



Targeted call for FSC Project Partners

Instructions to complete the application form

Please refer to the Future Skills Centre's (FSC) **Targeted Call for FSC Project Partners Guidelines** document when preparing your application.

This application form is structured to help you address the selection criteria for this call and give reviewers easy access to your project information. This form is divided into the following sections:

- Part 1 - General information
- Part 2 - Project summary
- Part 3 - Project details
- Part 4 - Project work plan and budget
- Part 5 - Declaration

If you would like to request accommodations or other types of support, please contact Maysa Mourad by email at targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca or by phone at 437-331-0613.

If you have any questions while compiling your application, you may contact our team at targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca. We would be happy to answer any questions.

PART 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Lead organization

Name of lead organization

Douglas College

Name of project lead

Peter Wilkins

Project lead’s preferred method of contact (email address and/or phone number)

Email: wilkinsp@douglascollege.ca

2. Proposed project

Project title

Reboot Plus - Expansion

Project start and end dates

January 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

Projects must end no later than September 30, 2023.

Amount requested from FSC (total)

\$2,846,964

Project partners and their location

British Columbia
PEERs – Vancouver. BC
Burnaby Board of Trade
Surrey Board of Trade
Burnaby School District
Surrey School District
New Westminster School District
Maple Ridge School District

3 additional Colleges in other provinces selected through an RFP process.

PART 2 - PROJECT SUMMARY

1. Proposed project “one-liner”

How would you describe your new project in one sentence?

Douglas College and PEERs will test the scalability of the Reboot Plus model, an innovative career development program for at-risk youth through local and national expansion, engaging new partners and delivery in new jurisdictions.

(30 words maximum)

2. Proposed project summary

How would you describe your new project and how it builds on the testing and learning of your current project to date?

We suggest that this summary covers the main information about how your new project addresses all selection criteria of this targeted call.

Reboot Plus re-engages marginalized youth with education and career planning and allows employers and professionals in fields the youth want to pursue to see the potential in this demographic and support their entry into the workforce. Reboot Plus Expanded continues and expands its partnerships in Vancouver and expands to three new partners in other cities in Canada to further test the project’s portability and scalability while establishing fidelity measures.

To date, Reboot Plus has worked with 60+ youth and nearly 200 professionals who do informational interviews with the youth participants. Several youth have enrolled in further training or post-secondary education and professionals have volunteered to do more to support the youth. This project builds on what we have learned so far by expanding delivery and evaluation to over 150 youth in Metro Vancouver and over 120 youth in three other jurisdictions and engaging up to 2000 employers and professionals. The youth participants gain easy to access, practical labour market information as they identify appropriate career and education pathways, while the professionals provide insight into real demands, benefits and opportunities of those careers.

We anticipate the new partners will provide new contexts, EDI issues, demographics, labour shortages and skills gaps that Reboot Plus Expanded can identify and address. Simultaneously, the project will continue to support the local school districts, boards of trade, and employers/professionals who have all been enthusiastic partners thus far in our project. Reboot Plus Expanded offers hope to the marginalized youth who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

(250 words maximum)

3. Additional scope

How does your new project go beyond the scope of your current FSC-funded project?

The additional scope may include expanding or extending a project model, its principles and/or components. For example, it may include expanding the project to new regions or jurisdictions, including new or larger target populations, and testing different delivery formats to understand what works to address demands. This would assume the potential for bringing additional partners to deliver the project at a broader scale. The additional scope must be grounded in new concrete learning questions to contribute to your work and of others in the skills ecosystem.

The project represents an expansion of the current research project in two ways. First, it increases the sample size of the current project in an effort to improve the data and evaluation of the intervention. Secondly, it will test whether the model can be replicated in other jurisdictions across Canada.

The project will increase the number of participants (sample size) from 60 (current) to nearly 300 which will provide more robust data for evaluation.

To test the scalability of the model and whether it can be replicated in other jurisdictions across Canada, we will engage, through a formal RFP process, three other colleges to deliver Reboot Plus. In total, this project will engage 276+ youth and between 1,100 and 2,000 participating employers / professionals. Each college will bring additional partners: school districts and Boards of Trade.

