Ontario

Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund Round 2 Call for Proposals

Program Guidelines and Requirements

November 2023

Ministry of Colleges and Universities

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Summary of Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund Call for Proposals

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) is releasing a call for proposals for the Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund Round 2. This includes funding of up to $5 million to further expand the number of micro-credentials available to learners in Ontario by incentivizing postsecondary institutions, employers and industry to co-create micro-credentials in priority sectors to help address Ontario's labour market gaps.

New for Round 2:

- The focus of training should be on filling gaps in Ontario's priority labour market sectors (e.g., healthcare, marine transportation, advanced manufacturing, electric vehicles, critical minerals, mental health services/accessibility, housing).
- The proposal may include up to a maximum of five Projects across multiple areas of focus.
- Private Career Colleges and Private Degree-Granting Institutions may only submit proposals that are tied to existing programs related to priority labour market sectors.
- Additional consideration will be given to proposals that:
    - Involve partnerships between postsecondary institutions to co-develop and/or expand delivery of Micro-credentials; and/or
    - Are submitted by Indigenous Institutes, and applicants who partner with Indigenous Institutes and/or target Indigenous learners.

Context

Ontario's postsecondary education and training system is playing a key role in reskilling and upskilling the workforce to support economic growth, especially in priority labour market sectors.

About micro-credentials

Micro-credentials offer a flexible and granular form of postsecondary education training of specific skills and competencies that are developed and offered in a partnership between one or more postsecondary institutions and one or more employers, that may be tailored towards a specific need or may be stacked together, with the opportunity to track towards a larger recognized credential or certificate. Micro-credentials are different from existing degrees and diplomas and are designed to expand the options available to learners without replacing existing learning opportunities. They ensure that learners have access to training opportunities that offer maximum flexibility to pursue learning and acquire the skills they need to be job ready.

Increasing the number of Micro-credential learning opportunities at postsecondary institutions will leverage the strength of Ontario's existing postsecondary sector while fostering the necessary ecosystem to create more innovative partnerships between employers, industry, and institutions to achieve solutions to local and regional needs.

Accordingly, the Government of Ontario is pleased to announce the Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund Round 2 Call for Proposals.

Filling key labour market gaps

The way people work, learn and train has been changing, and Ontario is facing historically tight labour market conditions. There are also disproportionate labour market impacts on local and regional economies that are driven by unique local conditions.

A greater focus on Micro-credentials to bring flexibility and improved responsiveness to learner/jobseeker and employer needs is required to support Ontario's economic growth and future prosperity.

Through the development of Stackable, Trackable credits and Micro-credentials, Ontario's postsecondary education sector could be well positioned to deliver much needed education and training to new and expanded markets of lifelong Learners.

Eligible organizations

Proposals may be submitted by the following types of postsecondary institutions*:

- Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology;

- Indigenous Institutes recognized in regulation under the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017;*

- Ontario publicly-assisted universities;

- Registered Private Career Colleges; and,

- Private Institutions offering programs with ministerial consent under the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000.*

Proposals may be submitted by a single postsecondary institution or as a collaboration between institutions (i.e., a Consortium). Institutions can be part of more than one Consortium.

Consortia must identify a lead institution that will be accountable to MCU through the terms and conditions set out in a Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) during the funding-agreement period. The lead institution will be considered the Applicant and will be responsible for planning, coordinating, and managing all aspects of the Project.

Only one proposal may be submitted per institution regardless of the number of campuses, sites or satellites an institution may have. In the case of a Consortium, the lead institution will include the Consortium Project(s) as part of their proposal. If an

institution included in a Consortium also wishes to submit Project(s) not associated with the Consortium, they may submit a stand-alone proposal.

The proposal may include up to a maximum of five (5) Projects across multiple areas of focus. If an institution has multiple Micro-credentials as part of its proposal, each proposed Micro-credential should clearly list its Partners. Proposals are expected to be vetted and approved by the appropriate senior academic officer / executive at an institution.

*Private career colleges may only submit proposals that are tied to existing programs related to priority labour market sector(s).

*Proposals by Private Degree-Granting Institutions must be in a program area for which the institution has ministerial consent under the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000.* These programs also must be related to priority labour market sector(s).

