

# **Literacy and Basic Skills Corrections Literacy Initiative Employment Ontario Network Questions and Answers**

## **General**

### **1. What is the Corrections Literacy Initiative?**

The Corrections Literacy Initiative (CLI) is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS). It will provide a \$1 million investment to pilot an expansion of Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program delivery to correctional facilities in Ontario.

This initiative will provide 11 existing service providers with additional, in-year funding to provide LBS training to learners in select correctional institutions across Ontario. Existing service providers agreements will be amended to include additional learner targets linked to additional funding provided.

### **2. Why is this initiative being implemented?**

The Ontario government's Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan, announced in Budget 2017, includes an expansion and improvement of the LBS program. This plan is an important part of the government's commitment to ensuring Ontario has a highly skilled workforce, and that no one is left behind.

As part of this commitment, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS) are partnering to launch the LBS Corrections Literacy Initiative.

Adults in custody face significant barriers to education, training, employment, and social inclusion. Approximately 75 per cent of the correctional population has not completed Grade 12, and 20 per cent has less than a Grade 9 education.

## **Literacy and Basic Skills Corrections Literacy Initiative Employment Ontario Network Questions and Answers**

Successful community reintegration on release from custody is enhanced when there are greater opportunities for offenders to engage in learning, education, and rehabilitation that increases prospects for employment, and ultimately assists with reducing the risk of reoffending. Society benefits when all Ontarians participate fully in the social and economic life of the province.

Despite these statistics, there is currently no uniform approach to providing literacy and essential skills training in Ontario's correctional institutions.

The CLI pilot will examine options for filling this gap in service and measure the effectiveness, so that these adults can get the literacy, numeracy and digital skills they need to actively participate and succeed in the workforce and society.

### **3. How will the pilot work?**

The CLI pilot will provide a small number of existing LBS service providers with additional, in-year funding to provide LBS programming to learners in 11 correctional institutions across Ontario. Selected service providers' agreements will be amended to include additional learner targets linked to additional funding provided.

### **4. When will CLI launch, and in what locations?**

The CLI will be launched across Ontario in early fall at the following correctional facilities:

- Kenora Jail
- Algoma Treatment and Remand Centre
- Sudbury Jail
- Thunder Bay Jail
- Toronto East Detention Centre
- Vanier Centre for Women (Milton)

## **Literacy and Basic Skills Corrections Literacy Initiative Employment Ontario Network Questions and Answers**

- Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre
- Niagara Detention Centre
- South West Detention Centre
- Quinte Detention Centre
- Ottawa Carlton Detention Centre

### **5. How many service providers are taking part in this initiative?**

Eleven service providers have been invited to deliver LBS programming at the 11 chosen correctional institutions across the province. See question 8 below for selection criteria.

### **6. How will this initiative be evaluated?**

The initiative will be evaluated by gathering information from multiple informant groups, including participants and service providers. The evaluation will measure the extent to which the program is meeting its targeted population, the implementation and delivery of intended programming, and its effectiveness in engaging participants in needed literacy and basic skills while incarcerated and following their release into the community. Results of the evaluation will provide useful evidence to support the ministry's future-state decision making beyond the end of the pilot.

### **7. What outcomes are we hoping to achieve through CLI?**

The CLI will use the existing LBS program delivery framework to deliver programming to 500 new learners who face multiple barriers and provide them with learner-centred, clear pathways to further education and/or employment.

The CLI also aligns with the LBS evaluation report recommendations by providing additional funding to increase the capacity and targets for service providers that serve a high-demand area.

## **Literacy and Basic Skills Corrections Literacy Initiative Employment Ontario Network Questions and Answers**

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### **8. What will happen at the end of the pilot? Will this initiative be permanently implemented?**

The CLI is a pilot funded within Ontario's Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan through enhancements to and investments in our adult education system. As service providers may be aware, there is a four-year investment plan that includes the LBS program. Decisions have not yet been made as to the continuation of CLI beyond this fiscal year.

### **Selection Process**

### **9. How were service providers chosen to participate in this initiative?**

Service providers were vetted using the following selection criteria:

- Organizational capacity to deliver in-year, and time-limited essential skills training.
- Experience working with populations facing complex barriers to success, including Indigenous groups and vulnerable women.
- Experience delivering programming in correctional institutions or ability to develop the relationships needed to do so.
- Met their 2016-2017 Provincial Service Quality Standard (SQS) targets.

### **10. How were correctional facilities chosen to take part in this initiative?**

## **Literacy and Basic Skills Corrections Literacy Initiative Employment Ontario Network Questions and Answers**

In consultation with Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, there were 11 correctional facilities chosen. These sites were chosen based on their inmate population sizes and inmate demographics. Priority was given to institutions with Indigenous and women inmate populations.

### **11. What are the next steps for service providers invited to participate in this initiative?**

Service providers invited to participate in the CLI pilot will work with their employment and training consultants (ETCs) to amend their agreements to include new deliverables and activities specific to this initiative.

## **Learners**

### **12. How many learners will this initiative target plan to help, and how was the number chosen?**

Based on consultation with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, it was determined that based on class sizes in an institutional environment and security protocols, serving more than 20 per cent of an institution's population would be hard for a service provider to accomplish. As such this initiative is only targeting 500 learners across the 11 sites.

### **13. What if a learner leaves a correctional institution before completing training?**

If a learner leaves a correctional institution before completing training and wants to continue in the LBS program, the learner will be referred to other LBS service providers in their area.