The larger sample sizes and multiple delivery sites and partners allow us to increase the validity of our findings. Research will continue on the model's original research questions, but within the expansion the project will also research and assess:

1. Can this program model be effectively delivered in other communities in Canada and achieve similar results?
2. Can Reboot Plus be delivered in other jurisdictions with fidelity?

(150 words maximum)

4. Importance of the additional scope

Why is the additional scope of your project important to your organization, sector and target populations? Why is it timely?

The additional scope of Reboot Plus Expanded is important to Douglas College and PEERs because it is transformative for marginalized youth and employers. The participant-centered ethos of the project with its focus on wellbeing, self-efficacy, and confidence has shown such promise that we are keen to share it to see if other partners can make it work in other regions.

Reboot Plus Expanded is not limited to one sector. Rather it allows employers in all sectors the

opportunity to see the skills and talents of a group they otherwise might overlook. We want to see if the enthusiasm of Metro Vancouver employers translates to other parts of Canada where the labour market and education contexts are different. Finally, marginalized youth will benefit from our additional scope; the more we learn about them and their needs, the more able we will be to help them build their futures.

(150 words maximum)

PART 3 - PROJECT DETAILS

In this section, please provide information about how your new project supports each of the selection criteria of this targeted call.

We provide prompting questions to help you address all criteria in the application guidelines. You may prepare this section following the prompting questions in sequence or using your own sections and narrative.

Although you have flexibility regarding the format for this section, please make sure that you address all criteria according to the prompting questions. Reviewers will assess your application by scoring each criterion individually.

This section should not exceed **seven** pages. We anticipate that most proposals will present this section in **five** pages.

A. Relevance

a. Alignment with FSC's Strategic Priorities

The project team is excited to collaborate with FSC to expand the testing, delivery and jurisdiction of Reboot Plus. The "Reboot Plus Expanded" project aligns with all four of FSC's Strategic Priorities.

Priority #4: "What works" replication—Douglas College and PEERs propose to expand and replicate Reboot Plus in Metro Vancouver and in three additional Canadian jurisdictions. In doing so, the project will test "what works" and, if the model is scaled successfully, the project team looks forward to working further with FSC to support other service providers to build their capacity and adopt "what works" and to inform policies and work toward system-wide scaling.

Priority #2: Responsive career pathways—Reboot Plus is currently being delivered to over 60 youth and, to date, has engaged over 150 professionals. The facilitators have created curriculum that meets participants' needs so they develop a career plan that fits their interests, abilities and skills and aligns with the current labour market. In the 4 to 7 interviews each youth participant will do with employers and professionals, their career vision becomes clearer, and they identify required education and skills development. In this way, this project is testing, prototyping, and evaluating an approach that is responsive to the rapidly changing labour market, customized, highly individualized and leads to the development of actionable education and career plans.

Priority #3: Agile labour market responses— Although this project is not focused on the skills and labour shortages of a specific industry or sector, its full intent is to support its youth participants to fully understand the sectors and industries they are interested in and to build education and career action plans that meet the needs of the current and changing labour market and prepare them to acquire necessary skills. At the same time, through the engagement of several hundred working professionals and employers, the project raises awareness of a pool of talent that has been overlooked by many sectors and employers. The project will trigger shifts in perception and instigate changes to recruitment, skills development, and onboarding to ensure these youth can be meaningful contributors to and participate in Canada's prosperity.

Priority #1: Easy to access, practical labour market and skills information—Reboot Plus in Metro Vancouver has succeeded qualitatively. Youth, employers/professionals, and school districts have all been enthused and benefited from the project. But the number of youth participants at 60+ is lower than required for good quantitative results. Expansion will give the project a firmer research footing, moving to N>300 where the project can substantiate its qualitative results with reliable and evidence-based quantitative data. Further, involvement with employers/professionals will also grow; youth participants will interview nearly 2000 professionals to learn about careers, understand needed skills and training and get advice on workforce entry. Like the increased number of youth, the increase in the number of employers and professionals included in the research will provide a broader understanding of their views and experiences with this important talent pool.

b. Addressing recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada

The proposed Reboot Plus expansion addresses recognized systemic challenges related to the world of work and future skills in Canada as follows:

1. **Employment outcomes of “at-risk” / marginalized youth** – Youth who don't graduate from high school (approximately 14% or 340,000 nationally) struggle to enter the workforce and find meaningful work. Many experience anxiety and depression. Some find themselves on social assistance/government aid indefinitely, while others fall into crime.