All Projects must include local industry/sector/employer Partners. Partners may include corporations, sector associations, non-profit organizations, municipalities, First Nations, or Indigenous organizations.

Eligible Projects

Funding will be prioritized for eligible Applicants who demonstrate a focus of new and/or expanded Micro-credentials that is:

1. Employer responsive and leads directly to local/regional jobs; and,
2. Designed to fill labour market gaps in priority sectors (e.g., healthcare, marine transportation, advanced manufacturing, electric vehicles, critical minerals, mental health services/accessibility, housing).

Projects must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- **Industry sensitivity:** Projects must provide training that meets the needs of industry and employers in identified priority sectors with labour market gaps.
    - o Alignment with priority labour market sectors will be informed by Applicant provision of one or more 5-digit National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes.
    - o Proposals must demonstrate how training will be valuable for employers/ industry and meet growing talent needs to contribute to employer/industry growth. Projects will be evaluated based on the strength of evidence of sustainable demand for the skills offered through the proposed training.
- **Areas of focus:** Projects should focus on new and/or expanded Micro-credentials which support economic growth.

- Funding will be allocated amongst the two areas of focus listed above. The Applicant must focus their proposal on addressing at least one of these areas of focus.

- **Applicants must work with the identified partnering organizations to contribute to the development of the training and submit at least two signed letters** from those representatives with the following components:

  - The Partner organization(s) attesting to their partnership in the Project;

  - A description of the workforce development needs that the Micro-credential training will address (e.g., local and/or provincial); and,

  - The role that Partners will play in the Project and the anticipated impact of training;

  - Commitments to roles and responsibilities (e.g., work-integrated learning opportunities, sharing of equipment or space for delivery, subject matter expertise, ongoing support beyond the timelines of the project, projected hires within six to twelve months of completion, program will provide upskilling for current employees); and
  - Be unique and written by the partner (i.e., not a form letter of support).

- **In-Demand Skills:** Projects must provide training that equips Learners with a clearly defined set of In-Demand Skills and knowledge that meet employer/industry/community needs. Proposals must marshal strong evidence, including collaboration with and attestations from employers, that such skills are valuable in Ontario's workforce, address a key labour market gap and, where applicable, will lead to a job within that Partner's place of business.

  - Successful Applicants will be subject to the reporting requirements outlined as part of the Transfer Payment Agreement (see Monitoring and Reporting). Reporting requirements could include data on number of students employed upon completion of the Micro-credential, information on staffing levels and employer needs, and other data as it relates to the institution(s) which conducted the training, and the community where the training was conducted.

- **Method of recognition:** Projects must have a clear method for recognizing the completion of training (e.g., a digital badge).

- **Short Duration:** Training is typically between 40 and 50 hours in duration; however, may be longer or shorter based on what is appropriate for the target Learners and training under consideration. Projects must clearly state the duration of the Micro-credential and provide evidence that the duration is appropriate for the target Learners and training under consideration. For

proposed Micro-credentials that are longer than 50 hours, Applicants must provide a rationale as to why the program should be considered a Micro-credential.

- **Ineligible for current provincial funding:** Partnership development and program development (including curriculum and existing fully-developed programs) costs for existing programs (excluding expansion of programs as described in this call for proposals), which are explained in the "Eligible Expenditures" section below, must not be eligible for other forms of provincial funding (e.g., the Core Operating Grant in the case of publicly-assisted colleges and universities).

- Training in the skilled trades is ineligible for this Call for Proposals.

Proposed initiatives must align with:

- Existing legislative and policy frameworks (e.g., *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002*; *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*; individual University Acts; *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017*; and the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*); and,

- College and university Strategic Mandate Agreements.

All Micro-credentials which receive funding through this call for proposals must go through institutional approval processes, including quality assurance, before they can be made available to Learners.

Note: Project approval related to this call for proposals does not automatically lead to approval or consideration for other funding (e.g., operating grants), government programs (e.g., OSAP, Better Jobs Ontario, or other employment supports), or inclusion on the Ontario Micro-credentials Portal.

Funding allocation

- Discretionary funding is available to be allocated for the development of new and/or expansion of existing Micro-credentials.
- Each Applicant is to submit one proposal with a maximum of five Projects.

