LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

Service Provider Program Guidelines

Ontario

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the Guidelines

These program guidelines support the implementation and delivery of the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program funded by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development ("MLTSD", "the Ministry"), delivered by LBS service providers ("service providers") and complemented through the work of LBS support organizations ("support organizations").

The LBS program has two broad purposes: service delivery and service development.

This document is the Service Providers Guidelines and is for the service delivery function. This document is intended to be a resource to help service providers deliver LBS programming directly to learners.

The service development function is outlined in the LBS Support Organization Guidelines document. The two sets of guidelines are designed to be used together. LBS service providers are encouraged to reference both documents on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) website.

The LBS Service Provider Guidelines provide the broad policy direction and information service providers need to deliver the LBS program through Employment Ontario (EO) programs and services.

This Service Provider Guidelines document provides information on the following aspects of LBS programming:

- **Program Description**, including program principles and objectives.
- **Program Delivery**, including Ministry and service provider roles and responsibilities, and funding.
- **Performance Management**, including performance management indicators and the business planning cycle.
- **Program Administration**, including documents and forms, and other operational aspects of LBS programming.

1.2. Program Context

1.2.1. Employment Ontario

Ontario aims to have the best educated and skilled workforce in the world, to build the province's competitive advantage and enhance our quality of life.

Employment Ontario (EO) is the province's one-stop service delivery system. EO offers a range of employment, training and labour market programs and services, delivered by third-party service providers to over one million Ontarians. The EO Service Promise is to:

- Deliver the highest quality of services and supports to help individuals and employers meet career or hiring goals;
- Provide opportunities for individuals to improve their skills through education and training;
- Ensure that individuals get the help they need at every Employment Ontario office; and
- Work with employers and communities to build the highly skilled and educated workforce Ontario needs to be competitive.

1.2.2. Literacy and Basic Skills

The LBS program was established in 1997 and continues to be an important part of Ontario's employment and training and adult education systems.

Without foundational literacy abilities, individuals are significantly disadvantaged in their efforts to pursue their career goals, maintaining employment, furthering their education, participating in training opportunities, and increasing personal independence. The LBS program provides adults with a foundation from which to launch and pursue their goals.

The combined work of both service providers and support organizations contributes to the EO Service Promise by creating opportunities either directly or indirectly for adults to improve their literacy and basic skills and providing them with information about other EO programs.

LBS service providers provide learners with goal path specific programming in order to prepare them for transition to their next steps. Support organizations play a critical role in identifying for service providers the changing needs and requirements for successful learner transition and contribute to any actions needed to increase learner success (e.g., development of resources, service provider training, linkages to other supports and services).

2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2.1. Overview

The Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program helps adults develop and apply communication, numeracy and digital skills to achieve their goals.

Literacy is the ability to apply communication, numeracy, and digital skills to find, use, create, and think critically about information and ideas. Literacy spans a continuum of learning that enables individuals to achieve their goals, solve problems, make decisions, participate fully in our diverse and technological society, and contribute to the innovation economy.

The program is divided into four cultural streams that are customized for Anglophone, Deaf, Francophone and Indigenous learners.

The LBS program focuses on adults who reside in Ontario and are unemployed, with special emphasis on people receiving income support. The LBS program is also open to employed Ontarians who need to improve their literacy and basic skills to maintain or upgrade their work skills.

The program helps learners reach goals of employment, post-secondary education, apprenticeship, secondary school credit, and independence. Programming is designed to help learners progress from developing skills to applying those skills to achieve their goals.

The LBS program serves adult learners whose literacy and basic skills are assessed at less than the end of Level 3 in the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) (see Section 2.5 for more information on eligibility).

2.1.1. Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework

LBS is a competency-based program. The OALCF describes how LBS is structured to help learners develop their desired competencies. This framework provides direction to service providers on how to deliver learner-centred, transition-oriented programming that is based on adult education principles. It includes informal and standard assessment activities, goal path descriptions, task-based programming and assessment and a focus on program planning and completion and learner transitions.

The OALCF links the LBS program to the requirements of employers, educational and training service providers, and community partners by providing the standards to link the LBS program to the labour market and to the broader education and training system.