Reboot Plus works with teachers, counsellors, and parents to help participants complete courses and obtain required credits to graduate. Concurrently, students explore careers and gain a deep understanding of themselves, their skills, abilities, interests and develop a comprehensive education and career action plan supported by learnings from multiple informational interviews.

The college setting inspires youth to continue their education. They get student cards and full access to the college. At the college, their perception of educational possibility grows with their self-esteem and confidence. With a high school diploma, a new self-image, a well-considered action plan and practice presenting to professionals and employers, these once “at-risk” youth are prepared to get the skills and education to succeed and move forward in the workforce.

2. **Current and looming skills and labour shortages and skill gaps** – Canada has a skills and labour shortage due to its low birth rate, long-living population and a rapidly changing labour market. Reboot Plus not only prepares youth for the workforce but it also fills gaps

in the evolving labour market by drawing employers' attention to the potential in the youth participants and educating them on the value of this labour pool.

3. Employer access to alternative or marginalized and equity seeking populations –

Traditionally employers have not had to consider or access marginalized populations for prospective staff. As Canadian skills and labour shortages increase, more and more employers are seeking assistance to access and participate in preparing and training formerly untapped pools of workers – across all skill and occupational levels. Employers who may not have considered marginalized and or EDI populations are now interested and are seeking more diverse staff for economic and ethical reasons alike.

c. Demand for the service: Who, how we know, and timeliness

Demand for this project comes from multiple stakeholders.

- Youth challenged by their inability to fit into conventional schooling and who need a fresh start and a bridge to the post-secondary education they need.
- Counsellors and teachers from secondary schools worried about the fates of their students who drop out or age out without graduating.
- Parents anxious about their children being unable to access post-secondary education and its career benefits.
- Employers grappling with labour shortages and the way COVID-19 has recalibrated work.
- Post-secondary institutions wishing to recruit a diverse, neuro-divergent student body.
- Boards of Trade with mandates to support their members and their labour force needs.

The current iteration of Reboot Plus has supplied further evidence of demand:

- The project has exceeded participant recruitment targets, and participants from outside the school districts we targeted have connected to register.
- Other school districts than those we have formal agreements with have requested Reboot Plus for their students.
- Willingness of Boards of Trade to support the project in an ongoing fashion. Agreements (MOUs) were made with individual Boards of Trade to support the project for a single cycle; they have committed their support and involvement for the expansion.
- Professionals and employers have willingly offered their time and expertise to the project and to individual students.

B. Innovation and evidence

a. Project innovation and news ways of doing things and informed by evidence

The proposed Reboot Plus expansion is innovative in several ways:

Meeting students “where they are” – Reboot Plus uses Universal Design for Learning to adapt to the needs of participants who have struggled for many reasons: depression, anxiety, bullying, gender identification, poverty, autism, racism, and diagnosed and undiagnosed learning disabilities. Reboot Plus supports success by using:

- a variety of instructional techniques
- multiple modes to present completed assignments
- frequent one-to-one support
- a policy of welcoming participants back to class and helping them catch up no matter how many sessions they miss

Students participate as they are able and achieve at their own pace so they can have as positive an educational experience as possible on their own terms.

- **Evidence:** low attrition, high rate of high school and action plan completion, high rate of participation in informational interviews, students who “disappear” often re-appear.

Multiple meetings with professionals – Youth meet professionals in low-pressure informational interviews. By getting access to professionals/employers in a supported environment, youth learn about work and specific careers, gain self-confidence and practice presenting to employers.

