



BURSARIES  
FOR POSTSECONDARY  
STUDIES  
IN FRENCH  
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

# APPLICANT GUIDE

## 2026-2027 Bursaries

Deadline for submitting  
funding requests:  
Friday, September 26, 2025  
5 pm (EDT)

This program is administered by



ACUFC

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Canada

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# GLOSSARY

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>ACUFC</b>	<b>Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne</b>
<b>APOL</b>	Action Plan for Official Languages
<b>FSL</b>	French as a second language
<b>PCH</b>	Department of Canadian Heritage

## Terminology used

<b>FSL Bursary Program or the Program</b>	<b>Bursaries for Postsecondary Studies in French as a Second Language Program</b>
<b>Entity or postsecondary entity</b>	Postsecondary entities include colleges, universities and university faculties.
<b>Official language</b>	The official languages of Canada are English and French.

# 1. BACKGROUND

## Action Plan for Official Languages

Under the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023 – Investing in Our Future*, the Government of Canada made a commitment to promoting a bilingual Canada, in particular by supporting English-speaking Canadians in learning French. As one of its objectives, the Plan intends to increase the national bilingualism rate from 17.9% to 20% by 2036, mainly through raising the bilingualism rate of English speakers outside Quebec from 6.8% to 9%.

Among the federal government initiatives aiming to strengthen and increase nationwide bilingualism, is a yearly bursary program established in 2019 to encourage English-speaking students to pursue their postsecondary studies in their second official language, in this case French, thus contributing to the increase of bilingualism among English speakers in Canada.

In its *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-2028: Protection-Promotion-Collaboration*<sup>1</sup>, the Government of Canada announced that the historical funding of the Bursaries for Postsecondary Studies in French as a Second Language Program was renewed for 2023-2028.

## Objectives of the Bursaries for Postsecondary Studies in French as a Second Language Program

The Bursaries for Postsecondary Studies in French as a Second Language Program aims to “encourage English-speaking students to pursue their post-secondary studies at a French-language institution or program; to help them in their efforts to learn, use and improve their French-language skills; and to expand their understanding of Francophone culture. Students with financial challenges or from under-represented populations will receive special consideration.”<sup>2</sup>

The *Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne* (ACUFC) was assigned responsibility for implementing this Program by the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH). Under the Program, 850 non-renewable bursaries, each worth 3,000 dollars, will be awarded yearly.

The ultimate goal of this Program is to see growth in bilingualism rates among English-speaking students, thus increasing the national bilingualism rate.

## Bursary Award Period

This call for proposals relates to bursaries to be awarded during the 2026-2027 academic year.

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada. *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-2028: Protection-Promotion-Collaboration*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/2023-2028.html#tbl1>

<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada. *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023 - Investing in Our Future*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/2018-2023.html>

## 2. EXPECTED RESULTS FOR THE PROGRAM<sup>3</sup>

- The implementation of the Bursaries for Postsecondary Studies in French as a Second Language Program is carried out within the expected timeframe.
- Each year, 850 students from across Canada whose first official language spoken is English benefitted from the opportunity to pursue their postsecondary studies in French, and to perfect their bilingualism by means of the bursary.
- Students contributed to increasing the rate of bilingualism among English speakers in Canada.

### Performance Indicators

- The Program's delivery mechanism operates effectively and ensures the processing of bursary applications in a timely manner.
- Number of participating postsecondary entities.
- Number of collaboration agreements signed with national and provincial/territorial partners.
- Number of students who first official language spoken is English who benefit from the bursary to pursue their postsecondary studies in French.
- Number of students who received the bursary and who would not otherwise have pursued their postsecondary studies in French.
- Geographical breakdown of recipients (province/territories and regions).
- Demographic profile (age, gender, languages spoken at home) and number of recipients from under-represented groups or visible minorities and/or who have financial needs.
- Number and types of college or university programs in which recipients have enrolled.
- Number of students who received the bursary and increased their ability to communicate in French.
- Success stories.

