



MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers of School Authorities
Employment Service (ES) Service Providers

FROM: David Fulford
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Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities

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RE: **Youth Employment Fund and Secondary School Students**

In the 2013 Ontario Budget, the government announced the two year Youth Jobs Strategy to promote employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth aged 15 to 29, www.ontario.ca/youthjobs.

The Youth Employment Fund (YEF) is one part of this strategy and is being led by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). The Ministry of Education and MTCU have been working together to identify how this initiative can help secondary school students, particularly those students who are making the transition from school to the work force. As part of Student Success initiatives, Ontario schools have emphasized the value of all postsecondary destinations and the launch of this new program creates an ideal opportunity to provide concrete support to students making the transition to employment.

Youth Employment Fund is an investment of \$195 million over two years to create employment opportunities for 25,000 youth in Ontario. The Province will provide hiring incentives to employers to offer young people in all regions of the province an entry point to long-term employment. Youth who participate in the program will learn life and work skills while earning income.

Youth meeting the Fund's criteria will be helped to connect with an employer for a four to six month paid job placement. ES providers will offer support tailored to individual needs through a combination of training, employment and individual help.

A flexible range of supports are available to youth meeting the Fund's eligibility criteria, to help link them to employment. These supports include hiring incentives for employers to create job placements, short-term training needed to prepare youth for a job placement and individual supports to help remove barriers to working.

Youth Employment Fund clients can also access:

- Job matching and placement
- Access to life skills and other human/social wraparound services through referrals to other community organizations
- Enhanced training – short term and directly linked to job placement
- Longer job placements – 4 to 6 months in duration
- Individual supports (financial assistance for costs such as transportation) – up to \$1,000.

YEF eligibility includes youth aged 15 to 17. The compulsory school age in Ontario is up to age 18 or graduation, as legislated by the *Education Act*, s.21. Students of compulsory school age may be eligible to participate in the YEF provided they have been excused from regular school attendance by an exception allowed under O. Reg. 374/10 of *the Act*. These exceptions include either Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL – which might include preparation for employment and development of general employment skills, job-training and full- or part-time employment) or specified part-time attendance provisions detailed below. For students who are enrolled in secondary school, the Youth Employment Fund may be helpful to:

- a. Students preparing to graduate or leave school at age 18 without a diploma and seeking to enter the workforce. These students can be encouraged to consider the Youth Employment Fund as a part of their individual pathways planning and as a support in their transition to employment.
- b. Students of compulsory school age (at least 15 years old) in Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL). Student participation in SAL is approved by the board's SAL Committee and includes a SAL plan and a school board primary contact who contacts the student at least monthly. A SAL plan can incorporate YEF participation.
- c. Students 16 or 17 years old attending school part-time for compassionate reasons with the principal's approval or because they only need one or two credits to graduate.
- d. Students 18 to 29 years old who have returned on a part-time basis to complete a secondary school diploma or pre-requisites for postsecondary study through Adult and Continuing Education programs. These students could benefit from the support provided through the YEF as they transition to the work force.
- e. Former students of compulsory school age who have left school and been removed from the enrolment register but are still being contacted regularly by the school board. The opportunity exists to re-engage these students with the opportunity to train and work through the YEF as part of a SAL plan.

In order to ensure that youth under the age of 18 wishing to access the YEF meet the exceptions defined under *the Act* and regulations, Employment Service providers will ask youth under the age of 18 to provide proof of their graduation **or** SAL or part-time school registration. Only those youth meeting these exceptions will be eligible to participate in the YEF.

Where youth under 18 are unable to provide proof of meeting these exceptions, ES providers will advise them to contact their local secondary school to either obtain proof or request to participate in SAL. In cases where a youth is under 16 years of age, the Employment Service provider will require a parent or guardian's signature on the Employment Service Participant Registration form.

In **all** cases, the individual will be advised that their personal information may be shared between the service provider and with schools involved in the approval of Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) programs, where it is in the interest of the client to do so. Connections between ES providers and school boards will support a smooth process for youth seeking employment.

Additional Information

- Learn more about the [Youth Employment Fund](#) and how it can be used to help youth in your area.
- Read more about [Supervised Alternative Learning](#) and how it helps re-engage youth who are at risk of not graduating.
- Find [Employment Service](#) providers in your community.
- Find [school boards](#) in your community.

There are great examples of collaboration between school boards and Employment Service providers that have resulted in positive outcomes for youth across the province. The Youth Employment Fund presents an extraordinary opportunity to further our efforts.

We encourage you to share this information with your staff and other community organizations who are serving youth.

David Fulford

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c: Student Success Leaders