

## **Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: Call for Proposals**

### **Introduction**

The Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship at Ryerson University (“Brookfield Institute”) is launching an Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Call for Proposals to build supports within the Ontario ecosystem that provide equitable opportunity for success for women entrepreneurs, including social entrepreneurs, in growing their businesses.

The Call for Proposals was developed through a design-led approach that engaged women entrepreneurs in Ontario and the service providers who support them. This initiative is funded by the Government of Ontario. For more information on the initiative, please see [webbreakbarriers.ca](http://webbreakbarriers.ca).

### **Submission Deadline**

The deadline to submit an application is **4 pm EST on Friday, February 2, 2018**.

All required documents must be provided at the time of submission. Please note that incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

### **Objective**

The Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Call is seeking proposals from Applicants to deliver projects that:

- Address challenges that women entrepreneurs face in growing their businesses
- Increase inclusion in Ontario’s entrepreneurship ecosystem

Our aim is to be inclusive of all women entrepreneurs, including newcomers, racialized women, women with disabilities, and LGBTQIS2, francophone, Indigenous, northern and rural, remote, young, low-income, and senior women. Throughout this document, the word “women” is used to inclusively to represent all groups of women including the underrepresented groups mentioned above.

### **Eligibility**

## **Project Requirements**

The focus of this Call is to support women (18 years of age or older, Ontario residents, Canadian citizens and/or permanent residents) who have already launched businesses and/or social enterprises, have established product/market fit, have secured first customers, and have a proven and scalable business model. For the purpose of scope, this Call is not designed to help women who are considering starting a business, nor is it intended to increase the number of women pursuing entrepreneurship.

All projects should build on or be informed by existing best practices, and describe how those best practices will be disseminated, adapted or adopted within the broader Ontario entrepreneurship ecosystem. All best practices must be strongly supported through the use of academic or applied studies, reports, evidence from other jurisdictions, or evidence from other programs delivered or supported by the Applicant.

Projects must align with the Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Call objectives by engaging in activities that support women entrepreneurs in Ontario through all of the following methods:

- **Act:** Address the unique\* challenges that women entrepreneurs face in growing their businesses;
- **Promote:** Disseminate best practices\*\* (e.g. programs, projects, and processes) that provide direct benefit to women entrepreneurs; and
- **Include:** Engage members of Ontario's entrepreneurship ecosystem in best practices that increase inclusivity within the ecosystem, thereby strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem as a whole.

\* For examples of these unique challenges, please review the Women + Entrepreneurship Discussion Paper available at [webreakbarriers.ca](http://webreakbarriers.ca)

\*\* "Best practices" are defined as approaches, methods or procedures that have been shown to produce optimal results through research and experience.

Anticipated activities performed by Applicants include, but are not limited to:

- Adapting and developing tools, templates, platforms, curricula and other resources to support the development of coaching, mentorship and other programs servicing women entrepreneurs;
- Licensing tools, platforms or curricula to support the development of programs servicing women entrepreneurs;
- Delivery of programming by mentors, coaches or other service providers (e.g. business mentorship or coaching programs that help women entrepreneurs transition from the startup stage to the growth stage of their businesses; programming to connect women to new market opportunities);
- Training and support associated with programming to help stakeholders in the entrepreneurship ecosystem better support women entrepreneurs (e.g. training programs in unconscious bias); and
- Impact evaluation of programming.

Examples of “out-of-scope” projects include:

- Entrepreneurship or financial literacy skills programs targeted to early-stage entrepreneurs; and
- Startup boot camps or hackathons for idea development.

### **Who Can Apply?**

Applications must be submitted by a single organization, or a consortium of organizations, including:

- Charities
- Not-for-profits
- Indigenous organizations
- For-profits
- Municipalities
- Boards of education
- Post-secondary institutions

Applicants must either be Ontario-based or have a major base of operations in Ontario (e.g. a multinational organization incorporated in a separate jurisdiction but with a major office in Ontario). Applications from individual persons will not be accepted.