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<sup>3</sup> Under the contribution agreement between PCH and ACUFC signed in July 2024.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR POSTSECONDARY ENTITIES

Under the FSL Bursary Program, postsecondary entities include colleges, universities and university faculties.

To be eligible for the Program, a postsecondary entity must demonstrate its ability to provide English-speaking students with:

1. College degree programs in French of a minimum duration of one year, or university study programs in French of a minimum duration of two years\*.

\*Some one-year university programs, pre-approved by ACUFC, are also eligible. A request must be submitted to ACUFC for purposes of case-by-case reviews.

2. Related support and an environment that allows students to use and improve their language skills in French. Related support can take the form of:

- Teaching support in French;
- Additional language courses, if needed;
- Support services for studies that foster academic success in French.

3. Opportunities to enhance their knowledge of Francophone culture and engage in cultural experiences in French. Increased knowledge of Francophone culture can take the following forms:

- The active offer of student life experiences in French, such as various clubs and activities where students will have the opportunity to communicate in French;
- The provision of cultural community activities in French, beyond courses and student life.

The postsecondary entity must demonstrate that, within the targeted program, at least 50% of courses and program-related activities (placements, training activities in the community) will be offered in French, in addition to cultural activities.

Only postsecondary entities located in Canada are eligible for the FSL Bursary Program.

## 4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS

### General Eligibility Criteria

It is the responsibility of the postsecondary entity to ensure that students who are eligible for bursaries meet the following compulsory eligibility criteria. These students must:

1. Be Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.
2. Have English as the first Canadian official language spoken.
3. Have completed their high school studies in an English or non-official language (neither French nor English) institution, and graduated from said institution.
4. Be enrolled full-time in a college program (minimum duration of one year) or university program (minimum duration of two years\*) delivered in French by a postsecondary entity that participates in the Program.

\*Some one-year university programs, pre-approved by ACUFC, are also eligible.

5. Take at least 50% of their courses and participate in related activities (placements and training activities in the community in French).

### Additional Eligibility Criteria

The postsecondary entity will give special consideration to students facing financial challenges and those who come from under-represented groups. The postsecondary entity will evaluate eligible applications based on the three following criteria:

Criteria	Required proof
<b>1</b> The student faces financial difficulties and tuition fees are an obstacle to accessing postsecondary education.	Self-declaration
<b>2</b> The student is from the first generation in their family to pursue studies at college or university level.	Self-declaration
<b>3</b> The students belong to an under-represented group or a disadvantaged minority.	Self-declaration

The postsecondary entity must prioritize students who face financial challenges and those who are from under-represented groups.

## 5. ALLOCATION MECHANISM FOR BURSARIES

ACUFC is the third party responsible for managing, promoting and implementing the FSL Bursary Program. ACUFC is responsible for determining which postsecondary entities are eligible for the Program, as well as the number of bursaries that they will receive for distribution each year.

Postsecondary entities participating in the Program will oversee assessing student applications and awarding study bursaries.

### Yearly Call for Proposals

The allocation mechanism for bursaries consists in a yearly call for proposals to postsecondary entities. Postsecondary entities must submit a new funding request every year, for consideration.

**In cases where multiple entities within the same postsecondary institution wish to receive funding for bursaries, ACUFC strongly encourages entities to work collaboratively and submit a single funding request.**

Neither approval of a postsecondary entity for the Program nor the number of bursaries it receives is guaranteed from year to year.

### Two-Stage Evaluation of Funding Request

As a first step, ACUFC will verify whether the postsecondary entity that has submitted a funding request meets the established eligibility criteria, and that it has no unresolved issues with the Program [e.g., outstanding invoice(s) and/or report(s)].

If so, ACUFC will then evaluate the number of bursaries requested.

