



News Release

For immediate release

Government of Canada to open new intake period for Youth Employment and Skills Program

January 9, 2025 – Ottawa, Ontario – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Today, the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, announced that applications will open for the Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP) on January 27, 2025. Supported by an investment of approximately \$13.5 million, YESP is an initiative aimed at helping young Canadians access employment opportunities and gain valuable work experience in the agricultural sector, while contributing to the growth of the agricultural community here in Canada.

The agriculture and agri-food sector is a major contributor to the Canadian economy. This funding will help address some of the pressing labour issues the sector faces by supporting approximately 1,200 jobs and by fostering the next generation of agriculture and agri-food workers.

Eligible applicants include producers, agri-businesses, industry associations, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous organizations and research facilities. Applications from Indigenous employers will be prioritized for the 2025-2026 program year.

Together, we are building a future where all young Canadians can gain work experience in the agriculture and agri-food sector and help them to access future employment opportunities in the industry.

Quotes

“The Youth Employment and Skills Program is more than just an employment program – it’s an investment in the future of our agriculture and agri-food sector. This program helps employers meet their staffing needs, while giving our young people some support to get their foot in the door – or onto the field – and pursue a career in agriculture. I encourage folks to take advantage of this vitally important program.”

– The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

“To build their careers, achieve their goals, and enhance their quality of life, young Canadians depend on meaningful work. Through the YESP, we’re investing in their potential and providing the support they need to confidently shape their futures within the agriculture and agri-food industry. When young people have access to the opportunities they deserve, they not only thrive individually but also strengthen our communities and Canada’s economy.”

– The Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth

Quick facts

- The YESP supports agriculture employers with the cost of hiring Canadian youth with an additional focus on those who face employment barriers. Employers can apply between January 27 and February 24, 2025, for their application to be considered.
- The YESP offers support for up to 50% of the cost of salaries and benefits, up to a maximum of \$14,000, to agriculture and agri-food employers hiring Canadian youth.
- Employers that hire youth facing employment barriers will be eligible for up to 80% of the cost of salaries and benefits. Applications from Indigenous employers will be prioritized for the 2025-2026 program year.



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- The YESP is part of the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS), an Employment and Social Development Canada-led initiative involving 12 federal departments and agencies. The YESS is part of the Government of Canada's commitment to help young people, particularly those facing barriers to employment, get the information and gain the skills, work experience and abilities they need to make a successful transition into the labour market.
- Since the YESP began, approximately 6,200 youth have been employed in agricultural-related organizations from every province and territory. There have also been nearly 2,000 youth facing barriers employed through the program since its inception in 2019.
- Application forms for AAFC's YESP are available through the [webpage](#) and additional information can be found by contacting aafc.yesp-pecj.aac@canada.ca or calling 1-866-452-5558.

Associated links

- [AAFC Youth Employment and Skills Program](#)
- [Youth Employment and Skills Strategy \(YESS\) – Employment and Social Development Canada](#)

Contacts

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