



## Northern Lights College Targeted Call

# Targeted call for FSC Project Partners

### Instructions to complete the application form

Please refer to the Future Skills Centre's (FSC) **Targeted Call for FSC Project Partners Guidelines** document when preparing your application.

This application form is structured to help you address the selection criteria for this call and give reviewers easy access to your project information. This form is divided into the following sections:

- Part 1 - General information
- Part 2 - Project summary
- Part 3 - Project details
- Part 4 - Project work plan and budget
- Part 5 - Declaration

If you would like to request accommodations or other types of support, please contact Maysa Mourad by email at [targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca](mailto:targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca) or by phone at 437-331-0613.

If you have any questions while compiling your application, you may contact our team at [targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca](mailto:targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca). We would be happy to answer any questions.

# PART 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

## 1. Lead organization

**Name of lead organization**

Northern Lights College

**Name of project lead**

Tracy Donnelly

**Project lead's preferred method of contact (email address and/or phone number)**

tdonnelly@nlc.bc.ca

## 2. Proposed project

**Project title**

NLC BREAK Room

**Project start and end dates**

January 04, 2022- September 30, 2023

Projects must end no later than September 30, 2023.

**Amount requested from FSC (total)**

\$1,181,861.80

**Project partners and their location**

Northern Lights College is B.C.'s Energy College, serving northern British Columbia in an area covering more than 324,000 square kilometres. NLC has campus locations in Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, and Tumbler Ridge, along with access centres in Atlin, Dease Lake and Hudson's Hope

# PART 2 - PROJECT SUMMARY

## 1. Proposed project “one-liner”

How would you describe your new project in one sentence?

To identify and create actionable strategies to break down non-traditional barriers for mid-career individuals (MCIs), entering training and/or education programs.

(30 words maximum)

Training new workers and

## 2. Proposed project summary

How would you describe your new project and how it builds on the testing and learning of your current project to date?

We suggest that this summary covers the main information about how your new project addresses all selection criteria of this targeted call.

CLIMB research identified barriers to training entry due to lack of support options not typically offered in traditional recruitment and admission strategies. The research suggests that specific questions or unique approaches could be employed to determine what the MCI needs before beginning the official admissions process. Furthermore, there is a need for accessible and timely ways to meet admissions requirements. Unfamiliarity with technology is a major barrier, especially in Indigenous communities. Many individuals identified fear being wrong or appearing uninformed as reason to discontinue forward progress. To further compound the issues is colleges rarely offer clear information about the prior learning assessment process, leaving the MCI daunted by the feeling of “starting over”.

We want to create a virtual place where individuals can confidently access information and support. A place where MCI's as individuals can plan and prepare for higher education before formally beginning college admissions process.

- Pillar One: Reducing barriers to program acceptance due to admissions criterion by examples such as: Trades math accelerator to admissions course, a credit for prior learning planning and preparation strategies course, a CAAT test prep course.
- Pillar Two: Reducing barriers to entry into college formal preparation process by offering: Individual pre-thinking & pre-planning sessions, individual planning and assistance with admissions and registration process, technology use for MCI's.
- Pillar Three: Career Advising and referral network by providing access to: Monthly Webinars with actual industry professionals, referrals to college career advising, financial advising, international and Indigenous student advising, referrals to

professional mentors.

(250 words maximum)

### 3. Additional scope

#### **How does your new project go beyond the scope of your current FSC-funded project?**

The additional scope may include expanding or extending a project model, its principles and/or components. For example, it may include expanding the project to new regions or jurisdictions, including new or larger target populations, and testing different delivery formats to understand what works to address demands. This would assume the potential for bringing additional partners to deliver the project at a broader scale. The additional scope must be grounded in new concrete learning questions to contribute to your work and of others in the skills ecosystem.

We will use our findings about mid-career individuals(MCI) and their barriers to entry to provide services directly targeted at this group. Services likely to include: 1) Accelerated Trades Math and CAAT test prep courses to meet admissions requirements, 2) Credit for prior-learning assessments to meet individualized needs, 3) MCI focused computer and technology use readiness, 4) Access to individual coaching/advising sessions covering form filling out, 5) appreciative inquiry sessions to gain needed knowledge and prepare prior to formal college sessions, and videos that directly target mid-career worker questions and concerns. 6) one-on-one career mentor sessions, 7) free monthly webinars with experts in field. 8) redesigning recruitment intake processes to directly serve MCI needs. 9) customized cohorts for admission courses and intake process, particularly Indigenous MCI looking to enter trades and/or micro-credential training.

