

**2025-26**

**Program Description**

***PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKER (PSW)  
TRAINING FUND PROGRAM***

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# Introduction and Background

## INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to assist employers with PSW Training Fund program applications for the 2025-26 program and fiscal year.

The Ministry of Health (ministry) recognizes the vital role of front-line personal support service workers in providing health and supportive care to the people of Ontario.

The Training Fund program since 1998 aims to maintain a competent, stable, and well-educated Personal Support Worker (PSW) workforce in the home and community care sector through education and innovation under two streams, as follows:

1. **Certificate Education Stream** to help current front-line personal support service workers complete their PSW certificate education in Ontario during employment; and
2. **Continuing Professional Development Stream** to help front-line personal support staff and PSWs who have already completed their certificate education to continue their professional development to acquire and retain enhanced skills to meet the needs of a diverse client base with complex care needs;

Subject to minister's approval, the plan for the PSW Training Fund program in the upcoming application cycle is the same as in prior years: eligible employers would be reimbursed for PSW educational priority expenditures to improve capacity and quality of the workforce providing personal support services.

**To focus on training and expedite approvals this year, there will be no innovation project stream. Training Plans for 2025-26 only will be collected.**

Employers will need to apply by submitting training plans and budgets on spreadsheet templates to a Coordinating Organization for assessment of completeness and alignment with priorities for the region in case of oversubscription.

Please note that the PSW Training Fund program is a discretionary, non-entitlement-based ministry program. Allocations of funding for the PSW Training Fund program are at the ministry's sole discretion and the submission of any application or any other information to the ministry in connection with the PSW Training Fund program does not entitle the organization to the receipt of any funding or otherwise bind the ministry to provide any funding to an Eligible Organization.

## ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

An Eligible Organization seeking re-imbursement from the PSW Training Fund program must:

1. Provide home and community care services that are community support services or personal support services in accordance with the *Connecting Care Act*, 2019 and its regulations (specifically, the Home and Community Care Services Regulation, O. Reg. 187/22); and
2. Receive funding for the provision of those services in its capacity as:
  - 2.1 a contracted service provider organization to Ontario Health atHome (OHaH) or another Health Service Provider (HSP);
  - 2.2 an organization funded by the Ministry of Health; or
  - 2.3 an HSP funded by Ontario Health; and

3. Provide relevant supporting information to Coordinating Organizations for verification of re-imbursement claims such as PSW certificates, invoices and course evaluations.

## ELIGIBLE CERTIFICATE EDUCATION

The PSW Training Fund program supports successful completion of formal personal support worker education at the certificate level by front-line personal support service workers employed by an Eligible Organization. Such education must meet [provincial standards](#)<sup>1</sup> and be provided by one of the following:

1. An Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) approved for funding purposes by the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security ;
2. A publicly-funded secondary school within an Ontario district school board who offers PSW education as an adult education program; or
3. A registered private career college that has received approval from the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges to offer a PSW education program.

This stream **excludes** “bridging” and “supportive care” or “home care aide” programs which do not result in a PSW educational program certificate.

## ELIGIBLE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The PSW Training Fund program supports successful completion of optional formal continuing education for front-line certificate-educated PSWs and personal support staff<sup>2</sup> employed by an Eligible Organization who wish to increase knowledge in certain areas. Additional clinical training in evaluated courses provided by educational organizations that are a minimum of two (2) hours of instruction in each subject area are eligible if they are in following subject areas:

- a. Specific types of care, such as
  - **Palliative and end-of-life care:** content and clinical training to support patients with serious illnesses;
  - **Chronic illness care:** care of persons with diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), or other chronic illnesses, to enable a better quality of life, or care of persons with Alzheimer’s or dementia, to enable safer management of challenging behaviours;
  - **Mental health care:** content and clinical training to understand and recognize symptoms of mental health disorders in clients in their care; or
  - **Geriatric care:** to raise awareness and address elder abuse and neglect of older adults.
- b. Specific populations such as Indigenous communities, children, francophone, LGBTQ. For example:
  - **Indigenous care:** educational content and clinical training to support a culturally appropriate and safe environment for Indigenous people requiring the care of a PSW;
  - **Pediatric care:** content and clinical training to provide care for children requiring the care of a PSW;
  - **Preventing elder abuse:** education to ensure safety and well-being of elders.
- c. Other specialized training to help a PSW deliver better client care within scope of a PSW (e.g. de-escalation, safe foot care, patient transfers, conflict management, mental health first aid, culturally appropriate food preparation).

This stream **excludes** the following courses:

- First aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Computer training

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<sup>1</sup> Although the standard is the same, it may be referred to as a Program Standard by the CAATs, a Training Standard by career colleges, and a Program Training Standard by the DSBs. The name of the credential issued will vary depending on the education provider (for example, Ontario College Certificate for the CAATs, Ontario Training Certificate for the career colleges, and Ontario Program Training Certificate for the DSBs).

