

July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010**TOWES**  
Bow Valley College  
332, 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
Calgary, AB, T2G 4S6**- Request for Pilot Project Partners -**Essential Skills Online: A Consortium Approach | **Project # 5332978**

In early 2008, the Office of Learning Technologies in conjunction with the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Social Development Canada announced a partnership project to include The Canadian Virtual College Consortium (CVCC), Bow Valley College (BVC) and Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology (FANSHAWE). The purpose of the project would be to develop and pilot an online tool to help disadvantaged adult learners increase their proficiency in three Essential Skills, Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy. Higher levels of Essential Skills increase the number and variety of opportunities for these learners to enter the workforce.

Beginning in January 2010, a beta version of the online tool was completed and initially field tested among nine nationally based pilot partners. Based on the feedback of the pilot partners and their participants, further improvements to the functionality of tool were needed. As a result, Bow Valley College has invested into improving the online Learning Management System. The tool has now been redeveloped and the completion of all determined upgrades will bring the online Learning Management System in line with its originally intended level of performance.

The redesigned online platform will continue to host a combination of SkillBuilders, which are short lessons aimed at improving specific skills such as skimming and scanning, and sector-specific workplace-based units that integrate the skills and require the learner to complete activities that reflect the world of work. Each sector's curriculum concludes with a TOWES-type assessment. This prepares learners for the TOWES post test and allows facilitators to gauge learner progress. The sectors of focus are **Health Care, Automotive, Oil and Gas, and Trades** (entry into apprenticeship).

Increased functionality has been incorporated that will enable learners to access all curriculum modules and save completed work in an online environment. For facilitators, access to learner diagnostics such as time spent per module or activity, will be newly available. Improved feedback channels and content toggling functions will improve learner experience and ultimately the tool's usability in a variety of contexts.

The purpose of this request is to encourage interested organizations to submit a letter of intent expressing interest in participating in the following opportunity:

**- FIELD-TEST PARTNER -**

Bow Valley College is seeking organizations to act as Field-Test Partners for the federal contribution agreement (#5332978) **Essential Skills Online: A Consortium Approach**.

Field test preparation activities will begin in August 2010. These activities will include field-test partner training and orientation as well as further beta testing of the online Learning Management System. Field testing will begin with TOWES pre-testing as early as August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010 followed by completion of the training modules and post-testing. The field test activities must be completed by December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

It is recommended that field test sites allow at least three months to recruit learners, conduct pre-testing, work through the approximately 20 hours of training materials, post-test participants and submit evaluations.

Interested field-test partners will have an opportunity to preview the online Learning Management System beginning on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Interested partners will be able to judge the suitability of the newly improved online Learning Management System for their learners and determine any field-test commitments at that time.

### Field Test Partner

The role of the Field-Test Partners includes:

- Participate in training and awareness activities on Essential Skills, TOWES, the online materials and technical requirements of the program
- Recruit participants and evaluate their appropriateness for the program
- Administer a TOWES pre-test to all participants
- Field-test the online tool with learners
- Ensure participants complete all field test activities
- Administer a TOWES post-test to all participants
- Complete participant and facilitator evaluation surveys
- Provide accurate and timely feedback to TOWES regarding the field test

Project partner organizations will be eligible for compensation for their participation, based on the number of field test participants who complete all activities including:

- completing pre and post TOWES tests
- completing the Sector Series materials
- submitting a participant evaluation

We are seeking up to 200 learners for the field test. The compensation provided to each project partner will be:

<b>Facilitated Training</b>
<p>\$200 per learner who completes all required elements. It is strongly recommended that at least \$50 of the compensation be provided as an honorarium to each learner.</p>

All costs associated with TOWES testing, workbooks, materials, curriculum and training will be covered by the funding organization. Activities will take place over several months and it is estimated that an overall maximum time commitment of approximately 12 days will be required for partners to:

- complete facilitator training [2 days]
- administer pre and post tests [2 days]
- facilitate training [5 days delivered in increments as determined by the facilitator]
- gather data [1 day]
- general administration [2 day]

## Qualifications

To qualify for consideration, contractors must:

- Work with learners who are in training to enter one of the above mentioned sector groups
- Have a general understanding of essential skills and online learning
- Ensure learners have access to a computer lab or internet enabled work station
- Ensure project participants have moderate English language skills (CLB level 7/8 or higher is strongly recommended)
  
- Have the ability to recruit a minimum of 20 participants
- Have the ability to administer the pre and post TOWES tests. Test administration training will be provided as needed.
- Oversee the field test
- Have the resources to provide ongoing technical and instructional support to participants (a technical supervisor, IT help desk, and instructional mentor will be available if assistance is required)
- Demonstrate capacity to use the tool, after the project is completed

## Letter of Intent Submission Guidelines:

Please submit a letter of intent indicating your interest in participating as a Field-Test Partner.

Submissions should be less than three pages in length and should include:

- A subject line that reads: Letter of Intent – Field-Test Partner (Project #5332978)
- Your name and contact information
- An explanation of why you would like to participate
- A draft activity plan and explanation of how the organization would ensure completion of the activities

## Deadline:

Please submit your letter of intent by e-mail not later than **4:00 pm (MST) Friday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010** to [krussnak@bowvalleycollege.ca](mailto:krussnak@bowvalleycollege.ca). Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

For additional information please contact:

**Kaesy Russnak**

-or-

**Meghan Barton**

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