

An Introduction to Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners

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The logo for Employment Ontario, featuring the words "EMPLOYMENT" and "ONTARIO" in white, bold, uppercase letters stacked vertically within a black rectangular box.

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Contents

What is the purpose of the goal path description documents?	1
How were the goal path description documents developed?	1
What is the difference between a goal and a goal path?	1
What is included in the goal path descriptions?.....	1
How do the goal path descriptions improve learner outcomes?	2
Should an LBS practitioner know all the details of each goal?.....	3
Who can use the goal path descriptions?	4
What other OALCF documents will help me develop goal-directed programming?.....	4

What is the purpose of the goal path description documents?

The purpose of the five goal path descriptions is to provide literacy learners and practitioners with important information that will both inform the goal-setting process and contribute to the development of the learner plan. The information provided in the goal path descriptions connects Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program service provision with the learner's goal. It helps practitioners and learners make good decisions about the selection of a goal, learning activities and assessment methods and about other supports that might be necessary for learners' successful transitions to their goal.

How were the goal path description documents developed?

The goal path descriptions were developed through and informed by a review of publicly available information related to each goal. In addition, interviews were conducted with key informants to determine other important information on how LBS learners can access their goal. The requirements may differ according to the community, institution or the personal circumstances of the learner. Therefore, both the practitioner and learner must ask additional questions to see how the publicly available information applies to the learner's unique situation. To ensure the cultural appropriateness of each goal path description, reviews were conducted by literacy practitioners working with anglophone, Deaf, francophone and Native adult learners.

What is the difference between a goal and a goal path?

The **goal** is what the learner wants to achieve once leaving the LBS Program. It is the next step to which the learner transitions after completing the LBS Program.

The **goal path** refers to the preparation required to exit LBS and transition to the goal and is delivered by an LBS service provider. The LBS Program has five goal paths: employment, apprenticeship, secondary school credit, postsecondary and independence.

What is included in the goal path descriptions?

Each goal path description document provides a snapshot of the goal for which the LBS Program prepares learners (employment, apprenticeship, secondary school credit, postsecondary and independence). Other information is also provided to help learners and practitioners decide if the goal is appropriate to the learner's needs and abilities, is feasible within the learner's means and is achievable in the learner's community. There is a goal path description for each of the five goal paths.

- The *employment goal path* primarily describes employment as an activity for which an individual seeks to earn a wage or salary. Activities that lead to employment and are similar to work, such as volunteering, internships and community placement are also part of the employment goal path description. Individuals with an employment goal spend time in job search, developing employability and job retention skills or learning how to advance at the workplace. The information in this goal path description will assist LBS service providers to give learners the appropriate supports, tools, and referrals so that they are able to reach their employment or career goal(s).

- The *apprenticeship goal path* description outlines on-the-job workplace-based training programs for a career in the skilled trades. The apprenticeship goal path description also includes information on skills training programs (hands-on, job-specific training).
- The *secondary school credit goal path* description presents LBS service providers with the various options available to learners for completing individual credit courses or obtaining their full Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). This information will help LBS service providers give learners the appropriate support and guidance they need to transition to secondary school credit courses.
- The *postsecondary goal path* description outlines the formal education opportunities (college and university) for which high school completion or its equivalency is the normal entrance requirement.
- The *independence goal path* description is based on four broad areas that contribute to personal independence (managing basic needs, health, personal issues and relationships and participating in the community). The independence goal does not have standard requirements or eligibility criteria due to the many purposes for which independence is required. The description illustrates key skills for preparation and supports many learners need.

Each goal path description includes the following information:

- a description of the goal
- eligibility and entrance requirements as well as other considerations for participation, such as costs or special equipment
- options for how to achieve the goal
- description of how achievement is recognized once the goal is reached
- suggested resources for learners and practitioners to use for further information and research
- key questions for the learner and practitioner to ask when selecting the learner's LBS goal; identifying supports a learner may need to ensure program persistence and successful transition; as well as, identifying appropriate referrals to other non-LBS services. The questions are examples of what the practitioner or learner might want to ask when choosing a goal or developing a learner plan. They are not intended to be prescriptive or mandatory.

How do the goal path descriptions improve learner outcomes?

