

Questions and Answers re: Literacy and Basic Skills

2017-2018 Funding Increase

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING DIVISION

General

1. How much additional funding is being allocated to the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program?

The government is investing \$185 million over four years in essential skills programming for adults, which will be provided through the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) funding envelope.

As part of this investment, the LBS program will receive increases to base funding of \$20 million in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, \$25 million in 2018-2019, \$55 million in 2019-2020, and \$85 million in 2020-2021. These investments will double the base funding of LBS by the fourth year—in order to fill gaps in service delivery, support program sustainability and build digital capacity in the network.

The LBS network will be informed of their funding allocations for 2017-2018 by Friday, June 23, 2017.

Allocations for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 will be communicated at a later date. However, we can confirm that funding dedicated to support across-the-board increases will be maintained in both 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

2. Is this a permanent change to base funding?

Yes. We are providing increases to base funding for the LBS program in the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 fiscal years to address static funding and strengthen capacity in the network.

Funding for 2017-2018 will be allocated to support:

- across-the-board increases for all LBS service delivery sites, e-Channel service providers, support organizations, and regional networks.
- an increase in learners served, including serving learners in high demand communities, and through e-channel.
- improvements to digital capacity and IT equipment across the LBS network.
- the launch of innovative literacy and essential skills training pilots to reach more learners.

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The ministry will also be reaching out to engage with the LBS network on the recent LBS evaluation and to help us prioritize program improvements, including the recommendation to develop a new funding model for LBS.

3. What approach to engagement will be taken to determine priorities for LBS program improvements?

Improvements to the LBS program will be informed by the recent evaluation of the LBS program, among other lines of evidence, as well as through dedicated engagement with all LBS partners.

These engagements, planned for fall 2017, will inform short, medium and long-term priorities for the continuous improvement of the LBS program. Planning for the engagements will also be a collaborative process. The ministry is working closely with a group of LBS support organization representatives to help plan the fall 2017 LBS network engagement.

4. What innovative literacy and essential skills training pilots will be supported in 2017-2018?

More information on new literacy and essential skills pilots will be shared as soon as they become available.

Allocations and Learner Targets

5. When will the LBS network be informed of their funding allocations?

The ministry will inform the LBS network of their individual 2017-2018 funding allocations by Friday, June 23, 2017. We are eager to work with the network to fill gaps in service delivery, support program sustainability and build digital capacity.

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Allocations for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 will be communicated at a later date. However, we can confirm that funding dedicated to support across-the-board increases will be maintained in both 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

6. How will the new funding for 2017-2018 be allocated across the LBS network?

Funding for 2017-2018 will be allocated to support:

- across-the-board increases for all LBS service delivery sites, e-Channel service providers, support organizations, and regional networks.
- an increase in learners served, including serving learners in high demand communities, and through e-channel.
- improvements to digital capacity and IT equipment across the LBS network.
- the launch of innovative literacy and essential skills training pilots to reach more learners.

This approach to allocations is designed to address static funding and strengthen capacity in the network.

7. Will learner targets also be increased as a result of the funding increase?

Yes. A portion of each service delivery site's across-the-board funding increase will be tied to an increase in learner targets. In addition, service delivery sites that have demonstrated ability to serve more learners will be allocated additional funding to support an increase in learner targets.

The ministry has set a goal of supporting more than 80,000 new learners over four years through the \$185 million investment in essential skills training for adults, to be provided through the LBS funding envelope.

8. What will the impacts be for service providers who are unable to meet the increased learner targets?

The ministry will continue to work with LBS service providers to support them in meeting contractual obligations.

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Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan

9. What is the Ontario Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan?

The government's recently announced Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan includes three elements:

- Investment and enhancements to the adult education and essential skills system.
- The new Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) support for mature students to access postsecondary education.
- The updating of key Employment Ontario programs that support unemployed, displaced and incumbent workers who require retraining and skills building.

Investing and enhancing the adult education system includes \$185 million over four years to support essential skills programming for adults, which will be provided through the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) funding envelope.

It also includes a commitment to pilot new dual credit opportunities for adults, provide sustainable funding for the Ontario Bridge Training Program for skilled newcomers, and support the testing of new skills pilot programs to address gaps in currently available training.

The government's commitment to lifelong learning and skills acknowledges that whether acquired through a training program or by securing an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, strengthened essential skills can open doors—to advancement in the workplace, further education and training, and greater participation in one's community.

Strengthening the Adult Education System

10. How will the government work with adult education partners to strengthen the adult education system?

In the 2016 mandate letters, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), Ministry of Education (EDU), and Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) were directed to work together to develop a seamless, learner-

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centred adult education system. This priority was reaffirmed through the Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan announced in Budget 2017.

Strengthening our adult education system means filling gaps in and enhancing current programming. It also means focusing on system enhancements to make it easier for adults to find programs that match their individual needs, move between programs and receive recognition for their learning.

The MAESD and partner ministries are working together to identify key priorities for adult education enhancements. We look forward to be seeking input from adult education partners including the LBS network, school boards delivering Adult Credit and Language Training Programs, and other partners to seek feedback on the government's ideas in this area.

11. What would the focus on a system approach to adult education mean for service providers?

A system approach would lead to greater collaboration between partner ministries and service providers, with a focus on serving the learner. We believe that we are only reaching some of the adults who would benefit from opportunities to upgrade their skills. Ministry partners are considering how we can best work together to reach more Ontario adults needing to strengthen the literacy, numeracy and other essential skills that are important to learn, work and adapt in the ever-changing knowledge based economy and society.

12. Why is the government prioritizing Adult Education now?

The government recognizes that Adult Education is one of a number of initiatives required to build Ontario's highly-skilled workforce. And a highly-skilled workforce for Ontario is one where no one is left behind.

Prioritizing Adult Education supports the government's belief that everyone should have access to opportunities that help prepare them for the new economy.