

Integrated Foundational Pathways Program Approval Application Guidelines

Applications are being accepted for training programs that help Albertans gain competencies to pursue further education, training, and/or employment.

Important dates

August 31, 2020: Application period opens

September 14, 2020: Applicants' conference call (optional)

October 30, 2020: Application period closes

February 1, 2021: Notification on review outcomes

April 1, 2021: Training commencement of approved programs

Overview

Foundational learning provides individuals with the skills necessary to pursue further education, training, and/or employment to attain satisfying and meaningful employment and strengthen their communities.

Foundational Learning Supports (FLS) is a branch within the Apprenticeship and Student Aid division in the Ministry of Advanced Education. FLS provides financial support to eligible Albertans to assist with living costs, tuition, mandatory fees, books, and supplies for full- and part-time approved training programs.

Call for IFP program applications: program approval process

Training programs are needed to provide adult learners with opportunities throughout Alberta. This program approval process will help government identify and select:

- relevant training programs
- qualified training providers

Approval Term

Programs will be approved for two-years effective April 1, 2021. There may be a possibility of a one-year extension for programs that have achieved the program's intended outcomes.

Approved programs will be incorporated into the FLS annual budget planning process. Training providers may receive an allocation letter outlining their approved allocation for the fiscal year beginning in April of each year and ending in March the following year. Funding allocations are based on provincial needs, priorities, and available funds.

Program approval may be revoked at any time for issues of non-compliance with the IFP program policy or due to other [non-compliance](#) issues.

Funding

Program approval is a prerequisite for funding; however, program approval does not guarantee that:

- funds will be allocated for the program and/or
- learners will attend the program

Funding for the program is determined by Advanced Education's annual allocation process. The allocation process is separate from the program approval process.

Once the program is approved and funds have been allocated, individuals can apply for [income support for learners](#).

To be eligible for income support as a full-time learner, an individual must meet the eligibility and financial eligibility criteria outlined in the:

- [Income and Employment Supports Act](#)
- [Income Support, Training and Health Benefits Regulation](#)

Training benefits for learners may also be provided for:

- cost of tuition
- books
- supplies
- mandatory fees

Eligibility

Training provider requirements

Applicants must have organizational experience in:

- providing training programs (at least three years)
- working with the targeted client group identified in the IFP guidelines
- setting and achieving targeted outcome measures
- implementing a minimum academic/professional qualifications for instructors for each program component

Program Guidelines

[Integrated Foundational Pathways](#) (IFP) provides adult Albertans with a supportive non-traditional approach to gain the competencies and academic components needed to prepare for further education/training and/or employment. The training provides the learner with the **essential skills, academics, and applied skills development** required to pursue further education and/or training at any point in their career path. FLS recognizes that some learners may transition to employment upon the completion of training with the intention of returning to formal education in the future.

The program approval process will identify and select relevant training programs and qualified training providers.

The IFP program must be a minimum of 12 weeks to a maximum of 52 weeks in length, and breaks between sessions, cannot be longer than three weeks duration. In addition, there must be at least 20 hours of instruction per week.

Applications must be in accordance with the [IFP](#) policy program components*:

1. [Essential skills](#) prepares individuals with the skills needed for learning and enabling people to evolve in their education, jobs and life. Examples of content include reading, writing, document use, numeracy, computer use, thinking, oral communication, and working with others.
2. **Academic components** - in one or more of the following areas:
 - a) **Basic Skills:** provides literacy and numeracy skills at the Grade 1-6 levels and adult basic education at the Grade 7-9 levels.

- b) **Academic Upgrading** provides the necessary academic competencies at the grade 10–12 level. Academic upgrading includes high school credit courses as per the Alberta Education curriculum, and equivalency courses accepted by post-secondary institutions as per the [Alberta Council for Admissions and Transfers \(ACAT\) Agreement](#).
 - c) **English as a Second Language (ESL)** provides the English language skills with the expectation to become proficient in speaking, reading, writing and listening in English. ESL provides study and practice of the English language to individuals whose first language is other than English and who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English.
3. **Applied skills development** allows the individual to learn and apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations, in the classroom and/or on the job. Applied skills development builds the individual's experience to increase their effectiveness in real-life circumstances. This component can also include the first period technical training, or courses/training that lead to credit towards a post-secondary program.