(150 words maximum)

### 4. Importance of the additional scope

#### **Why is the additional scope of your project important to your organization, sector and target populations? Why is it timely?**

In today's global climate of fear and uncertainty there is appears to be less willingness to risk the unknown and undertake new challenges. This is evidenced by the fact that 450+ people moved through the CLIMB Centre, yet less than 5% of these individuals proceeded to the free online college readiness course. Furthermore, the consent form placed prior to experiencing any of support tools was a barrier to entry as the landing page had 17,000 visitors and only a 2.6% signup rate. People are looking for help and MCI's appear to need more than typical

college admissions support and services. Technology literacy, navigating admissions form and adapting to college culture were a few concerns.

Developing useable, shareable tools that create action steps can deepen our CLIMB research while providing individuals with much needed support on their career journey, all while providing education providers with tools to serve their MCI community.

(150 words maximum)

## **PART 3 - PROJECT DETAILS**

In this section, please provide information about how your new project supports each of the selection criteria of this targeted call.

We provide prompting questions to help you address all criteria in the application guidelines. You may prepare this section following the prompting questions in sequence or using your own sections and narrative.

Although you have flexibility regarding the format for this section, please make sure that you address all criteria according to the prompting questions. Reviewers will assess your application by scoring each criterion individually.

This section should not exceed **seven** pages. We anticipate that most proposals will present this section in **five** pages.

### Working Project Title

- Barrier Reduction to Education through Advice & Knowledge"
  - Welcome to The BREAK Room.

### Background

Over 450 people utilized the CLIMB Centre and preliminary data collected showed that less 5% moved through and enrolled in the free training. Clearly there is more work to be done in discovering best practicing for serving mid-career workers. While unpacking the CLIMB data over these last few weeks since our project completion date, we have identified several barriers to entry as it translates to entering the education and training stream. In today's climate of uncertainty, the continued pursuit of relevant data around training mid-career individuals (MCI) in the workforce is critical. All data that helps identify timely and agile opportunities to support Canadians to remain in and/or enter the workforce is critical. Finding actionable

strategies that result in people entering training will help mitigate the labor market inequities happening across all of Canada. Our hands-off approach in CLIMB may have left room for the fear of the unknown to limit ones forward progress. In continuing this important work, the NLC team would be connecting in real time with people to meet their individual needs, as well as using these data to share with partners as soon as we discovered strategies that worked. NLC is and will remain collaborative when creating opportunities for everyone to benefit. Furthermore, rural communities face unique challenges with access, and we discovered that we could use technology to support a broader reach than we thought was possible all while decreasing cost of individual support. Our approach to overcoming various income, geography, and demographic inequities, using technology will further open the access door across our northern region, British Columbia, and Canada as a whole. One unique gift of these unprecedented times is a broader acceptance of using technology to serve ones needs. We have especially seen a new openness to providing services and training in our Indigenous communities that prior to the shutdowns generally was not accepted. With this newfound openness to finding solutions to training and support services, the BREAK room will include focusing on the unique needs of each of our Indigenous partners community by community in real time. This shift in acceptance of some form of digital learning is a huge systemic change and extending the CLIMB mission of connecting mid-career workers with key information is timely and relevant. Finding new innovate approaches focused on broad reaching inclusivity is key to moving from the one size fits all approach. Focusing on opening doors, allowing one to consider training by approaching this with a “personal life coach” or appreciative inquiry methodology as compared to traditional college acceptance and career advising.

What we have learned from the CLIMB Centre that is directly related to the framework of developing services will focus on shifting people out of exploring opportunities mode to action mode. A few key data points are as follows:

- Identifying which courses to take to obtain a specific career or job was a barrier to many CLIMB Centre Participants.
  - Participants mentioned that it would be helpful to be able to identify a career idea and be able to find out what is possible and what they would need to understand and/or address prior to officially starting process. They wanted a little “pre-planning support” before they could make the decision to act. Some people knew that they would like training, they just don’t know how to find the information they need, such as what course, where, how much, how to apply etc.
  - Looking at the Prospective Students and Admissions pages for post-secondary institutions in BC and Alberta, most really assume that the student is familiar with academic jargon and knows what sections apply to them. Having a place to

pre-plan and understand the academic world from their world view could break the barrier to entry or at the very least move them closer to entering training.

