

Provincial Adult Literacy Profile Fundors, Providers and Accountability

Ontario

Total population (2007)	12,803,900
First Nations (2006)	242,490
Immigrant (2006) [Visible minority, 2001]	3,398,725 [2,153,045]
Francophone (2006)	488,815
Urban (2001)	85%
Rural (2001)	15%
Senior/65 yrs and older (2007)	1,685,700

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html?gaw=08001>
[Ontario Summary Tables:
<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/101/pro01/pro106-eng.htm>]

Methodology

One objective of Connecting the Dots is to provide the first pan-Canadian overview of funding, delivery, and accountability practices in adult literacy services. The Provincial/Territorial Adult Literacy Profiles is one of the deliverables that helps meet that objective. Each profile offers a “snapshot” of adult literacy funding, services and accountability practices for a specific province or territory. It was constructed exclusively on the basis of online research using a variety of web sites. No interviews with literacy funders, providers or practitioners were conducted in this process. Online research for this profile was conducted between December 3 and 19, 2008, and represents the information that was publicly available at that point in time. It should not be used for further research purposes without validation. The date when web pages were last modified is noted when such information was indicated.

1. Funders

Public — Provincial Government

Government of Ontario, Employment Ontario/Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)

- MTCU is responsible for Ontario’s **Literacy and Basic Skills Program/LBS**, which helps promote the Ministry’s goal of “strengthen[ing] pathways to post-secondary education, apprenticeship and employment”. The Program “provides adults who have left school with learning opportunities to gain the literacy, numeracy and essential skills they need to improve their employment situations, access further education and training, and/or increase their independence”.

The objectives of LBS are to:

- help the population move towards a seamless adult education system supporting lifelong learning
- support literacy agencies in providing quality services meeting learners' needs
- design literacy services for adults most in need
- ensure accountability to government, to the public, and to learners
- foster closer links between literacy training and employment

Key Recent Statements and Directions

The Adult Education Review was launched in 2004 at the request of MTCU and the Ministry of Education to propose a policy framework for adult education and recommend actions supporting and improving adult learning in Ontario. The Review focussed on the specific programs that help adults gain access to further education and training, gain or keep employment, or participate more fully in the life of their communities. The Review centred on consultations with a broad array of stakeholders, the substance of which was published in the **2005 Report: Ontario Learns** around eight themes:

1. adult education as a key component of Ontario’s education system
2. learner pathways
3. integration of programs
4. partnerships
5. accountability, outcomes, and funding
6. access to adult education
7. information and communications technology in adult education
8. innovation and excellence in teaching and learning

The Report’s recommendations “establish a direction for action that will enable the government to put in place [a] proposed policy framework”. The policy framework proposes action on six key elements:

1. investment in skills development
2. learner pathways
3. accessibility and inclusion
4. innovation and excellence in teaching and learning
5. funding and accountability

6. research

According to another 2005 Report commissioned by EO/MTCU to provide recommendations on strategies to improve higher education in general, “Adult learning should be promoted actively”, i.e. the government needs to do more — increase funding to keep up with the needs of individuals, demographic groups, communities and the Ontario economy more broadly, engage in stronger outreach efforts, in particular to rural, aboriginal Francophone and special needs communities, and improve accountability at all levels.

Recipients of funding from EO/MTCU for LBS — a variety of contracted institutions and organizations, including:

- school boards
- colleges
- community agencies

Funding streams

- LBS
- Family Literacy
- Native Literacy

Funding amounts provided by EO/MTCU

- 2007-8: \$75 million was invested in LBS (resulting, according to EO/MTCU’s Annual Report, in “seven out of 10 learners going on to further education and employment”)
- 2006-07: between \$63-\$70 million was invested in LBS (\$10 million of the total was invested specifically in academic upgrading, representing double previous investments in this area)

Populations served by EO/MTCU

A broad spectrum of individuals and communities are served by LBS, including:

- Aboriginals
- Francophones
- people with special needs

The Program focuses on adults who are unemployed, who need literacy training in order to find and keep a job or function in daily life. Special emphasis is placed on Ontario Works participants. MTCU also supports families, single parents, immigrants and pre-school children through Family Literacy programs and services.

Volunteers: statistics not located

Number of LBS learners

2007-8: 51,000 (including those in academic upgrading)

2006-7: 46,000 to 49,000

(among these, about 4,200 were in academic upgrading programs)

Public: Other Funding

Federal government: Human Resources and Social Development Canada/Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES), Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Private and Non-Profit Funding

Additional support is provided by the private sector, from corporations, foundations and individuals.