Applications with multiple partners are encouraged. However, one organization must be identified as the lead applicant for the purpose of signing the funding agreement, receiving and managing the funds, ensuring coordination of project parties and activities, and communicating with the Brookfield Institute regarding the status of the project on behalf of all partners. Lead organizations must be eligible as set out above.

For the purpose of clarity, throughout this document the term “applicant” is used to refer to both single organizations applying to this Call and lead organizations of consortiums applying to this Call.

Applicants must have a mandate to support women and/or entrepreneurs in Ontario.

### **Performance Metrics**

All projects will be expected to report on the following two outputs:

- Number of women entrepreneurs who accessed new resources or participated in new programming
- Percentage of these women who state that they found the resources/programming valuable

Performance metrics reporting needs to include a description of the resources or programming that were accessed, and how they were accessed. The Brookfield Institute may require recipients to report against other metrics in order to evaluate the aggregate impact of multiple initiatives.

### **Funding Available**

We aim to award multiple projects through this Call for a total disbursement of \$450,000.

Maximum duration of projects is 15 months, and it is recommended that individual projects not exceed \$225,000 in size. Applications larger than the stated amount are welcome only by a consortium application. A case must be made for good value for money.

Applications will require a budget and it is recommended that the funding request be reasonable to sufficiently deliver on project outcomes.

Matching and/or in-kind funding is encouraged.

### **Duration**

15 months (March 2018 – June 2019).

All project activities, including reporting requirements, must be completed within 15 months.

### **Application Process + Timelines**

- Proposals must be submitted in PDF format and emailed to [info@webreakbarriers.ca](mailto:info@webreakbarriers.ca) by 4 pm EST on Friday, **February 2, 2018**.
- Questions can also be submitted to [info@webreakbarriers.ca](mailto:info@webreakbarriers.ca) and responses will be posted on the FAQ section of the website. The deadline for submitting questions will be Wednesday, **January 24, 2018**.
- Successful Applicants will be notified by the **end of February**.
- Projects will launch in **March 31, 2018**, and must be completed with funds spent by Sunday, **June 30, 2019**.
- Information can be found on our website at [webreakbarriers.ca](http://webreakbarriers.ca).

### **Application and Evaluation Criteria**

Applications must be submitted in PDF format and can be no longer than 12 pages (including images, graphics, charts, appendices, etc).

#### *General Formatting and Presentation*

Print must be in black ink on a white background, of letter quality (minimum standard), with no more than six lines per inch. The type size for fonts measured in points (pts) must be no smaller than 12 pts. If measured in characters per inch (cpi), it must be no more than 10 cpi. Condensed type is unacceptable.

Page size must be letter size at 8½ x 11 inches (21.5 cm x 28 cm), with margins of ¾ of an inch (1.905 cm) (minimum) all around. Enter the title of the proposal at the top of every page and number the pages consecutively.

Graphs and illustrations may be included, but will count as part of the page limits set out above. Single or double column presentation of text, graphs or illustrations is acceptable.

**Any extra material will be removed.**

### *Application Requirements*

Applications will be considered complete when they include the following:

- Application (includes: organization(s)’ legal name, business number, year of incorporation (if applicable), mailing address, contact information, length of project, proposed start and end date, amount of funds requested, location of project activities, names of partners (if applicable), type of organization, and all other sections required under the outlined evaluation criteria.
- Project Plan, which includes at a minimum: Activities, Milestones, Timelines, Outputs/Outcomes. (Please see Appendix 2 for Project Plan Template.)
- Project Budget. (Please see Appendix 3.)
- Signed Acknowledgement Form. (Please see Appendix 4.)
- Letters of Support (if applicable).

Applications submitted with partners must provide letters of support from each partner listed in the application which detail the nature of the partnership and the contributions that the partner will be making to the proposed project (letters of support will not be included in the 12-page document limit) and each letter of support cannot exceed two pages in length.