<sup>2</sup> These front-line PSWs and personal support staff provide home and community care services in accordance with the Connecting Care Act, 2019 and its regulations

- Safe Food Handling Certificate training
- Health and safety/infection control
- Vehicle operations/maintenance
- Administration and documentation
- Exercise programs
- Conferences/training days
- Any skills training that is part of on-boarding for new hires or annual refresher for employees associated with the regular operation or ongoing business or legislative requirements of the organization for its employees.

## ELIGIBLE COSTS

The following costs may be eligible for re-imbursement in connection with the PSW Training Fund program:

### 1. For **PSW Certificate Education**:

- a. For full time students
  - i. Salaries/wages and benefits (as applicable) for back-fill or relief staff to keep up service volumes while the student attends classes or is on placement during what would have been the student's regularly scheduled hours of employment;
  - ii. Tuition fees, books and other educational materials;
  - iii. Travel and out-of-town accommodation expenses may be eligible if consistent with Ontario's Management Board of Cabinet Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive<sup>3</sup>
  - iv. Additional child-care expenses (outside of what the employee must pay when working in his/her community) for those in areas of the province where geography or weather conditions preclude daily commuting to a home residence; and/or
  - v. Vaccination costs required for institutional practicum that is part of the PSW training and are not publicly funded. For example: Hepatitis B, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella.
- b. For part time students
  - i. Salaries/wages and benefits of back-fill or relief staff to keep up service volumes while the student is on full time clinical placement during what would have been the employee's regularly scheduled hours of employment;
  - ii. Tuition fees, books and other educational materials.

### 2. For **Eligible Continuing Professional Development**:

- a. Salaries/wages and benefits (as applicable) to back-fill shifts for certificate-educated PSWs who are required to be away from their regularly scheduled hours of employment to attend eligible clinical training as defined for this Fund;
- b. Trainer's fee, classroom rental and associated administrative costs<sup>4</sup> Note: If Eligible Organizations want to pool resources together to facilitate a training session, it must be clear in the Training Plan who will be the lead and how costs are to be distributed amongst the Eligible Organizations involved;
- c. Travel and out-of-town accommodation expenses may be eligible if consistent with the Government's Management Board of Cabinet Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive<sup>2,3</sup>
- d. Out-of-town accommodation costs for those PSWs working in areas of the province where geography or weather conditions preclude daily commuting to a home residence will also be considered;
- e. Additional child-care expenses (outside of what the employee must pay when working in his/her community) for those in areas of the province where geography or weather conditions preclude daily commuting to a home residence; and/or
- f. Vaccination costs required for institutional practicum that is part of the PSW training and are not publicly funded. For example: Hepatitis B, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/travel-meal-and-hospitality-expenses-directive>

<sup>4</sup> Food and refreshments costs are not included

Eligible Organizations may only apply to cover costs set out under the Eligible Costs section in this document (and associated application templates) **for PSW education or training successfully completed by the relevant fiscal year end, e.g., March 31, 2026.**

## Application Process

1. The 2025-26 PSW Training Fund program will be coordinated and administered by Coordinating Organizations (see page 7 for your local contact).
2. Employers interested in applying for PSW Training Fund program support will submit an application starting **Wednesday, September 10, 2025** until **Wednesday, October 1, 2025** to be considered for funding.
3. Eligible Organizations will provide all relevant information to their Coordinating Organization in support of their application (i.e. the dates and type of PSW Certificate Education program or PSW professional development training with details such as the name and location of the organization offering it, length of the course or program, associated costs/copies of invoices for payments made as well as and evidence of successful completion by the employee/PSW for programs/courses completed).
4. The Coordinating Organization acts as the primary contact for Eligible Organizations regarding applications and proposed training plans submitted.
5. Coordinating Organizations will assess and rank applications and submit recommendations to the ministry by **Wednesday, October 15, 2025.**

## Next Steps Following Application Process

1. Applicants will hear from the Coordinating Organization regarding the approved training plan amounts for the 2025-26 PSW Training Fund program.
2. Eligible Organizations who are approved for 2025-26 program funding will report on the training activities and funding to the Coordinating Organizations.
3. Eligible Organizations who are approved for 2025-26 program funding will provide the necessary back-up information related to their claims to satisfy the Coordinating Organization that these are eligible for reimbursement. This includes:
  - Claims related to the certificate education stream can include trainee hire date, program descriptions, education provider confirmation of tuition paid and by whom and proof of program completion as well as details relating to relief staff salary and benefits.
  - Claims related to continuing education can include front-line staff hire date verify trainee eligibility as well as course descriptions, receipts, proof of course completion and course evaluations.

