



NL WORKFORCE
INNOVATION
CENTRE



Call for Proposals Guidelines
2018-19

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This document is the Call for Proposals Guidelines for 2018-19, the second in a series issued by the Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Innovation Centre (NLWIC).

What is the NL Workforce Innovation Centre (NLWIC)?

The Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Innovation Centre (NLWIC), established in 2017 by the Provincial Government, and administered by the College of the North Atlantic, provides a co-ordinated, central point of access to engage government, career and employment services providers, skills development organizations and stakeholders in the business and community sectors throughout the province.

NLWIC's goal is to promote the research, testing and sharing of ideas and models of innovation in workforce development that will positively impact individual employability and attachment to the workforce. Funding is provided by the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour (AESL) under the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Development Agreement – Newfoundland and Labrador Research and Innovation Program (NLRI). Priorities for research funding are determined by the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour in consultation with NLWIC based on stakeholder feedback and other research.

By researching, piloting, testing, and evaluating evidence-based approaches, NLWIC will strengthen linkages, define priorities, and build capacity for a stronger employment system in the province.

The activities and priorities of NLWIC as set by AESL are aligned with the objectives and goals of the NLRI program.

Objectives and Goals of the NLRI Program

NLWIC supports research, evaluation and innovation projects to improve opportunities for people to obtain, retain, or advance in terms of employment, become more productive participants in the labour force and improve well-being. NLWIC supports the following objectives:

1. Support activities that address policy and program issues or research questions related to strategic priorities as identified by AESL; and
2. Research and/or design projects that are practical and that identify innovative and better ways of helping Newfoundlanders and Labradorians prepare for, find or return to, or maintain sustainable employment.

NLWIC will fund research, evaluation and innovation projects that align with these priorities and that will produce or improve knowledge, practice, and impact in the training and employment sector.

Furthermore, NLWIC supports the goals of NLRI:

- Seek ways to ensure that the education and skills of Newfoundland and Labrador’s labour force meet current and future labour market demands;
- Develop innovative means to provide employment and training programs, and to develop the processes and procedures required to enhance the delivery of these programs;
- Design improvements and efficiencies, including functionality of existing programs, operations, and services; and
- Identify and mitigate any barriers to employment that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians may be experiencing.

Priority Applied Research Themes for 2018-19

NLWIC welcomes proposals that support its mandate with a priority focus for 2018-19 on the sectors which have been identified through the provincial government vision document *The Way Forward* and priority being placed on research projects in the following themes:

1. Strengthening apprenticeship programs;
2. Enhancing essential skills such as literacy and technological abilities;
3. Providing improved supports to older workers, youth, persons with disabilities, Income Support clients, and to individuals living in rural and remote regions;
4. Increasing the participation rate of under-represented groups, including persons with disabilities, women, Indigenous Peoples, youth, immigrants, refugees, in the provincial labour force;
5. Exploring a right mix of benefits, programs and/or services that support individuals in making long-term attachment to the labour market; and
6. Preparing individuals and industries for the “jobs of the future”.

Preferred Projects will:

- Support applied research in skills-development and workforce development in priority growth sectors, as outlined in *The Way Forward*.
- Use progressive research and leading-edge innovation to identify better ways of helping Newfoundlanders and Labradorians prepare for, find, return to, or maintain sustainable

employment.

- Support and generate new and innovative research projects, pilots and processes to strengthen understanding of the provincial labour market, and to assist in recalibrating existing employment and training services to better align with changing employer demands and needs.
- Help to test new approaches, learn what works, and then adapt employment and training services to better address changing labour market needs throughout the Province.
- Consider local workforce opportunities and challenges by addressing their distinctive needs and build off growing sectors throughout the province; and emphasize knowledge and creativity that is highly dependent on localized, or regionally-based, innovation.
- Include collaboration and partnerships to deliver responsive programs, with a mechanism to share best and promising practices, and support communities in replicating successful programs.

Projects will be considered if they address the objectives and goals of the NLRI program as well as the following required project outcomes:

- Result in new approaches being tested that help people become productive participants in the province’s labour force; or
- Make direct links to increasing individual employability.

It is possible that a project can result in meeting both outcomes. The outcomes and recommendations of program activities will inform labour market policies, programs and services.

Eligibility for NLWIC Research Funding

Eligible proponents for NLWIC Research Funding include:

- Community Organizations (including not-for-profit, professional, employer and labour associations);
- Municipal governments;
- Band/tribal councils and Indigenous Organizations;
- Crown Corporations;
- Businesses; and
- Public Health and Educational institutions.

