

Work Experience Opportunities Grant - FAQ's (Updated January 2026)

Is the Work Experience Opportunities Grant (WEOG) an employment program?

No. WEOG is work experience, not employment. Participants receive a stipend, not wages.

BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) clients who participate in work experience are specifically exempted from being considered “employees” under the Employment Standards Act through Section 32(3) of the Employment Standards Regulation.

How will clients benefit from these placements?

The grant was made available to non-profit organizations to deliver work experience placements for BCEA clients who will receive financial support to develop life and essential skills to aid them in their connection to the labour market and provide enhanced community benefit.

Who is eligible?

Applicants who are eligible to apply are:

- Registered non-profit societies and charities based in or operating in British Columbia
- Registered non-profit societies and charities that own, operate, or administer a social enterprise
- First Nations band, governing bodies and Indigenous-led non-profits

Not Eligible

- For-profit businesses, B Corporations and Community Contribution Companies
- Operations outside the province of British Columbia
- Publicly funded bodies (for example: Municipalities, school districts, recreation centres, libraries, hospitals, etc.)
- Individuals

Eligible Work Experience participants include:

- BCEA clients including:
 - Income Assistance (IA)
 - Disability Assistance (DA)
 - Hardship Assistance (HA) recipients
 - Income assistance through the Person with Persistent Multiple Barriers to Employment (PPMB) benefit

- Indigenous individuals on reserve or within treaty lands receiving or eligible to receive federal assistance.

Not Eligible

- Current employees in their existing positions
- Not legally able to work in British Columbia

Note: Eligible participants can only apply through funded agencies.

Are Indigenous Organizations eligible to apply?

Land based First Nations, Metis, Indigenous governing bodies, and Indigenous-led organizations which are registered non-profits, charities or qualified donees are invited to apply.

Note: Indigenous participants receiving equivalent federal assistance, can only participate in work experience projects that occur on Indigenous reserves or within treaty lands.

Can a work placement be at our non-profit social enterprise location?

Yes. In cases where a non-profit owns or operates a social enterprise, the work experience placement activities may take place at either the non-profit or the social enterprise business. In both cases the non-profit society must hold the grant and administer the placement.

Are unionized workplaces eligible to apply?

Yes. Unionized workplaces are eligible to apply and will need to follow the terms of their collective agreement.

WEOG is not intended to provide employment; however, unionized hosts may be required to hire their participants depending on how practicums and other work experience opportunities are included in their collective agreement. In that case, organizations will be liable for any wage differential, the employer portion of any employee benefits, and incremental payroll-and-HR-related costs.

Can participants be placed with other organizations while the grant holder remains responsible?

Grant recipients may partner with other non-profits to provide work experience opportunities; however, the grant recipient must hold and administer the grant and ensure compliance with all requirements.

What are the key WEOG activities?

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| Step 1 | Agency applies to United Way BC (UWBC) by noon of February 24, 2026 |
| Step 2 | Successful agencies sign a UWBC Letter of Understanding and receive WEOG funding |
| Step 3 | Funded agency creates work experience placement documents (job description, posting, etc.) and undertakes a recruitment process - Optional: connect with your local WorkBC as they may have eligible candidates |
| Step 4 | Candidates apply and participants are selected by funded agency |
| Step 5 | Agency and participant complete and submit pre-placement survey |
| Step 6 | Participant(s) undertake work placement experience activities along with training, skills development, and employment-related support (if needed) |
| Step 7 | Agency and participant complete and submit post-placement survey and participant evaluation |
| Step 8 | Final report completed and surplus funds (if any) submitted to UWBC |

What are some eligible work experience activities?

Eligible activities are work experiences that align with your organization's work. The jobs can be at various levels including entry level or technical. The placements can include tasks such as:

- assisting with food distribution and collection at a food bank
- operating the cash register at a shop
- feeding, grooming, cleaning animals and their facilities at a shelter
- trail maintenance at a local park
- invasive species removal
- data entry
- sorting items at a thrift store
- general administration
- stocking shelves and sorting inventory
- providing customer service and reception
- building and grounds maintenance

Ineligible activities include:

- items deemed a conflict of interest such as cleaning the supervisor's personal property or other activities considered a personal service to the employer
- political activities (political campaign or other partisan political activities)

What are some training and employment support activities that can be covered by the funding?

Support services are to increase the success of participants in the placement and employability at the end of the placement. These services may include on-the-job training and supervision, workplace orientation, entry-level certification, or employment readiness.