Development of new and/or expansion of existing Micro-credentials

- Selected Projects will be eligible to receive up to $50,000 to design new or expanded Micro-credentials. Multiple Projects may be selected for funding up to an institutional maximum of $250,000.

- Projects may include Micro-credentials that will build longer term capacity within the postsecondary sector while meeting immediate needs (i.e., Stackable).

- Projects may include the expansion of an existing Micro-credential such as:
    - expanding a Micro-credential currently designed for a single employer to benefit multiple employers and/or industry;
    - collaborating with other (new) postsecondary institutions to expand the program to other regions of Ontario and/or enhance the existing program with new micro-credentials that leverage program strengths in other institutions;
    - changes to current Micro-credentials that will allow them to stack together to build up into a larger credential; or,
    - boosting enrolment in a Micro-credential via French-language curricula development, marketing, or data collection measures.
- The Project may be funded in whole or in part up to the maximum allocation per Project.

Each Project must be tied to at least one of the priority sectors identified in the eligible projects section above.

Each Project within a proposal will be evaluated independently. In some instances, funding may be awarded for individual Projects, but not the entire proposal.

Note: Projects to develop Micro-credentials for training in the skilled trades are ineligible for this call for proposals.

Eligible expenditures

If a Project is selected for funding, eligible expenditures may be incurred between the start date as specified in the TPA and 12 months after the start date. The funding may only be used to cover the following eligible expenditures:

- **Partnership development** costs including other initiatives, such as community outreach, related to ensuring there are appropriate relationships in place between organizations to deliver a Micro-credentials Project;

- **Program design and development** costs including curriculum, instructional design, face-to-face and virtual educational design, and pedagogy supports; and,

- **Administrative costs** related to the Project (to a maximum of 5% of total budgeted costs or $25,000, whichever is lower). Administrative costs must be broken down and described in at least three categories: office supplies, administrative support, and insurance.

Funding will be determined based on an evaluation of the application, including the total proposed budget submitted by the Applicant.

The budget must include all costs directly related to the Project, including any proposed cash or in-kind contributions from the Applicant and/or other Project Partners. Costs

must be clearly linked to the activities identified in the Project objectives and work plan section of the application.

Applicants should indicate whether Projects will leverage cash or in-kind contributions from employers or other Partners; however, the value of these contributions will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Important
The costs for any materials, tools, techniques, approaches, developments or salaries used in training, work placements or other Project components that have already been reimbursed by government funding to the Applicant under any other funding agreement **will not be eligible expenses** under any new agreement entered into by an Applicant and the Government of Ontario.

No Applicant is entitled to any funding unless and until (1) a Project submitted by the Applicant is selected for funding, and (2) a transfer payment agreement has been executed between the Applicant and the province. Applicants should not take any action, or incur any costs related to their Projects, that is predicated on receiving funding from the Government of Ontario until both of these criteria are met.

Any costs associated with the Project not foreseen by funding covered by the transfer payment agreement are the responsibility of the Applicant.

The Government of Ontario is not responsible for paying any cost incurred by an Applicant should the application not be successful or if an Applicant fails to enter into a TPA.

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 Successful Applicant meeting all Project milestones and reporting requirements under the TPA.

Ineligible expenditures
Expenditures which are ineligible for funding include:

- Learners' participation costs such as tuition and supplies;

- Overhead;

- Insurance, except for costs covered under administrative expenses related to Project delivery;

- Costs related to the development of the proposal or application;

- Costs not directly associated with the Project or not directly required to meet the deliverables of the Project;

- Executive or senior management salaries;

- Administrative salaries, except for Project management costs covered under administrative expenses related to Project delivery;

- Out-of-province travel costs for Project staff or Learners;

- Annual membership fees to associations;

- Costs for any materials, tools, techniques, approaches, developments or salaries or other Project components that have already been reimbursed by federal or provincial or any other government funding to the Applicant under any other funding agreement;

- Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points programs;

- Fines and penalties;

- Interest charges;

- Equipment;

- Losses on other Projects or contracts;

- Any costs, including taxes, for which the recipient has received, will receive or is eligible to receive a rebate, credit or refund;

- Annual general meetings, budget deficits, membership fees, fundraising activities, committee and political meetings, or religious activities;

- Costs covered by other funding;

- Contingency or unexplained miscellaneous costs; and,

- Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) is not eligible for tax exempted organizations.

