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.

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PART 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Lead organization

Name of lead organization

The Corporation of the City of Kingston

Name of project lead

Craig Desjardins

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

cmdesjardins@cityofkingston.ca

2. Proposed project

Project title

Workplace Inclusion Charter expansion to municipal corporations and small/rural communities

Project start and end dates

February 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023

Projects must end no later than September 30, 2023.

Amount requested from FSC (total)

$428,581.10

Project partners and their location

KEYS Job Centre

PART 2 - PROJECT SUMMARY

1. Proposed project "one-liner"

How would you describe your new project in one sentence?

> Our new project seeks to expand the Workplace Inclusion Charter (including its principles, components, and model) to municipal corporations and to small and rural communities.

(25/30 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.

Primary learning from the current project that informs the new project:

- We learned that the Charter and its tools are effective, but it takes longer and requires more ongoing support than initially anticipated – there is a need to strengthen the sustainability model.
- We learned that the demand for the Charter and its tools went well beyond the market of small/medium sized businesses (which was our initial target audience) and includes large employers and public sector organizations, including municipalities. These larger organizations don't necessarily have the EDI expertise and capacity we initially assumed.
- Organizations outside of our community have requested help and access to the Charter resources. Without an implementing agency like KEYS (with strong program delivery and community network capacity), scaling elsewhere will be difficult.

New project:

1) Refine and build on existing Charter tools to address the complexities of the municipal framework.

2) Pilot enhanced toolkit at the City of Kingston – implementing a corporate-wide action plan that draws on all relevant tools.

3) Share the Charter model along with the expanded, action-oriented toolkit and City of Kingston's own EDI action plan with small/rural municipalities in our region as the next stage of scaling the Charter.

4) Build up small/rural municipal corporations as EDI champions to position them as leaders in

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their communities and to support local employers as they implement EDI in the workplaces (i.e. implement the Charter).

5) Establish a "Community of Practice" to facilitate ongoing workplace EDI skills development among practitioners (Inclusion Coaches), employers, and municipalities.

(249/250 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.

Our new project goes beyond the scope of our current FSC-funded project in the following ways:

1) Augment and refine the Charter tools (extending its principles and components) to support the development and implementation of EDI initiatives in larger organizations – specifically complex, municipal environments.

2) Expand the Charter model to 3 – 5 new small / rural communities in the region. The Charter can offer an EDI employment solution for these communities.

3) Test a different project delivery format to better understand what works to address demand in small/rural communities: our new project proposes to first build up smaller municipal corporations in order to set the stage for the expansion of the Charter to businesses in those communities.

(117/150 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?

- As the City of Kingston has learned first-hand, larger complex organizations, such as municipalities, do not necessarily have the capacity or access to action-oriented resources that are required to engage employees and drive transformative EDI change within the organization as we had originally assumed.

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- This new project will evaluate the importance and need for municipal corporations to be EDI leaders in their communities and the correlating impact this has on successfully expanding the Charter to small/rural communities. This can be important for the growth of the Charter as municipalities signal/set the standard for critical/transformative change in a community (i.e. system change enablers).

- Canada's 3,519 smaller municipalities have the same EDI needs as larger urban centres but lack access to concrete solutions to drive positive employment outcomes for systematically excluded populations. This project is well timed as the federal government looks to spread the benefits of economic immigration to smaller communities.

(150/150 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.

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The main project activities that will enable us to meet the project objectives:

1) Refine and build on existing Charter tools to address the complexities of the municipal framework.

2) Pilot enhanced toolkit at the City of Kingston – implementing a corporate-wide action plan that draws on all relevant tools.

3) Share the Charter model along with the expanded, action-oriented toolkit and City of Kingston's own EDI action plan with small/rural municipalities in our region as the next stage of scaling the charter

- Coach 3-5 municipal corporations and build them up as EDI leaders in the community, starting with change within their own organization.
- Once the municipality feels comfortable in its role as champion, KEYS will advise on how to implement the Workplace Inclusion Charter for employers in the community. KEYS will help pilot the Inclusion Charter with one small/medium employer in each of the new communities.

4) Design a sustainability model that allows for continuous learning and access to relevant resources for employers, Inclusion Coaches, and other stakeholders who have been engaged in the Charter project. This will include a Community of Practice (or communities of practice) that cultivates ongoing information sharing and best practices for municipalities, EDI professionals and employers in the region.