- o Although not identified specifically within the data an individualize or specialized cohort approach to removing barriers has started to emerge as a solution. Taking a group of people and moving them through a similar process together leaving room for the highly individualized support when needed; can help determine the ways to support underserved groups to gain non-traditional access to programs and training.
- Filling out forms was a barrier to move into training.
  - o Many participants mentioned that they would appreciate help with filling out registration forms, possibly due to English as a second language, anxiety associated with filling out documents, or lack of access to updated technology skills or a printer. In seeking an informal understanding of this issue while running the CLIMB Centre we discovered that a fear of filling out forms was a barrier. Comments in these information discussion boards spoke of a fear of vulnerability when providing personal information; inability to answer questions on the spot; fear of misunderstanding the words and providing the wrong information. We are seeking to understand if the fear of filling out forms may be similar to test anxiety and reading anxiety, although a search of the literature did not highlight any studies to support this hypothesis.
- Technology use is a barrier.
  - o Some CLIMB participants mentioned that they do not have access to a printer, making it difficult to fill out registration forms that required a physical signature. Even if they had a printer, many people did not have legal-sized paper and did not have enough computer/technology literacy to find solutions, instead they give up.
  - o Additionally, understanding how the webworks and how to protect privacy. Some were either overly concerned and would not use the technology in a safe way, or others had no clue that sharing information was unsafe. Mid-career workers appear to lack access to the same technology literacy skills for everyday use, as younger adults.

CLIMB Centre quotes:

*“I would be so happy if i could find someone who helps random people with no skills who want training ! i have been googling trades schools and student loans for yrs and never found any really useful info , i wish i knew an office somewhere i could walk into with just the idea of welding school and walk out with courses and dates figured out maybe even student loan papers filled out“*

*“Deciding what to focus on and understanding transferability off my existing skills, knowledge, experiences, etc”*

*“More assistance to know how to grow on what they already have without starting from ground zero. Also, having the traing be actually affordable. I know as a parent I am struggling.”*

These are just a few examples of the three focus areas or “pillars” of the BREAK Room project, we have even more to share.

### Goal

The purpose of this study is to explore in real time various strategies such an appreciative inquiry approach to remove barriers associated with the pre-college application or pre-registration process. There have been countless approaches and models focusing on getting people into the recruitment stream and into traditional college programing. Yet, transitioning the MCI seems to be more elusive than the traditional college student and we are proposing that we continue to seek and identify at a more granular level what is needed. Finding these best practices across various demographics will support a new understanding and lead to the creation of real applicable changes that are customized for mid-career individuals. Providing pre-planning or pre-coaching supports that extend beyond the traditional college program admissions support to overcome barriers of time, comfort and access could lead to a universal change in how we connect with and create opportunities for people to upskill, reskill or just start an entirely new career path as a mature adult.

### Project high level frame

Using the existing materials created for CLIMB Centre in relation to career planning and/or personal assessment as a tools to create an virtual access point (The BREAK room) to work with MCI’s. We will create a personalized one on one experience virtual with contact points for each with the Breakroom coordinators. This virtual breakroom lounge will allow for all the pre-thinking and pre- planning everyone requires before committing fully to any college admissions process. This would be done virtual. Individuals would meet with a coordinator and explore options and create planning and next steps. This would be different from a traditional recruitment or admissions experience. These support sessions would be centrally focused on understanding how to navigate their personal story prior to learning what they need to approach the admission system requirements, the pre-requisites. Helping them understand what options are actually possible in relation to their needs. This will also include various courses such as Trades math admissions accelerator course and the college success skills



course developed in CLIMB, a new CAAT prep course, one on one advice and personal coaching support, online technology skills course, a goal setting and getting things done, stress management, live industry lead career webinars to name a few. In addition to this we would also be working with the ITA to support individuals working as apprentices to navigate their math barriers to certification or promotion. Another project would be working with the NLC Trades Division who will be piloting a Valid 8 program to offer Trades Training using a unique competency check model within our Indigenous communities. Our Trades math course, technology use and individuals pre-thinking module will go along side this pilot to support the places CLIMB has already identified as barriers. Finally, we also have plans to offer the trades math accelerator course as part of a special adult trades sampler course. Once the adult discovers what trade they are interested in they will have direct access to a six-week course to meet their math admissions requirement and be ready to enter training.

