

## 2021 PROGRAM GUIDE

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### WHAT IS THE FOOD PRODUCER WAGE SUBSIDY?

The Basin Food Producer Wage Subsidy Program provides support to primary food producers in the Basin that are increasing food production to meet the demand for foods that are locally produced. The program provides flexibility to farmers to hire residents of the Basin, as needed, throughout the growing and harvesting season of 2021.

For more information, call toll free 1.877.489.2687 ext. 3480 or email [fpwagesubsidy@ourtrust.org](mailto:fpwagesubsidy@ourtrust.org). This program is administered by College of the Rockies.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Primary food producers. These producers grow grains, vegetables, fruit or forage or raise livestock for meat or dairy products. This program is for food producers with farms and ownership located in [the Columbia Basin Trust region](#).

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### When can I apply?

Applications will be accepted on a first-received, first-served basis, with the program opening **March 11, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. PT/2:00 p.m. MT**.

#### How much is the wage subsidy?

75% of an employee's hourly wage up to a maximum of \$15 per hour. The maximum total subsidy a producer can apply for is \$10,000.

#### How many people can I hire through the program?

The subsidy is flexible.

#### When can the employees start work?

Subsidy can be used from March 15 – October 31, 2021 inclusive.

#### Does the program help me find employees?

No, you must recruit and hire employees.

#### Can I apply to hire an Apprentice or a Co-op student?

Yes, however; these wage subsidy programs have separate application forms and eligibility:

- [Apprentice](#)
- [Co-op](#)

## Who can apply?

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Employers Must:	Employees Must:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain or increase 2021 season production (compared to 2020 season);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain or increase 2021 season employment levels (compared to 2020 season);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be located, with farm and ownership, in the Basin (<a href="#">map</a>);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have been operating for minimum of two years;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a Statement of Farming Activity for 2019 (required) and 2020 (if available);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Must adhere to all relevant labour laws;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not hire a relative unless the relative is supervised by someone other than the owner(s);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Must provide a safe working environment;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Must be following COVID-19 protocols as required by public bodies; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Must have a WorkSafeBC account in good standing by the time the employee starts work.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you currently have WorkSafeBC coverage, you must provide a clearance letter with your application (get the form <a href="#">here</a>).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you don't have WorkSafeBC coverage, you must obtain coverage and send us proof of it before the student starts work (register <a href="#">here</a>).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be age 15 or older before the employment start date;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be legally entitled to work in Canada;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Live in the <a href="#">Basin</a> unless exception is requested and approved;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not be supported by another wage subsidy program;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not be a relative unless the relative is supervised by someone other than the owner(s); and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Must be hired as an employee, not a contactor.</li> </ul>

#### NOTE:

- It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that the employee(s) hired meet(s) the eligibility criteria listed herein. If an employer hires an ineligible employee, program staff will notify the employer and wages expended for the ineligible employee will not be reimbursed.
- Employers approved for funding that have questions about employee eligibility or would like to request an exception to employ someone that does not currently live in the Basin can contact program staff for more information.

## JOB REQUIREMENTS

- Jobs must be paid hourly. **Salary employees and piece work are ineligible.**
- Applicants will be requested to indicate the type of jobs, associated wage rates and how many employees they intend to use the subsidy for.
- Jobs cannot include tasks that would provide personal service to the employer such as domestic services, childcare or construction work on the owner's personal property.

## HOURS REQUIREMENTS

- Employees may be hired for temporary, part-time or full-time hours.
- Employees may work anytime between March 15 – October 31, 2021.

**NOTE:** Once a contribution agreement is signed, the employer must commit to hiring employees to use the full amount being subsidized. If you are not able to hire and will therefore not be using the subsidy, you must contact program staff immediately so that the funds can be allocated to another applicant.

## WORKSAFEBC REQUIREMENTS

You must have a WorkSafeBC account in good standing.

- If you currently have WorkSafeBC coverage, you must provide a clearance letter with your application. Get the form [here](#).
- If you don't have WorkSafeBC coverage, you must obtain coverage and send us proof of it before the employee(s) starts work. Register [here](#).

## How does the wage subsidy work?

### WAGES

If your application is successful, you will receive 75% of the employee's hourly wage up to \$15.00 per hour. The 75% hourly wage subsidy can be applied to any number of employees' wages up to a total maximum of the approved subsidy amount. You can apply for up to a maximum of \$10,000 in total wage subsidies. The wage subsidy can be applied to one or more employees.