A. Relevance:
a. How does your new project align with FSC's Strategic Priorities?

Alignment with FSC Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority: "What Works" replication. Focus Area: Systemic change enablers

The Workplace Inclusion Charter has established an ecosystem in Kingston for employers, service providers, and groups underrepresented in the labour market to collaborate on creating more inclusive work environments. This addresses two pressing skills development challenges – increased participation of systematically excluded groups in the economic life of the community and the expansion of the labour pool for employers who are struggling to find talent. Expanding the Charter project to surrounding rural/small communities via engagement and support for their municipal corporations will grow this ecosystem while creating more equitable workplaces and mitigating talent attraction and retention challenges.

Strategic Priority: Agile Market Response; Focus Area: New and innovative skills approaches

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The Charter is a highly agile tool that has successfully adapted to the unique demands imposed by COVID-19. It continues to serve as a support system for both employers recovering from the pandemic and systematically excluded workers whose economic well-being has been disproportionately affected by it.

As such, the Charter Project is uniquely qualified to support rural/small communities that have seen an influx of new residents during the pandemic. The most recent annual estimate of population changes at sub-provincial level by StatsCan (July 2019 – July 2020) indicates that more people are leaving large urban centres. Toronto alone saw a net loss of -50,375. Should this trend continue, the impact of diverse urban in-migrants on the culture and economy of the communities in which they settle will be significant. It may even reverse some of the population losses small/rural communities have experienced over the last two decades (projected at 17.2 % in Ontario from 2011 – 2025). The timely implementation of the expanded Charter Project has the potential to support municipalities and employers in successfully welcoming these new residents and connecting them to the economic prosperity of their chosen communities.

b. How does your new project address recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada?

Population projections show that Canada's aging labour force is on a steady downward trajectory, with growth almost exclusively dependent on immigration. While metropolitan centres like Toronto successfully attract new talent, small/rural municipalities are facing serious challenges related to depopulation such as deteriorating infrastructure, loss of services, and economic decline. This is especially concerning since Canada is a country of small towns, with 3,284 of its 3,573 municipalities housing fewer than 10,000 people. Without intervention, the population in these communities will continue to decline. A solution to the exodus of rural residents is the attraction and retention of new residents through in-migration or immigration. In response, the federal government has launched the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot. Without a structure in place to support employment success and community integration however, small/rural communities will continue to struggle to retain newcomers. Attraction strategies have little chance of success without retention. Gainful employment can serve as foundation, yet most employers are not equipped to effectively recruit and on-board a diverse workforce. Kingston has successfully implemented a program to guide employers, which can be replicated in small/rural municipalities. We know that the municipal corporation serves as an example to businesses in the community. When the City endorsed the Charter for its workforce on Nov. 19, 2019, it encouraged other employers to follow suit. As the City tackles the Charter implementation and develops tools specific to the needs of complex municipal corporations, we propose to share our learning and resources with 3 to 5 small/rural municipalities in our region.

c. Explain how your proposed project fulfills the demand for your service. Who is demanding this and how do you know? Why is it timely?

Our project meets the demand for EDI tools and support for smaller municipalities. Like other communities in Canada, the City of Kingston acknowledges that systemic racism and

discrimination exist within our organization. In the summer of 2020, Kingston City Council approved recommendations for the municipal corporation to advance its work on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) internally, as well as in the community. There has been significant interest in the Workplace Inclusion Charter from larger organizations, including the municipality. This is due to the lack of grassroots, accessible EDI resources and support for small and medium size municipalities. As we learned with the City of Kingston, the implementation of the Charter within large and complex organizations requires more in-depth support to meet the EDI needs and intricacies of a municipal framework.

Expansion of the Charter to small and rural communities (via municipal corporations) meets the expressed demand for Workplace Inclusion Charter resources beyond the geographic boundaries of the City of Kingston. The KEYS Charter Project team has received numerous requests from both small/rural communities and businesses in our region looking for EDI support – however, they don't know where to start. Examples include:

- Invitation to join the National Workplace Inclusion Committee that consists of, but not limited to, 15 small and medium size communities for the purpose of knowledge and best practices sharing.
- Invitation to speak at the National Workplace Inclusion Forum funded by the IRCC to share some of the practical tools and approaches implemented by the Charter Project team with those communities.
- Invitation by the St. Thomas Elgin Local Immigration Partnership to present at a conference and share best practices with other small and medium size communities, that would like to learn from our experience in Kingston.

B. Innovation and evidence
a. In what way is your project innovative by pursuing a new way of doing things? If applicable, how is your project model informed by evidence?

Our project is innovative because we are seeking to empower smaller and rural municipalities to be champions of EDI and lead by example – this model does not currently exist. Through our current project in Kingston, we have seen that employers are encouraged by the demonstrated leadership taken by the municipal corporation to bring about necessary EDI change in our community.

b. How do you plan to generate evidence and insights during your project? What new knowledge will it generate and what are the potential implications of your approach for the broader skills ecosystem?

