

Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

Better Jobs Ontario Redesign: Phase 3

External Technical Questions and Answers

For Service Provider Use Only

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General

1. The Better Jobs Ontario (formerly Second Career) program underwent changes in December 2020 and July 2021 for Phases 1 and 2. Why is the program being redesigned again?

The Ontario government is moving ahead with Phase 3 because we need to ensure that Ontario's changing economy has a secure supply of talented workers – now and in the future.

These changes build on the previous phases of the Better Jobs Ontario (formerly Second Career) Redesign, to further improve access for more unemployed individuals who could benefit from skills training to find a job.

Phase 1 of the redesign, implemented in December 2020, provided fast-tracked access to individuals laid-off from sectors highly impacted by COVID-19. Changes also focused on shorter-duration training in jobs that are in demand and are in local or provincial priority areas, such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences, information and communication technology and supportive health services.

Phase 2 further improved access to individuals by increasing financial support amounts available for living expenses to reflect the current costs of living, simplifying the application process, and beginning to test a new online application process.

The Better Jobs Ontario Redesign builds on Budget 2019 commitments; taking action to change our system so that it works better for workers and businesses by making it more relevant, effective and responsive to labour market demands, and will contribute to the government's broader economic recovery efforts.

2. When will Phase 3 of the Better Jobs Ontario Redesign launch?

The launch of Phase 3 is effective April 29, 2022.

3. What are the key changes of Phase 3 of the redesign?

Phase 3 of the Better Jobs Ontario Redesign will expand program eligibility and suitability to individuals who have had challenges transitioning into sustainable employment, and therefore would not have previously been eligible due to limited labour market attachment. These changes will improve access for client groups with known barriers to labour market attachment, which may have been exacerbated by COVID-19, such as newcomers, people with disabilities, youth with employment barriers, and social assistance recipients.

4. Have there been any changes to financial assistance and/or financial needs assessments as part of the Phase 3 changes?

No. There are no further changes to financial assistance and financial needs assessments in Phase 3.

5. What happens after Phase 3 of the Better Jobs Ontario Redesign?

The Ministry will continue to review and improve the Better Jobs Ontario program as the labour market and pandemic recovery evolves.

6. Do changes apply to both the Better Jobs Ontario regular and Fast Track Streams?

No. Phase 3 changes apply only to the Better Jobs Ontario regular stream. The Fast Track Stream remains focused on individuals who were laid-off on or after March 1, 2020 from a sector identified as highly impacted by COVID-19. Individuals from low-income households with challenges attaching to the labour market are not eligible for the Better Jobs Ontario Fast Track Stream. Please refer to the Addendum to the Better Jobs Ontario Guidelines for more information on the Fast Track Stream.

7. Do any changes apply to Better Jobs Ontario feepayers?

No. Phase 3 changes do not impact Better Jobs Ontario feepayers, who are active Employment Insurance (EI) claimants. Phase 3 changes focus on broadening eligibility to include individuals who do not qualify for EI.

8. Will the Manufacturing Initiative and the Fast Track Stream still be available to applicants after the Phase 3 launch?

Yes. The Better Jobs Ontario Manufacturing Initiative and the Fast Track Stream will continue to be available for individuals who were laid-off and meet eligibility requirements.

Program Renaming

9. Why has the program been renamed to Better Jobs Ontario?

Phase 3 of the Better Jobs Ontario Redesign expands program eligibility for new clients. In addition to the program's original focus on helping individuals return to employment through re-training, it also expands access for individuals facing barriers to labour market attachment such as newcomers, people with disabilities,

youth with employment barriers, and social assistance recipients. These new clients may not be seeking a second career, but rather pursuing skills and training to secure sustainable employment or exit social assistance.

In order to reflect the expanded scope of the program, the government has renamed it Better Jobs Ontario.

10. When will Better Jobs Ontario replace Second Career as the new program name?

Better Jobs Ontario will replace Second Career as the program name effective April 25, 2022.

11. How long will Service Providers have to update promotional materials and resources with the new program name?

The Ministry recognizes that service providers involved in Better Jobs Ontario may need time to update promotional resources and related materials to reflect the new program name. In order to ensure that the new program name is implemented in a timely manner, the Ministry has requested that changes to promotional resources and related material be in place by July 31, 2022.

