**Digital Skills for Youth Program**

**December 2019**

**Who we are?**

The Centre for Workforce Development (CFWD) is one of the 26 Boards in the Province of Ontario funded to conduct local level labour market research and workforce development. The skills that employers seek in potential employees is rapidly shifting, with job opportunities across varying industries requiring more experience in a variety of digital skills.

**The program**

The Government of Canada has recognized the need to assist youth with developing the digital skills needed for both today and the future. The Digital Skills for Youth program is an initiative that is part of the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS). CFWD is leading an application to provide the service delivery of this program in Ontario. **Through the program, employers with up to 500 employees can access funding to support internships for post-secondary graduate students that are underemployed or working part-time.** The internships would provide opportunities grounded in experiences that will prepare youth to adapt to the major changes projected in tomorrow’s workplace, including emerging areas where the jobs may not yet exist such as those related to cybersecurity, the automation of knowledge tasks, big data, and artificial intelligence, among others. This program is two years in length with funding under it available in one-year increments.

**Employer qualifications**

* Employers with legal status in Canada that have the capacity to offer internships including training and support.
* For the purpose of this program, employers are not-for-profit and for-profit organizations with up to 500 employees.
* Employers must:
  + have the appropriate administrative support and capacity to train and mentor the participants to enhance and maximize the participants' experience; and,
  + support the participants in the development and implementation of work activities to provide participants with a meaningful internship described in the key performance indicators.

**Who your interns will be**

* post-secondary graduates, between 15 and 30 years of age at the start of the internship;
* legally entitled to work in Canada (i.e. Canadian citizen, permanent Resident or person who has been granted refugee status); and,
* self-assess as underemployed, meaning they are employed below their level of education and/or hold part-time employment.

In the north, eligible participants may be youth between 15 to 30 (inclusive) years who:

* self-assess as underemployed, meaning they are employed below their level of education and/or hold part-time employment; and,
* are legally entitled to work in Canada (i.e. Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or persons who have been granted refugee status).

**How you can get involved**

The purpose of this letter is to gauge employer interest in participating in this program. If CFWD is approved as a Delivery Organization for the program, there will be available $17,000 in wage subsidy and Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCS), with an Employer match at 50% from for-profit organizations, and a 25% match for not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations, municipal governments, public health and educational institutions, provincial and territorial governments, institutions, agencies and Crown Corporations.

In order for the Federal Government to assess the application properly, we are required to include letters of interest in the program from employers. If you feel you would be interested in the program and providing an internship that could help develop the digital skills for youth, please fill out the letter on Page 3 and return it by email to myself at brad@cfwd.ca no later than 11:00 am, December 16, 2019. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Brad Labadie

Executive Director

Centre for Workforce Development

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613-969-0720

**Letter of Interest – Digital Skills for Youth Program**

Company Name:

Location (City or Town):

Contact Information:

Company Representative:

Our company would be interested in the following in internships (Please check all that apply):

Number of internships in:

Year One \_\_\_\_\_\_

Year Two \_\_\_\_\_\_

Length of Internships

Up to 6 months \_\_\_\_\_\_

6 to 11 months \_\_\_\_\_\_

Our company would provide experience and training in the following areas (Please check all that apply):

3D Printing \_\_\_ Artificial Intelligence \_\_\_ Automation \_\_\_ Big Data \_\_\_

Cybersecurity \_\_\_ Programming \_\_\_ Robotics \_\_\_

Other (please define below) \_\_\_