### Bursary Distribution Based on Four Criteria

The distribution of bursaries will be carried out according to a formula based on:

- The number of immersion high school graduates per province/territory
- The bilingualism rate and the bilingualism retention rate per province/territory
- The number of bursaries requested by postsecondary entities
- The number of FSL bursaries awarded by the postsecondary entity during the last two academic years (if applicable)

#### a) Number of immersion graduates

The Program's key objective is to incite a greater number of students whose first official language spoken is English to pursue their postsecondary studies in French, with the ultimate aim of increasing the national bilingualism rate. Grade 12 students enrolled in immersion programs in Canada are one of the main clienteles targeted by this Program.

#### b) Bilingualism rate and bilingualism retention rate<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate goal of this Program is to see growth in bilingualism rates among young English speakers, thus increasing the national bilingualism rate. The number of bursaries awarded will

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<sup>4</sup> According to Statistics Canada, the bilingualism retention rate corresponds to the proportion of English-French bilingual people in 2006 who were still bilingual in 2016.



take into account the bilingualism rate and the bilingualism retention rate in provinces and territories.

c) Number of bursaries requested by postsecondary entities

The number of bursaries allocated to postsecondary entities will take into account the number of bursaries requested by these entities.

d) Number of FSL bursaries awarded by the postsecondary entity during the last two academic years (if applicable)

The number of bursaries allocated to postsecondary entities will take into account the number of FSL bursaries that these entities have successfully awarded in previous years of program participation.

## **Communication of Results to Postsecondary Entities**

Once the funding request evaluation is completed, ACUFC communicates results, including the number of allocated bursaries, to postsecondary entities.

## **Preparation and Signature of Funding Agreements**

ACUFC will prepare a funding agreement with each postsecondary entity participating in the Program, which will be signed by both parties.

## **Transfer of Funds to Postsecondary Entities**

Once the funding agreement is signed, ACUFC will transfer funds before March 31 of the current fiscal year for bursaries allocated to the postsecondary entity.

Designated funds to cover certain eligible administrative expenses related to the management and/or promotion of bursaries will be allocated to entities. The amount of these funds will be determined according to a formula based on the number of bursaries awarded to the postsecondary entity.

Funds may only be used for expenses in their respective category: funds for bursaries may not be used for the management and/or promotion of bursaries, and vice versa.

## **Awarding of Bursaries to Students**

Postsecondary entities have until April 30 of the following financial year to award bursaries to students. ACUFC transfers funds to postsecondary entities before March 31, 2026 and these entities have until April 30, 2027 to award 2026-2027 bursaries to their students.

If, on April 30, 2027, a postsecondary entity has received 2026-2027 bursaries that were not awarded, it will be required to reimburse the amount of these bursaries to ACUFC.

## 6. PROMOTION OF THE PROGRAM

As the national manager for the FSL Bursary Program, ACUFC promotes an approach focused on the crucial role played by postsecondary entities participating in the Program. ACUFC will ensure national cohesion throughout the Program by implementing the overall strategy and communication framework it has developed. The postsecondary entities and collaborators with whom ACUFC has signed agreements will be invited to:

- Integrate the FSL Bursary Program into their promotional strategies among their clientele.
- Use the tools developed by ACUFC.
- Share success stories and constraints related to these tools, with a view to introduce future improvements.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF POSTSECONDARY ENTITIES

- Responding to the annual calls for proposals for participation in the Program.
- Providing programs and related activities (placements, training activities in the community aiming to enhance knowledge of Francophone culture) in French.
- Offering related support fostering academic assistance for bursary recipients in a vibrant and rewarding Francophone cultural environment.
- Processing applications within a reasonable timeline.
- Ensuring that processing of applications is achieved in an impartial way.
- Assessing applications received and selecting bursary recipients, in accordance with eligibility and evaluation criteria set out by the Program.
- Assessing and ensuring that students' knowledge of French is sufficient for them to study in that language.
- Promoting the Program.
- Awarding the bursary recipients, a 2026-2027 bursary in the amount of \$3,000, at the latest by April 30, 2027.
- Collecting data and reporting to ACUFC (ACUFC will provide all templates required for reporting):
  - Gathering data about bursary candidates and recipients, and submitting to ACUFC, at the latest by May 31, 2027:
    - An annual activity report detailing the activities and results of the promotion and implementation of the Program.
    - A table of administrative data on bursary recipients.