Proponents are eligible to apply for multiple projects.

A joint application by two or more proponents is acceptable. In such cases, one of the proponents must be identified as a primary contact in the proposal and be prepared to take overall responsibility for successful interconnection of the multiple proponents.

The research has to be about Newfoundland and Labrador; however, the researchers do not need to be based in that province.

Eligible Activities and Project Types

Eligible activities for NLWIC Research Funding include:

- Research studies, in particular applied research;
- Service delivery improvements and model testing;
- Information and/or data development;
- Program/project evaluations; and
- Demonstration projects.

The types of projects that are eligible include:

- Synthesis Project (Issue is identified, information is collected and a report is written)
- Inquiry Project (Issue is identified with what we know and don't know. Data is collected from multiple sources and an analysis is done)
- Evaluation and Impact Project (Assesses the changes or impact that can be attributed to a particular program or approach)

NLWIC Research Funding must be used to fund projects that examine previously untried solutions to specific labour market issues or problems. If successful, the idea will then inform the development of policies, programs or industry practices which may include incorporation into provincial programs and services.

Research projects may be of research and/or pilot project nature. However, all projects must make direct links to increasing individual employability—they must have associated concrete outcomes related to employment. For example, a research project may examine employability for a certain under-represented group using a new method of skill-building; a pilot project would apply a new approach to employing a group of individuals, monitor developments, and evaluate the outcomes using scientific research methods.

Projects will need to be completed up to a maximum of three years, with an opportunity for renewal under special circumstances.

Examples of projects that will be eligible for funding include:

- **Businesses:** explore skill shortages in a local workforce; recruit youth for a pilot *on-the-job* learning project focused on social enterprise opportunities.
- **Labour organizations:** explore new methods of reskilling displaced or transitioning workers.
- **Non-profit organizations:** test an experimental approach to increase employability for, under-represented groups, including youth, women, Indigenous peoples, newcomers and persons with disabilities; pilot how to increase employability for working-age adults with intellectual disabilities through community placements; match income support recipients in high-demand sector training and employment.
- **Crown corporations:** test a new approach to fast-track or tailor training of individuals to meet evolving project needs; support unemployed individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing units through a pilot project focused on job placements and soft-skills development to increase networking and employability.
- **Municipalities:** explore innovative training programs to increase digital literacy and digitization among municipal staff to support capacity building and increase employability; analyze regional labour markets and craft municipal/regionally-relevant responses.
- **Bands/Indigenous organizations:** test a bridging program that supports Indigenous jobseekers or existing employees in gaining additional skills and/or transitioning to employment.
- **Regional health authorities:** explore partnerships with individual employers to consider pilot supports for particular individuals, including youth with mental health challenges, older residents, etc. to enhance or support access to employment.
- **School boards:** a pilot project exploring transitions to employment for graduating students; A pilot project exploring an innovative approach to assisting youth in finding their first job.
- **Post-secondary educational institutions:** research changing social, economic, and demographic profile of the provincial workforce through a results-based study that informs policy.

Ineligible Activities

NLWIC Research Funding cannot be used to:

- Create a funding dependency or need – either for the applicant organization or for a participant/research subject; or
- Fund a research project that has already been initiated or tried previously.

Available Funding

There is no maximum funding available for a project per year, but the principle of equitable distribution will be applied when assessing and approving projects. Other partnerships are encouraged and will be considered during project assessment.

Eligible Costs

NLWIC shall assess the proposal costs to determine if reasonable and appropriate in relation to the proposed project and activities. Depending on assessment, costs will be included or disallowed. When assessing a cost item, there will be three considerations:

- Compliance to the program terms and conditions;
- Whether the item contributes to the success of the projects; and
- Extent to which it can be considered reasonable.

Eligible costs may include (but are not limited to):

- Overhead costs for the third party, including wages and employment-related costs for project staff
- Licenses, permits
- Travel and telecommunications
- Audits, assessments and evaluations
- Research or technical studies
- Costs relating to research subjects
- Development of evaluation framework/feasibility studies
- Advertising
- Postage/courier
- Printing
- Office supplies
- Marketing/Communication costs

Proponents may work with partners and also hire subcontractors to assist in the completion of a project. If proponents choose to work with one or more partners, they are required to provide a letter of commitment attached to the proposal. If they choose to hire subcontractors, proponents are solely and absolutely responsible for all terms and conditions related to contractual arrangement. In addition, proponents are solely responsible for any and all payments owed to its

subcontractors.