12. Will the Ministry provide additional funding to Service Providers to offset any costs associated with implementing the new program name?

The Ministry recognizes that there will be costs for service providers associated with implementing the new program name. Service providers are asked to manage these costs within their existing funding envelopes. However, service providers have the flexibility to implement changes over a period of time in order to manage costs in relation to monthly funding allocations.

13. When will external operational forms, tools and systems be updated with the new program name?

The Ministry will update the following public-facing operational forms, tools and systems on April 29, 2022, to include both Phase 3 changes and the new program name:

- Application for Financial Assistance Form (PDF) and Information Sheet (89-1889E and 89-1889F) on the Ontario Central Forms Repository
- Online Application for Financial Assistance Form and Employment Ontario (EO) Digital Portal

- Application Checklist for Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers
- Eligibility and Suitability Assessment Tool (Matrix) in EOIS-CaMS
- Participant Agreements

The Ministry will update other operational forms, tools and systems in the weeks following the Phase 3 launch and will inform the EO Network when each is released on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG).

Updates to Program Guidelines

14. What updates have been made to the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines because of Phase 3 changes?

Client eligibility and suitability has been expanded to unemployed individuals with limited labour market attachment, who could benefit from skills training because they have a hard time building their first career. As such, changes have been made to Eligibility (Section 2.3) and Suitability (Section 2.5), including the introduction of a Low-Income Household with Challenges Attaching to the Labour Market (Section 2.3.2) eligibility pathway in the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines.

Additional changes include:

- Updated Context and Funding Source (Sections 1.2 and 1.2.2)
- Updated Objectives and Consideration for Better Jobs Ontario Approval (Sections 2.1 and 2.2) to reflect that the program is intended for individuals who are unemployed and laid-off or low-income and do not have the financial resources to access training. Revisions have also been made to indicate that suitability thresholds may be adjusted periodically based on evolving labour market needs and/or client demand
- Revised list of Ineligible Individuals (Section 2.3.6) to reflect that individuals who had to take a leave of absence from employment may be eligible in exceptional circumstances
- Updated information regarding occupations that demonstrate demand and good employment prospects for Eligible Training (Section 2.4) and replaced references to the 2017 Labour Market Indicators with web resources and that Individuals who completed a skills training program in the last two years (24 months) through Ontario government funding are not eligible for the Better Jobs Ontario program at the Ontario, regional and local levels

- Updated descriptions for Single Skills, Micro-Credentials or Continuing Education Programs (Section 2.6.1.5)
- Revised Skills Training Outside of Ontario (Section 2.6.2.1) to reflect that individuals should make every effort to select training with an Ontario-based institute before looking for training in another Canadian province/territory or lastly outside of Canada
- Added new Breaks in Skills Training Due to Illness or Significant Life Event (Section 2.6.2.5)
- Added new section, Exception to the Two-Year Training Rule (Section 2.6.2.6)
- Updated Financial Hardship (Section 2.7.5) to include a definition of financial hardship based on the Canada Revenue Agency and further clarified that exceptions can be granted at the discretion of Ministry Regional Directors or their delegates in accordance with the Delegation of Financial Management Authority (DOFMA)
- Revised Better Jobs Ontario Participants (Section 3.1.3) to indicate that individuals who wish to apply to both Better Jobs Ontario and the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) should be assessed for financial assistance through Better Jobs Ontario first
- Added new Glossary of Terms – Appendix A that aligns with existing Employment Ontario (EO) program guidelines. Terms listed in this section support decision-making to assess clients for eligibility and suitability and are meant to provide consistency, clarity, and specificity for use in the Better Jobs Ontario program

15. Improved access for individuals with limited labour market attachment is anticipated to better reach those in receipt of social assistance, and individuals experiencing barriers to employment, such as vulnerable youth, gig-workers and those with precarious work history. Are those terms defined anywhere in the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines?

Yes, these terms can be found in Glossary of Terms - Appendix A of the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines.

