



# Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections



## Funding Guidelines for Young Adults



**SAJE**

Strengthening Abilities and  
Journeys of Empowerment

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## Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections Funding

(\$11,000 available up until the end of the month of a young adult's 27<sup>th</sup> birthday)



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### Step 1: Determine Eligibility

The young adult (from age 19 up to their 27<sup>th</sup> birthday) must be in an Unconditional or Conditional Income Support Agreement **AND** be participating in goal-based programming at a required minimum level (see page 2 “Eligibility”).



2

### Step 2: Identify Life-skills Goals

Discuss and determine learning goals, in alignment with one or more of the life-skills learning domains (see page 3 “Life-skills Learning Domains”).

Learning goals must be clearly stated in the [SAJE Income Support Agreement – Schedule B](#) form.



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### Step 3: Identify Funding Needs

The goals and activities that require funds need to align with the funding parameters (see pages 4-5).

Funds are submitted for approval using the [SAJE Income Support Agreement - Schedule A](#) form.

## Program Purpose

There are many pathways to learning and skill development. In recognition of this, Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections funding is available to support eligible young adults with care experience by improving access to various learning or skill-building opportunities to help them experience personal growth and achieve their goals. In turn, this will help them experience positive outcomes, including an improved sense of purpose and belonging, well-being and overall stability.

## Guiding Principles

As a benefit under the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program, the Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections (LSTCC) funding is intended to empower young adults as they grow and develop their strengths, skills, knowledge, and connections through participation in a range of self-selected programs or activities. This means having **transparent policies and practices** and supporting a **young-adult-led** approach in accordance with these principles:

- All young adults are supported to build **connections** to their culture, extended family, community, and the land, recognizing the diversity of Indigenous cultures and experiences for those who are Indigenous.
- Supports and benefits are provided in ways that are **strength-based, trauma-informed** and **culturally safe**.
- This program strives to provide respectful, **relationship-based** mentorship and guidance within a context of trust and generosity.
- This program takes a **whole person approach**, meeting young adults 'where they are at' and addresses barriers through a flexible, 'no wrong door' approach.
- Planning and activities are **goal-driven and developmental**, supporting young adults to set incremental and aspirational goals.
- Young adults are the experts of their own lives and the driver of their goals and the planning process. **Self-advocacy** is encouraged and there is room for mistakes and learning experiences as they pursue different skill-building programs and activities.

**Tip:** Young adults are encouraged to participate in educational programming that is eligible for the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (PTWP) and Learning for Futures Grant (LFG); however, young adults may choose to access the maximum \$11,000 available through LSTCC for educational/vocational programming that is ineligible for the PTWP and LFG grant.

## Eligibility

In order to access LSTCC funding, a young adult must:

- Be in one of the following agreements:
  - Unconditional Income Support Agreement
  - Conditional Support Agreement

### AND

- Be participating in either:
  - Life-skills programming or activities for a minimum total of 5-hours per week, **OR**
  - A combination of life-skills, vocational, educational, cultural and/or rehabilitative programming or activities for a minimum combined total of 5-hours per week,<sup>1</sup> **OR**
  - An educational, vocational, or training program comprised of a minimum of 5-hours per week.

## Goal Development

The young adult's learning goals will form the basis for the activities/programming in which they will participate, and the associated funding needed. Goal development should be empowering and encourage young adults to set goals which range from foundational to aspirational. This funding is intended to support learning and skill-building experiences; it is critical to support the young adult to set their own goals, pursue new and challenging opportunities, and explore their interests.

The worker will meet with the young adult and have conversations regarding the young adult's current place in life and their vision of their future, which will help frame goal development. This should naturally lead into a supportive conversation regarding which domain(s) best fits the young adult's learning and skill development goal(s), noting that goals need to align with one or more of the life-skills learning domains listed below.

To ensure the goals are clear, attainable, and meaningful, it is recommended that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Individualized life-skills goals must be clearly stated in the [SAJE Income Support Agreement – Schedule B](#)<sup>2</sup> form and must clearly align with the learning goal of the associated domain.

**Learning goals** refer to specific, measurable objectives that focus on developing particular skills or knowledge, providing a clear roadmap for personal or professional growth. This requires direct participation in programming or activities, typically with the support of an instructor, teacher, or mentor, to enhance the capacity of the young adult in developing the skill.