Support organizations play a critical role in helping service providers deliver contextualized and competency-based programming outlined in the OALCF.

The OALCF includes the following features of competency-based programming:

- Competencies;
- Assessment;
- Learner transitions to work, further education and training, or independence, and
- Learning materials.

The OALCF's competency-based approach helps practitioners and learners clarify the connections between literacy development and the real-life tasks learners perform in work, learning, and community contexts. The OALCF comprises the following six competencies that organize learning content and describe the literacy skills adults need to achieve their goals of further education, work, and independence:

- Find and use information;
- Communicate ideas and information;
- Understand and use numbers;
- Use digital technology;
- Manage learning; and
- Engage with others.

Three levels of task complexity are used to assess learner proficiency in the following four competencies: finding and using information, communicating ideas and information, understanding and using numbers and using digital technology.

2.2. Principles

The LBS program is delivered by a network of third-party service providers. Services are tailored to meet each learner's needs. They are provided one-on-one, in a group setting, or through e-Channel distance delivery.

All clients and learners should be provided with service that aligns with the following principles of client and learner satisfaction, with a constant focus on continuous improvement.

Learner's needs are met when:

- They are served in a timely manner by knowledgeable and competent staff who are courteous and fair, and who provide them with the services they need;
- Services are effective, accessible, individualized, and of high quality;

- Services focus on client needs; and
- Services are of the same high-quality standard, regardless of point of access.

The following key principles guide all of Employment Ontario (EO) service delivery, including the LBS program:

Accessibility: EO service providers will provide clients with clear paths to the training, employment information, and services they need. EO provides reasonable and equitable access to services across the province, which includes accommodation for special needs as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Client-centric: For each individual, employer or community, all EO service providers deliver services tailored to their needs, and address special requirements or circumstances (social, demographic, geographic or technological).

Quality: With every client contact across every channel, all EO service providers deliver a helpful and positive client experience, maintaining confidentiality and ensuring privacy.

Integration: Service delivery goals, processes, infrastructure and technology are aligned across channels, allowing all EO service providers to meet client needs and provide seamless service.

Cost-effectiveness: EO service providers use technology, simplify business processes, and leverage relationships to achieve the best possible results with publicly-funded resources.

Accountability: Since performance is measured against program outcome and customer service standards, both government and service providers are accountable for service delivery results. The LBS program has a Performance Management Framework (LBS PMF) supported by the Employment Ontario Information System - Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS).

Community-based coordination: Employment Ontario services are delivered throughout the province by service providers. Service providers coordinate their work at the community level through participation in the local planning and coordination process.

LBS learners are served at both sites and locations, which are defined as follows:

- Sites: LBS service delivery organizations carry out LBS program administration activities at sites, with an on-site administrator providing general information about literacy in response to enquiries. The site is legally accountable for meeting contracted deliverables to the Ministry, as listed in Schedule E of the agreement.

- Locations: Locations are associated with a site where program administration activities are carried out. For example, an organization may provide LBS services at multiple locations, but must administer the program from the site listed in their agreement.

2.3. Objectives

The objectives of the LBS program are to:

- Provide high quality instruction and services to adults who lack the literacy and basic skills they need to achieve goals related to employment, apprenticeship, post-secondary education, secondary school credit, and independence;
- Provide learners with appropriate referrals to additional supports;
- Coordinate literacy and other services to help move Ontario toward a seamless adult education and training system;
- Provide literacy services to those most in need of them; and
- Ensure accountability to all stakeholders by providing literacy services that are effective and efficient.

The LBS program achieves these objectives by being:

- **Learner-centred**: LBS service providers respect learners and provide a supportive learning environment. They help learners to set achievable goals and develop a learner plan to achieve them.
- **Based on adult education principles**: LBS service providers provide adults with a range of learning experiences to help them progress. They use varying methods of instruction, respond to gaps in learner knowledge, and include learners in decisions that affect them.
- **Transition-oriented**: Literacy services support learners' successful transitions to their goals with goal-directed, contextualized programming, and coordinated learner supports and services.
- **Linked to the broader education and training system and the labour market**: The LBS program complements the broader education and training system. LBS service providers link learners to educational and training opportunities provided through the Ontario ministries of Training, Colleges and Universities, Education, and Children, Community and Social Services, along with Employment and Social Development Canada and employer organizations.