Updates to Eligibility Requirements

16. What updates have been made to the eligibility criteria?

Eligibility has expanded to include individuals from low-income households with challenges attaching to the labour market. These individuals do not have a lay-off event but must have been unemployed for six months or longer, live in a household

at or below the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOs) or receive social assistance and have had a two-year period where they have not attended high school.

Individuals who were laid-off and are unemployed continue to remain eligible for Better Jobs Ontario.

17. What is the definition of “an individual from a low-income household with challenges attaching to the labour market” for the purposes of the Better Jobs Ontario eligibility requirements?

Better Jobs Ontario defines an individual from a low-income household with challenges attaching to the labour market as eligible if they meet all four of the following criteria:

1. They do not have a lay-off event
2. They have been unemployed for six months or more:
 - This criterion includes individuals who are not working as well as those who are working an average of 20 hours per week or less, for an employer or in unincorporated self-employment.
3. They currently receive social assistance or live in a household where the combined income for them and their spouse/partner is at or below the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOs).
4. They have had a two-year period where they did not attend high school (full-time, part-time or for academic upgrading):
 - Exceptions for this criterion include having left full-time high school studies to participate in Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programming within the last two years and/or currently receiving social assistance.

18. Has the definition of “laid-off” changed for the purposes of the Better Jobs Ontario eligibility requirements?

The principal definition of “laid-off” for the purposes of Better Jobs Ontario has not changed in Phase 3. However, the reference to January 1st, 2005, was removed and the definition was changed from whose “employment contract has ended” to whose “fixed-term employment contract has expired”. The January 1st, 2005, lay-off date was removed because it is no longer deemed relevant for the program given that most applicants have more recent lay-off dates. “Employment contract has ended” was changed to “fixed-term employment contract has expired” to align with recent terminology on the ending of an employment relationship, either in the middle of or at the termination of an employment contract.

19. Have any changes been made to the unemployed requirements for individuals with a lay-off event?

No. Individuals that have been laid-off still need to meet the previous threshold of unemployed. However, the unemployed definition has been combined with laid-off eligibility in the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines (Section 2.3.1) to distinguish it from the Low-Income Household with Challenges Attaching to the Labour Market definition of unemployed.

20. Why is there a different definition for “unemployed” for applicants that are seeking access to the Better Jobs Ontario program using the “low-income household with challenges attaching to the labour market” eligibility pathway?

Individuals without a lay-off event have a different definition of “unemployed” because they have different work histories and experiences in the labour market than individuals with a lay-off event.

The definitions of “unemployed” for individuals with and without a lay-off event are compared in the table below:

Individual with a lay-off event is considered “unemployed” if they:	Individual without a lay-off event is considered “unemployed” if, for 6 months or more, they:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are not working, or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are not working but actively seeking employment and currently available to start work, or
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are working less than an average of 20 hours per week, or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are not working more than an average of 20 hours per week, or • are engaging in unincorporated, self-employment without a business number for an average of 20 hours per week or less.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have taken an interim job to earn enough income to provide for basic needs after their initial lay-off, or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not applicable for this client group.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are continuing to receive salary via salary continuance or received severance pay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not applicable for this client group.

Assessing and Demonstrating Eligibility for Applicants from a Low-income Household Experiencing Challenges Attaching to the Labour Market

21. How does an applicant demonstrate that they are from a low-income household and experiencing challenges attaching to the labour market on the Application for Financial Assistance form?

The Application for Financial Assistance form now includes a series of eligibility questions for the Better Jobs Ontario regular stream's eligibility pathway from a low-income household and experiencing challenges attaching to the labour market. Applicants accessing Better Jobs Ontario through this eligibility pathway will be prompted to confirm that they meet all the criteria below:

- a. Do not have a lay-off event
- b. Have been unemployed for six months or longer
- c. Are from a low-income household; and
- d. Have had a two-year period where they did not attend high school

22. How does Better Jobs Ontario define a “low-income household”?

For the purposes of Better Jobs Ontario, an applicant is from a “low-income household” if their combined household income for the past six months is **at or below** the following Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds, as outlined in the Application for Financial Assistance form:

Household Size	Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds (six months)
1 person	\$13,213
2 persons	\$16,450
3 persons	\$20,223
4 persons	\$24,553
5 persons	\$27,848
6 persons	\$31,407
7 persons or more	\$34,968

The Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds are sourced from the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOs) before tax as specified in Section 2.3.2 of the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines.