## Roles and Responsibilities of a Coordinating Organization

Each Coordinating Organization is required to apply the criteria established by the ministry and carry out the following activities in connection with the PSW Training Fund program:

- a) Contact and engage all potential Eligible Organizations within the home and community care sector of relevant OHaH Branch(es).
- b) Provide assistance and support to Eligible Organizations regarding their proposed training plans including: training focus area, length and dates of training, eligible costs, other questions.
- c) Coordinate review of proposed training from Eligible Organizations and:
  - i. review them against the funding criteria established above by the ministry;
  - ii. determine whether the educational program has quality outcomes;

- iii. clarify and confirm any missing or unclear information including priority ranking<sup>5</sup>; and
- iv. make a recommendation for funding to the ministry.
- d) Submit a proposal to the ministry which provides priority ranking of detailed training plans and budget requests from Eligible Organizations that meet the PSW Training Fund program criteria.
- e) Provide a budget for administering the program as a Coordinating Organization.
- f) Communicate and provide feedback to Eligible Organizations regarding proposed training plans and related claims for re-imbursement.
- g) Coordinate information and data for reports to the ministry, including the administration of a course completion survey to be completed by the eligible organization and returned to the ministry.
- h) Maintain appropriate financial and operational records relating to the PSW Training Fund program for auditing purposes.
- i) Maintain responsibility for the total funding amount of approved funds for Eligible Organizations as set out in accordance with transfer payment agreement between the ministry and the Coordinating Organization.
- j) Enter into agreements with Eligible Organizations that ensure program criteria are met prior to providing any funding to them for approved PSW Training Fund program purposes.
- k) Ensure receipt of periodic financial and operational reports from Eligible Organizations to whom funding was provided in order to ensure that funding is being used for approved purposes.
- l) Submit periodic financial and operational reports to the ministry.

## Key Contact Information

- If you are an Eligible Organization looking for further information regarding this program, please contact your Coordinating Organization as noted in the chart below.
- The Coordinating Organization contact will consult with PSW Training Fund program team staff in the Capacity and Health Workforce Planning Branch at [PSWTraining@Ontario.ca](mailto:PSWTraining@Ontario.ca)

### Coordinating Organization by Ontario Health atHome Branch

<b>Ontario Health atHome Branch</b>	<b>Coordinating Organization</b>
Erie St. Clair and South West	<a href="#">Meals on Wheels London</a>
Waterloo Wellington, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, Central West, Mississauga Halton, South East and Champlain	<a href="#">AbleLiving Services Inc.</a>
Toronto Central and Central	<a href="#">Centre for Independent Living Toronto</a>
Central East and North Simcoe Muskoka	<a href="#">The Friends ... Supporting those with Long Term Health Care Needs</a>
North East	<a href="#">Physical Handicapped Adults' Rehabilitation Association</a>
North West	Treaty 3 Organizations - <a href="#">Anishinaabeg of Kabapikotawangag Resource Council (AKRC)</a>
	Other organizations - <a href="#">Confederation College</a>

<sup>5</sup> In the event of oversubscription, i.e. proposed budgets of all applications to the Training Fund program exceed \$11.0M, the priority ranking of training plans will be reviewed by the ministry in the approvals process.

## Appendix

# New Voluntary Registration and Oversight for PSWs in Ontario

### Introduction of HSCPOA for PSWs

- Starting December 1, 2024, personal support workers (PSWs) in Ontario can voluntarily register with the Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority (HSCPOA) **at no cost**.
- Registration with HSCPOA will provide a consistent standard for PSW education and training, ensuring high-quality patient care and instilling public confidence.
- Registered PSWs will be listed on a public registry, which patients and families can access to confirm their credentials.
- Registered PSWs will be identifiable by an HSCPOA quality mark on their identification badge.

### Employer Impact

- Employers will benefit from enhanced complaint management, as complaints against registered PSWs can be directed to HSCPOA for resolution based on a Code of Ethics.
- Organizations can verify the registration status of PSWs and access their history through the HSCPOA public register.
- Employers might consider making HSCPOA registration a condition of employment to promote public trust and a standardized quality of care.
- Employers could be asked to complete a Verification Form for PSWs using the Legacy Pathway for registration, confirming that the PSW has competencies equivalent to Ontario's PSW program.

### Value of Registration

There are many benefits for PSWs who choose to register with the HSCPOA, including:

- Registrants will be on a Public Register like other regulated health professionals (i.e., registered nurses, massage therapists, physiotherapists, etc.) to enhance the public trust.
- Potential employers will be assured that PSWs registered with the HSCPOA have met registration qualifications and will be held accountable for the delivery of safe, competent, ethical, high-quality care to patients, clients and residents.
- The Public Register allows the public to easily find PSWs who have met the minimum level of education and training to be registered from those who are unregistered.
- Enhanced recognition and elevation of PSWs as a respected health care professional working alongside other registered professionals.

### Application Process

PSWs wishing to register with the HSCPOA will apply directly to the HSCPOA. The HSCPOA will review the application and connect with the applicant if any additional information, documents, or assessments are required. Application forms and information will be found on the HSCPOA's website (<https://hscpoa.com>). Applicants can also reference the [2024 HSCPOA Application Guide](#) for more information on the application process.

Employers and PSWs are encouraged to sign up to the [HSCPOA newsletter](#) for regular email updates.