

Canada-provincial training grants

Elliot Schiller

Most provinces now offer training grants to encourage employers to improve the skill levels of their employees. A cynic might say it's being ramped up because this is an election year. Nevertheless, from a business perspective, when was being granted up to \$12,500 per employee to make your employees even more valuable to your company ever a bad thing?

As most provinces in conjunction with the federal government offer similar programs, let's focus on the specifics of the Ontario-Canada Job Fund Agreement. It's a good case study for the entire group of programs.

On March 28, 2014, Ontario signed the Canada-Ontario Job Fund Agreement with the federal government, which will provide Ontario with approximately \$192 million per year for the next six years. To quote from the Ontario guidelines, "the agreement is a key source of funding for new employer-driven training initiatives and represents an opportunity for the province to engage more effectively with employers to support Ontarians in obtaining the skill required to fill and succeed in available jobs."

Financially, the program is very attractive. Again, from the guidelines, "for employers with fewer than 50 employees, the grant will cover 2/3 of the training cost, not to exceed \$10,000, with the employer responsible for the other 1/3. However, of that 1/3 contribution, only one-half must be in cash, while the remainder of the employer's contribution can be made with in-kind wages to be paid to the individual. For employers applying for multiple grants (*editor's note: multiple employees to be trained*), a minimum one-third contribution must be made for each participating individual (i.e. an employer cannot contribute more than one-third for some individuals and less than one-third for others)". Further, if in-kind contributions result in an equivalent training cost shortfall requiring funding in order to fully pay the training provider, training costs shortfalls can be covered by another government grant contribution up to a maximum of \$2,500 per grant.

For companies under 50 employees, if the cost for training is \$15,000 per employee, the employer is only out of pocket \$2,500 per employee with the rest of the costs being covered by the grant. The additional \$2,500 shortfall grant is not available to employers with over 50 employees. So, in this case, if the cost of training is \$15,000 per employee, the employer would be required to cover \$5,000 of the cost, per employee.

Bottom line, for small companies, the grant can cover 83.333% of costs, while for larger companies, the grant can cover 66.666% of costs. That is certainly attractive.

Are you currently contemplating commissioning a new piece of machinery to expand your product offerings or improve your production turnaround? If so, here's your chance to properly train multiple operators on the use of



this machinery. Better still, with the product vendor expert on site, you can try some of those complex requests that your existing or potential clients require. Further, knowing there is grant money to subsidize your purchase, your bargaining position with the vendor is strengthened.

What about new company-wide computer systems, for example, business management software modules (ERP), or customer relationship management (CRM), or departmentally focused solutions like web based selling, or logistics management? In order to reduce costs, have you opted for or do you plan on using the "train the trainer approach"? Certain vendors favour this approach as it creates a "super user" who is easy for them to train, and requires a less disciplined training curriculum. While this can and often does work, the opposite is also true. Many "super users" are not equipped or desirous of properly training others. It's a tedious and time consuming task, and many super users interpret the job as the untrained user looking over his/her shoulder while the super user works. That's not training.

With government funding available, do it right. Set up a training room, a training database, and curriculum. And then, in the future, when new staff comes on board, you are also ready to train them.

In this competitive marketplace, all aspects of your business need to be kept up to date from equipment to systems to personnel. Here is a great opportunity to improve your workforce with the help of a government grant.

Elliot Schiller is a Director at Toronto's Teeger Schiller Inc., a company that specializes in obtaining government funding. His clients receive over \$5 million annually to support their ongoing business innovation. E-mail eschiller@teegerschiller.com, visit www.FundingHelp.ca or phone 1-888-816-0222 Ext. 102.



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David Teeger

Director

David Teeger C.A., C.A. (S.A.) graduated as a Chartered Accountant in South Africa, and upon arrival in Canada he obtained his Canadian C.A. designation and joined Richter & Associates, a management consulting firm, where he concentrated his practice on various business sectors including household goods, fashion, automotive parts, public associations, and retail chains. He performed many roles in his 15 years at Richter, including managing the professional services organization in North America and all business operations throughout Europe.

David's professional capabilities include computer audits, feasibility studies, system analyses and assistance in the selection, negotiation and implementation of computerized solutions.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused his practice on consulting to management. His team of professionals has helped businesses select and successfully install a variety of ERP business solutions and add-on systems including business intelligence solutions to give new life to existing computer systems. David's clients not only rely on him to successfully manage the implementation of their new systems, but to manage the change that occurs in their organizations as a result of the use of these new tools.



Elliot Schiller

Director

Elliot Schiller, Ph.D., C.M.C. began his career as a Chemical Engineer working for Grumman Aircraft, in Long Island, New York. He obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh with funding from the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, and, after being awarded a Presidential Fellowship, he went on to perform research and development activities at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Since coming to Canada, he has primarily assisted consumer products and retail organizations in a variety of strategic management initiatives, traveling around the globe on behalf of his clients. In 1987, Elliot joined Richter & Associates, and it is here that he first met David Teeger.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused the SR&ED / Grant Division on obtaining grants and tax incentives for over 100 companies in the small to medium sized business sector. His team has provided services to the discrete / processing manufacturing, material development, textiles, apparel, automotive and computer sciences sectors. Annually, Teeger Schiller Inc. secures more than \$5 million in government funding to assist its clients in having their business initiatives supported by government funding.



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