Applicants in receipt of social assistance are exempt from this requirement and considered to be below the LICOs and Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds.

23. What is the determination of household size for the Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds?

The determination of household size for the purposes of the Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds is the same definition of household size as is used for the Financial Assessment in the Better Jobs Ontario Application for Financial Assistance form. For the purposes of Better Jobs Ontario, “household” includes the applicant, their spouse/partner, and their dependent children under the age of 18.

24. What should an applicant include in “household income” when applying the Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds?

An applicant should include any monies that have been received by the applicant and/or their spouse/partner in the last six months prior to applying for Better Jobs Ontario when applying the Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds. Monies from an employer or any other person (including a trustee in bankruptcy) are considered household income for the purposes of Better Jobs Ontario. Other sources of income outlined in Section 2.7.1.1 of the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines, such as Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, **should not be included** in household income when applying the Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds.

25. Would an applicant accessing Better Jobs Ontario through the “low-income household with challenges attaching to the labour market” eligibility pathway need to provide evidence to verify their eligibility?

Applicants accessing Better Jobs Ontario through the new eligibility pathway will verify their eligibility by answering the eligibility questions in the Application for Financial Assistance form and by developing a mutually agreed upon Employment Service Plan/Employment Action Plan with their service providers attesting that they have been assessed as eligible and suitable for the new pathway.

Applicants will also be required to attest that the information provided is true and accurate when submitting their Better Jobs Ontario application.

26. Are individuals from low-income households experiencing challenges attaching to the labour market eligible for Better Jobs Ontario if they quit or were terminated from a NOC level D occupation?

Yes, individuals from low-income households with challenges attaching to the labour market may be eligible for Better Jobs Ontario if they quit or were fired from a low-level skill job (i.e., National Occupational Classification (NOC) D of the Statistics Canada National Occupational Classification Matrix 2016) while seeking better employment.

It is important to note, however, that individuals applying to Better Jobs Ontario through the laid-off and unemployed eligibility pathway, who quit or were terminated from their employment (excluding an interim job), will continue to be ineligible for Better Jobs Ontario.

27. Are applicants required to provide evidence of their household income to verify that they are at or below the Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds?

Applicants from the “low-income household with challenges attaching to the labour market” eligibility pathway will verify that they are at or below the Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Threshold when completing the Application for Financial Assistance form. Service providers will continue to consult with their clients to confirm that information is correctly entered on the Application for Financial Assistance form and applicants will also continue to attest that the information provided is true and accurate when submitting their Better Jobs Ontario application.

28. Why does the Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds table use 6-month household income numbers?

The Better Jobs Ontario Low-Income Thresholds use 6-month household income figures to align with the eligibility criterion of having been unemployed for 6 months or longer for individuals from low-income households with challenges attaching to the labour market.

29. Why are applicants that are in receipt of social assistance considered below the Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut Offs (LICOs)?

Phase 3 changes of the Better Jobs Ontario Redesign aim to expand access to individuals from low-income households with challenges attaching to the labour market to help prevent or reduce reliance on social assistance. Since those in receipt of social assistance are a target group for these changes, and social

assistance is a needs-tested program, a LICO assessment is not required for these individuals.

30. What is the reason for the new eligibility criteria for individuals with a two-year period where they did not attend high school? Why have exceptions been added to this eligibility criterion?

The eligibility criteria that individuals must have had a two-year period where they did not attend high school aims to target expanded access to individuals who have made a full and sustained transition into the labour market, rather than recent, returning or part-time students who may also apply for the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) or access youth-focused Ministry programming.

Two exceptions have been added to this criterion to help individuals who have left high school more recently than two years ago, but for whom a two-year wait period may represent a barrier to pursuing training. These exceptions are as follows:

- An individual has left full-time high school to take Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programming, which is for adult learners who may have a range of barriers to learning, and/or
- An individual is currently in receipt of social assistance.