Additional funding information

The Government of Ontario reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to determine what Projects are selected for funding, and the amount of funding for each selected Project. For greater certainty, the government reserves the right to not select any Projects for funding.

The evaluation of proposals, selection of Projects for funding, and determination of funding amounts is not a mechanical exercise and will necessarily involve the application of judgment. This process may include, among other things, consideration of government priorities, including priorities that have not been specifically articulated within this call for proposals.

Funding will be provided during the period of the TPA and will not signify a commitment to further funding beyond that period.

Successful Applicants will be expected to contribute any funding needed, beyond the provincially approved funding for the Project, to implement the proposed Micro-credentials. In applications where there is a shortfall between budgeted expenses and expected approved funding, Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they are contributing to the Project through other resources.

Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) requirements

A Successful Applicant will receive Project funding only after signing a TPA with MCU. By entering into this agreement, a Successful Applicant will be required to meet certain legal responsibilities, including maintaining all necessary insurance, in order to receive any funding.

A Successful Applicant will be responsible for managing and executing the development and delivery of their Project, including resource management and satisfaction of performance and financial obligations established by MCU.

The TPA with MCU will set out the terms and conditions governing the payment of the grant, and will include, but not be limited to:

- A Project Budget as approved from the application;

- Project management requirements, including a complete Project description, objectives, timeline and planned outcomes;

- Reporting obligations;

- Method and schedule of payment;

- Provisions for termination or corrective action in the event of default; and

- Other performance and accountability provisions identified by MCU and agreed upon with a Successful Applicant.

Successful Applicants will be expected to:

- Be accountable to MCU for all funds and Project components under the TPA;

- Manage their Project Plan to meet financial and accountability reporting requirements and deliverables, as identified in the TPA;

- Engage and manage relationships with any third-party service providers;

- Ensure coordination of Project Partners and all activities;

- Be responsible for performance measurement under the fund, including ensuring data quality, establishing targets, and aggregating information collected from funding recipients;

- Submit regular reporting that will be used by MCU to assess the progress of implementation, as well as compliance with relevant directives and requirements under the TPA;

- Put in effect and maintain for the duration of their program 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 Project is approved for funding, Applicants must provide MCU 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 Ontario;

- Agree to an independent audit of the Project if required, including program revenues and expenditures;

- Provide a copy of their latest financial statements (include audited financial statements if available) and those of significant Partners in the program if requested before the legal agreement is finalized; and,

- Undergo a due diligence review at MCU's expense if required before the legal agreement is finalized. In cases of a Consortium, the due diligence review will include all Partners, where applicable.

The amount, form, timing, and conditions of funding are governed by the TPA. The text of this call for proposals, to the extent that it anticipates the content of the TPA, is subject to the actual terms of the executed TPA.

Successful Applicants will need to register online as a Transfer Payment Ontario user to receive funding. The registration process can be found on the Transfer Payment Ontario website. Once registered, Applicants can download the application form on the Transfer Payment Ontario website.

Procurement, travel, and hospitality requirements

Under the _Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010_, two directives regarding procurement practices and expenses are in effect namely: the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive and the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive. The onus is on each Applicant to comply with these directives.

Submission process

The deadline for MCU to receive proposals is 5:00 p.m. EST on January 5, 2024. Institutions are asked to submit both a Word version and a signed PDF copy to psepolicy@ontario.ca with **Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund Round 2 Call for Proposals** as the subject line. **Receipt of all submissions will be acknowledged by MCU.**

Please ensure use of the application template provided.

Any additional relevant information may be attached as appendices to the completed application, if required. Please note: due to the high volume of anticipated applications, information provided in appendices will be considered supplemental to the main application.

For questions regarding the submission process, please contact psepolicy@ontario.ca with ***Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund Round 2 Call for Proposals*** as the subject line.

Proposal review and evaluation criteria

MCU will establish appropriate review processes and fairly evaluate proposals against the eligibility criteria outlined in the eligible projects section of this document.

Recommendations will be made to the Minister of MCU, or their delegate, who will make the final decisions on (1) which Projects, if any, are selected for funding, and (2) the amounts of funding to be allocated to each selected Project.

