required to obtain workers' compensation insurance and the necessary third party liability coverage.

5.5   Use of Funds

Funds provided by ACCESS are to be utilized only for the purpose of delivering training and employment programs and services to the urban Indigenous community within the boundaries of ACCESS, which comprises the Greater Vancouver region. Specifically, the funding transferred to the project sponsor must be used solely for the purposes outlined in schedule "A" of the "Delivery of Training Agreement" or the "Employment Assistance Services Program Agreement" and be in accordance with schedule "B" and "C," the contribution terms/budget and cash flow statement.

5.6 Protection of Client Personal Information and Security of Systems – Service Level Agreements

Project sponsors will need to sign and agree to the protection of client personal information and to the security of their systems as it relates to client personal information. The Service Level Agreements are intended to govern any situation where an organization is collecting forwarding or storing more than one element of a clients' identity.

The purpose of the Service Level Agreement between ACCESS and Project Sponsors is to:
a)   Set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the Parties
b) Outline the information management and protection of Personal Information requirements.
c) Outline the systems monitoring processes;
d) Outline the scope of the Sponsor's responsibility
e) Establish a prompt process to address any issues that may arise.

It is required that all project sponsors of ACCESS agree to all security measures as outlined in their service level agreement with ACCESS.