**INCOME ASSISTANCE FIRST NATIONS YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY (IAFNYES) 2023-2024**

**Questions & Answers**

This Questions and Answers document was developed to provide information

on the primary objectives and operational details of the

***Income Assistance First Nations Youth Employment Strategy*** pilot.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The goal of the Income Assistance First Nations Youth Employment Strategy (IAFNYES) is to reach up to 2000 on-reserve and Yukon First Nations youth between the ages of 18 and 30 who are receiving Income Assistance (Ontario Works-OW) in order to help them transition to the workforce or return to school, reducing long term dependency on income assistance.

For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, $33.4M [$16.7M forthe Income Assistance (IA) program and $16.7M First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES)] was approved for this pilot. The total amount available in Ontario Region is $4.8M ($2.4 for IA and $2.4 for FNIYES) in fiscal year 2023-24.

Recipients who are funded to deliver IAFNYES must follow the requirements outlined in their approved proposal for funding (including the funding decision letter), and the Terms and Conditions for FNIYES’s Skills Link Program for mentored work placements. As part of the 15% admin for IA funding, IAFNYES can also include costs for staff salary, wages, and benefits for IAFNYES activities which is an eligible activity under IA.

1. **Q. What are the main objectives of the pilot?**

**A.** The objectives of IAFNYES are to:

* provide short term work placements for youth to increase their access to more permanent employment opportunities;
* support the development and enhancement of essential employability skills;
* promote the benefits of education as key to labour market participation;
* introduce youth to a variety of career options;
* support access to services to help youth transition to and remain in the workforce; and
* reduce long term dependency on Income Assistance.

1. **Q. What is this pilot and how is it different from regular FNIYES?**

**A.**  This pilot aims to provide 2000 youth receiving Income Assistance (Ontario Works) with additional supports by leveraging FNIYES’s Skills Link program to complement case management and pre-employment supports provided by Income Assistance.

Synergizing the FNIYES and IA programs under YESS helps youth in receipt of IA (OW) transition to employment, and meet the goals of reducing poverty and reliance on income assistance on a long term basis.

The Income Assistance program has been seeking opportunities to help increase youth receiving Income Assistance (First Nations youth and youth with disabilities), transition to employment or education. Partnering with FNIYES is one way of increasing these supports. In Ontario, this program is solely targeted to eligible First Nation youth on Ontario Works.

This pilot will incentivize employers in hiring and retaining youth as it would consist of FNIYES and IA funding up to the totality (100%) of the wage subsidies for mentored work placements, each providing up to 50% for non-profit sector employers. The incentive for private sector employers would consist of FNIYES and IA funding up to 50% of the wage subsidies for mentored work placements, each providing up to 25%. Providing full wage subsidies to employers would increase access to employment training for on reserve and Yukon First Nations youth receiving Income Assistance. In addition, administrators can determine how to best support youth as they participate in mentored work placements. For example, either the FNIYES or the IA (OW) administrator can coordinate the mentored work placements, while also monitoring and following up with youth as they participate in their work placement(s).

1. **Q. What is the eligibility criteria for IAFNYES?**

**A. On reserve** and Yukon **First Nations** youth who are receiving **ISC’s Income Assistance (Ontario Works in Ontario)** between the ages of **18 and 30 years** old (or per Ontario Works age guidelines) are eligible to participate in this pilot.

First Nation youth receiving Income Assistance who are eligible to be supported through IAFNYES must be receiving Income Assistance benefits funded by the ISC’s Income Assistance program or be in Ontario Works in Ontario.

The eligibility for IAFNYES youth participants is specific to this pilot.

1. **Q. What is the maximum length of placements for this pilot?**

**A.** The maximum length of IAFNYES placements for this pilot is eleven (11) months. The one-time participation barrier for participating in FNIYES’s Skills Link mentored work placements has been removed, thus allowing youth who have participated in a previous program to have the opportunity to participate for a second time.