Evaluation of the funding proposal will take into consideration diversity in:

- Learner groups, skill levels, and official language;

- Skills/competencies that address gaps in priority labour market areas; and,

- Geographic distribution across the province (e.g., rural/urban/remote communities).

Proposals will also be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following additional requirements:

1. Viability and strength of the Proposal

- Proposals must clearly define the scope and purpose of the Project and provide a clear understanding of the steps for implementation. Particular attention will be paid to demonstrated organizational capacity and strengths of each Partner and how partnerships will be developed and enhanced. A Project work plan that sets out expected timelines for key activities is required. Proposals must also demonstrate an effective use of resources to achieve objectives within the established timeframe for funded activities.

2. Impact

- Micro-credentials

  a. The quality and number of new and/or expanded Micro-credentials created.

b. Additional consideration will be given to proposals that involve partnerships among postsecondary institutions to co-develop and/or expand delivery of Micro-credentials.

c. Additional consideration will be given to proposals from Indigenous Institutes, and applicants who partner with Indigenous Institutes and/or target Indigenous learners.

- Scalability measures

d. Scalability refers to whether it is possible to increase the size of an initiative. Applicants will be assessed based upon whether the Micro-credentials they propose would be able to scale up after initial investments. Alternatively, proposals would be evaluated on how the requested funds would allow existing Micro-credentials to have a broader reach than at present.

- Sustainability measures

e. Sustainability refers to whether a Project is likely to continue after government funding ends. Proposals that require initial investments, but which will be able to become self-supporting, will be prioritized.

- Learners served

f. The target learner group and estimated number of Learners that will be served through the proposed Micro-credentials. Estimation should be made on the assumption that a learner counts as being served only if they complete the entirety of the Micro-credential under consideration.

g. Outreach strategy focusing on target populations including underrepresented groups such as Indigenous people, Francophone communities, recent immigrants, justice-involved individuals, and social assistance clients.

h. Proposals must demonstrate they are providing pathways for labour market attachment including how Learners will be connected with long-term employment opportunities through the Project (e.g., job placement services).

- Demonstrated demand for training

i. Proposals must clearly demonstrate and articulate how training Projects are new/innovative in nature in order to fill gaps in priority labour market areas, meet the needs of employers and result in sustainable employment outcomes for Learners.

- Demand for skills can be demonstrated through a variety of sources, including but not limited to labour market information, mandatory input and attestations from employer and industry Partners (see 'Eligible Projects', above), current/historical job postings, and engagement with employers, industry, regional economic development committees, local planning Partners, and/or area associations.

j. Proposals should clearly outline the importance and role of the programming in helping to bridge skills gaps for target Learners and the relevance of In-Demand Skills to employers.

k. Proposals must clearly demonstrate how they will facilitate recognition by industry (e.g., transferability beyond an individual employer), where applicable.

3. Budget

- Applications must include a budget breakdown based on eligible expenses, including partnership development, program development, and administrative costs.

- Administrative costs must be broken down and described in at least three categories: office supplies, administrative support, and insurance.

4. Other

- Applications may also be evaluated against additional outputs and outcomes that are related to government objectives.

Timelines

- Application submission window opens: November 23, 2023.
- Deadline to submit applications: January 5, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EST.
- MCU evaluation of proposals: January 2024.
- MCU communicates results to sector and enters into TPAs with funding recipients: by March 31, 2024.
- Project development period (includes disbursement of three payments): April 2024 to March 2025.
- Final reports due to MCU: one month after Project completion date as per the TPA.

Monitoring and reporting

All Projects are expected to share common high-level objectives and outcomes. This includes helping Learners complete training, gain the In-Demand Skills and knowledge required for employment, and improve their overall employability and labour market

resiliency. Projects will be evaluated based on the Applicant's ability to achieve these objectives and outcomes over time, which will require Successful Applicants to enter and track key data points as required by the reporting requirements outlined in the TPA. These key data points will include learner-level information, such as enrolment, demographic information, skills development outcomes, and employment outcomes.

Reporting requirements for approved Projects will be set out in the TPA.

Each Successful Applicant must submit a final report by April 2025. The report will outline the achievement or progress towards fulfilling the objectives as articulated in the TPA. The final report must report on actual incurred expenses against budgeted amounts in the TPA. Unspent funding must be explained. MCU may request the return of any unspent funds.

