

## **CANADIAN LABOUR MARKET AND SKILLS RESEARCHER NETWORK**

### **CALL FOR PROPOSALS ON EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITIONS**

This is a Request for Proposals (RFP) for research studies in the area of 'Education, Training, and School-to-Work Transitions'. This is one of several areas where papers are being commissioned as part of the Canadian Labour Market and Skills Researcher Network (CLSRN) supported by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. The coordinators of this research program are Daniel Parent (McGill University) and Arthur Sweetman (Queen's University).

CLSRN plans to provide funding for 5 to 10 research papers in this area. Funded studies will generally provide new empirical evidence to support evidence-based policy decision making. They are to be of the quality of papers submitted to peer-reviewed, refereed journals and authors are encouraged to ultimately submit them to such forums (with appropriate acknowledgement to the funding source). The normal budget for such research studies is \$15,000 (plus GST if applicable).

For the purposes of research support, the product of the research will be a peer-reviewed working paper. Copyright of the research paper remains with the author(s). The working paper will appear in the CLSRN research paper series, and will also be posted at the HRSD web site. The findings may also be reported in HRSD's research newsletter.

Working papers are expected to be 20-40 pages in length, although they could be somewhat longer than this standard in order to provide sufficient detail on methods used, results obtained, and discussion of policy implications.

Proposals must involve new research that is not supported by other organizations. However, the proposed research may be related to, or an extension of, research supported elsewhere.

The budget can be used for any purposes deemed appropriate by the researchers to meet the legitimate expenses associated with carrying out the research. Such expenses can include: teaching or administrative release (at the relevant local university rates for such release); research assistance; data collection; honorarium for the author(s); and travel associated with conducting the research. Travel associated with presenting the paper at workshops and conferences organized by CLSRN will be covered separately. Larger amounts could be requested for specific unusual needs (e.g., conducting a survey, extensive data collection or a lab experiment) if justified. In all cases, a brief justification of the budget should be provided.

Payments will normally be scheduled as follows: (i) upon submission of a preliminary outline for the paper, including planned methodology; (ii) upon submission of a satisfactory first draft; and (iii) upon submission of a satisfactory final draft.

All proposals *and* papers will be peer reviewed. Academic reviewers will assess the quality of the proposed research and the potential contribution to knowledge. Representatives of selected

Canadian government departments will assess proposals and papers for their policy relevance (broadly defined). Only proposals that meet both criteria – academic excellence and policy relevance – will be funded.

Since one of the objectives of CLRSN is to help ensure the emergence of a new generation of researchers with an interest in labour market policy, proposals from new researchers are especially welcome. For established researchers, proposals that involve graduate students or recent graduates in a significant role are also encouraged.

Government researchers are also invited to submit proposals, either as principal investigators or as co-investigators. However, government researchers are not eligible for financial support.

Given the need to have deliverables within the first year of the project, strict timelines will have to be followed. Please do not submit a proposal if you cannot adhere to those timelines since missing them can jeopardize future funding, both individually and collectively to the project.

The timelines are:

July 31, 2006	Proposals due
August 31, 2006	Researchers are informed of decision and given feedback from peer reviews
October 31, 2006	Preliminary outline of paper due
March 31, 2007	First draft of paper due
April 30, 2007	Feedback on first draft provided to authors
August 2007	Conference on education, training and school-to-work transitions
September 2007	Peer review of final draft; revisions to working paper completed

The proposals can be brief (e.g., 3-4 pages) and can take the form of the proposed outline of the research paper. Proposals and final working papers may be written in English or French. The proposal should outline the rationale for the study, situating it in the relevant literature and indicating the gaps in our knowledge that it proposes to fill. The proposal should also explain the relevance of the proposed research for public policy. Finally, the proposal should describe the data to be used and the proposed methodology. The CVs of all co-investigators should be included with the proposal.

