



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

Up to \$5,500/year for eligible young adults (\$11,000 available up until 27th birthday)



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Step 1: Determine Eligibility

Young adult (age 19 up to 27th birthday) must be on the Agreements with Young Adults Program **AND** be participating in either an individualized life-skills program **OR** a combination program (see page 2 “Eligibility”).



2

Step 2: Identify Life-skills Goals

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

Goals must be clearly stated in the *AYA Schedule “B” – Program Plan* form.



3

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 *AYA Schedule “A” – Payment Plan* 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 young adults with care experience¹ by improving access to various learning or skill-building opportunities to help them achieve their goals, experience personal growth and reach their potential. In turn, this will help them achieve 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 funding is intended to empower young adults as they grow and develop their strengths through experiences that build their skills, knowledge, and connections. 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.

Eligibility

A young adult must meet the following eligibility criteria to access the additional Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections funding:

- Be on the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) Program; AND,
- Be participating in either:
 - 1) An individualized life-skills program for a minimum total of 5-hours per week OR
 - 2) A combination of vocational, educational, and/or rehabilitative programming AND an individualized life-skills program for a minimum total of 5-hours per week.

¹ “Young adults with care experience” is defined as: young adults who, at the time of their 19th birthday, were receiving services under a Continuing Custody Order, a Youth Agreement, or were in the guardianship of the director of adoption or of a director under Section 51 of the Infants Act. This eligibility criteria is the same as the AYA program.

Goal Development

The young adult's individualized learning and/or skills-development goals will form the basis for the activities/programming in which they will participate, and the associated funding needed. Goal development should be empowering, encouraging young adults to set goals which range from foundational to aspirational and help them to thrive. 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 *AYA Schedule "B" – Program Plan* form.

Life-skills Learning Domains

The following seven life-skills learning domains provide a description of the areas with which a young adult's life-skills goals need to align.

Identity, Belonging, Community & Cultural Connections



Goals under this domain will support connections to family, community and culture and 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, are expectant parents or are currently parenting to strengthen or build their parenting skills. They also may focus on strengthening healthy connections with other young parents, extended family, cultural supports and/or home communities, and on connecting to supports for parenting.

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.



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 opportunities to connect with others, 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 to strengthen or maintain their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing.


Funding Parameters

- A total of \$11,000 of Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections funding is available to young adults who meet the [eligibility criteria](#).
- Only \$5,500 can be accessed in a single year; exceptions to spend more than \$5500 in a single year will be subject to an approval process.
- This funding is intended to cover items unique to Life-skills, Training, and Cultural Connections domains that are not covered by the AYA program, or additional costs when AYA program funding is fully utilized. This funding is intended to support a young adult to achieve their skill development and learning goals as specified in the *AYA Schedule "B" - Program Plan*.
- When possible, utilize funds under the AYA Program Expenses before using funds available through the Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections funding.
- Decisions to approve funding requests to allow young adults to meet their goals are made in accordance with Government financial policy, standards and ethics.
- Young adults and workers are encouraged to pursue other sources of funding and community resources where available (e.g., WorkBC).
- Payments made directly to service providers or programming are preferred, especially for larger amounts.
- This funding is not an income supplement and does not cover shelter costs or lost wages while participating in life-skills programs or activities.
- The funding parameters are outlined in the table below.

- An example of goals and related items included for funding can be found in [Appendix A](#).

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 do not meet the AYA Educational or Vocational courseload criteria or the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program eligibility criteria (PTWP). These may be offered by private institutions, colleges, or opportunities in a 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.	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.	Supports and services required to 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 required to participate in a program or activity which 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 which is required to fully participate in activities or to meet eligibility criteria.	Costs associated with obtaining identification or related documentation.

Role of the Young Adult

The young adult will:

- Develop life-skills goals in alignment with one or more domains.
- Ensure the funds are used according to the terms of their agreement.
- Regularly communicate with their worker, advising them of any changes to goals or plans.
- Apply for alternate funding where available, including 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](#).
- 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,

- Supplemental funding required to complete the program.
- Enroll in programming and/or purchase programming materials once approval has been provided by the worker.
- Inform the worker if activities, program or course completion will be delayed or if the young adult is unable to complete the activities, program or course.
- Meet with the worker as per policy for SAJE (every 6 months) or AYA (as determined by the young adult and worker).
- **Please Note:**
 - Payments made directly to service providers or programming are preferred, especially for larger amounts.
 - Receipts/proof of payment are not required when payments are made to you in advance, in accordance with your Schedule A and documented planning goals.
 - If you purchase programming or supplies/materials and you request reimbursement, receipts/proof of payment are required.
 - Reimbursement payments can be made with receipts/proof of purchase, if you are on an agreement and eligible for funding.