Third-party evaluation

MCU may engage a third-party to research and evaluate approved Projects during and after their implementation. This will require Successful Applicants to track key data points on behalf of the province. These key data points will include participant-level information, such as demographic information, skills development, and Micro-credential participation outcomes, as well as employment outcomes and satisfaction levels of Learners and employers. Successful Applicants, including partnering institutions within a Consortium, and Partner organizations shall agree to full co-operation with the MCU and/or a third-party at the time of signing a TPA with MCU.

Notification

A decision regarding funding will be communicated to all Applicants, including partnering institutions in a Consortium, by e-mail.

Confidentiality

MCU is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the "Act"). The Act provides every person with a right of access to information in the custody or under the control of MCU, 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 MCU in confidence should be clearly marked. MCU will provide notice before granting access to a record that might contain information referred to in section 17 of the Act so that the affected party may make representations to MCU concerning disclosure. Should MCU decide not to disclose certain records, the

requester has the right to appeal that decision to the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who will ultimately decide on the disclosure of the record.

Applicants are advised that the names and addresses of grant recipients, the amount of grant awards, and the purpose for which grants are awarded is information MCU makes available to the public.

Appendix A: Key Terms

Applicant: a postsecondary institution (of a type identified in the "eligible organizations" section below) that has submitted a proposal created with and supported by industry Partner(s) in response to the Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund Round 2 Call for Proposals.

Consortium: a collaboration between one or more institutions and one or more employers and/or industry/sector representation that are developing and offering a micro-credential. Institutions can be part of more than one Consortium.

Distinct Learner: a unique individual who may be enrolled in more than one Micro-credential within a Micro-credential suite; may differ from enrolment counts per Micro-credential.

In-Demand Skills: attributes that can be technical or transferable in nature, are desired by industry, and support labour market resiliency.

Indigenous Institutes: refers to the nine Indigenous Institutes in Ontario recognized in regulation under the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017*.

Learners: for the purposes of this program, Learners include traditional students currently attending postsecondary school; recent graduates; people looking to retrain or upgrade their skills; laid-off, unemployed or underemployed jobseekers; workers at risk of layoff; and social assistance clients.

Micro-credential: a flexible and granular form of postsecondary education training of specific skills and competencies that are developed and offered in a partnership between one or more postsecondary institutions and one or more employers, that may be tailored towards a specific need or may be stacked together, with the opportunity to track towards a larger recognized credential or certificate.

Partner: Applicants must Partner with employers and/or industry/sector representatives. Partners may include corporations, sector associations, non-profit organizations, municipalities, First Nations or Indigenous organizations.

Private Career Colleges: Private education institutions that offer vocational programs and are registered under the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*. They may only submit proposals that are tied to existing programs related to priority labour market sectors.

Private Degree-Granting Institutions: Ontario-based postsecondary providers offering approved programs under the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*. They may only submit proposals that are tied to existing programs related to priority labour market sectors.

Project: all activities that meet the criteria set out in these program guidelines and requirements.

Project Budget: a detailed breakdown of all expenses and funding contributions (cash and in-kind) required to carry out the Project.

Project Plan: a detailed breakdown of all key Project activities, timelines, and outcomes expected as a result of the Project.

Short-Duration Training: training that is typically between 40 and 50 hours in duration; however, may be longer or shorter based on what is appropriate for the target Learners and training under consideration.

Stackable: the ability to combine Micro-credentials to build up into a larger credential.

Successful Applicant: a partnership that has been awarded funding and is responsible for delivering a Project. The Successful Applicant is responsible for signing and fulfilling all requirements of the transfer payment agreement, including but not limited to: receiving and managing the funds, ensuring coordination of Project Partners and activities, and communicating with MCU regarding the status of the Project on behalf of all Partners. Note: in the case of a Consortium of institutions, the lead institution is deemed the Successful Applicant.

Trackable: the ability for a learner to keep a digital record of their Micro-credentials in order to be shared with a potential employer and/or stacked towards a larger credential.

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL): a hands-on learning model which formally integrates a learner's academic studies with learning in a workplace or practice setting. WIL allows employers to recruit talent and provides Learners with opportunities to hone their skills and to build connections that can lead to employment.