### Measure of Success

One measure would be to provide the 450+ CLIMB Centre participants an opportunity for additional one on one coaching and support in an effort to understand why they did not access any of the free training and determine if they would like support to transition into training. Secondly, the goal would be to provide one on one support services to at least 150 people over the life of the project and understanding in a qualitative sense the real details and barriers preventing MCI's from moving forward. Also, will be looking at how many people we can move into a training opportunity. At the end of the project this focused work would support the creation of MCI persona profile styles and a question-and-answer flow chart to support various MCI's and their specific needs. Additionally, the project would culminate in the creation of a specialized intake and support process included specialized accelerated courses to meet admission requirements. Finally, we would have specialized support and recruiting for cohort groups verses individual support only, comparing the differences in strategies and transition rates. The end goal will be to provide out of the box successful solutions to educational institutions across Canada to better service MCI in today's non-traditional training and educational climate. There is more than one option to change one life trajectory using training be it a micro credential, independent study toward skills needed for workforce, special virtual hybrid training to name a few. The thinking one applies to approaching the education table with a traditional course catalog is different from the new buffet table filled with wonderful choices. We want to use our unique approach and vision to find out how to help people get where they want to go and help Canada recover our economy with a skills workforce.

### Participants Eligibility

The resources of the project would be available to anyone that is not in high school and/or having graduated within a year of high school completion. Exclusion criteria: live outside of Canada, under 19 years of age.

### Recruitment

Multiple avenues of directing people to the site via advertizing as well as re-connecting with the 450 CLIMB participants. Referrals from the Industry Training Association of BC (see appendix) and other Indigenous Community Education Coordinators. Reaching out to industry providing support to their workforce as they reach for additional training to support businesses and industry.

### What would Individual support project entail?

The main goal will be to help people formulate a training plan, to help them develop a vague idea about a career into a concrete list of questions that will facilitate discussions with college campus advisors and/or make decisions around taking courses needed to meet admissions requirements. Other support materials would be provided as online resources. Moving from the formal pre-post survey to determine success, the coordinators will apply a coaching approach to discover support trends while helping each participants meet their individual goals. The emphasis is not to offer more traditional college recruitment and advising, rather create the pre-planning and pre-thinking stage support in an effort to help build the confidence. In essence to help MCI understand the college world and how they might fit as a mature adult while still managing all of life that MCI's encounters that are often barriers to entry.

Examples of projects that will help reducing barriers to training/college acceptance

- Pre-Foundational Trades' Math. We will be working with the ITA (*see appendix one*) as they will be sending apprentice referrals, who are finding that math is a barrier to additional certifications. We will be creating custom hybrid courses for various Indigenous communities to determine how this can remove the barrier of entry into Trade Training.
- Credit for Prior Learning
  - Although many college websites mention that some eligibility requirements can be substituted with work experience, explain what that means and how to get certification. Offer Prior Learning certification in conjunction with the CE department

## Technology Training – Reducing barriers to access

- Webinar for navigating online
  - Laptop/PC or mobile
  - Getting online
  - Opening PDFs, digital signatures, printing a page, printing a webpage to a PDF
  - Online safety, keeping your ID secure
- Webinar and building an online video on how to fill out a registration form
  - On paper
  - Fillable form (digital signature)
- CLIMB College Success online course

## Data collection instruments

These will be developed both prior to launch of program, regularly adapted and changed in real time. The only unchanging data instrument will be a post survey asking questions about what supported them and might have also been supportive. And then keeping data on all individuals that made the decision to entering within timeframe of the program and/or plan to over the subsequent 6-10 months after the project. All other data collected would be the coaching notes of each participant.

## Equity, diversity, and inclusion.

This project would be open to everyone. Special focus would be given to our Indigenous community members by providing customizable and/or group supports even giving technology skills workshops individually or as groups to provide easy access to the other BREAK room resources. Additionally, we plan to offer custom training options for the Trades Math accelerator. At the writing of this proposal, we are looking at adding the math course at the end of a adult trades sampler course for Indigenous community members to move from a sampler course directly into the admission process. We will also be focusing on our remote communities in Atlin and Dease Lake. These communities have been in lock down and without access to training for close to 24 months and need individualize support to determine what they need to return to work (upskilling and safety training) and/or enroll in school. We will also be focusing on recent permanent residents who just completed their education and are looking to enter the workforce but finding barriers to workforce entry.