Youth could participate in an IAFNYES placement, and once completed, continue through FNIYES regular programming.

1. **Q. What additional work will recipient’s staff be expected to do?**

**A.** Administrators are expected to coordinate quality work placements and support youth as they participate in this pilot.

There are additional reporting requirements for IAFNYES (please refer to the reporting section of this document for more information). As this is a pilot, it is important that reporting is provided to ISC in order to signal any issues with implementation, and to support future funding requests.

# PROPOSALS

1. **Q. Can recipients submit a proposal if they do not receive targeted Case Management and Pre-Employment Supports funding from ISC's Income Assistance program or are an Ontario Works full delivery site?**

**A.** Yes, but the recipient must confirm that their administrator(s) can provide some form of case management supports to Income Assistance youth as they participate in IAFNYES and can confirm that quality mentored work placements can be coordinated for participants of this pilot. Case management supports may include: intake, assessment, case planning, monitoring, and referral procedures along with some form of personalized action plan or aftercare plan, which address barriers to participation in employment, education or other funded programs.

1. **Q. How do I submit a proposal for IAFNYES funding?**

**A.** An updated proposal template was included as an attachment with your invitation letter. Only proposals submitted with the attached 2023-2024 electronic proposal form issued by the Department of Indigenous Services Canada will be considered for assessment.

Applicants who have access to ISC’s Education Information System (EIS) can use the portal to validate the proposal to ensure it meets all the business rules (e.g.; confirm that all mandatory fields have been completed).

The updated proposal must be populated and saved in the PDF before being submitted by email to your ISC Regional Office or Yukon CIRNAC Regional Office by secure USB.

Incomplete proposals and hard copy/scanned copies of proposals will be returned to the applicant for revision.

Proposals submitted after the due dates provided to you by your regional office may not be accepted for funding consideration.

1. **Q. Why and how do I request funding for expenditures from the two programs (FNIYES and IA)?**

**A.** Since IAFNYES is a partnership pilot, the funding will be coming from both FNIYES and IA, respectively. The aim of the partnership is for each program to cover up to 50% of costs of IAFNYES’s mentored work placements and administration costs. As such, the funding will be divided by program into two equal allocations in your contribution agreement**.** For this reason, expenses will need to be identified separately in your proposal.

The updated proposal template that will be sent to you will include **Objective - *IAFNYES* (IA and FNIYES pilot)** and **Activity - Coordinate quality IAFNYES Mentored Work Placements**. Once these options are selected in your proposal, you will be prompted to identify separate **Expense Types** (eligible expenses as per Program Guidelines) for each program:

* Cost per participant for required dependent care (IA)
* Cost per participant for required dependent care (FNIYES)
* Mandatory employment related costs for work placements (IA)
* Mandatory employment related costs for work placements (FNIYES)
* Special equipment and facilities to accommodate the needs of disabled participants (IA)
* Special equipment and facilities to accommodate the needs of disabled participants (FNIYES)
* Total wages (IA)
* Total wages (FNIYES)
* Training (IA)
* Training (FNIYES)
* Other (IA)
* Other (FNIYES)

**Administration costs** (up to 15%) will be collected as a total for IAFNYES funding, however, the explanation field **must be used** to identify and explain the administration costs for both programs:

* Staff salary, wages and benefits and other Administration costs (IA)
* Administration costs (FNIYES)

Please review additional informationoneligible IAFNYES mentored work placements and administration costs in the reporting and funding sections below **prior** to completing your proposal.

**Regular Income Assistance and FNIYES funding utilized to support youth should not be included in the IAFNYES proposal and reports.**

# REPORTING

1. **Q. What are the reporting requirements for this pilot?**

**A.** The reporting requirements for IAFNYES are designed to minimize the reporting burden on recipients, while still collecting the information ISC needs to support future funding requests and confirm actual expenditures incurred.

The IAFNYES reporting requirements are:

* **Final Reports** due May 15, 2024, including an Addendum Report.