Sources Section 1

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<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/literacy/main.html> (last modified 29 Jan. 2007)

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/literacy/ontliteracy/ont_lit.html (last modified 14 March 2007)

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/postsec.pdf> (Feb. 2005)

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/MTCU/about/annualreport/#8> (last modified 17 June 2008)

<http://www.on.literacy.ca/themes/olc/annualreports/2008/ar2007-08.pdf>

<http://www.nald.ca/clo/about.htm>

<http://www.onlc.ca/page.php?PageID=19> (2008)

[http://www.collegesontario.org/Client/CollegesOntario/Colleges_Ontario_LP4W_LND_WebStation.nsf/resources/2007_Annual_Report/\\$file/2007_CO_ANNUAL_REPORT.pdf](http://www.collegesontario.org/Client/CollegesOntario/Colleges_Ontario_LP4W_LND_WebStation.nsf/resources/2007_Annual_Report/$file/2007_CO_ANNUAL_REPORT.pdf)

<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/CONFINTEA%20VI/CANADA%20FINAL%20CONFINTEA%20VI%20EN.pdf> (Oct. 2008)

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/adultedreview/ontariolearns.pdf> (2005)

<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/CONFINTEA%20VI/CANADA%20FINAL%20CONFINTEA%20VI%20EN.pdf> (Oct. 2008)

2. Providers

LBS

Contracted school boards, colleges (24 exist in applied arts and technology) and community agencies

- across Ontario, in about 300 locations
- courses are in self-directed format and online, provided at no cost to learners
- focus on people with literacy skills below Grade 9 of the Ontario Secondary School Curriculum
- academic upgrading available to learners with skills at the Grade 10-12 level (helps them prepare for post-secondary education, apprenticeship training, or employment)
- courses offered in four streams: for Anglophone, deaf, Francophone and Aboriginal learners

Types of Adult Literacy Programs Offered

A wide range of programs is offered tailored to individuals, communities, demographic groups and the Ontario economy more broadly and responding to specific needs of either an academic, employment or functional nature.

Family Literacy

The 2008 Ontario Budget increases the number of Parenting and Family Literacy Centres in the province by 34 (with an additional investment of \$2 million in the 2008–09 school year), bringing the total to 123.

Provincial Organizations

Four umbrella organizations in Ontario support diverse literacy initiatives:

1. **Ontario Literacy Coalition/OLC** (250 members) — “works to lead the discussion on literacy, support the literacy field and empower the entire literacy community”.

The organization’s mission is to “build leadership, support and capacity towards a more literate Ontario” by conducting and supporting research into literacy in Ontario, advising policy-makers in government and the literacy field, fostering innovation, leading collaboration among stakeholders and initiating partnerships and alliances in support of literacy initiatives province-wide.

2. **Deaf Literacy Initiative/DLI** — provides “accessible and culturally relevant training, research, networking and resources to the Deaf and Deaf-blind literacy community in Ontario”. DLI strives to be “a world leader providing professional expertise and innovations in specialized literacy services to the Deaf and Deaf-Blind community and other coalitions”.
3. **La Coalition ontarienne de formation des adultes/COFA** — offers support services to French-language literacy and basic education providers in communities, schools and colleges. COFA’s services include a range of activities supporting coordination, communication, networking, training and information sharing.
4. **Ontario Native Literacy Coalition/ONLC** — provides “information, support and training to Native literacy practitioners in the Province of Ontario, enhancing ability and awareness of literacy issues”. ONLC strives to be “the leader of Native literacy in the Province of Ontario”. Its priorities include: advocacy to promote better understanding of Native literacy issues and program needs (funding, facilities and “appropriate, culturally-sensitive resources”), and training for Native literacy practitioners.

All four of the provincial coalitions have comprehensive web sites with extensive links for learners and practitioners. Annual reports are also posted (except for DLI).

Ontario also has 16 *Regional Literacy Networks*.

Provincial Sector Organizations

Four organizations in Ontario support distinctive approaches to literacy delivery:

1. **Colleges Ontario/CO** — the advocacy and outreach organization for the province’s 24 colleges of applied arts and technology. CO works to secure policy improvements and measures aimed at producing a skilled workforce.

2. **Community Literacy of Ontario/CLO** (made up of 100 community literacy agencies) — “exists to support, promote and provide a united voice for Anglophone community-based literacy programs in Ontario”.
3. **Laubach Literacy of Ontario/LLO** — an organization representing a network of 46 community-based literacy programs, employing the services of trained volunteer tutors and trainers; a member of CLO, the Ontario Literacy Coalition, and Laubach Literacy of Canada.
4. **Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education of School Board Administrators/CESBA LBS Committee** — “represents the work of the school boards in Ontario to deliver literacy and basic skills in their communities”. The Committee receives core funding from MTCU to enhance communication between the school board LBS and MTCU, coordinate and manage literacy development projects, and work towards best practices and share research results.