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<sup>1</sup> This means that a young adult participating in a full-time educational program does not have to complete an additional 5-hours of programming per week towards their life-skills goals.

<sup>2</sup> The Schedule B needs to be completed for all young adults, even if they have a SAJE Plan which states the life-skills goals. However, the goals do not need to be duplicated in the Schedule B. Instead, the form includes a checkbox where a worker or young adult can indicate that the goals are documented in the SAJE Plan.

## Life-skills Learning Domains



### **Identity, Belonging, Community & Cultural Connections**

Goals under this domain will support young adults to develop the skills they need to create connections to family, community and culture and provide opportunities for the young adult to further develop their identity. Restoring or strengthening a sense of identity and belonging to culture, family and community is a protective factor that promotes wellness and provides a sense of purpose and direction. This may also support healing for those who have experienced intergenerational trauma.



### **Parenting & Family Life**

Goals under this domain will support young adults who are planning for a future family or who are expectant or current parents, to strengthen or build their parenting skills. They also may focus on strengthening healthy connections with other young parents, extended family, cultural supports, home communities, and engaging with parenting resources.



### **Education, Employment & Training**

Goals under this domain will support young adults to explore and make career or employment goals, learn what education or training is needed, and take steps toward making this plan a reality. This may include learning about resources to support high school completion, post-secondary education or non-academic coursework and training. It can also mean pursuing educational, vocational or training opportunities that are not eligible for the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (PTWP) and Learning for Futures Grant (LFG).



### **Daily Living & Household Skills**

Goals under this domain will support young adults to strengthen or develop their skills in maintaining a safe, sustainable home, including learning daily living skills, how to complete household maintenance tasks, and navigating relationships with roommates and landlords. This includes support for those who are precariously housed, and those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.



### **Social Skills**

Goals under this domain will support young adults to pursue formal and informal paths to improve or develop social skills and build relationships through a range of experiences, including recreational activities. Effective social skills help young adults establish healthy relationships, set boundaries, and navigate social interactions across all areas of their life.



### **Money Management**

Goals under this domain will support young adults to extend or gain the financial knowledge and skills needed to help them make effective budgets and plans that align with their goals. This includes learning about responsibilities (e.g., filing personal income taxes) and skills such as applying for benefits or financial supports (e.g., Canada Child Benefit).



### **Health & Wellness**

Goals under this domain will support and encourage young adults to develop knowledge and skills by participating in activities, programs or training that will strengthen or maintain their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing. Young adults may choose to apply LSTCC funding towards the private-pay cost of in-patient treatment. However, payment

for dental, orthodontic, medical or cosmetic procedures or surgeries, cannot be covered (also excludes travel for these procedures).

## Funding Parameters

- Up to \$5,500 can be accessed in a single year (starting when a young adult first signs their Agreement). Exceptions to spend more than \$5,500 in a single year determined by a young adult's personal circumstances will be subject to Director/Executive Director approval according to MCFD or ICFS Agencies' approvals processes.
- A maximum of \$11,000 of LSTCC funding is available to young adults who meet the eligibility criteria.

### Purpose of Funding

- This funding is intended to cover the typical or average cost of products or services specific to LSTCC domains that are not covered by a SAJE Housing Agreement, SAJE Support Agreement, Unconditional or Conditional Income Support Agreement or other government funding such as that provided by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR), PTWP/LFG and other government funding (where applicable). This funding must be directly connected to learning goal(s) as specified in the [SAJE Income Support Agreement – Schedule B](#) and the SAJE Plan.
- Funding is specifically for the young adult's programming, training, activities or costs. Costs for spouses/partners, friends, family members or pets are not covered. However, if a young adult has goals under the Parenting/Family Life domain and there are costs associated for the young adult's dependent<sup>3</sup> or child(ren) to participate in programming, those costs may be covered.
- This funding is not an income support and does not cover shelter costs, basic living support or replacement of wages while participating in life-skills programs or activities.
- This funding does not cover the costs associated with starting or maintaining a business (e.g., rental/lease costs for a vehicle, business space, business licence, insurance etc).