If the proposed research is to be carried out in a Research Data Centre (RDC), applicants should note that proposals that are approved for funding by CLSRN will not also be required to go through the SSHRC review process that is normally required for RDC access. Such proposals will, however, still be reviewed by Statistics Canada. The Statistics Canada review focuses on two issues: (i) demonstrated need for access to confidential micro-data (could the proposed research be carried out with public use data?) and (ii) the viability of the methods to be applied given the data to be analyzed (is the data up to the task?). Researchers wishing to use data housed in an RDC should ensure that their proposal addresses these issues.

More than one paper may be commissioned on a particular topic and none may be commissioned in others. The suggested topics (listed below) may also be combined and researchers may propose alternative topics. Researchers may be involved in more than one topic and in different areas.

Proposals should be sent to: Katherine Meredith  
Canadian Labour Market and Skills Researcher Network  
Department of Economics  
University of British Columbia  
#997 – 1873 East Mall  
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1

Proposals can also be submitted by email to: [ine2@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:ine2@interchange.ubc.ca)

Enquiries about this research project can be directed to:

Daniel Parent  
Department of Economics  
McGill University  
[daniel.parent@mcgill.ca](mailto:daniel.parent@mcgill.ca)

Arthur Sweetman  
School of Policy Studies  
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## **Call for research proposals on education, training, and school-to-work transitions**

CLSRN is seeking proposals for a project on education, training and school-to-work transitions. Our initial emphasis is on the four areas listed below, but we are open to related submissions. The proposals may involve entirely new projects or extensions of ongoing research. The completed projects, along with papers from international researchers designed to help expand our knowledge of practices in other countries, will be presented at a conference in August 2007.

The main areas of focus are:

1. **Adult Learning and Retraining.** With the rapid pace of technological change and the increasing focus on productivity, workers who are past the usual schooling age face the challenge of maintaining and upgrading their skill set, as well as the prospect of having to re-train following job displacement. The aging of the population also suggests that more attention will be devoted to maintaining the skills of the workforce. Research might address questions such as the following. Is there evidence of skill obsolescence among adult workers? What types of education and skills promote adaptability and life long learning? What are the labour market consequences of alternative approaches to skill formation among adults? What should displaced workers do to speed up their re-employment? Are low skill individuals particularly vulnerable to technological and economic change, and what constraints do they face in terms of re-training opportunities? Are there barriers to adult education and training, and do these imply a role for government policy?
2. **High School Completion and Labour Market Outcomes.** Although the overall educational attainment of Canadians is relatively high by international standards, high school completion has traditionally been a weak spot. Does this situation reflect a relatively low economic return to secondary school graduation in Canada? Why is the wage differential between high school graduates who enter the labour force and high school dropouts small in Canada compared to the U.S., where the wage gap associated with completing high school is substantial? What are the implications of natural resource booms for high school completion? Do many high school dropouts subsequently obtain additional skills through trade school and community college programs? How do such individuals fare in the labour market?
3. **Determinants of Non-University Post-Secondary Schooling and Its Impact.** A distinguishing feature of the Canadian education system is the large fraction of individuals who enroll in, and graduate from, non-university post-secondary institutions. Indeed, by international standards Canada appears to be relatively unique in the extent of non-university post-secondary education. Are such apparent differences real, or do they reflect differences in measurement of educational attainment across countries? A related characteristic is that a substantial fraction of Canadians without a high school diploma report having some form of post-secondary education. What are the implications of this educational structure? Does Canada have the appropriate mix between university and non-university post-secondary education?
4. **Family Background and Human Capital Development.** What role does the family play in human capital development? How do unanticipated events affecting parents influence student enrolment/completion decisions? How are beliefs about the consequences of human capital

investments formed and what type of information is taken into account in making education and training decisions?

To further elaborate on the issues that can be addressed by research in this area, you may wish to consult the following documents: HRSDC Policy Research and Survey Plan (November 2005) and HRSD Medium-Term Policy Research Priorities (March 2006).