Tip for Young Adults

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

Role of the Worker

The worker will:

- 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 as they help young adults explore their options, create opportunities, and make decisions and plans.
- Support the young adult in creating self-directed goals that align with the life-skills domains.
- Identify additional external sources of funding and community resources, as needed.
- Support the young adult to appropriately budget to ensure funding will cover all anticipated expenses throughout the course of the benefit.
- Support and encourage the young adult in achieving their goals.
- 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. Then, support the young adult to include this programming in the *AYA Schedule "A" – Payment Plan*, and the *Schedule "B" – Program Plan* forms.
- Assist the young adult in evaluating their progress and in future planning post program completion.

Support to youth before their 19th birthday:




- Use planning meetings between ages 17 and 19 to explain the Life-skills Training and Cultural Connections Funding to youth who are eligible.
- When the youth is working with a SAJE Navigator or ICFSA equivalent, the worker will inform eligible youth of the Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections funding available to them prior to their 19th birthday.
- If the youth is not yet engaged with a SAJE Navigator or ICFSA equivalent, information regarding the funding will be provided by the youth's worker to the youth prior to their 19th birthday.





Support to young adults participating in SAJE Planning and/or working with a SAJE Guide:

- Support the young adult to access programming that allows the young adult to pursue learning or skill-building opportunities that to help them achieve their goals, experience personal growth, and reach their potential.
- Support the young adult to find linkages between the life-skills domain in their SAJE Plan and the life-skills, training, and/or cultural opportunities available to them.
- 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. Then, support the young adult to include this programming in the *AYA Schedule "A" – Payment Plan*, and the *Schedule "B" – Program Plan* forms.

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

The following example goals were generated based on feedback provided by young adults.

Life-skills Learning Domain	Domains in Action: Example Goals	What Would be Funded?
Identity, Community, Belonging & Cultural Connections 	Over the next 6 months, I will explore my culture through reconnecting with my extended family, visiting my home community for two weeks and participating in a cultural event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel costs back to home community, including costs to obtain a Canadian passport • Regalia or traditional attire to attend the event • Honoraria for Elders
	As an adoptee, I want to find out more about my birth family and my ancestry. Over the next 6 months, I would also like to learn my birth family's language so I can feel connected to my cultural roots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancestry/DNA testing (e.g., 23andMe) • Registration fees for online or in-person language lessons • Costs of any textbooks and other learning materials
	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"> • Registration fees to participate in drag lessons and drag show • Costs for supplies and clothing needed to participate
Parenting & Family Life 	Over the next 3 months, I would like to learn better parenting techniques to create a positive, nurturing environment for my child(ren).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration fees for a parenting program • Travel to attend parenting program (if in-person) • Funds to pay for childminding or a babysitter
	I would like to spend more quality time with my child(ren) to support them in achieving their developmental milestones. I would also like to take them to local museums and galleries to ensure they develop an understanding of their cultural background from an early age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees to pay for recreational activities with child (e.g., parent and tot swimming lessons, museum/gallery passes) • Travel necessary to participate in recreational activities and parent support programs
Education, Employment & Training 	Over the next 6 months, I would like to develop my own website as an online small 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 small business goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration fees for business planning courses • Travel to attend programming (if in-person) • Any costs for necessary supplies for the course (e.g., laptop)
	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"> • Enrollment fees for driving lessons • Fees for driver's license testing • Fees associated with obtaining a BC Driver's License
	I grew up living 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment for workshop • Supplies needed to complete the workshop

	embraces my identity. I would like to participate in a culturally specific hairstyling workshop. I would then use these hairstyling techniques to start a home-based hairstyling business.	
Daily Living & Household Skills 	Over the next 4 months I want to learn healthy cooking techniques so I can make my own healthy meals at home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration fees for cooking courses • Costs for supplies/materials for courses (i.e., cooking supplies) • Travel costs to attend programming
	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 a contractor to complete these tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs for home maintenance courses offered through continuing education programs • Travel costs to attend in-person training
Social Skills 	I'd like to build positive social relationships with others who have a common interest while also learning and developing a new skill. Over the next 4 months I want to try a new activity, like snowboarding, to meet more peers my age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration fees for a snowboarding program • Fees for supplies needed for program (e.g., snowboarding equipment) • Travel costs to attend program
	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"> • Travel costs to Pride events in nearby city • Registration fees for Pride events
Money Management 	Over the next 2 months, I would like to file my taxes and improve budgeting. I would like to meet with a tax expert who can teach me how to file my taxes and a financial advisor to create a budget and savings plan with me. I'd then like to take an introductory weekend bookkeeping course to expand my financial knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program expenses (Bookkeeping course) • Payment for meeting with subject matter experts (Tax Specialist, Financial Advisor) • Transportation costs to attend course/scheduled appointments
	Over the next 2 months I would like to learn about filing taxes my money – either through financial courses or by meeting with a financial advisor – so I can manage my own money and help prepare for my financial future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application/enrollment fees for applicable financial courses • Payment for meeting with subject matter expert (e.g., financial advisor) • Transportation costs to attend course/scheduled appointments
Health & Wellness 	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"> • Enrollment fees for a weekly yoga program • Costs for supplies to attend the program (i.e., yoga mat) • Funds to pay for childminding or a babysitter
	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"> • Payment for a substance use and mental health program • Transportation costs to attend the program