

**First Work and LinkedIn partnership upskills over 40,000 Ontario job seekers**

*Learning initiative funded by the Government of Ontario equips job seekers with free training, advancing Provincial skills-based hiring approaches*

**Toronto, February 23** – In July 2021, First Work – Ontario’s employment network for job seekers facing barriers – and LinkedIn, the world’s largest professional network, partnered to deliver Ontario job seekers and employment professionals access to free online learning and training. Funded by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and the Government of Canada; this first of its kind partnership has helped over 40,000 Ontarians complete over 26,000 courses and fill over 6,000 jobs since July of last year.

First Work represents over 90 community service agencies and their practitioners who specialize in working with job seekers facing barriers to employment. Leveraging the unique position of First Work’s network – as the bridge between local employers and job seekers – and LinkedIn Learning, this collaboration has positively impacted Ontarians looking to increase their employability, through rapid upskilling and micro-credentialling. By complementing the human services delivered by community providers with the powerful recruitment tools through this initiative, employment service providers are better capacitated to support regional economies. Specifically, Teanne Larocque’s team at The Employment + Education Centre found immense success in attracting top talent to the Thousand Islands area using LinkedIn tools. She shares her “biggest goal is to provide top talent to our local employers and help fill that skills gap and labour shortage in our area. This tool has helped me to do that” by allowing her to *sell* the region in addition to the job opportunity.

Launched during the acute volatility of COVID-19, this program helps Ontarians jump start their careers by removing the financial barrier associated with furthering education through free LinkedIn Learning licenses, offering over 16,000 courses taught by industry experts. Akosua Alagaratnam, Executive Director of First Work, sees this positive shift towards digital adoption and skills-based employability as an important step towards enhancing support for job seekers and employers at a time when labour demand is high.

Making access to quality resources and meaningful opportunities to all Ontarians has been a big priority for First Work and LinkedIn alike. “Feedback from participants has indicated even higher impact for those disproportionately affected by pandemic or out of the workforce for a long time, and also for youth facing barriers to employment like poverty, poor mental health, or lack of experience” said Alagaratnam.

LinkedIn and First Work have seen similar sentiments echoed across the province with both job seekers and employers. Extending access to communities in Ontario beyond March through the Skill's Development Fund will allow more job seekers and employers the "opportunity to leverage the long-term benefits of the digital learning enabled through this project."

### Quick Facts

- The free LinkedIn tools are available from July 2, 2021 to March 31, 2022.
- The tools have helped job seekers secure 609 jobs per month on average for a total of 6,096 jobs filled in the first 10 months of the program.
- 26,157 micro-credentials have been earned in the 10-month duration with nearly 38,000 hours of learning.
- Participants have developed 1,297,140 new connections and earned 63,334 skills in the 10-month duration
- Top industries in which participants are gaining employment include Information Technology & Services, Non-profit Organization Management, Higher Education, Retail and Government Administration.

### Related Topics:

#### About First Work:

First Work is a leading membership organization bringing together providers of youth programming and employment services, business leadership, academia, and government to develop and advance solutions for youth employment.

#### About LinkedIn:

With over 756 million members worldwide and over 17 million members in Canada alone, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network as well as the most popular job posting platform in Canada with over 450,000 companies represented.

#### About the MLTSD Skills Development Fund:

The Skills Development Fund – provided through the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development – offers funding to support innovative, market-driven solutions that can help people and businesses make it through the pandemic successfully. These solutions may also lead to lasting improvements to cross-sector employment and training in Ontario.

### Quotes

“Access to these tools provided better chances for our staff and clients to achieve employment success and meet our program/contract outcomes.” Tracy Houston, Senior Manager Programs & Services, Woodgreen

“Having off-the-shelf content on a variety of topics helps us offer a richer, more personalized learning experience for clients and cohorts. In addition, engaging clients in online training also builds their digital literacy and technical skills.” Tamara Sirota, Manager Learning and Curriculum, ACCES Employment

“We've shared LinkedIn Learning with our clients. It made it possible for them to participate and earn various certifications, to increase their employability. Talent Insight and the Recruiter tools helped us outreach to a pool of youth that had in their headline "Unemployed" and made it easy for us to get in contact with them.” Matthieu Charbonneau Dodd, Youth Advisor, YMCA-YWCA of the National Capitol Region

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