Each applicant needs to identify estimated costs to assist evaluators in awarding appropriate funds. The estimated costs will be used to determine the level of funding. The proposal should identify the costs eligible for funding (salaries for researchers, travel, direct expenses and overhead/indirect costs). The proposal should also include a cash flow statement covering the full duration of the project.

If a project is approved, a contract must be signed by the proponent and College of the North Atlantic (CNA). Payment will be provided to a recipient's organization on their behalf, according to a disbursement schedule provided by NLWIC and attached to the contract. Organizations are required to comply with the financial, monitoring, and other requirements related to how project activities were completed and funds were spent to verify compliance with the terms of the signed contract.

The proponent of approved projects will submit itemized and substantiated invoices and other required documents as per the contract to NLWIC for payment during the project up to a maximum of 90 per cent of the total approved funding for the project. A minimum of 10 per cent of the total approved funding will be withheld from the proponent pending the receipt of the Final Report and any additional deliverables that are identified in the negotiated contract.

Proposals must provide details for all budget costs and align with budget guidelines. Projects will need to be completed within one to three years, with an opportunity for renewal under special circumstances.

Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated by AESL in partnership with NLWIC and other relevant departments and agencies, as deemed pertinent to the evaluation of each proposal. AESL and NLWIC will oversee this process and successful proponents will receive a Letter of Offer outlining the terms for a completion of each project and conditions of funding.

Upon receipt of proposals, NLWIC will examine each proposal to ensure compliance with the required content, prior to carrying out the primary evaluation. NLWIC, in consultation with AESL, will complete the final evaluation of all proposals received.

Before proposals can be evaluated or any discussion can take place related to funding of submitted proposals, assessors will be asked to make a full and open disclosure of potential conflicts (i.e. real or perceived). Assessors will decide if the conflict is sufficient to call in to question the process and, if so, the assessor in question will be asked to recuse oneself from the

entire proposal assessment process.

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the comprehensiveness of the proponent's:

- ✓ Understanding of the Work Required
- ✓ Relevance of Topic to NLWIC
- ✓ Methodology and Work plan
- ✓ Plan for Project Management and Administration
- ✓ Dissemination Strategy
- ✓ Team's Experience and Knowledge Relevant to the Project
- ✓ Proposed Budget (Cost) and Cash Flow

**See Evaluation Matrix on pages 10-11*

Proposals will be assigned a weighted score for each section (please see the Evaluation Matrix). Applications will be ranked and sorted by research theme and type to determine a complementary mix of successful projects. NLWIC aims to fund a diverse range of projects, institutions and researchers.

Proposals must achieve a minimum score of 60/80 or 75 per cent in Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the Evaluation Matrix to be considered as demonstrating value for money. The level a proposal demonstrates value for money will depend on the amount a proposal's score exceeds the minimum score for the noted sections. All factors will be considered and lowest cost may not be the successful proposal.

In order to eliminate an unfair advantage during the Call for Proposals and application review period, NLWIC will not accept phone calls or meetings pertaining to the proposal and/or review process. NLWIC will direct applicants to forward questions to nlwic@nlwic.ca, with the subject line '2018-19 Call for Proposals: Question'. All questions must be received by NLWIC by 12:00 pm, August 24, 2018.

NLWIC staff will post questions and answers on its website to ensure all potential proponents have the same access to responses. Questions and answers should be reviewed by all proponents prior to submitting their proposals.

Required Proposal Format and Content (see Appendix A: Proposal Template)

- A) Proponent Details
- B) Proposed Research Project
- C) Project Management, Administration and Budget (with Cash Flow Statement)

All documentation must be submitted to NLWIC in Microsoft Word format with one electronic copy and six hard copies (see page 13).

All materials submitted as appendices/attachments to the proposal must be clearly indicated in the Table of Contents. Material not documented by the proponent will be considered as extraneous information. This list of attachments must also contain a brief description of the attached material, including what information can be gained by the evaluation team from its examination of the material.

Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points
1 a. Understanding of Work Required	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is clearly defined. The proposal identifies problems and gaps to be addressed with supporting statistics. The scope of the project described is appropriate for the timeframes and focus of the NLRI Program. 	___ / 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research project demonstrates knowledge of literature and issues relevant to the topic under consideration. 	___ / 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the proposed research is part of a larger project funded by other sources, the proposal must clearly identify deliverables and activities that will receive NLWIC Research Funding provided under the NLRI Program. 	___ / 3
1 b. Relevance of topic to NLWIC	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic is relevant to current policy and program challenges. 	___ / 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant is able to articulate the project’s relevance and demonstrate knowledge of the Priority Applied Research Themes for 2018-2019. 	___ / 5
	Total: ___ / 25
2 a. Methodology and Work Plan	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The methods are clearly described (e.g. details are provided on the research approach (quantitative, qualitative or mixed- method), participants’ recruitment strategies, sample size, key variables, etc.). 	___ / 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The methodology is appropriate for the research or review project and is the most suitable to answer the research question. 	___ / 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths and limitations of the approach as well as steps required to complete the project are identified by the applicant. 	___ / 5
2 b. Plan for project management and administration.	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant provides a clear plan for how the project will be coordinated and administered within realistic timelines. 	___ / 5
2 c. Dissemination strategy.	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant identifies project deliverables, dissemination tools and plans to share findings to the public and research community. 	___ / 5
	Total: ___ / 35

3 a. Team's Experience and Knowledge Relevant to the Project		20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal identifies that project team members have experience in leading and managing comprehensive research similar to this project. 		___ / 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal demonstrates that project team members have the relevant education, research and implementation experience to undertake the project. 		___ / 10
Total:		___ / 20
4 a. Proposed Budget (Cost) and Cash Flow		20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed budget and cash flow are realistic for the scope of the proposal. 		___ / 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed budget and cash flow are detailed and aligned with the anticipated needs of the project. 		___ / 10
Total:		___ / 20
Cumulative Total:		___ / 100

Use of Results

Recipients of NLWIC Research Funding will be required to grant NLWIC and AESL a perpetual, irrevocable and royalty-free licence to use the results of the research (the “Results”) for any purpose except commercial gain. AESL will retain the copyright of the Final Report and any additional deliverables. Without limitation, NLWIC and AESL may update, revise, copy, translate the Results, and distribute the Results with or without such changes to their stakeholders.

Important Dates

Activity	Timelines
Call for Proposals Announcement	July 13, 2018
Deadline for questions	August 24, 2018
Deadline for receipt of proposals	August 31, 2018
Announce successful Proponents	October 2018

General Principles

The awarded funds must contribute towards the direct costs of the research for which they were awarded. The funding may cover direct project expenses for indirect or overhead costs (i.e. ongoing operating expenses that cannot be associated with the direct costs of the research activity such as the costs associated with facilities and basic utilities, the purchase and repair of office equipment, administration fees, insurance for equipment and research vehicles, and basic communication devices such as telephones).

Retroactive Expenses

Costs incurred prior to the execution of the contract between CNA and the Proponent will not be eligible.

Proposal Submission

Proposals must be signed, scanned and submitted electronically by midnight on August 31, 2018 to nlwic@nlwic.ca.

Six hard copies of the proposal should be mailed to:

NL Workforce Innovation Centre
College of the North Atlantic
Corner Brook Campus
P.O. Box 866
141 O'Connell Drive
Corner Brook, NL
A2H 6H6

Appendix A: Proposal Template

Section A: Proponent Details

- Research Project Title:
- Principal Proponent:
- Title/Position:
- Institution or Organization:
- Total Funding Requested:
- Phone:
- Mobile:
- Fax:
- Email:
- Social Media (ie. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)

Please attach your annual report, website, and charitable number if applicable.

Other members of the research team for this project and their role in the project (e.g., co-applicant, project coordinator, research assistant):

- Name:
- Title/Institution:
- Role in the Project:

Type of Project:

- Synthesis Project (Issue is identified, information is collected and a report is written)
- Inquiry Project (Issue is identified with what we know and don't know. Data is collected from multiple sources and an analysis is done)
- Evaluation and Impact Project (Assesses the changes or impact that can be attributed to a particular program or approach)

Role that best describes the principal proponent (choose one only):

- Researcher/Staff from Non-profit or Broader Public Sector Organization
- University Faculty
- College Faculty
- Other qualified researcher

Declaration from Principal Proponent:

By signing below, I confirm that the information provided in this document is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

- Name:
- Signature:
- Date:

Principal proponent to submit with proposal a letter of commitment from each proposed partner.

Signing authority at institution or organization:

Please provide information on the individual and department responsible for managing the project's financial administration (i.e. research office at the university, executive director at a non-profit organization).

