



CONESTOGA
Connect Life and Learning

GIG MARKETPLACE



THE
ACCELERATOR
CENTRE

Phase 2 GUIDE

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Welcome to the AC:Studio + Conestoga Gig Marketplace Program!



What is the Accelerator Centre?

Originally launched by the University, federal, provincial, regional and city governments, the centre now counts Wilfrid Laurier University, Conestoga College, University of Guelph and several economic development and technology organizations as partners. It's Canada's #1 private business accelerator and one of the top-five accelerator organizations in the world. It has helped some of Canada's most exciting companies – Axonify, Clearpath Robotics and ApplyBoard, among others – get their start. It has programming that helps companies through the entire growth process from ideation to global expansion.

What is the AC:Studio Program?

The AC:Studio program was designed to support high-potential startup founders, whether they have an existing business idea or they are looking for their next startup adventure. This hybrid accelerator/venture studio program combines the best of the award-winning AC:Incubate program with a venture studio model that funds high impact startups and matches great ideas with talented founders. Through the partnership with Conestoga College's Gig Lab, this support will go beyond the usual mentorship and workshops and provide startups with access to tactical support through the Gig Lab freelancers.

Where does the funding come from?

The AC:Studio program is funded by the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency (FedDev Ontario). This program offers seed funding grants to qualifying start-ups and small businesses to receive one-to-one mentorship, sales training, and access to in-kind-hours with industry experts.

This is where you come in! As part of this program, AC:Studio Companies have an allotment of funding which can be used exclusively on the Conestoga Gig Marketplace!

How does it WORK?



Complete your profile on the Conestoga Gig Marketplace.

Completing your online profile which will become your showcase to help attract clients and solicit RFP's from AC:Studio Clients

Get RFP's

AC:Studio Clients will submit an RFP using a specific template via [Conestogagigs.ca](https://conestogagigs.ca). To be eligible for the program, an RFP must be submitted through the website portal in an approved format. Proposals received outside of this channel will not qualify for program funding.



Send an acknowledgment

Send a notification to Client that you have received the RFP. Proposals should be acknowledged within 48 business hours that will confirm the receipt and your intention to respond to or decline the request.



Ask questions to qualify the project

<https://conestogagigs.ca/freelancer-rfp-submission/> You will have an opportunity to ask questions to the prospect before the RFP window closes. To help expedite the process and ensure that questions are tracked, the questions must be submitted using the online form on the website. AC:Studio clients are tasked with answering questions before the RFP window closes.



Build & Submit a Proposal

Proposals are to be submitted using the provided PDF which is [available here](#). This is a universal format provided to all Gig Marketplace Freelancers and is designed to provide a standardized framework for equal evaluation. Amendments and portfolio work are to be attached as an appendix to this document. Once signed, this document becomes the governing document of the relationship between you (the Freelancer) and the AC:Studio Client.



Accepting a proposal

You will be notified via email from a form completed by the AC:Studio Client. For the agreement to be formalized, it must contain the following:

- Submitted using the proper PDF format
- A RFP Number assigned by the AC
- A client signature (virtual and physically signed copies are okay)



Timelines & KEY DATES

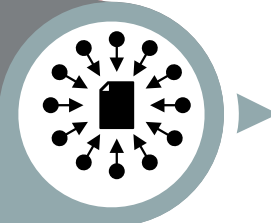
June 17th 2023

Phase 2 Kick-Off with AC
Studio Companies.



June 17th 2023

Rolling RFP window opens
and RFPs can be sent to
Freelancers.



RFP Acknowledgement

RFPs must be acknowledged
within 48 business hours of
receipt.



Questions

Questions can be asked at
any time to get clarification
on RFPs. Please give your
potential client time to
answer.



Proposal Submission

Proposals MUST be
submitted 2 weeks from
receipt of RFP



Proposal Awarding

Proposals should be awarded
and notifications sent to
unsuccessful bidders within
7 business days of proposal
receipt.



Phase 2 Closes

April 2023



What you need to KNOW

As you navigate through the process, we're sure that there will be questions and we're happy to help.

Below we've compiled a list of some of the most frequently asked questions and key information for you to be successful in the program.

If you ever get stuck or are unsure about the process, please reach out to kronan@conestogac.on.ca for help.