### Alternate and Concurrent Funding Sources<sup>4</sup>

- When eligible, young adults should apply for PTWP and LFG funding prior to accessing LSTCC funding. Educational programs not covered by PTWP/LFG can be supported by LSTCC.
- Where possible, young adults and workers are encouraged to seek alternate sources of funding prior or concurrent to using LSTCC. These sources may include, but are not limited to, programs and services funded by other provincial government ministries, federal government, crown corporations (i.e. CLBC and BC Housing) and community-based agencies or organizations.
- Young adults who wish to focus on in-patient treatment for substance use or mental health concerns may also ask to apply LSTCC towards private-pay costs. While a young adult may choose to use LSTCC for rehabilitative costs, they should consider alternatives, including publicly funded resources.

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<sup>3</sup> Dependent child(ren) refers to a child, biologically related or not, who is in the care of the young adult.

<sup>4</sup> A young adult is able to access an Income Support Agreement (Unconditional or Conditional) at the same time as a SAJE Support Agreement (SSA) or a SAJE Housing Agreement (SHA).

## Approvals and Administration

- Direct payments to service providers or programming are preferable, particularly for larger amounts. Young adults who receive funding directly are required to retain and submit receipts to their worker.
- Young adults who received LSTCC funding exceeding \$500.00 per calendar year will receive a T5007 tax slip as it is considered a benefit. This funding must be reported by the young adult within the calendar year on their annual income tax return.
- When a funding request is declined, the basis for the denial is provided to the young adult. The young adult and worker will discuss alternatives to assist them in meeting their goals.
- Decisions to approve funding requests must consider what is reasonable in terms of the product, service and cost – and align with financial policy, standards and ethics as outlined in the [Core Policy and Procedure Manual](#) and [Financial Policy and Procedure Manual](#).



Figure I. Funding Parameters

Types of Skill-building or Learning Opportunities			
Formal Training or Courses	Informal Programs & Recreational Activities	Cultural Activities & Supports	Health & Wellness Supports
Courses, programs, or activities that are not eligible for PTWP, such as those offered by private institutions, as well as other opportunities offered in an instructor-led or class-like setting. May result in certification or credentials.	Learning opportunities and experiences in less structured settings. This may include recreational activities and/or working with subject matter experts to learn new skills.	Programs and activities which help young adults to build a sense of identity, wellness, purpose and belonging through exploring one's culture, family, and community.	Programs and activities that help young adults develop skills to address mental, physical, and emotional health & wellness goals



Funds to Enable Access to Learning Opportunities				
Tools, Materials or Supplies	Transportation/Travel	Childcare	Diagnostic & Psychoeducational Assessments	Personal Identification & Documentation
Items that are directly related to or required for participation in a program or activity that supports the pursuit of life-skills goal(s).	Costs associated with transportation/travel to participate in a life-skills program or activity.	Costs associated with childcare needed while one is attending a life-skills program or activity.	Costs associated with obtaining an assessment required to fully participate in activities or to meet eligibility criteria.	Costs associated with obtaining identification or related documentation, required to participate in a program or activity and pursue a learning goal. E.g., identification needed to enroll in programming or open a bank account.

## Role of the Young Adult

### The young adult will:

- Develop learning goals in alignment with one or more domains and participate in specified activities as per the required weekly hours.
- Regularly communicate with their worker, advising them of any changes to goals or plans.
- Apply for alternate funding where available, including PTWP/LFG, grants, bursaries and scholarships, to support identified goals.
- Seek out life-skills, training, and/or cultural connections activities or programming which aligns with the guiding principles, the life-skills learning domains and the funding parameters.
- Explore options for products or services to determine cost-effective, reasonably-priced preferences.
- Submit documentation of desired programming to the worker, including:
  - Name of the program or description of individualized activities
  - Dates of the program/activities (if applicable)
  - Registration/course fees and/or program/activity fees
  - Alternate funding sources sought and applied for (if any)
  - Payment information (confirmation of payment or supplier payment information), and
  - Amount of funding required to complete the program
- Obtain pre-approval before purchasing any supplies/items/services/fees to receive reimbursement, as these purchases must be directly related to the LSTCC goal, activity and/or program. Once approved, the young adult may make the purchase and must retain receipts for reimbursement.
- Keep and submit receipts when and as requested.
- Enroll in programming and/or purchase programming materials once approval has been provided by the worker.
- Ensure the funds are used according to the terms of their agreement.
- Inform the worker if the activities or program will be delayed or if the young adult is unable to complete the activities, program or course.
- Meet with the worker as per SAJE policy (at least every 6 months) or as determined by the young adult and worker.
- Young adults who are concurrently accessing benefits through SDPR, including Income Assistance, Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers, and Persons with Disability funding, are required to declare all LSTCC funding paid to them directly on their monthly report. (Funds issued directly to Service Providers do not need to be declared). LSTCC funding received directly by the young adult will be excluded from SDPR deductions and considered Unfunded Educational Programming.