Applications should address the following criteria, against which they will also be evaluated:

Section		Assessment Criteria	Weight (%)
1	<p><b>Objective and Evidence-Based</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear and concise description of proposed project.</li> <li>- Evidence used to identify the challenge or issue to support the best practice being addressed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project demonstrates clearly how it will strengthen ecosystem supports for women entrepreneurs growing businesses in Ontario.</li> <li>- The project demonstrates clearly how it will build dedicated supports and/or resources to strengthen the ecosystem.</li> </ul>	25

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project demonstrates how it will support women (18 years of age or older, Ontario residents, Canadian citizens and/or permanent residents) who have already launched businesses and/or social enterprises, who have established product/market fit, have secured first customers, and have a proven, repeatable and scalable business model.</li> <li>- Describes the evidence base (e.g. academic or applied studies, reports, evidence from other jurisdictions, evidence from the other programs delivered or supported by the Applicant) that supports the approach outlined in the project objective.</li> <li>- Describes how the project builds on or is informed by existing best practices, and how these best practices will be disseminated, adapted or adopted within the broader Ontario entrepreneurship ecosystem.</li> </ul>	
2	<p><b>Project Description and Project Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A clear and concise explanation of the project.</li> <li>- A detailed project plan, including activities, milestones timelines, outputs/outcomes.</li> <li>- List project partners and their roles and responsibilities, if</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies a need or problem and proposes a well-defined solution.</li> <li>- Details a clear and comprehensive approach to addressing the project’s objectives, including the role of partners in project delivery.</li> <li>- Outlines a viable plan to meet the objectives of the project.</li> <li>- Activities, milestones, timelines, outputs/outcomes are reasonable and achievable given the resources</li> </ul>	30

	applicable.	<p>allocated to the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Activities are relevant and in project scope (e.g. women growing businesses, strengthening the ecosystem, adapting best practices, etc.).</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b>Measurable Outcomes</b></p> <p>- Describe the outputs and outcomes your project will achieve (including mandatory outputs, as well as applicable metrics).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The mandatory outputs are relevant to project scope (number of women entrepreneurs who accessed new resources or participated in new programming, and percentage of these women who state that they found the resources/programming valuable).</li> <li>- Defines clear, measurable outcomes that will result directly from this project.</li> <li>- Explains the evaluation framework or approach that will be used to evaluate outcomes.</li> </ul>	10
4	<p><b>Budget</b></p> <p>- A detailed budget that includes all project expenses and contributions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expenses and costs are eligible for and in line with Ryerson University's guidelines (please see Appendix 1).</li> <li>- Budget items align with the project description and deliverables.</li> <li>- Proposed expenses are realistic, reasonable and aligned with general market rates.</li> <li>- Where applicable, in-kind or matching funding has been identified.</li> </ul>	10
5	<p><b>Inclusivity</b></p> <p>- Women entrepreneurs (18 years of age or older,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear description of how the project will incorporate and serve a broad and diverse set of women entrepreneurs.</li> </ul>	5

	<p>Ontario residents, Canadian citizens and/or permanent residents) are identified as target population.</p> <p>- Project is inclusive of all women entrepreneurs, including those from underrepresented communities, such as: newcomers, racialized women, women with disabilities, and LGBTQIS2, francophone, Indigenous, northern and rural, remote, young, low-income, and senior women.</p>		
6	<p><b>Organizational Capacity and Experience</b></p> <p>- A clear description of the sole applicant and/or all organizations within a consortium is provided.</p>	<p>- Sole applicant organizations, or the lead organization within a consortium's, mandate to support women and/or entrepreneurs in Ontario is included and relevant.</p> <p>- Evidence (through examples of past work, partnerships, etc.) on your organization's ability to manage projects of this size.</p>	10
7	<p><b>Risk and Mitigation Strategy</b></p> <p>- Identification of key risks and approaches to mitigating those risks.</p>	<p>- Risks are related to a project's activities and clearly identified. Mitigation strategies are identified and realistic.</p> <p>- Risks are assessed for likelihood and impact based on program delivery experience and regional expertise.</p>	10