Updates to Suitability Criteria

31. What changes have been made to the suitability criteria?

Suitability criteria, in Section 2.5.2 of the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines, have been updated so that individuals with limited labour market attachment can be assessed as suitable for the program. The “Work History” and “Occupational Experience” criterion have been enhanced so that individuals with “poor employment history” (more than 3 years, 2 to 3 years, and less than 2 years) or “no previous work history” (never having had a year of earnings of \$5,000 or more in employment income) can receive scoring. Similarly, the duration required for participants with work experience in the same occupation to score has been reduced to more than 5 years, 3 to 5 years, and less than 3 years.

32. Why has the Work History suitability criteria changed?

Previously, the “Work History” criteria targeted individuals who had been laid-off from a long tenured job in the same occupation. With the Phase 3 redesign, the Ministry is aiming to improve access for individuals from a low-income household

who are struggling to attach to the labour market. We recognize that these individuals may have a more limited work history or may have multiple disruptions and occupations throughout their work history. To include more of these individuals, we have added a new “Work History” option called “Poor Employment History”. The Ministry has also shortened the duration in the same occupation required to score high in the Suitability Matrix, out of recognition that in the modern labour market, individuals tend to change jobs more often.

33. Why is an option for “no previous work history” included in the Work History and Occupational Experience suitability criteria?

Since low-income individuals without a lay-off event may now be eligible for Better Jobs Ontario, suitability criteria have been updated to consider individuals with no previous work history. Individuals with no previous work history are recognized as having a disadvantage in the labour market. Individuals with no previous work history can be suitable for the program provided they meet the baseline score of 16.

34. How can an applicant demonstrate that they have “poor employment history” or “no previous work history” to meet Work History and Occupational Experience suitability criteria?

An applicant can demonstrate “poor employment history” or “no previous work history” to meet “Work History” and “Occupational Experience” suitability criteria through discussions and information shared with their service provider about their work history, employment barriers and needs, and job search efforts. Service providers are asked to document these details in the applicant’s Employment Service Plan/Employment Action Plan and use them to inform their recommendation rationale in support of the applicant’s Better Jobs Ontario application.

35. Why do the new Work History criteria options have different time durations?

The time durations are different because the experience of individuals with longer duration in the same occupation is different than those with “poor employment history.” The matrix design considers “poor employment history” to be a more challenging employment situation and aims to help individuals experiencing precarious work and/or long-term unemployment to be assessed as suitable, without requiring an extended time to pass (e.g., 5 years).

36. How should a service provider score a client whose work experience fits under multiple criterion?

Service providers should score the applicant under the “Work History” category that is most aligned with the applicant’s work experience. Individuals who are “laid-off and unemployed” could be scored under “duration in the same occupation” or “poor employment history” if the criterion aligns with their work experience. Individuals without a layoff event can only be scored under “poor employment history” or “no work history” since they would not have a long duration of employment prior to layoff.

37. Have changes been made to the baseline suitability score?

No. The baseline Better Jobs Ontario suitability score continues to be 16. Individuals who meet or exceed the baseline score will be considered suitable for the Better Jobs Ontario program. Individuals who do not meet the baseline score of 16 may only be considered for Better Jobs Ontario in exceptional circumstances and/or may be redirected to other Employment Ontario and/or community programs and services. Suitability thresholds may be adjusted periodically based on evolving labour market needs and/or client demand.

38. Will the Better Jobs Ontario Eligibility and Suitability Tool be updated with the changes in EOIS-CaMS?

Yes, the Better Jobs Ontario Eligibility and Suitability Assessment Tool (Matrix) in EOIS-CaMS will be updated to reflect the changes for the Phase 3 launch for service providers to complete and submit as part of Better Jobs Ontario application packages.

39. Can a service provider fill out and submit a handmade Better Jobs Ontario Eligibility and Suitability Assessment Tool (e.g., spreadsheet) as part of an application package?

No. Service providers must complete and submit the Better Jobs Ontario Eligibility and Suitability Assessment Tool from EOIS-CaMS as part of the submitted application package. If the Ministry receives a handmade assessment tool, the application should be returned to the service provider to re-submit the application package with a filled-out assessment tool from EOIS-CaMS. Service providers must submit the documents outlined in the Better Jobs Ontario Application Checklist for Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers as part of the application package.