- **Evidence:** Youth are initially hesitant to participate in informational interviews, but most go on to do several – some doing far more than the proposed four to seven. Youth modify their action plans according to what they learn in interviews, adjusting and sometimes completely changing career direction.

Shifting employer perceptions of “at-risk” youth – The informational interviews shift the perception the professionals and employers have of this demographic – moving their view of these young people from unemployable to potential employees.

- **Evidence:** The number of employers/professionals volunteering their time and reporting their enthusiasm for interviews and what they learn from the youth. Many ask to do additional meetings and offer more support such as mentorship and work experience.

b. Plans to generate evidence and insights. Knowledge to be generated and potential implications of your approach for the broader skills ecosystem

The research team will develop a research plan with FSC input and guidance. Multiple approaches will generate evidence and insights. We will collect quantitative and qualitative data from the youth, professionals, teachers and school staff, and from college delivery partners and participating Boards of Trade.

Specific approaches to the proposed generation of evidence include but are not limited to – qualitative pre and post interviews, focus groups and consultations with stakeholders, post-program surveys with all participants and employers and professionals, and from the Youth Advisory Board. The research team is exploring using contemporaneous assessments such as participant journal entries on daily classroom work with facilitators.

New knowledge from the expansion will focus on the portability of the model: can Reboot Plus be delivered with fidelity and achieve similar outcomes by other colleges in different jurisdictions? If the project proves portable, it can play a critical role in increasing the number of high school graduates and the number of Canadians moving into post-secondary or training and obtaining the skills required to fully participate in the Canadian labour market.

C. Learning

a. Learning the current project with FSC has generated and how learning has informed the scope of the new project

Learning that has informed the scope of our new project includes:

- Youth who engage in Reboot Plus gain hope and have more clarity about their futures. They become excited about post-secondary education and possible careers; many enroll while with the project. *There is a need for this type of “bridging” program for this target population.*

- Programs like this need skilled facilitators who are innovative, creative, flexible and responsive to diverse student needs, personalities and goals. *The expansion includes comprehensive facilitator training to ensure effective program delivery.*
- The willingness of professionals and employers to participate exceeded expectations. *The expanded model will continue to encourage youth participants to meet a minimum of four professionals and will work to increase the participation of new professionals.*
- The project had to move from in-person to online and did so quite seamlessly. As a key principle of the project is exposure to the college setting, moving online was not ideal; however, we learned that Reboot Plus could not only be effectively delivered virtually, barriers to participation for both our youth and professional participants were reduced. *In the expansion, an online option will be offered to ensure equity of access and inclusion, and online informational interviews will be recommended.*
- The project successfully achieved its aim in re-engaging its youth in education and skills development; many poised to apply and register for post-secondary and other skill development programs. For some, application fees or the cost of basic short-term training were prohibitive; the project team shifted unused transportation and refreshment funds to offset these costs. *In the expanded model, budget will be allocated to cover these costs for those in need.*

b. Additional learning questions the new project will address

The expansion of Reboot Plus will continue to collect evidence to answer the following questions. The larger sample sizes and multiple delivery sites and partners allow us to increase the statistical validity of our findings.

1. Can the intervention support youth at-risk to re-engage with education and improve their long-term labour market prospects?
2. Can techniques used to give privileged youth a leg-up be adapted and used to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged youth?
3. Can we raise employer awareness of this group as a pool of talent and impact their hiring practices?

The focus of the research for this expanded version of the project is to answer these questions:

4. Can this program model be effectively replicated in other communities in Canada?
5. Can Reboot Plus be delivered in other jurisdictions with fidelity?

