

Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP # 2024-10-07 – FUTURE SKILLS TRAINING

(A.C.C.E.S.) ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY COUNSELLING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (“ACCES”)

RFP Issued Date: October 7, 2024

RFP Closing Date: November 18, 2024 (5:00 pm EST)

RFP Objective

ACCES is requesting proposals from prospective proponents to qualify as a potential vendor for the provision of Future Skills training, specifically Emotional Intelligence, Creative Problem Solving, and Growth Mindset.

The RFP aims to identify a vendor that meets the requirements of the service, which include quality of service and commercial conditions, such as price and payment terms.

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SECTION 1 - ACCES OVERVIEW

ACCES is a leader in connecting employers with qualified employees from diverse backgrounds. Over 56,000 jobseekers are served annually online and at our seven locations across the Greater Toronto Area. As a not-for-profit corporation, ACCES receives funding from all levels of government, corporate sponsors, various supporters, and the United Way Greater Toronto.

For more information about ACCES, please visit www.acesemployment.ca.

SECTION 2 - DELIVERABLES AND EXPERIENCE

ACCES is requesting proposals from prospective proponents to qualify as a potential vendor for the provision of Interactive Instructor-Facilitated Future Skills training as described in section 2.2 *Scope of Work*. The successful proponent will be invited to enter a Services Agreement from April 1, 2025 to May 31, 2025. At ACCES's discretion, the Services Agreement may be extended.

2.1. Project Overview

ACCES offers numerous sector-specific workforce development programs to position disadvantaged jobseekers to integrate into employment that reflects their skills and abilities without duplicating their existing education. The goal is to support them in successfully moving into their chosen profession at an accelerated pace and help them excel and succeed in their jobs.

Connecting to Careers in Early Childhood Education is a sector-specific program offered in partnership with Humber and Sheridan Colleges, and made possible through funding from the Region of Peel. In this 16-month program, which started in January 2024, we support 75 marginalized jobseekers in completing a college diploma in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and securing employment in this field. This program includes completion of a college degree in ECE, employment preparation, and job search support that includes various job search tools, futureproofing, and job placement.

2.2 Scope of Work

The scope of work will involve developing and delivering future-proofing modules for 75 participants in the Connecting to Careers in Early Childhood Education program at ACCES Employment. These 75 participants will be divided into three groups of 25, with the possibility of delivering the modules concurrently across the three groups. The details of the modules are as follows:

- i. **Growth Mindset (2 days per group, 6 hours per day, 3 groups):** A growth mindset is essential for ECE leaders to effortlessly respond to daily challenges and unforeseen obstacles. In acquiring comfort with continually being in learning mode, the ECE will be better positioned to inspire and guide children, families, colleagues, and other stakeholders. This module will focus on:
 - **Promoting learner engagement:** Encouraging creativity and lifelong learning to help individuals remain relevant and thrive in an ever-changing environment.

- **Empathetic response:** Responding with empathy and breaking down complex ideas into simpler, digestible chunks that inspire and promote action.
- **Open-mindedness:** Remaining open and respectful while developing a sense of ease with new situations and unforeseen challenges (i.e., Pedagogy of Difficulty).

ii. **Creative Problem-Solving (2 days per group, 6 hours per day, 3 groups):** ECEs often manage multiple children simultaneously and must handle challenging situations promptly and decisively. This module will emphasize:

- **Inquiry processes:** Engaging in conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information to solve common ECE problems and make informed decisions.
- **Strategic selection and nuanced decision-making:** Choosing appropriate strategies, resources, and tools to support learning, thinking, and problem-solving, and evaluating their effectiveness.
- **Pattern detection:** Recognizing patterns, making connections, and transferring creative problem-solving skills to diverse real-world scenarios.

iii. **Emotional Intelligence (1 day per group, 6 hours per day, 3 groups):** Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) require high emotional intelligence to communicate clearly, negotiate the intricacies of interpersonal interactions, self-regulate emotions, and serve as positive role models for the children in their care.

