**IT Apprenticeship Program for Indigenous Peoples Manager’s Package**

Welcome to the Government of Canada’s (GoC) IT Apprenticeship Program for Indigenous Peoples! You have made a great decision by taking the first step to hire an apprentice through the program, and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) team is here to support you.

# Overview of the Program

This turnkey program, designed by, with and for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples recruits Indigenous Peoples to join the GoC’s IT workforce. Apprentices are hired by a GoC host organization at the entry level of the IT group (IT-01 or equivalent) for a 24-month Term appointment. The apprenticeship provides participants access to self-paced developmental online training and the hands-on work experience needed to develop into an IT professional. After the successful completion of the program, graduates are deemed to meet the combination of education, training and/or experience as per the [GC Qualification Standard alternative for the IT Occupational Group](https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/information-notice/it-apprenticeship-program--indigenous-peoples-alternative-educational-requirements.html). This whole-of-government offering is supported by the OII at Employment and Social Development Canada.

## Circle of Support

The program has been intentionally designed to offer a circle of support so that apprentices can have a successful learning journey. These supports have also helped keep the apprentice retention rate consistently at over 95%.

| **Support provided by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives** | **Support provided by host organizations** |
| --- | --- |
| The OII has a very supportive, hands-on approach with individuals dedicated to offering a simple and effective hiring experience and successful apprenticeship journey:  **Intake team**:this team meets with applicants and builds relationships with them. They also complete preliminary HR paperwork including assessing potential candidates against the program’s Statement of Merit Criteria and coordinating the security clearance process. Apprenticeship candidates who are ready for referral to host organizations have a valid Reliability level security clearance and a PRI.  **Job matching team**: this teammeets with hiring managers and their HR Advisor to determine the needs for each job opportunity that is ready to be filled and then locate the ideal candidate.  **Success facilitators**:these individuals support apprentices and managers throughout the 24-month journey with one-on-one support and guidance, weekly apprentice sharing circles, and manager check-ins.  The OII is also available to answer questions and provide advice and guidance on selecting Peer partners and mentors as well as provide support for any questions that may arise. | Each participating host department, agency and Crown corporation is asked to provide the necessary support to ensure that apprentices have a successful developmental journey. These supports include:  **Peer partner**: host departments pair apprentices with an experienced peer who assist and guide them in their on-the-job learning. This foundational on-the-job learning represents 80% of the apprenticeship program and supports the apprentices in gaining experience and developing marketable and in-demand skills in IT necessary to contribute to Canada’s digital workforce, both within and outside the federal public service.  **Mentor**: the program relies on mentoring as a critical element of supporting apprentices. For most apprentices, this is likely to be their first real job in any kind of a large organization or bureaucracy like the Government of Canada. They will most likely be unfamiliar with government and departmental/agency/Crown corporation structure, office procedures, and federal public service work dynamics. The mentor can provide trusted advice and counsel, augmenting the normal support provided by supervisors, managers and peers.  **Dedicated time to learn**: 20% (7.5 hours per week) of the time apprenticeship is dedicated for self-paced online learning, following a curated curriculum of courses. Time should be allocated for apprentices to complete these courses.  To successfully complete the apprenticeship program, participants must complete the combination of self-paced learning (20%) and on-the-job training (80%). |

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Why is this program only open to Indigenous applicants and not to other equity seeking groups?

Data shows that as of March 31, 2022, the Indigenous representation for the IT group was only 3.3%. In fact, of the 17,913 IT (CS) employed in the federal public service at that date, only 9 were Inuit. We must do better. This apprenticeship program seeks to remedy this by specifically recruiting Indigenous candidates. We encourage other groups to follow our lead and we are happy to share our documentation and lessons learned.

## Is there an IT Apprenticeship Program Office?

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives acts as the Program Office, providing coordination and support services for all participants.

## Who chooses which candidates are eligible?

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives receives and assesses all applications using the program’s Statement of Merit Criteria. The Office also assists applicants by answering questions and helping them with their applications.

## What qualifications / competencies are being used to assess them?

The program focuses on individual’s potential combined with the competencies for entry level technology positions. This innovative approach is designed to decrease barriers and to provide Indigenous peoples with better access to federal public service jobs. The program also takes direct aim at the barriers faced by many Indigenous peoples related to the educational requirement to enter the IT workforce of the Government of Canada.