2.4. Program Components

Through the LBS program, learners access five services. Service providers may focus on preparing learners for different goal paths, but each learner receives the same five services:

- Information and referral
- Assessment
- Learner plan development
- Training
- Follow-up

1. **Information and Referral** services ensure that information about the LBS service provider's program is available to learners, clients, volunteers, other interested individuals and referring organizations. Through the Literacy Services Planning and Coordination (LSPC) process, a community-wide marketing and promotion strategy is developed. At this stage, the service provider will often conduct general literacy screenings of clients, to determine if the LBS program is appropriate. LBS service providers also offer information and referrals to all Employment Ontario employment and training programs and services.

2. **Assessment** gathers information about a learner's knowledge, skills, behaviours and abilities. It forms a critical part of everyday activities in a literacy program, as decisions are made on how to best meet learner needs. Assessment includes a range of approaches, from informal procedures to standardized tests. Assessments are conducted at intake, during programming, and when learners complete the learner plan.

3. **Learner Plan Development** produces the learner plan to describe the goal path. It includes the learner's goal, background information, assessment results, milestone tasks, culminating task, learning activities, program duration, additional supports required by the learner, and referral results.

4. **Training**. The focus of the LBS program is the literacy instruction delivered to adult learners. All other LBS services support the training service. Learners not only acquire the skills, but also demonstrate the ability to use their newly acquired competencies for meaningful tasks.

5. **Follow up**. LBS service providers contact learners at exit, and at three, six and 12 months after they leave the LBS program. This service documents the value and effectiveness of the other four services.

2.5. Eligibility and Suitability

The LBS program focuses on unemployed adults with special emphasis on people receiving income support (see glossary). The LBS program is also open to employed Ontarians who need to improve their literacy and basic skills to maintain or upgrade their work skills.

2.5.1. Eligibility Criteria

The Ministry has established the following criteria for participation in the LBS program.

LBS service providers must ensure each learner is:

- An Ontario resident.
- An adult whose literacy and basic skills are assessed at intake as being less than the end of Level 3 in one or more of the following OALCF competencies:
  - Find and Use Information
  - Communicate Ideas and Information
  - Understand and Use Numbers
- At least 19 years old. On an exception-only basis, LBS service providers may serve young adults between ages 16 to 18 who demonstrate the maturity to benefit from adult education. However, returning to the regular school system should be the priority for these learners. LBS service providers may allow age exceptions, not exceeding 10 percent of learners enrolled in a fiscal year. In all individual cases, there must be a documented rationale in the learner's file.
- Sufficiently proficient in speaking and listening to benefit fully from the language of LBS instruction (English or French). Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level 6 for speaking and listening is the recommended minimum level of proficiency required to benefit from LBS instruction. This eligibility requirement does not apply to a Deaf learner.

In addition to the above eligibility criteria, LBS service providers determine the suitability of the program for eligible clients based on identified barriers to learning. These barriers are described as Indicators of Suitability in Section 4.3.

2.5.2. Suitability Criteria

The Literacy Service Planning and Coordination process ensures that service providers analyse their program participant characteristics to determine if they are reaching those who are most suitable for the LBS program. Criteria include:

- Learning performance: characteristics of a learner which may affect learning performance, such as language, disabilities, and education level.
- Motivation and study habits: characteristics of a learner which may result in motivational challenges or study habit issues, such as time away from formal education, and a history of interrupted education.
- Demographics: characteristics of a learner which have been identified as barriers to learning, such as age, level of education, and source of income support.

3. PROGRAM DELIVERY

3.1. Roles and Responsibilities

LBS service providers deliver service throughout the province. They co-ordinate the delivery of their services at the community level through participation in the literacy services planning and co-ordination process.