1 What can the funding be used for?

Funding can be used for services from Freelancers who are currently in good standing on the Conestoga Gig Marketplace. As a Freelancer, it is up to you to scope, develop and deliver on the items outlined in your proposal and determine how you will be using the funding.

As your scoping the proposal, it may make sense to collaborate with other Freelancers to complete a project. Funding can be used to finance the work of collaborators, however, as the "project lead" it will be your responsibility to organize the payment terms and conditions with participating entities.

If your project includes 3rd party spending, you must ensure there is a note outlining any additional charges related to the project which will not be covered as part of the AC:Studio program.

2 Can you collaborate on RFPs?

We know there will be times where it makes sense to collaborate or outsource work to other Freelancers to fulfill a project. This is something which is encouraged as long as you're working with other Gig Marketplace Freelancers.

Outsourcing work to 3rd party entities or other platforms outside of Conestoga Gigs may disqualify you from receiving funding without permission from the Conestoga Gig Marketplace program administrators.

3 What are the timelines?

In Phase 2 of the program, there will be rolling RFP submissions. This means there will NOT be set windows as you've seen in Phase 1. AC:Studio clients are able to submit RFPs at any time until the end of the program. This gives greater flexibility and allows them to reach out for help when they need it.

What you need to KNOW

4 How will I receive an RFP?

Go to the AC:Studio Company landing page on the Conestoga Gig Marketplace at: <http://conestogagigs.ca/accelerator-centre/>

- Download and complete the official RFP form and save as a PDF.
- Search for freelancers that fit your needs.
- Complete the submission form, attaching the completed RFP form as a PDF. Attach any additional documentation to support project needs as a PDF.
- You will receive an email confirming completion of the submission.

Submissions by any other method will not be accepted.

5 How do I submit a proposal?

Go to the AC:Studio Freelancer landing page on the Conestoga Gig Marketplace at: [We know there will be times where it makes sense to collaborate or outsource work to other Freelancers to fulfill a project. This is something which is encouraged as long as you're working with other Gig Marketplace Freelancers.](#)

[Outsourcing work to 3rd party entities or other platforms outside of Conestoga Gigs may disqualify you from receiving funding without permission from the Conestoga Gig Marketplace program administrators.](#)

- Freelancers must have received an RFP from an AC:Studio company in order to submit a proposal. No unsolicited proposals will be accepted.
- Questions may be submitted to companies ONLY using the Q&A form provided on the landing page.
- Complete the proposal form and save as a PDF.
- Complete the submission form, attaching the completed Proposal form as a PDF. Attach up to one (1) additional document to support your proposal as a PDF.

Submissions by any other method will not be accepted.

What you need to KNOW

6 Can I make changes to a proposal or withdraw a proposal?

Companies may amend their RFP's before the Submission Deadline by re-submitting a revised RFP through the Gig Marketplace portal to the selected freelancers and including a message to all regarding the nature of the amendment.

Gig Marketplace freelancers may amend their proposals prior to the Submission Deadline by re-submitting a revised proposal through the Gig Marketplace portal. Revised proposals must be clearly marked "Revised" for differentiation.

To withdraw an RFP, a company should send a notice of withdrawal to the RFP Contact for AC:Studio companies.

To withdraw a Proposal, a freelancer should send a notice of withdrawal to the RFP Contact for Gig Marketplace Freelancers.

Questions and clarification.

As part of this program, it is your responsibility to engage with the client, seek to understand their business and project requirements and manage them accordingly.

8 How will I know if I've won or lost an RFP?

When evaluating proposals, AC:Studio companies may request further information from the freelancers in order to verify, clarify or supplement the information provided in the freelancer's proposal.

AC:Studio companies must indicate the most important criteria they will use to evaluate proposals on all RFP form submissions.

After a thorough review of the proposal submissions, the preferred freelancer will be contacted to finalize the agreement.

Once an agreement is made between an AC:Studio company and a freelancer, the company will notify the other freelancers directly via email. The notification is to include the #1 reason that the job was awarded to the winning proposal.

Should you be successful, you'll receive a signed copy of the proposal which will make it official.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

As part of this program, we know that sometimes an engagement might not go 100% according to plan. That's why we've developed a dispute resolution / escalation plan which is designed to meet the needs of both the Freelancer and the AC:Studio client.

