

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Evaluation of a Three-Year Research Project:

Measures of Success: Workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives

1. Proposal Timeline

February 4, 2010	Release of Request for Proposals
Feb. 19, 12 midnight PST	Submission deadline
February 22-March 5	Review of proposals
March 8, 2010	Selection and notification

2. Background

Measures of Success: Workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives is a three-year project (fall 2009 – fall 2012) funded by the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and sponsored by The Centre for Literacy of Quebec, Workplace Education Manitoba, Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development, and the Canadian Council on Learning, with support from a New Zealand Department of Labour researcher.

This project is designed to develop a new evaluation model to measure the long-term impact of workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives in Manitoba and Nova Scotia. The evaluation model will build on existing models, particularly one developed in New Zealand. It is intended that the evaluation model will eventually be used in other provinces and territories across Canada. Information about workplace literacy and essential skills is provided at the following website: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/understanding_es.shtml

The research questions are:

- What are the long-term impacts of workplace literacy and essential skills (LES) initiatives on the participants, workplaces, and companies?
- What is a reliable model for evaluating the long-term impacts of workplace LES initiatives?
- What are effective and efficient ways to provide workplace LES initiatives to maximize positive long-term impacts?

The project goals are:

- To increase capacities to evaluate effectiveness and measure the long-term impact of workplace literacy and essential skills programs;
- To demonstrate the benefits of using common measure to compare outcomes within different programs and across jurisdictions.

The project activities are:

- To collaborate with Workplace Education Manitoba and Nova Scotia's Department of Labour and Workforce Development, with support from a New Zealand researcher, in an action research project designed to develop and disseminate an evaluation model to measure outcomes of workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives;
- To adapt and test a model for evaluation of the long-term impacts of workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives in two Canadian provinces (Manitoba and Nova Scotia) by

starting from an evidence-based model from New Zealand that integrates quantitative and qualitative measures;

- To apply the adapted model to ten sites in each of the two provinces.

The anticipated project results are:

Outputs:

- Literature review and province report published online;
- Common evaluation/research framework for the site projects and a project logic model for the evaluation of the project;
- A Canadian common model of evaluation for workplace literacy and essential skills, tested in 20 workplace sites in the provinces of Manitoba and Nova Scotia, that capture comparable outcomes and benefits for individuals and employers of workplace literacy and essential skills (LES) across programs and jurisdictions;
- Mechanisms in place that will allow tracking the impacts of the pilots at least two years beyond the end date of the project;
- Reports on site projects and synthesis for broader dissemination;
- Long-term plan/strategy to apply in other provinces the common model of evaluation for workplace LES.

Outcomes:

- Strengthen Manitoba and Nova Scotia's capacity to collect longitudinal data and use it to improve programs and communicate outcomes in consistent, reliable and comparable ways to improve their program and use this model as a key component of their current long-term strategies and programs in LES;
- A greater understanding of long-term impacts of workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives in Canada;
- A greater number of Canadian employers and workers engaged in workplace LES programs, as a result, improving workers' literacy and essential skills needed to find and keep jobs;
- Opportunity to apply the model and strengthen capacity and improve LES programs across Canada.

3. Evaluation of Research Project: *Measures of Success: Workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives*

The research project has been designed to include an evaluation component as an integral part of the process. The evaluation component is intended to provide an ongoing process for reviewing, assessing, and refining the project's activities, targets, and methods.

Evaluation Activities

- To liaise with the Project Manager to develop an evaluation plan with formative and summative strategies for approval by the project steering committee; the evaluation plan will include strategies for monitoring:
 - the progress and achievement of the project goals and activities;
 - the project's outputs and outcomes as anticipated;
 - any unexpected outcomes;

- To carry out the evaluation plan with the guidance of the Project Manager and input from the project's Steering Committee;
- To develop a logic model in consultation with the Project Manager and the project's Steering Committee;
- To produce interim reports at six-month intervals reflecting formative evaluation;
- To produce a final report in paper and electronic format to be approved by the Project Manager and Steering Committee.

Evaluation Timeline

Evaluation activities are expected to begin in March 2010. The project ends August 30, 2012.

4. Submission Requirements

Qualified individuals and firms are invited to respond to this Request for Proposals by submitting proposals indicating an expression of interest. Proposals must include:

- a) **Evaluation strategy:** A core objective for this research project is to develop an evaluation model for assessing workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives. The model is expected to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data, to balance the interests of multiple stakeholders, and to maintain an evidence-based orientation. The strategy for evaluating the research project is expected to demonstrate similar values and perspectives. Submissions must include an overarching strategy for evaluating the research project.
 - b) **Work plan outline:** Submissions must include a work plan outline that delineates the key elements of a successful evaluation process, identifies appropriate and achievable targets, and is specific about deliverables to be achieved within set budgetary parameters.
 - c) **Logic model:** It is expected that the evaluator will develop a logic model with input from the Project Manager and the Steering Committee. The submission must provide information about the strategy for preparing a clear, comprehensive, and easily understood logic model.
 - d) **Budget:** The submission must include a detailed budget, not exceeding a maximum of \$50,000 over the life of the contract.
 - e) **Information about the applicant**
 - Name, address, and contact information of the consulting firm or individual, including direct line telephone and e-mail;
 - Description of the firm or individual, relevant experience and qualifications;
 - Names of the key personnel who will work directly on this project, indicating the anticipated proportion of their contribution to the project;
 - References to at least two similar projects done by this firm or individual.
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5. Follow-up to submission

Questions

Any questions about the project may be directed to the Project Manager. All questions and answers will be shared with everyone who has submitted an expression of interest.

Selection Criteria

The Project Manager and Steering Committee will review all submissions using the following criteria:

- Understanding of the practice of workplace literacy and essential skills;
- Understanding of the project goals, activities and partnerships as demonstrated by the evaluation strategy, work plan, and budget;
- Logic and fit of the proposed evaluation strategy and methods;
- Expertise and experience of the proponent related to evaluation, project management, and working with industry, as demonstrated by the proposal.

Submission Deadline

The proposal must be submitted by e-mail and must be received **no later than February 19, 12 midnight PST**. Please send the proposal to:

Dr. Kathleen Flanagan, Project Manager

Measures of Success: Workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives

The Centre for Literacy of Quebec

Kathleen.Flanagan@CentreforLiteracy.qc.ca

Submissions must also be copied to Vicky Boldo, administrative assistant, at the following address: admin.asst1@centreforliteracy.qc.ca.

Notification

All interested parties are warmly thanked for their interest in this initiative. Submissions received by February 19, 2010, will be acknowledged by February 26, 2010. All candidates will be notified of the selection committee's decision no later than March 8, 2010.