## How are candidates referred / selected?

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives works with hiring organizations to make their selections. It will be on a first come first serve basis, so it is best to sign on as soon as possible. Hiring managers will be able to meet with candidates in an informal setting to determine right fit.

## Do we have to create a position for the apprentice?

Yes, apprentices are hired at the entry level of IT positions (IT-01 or equivalent) for a 24-month Term via an external non-advertised appointment.

## Who pays the apprentices’ salaries?

Since apprentices are employees of their respective hiring departments, agencies, and Crown corporations, each hiring organization is responsible for covering their salaries.

## Who identifies the peer partners and mentors?

Because the apprentices will be working in their respective organizations, it will be up to each department, agency, and Crown corporation to identify peer partner(s) and mentors(s) and ensure that these are productive relationships. The Office of Indigenous Initiatives has prepared information to help organizations select appropriate peer partners and mentors and explain the difference between their roles.

## Is there any classroom style training?

Over the course of the 24 months, apprentices are exposed to an integrated learning environment. Four days per week (80%) spent working with a peer partner, one day per week (20%) dedicated to self-paced online learning and professional development.

## Who organizes and pays for the self-paced online learning?

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives organizes the online learning by providing a standardized curriculum that aligns with entry level jobs and competency framework for IT-01s (or equivalent). The curriculum was designed in collaboration with the Treasury Board of Canda Secretariat’s Office of the Chief Information Officer, Shared Services Canada, the Canada School of Public Service, private sector industry leaders, Indigenous experts, non-profit and post-secondary institutions. The Office of Indigenous Initiatives covers all training costs associated with the curriculum.

## Is there a Probationary Period?

Yes, as it is a 24-month Term appointment, the probationary period is equal to the full length of the apprenticeship.

## What happens at the end of the two-year apprenticeship?

After successfully completing the apprenticeship, graduates are issued a digital certificate and a portable verifiable credential. It is endorsed by the Chief Information Officer of Canada and formally recognized as meeting the GC Qualification Standard alternative for the IT Occupational Group.

It is our hope that at the end of the two-year period, the apprentice will be offered an indeterminate position within their host organization. If a hiring organization is unable to offer a position to their apprentice, we will ask that they advise the Office of Indigenous Initiatives at least 6 months prior to the end of the apprenticeship so that they can help the apprentice find a position elsewhere. The Apprentice Success Facilitator will connect with you throughout the apprenticeship to discuss apprentice’s journey.

## What occurs if an apprentice is not successful?

Apprentices will be closely monitored during their apprenticeship and provided with regular feedback and ongoing performance appraisals by their hiring organization. If there are any issues, we ask that hiring organizations involve the Office of Indigenous Initiatives immediately to address the performance or behavior issues and to provide the apprentice the opportunity to adjust while ensuring they have the tools and supports needed to do so.

## Who provides apprentices with equipment and internet access?

As with any other employee, the hiring organization must provide the apprentices with the necessary equipment for them to work. Should the position offer opportunities to work from home and/or to complete the self-paced online learning from home, internet access is the responsibility of the apprentice. It is important to keep in mind that internet access within the home is not always a given in some communities. The Office of Indigenous Initiatives will assess this with the candidates when they apply and will seek assistance from the community (for example band office, school, territorial and provincial governments, etc.) as needed.

## Where will apprentices be located?

The program is open to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from across Canada. One of the objectives of the program is to increase employment and economic development opportunities within Indigenous communities. For this reason, we encourage that remote work be considered so that apprentices can work from their home communities. That said, managers will be able to identify any geographic-specific job requirements as part of the hiring process.

# Program Readiness Checklist

To ensure a consistent experience for apprentices across the Government of Canada, this helpful checklist will make sure the proper foundation is in place:

* Chief Information Officer (CIO) or Chief Digital Officer awareness and approval
* Term position created and salary dollars available
* Opportunity exists for apprentice as confirmed by the hiring manager
* Peer Partner identified
* Mentor identified
* Agreement to follow program guidelines and to participate in community of practice meetings

Once you are ready to start the journey or if you have additional questions, please email the [Office of Indigenous Initiatives](mailto:edsc.patipa.jumelage.emplois-itapip.job.matching.esdc@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca). A job matching expert will contact you shortly.