#### **Tip for Young Adults:**

Talk to your worker if you observe an issue with a payment you expected to receive.

## Role of the Worker

*Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies (ICFS Agencies) may have workers with different titles but similar roles and responsibilities to SAJE Navigators and Guides to provide dedicated transition planning support to youth and young adults. ICFS Agencies' workers can support post-majority young adults to access the full suite of SAJE agreements and benefits according to SAJE eligibility criteria, however, some processes and systems in administering these supports may differ between ICFS Agencies and SAJE.*




### Support to eligible youth before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday:





- Use planning meetings or alternate planning opportunities between the ages of 17 and 19 to inform and explain the LSTCC funding program.
- If the youth is not engaged with a SAJE Navigator or ICFS Agency equivalent, information regarding the funding will be provided by the youth's worker to inform the youth prior to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### Support from 19 to 25<sup>th</sup> birthday:

- Coordinate virtual and/or in-person meetings with the young adult and their circle/support team at the request of the young adult to support them to identify and move forward with their goals and tasks.
- Provide guidance and resources to help the young adult explore their options, create opportunities, and make decisions and plans, including comparing and selecting cost-effective options.
- Support the young adult to find linkages between the life-skills domains in their SAJE plan and the life-skills, training, and/or cultural opportunities available to them.
- Support the young adult to create SMART goals that align with the life-skills domains.
- Identify additional external sources of funding and community resources, as needed.
- Support the young adult to plan appropriately to ensure funding will cover all anticipated expenses throughout the course of the benefit.
- When the young adult has identified an opportunity they would like to participate in, consult with a team leader and ensure that it meets the programming and funding requirements and criteria. Then, support the young adult to include this programming in the [SAJE Income Support Agreement - Schedule A](#) and the [SAJE Income Support Agreement – Schedule B](#) forms.
- Support and encourage the young adult to achieve their goals.
- Assist the young adult to evaluate their progress and future planning after program completion.

## Appendix A: Example Goals & Funding per Life-skills Learning Domain

Learning Domain	Domains in Action <i>Examples of Goals</i>	What Could be Funded? <i>Funding must clearly be linked to learning/skill-building goals and corresponding programs or activities to achieve these goals.</i>
<b>Identity, Community, Belonging &amp; Cultural Connections</b> 	Over the next 6 months, I will explore my culture by reconnecting with my extended family, visiting my home community for two weeks and participating in a cultural event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel costs back to home community, including costs to obtain a Canadian passport</li> <li>• Regalia or traditional attire to attend the event</li> <li>• Honoraria for Elders</li> </ul>
	As an adoptee, I want to find out more about my birth family and my ancestry. Over the next 6 months, I would like to learn my birth family’s language so I can feel connected to my cultural roots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancestry/DNA testing (e.g., 23andMe)</li> <li>• Registration fees for online or in-person language lessons</li> <li>• Costs of any textbooks and other learning materials</li> </ul>
	Over the next 4 months, I want to explore my gender identity and connect with other gender diverse youth by participating in drag lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration fees to participate in drag lessons and drag show</li> <li>• Costs for supplies and clothing needed to participate</li> </ul>
<b>Parenting &amp; Family Life</b> 	Over the next 3 months, I would like to strengthen my parenting strategies to create a positive, nurturing environment for my child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration fees for a parenting program as well as support for travel to/from and childminding while attending the program</li> <li>• Equipment/supplies to support new parenting techniques</li> </ul>
	I would like to spend more quality time with my child to support them in achieving their developmental milestones. I would also like to take them to local museums and community events to help them develop an understanding of their cultural background from an early age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fees to pay for recreational activities with child (e.g., parent and tot swimming lessons, passes/admissions)</li> <li>• Travel (for parent and child) as necessary to participate in recreational activities and parent support programs</li> </ul>
<b>Education, Employment &amp; Training</b> 	Over the next 6 months, I would like to develop my own website as an online business to sell my handmade products. This includes participation in courses for web development and business planning to help set me up for success and meet my business goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration fees for business planning courses</li> <li>• Travel to attend programming (if in-person)</li> <li>• Any costs for necessary supplies for the course (e.g., laptop)</li> </ul>
	I would like to sign up for an 8-week driver training course so I can get my driver’s license. This will allow me to be self-reliant for transportation and provide more opportunities for employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment fees for driving lessons</li> <li>• Fees for driver’s license testing</li> <li>• Fees associated with obtaining a BC Driver’s License</li> </ul>
	I grew up with caregivers who do not share my African ethnicity and I did not learn how to style and care for my hair in a way that expresses and embraces my identity. I would like to pursue a career in hair styling and be able to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fees for hair styling courses.</li> <li>• Remaining fees and expenses will be covered through a student loan and any available bursaries and grants.</li> </ul>