The new *Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework* (OALCF) for the LBS Program is based on the recognition that learners' participation, persistence and success improve when literacy programming links to learners' goals and takes into account their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This is known as contextualized programming which, in combination with goal-directed learning and coordinated learner supports and services, reflects critical features of the OALCF.

Without a deeper understanding of all aspects of the goal (e.g. expectations, requirements, accessibility, desirability, etc.), it is difficult for the learner and the practitioner to make appropriate choices in developing the learner plan. LBS service providers have the flexibility and mandate to provide learners with targeted services that will maximise program persistence and successful learning outcomes. Understanding the end point – the goal which the learner wants to achieve – is the LBS service providers' starting point for designing and delivering a goal-directed, contextualized program. By linking learning activities and content to the goal, learners are more likely to remain motivated to succeed.

Understanding the non-LBS related features of the goal will help the LBS service provider identify and make timely referrals to the other supports and services that learners need to maximize their chances of being successful in both the LBS Program as well as in their next step(s). These supports can include financial aid and material supports, health supports, academic supports, employment-related supports and other social services.

Through their involvement in the process of understanding and researching the information related to the goal and other needed supports, learners have the necessary information to be a full partner in the positive outcomes of their learner plan.

LBS service providers serve many kinds of learners, including those who are anglophone, francophone, Native and Deaf. By having a clear picture of the goal, both learners and practitioners can determine if there are culture and language considerations in preparing for and achieving the goal. For example, the learner may be improving French literacy skills through the LBS Program because she wants to become an apprentice. The learner needs to know if the in-school portion of the selected apprenticeship training program is available in French. If not, the learner plan will have to outline how the learner will obtain the necessary English skills to access the trade's training program.

Should an LBS practitioner know all the details of each goal?

The LBS practitioner is an expert in providing learner-centred, goal-directed and transition-oriented literacy programming and is **not** expected to be aware of all the details for each goal. There are specialized services in many communities, such as educational counsellors at colleges, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) consultants for apprenticeship programs, school board principals for Adult Credit programming and Employment Service Centres for career exploration and job search. The LBS practitioner, however, does need to understand the general scope of the goal and, more importantly, needs to know what questions to ask to whom in their community.

The goal path descriptions are not exhaustive, but rather provide high-level details of each goal and will point both the learner and practitioner towards additional information they should consider to make the best possible goal and programming choices. The documents will help the learner and practitioner answer the following questions:

- What does it mean to be employed, an apprentice, a secondary school credit student, a postsecondary student or to handle personal tasks more independently?
- What resources or websites will help to further understand the requirements of the goal?
- What resources or websites will help provide goal-directed learning activities?
- What questions need to be answered to know if the goal is reasonable, achievable, feasible and appropriate?
- What other non-LBS services can help ensure that the learner remains in the program long enough to obtain all that is necessary to transition to the goal?
- What is the role of the LBS service provider in preparing the learner for the goal and what other agencies or services will contribute to the learner's positive outcomes?

Who can use the goal path descriptions?

Learners can use the goal path descriptions to help set realistic goals and to understand how to bridge the gaps in their literacy and numeracy abilities that are necessary for goal path achievement.

Practitioners can use the goal path descriptions to help learners set goals, to develop a learner plan and to choose and organize content based on how learners will apply their learning in meaningful, goal-oriented ways.

Employers, adult secondary school staff, postsecondary institution counselling services staff, Employment Service providers, social support services (such as Ontario Works), MTCU staff and others may use the goal path descriptions to understand how the LBS Program prepares learners for specific goals.

What other OALCF documents will help me develop goal-directed programming?

Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework – Foundations of Transition-Oriented Programming. - http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Foundations_of_Transition-Oriented_Programming_March_2011.pdf

Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework – Integrated Tasks by Goal Path.
http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_integrated_tasks_Mar_11.pdf

Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework – Practitioner Guide to Task-Based Programming.
http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Task-Based_Prog_Mar_11.pdf

Linking Learning Materials to the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework
<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/materials.html>

Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework - Selected Assessment Tools
<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/assessment.html>

Learner Plan Template
http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Learner_Plan_Template_Oct_11.doc

Learner Plan Template Instructions
http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_LPT_Instructions_Oct_11.pdf

Supporting Learners through Service Coordination and Referral
http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Service_Coordination_Referrals_Oct_11.pdf