

Pathways to Careers in Foodservice

Program Overview

The Pathways to Careers in Foodservice program provides foodservice operators with access to Training Subsidies that support the training and retention of new hires or promotions of individuals from under-represented groups. Restaurants Canada also supports participating foodservice operators with accessing talent supply management solutions, as well as additional incentives outside of the Pathways program.

Eligible under-represented groups are defined as:

- Youth under 25
- Workers displaced by tariffs
- People with disabilities (including learning disabilities and those experiencing mental health)
- Women
- Newcomers
- Indigenous
- Racialized
- Justice involved and at risk
- 2SLGBTQI+

The Subsidy is available to offset the cost of in-house training for the following hospitality operations:

- Front of house (point of sale employees, wait staff, hostess/host, bartenders, supervisors, management)
- Back of house (cooks, chefs, line-staff, dishwashers/prep-cooks)

The Subsidy is also available for existing employees from the same groups to support upskilling / promotion into other positions (i.e., into supervisor or management positions).

The following supports and services are available to participating restaurants and foodservice operators:

Training Subsidy: \$1,500 for each staff hired from the specified under-represented groups that has been retained for a period of three-months (\$2,000 for youth under 25 and workers displaced by tariffs).

Claims can be submitted through the [Pathways website](#) or manually by email to our Director of Workforce Development, Donald Guse Salah: DSalah@restaurantscanada.org (please contact Donald for the required registration and application forms if submitting manually).

Recruitment Supports: Upon request, Restaurants Canada's Program Director and Program Coordinator will both work with participating foodservice operators to support recruitment needs through digital talent solutions and employment service providers supporting local job seekers. Recruiting from our partners is a good way to find candidates eligible for the Subsidy. Recruitment options include:

- Free one-year [Kibbi](#) subscription to enhance youth recruitment strategies
- Single points of access to groups of talent pools for streamlined recruitment
- Connections to individual service partners to cultivate talent pipelines
- Access to sector specific training programs for job seekers (where available)
- Provincial networks of service providers

Some of these options are able to provide access to hiring incentives of their own beyond the Training Subsidies offered by Pathways to Careers in Foodservice. To inquire about these support options, please email: DSalah@restaurantscanada.org

Disclaimers and Commitment to Support

Restaurants Canada is committed to supporting all restaurants and foodservice operators to ensure the health and sustainability of our industry.

Not all applications for subsidies can be approved due to limited funds and the need to support a variety of restaurants and foodservice operators across Ontario. In cases where applications are not approved, the Project Director or Project Coordinator will work with the foodservice operator to establish talent pipelines (as indicated above), that will facilitate access to recruitment opportunities that include incentives and subsidies to offset costs (where available). In order to support as many foodservice operators as possible, we will be limiting the number of hires approved per location.

Registration and Application Process (what to expect)

All restaurants and foodservice operators will complete and submit a Government of Ontario registration form (SDF-TS ERF) to register as an employer in the program. This form will ask for a specification of the type of placements available (jobs: server, line cook, chef, dishwasher, etc.), as well as the number of positions available (how many servers, line cooks, etc.), and at what location(s). We encourage employers to specify the type of placements (jobs) and number of positions for which grants may be claimed under each placement option based on hiring projections for the year.

If the number of claims throughout the year exceeds the number of positions identified on the registration form, it does not necessarily preclude the paying out of additional subsidies (however, processing delays could result, which is why employers are encouraged to project the number of positions they expect to be available throughout the year when registering).

Once the registration form (SDF-TS ERF) has been completed and submitted, employers will be able to submit applications to claim the Training Subsidy for each new hire or promotion from one of the specified under-represented groups. **Applicants must submit a Participant Registration Form (PRF) completed by the new hire or promotion** (to the best of their ability), as per Government of Ontario requirements for Restaurants Canada to disburse funds.

The Government of Ontario has mandated the documentation of employee progress to track retention and skill development outcomes. As such, for each employee for whom a grant is to be claimed, **employers must complete and submit a Training Agreement form** provided by Restaurants Canada along with an employee's PRF (the Training Agreement form doubles as a preliminary claim form and holds your spot). The PRF and Training Agreement for each employee **must be submitted within the first month of employment. Subsidies cannot be claimed for employees hired more than 31 days from the time of submitting the PRF and Training Agreement.** For example, if an employee is hired on Nov 12, 2026, the employer must submit the PRF and Training Agreement for that employee no later than Dec 13, 2026, in order to be eligible to claim the Subsidy for that employee. Only hires made between June 30th, 2026, and June 29th, 2027, are eligible.

All three mandatory forms (SDF-TS ERF, SDF-TS PRF, and the Training Agreement) can be found on the [Pathways website](#) under the 'Quick Links' dropdown menu on the side bar on

the lefthand side of your screen once logged into your Pathways account as well as the Forms and Claims dropdown section at the bottom of your account Dashboard / View Submissions page.