**Final Reports**

The **final reporting requirements** for this strategy are **due May 15, 2024** and include the following:

The **FNIYES Reports (#434352 and #434342)** with minor updates mainly to collect information for this pilot separately from regular FNIYES funding and to collect information on expenditures actually incurred for **each** programs’ funding for IAFNYES.

The information included in approved proposals will be prepopulated into the final FNIYES report.

An **Addendum Report** to collect information specific to IAFNYES that is not collected in the FNIYES DCIs. For example, this report collects some information on case management. For more information on the Addendum Report, please see the Addendum Report form provided to you in the invitation package.

**Regular Income Assistance and FNIYES funding utilized to support youth should not be included in the IAFNYES proposal and reports.**

1. **Q. What are the anticipated changes to the FNIYES Report to collect information for IAFNYES?**

**A.** The **FNIYES Reports (DCI#434352 and #434342)** have been minimally updated to collect information on this pilot separately from regular FNIYES funding and to collect information on expenditures actually incurred for **IA** and **FNIYES**’s IAFNYES funding.

The minor changes to FNIYES’s DCIs are listed below for the FNIYES Report and Youth Evaluation:

**FNIYES Report**

* Add a new objective; “IAFNYES (IA and FNIYES pilot strategy)”
* Add a new activity; “Coordinate quality IAFNYES Mentored Work Placements”
* Update the titles of the drop down options for each expense type for IAFNYES Mentored Work Placements so you can report actual expenditures for each program’s funding by expense type.
  + For example, the title of the drop down option for “Total Wages” will be updated to include “Total Wages – FNIYES” **and** “Total Wages – IA”.
* Administration costs (up to 15%) will be collected as a total for IAFNYES funding provided. However, the explanation field must be used to identify and explain the administration costs for both programs, respectively:
* Staff salary, wages and benefits and other Administration costs (IA)
* Administration costs (FNIYES)
* Add a new audience type; “IAFNYES youth participants”. This is to collect information on youth participants funded by IAFNYES **separately** from youth participants funded by regular FNIYES.

**Youth Evaluation**

* Add a new work placement type; “IAFNYES Mentored Work Placement”. This is to collect information on youth participants funded by IAFNYES **separately** from youth participants funded by regular FNIYES.
* Add two new status options to provide information on “Status After Your Work Placement” which are applicable to Income Assistance youth:
  + “On/Applying for Income Assistance”
  + “On/Applying for Employment Insurance”

1. **Q. What and how are administration costs to be reported?**

**A.** Eligible administration costs for this pilot are up to a combined maximum 15% of the sub-total amount for IAFNYES costs before administration costs. The sub-total amount for IAFNYES costs includes the IAFNYES funding provided by the IA program and FNIYES.

The costs for staff salaries, wages, and benefits for delivering IAFNYES are **only** eligible expenditures for Income Assistance program funding provided for IAFNYES. Up to 15% of the subtotal amount for IAFNYES Income Assistance funding may be used for administration costs, which includes the costs for staff salary, wages and benefits **only**. Consequently, the **administration costs of up to 15% of the sub-total amount funded by IA** and the **administration costs of up to 15% of the sub-total amount funded by FNIYES** must be identified and explained separately in the explanation field in your proposal and final report (**#**434352).

**Regular Income Assistance and FNIYES funding used to support youth should not be included in the IAFNYES proposal and reports.**

1. **Q. Who should complete the Youth Evaluation?**

**A.** IAFNYES participant success stories and comments are greatly valued and are helpful for demonstrating IAFNYES’s positive impacts. IAFNYES participant comments may also be used to determine how to improve the pilot.

This valuable information is only collected in the Youth Evaluation when IAFNYES youth complete it. Where possible, we request that it be completed by the youth who participated in IAFNYES, and that administrators complete the Youth Evaluation when youth are not available to do so.

1. **Q: How will the information provided to ISC be used and protected?**

**A:** In order to minimize the reporting burden on recipients, ISC’s IA and FNIYES programs are jointly collecting information to report on IAFNYES to support future funding requests, and to confirm actual expenditures incurred.