D. Equity, diversity, and inclusion

a. Perspectives of end-users and other stakeholders, particularly groups facing barriers incorporated in its design and execution

Reboot Plus is designed for atypical, divergent youth facing barriers in the secondary school system. These barriers include: depression, anxiety, bullying, gender identification issues, poverty, autism spectrum, racism, and diagnosed and undiagnosed learning disabilities. The variety and intensity of these barriers makes each cohort unique and these individual needs and challenges shape and shift the delivery of each cohort – the content, selection of curricula, presentation format, etc. Our Youth Advisory Board is made up of former participants of Reboot Plus and other like-minded youth programs. This Board gives us a regular and ongoing participant perspective on our program design. We consult with Boards of Trade to recruit and educate professionals and employers, and work with administrators, teachers, and counsellors in school districts to get a broader picture of our participants and their group and individual needs.

b. Practices and activities of the project that directly support and are grounded in principles of equity, diversity and inclusion

Every aspect of Reboot Plus is devoted to EDI. Our ethos is to *re-include* youth who have not thrived in high school because they were excluded. Reboot Plus uses Universal Design for Learning Principles, which show that design for the most barriered benefits all users. For example, the program gives participants multiple ways of responding to tasks and conducting informational interviews, which allows people barriered in one mode to succeed in another.

Other examples of practices and activities include:

- We carefully match our professional participants with our youth and educate them about the youth who are interviewing them.
- The process of establishing informational interviews is wholly student-centred and matches are made entirely based on students' areas of interest.
- The facilitators are trained in mental health first aid, emotional intelligence, and trauma informed practices.
- Program policies allow for easy return to the program if youth participants leave at any point.
- Reboot Plus aims to remove as many barriers to access as possible by providing transit and food supports and, in some cases, access to short-term occupational training supports that meet with their action plan.

c. Furthering equity, diversity and inclusion in the field or sector of the project

Reboot Plus will further EDI for both marginalized youth and for employers seeking to expand their talent pool. Reboot Plus provides exposure to the potential held by the youth and shifts employer perceptions to see this group as hireable. Different EDI issues and needs will manifest in different communities, posing a different set of circumstances, exclusions, intensities, and demands. We are confident that our model will adapt successfully to these challenges and further EDI in other regions and labour markets in Canada.

E. Capacity

a. Skills, experience and resources available within the lead organization and partners and their support of successful project execution

Douglas College is the lead with PEERs as delivery partner in Reboot Plus, which is further supported by several School Districts and Boards of Trade. All current partners have collaborated on previous projects and have the experience, capacity, networks and stakeholder relationships to implement the project. Three additional colleges will become partners through an RFP process that will ensure they have the required skills, experience, community connections and resources.

The Training Group at Douglas College has experience in national employment and labour market programming and in national research projects for barriered youth, such the CICan Skills Compass project for NEET indigenous and newcomer youth, and the Autism CanTech (ACT) program. We are staffed to ensure the Reboot Plus expansion has the required attention and resources:

- Project management is in place
- Facilitation and instructional supports are in place
- The Research team will continue and expand its role to include the national expansion
- Financial monitoring, tracking and reporting is in place through our Financial Manager who reports to the Douglas College Controller and Director of Finance

Douglas College's financial management and reporting system fully complies with BC's Budget Transparency and Accountability Act and follows the BC Government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual for financial, general management and financial administration policies.

PEERs specializes in workforce integration, cultural diversity, strategic planning and labour market initiatives with experience in employment, language and settlement programming, cultural diversity research, resource development, and training and planning. They develop and implement strategic and operational plans, lead research projects, conduct service and resource development initiatives, and manage stakeholder relations and community capacity building projects. In conjunction with Douglas College, PEERs has delivered Reboot Plus and oversees the project's employer outreach and partnerships with the Boards of Trade. PEERs program team is in place to deliver the expansion and has working relationships in place with Boards of Trade, an extensive network of employers and senior officials in multiple school districts to ensure project success.

The Douglas College and PEERs project management team has met with all the Metro Vancouver School District and Board of Trade partners and has received commitment from them for ongoing support and involvement in Reboot Plus Expanded.

b. Current project's track record with FSC, challenges and how they've been addressed

Our current project has a good track with FSC as evidenced from the following achievements.