Safety courses will only be considered if they are a prerequisite either for the classroom or on-the-job skill development component.

***Components 1 and 2 must make up a minimum of 50% of the IFP program.**

Targeted learners**

IFP targets learners who are faced with barriers or seek a different integrated pathway to a supportive learning environment and skill development opportunity that will build on their essential and academic competences. Individuals selected for foundational learning approved programs must have two or more of the following characteristics:

1. a limited range of academic competencies and/or related credentials
2. a variety of barriers that have previously affected their schooling, learning opportunities, attachment to the labour market, and vocational skill development
3. insufficient English language skills to pursue training or employment in their field of training, or
4. requirement for essential skills training

**Preference to be given to program applications that target underrepresented groups in the labour market such as women, youth, Indigenous people, immigrants, persons with disabilities, and income support recipients.

Targeted locations***

IFP programming should be made available for Albertans by providing programs in all geographical regions of the province.

***Preference to be given to programs proposed in regions of the province that currently do not have an IFP program: South, Central, Northeast, and Northwest.

Economic Sectors

Due to COVID-19 and the impact to jobs and the economy, preference to be given to programs that will support [Alberta's Recovery Plan](#).

Applicants will need to demonstrate the relevant labour market information to support the choice of the targeted industry/occupations if employment is the intended outcome of the training.

How to apply

Step 1. Read the guiding legislation and policy

Before you apply, ensure you have thoroughly read and understand the training provider roles, responsibilities, and legal obligations as related specifically to the:

- [Income and Employment Supports Act](#)
- [Training Provider Regulation](#) for legal obligations of training providers
- [Income Support, Training and Health Benefits Regulation](#) to find eligibility and financial criteria for income support as a full-time learner
- [Integrated Foundational Pathway](#) to confirm your training program meets the policy requirements

Step 2. Download the IFP application package

- [IFP application form](#)

Step 3. Participate in a Q&A conference call (optional)

The applicant's conference call will be held on September 14, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

The purpose of the Q&A conference call meeting is to:

1. respond to questions applicants may have about the application content and process
2. clarify information on the application to reduce the chance of misinterpretation

If you require anonymity or are unable to attend the meeting but have questions you would like answered, please send your questions in advance to AE.FoundationalLearning@gov.ab.ca by 11:55 p.m. on September 13, 2020.

Access information

Toll Free: 1-866-834-7723

Conference Code: 798 525 4143 #

To mute your line #6

To unmute your line #6

- The applicants' conference call will be the **final opportunity** to have your questions answered prior to the submission deadline.
- All questions and answers will be posted on the [IFP website](#). The applicant's conference call questions and answers will be an addendum to the IFP Program Application Guidelines and considered to be a part of the guidelines.
- No further questions will be answered after the conference call.

Step 4. Complete the application package

Only completed applications will be reviewed. All questions asked on the application form (provided in step 2) must be addressed.

Please read the guidelines and application carefully to confirm your program meets the IFP requirements and you have provided all necessary information.

To be eligible for program review, applications must meet the following criteria:

1. Application is received electronically using the [Program Approval Application](#) template provided by the deadline date and time
2. All sections of the application must be completed.
3. Application page limit does not exceed **25** pages, use Arial 11 point, 1-inch margins, single spaced, and the application template must not be altered

Step 5. Submit the application package

Submissions

- Review your application before you send to ensure all sections of the IFP program application is completed.

- Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Application packages must be directed to AE.FoundationalLearning@gov.ab.ca
- Title the subject line as “Your Organization Name”: Integrated Foundational Pathways Program Approval Submission

Closing Date and Time

- Applications **must** be submitted using the non-altered [IFP Program Application](#) by **11:55 pm on October 30, 2020** to the following email address AE.FoundationalLearning@gov.ab.ca.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is received on time. An acknowledgement email will be sent upon receipt. If you do not receive an acknowledgement email, please email AE.FoundationalLearning@gov.ab.ca to advise us.

After you apply

1. Application Review

Applications will be evaluated based on how effectively they address:

- program information
- program design and outcomes
- training provider experience and qualification
- cost per learner

2. Notification

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the internal review.