You will be responsible for paying 25% of the employee's hourly wage or more depending on the hourly wage of your employee. You will also be responsible for the Mandatory Employer Related Costs on the total hourly wage.

For example:

If you pay a minimum wage of \$14.60 per hour, you will be reimbursed 75% of \$14.60 per hour which equals \$10.95 per hour. You are responsible to pay 25% of \$14.60 per hour which equals \$3.65 per hour. If you applied and were approved for a total subsidy of \$10,000, you will be reimbursed \$10,000 and you will be required to pay \$3,332 in hourly wages plus Mandatory Employer Related Costs on the full wage amount of \$14.60 per hour.

Calculations:

Hourly Wage x 75% = Hourly Wage Subsidy (must be less than or equal to \$15.00/hr)

Hourly Wage x 25% = Employer Wage Portion (using the \$14.60/hr minimum wage as the base rate, the Employer Wage Portion will be equal to or greater than \$3.65/hr)

Total Approved Subsidy / Hourly Wage Subsidy = Total Subsidized Hours  
(example: \$10,000 / \$10.95/hr = 913 hours)

**NOTE: The minimum wage is scheduled to increase to \$15.20 effective June 1, 2021.**

Information regarding BC Minimum Wages and other BC Employment standards can be found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards>

## **FINANCIAL CLAIMS, PAYMENTS AND MONITORING**

If your application is successful, you will be able to submit claims for reimbursement of wages as early as four weeks following the start of your employee(s) and every four weeks thereafter. It is a **mandatory requirement** of the program that you submit at least one claim by July 31, 2021 and provide confirmation that you intend to use the total amount of your approved subsidy by October 31, 2021. If you do not submit an initial claim and confirmation by this date your subsidy agreement will be terminated.

Note:

- We will not issue advance payments.
- We may monitor you through a virtual meeting or phone call.
- Financial reimbursements will be based on satisfactory reporting and claims requirements.
- You must submit a mandatory mid-term claim eight weeks after your start date, and your final claim by October 31, 2021.
- If your subsidized employee's start after July 15, 2021 you will only be required to submit a confirmation of use by July 31, 2021.

If your application is successful, we will provide you with further details on claims, payment and reporting processes.

## How do I apply?

The Basin Food Producer Wage Subsidy opens on **March 11, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. PT/2:00 p.m. MT**. The online application form will be [posted here](#) on this date and time.

**Applications are accepted on a first-received, first-served basis and are assessed as they come in. This process continues until all funding for the program has been committed.**

All applications must be submitted through the Trust's application portal. Detailed instructions will be posted on the Trust's [website](#) when the program opens to accept applications.

- If your application requires clarification or further information, we will not consider it "received" until you have provided all required information.
- You will receive an email confirming the receipt of your application from program staff.

## To be successful, you must:

- Meet all eligibility requirements, as outlined above;
- Provide a safe working environment;
- Be following COVID-19 protocols as required by public bodies; and
- Commit and be accountable to the terms of the Basin Food Producer Wage Subsidy contribution agreement.

## When will I know if my application has been approved?

You will receive an email confirming approval/decline of your application approximately five business days following the receipt of your completed application.

Note:

- College of the Rockies, Columbia Basin Trust and their agents shall not be obligated in any manner to any applicant whatsoever.
- College of the Rockies and Columbia Basin Trust reserve the right to fund all or none of any application submitted.
- If your application is successful, you must enter into a contribution agreement with College of the Rockies and commit to offering the employment opportunities being subsidized.

## Reminders:

- Applications are assessed as they come in and continue until all funding for the Basin Food Producer Wage Subsidy has been committed. Don't wait to apply!
- Be clear and succinct and use point form where appropriate in the application process.
- Be thorough and complete the application in full; incomplete applications will not be processed.
- Don't forget to upload an electronic copy your Statement of Farming Activities for 2019 and 2020 (if available) and WorkSafeBC Compliance Letter with your online application (unless not yet covered by WorkSafeBC).

**Questions?** Call toll free 1.877.489.2687 ext. 3480 or email us at [fpwagesubsidy@ourtrust.org](mailto:fpwagesubsidy@ourtrust.org).