May also include (but not limited to):

- Certifications/Training
- Digital literacy/tech support
- Community involvement experiences such as events and festivals
- Emotional support and counselling
- Information/Referrals
- Learning aids provided
- Transit passes/tickets provided
- Volunteer opportunities
- Workshop/Learning activities
- Equipment required for the work experience placement

Note: The individual supports provided to participants will vary based on participant needs and the parameters of the placement.

Is there a time limit for each work experience placement?

No. There are no specific time requirements on the duration or scheduling of work experience placements provided the number of hours are completed by February 28, 2027. For example, you may have a work experience placement of 10 hours per week for 20 weeks or 240 hours spread over 12 weeks.

The initiative is intended to provide flexibility to allow participants to receive 200-240 hours of experience, which accommodates the capacity and availability of participants and meets the needs of placement hosts.

What do you mean by Low and High Intensity?

For the WEOG grant, intensity refers to two streams of work experience and are intended to provide flexibility and accommodation to support persons who may have different abilities, need additional support and/or who have barriers to employment.

Low Intensity Option: includes work experience placements that support individuals who may have personal circumstances that limit their ability to participate and who may require additional support to complete 200 hours.

High Intensity Option: work experience placements where individuals can participate for 240 hours.

Note: the number of hours of participation may include time allocated to work experience activities, plus time for training, skills development, equipment and employment-related support.

What happens if a participant is unable to complete the required 200 or 240 hours?**Can the same placement be replaced with another participant?**

Yes. If an applicant fills a vacant placement with a second or subsequent participant, the total cost of placement administration and participant supports for all participants in that placement continues from the original grant funds. The second or subsequent participant will complete the remaining hours.

Can you break down the funding?

The funding you can apply for is \$5,000 per work placement up to a maximum of 10 placements (\$50,000).

Out of the \$5,000:

- Maximum \$3,000 (low intensity: 200 hours) or \$3,600 (high intensity; 240 hours) stipend to participants
- Up to 10% to offset operating expenses and administrative costs such as project management, recruitment of participants, claims and reporting.
- Remainder for direct cost to support work experience placement(s):
 - Direct program costs such as recruitment, supervision and support
 - Training (including certificates)
 - Skill development
 - Recognition activities/events
 - Criminal record checks
 - Other work experience supports related costs

What should we do if a WEOG participant requires additional supports, such as transportation, beyond the minor incidental allowance?

If additional wraparound supports are needed, connect with your local WorkBC office. You may also wish to accompany the participant to meet with a case worker. WorkBC can then conduct a needs assessment to determine what supports may be required. This option is available for any WEOG participant if additional needs are identified.

How can participants who require additional support receive assistance?

Participants who require wrap around support such as transportation, childcare, essential work clothing, or other placement-related needs—can be referred to WorkBC for assistance. To access WorkBC's support for these needs, successful agencies are encouraged to contact their local WorkBC centres to provide details of their work experience opportunity.

A WorkBC centre may also refer a client directly to the work experience host organization. Contacting WorkBC with your placement details may assist in your recruitment.

UWBC will also be available to help make connections and respond to general questions.

Can the work experience placement be remote or hybrid?

Yes, as long as it follows the standardized safe work policies and procedures that are in place at your organization.

Do we require WEOG participants to be covered by WorkSafe BC?

Yes, you are required to have WorkSafe BC coverage if you hire one or more workers on a full-time, part-time, casual, or contract basis. As per WorkSafe BC, when you're registered for WorkSafe BC, all of your workers are insured including contractors that would be considered your worker.

Contractors are considered your workers if they do not operate as an independent business such as if they supply you with labour or work hours for you on an ongoing basis. Contractors are not considered your workers if they operate as an independent business. Therefore, whether or not the WEOG participant is considered a worker or contractor, they will be covered by WorkSafe BC if you're registered.

As an eligibility criterion for WEOG funding, your organization must be in good standing with WorkSafe BC.

Source: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/insurance/need-coverage/who-needs-coverage>

What if we're unsure of the participant's eligibility? How do we confirm their eligibility?

Participants are required to demonstrate their eligibility (i.e. proof of deposit, letter, statement, etc.) as we recognize that each participant's circumstances are unique. Any individuals who are unsure of their eligibility should seek assistance from their local BC income assistance office in person, online via their My Self-Serve (MySS) account, or call 1-866-866-0800 during regular business hours. Service BC offices assist in smaller communities where no dedicated income assistance office exists.

Can WEOG participants (especially those on PWD) also work part-time?