***Applicants may be requested to provide articles of incorporation, most recent audited financial statements, and/or other evidence that the organization is in good standing.***

### **Accountability**

Successful applications will receive their funding pursuant to an Agreement between the Applicant and the Brookfield Institute. The Applicant will be responsible for managing and executing the development and implementation of the proposed program, including coordination of activities, budgeting and resource management amongst partners (if any). The Applicant will also be responsible for ensuring compliance with financial obligations established by the Brookfield Institute. The funding agreement with the Brookfield Institute will set out the terms and conditions governing the payment of the award, and will include:

- A project budget;
- Project management requirements, including a complete project plan and milestones;
- Reporting obligations;
- Method and schedule of payment;
- Contract termination and corrective action in the event of default; and
- Other performance and accountability provisions identified by the Brookfield Institute and agreed upon with the Applicant.

Successful Applicants will:

- Be accountable to the Brookfield Institute for all funds and project components, and will be considered to be the final decision-making authority among Member Organizations if engaged in a partnership under the Agreement;
- Manage their project plan to meet financial and accountability reporting requirements and deliverables, as identified in the Funding Agreement;
- Engage and manage relationships with any third-party service providers;
- Be responsible for receiving and administering funds on behalf of the partners in accordance with the requirements of their agreements (if applicable);
- Be required to put in effect and maintain for the duration of their program, at their own expense, all necessary insurance for the initiative, including Commercial General Liability Insurance to an inclusive limit of not less than Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence. If the proposed application is approved for funding, Recipients must provide the Brookfield Institute with a copy of their Certificate of

Insurance as a condition of funding. Coverage under Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) may be considered, based on prior approval by Ryerson University;

- Be responsible for performance measurement, including ensuring data quality, establishing targets, and aggregating information collected by partners (if any) for reporting; and
- Be required to submit regular reporting that will be used by the Brookfield Institute to assess the progress of implementation, as well as compliance with relevant directives and requirements under the Agreement.

It is anticipated that funding will be allocated in installments according to a specific payment schedule and milestones. Disbursement of funding installments will be dependent on the recipient meeting all program and reporting requirements under the Agreement. If at any point the Brookfield Institute uncovers evidence that the Recipient made false statements in their proposal or in any provided documentation, the Brookfield Institute maintains the right to revoke funding at their discretion.

### **Confidentiality**

Please note that Ryerson University, of which the Brookfield Institute is a part of, is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The Act provides every person with a right of access to information in the custody or under the control of Ryerson University, subject to a limited set of exemptions. Section 17 of the Act provides a limited exemption for third-party information that reveals a trade secret or scientific, commercial, technical, financial or labour relations information supplied in confidence where disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to result in certain harms.

Any trade secret or any scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information submitted to the Brookfield Institute in confidence should be clearly marked. The Brookfield Institute will provide notice before granting access to a record that might contain information referred to in Section 17 so that the affected party may make representations to the Brookfield Institute concerning disclosure.

The Applicant is advised that the names and addresses of Applicants, the amount of funding, and the purpose for which funds are awarded is information the Brookfield Institute will make available to the public.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Successful Applicants shall carry out the program and use the funds received from Brookfield Institute pursuant to the Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Call without an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. A conflict of interest includes any circumstances where:

- a. the Applicant;
- b. or any person who has the capacity to influence the Applicant's decisions,

has outside commitments, relationships or financial interests that could, or could be seen to, interfere with the Applicant's objective, unbiased and impartial judgment relating to the program and the use of the funds.