To accommodate individual learner needs and to optimize learner success, a range of training methodologies is utilized. For example:

- e-Channel is web-based literacy training that can be used by an individual learning independently or as programming that is blended with personal instruction.
- Learners may also need to access group learning for some components of their instruction and be individually tutored for other components.
- Some learners could get started on earning credits towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma in one subject area (e.g., English) while also participating in an LBS program to gain foundation skills in another required area of competency (e.g., Understand and Use Numbers).

The LBS program is delivered by colleges of applied arts and technology, school boards, and community-based organizations. LBS service providers must demonstrate they have the organizational capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver the LBS program, and that they can meet LBS program customer service expectations. Service provider organizational capacity includes planning, resourcing, communicating and measuring to demonstrate that appropriate processes and procedures are in place to support learners and the Ministry's accountability requirements. It also includes the establishment of policies on privacy protection and conflict of interest.

LBS service providers must have:

- A customer service charter that is posted and accessible to customers;
- A customer complaint and resolution process; and
- Delivery site(s) and facilities and hours of operations that reflect customer needs.

A customer service charter expresses the value a service provider places on service quality by encouraging and responding to client feedback. It outlines the process and timeframe for dealing with customer compliments and complaints.

Charters can include as many elements as service providers choose; however, the following three elements are mandatory:

1. The service provider believes in quality service.
2. The service provider encourages feedback (compliments or complaints).
3. The service provider will respond to feedback in a prescribed manner and timeframe.

LBS service delivery sites and facilities must reflect customer needs, including but not limited to:

- Accessible facilities or service provision at an accessible site;
- Itinerant and/or mobile services where localized service need is identified; and
- Operating hours that include evenings and/or weekends, based on identified need.

As part of the LBS Performance Management System (LBS PMS), service providers report on customer service to the Ministry, and include a measure of customer satisfaction. The Ministry will phase in additional service delivery and customer service expectations over time. These ensure accountability, and consistency in quality, customer experience, and service improvement.

All EO service providers must provide information and referrals to all EO employment and training programs and services, regardless of which programs or services they are contracted to deliver.

Each LBS Service Provider must:

- Have an efficient and effective process to identify each client's information and referral needs;
- Make information about all EO Services accessible to the client (e.g. print, telephone, digital media);
- Ensure clients receive accurate and current information on the EO services relevant to their needs;
- Help clients understand their program and service options from across the EO network;
- Match clients with the service and provider that best meets their needs efficiently, accounting for culturally-appropriate service delivery;
- Continually improve their information and referral service, based on client feedback; and
- Ensure their contact information and service descriptions are accurate and timely on the Web, in social media, and in any print materials.

3.1.1. Program Services

The Ministry enters into legal agreements with community-based organizations, school boards, and colleges of applied arts and technology throughout the province to provide the following services:

- Information and Referral
- Assessment
- Learner Plan Development
- Training
- Follow-up

Together, these services constitute a cycle of learning which clearly defines the learner's goal and follows and evaluates the learner plan to achieve the goal.

Information and Referral

The Information and Referral service ensures that information about the LBS Service Provider's literacy training opportunities, approaches, and targeted clients is available to learners, clients, volunteers, other interested individuals, and referring organizations.

LBS service providers also offer information and referrals to all Employment Ontario employment and training programs and services.

LBS service providers must:

- Promote the LBS program within the community, as part of an integrated system of literacy service provision within Employment Ontario, and with related programs and services provided by other ministries and other levels of government;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of their outreach strategy and activities, and revise accordingly;
- Coordinate and integrate services to provide learners with supported access to other services that help them achieve their goals;
- Ensure that the LBS service provider's information and referral services build on the results of the literacy services planning and coordination process, and are complementary to other resources in the community; and
- Implement a systematic approach to tracking, reporting, and analysing information and referral activity and follow-up.

Assessment

Assessment is any process or procedure that gathers information for making decisions about a learner's knowledge, skills, behaviours, and abilities. It forms a critical part of

everyday activities in a literacy program, as decisions are made on how to best meet learners' needs. Assessment includes a wide range of approaches, from informal procedures to formal standardized tests.

LBS service providers conduct assessments at intake (upon registration and placement), during programming (as part of program delivery), and at exit (when learners complete the learner plan).