40. Do Fast Track Stream applicants continue to be exempt from the suitability assessment?

Yes, Fast Track Stream applicants continue to be exempt from the Better Jobs Ontario suitability assessment. However, applicants of the Fast Track Stream must research at least one skills training institution that they wish to attend to demonstrate that the training is the most cost-effective path to employment.

Updates to Eligible Skills Training

41. For breaks in skills training due to illness or significant life event, does the previously interrupted skills training need to have been funded under Better Jobs Ontario (formerly Second Career)?

In situations where an applicant to Better Jobs Ontario had to leave their previous interrupted skills training due to illness or a significant life event, the Ministry may consider permitting re-entry into skills training on a case-by-case basis. The applicant's previous skills training did not have to be funded under Better Jobs Ontario (formerly Second Career). The service provider should support that the applicant left training due to illness or a significant life event in the applicant's Employment Service Plan/Employment Action Plan.

42. What is the new two-year training rule and under what circumstances may the exception apply?

The new two-year training rule specifies that individuals that have completed a skills training program in the last two years (24 months) through Ontario government funding are not eligible for the Better Jobs Ontario program. An exception to the two-year training rule may apply to an individual if they are unable to pursue employment in the occupation for which they were trained. Individuals that may be considered for this exception include:

- Individuals who received skills training in an occupation with low-occupational outlook, or
- vulnerable youth (15 to 29 years of age), such as justice-involved youth or youth with disabilities.

Please refer to Section 2.6.2.6 of the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines for more information.

43. Are feepayers eligible for skills training for NOC skill level A occupations? Are there any exceptions?

Yes, feepayers are eligible to access National Occupational Classification (NOC) skill level A training. As feepayers assume the entire cost of their skills training, they are not limited to just the NOC skill level A occupations listed on the Addendum to the Better Jobs Ontario Guidelines, like applicants who are funded under Better Jobs Ontario.

Breaks in Skills Training

44. In a situation where a participant had to leave their skills training due to an illness or a significant life event what does “re-entry” mean?

Program re-entry means that a participant can return to previously started skills training and may be eligible for funding through Better Jobs Ontario (on a case-by-case basis), to complete their skills training. Program re-entry is applicable for those that left their training due to an illness or a significant life event as outlined in Section 2.6.2.5 of the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines.

Changes to Supplementary Forms and Tools

45. What supplementary forms and tools have been updated for Phase 3?

The following forms and tools have been updated for the Phase 3 launch and include the new program name:

1. Application for Financial Assistance (PDF) and Information Sheet (89-1889E and 89-1889F)
 - For details on updates, refer to section, Changes to Application for Financial Assistance Form.
2. Application Checklist for Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers
 - For details on updates, refer to section, Changes to Application Checklist for Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers.

Added program forms and tools, including the dependent care forms, will be updated in the coming weeks after the Phase 3 launch. The Ministry will notify the EO Network when updated forms and tools are released on the EOPG.

46. When do applicants need to start using updated forms for their applications?

Better Jobs Ontario applicants will be required to use updated Phase 3 forms from Friday, April 29, 2022. However, the Ministry has established a **one-month grace period** from Friday, April 29 to Friday, May 27, 2022, for applicants who were **in the process** of completing applications prior to the Phase 3 launch. During the grace period, applicants that were in the process of completing their applications will not be required to resubmit their applications using updated forms.

Changes to Application for Financial Assistance Form

47. What updates have been made to the Application for Financial Assistance form?

The Application for Financial Assistance form has been updated to reflect Better Jobs Ontario program guideline changes for Phase 3 of the redesign. Key changes to the application form include:

- Revised questions for the updated Better Jobs Ontario regular stream eligibility pathway for individuals that were laid-off and unemployed
- Added questions for the new Better Jobs Ontario regular stream eligibility pathway for individuals from low-income households experiencing challenges attaching to the labour market (i.e., for individuals with no lay-off event)
- New electronic file attachments feature to allow an applicant and/or service provider to attach and securely transmit required documents as part of the application package
- Added funding line to highlight when, and by how much, an applicant's request for financial assistance exceeds the \$28K funding maximum for estimated financial assistance, tuition, other instructional costs and the Training Access Payment
- New and updated pop-up hints for key terms, definitions, and eligibility requirements to the electronic version of the application form
- Revised instructions and questions throughout the application form to help clarify application requirements

Content for the accompanying Information Sheet has also been revised to align with the updated Application for Financial Assistance form and Better Jobs Ontario program guideline changes.