	support other young women like me. I have been accepted into a private school in Vancouver not covered by the PTWP.	
<b>Daily Living &amp; Household Skills</b>	Over the next 4 months I want to learn healthy cooking techniques so I can make my own nutritious meals at home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration fees for cooking courses</li> <li>• Costs for supplies/materials for courses (i.e., cooking supplies)</li> <li>• Travel costs to attend programming</li> </ul>
	Over the next 3 months I want to learn how to handle regular housing maintenance tasks, such as unclogging a toilet, or using tools to put up shelves. In this way, I can be more self-sufficient and not have to worry about hiring someone to complete these tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs for home maintenance courses offered through continuing education programs</li> <li>• Travel costs to attend in-person training</li> </ul>
<b>Social Skills</b>	I'd like to build positive social relationships with others who have common interests while also learning and developing a new skill. Over the next 4 months I want to try a new activity, like slo-pitch, to meet more peers my age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration fees for a slo-pitch team</li> <li>• Supplies needed for program (e.g., shoes, glove)</li> </ul>
	I live in a rural community that unfortunately lacks queer supports; thus, I would like to travel to a nearby city in order participate in 2SLGBTQIA+ events and connect with those who share similar experiences of sexual and gender identity exploration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel costs to Pride events in nearby city</li> <li>• Registration fees for Pride events</li> </ul>
<b>Money Management</b>	Over the next 2 months, I would like to file my taxes and improve budgeting. I would like to meet with a professional who can teach me how to file my taxes and a financial advisor to help me create a budget and savings plan. I also want to take an introductory bookkeeping course to expand my financial skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fee for the bookkeeping course</li> <li>• Payment for meeting with subject matter experts to learn how to complete file income tax and obtain financial planning advice</li> <li>• Transportation costs to attend course/scheduled appointments</li> </ul>
	I would like to become debt free and learn how to budget and remain debt free. I would like to take an online 4-week course in money management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of online course on money management</li> <li>• Transportation to attend meetings or programming</li> </ul>
<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b>	Over the next 4 months I want to enroll in a weekly yoga program so I can improve my personal health and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment fees for a weekly yoga program</li> <li>• Costs for supplies to attend the program (i.e., yoga mat)</li> <li>• Funds to pay for childminding or a babysitter</li> </ul>
	I would like to attend a 12-week substance use and mental health program. This will exceed the funding available through the new mental health and counselling benefit, so I would like to use this funding as a top-up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment for a substance use and mental health program (including in-patient)</li> <li>• Transportation costs to attend the program</li> </ul>

### Examples of Non-eligible Requests

*The list below is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all ineligible expenses but demonstrates examples of requests that have been received and would not be considered eligible.*

- Travel costs for anyone other than the young adult (excepting relevant travel costs for dependent children, as applicable).
- Educational costs that are eligible for Provincial Tuition Waiver Program.
- Business expenses, including equipment, insurance, fees, etc.
- Cost relating to purchasing, leasing or owning a car (e.g., maintenance costs, insurance).
- Basic living expenses, including rent, groceries, lost wages, pet care, etc.
- Services that do not involve an active learning goal, such as paying for preparation of tax returns, household maintenance, etc.
- Medical and dental procedures, including cosmetic procedures, and travel to these appointments.