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## The Counselling Foundation of Canada

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The Counselling Foundation of Canada (CFC), a family foundation funded by Frank G. Lawson and his estate, dates back to the early 1940s. The stimulus for its establishment was rooted in two issues: too many young people were being inappropriately lodged in mental institutions; and men released from the armed services required assistance in seeking a new vocation.

Formally incorporated in 1959, Frank Lawson's purpose in establishing the Foundation was to create and enrich counselling programs and improve the technical skills of counsellors. As founder and chair from 1959-1984, Frank Lawson, a stock broker, took an active and personal role in searching out and developing granting opportunities which would enhance the self-perception of young people in such a way that they would not hesitate to commit themselves to the dignity of work with the expectation that they would be successful. Every grant request was reviewed as rigorously as any stock purchase. Every grant approved was an investment towards ensuring the provision of counselling services to young people in Canada.

At the time of Frank Lawson's death in 1984, all post-secondary educational institutions had a counselling service. A number of career development theories had been developed. High school guidance systems were in place and some students even reported that some of them were helpful.

Frank's son, Donald G. Lawson, assumed responsibility as the Chair of the Foundation in 1984 when he established a seven member Board of Directors, four of whom are family members, to govern the CFC as it worked towards its goal of encouraging the development of positive growth in the lives of individuals and the health of our communities.

During its forty-year history, The Counselling Foundation of Canada has provided over \$31 million dollars in community investment grants to registered charitable organizations. Grants have been provided to community not-for-profit agencies, universities, colleges, primary and secondary schools, and other focus educational organizations. Approximately 89 percent of this community investment has been made since 1985.

Like many agencies, organizations and communities, the Board and Members of the Foundation have recognized the importance of a growing number of emerging social issues, which have tremendous significance for the development of human resources in Canada. While the traditional focus of counselling and career development remains ever present, the Foundation has expanded its focus to include factors that affect future employability. This has brought a broad range of issues, encompassing all ages from children at risk to adults wishing to enter or re-enter the workforce, into the realm of community investments made by The Counselling Foundation of Canada.

Today, as in the past, active interventions are the preferred investment. There is a purpose to be achieved with each grant and that purpose is directly related to an increase in the economic and social wealth and productivity of the individual and the community.

In the late 1950s, it became evident that the growing demand for counselling psychologists could not be met unless Canadian universities were persuaded to alter their programs in teaching psychology to place more emphasis on applied studies. Grants were made to this end. Grants to universities also focused on improving the quality of career information and counselling resources available to students. In total, twenty-one Canadian universities received multi-year funding to establish and/or enhance what has evolved into the on-campus Student Placement and Career Centre and/or Psychological Services. The university sector remained a primary recipient of grants until the early 1990s.

It was recognized that parish ministers were frequently the only persons providing any form of counselling in their communities. It was believed enhancement in the training of ministers in family and marriage counselling would be beneficial. Grants included the provision of counselling services and curriculum development at the applicable institutions.

The mid-1980s saw a strategic increase in the investments made in community-based, not-for-profit agencies and organizations. Community agencies were perceived to be on the front line of the employment issues. Having acknowledged the difficulties experienced by many maturing in economic hardship, The Counselling Foundation of Canada focussed more sharply on those issues which would contribute to total development of young people. Issues dealing with youths at risk, particularly of dropping out of school, were met with approaches of in-school behavioural counselling, anti-racism programs, the recruitment of volunteer mentors to interact with youths as well as pro-

grams to encourage young people to function as volunteers in their community.

In 1995, based on the success of a limited number of pilot projects and with the encouragement of its members, The Counselling Foundation of Canada revised its statement of purpose to focus some resources on parenting and early childhood development. Since then, significant resources have been invested in the community-based, not-for-profit sector for programs and services to children and families most at risk.

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## **The goals of the Foundation:**

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- To promote effective delivery of counselling through reputable and credible existing institutions (education, religious and community) to individuals involved in the process of career development;
- To encourage and support information and evaluation centres for career counselling;
- To work towards the professionalization of counselling and promote public education which clarifies the role and qualifications of counsellors; and
- To encourage and support programs which contribute to healthy child development especially for those groups of parents and children known to be at greatest risk.

Projects which partner community resources are preferred. All grants are time limited subject to annual review. The order of priority for grants, according to geographic location, is Toronto, Ontario and Canada. Grants are not made for research projects, building funds, emergency funds, deficit financing, endowment funds, equipment funds, mass fundraising appeals, long-term funding, capital funds, awards, fellowships, bursaries, or to individuals.