## Capacity

In this project we would be utilizing the same two coordinators and then hiring a third. Two of these coordinators understand our communities and the direct barriers to entry via our CLIMB

experience. Furthermore, this proposal includes their ideas and vision to removing these barriers. We would be utilizing the resources already built and providing a view on how these can be used in real time coaching/advising extending the learning of the CLIMB with actionable strategies. We have successfully worked with Blueprint and undertaken three IRB approvals for the CLIMB Centre project with Veritas IRB. We have watched FSC grow alongside us, and we believe we have a good track record in terms of fiscal responsibility, reporting and updates, sharing concerns and/or being transparent with issues that arise with changed timelines and then overcame and continued to successfully meet our targets. Finally, it has been an honor to work with FSC as one of the first 13 pilot projects.

### Coherence

NLC believes that this project is the next logical step in understanding how to help MCI's. This is a continued discussion among training and education providers. This would be an opportunity to move from the more passive CLIMB Centre model of understanding on how personal self-discovery has the potential to move someone into considering training, into an active one on one approach. This project would provide a unique individualized support to determine how to move and MCI with barriers into training. Our team understands from the CLIMB data where the local next is and making with this project will provide a comparison of the same group of data and the approach success rates.

### Appendix One

Hi Tracy,

In follow up to our discussion regarding the Accelerated Trades Math Pilot project, as a designated training provider with ITA, you have our full support. We can promote this resource to apprentices and individuals interested in getting into skilled trades. Our completion team can use this resource to support individuals that are struggling to achieve their certification and if individuals are looking for a math tutor, this can be very helpful. As I said in the meeting, this would be a great project for Leo to present to BCATTA, share this information with the other public post-secondary trainers, they might also have an interest in these resources. If you could provide a flyer/brochure to assist ITA in promoting this resource we would be happy to put it on our webpage, share with internal departments so everyone can refer individuals as needed. Please let me know if you have any questions. Kind regards,

**Pam Eales** Manager, Apprenticeship Advisors at the **Industry Training Authority**

904 102 Ave Dawson Creek, BC V1G 1B8

t: 250-782-0002 | c: 250-219-2873 | w: [itabc.ca](http://itabc.ca)

(3,500 words maximum)

## PART 4 - PROJECT WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

1. Please submit a **one-page work plan** with key milestones and their timeline. **Do not** include detailed activities at this time. If your proposal is selected, we will work with you to develop a detailed work plan.
2. Please complete the project budget template provided to you as part of the application material.
  - a. Include only **new funding** associated with your new project and its additional scope. Please do not include the existing funding that is already part of your current funding agreement with FSC.
  - b. If applicable, identify new funding pending or confirmed for this project from other sources. **This funding should be included as in-kind contributions.** (Please note that funding from other federal sources cannot be counted towards in-kind contributions)
3. Please submit your work plan and budget by sending these files, along with this completed form, to [targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca](mailto:targetedcall@fsc-ccf.ca).
4. You may use the space below to provide comments to accompany your work plan and/or budget.

With respect to the website build, this is nothing like CLIMB Centre website that was built as a data collection repository and a self-guided experience. These new project development tasks are not comparable to the CLIMB design of research instruments and the CLIMB experience. In fact, everything we plan on undertaking we in this moment have the expertise to execute, especially as many tools are coming from CLIMB. In planning the BREAK Room we have overcome many of the barriers encountered over these past years and see this running smoothly as we extend the CLIMB Centre experience into action.

(100 words maximum)

## PART 5 - DECLARATION

By submitting an application, the lead organization and its partners agree to the requirements of the following sections, detailed in the guidelines outlined for this funding call, and they affirm that they comply with and/or commit to the following:

- Organization eligibility.
- Active support for co-creating and carrying out an evaluation with an FSC-approved evaluator, if FSC decides an evaluation is appropriate for this project.
- Active engagement in knowledge mobilization activities related to the project.
- Compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans.
- Confidential due diligence inquiries from Future Skills Centre into the applicant.

**Signature**

Tracy L. Donnelly

**Name of signing authority**

Tracy L Donnelly

**Date**

10/26/2021