The emotional intelligence futureproofing module will cover:

- **Self-awareness:** Identifying and acknowledging one's emotional state, accepting and reflecting on emotions, and forecasting future emotional responses.
- **Safe expression:** Applying strategies to express feelings appropriately and safely.
- **Self-regulation:** Implementing strategies to respond effectively to emotionally charged situations, particularly those involving children, their families, or other childhood education professionals.

Outcomes

Each Interactive Instructor-Facilitated module will include:

- **Experiential Learning:** Participants will participate in integrated activities pertaining to three main futureproofing themes (Emotional Intelligence, Creative Problem Solving, and Growth Mindset) to identify future skills gaps and provide strategies to develop those skills gaps by leaning into the discomfort associated with this ambiguity.
- **Growth Mindset:** Participants will explore growth vs. fixed mindset to build an understanding of: one's personal approach to learning, the importance of shifting to a growth/learning mindset, and the impact on organizations when their workforce adopts a growth/learning mindset.
- **Creative Problem Solving:** Participants will develop the capacity to solve complex workplace challenges by exploring divergent and convergent thinking.

- **Interactive Activities:** Group activities will help program participants develop greater self-awareness about how they see themselves and how they interact with others.
- **Identification of Barriers to Employment Encountered by Marginalized Jobseekers:** Participants will acquire strategies to identify and overcome barriers, and then integrate those strategies into their job search and employment.
- **One-to-One Coaching:** Participants will be guided to use reflective questioning to support them in identifying, clarifying, and deepening their understanding of the future skills framework, and leverage their new knowledge in pre- and post-hiring processes to integrate more effectively into the workplace.

Facilitation Requirements

- **Differentiated Instruction:** Facilitating learning sessions/workshops to cater to various participant learning styles, ensuring an interactive, inclusive, and effective learning environment for all participants.
- **Forward-Thinking:** Implementing interactive learning methods that encourage participants to embrace discomfort and uncertainty, preparing them for the evolving demands of the modern workplace.
- **Application Support:** Providing guidance and assistance in applying future skills to real-world scenarios relevant to Early Childhood Education, ensuring practical and actionable learning outcomes.
- **Understanding of Workplace Dynamics:** Ensuring participants achieve a high level of proficiency in future skills, enabling them to confidently navigate workplace dynamics, secure and sustain employment, and advance professionally in their careers.

Proponents are invited to submit proposals encompassing the entire scope of work or opt for specific futureproofing components.

2.4 Skills and Qualifications

- Relevant post-secondary education
- Minimum of five years' experience in the application of differentiated, interactive instruction
- Ability to address the learning styles of disadvantaged workers using strategies that combine language, content, critical thinking, and cultural understanding
- Minimum of five years' experience in assessing learning outcomes achieved by marginalized jobseekers, using various methods to monitor the effectiveness of coaching strategies
- Demonstrated coaching experience
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills
- Familiarity with strategies that offset employment barriers
- Experience onboarding new employees will be considered an asset

2.5 Demonstration of Experience

Please provide three recent examples and three recent references (*APPENDIX C – References*), demonstrating experience in the areas listed below:

- Provide examples of your work with organizations whose customers represent the full spectrum of a community comparable to Peel Region’s diverse demographic.
- Experience with the non-profit and public sector, higher education, and/or community-based employment service organizations is an asset.

SECTION 3 – SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

3.1. Key Dates

Description	Date and Time
RFP Issue Date	October 7, 2024
Proponents’ Questions Deadline	October 28, 2024 (5:00 pm EST)
Last Day for Addenda/Responses to Proponents’ Questions	November 4, 2024
Proposals Submission Deadline	November 18, 2024 (5:00 pm EST)
Proposals Review Period	November 19, 2024 – December 13, 2024
ACCES Selection Committee to Meet with Top Proponents	January 6, 2025 – January 24, 2025
Contract Award	Week of February 10, 2024

3.2. Instructions to Submit a Proposal

1. Proposals must be submitted by **November 18, 2024 (5:00 pm EST)** via email to procurement@acesemployment.ca. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be rejected.
2. The subject line of the e-mail should contain the proponent’s name followed by **RFP # 2024-10-07 – FUTURE SKILLS TRAINING**
3. Proposals must include all completed forms listed below to be evaluated. Failure to provide all of these documents will result in disqualification.
 - Appendix A – RFP Cover Page
 - Appendix B – Conflict of Interest Statement
 - Appendix C – References
 - Appendix D – GST/HST Registration - Confirmation of Exemption (*if Applicable*)
 - Appendix E – Bid Form in .xlsx format

Important Note: The maximum size of an email that ACCES can receive is 10 MB. The proposal may be separated into sections and sent in multiple emails if necessary.