- A financial report (Note: any postsecondary entity receiving annual contributions of \$250,000 or more under this program will be required to provide either annual audited financial statements supported by an appropriate table or an audited financial report).
- Conducting a yearly survey (coordinated by ACUFC) among bursary recipients, in order to evaluate:
  - Their experience with the bursary application process.
  - The impact of the bursary on the recipients who received funding.

## 8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACUFC

- Review the Program's eligibility criteria and management mechanism.
- Launch an annual call for proposals to postsecondary entities.
- Transfer funds to postsecondary entities by March 31, 2026.
- Develop collaboration agreements with national and provincial/territorial partners.
- Implement the multifaceted promotion strategy with targeted audiences throughout the year.
- Develop presentations to inform Program stakeholders.
- Create and disseminate communication tools to ensure the implementation and expansion of the Program.
- Continue the performance measurement strategy, including success indicators and short- and long-term corrective measures, and keep data collection and monitoring mechanisms up to date.
- Review the tools required for reporting to PCH.
- Analyze qualitative and quantitative data from the Program throughout the year.

## 9. TIMETABLE

MAIN STEPS	DATE
Launch of the call for proposals	Week of September 15, 2025
Webinar in French about the call for proposals	September 22, 2025, 11:30 am (EDT)
Webinar in English about the call for proposals	September 23, 2025, 11:30 am (EDT)
<b>Deadline for submitting funding requests</b>	<b>September 26, 2025, 5 pm (EDT)</b>
Evaluation of funding requests and bursary allocation	September/October 2025
Communication of results by ACUFC	October 2025
Signing of funding agreements	October 2025 to March 2026
Transfer of funds from ACUFC to postsecondary entities for 2026-2027 bursaries	No later than March 31, 2026
Awarding of 2026-2027 bursaries by postsecondary entities	No later than April 30, 2027
Submission of reporting documents by postsecondary entities to ACUFC	No later than May 31, 2027

## 10. SUBMISSION OF FUNDING REQUESTS

Applicants must complete the online funding request form available on the Program webpage at [ACUFC.ca/FSLbursaries](https://acufc.ca/FSLbursaries) before **September 26, 2025 - 5 p.m. (EDT)**. Incomplete or late funding requests will be rejected.

### Technical Assistance

Should you experience any technical problems with the funding request form, please write to: [boursesfsl@acufc.ca](mailto:boursesfsl@acufc.ca).

### Funding Request Follow-Up

ACUFC will send an acknowledgement of receipt for all funding requests received.

ACUFC will inform postsecondary entities in writing regarding the results of their funding request review. Decisions are final and without appeal.

## 11. DOCUMENTS FOR CONSULTATION

The following documents<sup>5</sup> are available for reference only, for consultation:

- Funding Agreement template;
- Annual Activity Report template;
- Annual Financial Report template;
- Bursary Recipient Data template;
- Funding Request Form (Note: do not complete this document. Only forms completed and submitted online will be accepted.)

To request access to these documents, please send an email to [boursesfsls@acufo.ca](mailto:boursesfsls@acufo.ca).

## 12. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Please send all requests for information to [boursesfsls@acufo.ca](mailto:boursesfsls@acufo.ca).

## 13. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. ACUFC is not required to justify the approval or rejection of a funding request. ACUFC assumes no obligation whatsoever toward postsecondary entities.
2. Selected funding requests will serve as general guidance for the development of a funding agreement by ACUFC. The proposed agreement may contain changes to the funding request initially submitted and may be subject to further discussions before its signature by both parties.
3. ACUFC will accept funding requests in French and in English as part of this call for proposals.
4. Bursaries provided under this Program must not replace other bursaries or scholarships to students related to bilingualism or French as a second language, as the case may be, provided by the postsecondary entity.

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<sup>5</sup> ACUFC reserves the right to modify or correct the content of these documents at any time, without prior notice.