

2018-19 Lifelong Learning and Skills Investment in the Literacy and Basic Skills Program

Questions and Answers
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING DIVISION

General

1. How much additional funding is being allocated to the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program in 2018-19?

In 2017, as part of the Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan, the government announced its investment of \$185 million over four years in essential skills programming for adults. As part of this investment, the LBS program will receive a \$25M increase to its base funding in 2018-19.

2. How did the ministry determine priorities for the funding in 2018-19?

This year's funding priorities were informed through direct consultation with LBS partners, feedback from the October 2017 LBS Symposium, and recommendations from the 2016 LBS evaluation report.

The \$25 million investment in 2018-19 continues to support initiatives from 2017-18 as well as new initiatives in 2018-19.

3. How will the new funding for 2018-19 be allocated across the LBS network?

Funding for 2018-19 will continue to support initiatives from 2017-18 including:

- Corrections Literacy Initiative
- Service delivery site (SDS) across-the-board funding to address static funding challenges
- Increased funding for service providers in areas highly in need of literacy services
- Support organization across-the-board increase
- e-Channel curriculum development and increased learners

The ministry will also:

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- Provide additional incremental funding increases to most service delivery sites to increase the number of learners
- Launch two expressions of interests for support organizations to:
 - provide Ontario Adult Learning Curriculum Framework training to the LBS network
 - expand outreach and awareness of the LBS program
- Invest in the provision of digital skills training to support LBS service providers
- Continue to provide funding to e-Channel service providers to increase learners and develop curriculum to meet learner demand
- Provide additional funding to provincial support organizations to support curriculum enhancements, in particular level one curriculum for lower level learners; and develop curriculum from a cultural perspective
- Invest in learner training supports, if required, to reduce barriers to program participation for eligible learners.

Further details about these initiatives will be shared as they become available.

LBS Service Delivery Sites

4. Will learner targets for service delivery sites be increased as a result of the incremental funding?

Yes. A portion of the service delivery sites' incremental funding increase will be tied to an increase in learner targets.

This approach will add more than 1,500 new learners to the program, furthering the ministry's goal of supporting more than 80,000 new learners over four years through investments in essential skills training for adults.

5. What will the impact be for service delivery sites that are unable to meet the increased learner targets?

The ministry will continue to work with LBS sites to support them in meeting their targets. This will help enhance access and maximize the government's investment for learners.

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Support Organizations

6. Will stream and sector support organizations receive new deliverables as a result of the incremental funding increase?

Yes, the incremental funding increase will be allocated to stream and sector support organizations so they can:

- develop curriculum, especially for lower level learners
- develop curriculum from a cultural perspective, as opposed to adapting generic curriculum from existing sources

7. Will regional networks receive any incremental funding in 2018-19?

Regional networks will continue to receive the funding dedicated to an across-the-board-increase that was provided in 2017-18. This increase was an increase to base funding and has no added deliverables associated with it.

For 2018-19, the government's additional incremental funding is focused on supporting frontline services and expanding the reach of LBS in the province. As such, there will be no incremental funding increase for regional networks.

However, there will be opportunities to apply for additional funding during the fiscal year, in particular through Expression of Interest submissions to deliver training to service providers; and to expand outreach and awareness for the LBS program. Regional networks will be encouraged to submit proposals either individually or as part of a group with other regional network partners / support organizations.

e-Channel

8. Will e-Channel service providers receive additional learner targets as a result of the funding increases?

Yes, funding increases to e-Channel service providers will continue to include new learners to meet the e-Channel demand.

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Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan

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

Budget 2017 introduced the Ontario Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan. Its purpose is to open doors and create opportunities for adult learners and workers by supporting the critical building blocks to economic success – literacy, numeracy and aptitude with digital tools like computers, the Internet and new workplace technologies.

The Ontario Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan includes three elements:

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

Ontario will enhance its adult education system, making it more learner-centred by improving pathways and expanding services and programs that will provide around 90,000 more adults with easier access to skills training and upgrading. It will include an expansion and improvement of the Literacy and Basic Skills program (an investment of \$185 million over four years to serve more than 80,000 additional learners), enhance dual credit opportunities for adults, fund technical and workplace-based skills training pilots, and support Ontario Bridge Training for internationally trained immigrants.

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 and Ministry of Citizenship and

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Immigration were directed to work together to develop a seamless, learner-centered 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 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.

On December 1, 2017, MAESD and partner ministries released a discussion paper, *Strengthening Ontario's Adult Education System*, to obtain feedback and input on ideas, priorities and actions from learners, service providers, educators and partner organizations. Focus groups are being conducted in February 2018 with learners across Ontario from all adult education programs, to allow learners to share their experiences.

Literacy and Basic Skills Engagement

- In June 2017, MAESD formed an LBS stakeholder consultation group to gather feedback on proposed additional funding investments in the 2017-18 LBS program, as part of the \$185M Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan. Engagement with the group continues for the 2018-19 proposed additional funding investments.
- MAESD hosted a major two-day symposium with over 200 Literacy and Basic Skills program organizations in October 2017, and then reported back to the LBS network on what was heard during symposium and communicated next steps for LBS improvement and expansion (including funding increases).
- In December 2017, MAESD and representatives of organizations currently providing leadership in the LBS network struck a Steering Committee leading a year-long, collaborative process to improve and expand the LBS program.
- In February-March 2018, five additional collaborative bodies—three Working Tables and two Reference Groups—will be created to support the LBS improvement and expansion process. These bodies will focus on priority themes to improve and expand the LBS program and be made up of representatives from the LBS network and ministry representatives.

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11. What would 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. There is some evidence that the system only reaches a portion of the adults who could benefit from opportunities to upgrade their skills. Ministry partners are considering how all partners in the system can best work together to reach more Ontario adults who would benefit from strengthening their literacy and numeracy skills, along with other essential skills that are important to be able to learn, work and adapt in the ever-changing knowledge based economy and society.