The **Youth Employment and Skills Strategy** (YESS) is a Government of Canada initiative led by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and delivered in partnership with 11 other federal departments, agencies, and Crown corporations.

Through the delivery of 16 unique programs, the Strategy aims to provide youth (aged 15 to 30), including those who may be underrepresented or face barriers to employment, with meaningful opportunities to gain work experience, develop necessary skills and receive wraparound supports to help them and find and keep quality jobs. Programs under the YESS help remove barriers for young people to get ahead, reach their employment goals and thrive.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) delivers two programs under the Strategy:

* 1. The ESDC Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) Program supports youth (aged 15-30) in overcoming barriers to employment, with a focus on those furthest from opportunity, such as those not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The program provides funding to organizations to deliver individually tailored supports and services with the goal of equipping youth with the tools needed to succeed on their employment journeys. For example, as part of their employment programming, youth may receive mentorship, skills development and training, wrap-around supports (e.g., dependent care support, mental health counselling) and/or paid work experiences.

Additionally, the program encourages cross-sectoral strategic collaboration and innovation to address new and emerging systemic challenges in the youth employment sector (e.g., employers, service providers, educational institutions) and increase organizational capacity to improve outcomes for youth across the country.

Youth who face barriers such as:

* Indigenous youth;
* Black youth
* Racialized youth;
* 2SLGBTQI+ youth;
* Youth with disabilities; and
* Youth living in rural, remote, Northern, fly-in and/or official language minority communities.

1. **Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ)** provides youth (aged 15 to 30) with opportunities to develop and improve their skills through quality jobs over the summer. It supports employers from not-for-profit organizations and the public sector, as well as private sector organizations with 50 or fewer full-time employees, to provide quality summer employment opportunities for youth.

For some youth, CSJ is a first job experience that informs future education, training, and career choices. The program is responsive to national and local priorities, as well as labour market needs.

Annex

Youth Employment and Skills Strategy

* The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) focuses on supporting youth facing barriers to employment to succeed in the labour market by finding and keeping quality jobs. Priority groups include populations that are often underrepresented in the labour market, including youth from official language minority communities (OLMCs). The YESS supports positive measures that advance the equality of the status and use of English and French regarding youth employment supports.
* Under the Strategy, ESDC has two programs: Canada Summer Jobs and the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program. Both programs identify OLMC youth as priority groups.

How does the YESS program support youth in OLMCs throughout our programming:

* The YESS programs contribute to the advancement of the use of English and French in Canadian society. The YESS Program and Canada Summer Jobs include youth that are part of OLMCs as one of their priority areas.

Youth Employment and Skills Strategy program

* The YESS program supports enhancing the vitality of OLMCs by funding projects that support OLMC youth to access skills and employment programming. Projects are delivered by organizations, including employment service providers, that assist youth from OLMCs to gain the skills, tools, information or work experience needed to transition into the labour market or return to education.
* The Canada-Quebec Contribution Agreement to Support the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (available in French) covering the period from 2020-2021 to 2024-2025, recognizes that Quebec will continue to offer a personalized approach for youth, including the English-speaking community, when delivering employment measures and services. In addition to the existing clause, a new clause has been added to the preamble of the agreement covering the period 2025-2026 to 2029-2030 to recognize the role of the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d’expression anglaise in ensuring that the concerns of English-speaking Quebecers are taken into consideration in government policies and decisions, as well as in terms of access to government programs and their applications.
* Under the most recent Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) YESS 2023 Call for Proposals, 42 organizations that were funded indicated that they would support approximately 1,200 youth that identified as members of OLMCs between 2024-2025 and 2027-2028. Of those 42 organizations, six organizations specifically focus on OLMCs.
* Direct OLMCs youth demographic data and statistics are hard to find, especially in each province and territory, but the YESS Program indirectly proxies the national OLMC rate at 4.0% by simply adding the Francophone population outside of Quebec and the English-speaking population in Quebec.

Canada Summer Jobs

* For Canada Summer Jobs 2024, 5.9% (4,286) of eligible youth identified as members of OLMCs. Canada Summer Jobs also identified supporting youth from OLMCs as a National Priority in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2024 and 2025.