We have:

- Exceeded targets for recruitment and registration
- Successfully adapted and delivered Reboot Plus in the face of COVID-19
- Engaged numerous employers and professionals in one of the most challenging employment periods of our lifetimes
- Onboarded district and business partners as planned and incorporated additional partners including the Maple Ridge and New Westminster school districts
- Established well thought out and executed social media channels for communication and knowledge sharing and participated fully in the Community of Practice
- Reported and shared project results in a timely manner

Challenges have included:

- Dealing with COVID-19 and its effects on both Douglas College and the participating school districts. But we have responded effectively to those challenges by delivering the project online and adapting the project materials accordingly.
- Collecting data—our participant demographic is resistant to surveys, but we continue to experiment with incentives and youth engagement in the research.

F. Coherence

a. The main activities that enable the project to meet its objectives

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Project Research and Evaluation Plan including submission of a revised Research Ethics Board application
- Conduct all research activities and report out as agreed upon with FSC
- Conduct national RFP process to select three additional colleges / communities and finalize contracts
- Develop program guide/curriculum package to guide subcontractors' implementation of project
- Deliver 9 cohorts in Metro Vancouver, including 3 months post program participant monitoring and support plus provide training to and support the setup of national partners

- Deliver “Train the Trainer” sessions to partner colleges
- Deliver 6 cohorts (2 per college) with national college partners, with support, supervision, and monitoring
- Knowledge mobilization: continued use of social media channels, presentation at conferences, employer, and government project showcase events
- Project Reporting including communication and liaising with FSC, and timely submission of all required reports

b. Explain how your project presents good value for money. How is your budget reasonable, appropriate and aligned with your work plan?

The Reboot Plus expansion presents good value for money in the following ways:

- Testing the expansion aims to prove the potential portability and replication of the project. If replicated, the cost invested in the pilot and research of the model is pro-rated against all future expansion
- A fully developed curriculum package and program guide can be used in other jurisdictions with other providers, reducing planning, start-up, implementation, and experimentation costs
- Testing delivery and partnerships in other jurisdictions will solidify delivery and costing models that can be applied and adjusted to local conditions and venues
- Investment in research and evaluation of delivery model will reduce future costs per student rates of replicated programs
- Investment in a model that demonstrates the value of “at-risk” youth to hundreds of professionals and employers presents a potential labour market solution and a reduction to reliance on Canada’s social safety net

(3,500 words maximum)

PART 4 - PROJECT WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

1. Please submit a **one-page work plan** with key milestones and their timeline. **Do not** include detailed activities at this time. If your proposal is selected, we will work with you to develop a detailed work plan.
2. Please complete the project budget template provided to you as part of the application material.
 - a. Include only **new funding** associated with your new project and its additional scope. Please do not include the existing funding that is already part of your current funding agreement with FSC.
 - b. If applicable, identify new funding pending or confirmed for this project from other sources. **This funding should be included as in-kind contributions.** (Please note that funding from other federal sources cannot be counted towards in-kind contributions)
3. Please submit your work plan and budget by sending these files, along with this completed form, to targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca.

4. You may use the space below to provide comments to accompany your work plan and/or budget.

1. Through expansion of Reboot Plus we will test the efficacy and fidelity at levels that improve statistic validity.
2. Douglas College and PEERs have the project management, research and delivery team in place to begin in January 2022.
3. Douglas College is experienced in developing, implementing, and administering national multi-stakeholder labour market, skills development and research projects.
4. The local School District and Board of Trade partners have committed to ongoing participation and support of the project.
5. The proposed project is committed to ongoing Knowledge Mobilization: social media, blogs, employer events, conference participation.

(100 words maximum)

PART 5 - DECLARATION

By submitting an application, the lead organization and its partners agree to the requirements of the following sections, detailed in the guidelines outlined for this funding call, and they affirm that they comply with and/or commit to the following:

- Organization eligibility.
- Active support for co-creating and carrying out an evaluation with an FSC-approved evaluator, if FSC decides an evaluation is appropriate for this project.
- Active engagement in knowledge mobilization activities related to the project.
- Compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans.
- Confidential due diligence inquiries from Future Skills Centre into the applicant.

Signature

Valerie Lockyer

Name of signing authority

Valerie Lockyer

Date

November 1, 2021