ISC's collection and use of personal information and other records for the purposes of targeted program reviews (for example, desk and on-site reviews) will be limited to what is necessary to ensure that program delivery requirements are met.

ISC is responsible for all information and records in its possession. Information confidentiality will be managed by ISC in accordance with the *Privacy Act*, and other related policies on privacy. Recipients are responsible for the protection of personal information as per provincial privacy statutes and regulations, as well as the recipient's policies up to the point that the personal information is transferred to ISC.

# ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

1. **Q. What activities are eligible under this IAFNYES?**

**A.** Key activities that are eligible under this pilot include wage subsidies for mentored work placements for youth who are receiving Income Assistance benefits funded by the ISC’s Income Assistance program to enable them to develop employability skills and support career development.

The only activity that will be included in the proposal template is “Coordinate quality IAFNYES Mentored Work Placements”. Please see additional information provided below for administration costs and staff salary, wages, and benefits.

# FUNDING (ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES)

1. **Q. What is the break down in coverage between the two programs (IA and FNIYES) for wage subsidy between the non-profit and private sectors?**

**A.** IA will seek to cover up to 50% of wages subsidies typically provided by FNIYES. As a result, the incentive for **non-profit sector employers** would consist of the payment of up to the totality (100%) of the wage subsidies by FNIYES and IA, with each providing up to 50%. The incentive for **private sector employers** would consist of the payment of up to half (50%) of the wage subsidies by FNIYES and IA, each providing up to 25%.

Eligible recipients may enter into agreements with private sector and non-profit sector employers to access employment opportunities for youth. Private organizations may be eligible for funding provided that the nature and intent of the activity is non-commercial, not intended to generate profit, and supports FNIYES program priorities and objectives.

1. **Q. What expenditures are eligible for coordinating mentored work placements?**

**A.** The following are eligible expenditures for coordinating mentored work placements:

* Participant wages and Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCS), including the gross employee share of CPP, QPP, EI, vacation pay, WCB/CSST (Quebec) and where applicable, health insurance premiums;
* The **non-profit sector** is eligible to receive a contribution of up to 100% of the applicable wage, plus mandatory employment-related costs (MERC), while the **private sector** is eligible to receive up to 50% of the applicable wage only;
* Training experiences that support the acquisition of skills required for work placements;
* Wage costs per participant that meet or exceed the applicable minimum wage in the province or territory where the work placement occurs;
* Other necessary costs directly related to a proposed work placement, including but not limited to: criminal record checks, and required uniforms and personal safety gear (such as work boots or safety hats) up to a maximum of **$300 per participant**;
* Actual costs for special equipment and facilities to accommodate the needs of a disabled participant, up to a maximum of **$3,000 per participant**;
* Participant costs such as living expenses, travel, room and board**\***; and
* Dependent care for participants (documentation is required including a description of the type of arrangements available in the community if applicable).

***\*****Travel expenses are to be claimed at actual cost, but cannot exceed Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's guidelines as specified in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's* [*Travel Directive*](https://www.njc-cnm.gc.ca/directive/d10/en) *in effect at the time of travel. Expenses which exceed the rates set for in the directive are ineligible and will not be paid.*

1. **Q. Can we use funding from other programs to support IAFNYES participants?**

**A.** Yes, as strategically coordinated investments within your community could help Income Assistance clients transition to employment or school.

First Nations communities can strategically leverage IAFNYES funding along with Income Assistance benefits and other training and wage subsidy programs’ investments (e.g.; Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program dollars funded by Employment and Social Development Canada).

A youth’s eligibility and benefits for Income Assistance and other supports will be assessed and provided in accordance with the requirements of the reference province of residence or Yukon.