48. What is the new File Attachments feature on the Application for Financial Assistance form and how can it be used?

The new electronic File Attachments feature allows an applicant, or service provider, to attach and securely transmit required documents as part of the Application for Financial Assistance form, as listed under Section G – Attached Documentation. Files that are attached to the form may be opened and saved from the Attachments pane by selecting the paperclip icon from the left-hand menu.

Using the attachments feature is not mandatory; however, it may be useful in securely transmitting the required documents of an application package between the applicant, service provider and the Ministry, as needed.

Service Providers are asked to ensure that the final Application for Financial Assistance submitted to the Ministry only includes those documents outlined in the Better Jobs Ontario Application Checklist for Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers.

49. Why was a line for requested financial assistance that exceeds the Better Jobs Ontario \$28,000 funding maximum added to the Application for Financial Assistance form?

This line was added under the Financial Assistance Requested for Skills Training section of the form to highlight when and by how much, an applicant's request for financial assistance exceeds the Better Jobs Ontario \$28K funding maximum for estimated financial assistance, tuition, other instructional costs and the Training Access Payment. The Application for Financial Assistance form also notifies applicants that the Ministry will adjust any excess financial assistance amount for these costs so as not to exceed the funding maximum.

50. Where can the updated Application for Financial Assistance form and accompanying Information Sheet be found?

The Application for Financial Assistance form and its accompanying Information Sheet can be found on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) and the EO Portal websites and are housed on the Government of Ontario Central Forms Repository. The application form is in PDF format and can be filled out electronically or printed out and completed manually.

51. When will the updated Application for Financial Assistance form be available for use?

The updated Application for Financial Assistance form and the accompanying Information Sheet will be released at the launch of Phase 3 of the Better Jobs Ontario Redesign, on April 29, 2022.

52. Will applicants still be required to work with service providers to complete the Application for Financial Assistance form and the application package?

Yes, the service provider's role remains an integral part of the application process.

53. Will I still be able to print and manually complete the Application for Financial Assistance form?

Yes, applicants will still be able to manually complete a printed version of the application form once the applicable program stream has been selected. Please note, however, that the pop-up hints, which provide definitions for key terms used throughout the application form, are not viewable when it is printed. Applicants and service providers are therefore advised to also print the accompanying Information Sheet that includes details about the Better Jobs Ontario program and key terms and definitions to provide support when completing the application form.

Changes to Application Checklist for Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers

54. What changes have been made to the Better Jobs Ontario Application Checklist for Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers?

The Better Jobs Ontario Application Checklist for Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers has been updated to reflect program redesign changes and the new program name:

- Section 1 has been updated to include the online application
- Section 3 has been updated to highlight the \$28K funding maximum
- Section 6 has been updated to highlight that the letter of acceptance, and any support documentation from the training institution, should specify whether the training is a) full-time or part-time as well as b) online, in-person or hybrid. Updates have also been made to mention that training institutions must highlight the recognition of previously completed courses/components (if applicable) in exceptional cases where an applicant has had a break in Skills

Training Due to Illness or Significant Life Event, as outlined in Section 2.6.2.5 of the Better Jobs Ontario program guidelines.

- Section 8 has been updated to specify that applicants must submit three quotes for the purchase of upgrading a device as per the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy.

Employment Service/Integrated Employment Services Providers are reminded to include a completed copy of this checklist with each Better Jobs Ontario application package submitted to the Ministry.

Fast Track Stream Addendum

55. Have updates have been made to the Fast Track Stream Addendum?

The Addendum to the Better Jobs Ontario Guidelines for the Fast Track Stream was updated with minor changes. No changes were made to the eligibility criteria for the stream.

56. How often will the Addendum to the Better Jobs Ontario Guidelines be updated?

The Ministry will continue to review and update the Better Jobs Ontario program and related documents as the labour market, and the pandemic, evolve.