# Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund

## Register of Interest - Second Funding Round

Greater Manchester and Lancashire both demonstrate a growing digital sector and growing demand for specialist digital skills resulting in skills gaps and hard-to-fill vacancies.

The Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund is a £3 million, joint venture between the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) and aims to help employers, in the Greater Manchester and Lancashire areas, to address their specialist digital skills needs through short, innovative, bespoke training.

### Key principles

* The fund is seeking applications from consortia who can work together to co-design and co-deliver creative approaches to addressing digital skills gaps faced by employers. These can be existing or new collaborations and can consist of any combination of employers, training providers of all descriptions, Colleges, Universities, other community or charity organisations – there is no set formula.
* Identified vacancies – absolutely the starting point for all potential bids – there will be an expectation that employers will give guaranteed interviews to the people who successfully complete the training programme they are involved with. This refers to digital roles within digital companies and those across all sectors e.g. construction, health, manufacturing etc.
* The training programme should be as innovative in design and content as needed to match the needs of the employer within a maximum of 12 weeks for full time and 20 weeks for part time courses. *(In round two we are unlikely to fund bootcamps that already exist unless there is a significant change e.g. a new target cohort, a different skill area)*.
* Should seek to promote greater diversity in the workforce with courses designed to attract and meet the specific needs of your target group. Target candidates might include: underrepresented groups (e.g. women, BAME), returners, career changes, underemployed/unemployed STEM graduates, GM & Lancashire residents currently in low-paid and/or insecure work.
* Looking for 85% of participants achieving a positive destination.
* Bids between £50 000 and £250 000
* Expectation of significant employer contribution (cash match and/or in-kind support)

This is not a fund about basic digital skills. We are particularly looking at the need for people in priority areas such as cybersecurity, data science and manufacturing - process control and AI/Robotics. Or other shortage digital skill areas; digital marketing and software development (outside of central Manchester). Any area of medium to high level digital skills that can evidence a need will be considered at this stage.

### Timelines and process

By completing this register of interest, you are indicating to GMCA and LDSP that you are keen to explore potential projects but it is not a binding commitment. Nor does not completing this form preclude you from applying for the tender once launched. Registering interest will allow us to open up a dialogue for exploring ideas, contribute to the development of the tender specification and, with your permission, to match you with other likeminded and suitably located businesses, training providers and/or other groups that may be interested in forming a consortia. Depending on the stage you are at with your proposal idea you can submit your ROI as a consortia or as an individual organisation which is seeking, or in the process of forming a partnership.

Experience tells us that those organisations that engage with events, drop ins and other aspects of the process were generally more successful. Registering interest now puts you on that path.

* 4th November 2019

Registration of Interest opens.

* 21st November 2019

Registration of Interest closes.

Requests for one-to-one appointments will be actioned as Registration of Interests are submitted. After the deadline, we will introduce interested partners and issue invites to the engagement event, as appropriate. Brief feedback on any ideas will be shared.

* 29th November 2019

Fund formally opens for bids.

All documentation including the specification for the fund will be launched on the ProContract website.

* 4th December 2019

Engagement event.

This event will give you the opportunity to hear first hand, further details regarding the fund and ask any questions you may have about the specification, paperwork and process. Guidance on using The Chest and the Social Value Portal will also be available.

* Drop ins

17th Dec 2019 and 15th Jan 2020 in Lancashire

18th Dec and 14th Jan 2020 at GMCA

Appointments will be available to discuss the process or the specification content for all interested in submitting bids.

1. Organisation Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Organisation Name: |  |
| Lead Contact Name: |  |
| Contact Details: |  |
| Email Address: |  |
| Telephone Number: |  |
| Area of Lancashire or Greater Manchester located in: |  |

1. Specialist Skill Requirements: Employers Only

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Area of training need identified (e.g. Software Development, Digital Marketing, Data Science): |  |
| Number of hard to fill vacancies identified at present: |  |
| Types of roles identified (include salaries if available): |  |

1. Training Offer: Providers Only

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Brief description of current / proposed training offer (e.g. Software Development, Digital Marketing, Data Science): |  |
| Target |  |

1. Other Organisations e.g. community groups

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Interest in the fund / what could you offer as part of a partnership |  |
| Target candidates |  |

1. Application Support

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| We are/I am interested in attending the launch event. Please send an invitation. | Yes/No |
| I am happy to be introduced to other employers, training providers or other relevant groups who have the same or similar needs and interests for this project. | Yes/No |
| I would be interested in arranging a one-to-one conversation with the Fund Manager for GMCA (Adele Reynolds) and/or Lancashire (Kerry Harrison) prior to the launch event. | Yes/No |
| What additional information would you require in a tender document and/or at the launch event to be able to submit a fully scoped and fully priced bid for this project? (Max 250 words): | |

1. Project Ideas (Optional questions)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If you have an idea that you would like to sense check with the team prior to launch of the second funding round, please outline below (500 words max). Brief feedback will be provided. Details you may want to consider include:   * Consortia members and their expected roles * Programme content and delivery plans * How your approach is new and innovative * The target groups you will look to engage with (e.g. Underrepresented groups, returners, career changes, underemployed or unemployed STEM graduates) | |
|  | |
| Please indicate the total funding you anticipate needing for your programme.  If possible a breakdown of what those costs will be for.  (Range - £50 000 - £250 000)  *NB: At this stage if you anticipate needing a greater amount of funding than suggested above, please add a short comment as to why (200 words max).* |  |
| How many people do you expect to train? |  |

**Completed forms should be returned to:**

[**FastTrackDigital@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk**](mailto:FastTrackDigital@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)