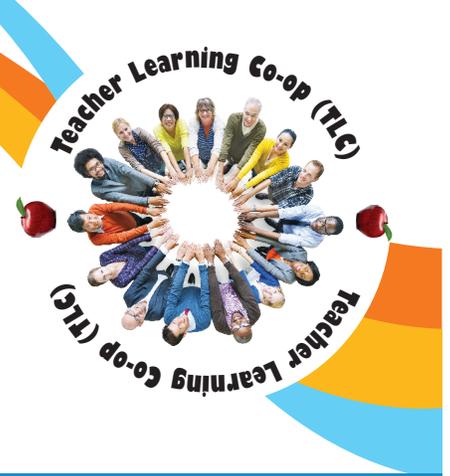# OTF FEO

FAQ's

Teacher Learning Co-op

Teacher Learning Co-op (TLC)

The Teacher Learning Co-op is a professional development initiative of the Ontario Teachers' Federation funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education. TLC provides an opportunity for teachers to become involved in collaborative learning, research and leadership with a focus in such areas as Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Kindergarten and Revised Curricula. All projects are developed through an inquiry approach and culminate in a resource/product/presentation that can be shared with other teachers in Ontario and on line as an OTF resource document. TLC will consist of teams of two to four team members who will collaboratively develop a project based on a self-assessment of their professional learning goals to enhance teaching practice.

How are the TLC teams created?

Teachers choose the people with whom they wish to work. The TLC team leader will take the initiative to seek out others who might share a similar interest, work effectively with others and bring diversity of perspective to the question(s) at hand. The TLC team members can be from the same school/ department or from various schools/boards. The team should collaborate to complete the application form and the budget proposal which can be found at www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/teacher-learning-co-op-tlc.

What is the budget for each TLC project?

Each TLC team must submit a proposed budget with their application. The budget must not exceed $4,000 per team.

This money can be used for release time, professional development, resources, materials or any other reasonable, related expenses which the team deems appropriate. The proposed budget must show the amounts of money to be expended and the purpose for the expenditures. The proposed budget form (which is a part of the application form) will guide you in preparing the budget.

Please note: The budget is not static and may be subject to revisions, additions and/or deletions as the project evolves. However, the budget must always provide for ample release time for the TLC team members to carry out the works needed to be done.

How will the TLC teams be chosen?

A Steering Committee made up of representatives from OTF and the participating Affiliates will consider all submitted applications. The Steering Committee will make decisions based on the apparent emphasis on collaboration, the provision of a balanced budget with ample release time for members, the quality of the proposal, the relevance to the stated areas of focus, the prospects for effective positive sharing and the ability to ascertain enhancement in teaching techniques and

student learning. The Steering Committee will also consider representation of several demographic variables in order to finalize the selections.

How will we know if our project is selected?

Team leaders will be notified via email as to the status of their project.

How will the money be allocated?

The Steering Committee will determine the amount of money to be allocated to each TLC team on the basis of the budget submitted in the application.

The maximum budget allocation granted will be $4,000 per team. The first payment of approximately 80% ($3,200) will be forwarded to the Team Leader shortly after the Steering Committee has approved the TLC team project. The final 20% ($800) will be paid when the project is completed and the final report is submitted through the OTF website.

Are there any planned meetings for all of the TLC teams to come together?

No. It will be up to you to arrange times, dates and locations to meet as a team. You have the flexibility to arrange meetings as they suit your purposes by using release time which is provided for in the budget. OTF will provide support through a mentoring program – each team will be assigned an expert teacher who will act as your mentor. This mentor will assist the team, as needed throughout the process. You may also contact OTF with any concerns or questions at tlc@otffeo.on.ca.

When you meet together as a team, then you will need to arrange release time for each team member. Since the budget is limited, teams can interact through means that are cost efficient, such as teleconferencing and online communication. Use of free software such as SKYPE and Dropbox or others which may be available through your Board; eg, Adobe Connect or Elluminate, may also allow for additional meetings at little cost. Remember, these meetings should take place through release time, wherever possible.

Ongoing communication and sharing is essential to the process of collaborative inquiry and OTF encourages the use of release time to accommodate busy teacher schedules to allow this to happen. It is up to the TLC team to determine frequency and duration of such meetings as may be possible within the budget provided.

Each Board has its own practice and it will be necessary for the TLC team to become familiar with the requirements for accessing release time at the local level. Sometimes the Board may require official requests for release time to come directly from OTF. This can be arranged specifically for each team or team member by completing our Request for Release Time Form which will be made available to TLC team members.

It is always a good idea to inform the school administration from the start of your involvement in such a project. This will help to ensure co-operation and support at the school level for the teachers who are on a TLC team.

Are there any reporting requirements?

Yes. Each TLC team is required to report to their mentor from time to time in regard to the progress being made. Changes to budget and focus may be necessary as your project evolves. These changes must be discussed with your mentor prior to making changes.

You are also expected to provide a final report via a page on the OTF website set up specifically for the reporting process. Here you will share your team's reflections on the progress made. Because it is open to the public to view, there is also a place for you to share pictures, resources and videos, if you should desire. The on line reporting is user friendly and allows for opportunities to interact with teachers who have viewed your report and have comments and/or questions to pose.

> **For the 2017-2018 year, final reports will be due online by May 31, 2018.**