The Government of Ontario requires progress check-ins for each employee participating the program at 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and 12 months of employment. The Training Agreement and PRF must therefore be submitted within the first month of employment so the subsequent check-ins can be performed. Restaurants Canada will send the employer a very short and simple check-in form to be completed for each employee when each of the above months of employment is reached.

Subsidy Claims – Understanding the Process

When an employer submits the PRF and Training Agreement for an employee, the appropriate Subsidy amount will be allocated to the employer. However, Subsidies are not confirmed until completion of 3 months of employment. The allocation ensures that available funds are assigned to and held for employers until 3 months of employment have elapsed.

The check-in form provided to the employer at 3 months of employment acts as the Subsidy claim form. As long as the employee is still employed 3 months after the date of hire **and** has completed at least 80 hours of work during those 3 months, the employer will receive the Subsidy for that employee as long as funding remains available.

The Program Director and Program Coordinator will both be available to answer any questions participants may have about the forms they must complete, in order to support their submissions and ensure accuracy of form completion when making claims. Please contact Donald Guse Salah for assistance with or questions about completing and submitting forms: DSalah@restaurantscanada.org

Approvals and Timelines

Subsidy claims will be approved for eligible employees once 3 months of employment have elapsed since their initial hire date, and after supporting document(s) have been received and verified (see “Claiming the Training Subsidy” section below for further details).

Disbursement of funds will be delayed by one or more months following the initial approval to facilitate processing efficiency and availability of funds. Funds may be disbursed anywhere from one to ten months after approval.

Claiming the Training Subsidy

Forms to be submitted: SDF-TS ERF (Employer Registration Form), Participant Registration Form (PRF), SDF Training Agreement (for each employee), Progress Check-Ins at 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and 12 months of employment. All forms can be found and submitted on the [Pathways website](#). To request or submit forms manually, please email:

DSalah@restaurantscanada.org

Follow the below links for two short videos explaining some features of the Government of Ontario forms:

- SDF-TS ERF (Employer Registration Form): <https://youtu.be/aHbXDTldt74>

You can search for your NOC and NAICS designation (required to complete the SDF-TS ERF) on these sites:

- NOC: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/eligibility/find-national-occupation-code.html>
- NAICS: <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=1369825>

The SDF Training Agreement and Progress Check-In forms are Restaurants Canada forms which have been streamlined for ease of completion. They are short, simple, and straightforward.

Step-by-Step: Registration Through to Final Documentation for Each Claim

Step 1: Complete SDF-TS ERF (Employer Registration Form)

- This form will ask for a specification of the type of ‘placements’ available (jobs: server, line cook, chef, dishwasher, etc.), as well as the number of positions available (how many servers, line cooks, etc.). We encourage employers to specify the type of placements / jobs and number of positions under each placement option based on projections for the year. Please name your SDF-TS ERF using the following format: **Business Name – Primary Contact Name – Date**
 - Only eligible hires made will be approved and not all eligible hires can be approved

- SDF-TS ERF must be completed and submitted before any Subsidy claims or requests for services / support are attended to
- To submit the SDF-TS ERF or if you have questions about the forms, please email: DSalah@restaurantscanada.org

Step 2: Submit Participant Training Agreement and Participant Registration Form (PRF) for each employee for whom a Subsidy will be claimed

- **Important:** These forms **must** be submitted within 31 days of the date of hire
- A Participant Training Agreement and a Participant Registration Form (PRF) must be completed for each new hire or promotion that you are claiming the Subsidy for.
 - The Participant Training Agreement is a Restaurants Canada form to be completed by the employer; it is simple and straightforward
 - The Participant Registration Form is a Ministry form to be completed by the employee; please name PRFs using the following format: **Business name – Employee name - Date**
 - Please have the new hire complete a PRF to the best of their ability;
 - **Important:** Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory (including their Social Insurance Number)
 - **Please note:** If the employee has no work history or is unsure, they should put 'no previous work history' in the section that asks about their previous jobs
- Submit the completed Training Agreements and PRFs for all hires / promotions to: DSalah@restaurantscanada.org

Step 3: Submit progress check-ins at 2, 3, 6, 9, and 12 months of employment

- These short and simple forms will be emailed to you by the Pathways team once the relevant months of employment have been reached
- **Please note:** The check-in form for month 3 acts as the Subsidy claim form and will request an attestation confirming that the employee has completed at least 80 hours of work during the first 3 months of employment



- The check-in forms for months 6, 9, and 12 of employment are Ministry mandated follow-ups to track overall retention data throughout the first year of employment

If you have questions about the forms, timelines, or process please contact:

DSalah@restaurantscanada.org