What do I do as a Freelancer?

Should you be in a situation where you would like some help with an AC:Studio client, your first point of contact will be Kris Ronan (kronan@conestogac.on.ca) as soon as the issue arises.

It is EXTREMELY important that your reach out as soon as possible as working through the mediation process is very time sensitive and typically will bring the best results when dealt with immediately.

If you feel it say it.

Once an issue or escalation has been brought to Kris, he will take it directly to the program coordinators at the AC:Studio for next steps.

Mediation Process / Meeting

In some cases and based on the judgement of the Gig Marketplace & AC:Studio team, you may be asked to join a facilitated meeting between yourself and your client. In this meeting it is important to gather information from all parties involved as well as be prepared with any background information or documents asked for in advance.

What happens if an AC:Studio client has a complaint?

In the event that an AC:Studio client has a complaint or concern about the work being done, they will contact their assigned Client Coordinator to address the issue.

Based on the judgement of the Client Coordinator, they may request a review by the Gig Marketplace Team which would result in an email or meeting notification sent to the Freelancer.

Again, should this happen it is extremely important to respond with any requested documentation in a timely manner to deal with the situation as cleanly and fairly for all parties involved. Failure to do so may result in your disqualification from the program.

INVOICING

All invoices are to be sent to Rose Mastnak (rmastnak@conestogac.on.ca) for processing. As this program is autonomous from Conestoga College, you are not to contact the College accounting department at any time as this causes confusion among that team.

Any questions regarding invoicing or payments are to be sent directly to the Gig Marketplace team

WHAT MAKES A GOOD INVOICE?

Here is all the information you'll need to submit an invoice for processing:

INVOICE					
Your Company Name Your Address Your City, Postal Code Phone Number Email HST#	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>INVOICE #</th><th>DATE</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>[123456]</td><td>5/1/2014</td></tr></tbody></table>	INVOICE #	DATE	[123456]	5/1/2014
INVOICE #	DATE				
[123456]	5/1/2014				
BILL TO Conestoga College 299 Doon Valley Dr, Kitchener, ON N2G 4M4 519-748-5220 rmastnak@conestogac.on.ca	AC:Studio Client Name RFP#				
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT				
Copywriting for website pages (2 hrs)	\$350				
Editing of existing copy (1.5 hrs)	\$187.50				
Subtotal \$537.50					
HST (if applicable) \$69.88					
Total: \$607.38					
<i>Thank you for your business!</i>					

If you have any questions about this invoice, please contact
[Name, Phone, email@address.com]

Did you know that in Phase 1....

115

RFP's Submitted by
AC:Studio Clients

Over
\$200K

Paid to Gig Marketplace
Freelancers

83

Projects awarded

Terms & CONDITIONS

Disqualification for Conflict of Interest

AC:Studio companies may disqualify a freelancer for any conduct, situation, or circumstances that, in its sole discretion, constitute a Conflict of Interest.

Illegal or Unethical Conduct

Freelancers must not engage in any illegal business practices, including activities such as bid-rigging, price-fixing, bribery, fraud, coercion or collusion. They must not engage in any unethical conduct, including lobbying, as described above, or other inappropriate communications; offering gifts to any employees, officers, agents, elected or appointed officials or other representatives of AC:Studio companies; deceitfulness; submitting proposals containing misrepresentations or other misleading or inaccurate information; or any other conduct that compromises or may be seen to compromise the competitive process provided for in this RFP.

RFP Process Non-Binding

This RFP process is not intended to create and will not create a formal, legally binding bidding process and will instead be governed by the law applicable to direct commercial negotiations. For greater certainty and without limitation this RFP will not give rise to any Contract A-based tendering law duties or any other legal obligations arising out of any process contract or collateral contract.

Terms & CONDITIONS

Dispute Resolution for Gig Marketplace Freelancers

Any proponent with concerns about the RFP process is required to contact Kris Ronan (kronan@conestogac.on.ca) by email. The email must contain:

- (a) a clear explanation of the freelancer's concerns with the procurement, including specifics as to why it disagrees with the procurement process or its outcome; and
- (b) the freelancer's contact details, including name, telephone number, and email address.