In the current project, we have developed a full evaluation protocol to understand the impact and the outcome of our work with employers. This includes a pre-intervention assessment survey that provides a basic overview of strengths and weaknesses in workplace EDI, a post-intervention survey to assess the immediate impact of the implementation, 1-, 3-, and 6-month check-ins to gauge whether the implemented initiatives have expanded, declined, or stayed the same. We investigate whether the Charter implementation has effected changes (in the short-term) in actual or projected employee demographics, sense of belonging,

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structured inclusive systems/practices, and other key indicators of diversity & inclusion. Surveys and check-ins are supplemented with interviews and/or focus groups with employers and other stakeholders to understand the impact of the Charter implementation.

In this next phase, we can adapt these evaluation tools to:
1) Generate new knowledge on how/whether a more fulsome and involved action plan implemented at a large and complex organization such as the Corporation of the City of Kingston can dismantle systemic barriers and generate sustainable EDI practices.
2) Understand how small municipal corporations can grow into workplace EDI champions.

We will also implement a Community of Practice to sustain learnings and engagement beyond the course of this project. The Community of Practice will seek to understand what types of activities can sustain practical engagement among EDI practitioners, employers, and municipalities.

C. Learning
a. What learning has your current project with FSC generated and how has this learning informed the scope of your new project?

- One of our key learnings has been that there is great interest in implementing inclusive practices in all sizes of workplaces in Kingston and beyond. However, there is also significant hesitation and uncertainty when it comes to where to start and how to avoid mistakes.
- Through experiences with other small communities, both at a municipality-to-municipality level, and within service provider networks we have found that there is a significant need for organizations and employers to move from awareness and intent to action and change.
- There is a pronounced demand for ongoing support and guidance to make this happen – more than originally anticipated. This increases the need to strengthen the sustainability model.
- We also learned that the demand for the Charter and its tools went well beyond the market of small/medium sized businesses in Kingston (which was our initial target audience) and includes large and public sector organizations, specifically municipalities.
  - o While municipal corporations have experience and expertise in HR and have often done some EDI groundwork, we learned that they require more time, hands-on support, and in-depth guidance from individuals with lived experiences of exclusion and workplace discrimination to effect change. Requirements such as genuine senior leadership support and the identification and on-boarding of key participants and champions takes time, while the structures of exclusion can be more complex and nuanced, involving multiple people and departments.
- Without an implementing organization like KEYS (with very strong program delivery and community network capacity), scaling elsewhere will be difficult.

b. What are additional learning questions that your new project will address?

1. Are municipalities best positioned to inspire EDI strides in the community?

2. Is there a correlation between what the municipality does and what businesses do – will businesses adopt EDI initiatives because the municipal corporation has done so?

3. Is the Charter scalable? What adjustments will need to be made for it to be effective in small/rural communities?

4. Is a Community of Practice a sustainable and effective solution for on-going support?

D. Equity, diversity and inclusion
a. Does your project incorporate in its design and execution the perspectives of end-users and other stakeholders, particularly groups facing barriers? If so, how? If not, why not?

As with our current initiative, this expansion continues to be founded on the idea that those who are systematically excluded from workplaces hold knowledge that is key to making meaningful changes towards more inclusive workplaces. The existing toolkit was assembled based on input from newcomers, Indigenous people, Black and racialized community members, and people with disabilities who have first-hand experience of workplace exclusion and inclusion. Their insights translated into the implementation of practical change within workplaces.

In this expanded project, the existing cohort of Inclusion Coaches and core Workplace Inclusion Charter staff from KEYS will continue to bring their first-hand experience to the specific context of municipalities. This project will also deepen inclusive workplace practices within the City of Kingston, engaging the newly-formed EDI team as well as end-users across the corporation. It will draw on the knowledge and expertise of the Charter Project team as well as the City's own Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee which includes representation from individuals of diverse backgrounds and experiences and a strong track record with equity and inclusion.

Ultimately, the project will bring together municipal corporations, employers, and groups facing barriers to improve workplace inclusion. Additionally, end-users and stakeholders from both the current FSC-funded project and this expansion will be invited and supported to participate in an online Community of Practice. This will help employers and municipalities to sustain their EDI work by finding support to address expected roadblocks, be sparked by new ideas, and find community and solidarity amongst EDI champions within small and rural communities. The Community of Practice will also enable EDI practitioners to deepen their learning and have a platform to continue to share their expertise with interested employers and municipalities.

b. What are the practices and activities of your project that directly support and are grounded in principles of equity, diversity and inclusion?