As a condition of consideration for funding, Applicants shall:

- Disclose to the Brookfield Institute, without delay, any situation that a reasonable person would interpret as either an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest; and
- Comply with any terms and conditions that the Brookfield Institute may prescribe as a result of the disclosure.

### **Other Terms and Conditions**

- 1) This Call is discretionary. As such, notwithstanding that the Applicant has submitted a complete application and met all program criteria, there is no guarantee that the Applicant will be awarded funding. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Applicant acknowledges that if an Applicant submits an application, the Brookfield Institute is under no obligation to approve funding.
- 2) All applications must be complete and signed by a designate with the authority to bind the Applicant in a legal agreement. An application that is incomplete will not be evaluated. Additional materials other than those requested will not be accepted or considered to be part of the application.
- 3) The Brookfield Institute reserves the right to request or require adjustments to elements communicated in a completed application as a condition of approval in order to ensure that the objectives of the Call are satisfied.

- 4) Applicants should not take any action, or incur any costs related to the project, that is predicated on receiving funding from the Brookfield Institute until an application is approved and all parties have entered into a legal agreement.
- 5) All Applicants must demonstrate capacity to develop materials and programming that accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its Regulations.
- 6) The Brookfield Institute reserves the right to impose whatever conditions it deems advisable in the acceptance of an application.
- 7) The Brookfield Institute, in its sole and absolute discretion, may determine whether to provide funding, the amount of any funding, and the purpose for which the funding will be used.
- 8) The Brookfield Institute reserves the right to issue addendum to this Call for Proposals or hold another Call for Proposals should it be required in order to meet the objectives of the Call.

## **Appendix 1: Eligible Expenditures**

### **Eligible Expenditures**

Expenditures that are reasonable and necessary for the successful implementation of the Call will be eligible for reimbursement, subject to the parameters below. Expenditures must be incurred in accordance with an approved budget, supported by acceptable documentation. Eligible expenditures must all pertain to “net new” or incremental activity that would not occur without project funding. The expenditures must therefore not relate to existing or planned activities delivered with government or other funding.

Eligible expenditures under the Call include:

- Salaries and benefits of staff;
- Expenses related to project administration, up to the maximum amounts specified in the Funding Agreement;
- Office lease and maintenance expenses;
- Office supplies and services;
- Office equipment and software;

- Financial and professional services required for the delivery of the project, including audit expenses, if any, incurred in the preparation of the financial statements required under the Funding Agreement;
- Professional services required for the development of resources and tools to support women entrepreneurs;
- Staff training costs;
- Costs associated with the delivery of training, mentorship and/or other new direct supports to entrepreneurs, consistent with the Applicant's proposed service delivery model;
- Telecommunications/courier charges (e.g., telephone, Internet, mail and courier);
- Production costs for resource development such as graphic design, printing, translation into other languages, alternative formats;
- Expenses associated with outreach to women entrepreneurs, events and training sessions directly related to program activities; and
- Travel incurred and reimbursed in accordance with the [Ontario Public Service Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive](#).

The Applicant must maintain documentation/receipts for all expenditures; the Brookfield Institute reserves the right and may request to see them at its discretion or for audit purposes. In the event of any interpretation issues regarding expenditures or valuations, the decision of the Brookfield Institute is final and determinative.

Ineligible expenses under the Call include:

- Costs not directly associated with meeting the deliverables and milestones as specified in the Funding Agreement;
- Costs related to proposal development (including staff costs);
- Capital costs (e.g. land, building, vehicles, leasehold improvements);
- Entertainment expenses, gifts and alcoholic beverages;
- Costs associated with activities or operations performed outside of Ontario, unless the Applicant obtains prior approval from the Brookfield Institute in writing for any proposed out-of-province expenditures;
- Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points programs;
- Fines and penalties;
- Donations in the form of goodwill and other intangibles;
- Opportunity costs;
- Standard discounts;