Conestoga will send an initial response to acknowledge receipt of the proponent's notice and indicate the date by which Conestoga will either provide the proponent with a formal response by email, or, will meet with the proponent for a formal debrief session.

Dispute Resolution for AC:Studio Companies

Any AC:Studio company with concerns about the RFP process is required to contact their AC:Studio Client Experience Coordinator (CEC) by email. The email must contain: (a) a clear explanation of the company's concerns with the procurement, including specifics as to why it disagrees with the procurement process or its outcome; and (b) the company's contact details, including name, telephone number, and email address. The CEC will send an initial response to acknowledge receipt of the company's notice and indicate the date by which will either provide the company with a formal response by email, or, will meet with the company for a formal debrief session.

Terms & CONDITIONS

Intellectual Property Ownership

All work completed by Gig Marketplace freelancers in response to an RFP from an AC:Studio company, including all intellectual property rights in respect thereof, is the sole property of the AC:Studio company. Freelancers cannot use any of the work created for an AC:Studio company for any other client or project.

If Gig Marketplace Freelancers use third party materials in their project for an AC:Studio company, it is their responsibility not to breach any third-party rights.

Confidential Information of AC:Studio Companies

All information provided by or obtained from AC:Studio companies in any form in connection with this RFP either before or after the issuance of this RFP:

- is the sole property of the AC:Studio company and must be treated as confidential;
- is not to be used for any purpose other than replying to this RFP and the performance of any subsequent contract for the Deliverables;
- must not be disclosed without prior written authorization from the AC:Studio company; and
- must be returned by the proponent to the AC:Studio company immediately upon the request of the company.

Terms & CONDITIONS

Confidential Information of Gig Marketplace Freelancers

Freelancers should identify any information in their proposal or any accompanying documentation supplied in confidence for which confidentiality is to be maintained by the AC:Studio company. The confidentiality of such information will be maintained by the company, except as otherwise required by law or by order of a court or tribunal. Freelancers are advised that their proposals will, as necessary, be disclosed, on a confidential basis, to advisers retained by AC:Studio companies to advise or assist with the RFP process, including the evaluation of proposals. If a freelancer has any questions about the collection and use of personal information pursuant to this RFP, questions are to be submitted to the RFP Contact.

Pricing

All budgets provided from AC:Studio companies must be in Canadian dollars and do not include HST.

All pricing in proposals from Gig Marketplace freelancers must be in Canadian dollars and include any necessary duties and taxes.

Terms & CONDITIONS

Indemnity

Service contracts are between the AC:Studio company and the Gig Marketplace freelancer.

All Parties shall indemnify and hold harmless Conestoga College, its agents and employees from and against any claim for damages arising from an occurrence of bodily injury or the destruction of tangible personal property provided that the damages are caused by the negligence or breach of this Agreement by the Parties, or by anyone for whom the Parties are responsible in law, in the performance of this Agreement and provided that the Parties are given notice of the claim by Conestoga College within a reasonable time following the occurrence but in any event within 48 hours of Conestoga College first acquiring knowledge of the circumstances of the claim. Conestoga College expressly waives the right to claim against for, or be indemnified by the Parties from and against, any other claims and further agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Parties, its agents, and employees from and against any claim for damages which are not caused by the negligence or breach of this Agreement by the Parties, or by anyone for whom the Parties are responsible in law.

Terms & CONDITIONS

Billing/Payment Terms

Payment of freelancers will flow through Conestoga College.

Freelancers are to invoice a maximum of 50% of the project costs as a downpayment. Deposit invoices must be issued during awards week as detailed in the RFP Timeline. Final invoices are to be issued upon completion of the project. Any project of less than a week in duration should be invoiced 100% upon completion.

All invoices are to be sent for approval to:

Rose Mastnak, Director, Conestoga Entrepreneurship Collective
Rmastnak@conestogac.on.ca

Project Completion Notification

Upon completion of an AC:Studio company project, freelancers are to submit a Project Completion Notification form that can be found on their landing page:

[Billing/Payment Terms](#)

This will stimulate payment of the final invoice.



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BEST OF LUCK

HAVE A GREAT PHASE 2 OF THE PROGRAM

**NOW CLOSE
SOME DEALS!**