**The intent is that there is no duplication of funding when strategically leveraging resources.**

1. **Q. Can youth collect their regular IA benefits and wage subsidy through IAFNYES?**

**A.** Income Assistance is provided in accordance with the applicable requirements for Income Assistance in the reference province of residence or Yukon (i.e., Ontario Works in Ontario).

At a minimum, administrators will assess a youth’s eligibility and benefits for Income Assistance as they transition into and out of mentored work placement(s).The assessment will take into account all of the financial resources available to the youth, including the wage subsidy provided under IAFNYES.

The youth’s Income Assistance benefits will be provided in accordance with this assessment, which follows the requirements of the reference province of residence or Yukon.

The intent is that youth on IA **will not** **have fewer financial resources** while they are participating in IAFNYES and that there is **no** duplication of funding.

When youth participating in IAFNYES no longer qualify for Income Assistance benefits, please keep their file open so that administrators can continue to monitor their progress and, where needed, provide other supports to the client as they go through their placement (e.g.; an administrator can still provide referrals to service providers or employers to continue supporting the youth to achieve their goals).

1. **Q. What types of expenses are eligible for administration costs?**

**A.** Administration costs for IAFNYES are up to a maximum 15% of the sub-total amount for IAFNYES costs before administration costs. The sub-total amount for IAFNYES costs includes IAFNYES funding provided by the IA and FNIYES programs.

Eligible expenses for administration costs under **IA funding** and **FNIYES funding** include (but are not limited to):

* office or general expenses
* materials
* supplies
* advertising
* communication and printing costs
* professional services

An eligible expense for administration costs under **IA funding only** is:

* staff salaries, wages, and benefits cost for delivering this pilot

Staff salaries, wages and benefits already covered by existing strategies, such as ISC's Elementary and Secondary or Band Support/Tribal Council funding and ISC's Income Assistance Service Delivery and Case Management and Pre-Employment Supports funding are **not** eligible expenditures.

Staff salaries, wages, and benefits is an eligible expenditure for IAFNYES Income Assistance funding when it is included in the recipient's approved IAFNYES proposal for funding.

When a funding recipient further transfers funds that were received under this program to a third party, the 15% allowed for administration costs must be divided between the parties, as agreed between the parties. The total administration costs retained by all parties must not exceed 15% of the sub-total amount requested before administration costs.

1. **Q. Are capital costs eligible?**

**A.** No, capital costs for the construction of a building (other than small repairs or renovations to support the participation of persons with disabilities, or the purchase of land or buildings) are not eligible expenditures.

1. **Q. Can funding be reallocated to other programs, projects, and activities?**

**A.** No. IAFNYES funding must be used for their original intended purpose and cannot be reallocated to other programs, projects, and activities, including regular FNIYES and Income Assistance funding. IAFNYES funding cannot be used interchangeably between FNIYES and IA since funding is coming from each respective program and should be spent accordingly.

Please contact your ISC Regional Officer or Yukon CIRNAC Regional Officer directly if you have any questions with administering your project.

1. **Q. Will IAFNYES funding continue beyond the end of March 2024?**

**A.** The continuation of the Income Assistance First Nations Youth Employment Strategy (IAFNYES) pilot has been confirmed for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

1. **Q. Will funding be sent as Set, Fixed or Flexible?** 
   1. For **FNIYES** funding, Set or Fixed contribution funding is available.

For **IA** funding, Set, Fixed, and Flexible contribution funding is available.

For both programs, it is preferable that IAFNYES funding be transferred under a Fixed or Flexible funding arrangement, wherever possible.

1. **Q. Can unspent IAFNYES 2023-2024 funding be carried forward to 2024-2025?**

**A.** Unexpended funds may be carried forward from one fiscal year to the next, according to the terms of the recipient’s funding agreement and as long as the activities have commenced in 2023-2024. Contact your ISC Regional Officer or Yukon’s CIRNAC Regional Officer for more information.

In Ontario Region, the Fixed contribution funding approach is used. More information on the Fixed approach can be found here: [Funding approaches (sac-isc.gc.ca)](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1322746046651/1618142957561)