

UPSKILL

South Dakota received Education Stabilization Funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and the Board of Technical Education (BoTE) was provided funding through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund to develop and cover a portion of tuition for up to 18 credit hours leading to high-quality certificates for Dislocated Workers whose jobs were impacted by COVID-19. DLR has partnered with BoTE to pay for the remaining cost per credit for participants eligible for the WIOA National Emergency Dislocated Worker Grant or the WIOA Dislocated Worker grant.

BoTE approved online UpSkill certificates for the 2020-2021 academic year. The certificates aligned with labor market demands and articulate into Associate of Applied Science and bachelor's degree programs. Virtual delivery methods will allow participants throughout the state access to services and instruction regardless of the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

ELIGIBILITY

Participants must be authorized to work in the United States, reside in South Dakota, be eligible for Reemployment Assistance, and meet the eligibility identified in the [COVID-19 Dislocated Worker Grant](#) Policy 5.41 or the Dislocated Worker section of [Eligibility and Priority of Service](#) Policy 4.1. Due to the quick response needed with COVID-19 and GEER funding not all programs will be eligible for Federal Financial Aid. A formal basic skills assessment will not be required for participation in WIOA or the training. However, in compliance with WIOA, the assessment of training eligibility will be based on individual's ability to follow pre-enrollment instructions including:

- Watch Intake and Orientation Video
- Complete SDWORKS registration
- Sign and upload required forms and documents to their SDWORKS profile
- Participate in a Microsoft Teams meeting with DLR staff

Above and beyond authorization to work in the United States and Dislocated Worker status, a self-attestation will be used to verify eligibility items.

Individuals do not have an entitlement to services provided by DLR through WIOA. Resources are limited and distributed on a case-by-case basis.

SERVICES

DLR services will be available based on an individual's specific program eligibility. If requested by participant services will continue to be offered after their participation in the UpSkill certificate program. Ongoing case management and services will be provided to improve likelihood of successful outcomes.

Approved participants will be enrolled into a Non-ITA Occupational Skills Training.

FUNDING

Stipends for books, tools, and supplies may be provided to participants through the GEER funding. Additional Support Services through WIOA may be provided if determined appropriate and on a case-by-case basis (see the [Support Service](#) Policy 5.34). The DLR staff must coordinate with the technical college to ensure there is not a duplication of financial services.

UPSKILL 2.0

Under the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, the U.S. Department of Education has awarded grant funds to South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem for the purpose of providing school districts, institutions of higher education, and other education-related entities with emergency assistance as a result of Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

As a result of GEER funding, the BOTE in partnership with the DLR developed the UpSkill program. The UpSkill program was initially designed to provide “dislocated workers” impacted by COVID-19 in South Dakota access to high-quality certificates. This program has evolved and expanded to include the following short-term credentials in programs leading to occupations that have been impacted as a result of COVID-19.

- **Lake Area Technical College:** *Accounting, Agriculture, Banking, Community Healthcare Worker, EMT, Human Resources, Manufacturing, Networking, Precision Machining, Programming, Welding*
- **Mitchel Technical College:** *Medical Information, Dietary Management, Professional Truck Driving*
- **Southeast Technical College:** *Computer Support, Web Programming*
- **Western Dakota Technical College:** *Phlebotomy, EMT/Pre-Paramedic, Plumbing*

Due to COVID, many industries lost employees for a variety of reasons, such as symptoms related to COVID, high risk health concerns, fear, or a lack of childcare. Likewise, three of four technical colleges saw a decrease in enrollments from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 for similar reasons. Currently, we are facing a low unemployment rate. Most of those who lost employment due to COVID were in positions that required lower skill sets. Many are not finding they have the skill set employers are seeking as businesses adjust to demands post-COVID. The short-term credentials offered through UpSkill engage South Dakotans in their future and were developed in high demand industries based on industry input and labor market information.

ELIGIBILITY

Participants must be authorized to work in the United States, reside in South Dakota, and must score a 235 or higher on the ACCUPLACER® as determined by the technical college.

DLR will determine eligibility in alignment with the following:

- Eligibility as identified in [Occupational Skill Training](#) Policy 5.27
- Categories 1-6 in the Priority of Services Chart in [Eligibility and Priority of Service](#) Policy 4.1 have been expanded to include:
 - *Single Parent*
 - *Long Term Unemployed*
 - *Native American/Hawaiian Native/Alaska Native*
 - *55 and older*
 - *Homeless*
 - *Substance Abuse*
 - *Underemployed*
 - *Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker*
 - *English Language Learners*
 - *Within two years of exhausting TANF*
 - *Veterans and Eligible Spouses who are NOT included in the priority groups 1 or 3*
 - *Displaced Homemaker (Displaced Homemaker will be served under the Dislocated Worker Program)*
- WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker
- WIOA Title I National Dislocated Worker
- WIOA Title I Youth
- Household within 200% poverty level with children under the age of 18.

Requirements

All students must have a program-compatible laptop as defined by the institution with high-speed Internet access at their home. A mobile device or tablet is not sufficient, and high-speed Internet access must be available in the student's home (utilizing a friend or public space is not sufficient). The speed of access must have the ability to stream two videos at once.

All UpSkill participants must provide authorization to the technical college to share information protected by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to the SD Department of Labor and Regulation for performance purposes of the WIOA Title I program.

UpSkill programs are not eligible for Federal Financial Aid. Individuals do not have an entitlement to services provided by DLR through WIOA. Resources are limited and distributed on a case-by-case basis.

SERVICES

BoTE has identified and approved UpSkill certificates. The certificates are aligned with labor market demands. UpSkill programs will not be eligible for Federal Financial Aid. The BoTE has also identified Associate degree programs for Upskill 1.0 graduates continuing their program of study. If requested by participant services will continue to be offered after their participation in the UpSkill certificate program. Ongoing case management and services will be provided to improve likelihood of successful outcomes.

FUNDING

Those eligible for funding will receive funding for application and testing fees, tuition, required books and supplies as identified by the institution.

Additional supports required for program may be available based on a needs assessment. Must be in compliance with [Support Service](#) Policy 5.34 but can be utilized for technology access.