Generally, the Ministry considers people to be underemployed if they work under 20 hours per week or if their hours fluctuate and the hours are consistently below 20 hours per

week. If a candidate is in this situation and the WEOG helps them to try out a job at a different level or helps them to move to a different opportunity or job sector, then this person can participate in a WEOG. These should be one off situations and require approval from the Ministry. Please reach out to the UWBC WEOG staff for the approval process.

Is the WEOG payment to participants considered a wage?

No. WEOG is work experience, not employment. Participants receive a stipend, not wages. The amount of stipend that participants receive may be calculated as an hourly amount but is to be reported as a stipend and not a wage. A stipend is not intended, or required, to be equivalent to minimum wage.

A stipend is one component of a broader support model. Participants gain mentorship, training, exposure, and sometimes certifications. Expectations are flexible and adaptive to individual ability, which aligns with WEOG's intent to foster growth rather than enforce rigid performance standards.

Note: Stipend payments must be disbursed fairly and timely.

Can our organization pay more than the WEOG stipend to each participant?

As part of the WEOG Initiative, each grant is for \$5,000 and from that participants are to receive a maximum stipend of \$3,000 for Low Intensity Placements or \$3,600 for High Intensity Placements.

For workplaces whose organizational compensation policy exceeds the WEOG stipend amount (i.e. organizations that adhere to a livable wage), an additional amount may be paid through another funding source.

If an organization chooses to top up the stipend, they will be responsible to pay any additional amounts, the employer portion of any employee benefits and any incremental payroll-and-HR-related costs.

Will participants continue receiving their income assistance while participating in a WEOG placement?

Yes. Participants will continue to receive their BCEA income assistance at the same time as they receive the stipend. Individuals will need to report and declare the stipend to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction for tracking purposes. (Information will be provided to successful applicants).

Will the stipend affect the participant's earnings exemption?

BCEA Clients who participate in work experience are specifically exempted from being considered “employees” under the Employment Standards Act, and the monies received through the grant are exempted by an Order in Council. The WEOG stipend is considered exempt and will not be deducted from the participant’s BCEA such as income or disability assistance.

Participants who receive any additional income from applicants, including those that are hired, should contact the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to discuss how the income may impact their income or disability assistance and earnings exemptions.

Is the participant stipend taxable?

We recognize that each participant's circumstances are unique. It is the responsibility of each individual to seek advice to determine whether participation in the program will have an impact on their personal situation.

Are organizations required to make deductions from participant stipends? What kind of tax documents should we provide participants?

WEOG does not prescribe how organizations must pay participant stipends. Each organization is responsible for determining the payment method that works best within their policies and practices.

Some organizations may choose to set participants up as employees and issue a T4, which involves making deductions (e.g., income tax, CPP, EI). Others may choose to treat participants as independent contractors and issue a T4A, which does not involve deductions—the responsibility for reporting and paying taxes then falls to the participant.

There is no “best” approach. It is ultimately the organization’s responsibility to decide which method aligns with their operations. We encourage organizations to:

- Review their internal policies and capacity,
- Consider discussing options with participants, and
- Consult with their finance or payroll team (or seek professional advice if needed).

If, and to what extent, organizations should make deductions from a participant’s stipend (therefore completing a T4) will depend on the organization’s policies and procedures, whether there was a top up to the stipend, and/or the participant’s situation.

In cases where tax deductions need to be made, the amount that participants receive can be considered as the gross amount.

Grant holders are responsible for understanding their own provincial and federal tax requirements. Information on determining employment status and deductions can be found on the Canada Revenue Agency website: Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) - Canada.ca.

Are there requirements for the hiring process?

You should follow the standardized hiring process that is in place at your organization. We ask that you have the necessary documentation of the participants including proof of eligibility for audit purposes.

What sorts of resources are available to funded agencies to provide additional wrap-around supports?

You may find services through Work BC and BC 211.

Over the year, UWBC will host Community of Practice forums where resources and information will be shared. UWBC may also be able to assist you in finding additional support.

What is a Community of Practice (CoP)?

A Community of Practice is a group of people who share a common interest, profession, or area of expertise and who come together—formally or informally—to share knowledge, learn from one another, and improve their practices over time.

For the WEOG initiative, CoP forums will be facilitated by United Way BC on a regular basis.

Can more than one person in the organization have access to the online application?

Yes, you can register as many people in your organization to access the application. Please note that you should not all be on the application at the same time to work on it as responses will be overridden when someone saves. Our recommendation is to download the application template to collaborate as a team and have one person copy and paste the responses on to the form on the portal.