3.3. Amendment or Withdrawal of Proposal

- Changes to the submitted proposal can be made no later than the submission deadline and to be marked ***“FINAL PROPOSAL”*** in the email subject line.
- At any time throughout the RFP process, a proponent may withdraw a submitted proposal by sending a notice of withdrawal to procurement@acesemployment.ca.

3.4. Subcontractors (if applicable)

- The proponent must list any subcontractors they will use for delivering the services requested in this RFP. Subcontractors will not be hired without ACCES’s prior written approval.

3.5. Proposal Receipt

- ACCES will send an email confirmation upon receipt of a proposal.

SECTION 4 – EVALUATION AND SELECTION

4.1. Evaluation Process

ACCES will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria.

Criteria	Weight
<p>Company Profile (or Individual’s Profile):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the Proponent’s legal name and location (state/province of incorporation); HST number; number of years in business; primary contact details; number of employees/current staffing; financial stability or total revenue previous fiscal year; core competencies, services and products. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Where additional companies will be subcontracted, a company profile and company experience must be completed for each firm. 	5%
<p>Company Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proponent’s Experience and Expertise. Provide a comprehensive description of the Proponent’s experience in delivering the required services. Highlight the Proponent’s specific knowledge, skills, and qualifications relevant to the scope of work, including details about any sub-contractors involved. For each sub-contractor, clearly indicate their role, qualifications, and relevant work history with the Proponent. Demonstrate the alignment of both the Proponent’s and sub-contractors’ expertise with the project’s objectives and deliverables. • Proven Track Record in Future Skills Training. Demonstrate the Proponent’s experience in delivering successful training programs focused on futureproofing. Provide concrete examples of past workshops or training 	20%

<p>sessions conducted, including details such as the number of participants, industries served, methodologies used, and measurable outcomes achieved. Emphasize success stories, impact on participants, and long-term benefits to organizations.</p>	
<p>Approach and Implementation Methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the planned and recommended process for conducting the scope of work. • Describe and/or provide details of how the deliverables (<i>SECTION 2</i>) will be addressed and describe the deliverables. 	25%
<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customization of Workshop Content. Provide a detailed description of the approach used to tailor workshop content to address the unique needs and challenges faced by learners in the Early Childhood Education sector. Highlight strategies for adapting materials to meet industry-specific requirements, skill gaps, and desirable behaviours relevant to this field. • Engaging, Interactive and Differentiated Instruction. Describe how the workshops will cater to various participant learning styles, ensuring an interactive, inclusive, and effective learning environment. Emphasize techniques that foster the effective development of the future skills outlined in the scope of work, such as group discussions, collaborative problem-solving, and real-world application exercises. • Reinforcement through Practical Activities: Include details of activities such as roleplaying, simulations, or hands-on exercises that will be used to reinforce outcomes. Describe how these practical approaches will help learners apply newly acquired skills in real-world scenarios and ensure retention. • Tailoring to Learner Needs: Provide examples of previous workshops where content and delivery were customized to address the unique requirements of learners. Include case studies or examples showcasing how these adaptations improved participant engagement, outcomes outlined in the scope of work, and overall success. 	25%
<p>Pricing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Bid Form (<i>APPENDIX E</i>) and attach it to the proposal in .xlsx format. 	25%

4.2. Selection Process

- ACCES reserves the right to accept, reject or request changes to any proposals.
- ACCES may request further information from the proponent or third parties to verify, clarify or supplement the information provided in the proposal. ACCES may reevaluate the proposal based on any such information.