The practice of integrating systematically excluded people in solutions that improve inclusion is grounded in EDI principles. The project's primary intent is to support EDI principles through implementing them within municipal workplaces and beyond. The project will enhance EDI competencies of all those involved. All activities in the project will seek to support and elevate the voices and perspectives of systematically excluded groups. For example, one key

inclusive workplaces tool that will be implemented within the City of Kingston is the Employee Resource Group (ERG). ERGs can serve to break the isolation that systematically excluded employees experience in the workplace. They also facilitate cross-departmental connections by addressing systemic barriers to healthy, equitable, and inclusive workplaces. ERGs improve employee engagement, motivation, productivity, and satisfaction for systematically excluded groups while promoting the core values of respect, integrity, and teamwork. Once the City of Kingston has had experience establishing an ERG, we will be well positioned to share our experience and guide other municipalities on their own journey towards equity and inclusiveness.

c. Will your project further equity, diversity and inclusion in the field or sector of your project? If so, how? If not, why not?

Yes, this project will seek to further equity, diversity and inclusion within the Corporation of the City of Kingston and 3-5 smaller municipal corporations and their communities. Municipalities are not oblivious to the longstanding and growing prevalence of racial profiling, spike in hate crimes, and the disturbing manifestations of white supremacy. Research highlights the experiences of racism, ableism, and discrimination by members of our community.

Smaller municipalities are concerned with the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce. Meanwhile, they are not always aware how they can make substantial, meaningful EDI changes. Through this project, we will support and equip municipalities to be champions of inclusive workplaces by modeling the changes that are necessary for success.

E. Capacity
a. What are the skills, experience and resources available within the lead organization (and partners, if applicable)? How will these elements support the successful execution of the project?

The City of Kingston's EDI office, formed in June 2021, consists of two full-time staff with intersectional lived experience, who have over 20 years of combined expertise in delivering innovative solutions that achieve equitable outcomes, improve culture, and produce transformational results nationally and internationally. This team has guided organizations and institutions in both public and private sectors towards systematic changes through both reflective and reflexive practice. Additionally, the team has experience in anti-oppressive and anti-racism training, coaching, professional development, and organizational change processes in social and community services. As equity leaders, this team has graduate level education in Public Administration, Business Administration, Social Services, and Leadership and Inclusion. The City's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee consists of 11 members with intersectional identities who will provide guidance in the development of policies, initiatives, and programs aimed at reducing barriers in the workplace at the City of Kingston and fostering diversity and inclusion in all areas of the organization, both internal and external. The work of the Committee is guided by the vision and principles outlined in the Workplace Inclusion Charter.

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The core KEYS Workplace Inclusion Charter team includes 3 full-time staff who hold a combined 25+ years of experience in international education, sales & marketing, financial analysis, customer relations, and community-based sector work nationally and internationally. The team also boasts undergraduate and graduate-level achievements in business, education, and translation. The team excels in creating collaborative, action-oriented, multi-stakeholder teams to implement meaningful changes within workplaces, guided by on-the-ground realities, practical experiences, and input from Inclusion Coaches. The core team is enhanced by a cohort of 20 Inclusion Coaches – individuals from widely varied backgrounds in healthcare, performing arts, education, marketing, engineering, and beyond. All 20 coaches are either Indigenous, racialized, (im)migrant and/or persons with disabilities and have first-hand experience of workplace exclusion in the Canadian labour market. Inclusion Coaches also offer over 1-year of experience working with varied local employers on implementing inclusion initiatives within their workplaces.

b. Does your current project with FSC hold a good track record? Have you faced any challenges? If yes, how have you addressed them?

Yes, our current project has a solid track record. We have faced some challenges, especially in the first year of the project, when the COVID-19 pandemic up-ended workflows and workplaces across the country. This made engaging employers in what could be viewed as a high-risk activity challenging. We ramped up recruitment activities and re-positioned equity, diversity, and inclusion as essential ingredients to a COVID recovery (which they are!). Over the past year, we have picked up speed and as of November 1, 2021, we are about to reach 80% of our targeted employer-participant goal.

F. Coherence

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

With our new project we are seeking to expand the Charter model, its tools and its learnings to 2 new audiences:
1) a new market segment in municipal corporations, and
 2) geographically, reaching small and rural communities in the region.

Given the fairly modest budget we have drafted, the City of Kingston feels that the potential impact of this project and the evidence we intend to generate represents a strong return on investment.

(3,032/3,500 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.
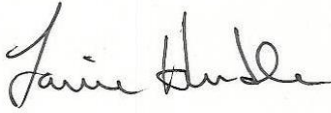
(100 words maximum)

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.

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- 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

Name of signing authority	Date
Lanie Hurdle, Chief Administrative Officer	**November 2, 2021**