Organizations Promoting/Providing Practitioner Training and PD

- MTCU
- deliverers of literacy programs and services
- provincial umbrella organizations and sectoral bodies

Sources Section 2

<http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2006/11/16/c5436.html?lmatch=&lang=e.html> (Nov. 2006)

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<http://www.onlc.ca/> (2008)

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<http://www.deafliteracy.ca/Public/Home.aspx> (2007)

<http://www.collegesontario.org/>

<http://www.laubach-on.ca/> (revised 1 Dec. 2008)

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http://www.cesba.com/committee_literacy.htm

<http://www.cesba.com/fundingcoreservices.htm>

3. Accountability/Reporting

LBS Reporting to MTCU

According to the **2005 Report on the Adult Education Review, Ontario Learns**, each delivery agency submits an annual business plan, annual financial statement or audit. Delivery agencies upload activity and learner information each month to the MTCU database. Information includes learner outcomes.

The Report indicated that MTCU was implementing a performance management system that would focus on three core measures to benchmark success:

- efficiency
- effectiveness
- learner satisfaction

The Review consultations outlined in the 2005 Report “revealed differences in accountability approaches, as well as concerns that stakeholders have about accountability mechanisms. In some instances, there seemed to be concern that accountability and reporting requirements were too onerous. In other cases, stakeholders suggested that greater accountability was required.

The 2005 Report’s on accountability included:

- support for government priorities
- incentives for innovation and local partnerships
- links to a broad range of agreed-upon outcomes
- links to return on investment across a number of indicators
- accountability and clear roles and relationships among funding ministries and delivery agencies
- accountability measures for achievement of economic, social, and personal development goals
- accountability mechanisms for monitoring and continuous improvement
- accountability mechanisms to enable flexibility and innovation to meet local needs
- efficiency and effectiveness

Recent Direction

MTCU is using the **Essential Skills** as the basis of a new adult literacy curriculum and associated framework for measuring learners’ attainment of skills. The results of the assessments will be expressed as scores on the same scale as those used by Essential Skills and the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey. The data are the basis of the measures of effectiveness used in the performance management system of Employment Ontario. The Ministry of Education is cooperating on this initiative.

College Reporting to MTCU

According to CO, “Ontario’s college system is committed to accountability and transparency”, which are “built into the entire structure of Ontario’s college system through exacting governance requirements, rigorous provincial standards, and regular performance measurement and reporting”.

- Expected outcomes for college programs are set by over 100 provincial standards.
- Every year, colleges are required to provide documented results that serve to reliably inform students, parents, the public and the government.

In 1998, the Ontario government mandated colleges to collect and report performance data (KPIs, or Key Performance Indicators, gathered by an independent research company) in five areas:

1. graduate satisfaction
2. student satisfaction
3. employer satisfaction
4. employment rate (within six months of graduation)
5. graduation rate

Student satisfaction data are gathered by college-administered surveys and tabulated externally; student graduation rates are calculated by the colleges; graduate employment, graduate satisfaction and employer satisfaction are collected through telephone surveys.

Collected data appear in **CO's Results Reports**. The 2006 Report claims that the province's college system has "strengthened its commitment to accountability through maintaining effective governance framework and regular performance measurement".

A 2005 Report commissioned by EO/MTCU to provide recommendations on strategies to improve higher education in Ontario observed that, "The growing awareness of the fundamental role that post-secondary institutions play in the economic, social and cultural development of Ontario, combined with the increased costs of higher education, has resulted in an increased profile of accountability and governance in the post-secondary sector". The Report pointed to shortcomings with accountability in the provincial educational system generally, characterizing the system as one of "limited accountability and outcomes that are too often less than stellar of purpose".

Among its recommendations, the Report called for the establishment of a Council on Higher Education that, among other tasks, "should lead the way in the focus on better outcomes and better performance", in consultation with EO/MTCU and sector partners. According to the recommendations, the Council's work in the area of accountability will revolve around:

- developing a comprehensive quality assurance framework (qualitative measurement should be expanded)
- selecting suitable provincial measures and indicators based on internationally accepted standards
- advising on unique institutional-level measures
- ensuring the necessary capacity for data collection and analysis
- ensuring that indicators of quality are both quantitative and qualitative

The Report also noted that, "the extension of the powers of the Auditor General to "follow the money" will lead to greater accountability and more public discussion about the reasonableness of financial practices in the broader public sector".

MTCU Reporting

The Ministry's Annual Reports and Budgets are easily accessible online, clearly presented and relatively easy to follow. They provide detailed information on expenditures and performance in the educational sector (the latter based on data provided by their funded programs, especially from the colleges).

Sources Section 3

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[http://www.collegesontario.org/Client/CollegesOntario/Colleges_Ontario_LP4W_LND_WebStation.nsf/resources/2006+Results+Report/\\$file/CO_2006_RESULTS_REPORT.pdf](http://www.collegesontario.org/Client/CollegesOntario/Colleges_Ontario_LP4W_LND_WebStation.nsf/resources/2006+Results+Report/$file/CO_2006_RESULTS_REPORT.pdf) (Dec. 2006)

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