

# Improving the Canada Summer Jobs Grant

## Issue

The Canada Summer Jobs Grant has been put in place to provide funding to further assist employers to create summer job opportunities for students. It is intended to focus on local priorities, while helping both students and communities. Canada Summer Jobs supports local organizations, including those that provide important community services. The program recognizes that local circumstances, and community priorities wildly vary. It is designed to create summer jobs for young people aged 15-30 who are full time students intending to return to their studies in the following school year.

While the program is well utilized, many employers are facing issues with late notice of approval, decreased participation due to funding for inadequate number of weeks, and vacant positions because of the age of eligibility for the program.

## Background

The Government of Canada announced on February 12, 2016 that it would double the number of summer jobs from over 34,000 in 2015 to nearly 70,000 in 2016, 2017, and 2018. The new funding was to be allocated to Canada's 338 constituencies based on the most recent Labor Force Survey and Census. Communities with higher rates of unemployed students were meant to receive a greater allocation than constituencies with lower levels of unemployed students. The yearly budget for Canada Summer Jobs increased by up to \$113 million for three years, beginning in 2016-17.

The program allows applicants to apply for students from 6 to 16 weeks, however since 2016, employers are only being approved for 9 week placements. This is making it difficult for employers to find students, specifically those enrolled in post-secondary programs, to fill the spaces, and for students to consider taking positions that would give them field related experience because they would have to find further employment after the placement is over. In some cases, employers approved for funding for 9 weeks requested the placement be increased to 16 weeks and were told that this is not possible.

The Canada Summer Jobs program is a valuable program and well worth the effort for businesses and organizations to participate in. The application process is relatively straight forward, however the amount of time it takes for a response also creates challenges in hiring students. Prior to 2016, the application deadline was March 11th, 2016 and applicants were informed of the outcome in April. By this time, many eligible students had already secured summer employment, leaving businesses scrambling for staff for their summer programs or hiring and training students during their peak busy season. In 2016, the application deadline was moved to January 20, 2017, presumably to resolve this issue but the deadline was then extended to February 3, 2017 and businesses were once again left waiting as late as May 2017.

Employers approved for funding must agree to hire youth who are:

- Between 15 and 30 years of age at the start of employment,
- Registered as full-time students in the previous academic year and intending to return to school on a full-time basis in the next academic year,
- Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or have official refugee protection status under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act,
- Legally entitled to work in Canada in accordance with relevant provincial or territorial legislation and regulations.

Applications are assessed and participating Members of Parliament ensure that local priorities are reflected, using a variety of criteria. Many employers have no trouble finding students who fit the criteria for eligibility but in some areas, there are many students that fit all but the age requirement and there are no students that do, leaving students

without jobs and employers without staff. There are currently no programs for employers to employ mature students looking for work experience.

### **Recommendations**

That the federal government:

1. Align the amount of approved weeks of funding with the needs of the employer.
2. Make the current application submission in December and inform businesses in February of the result of their application.
3. Allow the criteria for eligibility to include any full-time student of any age, returning to full time studies in the following year.

### **References**

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/youth-summer-job.html>
- <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1180449>
- <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2016/02/12/doubling-canada-summer-jobs-program>
- <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/trudeau-gives-big-boost-to-canada-summer-jobs-program/article28740799>