
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2024PSFS0047-001552
Sept. 18, 2024

Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

New micro-credential program helps boost B.C. rural, remote economic development

PORT ALBERNI – A new micro-credential program at North Island College (NIC) will help people living in rural and Indigenous communities build relevant skillsets to foster economic growth in their communities.

“Improving access to skills training helps people progress in their careers and creates more economic opportunities for their communities,” said Lisa Beare, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. “By funding the development of this micro-credential program led by North Island College, we are helping to create more skilled workforces that will promote economic resilience and support the current and future needs of rural and Indigenous communities.”

The 12-week micro-credential program includes six individual stackable courses specifically geared toward building economic development capacity for rural and remote municipalities, local government and Indigenous communities. The courses will help train people in such things as rural community development, entrepreneurship, market research and analysis, infrastructure and resource development. The curriculum also includes a final project where students will apply their knowledge beyond the classroom and help design an economic development plan for a municipality or a First Nations community.

“Innovation is critical to the success of B.C.’s rural and Indigenous communities,” said Lisa Domae, president and CEO, NIC. “Barriers to accessing important economic development training can leave rural communities behind. These stackable micro credentials will be available both online and in person, allowing interested learners to stay in community and build critical capacity for their home community.”

The program is an NIC-led joint venture with six other participating public rural colleges. NIC will be engaging with local communities, industry experts and First Nations to build a program and curriculum plan that best aligns with the visions and needs of the people in those communities. The Province is supporting the development of the micro-credential program with \$278,000.

This project aligns with the Province’s continued commitment to truth and reconciliation with the Indigenous Peoples of British Columbia, as well as the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, which aims to make education and skills training more accessible, affordable and relevant to help the people of B.C. prepare for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Quick Facts:

- NIC will be the primary co-ordinating institution for program development and delivery.
- NIC will be working with Coast Mountain College, College of New Caledonia, College of

Rockies, Northern Lights College, Okanagan College and Selkirk College.

Learn More:

For more information about North Island College, visit: <https://www.nic.bc.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:

Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and
Future Skills
Media Relations
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Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUND

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What people are saying about the program

Maggie Matear, president and CEO, Selkirk College –

“The really great thing about this micro credential is that it creates an accessible opportunity for municipal staff to build some internal capacity and institutional knowledge that remains in the community. It’ll support communities’ ability to chart their own economic and community development paths.”

Erin Higginbottom, education and capacity development co-ordinator, K’ómoks First Nation –

“The Applied Rural and Indigenous Community Economic Development Program offers a digestible and accessible format. The content is well designed to empower individuals with practical skills, and highlights preserving cultural heritage and promoting economic growth in rural and Indigenous communities. Participants will learn to address real-world challenges, fostering both local traditions and economic resilience.”

Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation –

“Collaboration between post-secondary institutions and First Nations communities, such as this program brings together, is essential to creating opportunities that address First Nation community needs. We are committed to fostering partnerships that support meaningful educational pathways for Indigenous Peoples and promote economic development aligned with First Nations’ priorities.”

Roly Russell, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development –

“Just as any other community, rural and Indigenous communities deserve access to skill building programs to build a better future for all generations. We’re proud to be supporting the development of this new micro credential and we are looking forward to seeing its impact on increasing employment and economic opportunities for people.”

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