- Name of Signing Authority
- Position/Title
- Office/Department
- Address
- Phone
- Email

Section B: Proposed Research Project

Methodology used for the project (choose all that are applicable):

- Inter-jurisdictional review
- Literature review
- Environmental scan
- Case Study
- Document Analysis
- Data Analysis
- Evaluation Study

Theme of research project (choose all that are applicable):

- Literature Review /Synthesis on Issue
- Labour Market Data Analysis
- Best Practice Study
- Evaluation of Existing Project and Impact
- Other

Does the proposed project involve human beings as research subjects or sensitive administrative data?

- Yes
- No

If yes, applicants are required to submit research proposals to institutional Research Ethics Boards and comply with ethical standards outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Background experience of principal proponent and research team members that is relevant to this project (300-600 words):

Please describe relevant background experience and knowledge that will contribute to the successful implementation and completion of the project (e.g., qualifications, other research projects, peer-reviewed publications, policy reports, and project management experience).

In addition, the principal applicant and individuals listed as members of the research team must attach their curriculum vitae to the Proposal. Each curriculum vitae should not exceed 3 pages and should include information pertinent for this application.

Description of the research project (300-600 words):

- What is your research question?
- What previous research has been done on this topic, and what has it found?
- What problems/gaps are being addressed, using supporting statistics?
- Clearly specify the under-represented groups the research will focus on
- Clearly specify the Priority Applied Research Themes and priority sectors in *The Way Forward* document which the research will address
- Describe how your research project will contribute to the desired outcome of enhancing employability, and attachment to the workforce

Description of the research methodology (600-800 words):

- Identify your criteria for including/excluding secondary sources and the scope of the literature review, inter-jurisdictional scan or environmental scan.
- Identify your methodology including the type of study (i.e. case study, data analysis, evaluation project) and the primary sources you intend to use.
- Describe the approach (i.e. qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method) and instruments used (i.e. descriptive statistics, regression analysis, focus groups, interviews, etc.) and provide sufficient level of detail on participants' recruitment strategies, sample size, key variables, etc.
- Identify the duration of work integrated learning program, if applicable
- Identify the steps required to complete the project and strengths and limitations of the approach.
- Describe the form of results you will provide (i.e. report, working paper, case study, webinar, PowerPoint, YouTube, etc.)

Explain how this project is relevant to contributing to the goals of the NLRI program, outlined in this document (300-600 words):

Projects will be considered if they address one or more of the following:

- Seek ways to ensure that the education and skills of Newfoundland and Labrador's labour force meet current and future labour market demands;
- Develop innovative means to provide employment and training programs, and to develop the processes and procedures required to enhance the delivery of these programs;
- Design improvements and efficiencies, including functionality of existing programs, operations, and services; and
- Identify and mitigate any barriers to employment that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians may be experiencing.

Explain which of the following Priority Applied Research Themes for 2018-19 will be addressed by the research project and the project's relevancy to those priorities (300-600 words):

1. Strengthening apprenticeship programs;
2. Enhancing essential skills such as literacy and technological abilities;
3. Providing improved supports to older workers, youth, persons with disabilities, Income Support clients and to individuals living in rural and remote regions;
4. Increasing the participation rate of under-represented groups, including persons with disabilities, women, Indigenous Peoples, youth, immigrants, refugees, in the provincial labour force;

5. Exploring a right mix of benefits, programs and/or services that support individuals in making long-term attachment to the labour market; and
6. Preparing individuals and industries for the “jobs of the future”.

Knowledge Mobilization and Dissemination

Describe types of events, publications, and other activities that you intend to engage for dissemination purposes (please note while dissemination may occur after the end of the fiscal year, NLWIC will only cover expenses incurred before the end of the project).

Section C: Project Management, Administration and Budget

Description of how project will be managed (300-600 words):

If the project involves a team of researchers, describe what components of the project will be delegated to different members.

For projects that involve multiple partners, describe how you will manage the project (i.e. meetings, teleconference, division of work, etc.).

Timelines for Project:

Describe the process you will use to ensure that the project will be completed within the time period of your project.

Identify any possible delays (i.e. research ethics board approvals, hiring interruptions) that may disrupt the project, and identify how you will mitigate these risks.

Date	Action Item

Proposed Budget:

Please refer to pages 6, 7, and 20 of this document for eligible and ineligible budget expenses and details on how to complete the Budget Proposal. *Salaries should be estimated using the wage rates and benefits specified in institutional employment contracts and collective agreements with no markup.

Budget

Template:

Category	Description	Amount
Personnel Costs		
Capital Assets		
Operating Expenses		
Other Expenses		
Subtotal		
Overhead		
Grand Total		