- Interest charges;
- Allowance for interest on invested capital, bonds, debentures, bank or other loans together with related bond discounts and finance charges;
- Losses on investments, bad debts and related collection expenses;
- Losses on other projects or contracts;
- Amortization of unrealized appreciation of assets;
- Depreciation of assets;
- Expenses and depreciation of excess facilities;
- Annual general meetings, budget deficits, membership fees, fundraising activities, committee and political meetings, or religious activities;
- Costs covered by other government funding;
- Contingency or unexplained miscellaneous costs;
- Portion of harmonized sales tax (HST) costs that are refundable; and
- Activities that could be deemed discriminatory, as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## Appendix 2: Project Plan Template

Please use this example project plan template when submitting the project plan for your application (add extra rows as needed). The project plan template should be incorporated into the PDF application you submit, and will be counted towards the maximum 12-page limit.

Activity	Deliverable	Timeline	Outputs/Outcomes

### **Appendix 3: Budget Template**

Please use the Excel budget template provided when submitting the budget for your application – the spreadsheet can be found on our website [webbreakbarriers.ca](http://webbreakbarriers.ca)

Note that the budget template will not be included as part of the 12-page limit for your application.

## **Appendix 4: Acknowledgment**

### **Acknowledgement Form**

Please submit a scanned, signed Acknowledgement Form, which must be signed by an authorized signing officer for the Applicant.

#### **Contact Information:**

Please provide the contact information for the person in the organization leading the development and execution of the application.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Acknowledgement and Certification:**

In submitting this application, we acknowledge understanding of the following:

- The Applicant has read and understands the information contained in the Application Form and Guidelines.
- The Applicant is aware that the information contained herein can be used for the assessment of eligibility and for statistical reporting.
- The names and addresses of Successful Applicants, the amount of funding, and the purpose for which it is awarded may be made available to the public by Ryerson University.
- The information provided in this application is true, correct and complete in every respect. If Ryerson University discovers that this application contains a material misrepresentation, this application shall be deemed to be withdrawn immediately by the Applicant.
- Additional materials other than those requested will not be accepted or reviewed by Ryerson University.
- The Applicant understands any funding commitment will be provided by way of an approval letter from the Ryerson University and will be subject to any conditions included in such a letter. Conditions of funding will include the requirement for the funding recipient to enter into a funding agreement satisfactory to the Ryerson University, outlining the terms and conditions governing

the funding. The said funding agreement will, among other things, obligate the successful Applicant to report to Ryerson University on how the funding was spent.

- Applicants should not take any action, or incur any costs related to the Call, that is predicated on receiving funding until an application is approved and all parties have entered into a funding agreement acceptable to Ryerson University.
- Ryerson University reserves the right to impose whatever conditions it deems advisable as a condition of accepting an application.
- The Applicant is currently in substantial compliance with all applicable laws.
- The Applicant is not in default of the terms and conditions of any loan or funding agreement with Ryerson University or an agency of the Government of Ontario.
- Ryerson University is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)*. The Act provides every person with a right of access to information in the custody or under the control of Ryerson University, subject to a limited set of exemptions. Section 17 of the Act provides a limited exemption for third-party information that reveals a trade secret or scientific, commercial, technical, financial or labour relations information supplied in confidence where disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to result in certain harms.
- Any trade secret or any scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information submitted to Ryerson University in confidence should be clearly marked. Ryerson University will provide notice before granting access to a record that might contain information referred to in Section 17 so that the affected party may make representations to Ryerson University concerning disclosure in accordance with FIPPA.
- The program is a discretionary and non-entitlement Call with a limited budget. Therefore, notwithstanding any other statement or provision in these Guidelines, even if an application meets all stated criteria, there is no guarantee that funding will be awarded as there may be other Applicants that more effectively meet the objectives. Ryerson University reserves the right to take into consideration location and diversity of applications to ensure program objectives are met.

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have the authority to submit this application on behalf of, and to bind, the organization.

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Name

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Title

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Date