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### **Technical Colleges Still Accepting UpSkill Applicants**

PIERRE, S.D. – Technical colleges in South Dakota are still accepting applicants to the UpSkill program, an effort announced by Governor Kristi Noem in July. UpSkill is a dynamic new program designed to support dislocated workers, impacted by COVID-19. The program is a joint venture of the Board of Technical Education and the Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR).

UpSkill provides participants access to one of 24 high-quality, online-only certificate programs at the state's four technical colleges. Participants will earn these credentials at little or no cost. The certificates are in high-demand fields, including; business, healthcare, information technology, and manufacturing.

Participants must have filed for re-employment assistance through DLR and be deemed a dislocated worker. After completing the UpSkill program, participants can enter a new career field, advance in their current field, or continue their education.

Individuals interested in certificates at Mitchell Technical College, Southeast Technical College, and Western Dakota Technical College still have time to apply. The application deadline is Friday, August 21, 2020. The first day of classes at those three institutions is Monday, August 24, 2020. The application deadline at Lake Area Technical College has already passed.

The UpSkill certificate programs are primarily 18 credits and are designed to be completed over two semesters in the fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021. The curriculum was designed to be completed in an online-only environment, so the certificates can be completed remotely, from anywhere in the state.

"These are high-quality certificates and were approved by the Board of Technical Education and created using curriculum approved by the Higher Learning Commission," noted Nick Wendell, executive director of the Board of Technical Education. "Every UpSkill certificate could lead to a meaningful career in South Dakota or to continued education."

The cost of the program will be supported by the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund directed to South Dakota as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding.

The participating technical colleges are Lake Area Technical College in Watertown, Mitchell Technical College in Mitchell, Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls, and Western Dakota Technical College in Rapid City.

Dislocated workers in South Dakota are encouraged to apply for the UpSkill program starting today. More information about the program and the eligible certificates can be found at [www.sdUpSkill.com](http://www.sdUpSkill.com).