- Top scoring proponents will be invited to interview with ACCES’s Selection Committee.
- The evaluation process will consider proposals that offer the best value and solution to ACCES, which may not necessarily be the lowest-priced proposal.
- The proponent that receives the highest score will be invited to enter into a contract with ACCES. If the highest-scored proponent declines the invitation to further participate, ACCES reserves the right to invite the next highest-scoring proponent to enter a contract instead.
- In the event of a tie score, ACCES’s Selection Committee will consider all available tangible and intangible information, including but not limited to the information contained in the proposals, to arrive at the tiebreaking decision.
- ACCES will award the contract in writing.

SECTION 5 – TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5.1. Inquiries

- Proponents should e-mail all questions to: procurement@accesemployment.ca by the “Proponents’ Questions Deadline” (*Section 3.1.*). ACCES will not respond to questions after this deadline.
- Inquiries deemed appropriate will be answered via addenda by the “Last Day for Addenda/Responses to Proponents’ Questions” (*Section 3.1.*). The addenda will be available online via the same bidding platform(s).

5.2. Blackout Period

- From the issuance of this RFP until the selected proponent executes an agreement, any contact regarding this RFP (other than as permitted in this RFP) with personnel employed by or contracted by ACCES is prohibited. During this time, proponents should not approach any ACCES personnel or contractor concerning this bidding, the contracting process, or their proposal.

5.3. Acknowledgment of Non-Binding Procurement Process

- This RFP is not intended to create any contractual or other legal obligations or duties whatsoever owed to any proponent or potential proponent by ACCES. Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, no contractual relations shall exist between ACCES and any proponent until the execution of an Agreement/Contract with that proponent.

5.4. Sample Services Agreement

- A sample Services Agreement (*APPENDIX F – Sample Services Agreement*) has been provided to outline ACCES’s standard terms and conditions, and it is not intended to be signed.

5.5. Insurance

- Even though ACCES does not identify any specific insurance requirements in this RFP, this shall not be construed as a waiver of the successful proponent’s responsibility to carry insurance that would be considered appropriate for a prudent person or business to carry while engaged in the activities and providing the Services, including liability insurance. For

additional information on the insurance requirements, refer to (*APPENDIX F – Sample Services Agreement*).

5.6. Incidental Expenses, External Factors and Proposal Outcome:

- ACCES receives funding from various sources; therefore, all contracted services are subject to budget availability.
- ACCES as a non-profit organization under the *Broader Public Sector (BPS), Act 2010* is unable to reimburse the proponent for any incidental expenses such as food, hospitality, mileage, parking, photocopying, printing, etc.
- ACCES shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by any proponent, including the expenses associated with preparing the proposal.
- ACCES reserves the right to withdraw this RFP or terminate the resulting contract within the terms of the contract without penalty.

5.7. Conflict of Interest:

- Proponents may not have any personal or business interest that would present an actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest with the performance of the contract to be awarded (*APPENDIX B – Conflict of Interest Statement*).

5.8. Publicity:

- Proponents should not use the award of a contract as part of any news release or commercial advertising without ACCES’s prior written consent.

5.9. Disclosure of Confidential Information:

- Proposals should mark any confidential information. The confidentiality of such information will be maintained by ACCES, except as otherwise required by law or by order of a court or tribunal. Proponents are advised that their proposals will, as necessary, be disclosed on a confidential basis, to ACCES’s staff to advise or assist with the RFP process, including the evaluation of proposals. If a proponent has any questions about the collection and use of personal information pursuant to this RFP, questions are to be submitted as per (*Section 5.1 “Inquiries”*).

5.10. Notification and Debriefing

- Once the contract has been awarded, the other proponents will be notified of the outcome of the RFP process via e-mail.
- Proponents may request a debriefing after receipt of notification of the outcome of the RFP process. All requests must be sent to procurement@accesemployment.ca and must be made within sixty (60) days of such notification.

5.11. Bid Dispute

- Any bid disputes should be submitted to procurement@accesemployment.ca within five (5) business days of receipt of the notice of award.

- The Selection Committee will review a bid dispute and take the appropriate remedial action, including, but not limited to, reinstating the proponent into the competition, or cancelling the RFP.
- The RFP award may be delayed because of a bid dispute.