

Upskilling Program in Inclusive Excellence (UPIE) Application Instructions

Thank you for your interest in this **Upskilling Program for Inclusive Excellence Program** offered through the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies.

Please note this program is intended for Black Canadians (Canadian Citizens, Permanent Residents, and Protected Persons) who have been unemployed for up to three (3) years or are currently underemployed (i.e. I possess higher knowledge, skills, and abilities than required for my current position/job).

Eligibility Criteria

Individuals interested in applying for this program must meet the following eligibility criteria below:

- Must be at least 25 years of age by December 31, 2027.
- Must be either unemployed for up to three years or currently underemployed.
- Must self-identify as a Black Canadian and be one of the following:
 - Canadian Citizen
 - Permanent Resident of Canada, or
 - Protected Person

* **Important Note:** For the purposes of this program applications, underemployment refers to situations in which an individual's knowledge, skills, qualifications, or experience exceed the requirements of their current role, or where they are unable to secure sufficient paid work. This may include working part-time, receiving fewer hours than desired despite being employed, or relying primarily on gig, contract, or other uncertain forms of work.

The application deadline for the Halifax Region cohort starting in May 2027 is February 7th, 2027 at 11:59 p.m. (EST).

Application Instructions

To complete your application towards this program you will be asked to complete both a questionnaire and upload all the following documentation listed below.

- 1. A copy of government-issued identification.**

Submit one (1) piece of identification as outlined in the province of Ontario's Acceptable Identity Documents guidelines: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/acceptable-identity-documents>

2. Statement of Interest (500 to 800 words maximum).

The statement of interest must be typed (Word document or PDF), double-spaced, and in your own words (without the use of generative AI tools), that responds to each of the following questions:

1. Briefly describe your personal and/or professional background.
2. Describe your career goals, interests, and aspirations within the next two (2) to five (5) years. Include in what ways you expect participating in this program will impact your life and your career goals.
3. Explain any engagement activities or volunteer experience you have within your community, and how these connections may help you to succeed in this program.
4. This program includes a mentorship component. What does an ideal mentor look like for you? Please describe any preferred professional background, industry experience, leadership style, personal qualities, or other characteristics that would help you thrive in a mentoring relationship.

Note: Please ensure your statement of interest fully responds to each of the questions listed above. The Awards Selection Committee will attach particular importance to the strength of the statement of interest which fully answers the key questions posed above, is in your own words without utilizing generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

3. Current Resume

4. Reference (Either one personal or one professional).

Please provide one (1) letter of reference: one (1) professional or one (1) personal reference.

Examples of reference letters may include: community member, employer (supervisor or manager – former or current), colleague (former or current), someone from your community engagement/volunteer experience.

References should include comments about what your reference believes will be the impact of this program if you have the opportunity to participate, and why you are a strong candidate for the program.

Submissions must be a minimum of one (1) paragraph to a maximum of three (3) paragraphs. Letters or emails may be sent under separate cover and should be marked “Confidential”. All reference letters are confidential and will only be reviewed by members of the awards selection committee.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that reference letters/emails are dated and signed by the reference and submitted by the application deadline date.

Important Notes and Reminders:

1. Please take note of the application deadline of Sunday February 7th 2027 at 11:59 p.m. (EST) and ensure that all documentation is uploaded and submitted by the specified application deadline. Failure to provide this documentation above by the deadline will impact your application towards this program at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies. Incomplete or late applications by the specified deadline will not be accepted or considered.
2. Please ensure that the documentation you are asked to upload are in PDF format and upload any documentation as part of your application from a desktop computer or laptop. The upload function for the application is not supported by mobile devices.

Should you have any questions about the program, required documentation, or document upload process please direct these questions to scs.upskilling@utoronto.ca.