



A Study of Retrain Manitoba, a successful workforce skills training fund for post-pandemic recovery

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Retrain Manitoba (RTM) – Summary results

- A \$12.5 million workforce skills development fund. Part of Manitoba's Skills, Talent and Workforce Strategy.
- Helped Manitoba organizations recover from the pandemic. Though reimbursement for **micro-credential** courses to improve staff skills.
- RTM program launched November 8, 2021 and was slated to run until March 31, 2022 or until funds ran out. This occurred February 4, 2022.
- Helped at least 1,365 organizations, train more than 18,000 employees. 87 per cent of companies were small businesses.

What are micro-credentials?

- *“A micro-credential is a representation of learning, awarded for completion of a short program that is focused on a discrete set of competencies (i.e., skills, knowledge, attributes), and is sometimes related to other credentials.” [1]*
- *“... a micro-credential can be accepted for credit by an institution or organization or **be an attestation for employers.**” [2]*

Source: [1] (Pichette, Brumwell, Rizk, & Han, 2021), and [2] (McGreal, R., Olcott, D. A Strategic reset: micro-credentials for higher education leaders. Smart Learn. Environ. 9, 9 (2022))

RTM – Motivation for RTM

- COVID-19 pandemic disrupted economy
 - Firms faced reduced revenues, increased costs, significant uncertainty
 - Still a need to (re)train staff on new skills or competencies.
- Wanted to ensure small businesses, and non-Winnipeg businesses had access to funds.

Criteria and Framework

Any Manitoba-based business, not-for-profit or charity with a valid Manitoba business number in good standing was eligible to register for the program

The per employee maximum was \$2,500, and
The per organization maximum was \$75,000

Training eligible for reimbursement included:

Applications were on a first-come, first-served basis

Start date as early as April 1, 2021, and,
training paid for while the program was active.

To get reimbursement

Needed to submit a valid paid receipt via the Retrain Manitoba portal.

Once confirmed, funds were paid out within five business days.

Launch / Marketing

To reach as many eligible organizations as possible, used a multi-channel approach

- Press releases by EDW, the Province, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce,
- Support from multiple: industry associations, sector councils, and training organizations
 - Did presentations to over 500 members of these organizations
- EDW ran webinars in all eight of Manitoba's economic regions.

Employer Statistics by Employee Size

Employee Size	Share of Businesses	Share of Approved Trainees	Share of Total Approved Dollar Value	Average Spend Index
0 to 99 employees	87.4%	60.1%	70.8%	104
100 - 499 employees	9.9%	30.3%	22.5%	75
500< employees	2.7%	9.6%	6.7%	67
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100

Source: Ferris, C., & Au, W. (2023).

Employer Statistics by Grouped Geography

Census Agglomeration and all other	Share of Businesses	Share of Approved Trainees	Share of Total Approved Dollar Value	Average Spend Index
Winnipeg	65%	63%	66%	101
Other	35%	37%	34%	97
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100

Source: Ferris, C., & Au, W. (2023).

Employer Statistics by Who Heard It From

How did you hear about the program?	Share of Businesses	Share of Approved Trainees	Share of Total Approved Dollar Value	Average Spend Index
Social Media	8.2%	4.8%	7.1%	116
Training course provider	14.7%	16.0%	15.8%	114
Word of mouth	29.3%	21.0%	25.1%	111
Google/search engine	3.7%	3.0%	3.6%	108
Radio/TV	4.1%	3.3%	4.4%	99
Other	10.5%	10.4%	9.2%	91
Employment Assistance Services agency	0.7%	0.5%	0.8%	83
Directly from Chambers of Commerce/EDW	19.1%	26.2%	22.5%	83
Industry newsletter/publication	9.6%	14.8%	11.5%	73
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100

Source: Ferris, C., & Au, W. (2023).

Conclusion

- Small businesses were the largest group accessing funds. Businesses outside of Winnipeg accessed training funds at approximately the same rate as their share of Manitoba's population
- The main marketing channels, along with word of mouth were how most businesses heard about the program.
- All funds were dispersed, well in advance of the end of March 2022.
- Over 18,000 people, at least 1,365 organizations were (re)trained in a wide variety of required skills, helping the economy recover.



Economic Development Winnipeg:

- [Winnipeg Economic Digest Blog](#)
- Thank you!
- Chris Ferris, Senior Economist