In the LBS Performance Management Framework (LBS PMF) (see Section 4.1.1 Dimensions and Measures of Service Quality Success), there are three effectiveness measures that relate to learner assessment: learner progress, completion of goal path, and Learner Gains. The indicators of the measures are reported by LBS service providers to the Ministry.

Learner progress

Learner progress is a measure during service and at exit of the number of learners who successfully complete at least one required milestone related to their individual goal path.

Completion of goal path

Completion of goal path is a measure of who successfully completes all elements of the learner plan. These are the three indicators of completion:

- Learners who complete all Milestones
- Learners who complete Culminating Task
- Learners who complete the Learning Activities

A milestone is a goal-related assessment activity that learners complete to demonstrate their ability to carry out goal-related tasks. Milestones are aligned to the competencies and complexity levels found in the OALCF curriculum framework and are standard indicators of learner progress towards completion of goal path. Milestones answer the question, "Can learners apply the skills they are developing to purposeful tasks?"

A culminating task is more complex than a milestone task and is also aligned to the OALCF. It reflects a task that a learner could expect to perform upon exiting the LBS program. A culminating task answers the question, "Can the learner manage the expectations of the learning, training, community or work setting after leaving the LBS program?"

The learning activities detailed in a learner plan include the competencies, skills and content a learner must develop to meet the requirements of the goal. Fourteen learning activity categories have been created in the Employment Ontario Information System-Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS) to help service providers select and add to the learner's learner plan.

EOIS-CaMS is a web-based, real-time program that supports the administration and management of clients participating in EO programs and services. Both Ministry and service provider staff access the system, and the information inputted is accessible across the province to authorized users. Examples of learning activity categories include learning related to:

- Specific milestones;
- Communications for further education;
- Technical math; and
- Analysis/synthesis of data or information.

Completion of the learner plan indicates that a learner has met the learning goal and is transition-ready. The learner plan answers the question, "What does the learner need to be transition-ready?"

Learner Gains

Learner Gains assessment provides one indicator that the LBS program supports the progress of learners. There is currently no measure for Learner Gains, but this may be implemented at a later date. The Ministry remains committed to evidence-based decision-making.

LBS service providers must:

- Confirm an individual's eligibility for LBS service;
- Determine an individual's primary service need and determine most appropriate referral if not appropriate for LBS service;
- Administer assessment to develop a learner plan, including assessment of learners':
    - Strengths and gaps
    - Learning style
    - Milestone tasks
    - Culminating task
    - Learning activities

- Use assessment tools that are appropriate, meaningful, and understandable to the learner and, are suitable for informing the learning activities outlined in the learner plan;
- Ensure that LBS Service Provider staff carrying out assessments have the appropriate skills and training to select, administer, interpret, and track assessment results;
- Ensure that milestone and culminating task assessment activities are kept secured and are used according to the administration instructions;
- Assess learners' achievements as they progress through and complete their training including milestone tasks, the culminating task and the learning activities;
- Administer MLTSD approved Learner Gains test, once available;
- Maintain up-to-date learner files that contain all required assessment information (see Section 5.5.1 Learner Files); and
- Ensure that assessment results can be understood by other LBS service providers and by key referral agencies, as agreed to through the literacy services planning and coordination process.

Learner Plan Development

The learner plan describes the goal path, and includes the learner's goal, background information, assessment results, milestone tasks, culminating task, learning activities, program duration, additional supports required, and referral results.

Learner information is required by the Ministry at registration and recorded in EOIS-CaMS. Service providers may gather more information as required.

LBS service providers work with the learner to identify and document the learning activities that prepare them for transition to their goal. The learner plan ensures that learners understand the steps required to achieve their goal, the sequence for training, and the time necessary to achieve the learning identified.

Using the language of the OALCF competencies and levels for the milestone tasks and culminating tasks, the learner plan provides other stakeholders with a clear understanding of what a learner has achieved in the LBS program.

The LBS program offers learners the opportunity to develop the range of literacy and basic skills required for successful transition to the following goals:

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary school credit

- Post-secondary education
- Independence

The goal is what the learner wants to achieve once leaving the LBS program.

The goal path refers to the preparation required to exit LBS and transition to the goal.

The employment goal path primarily prepares the learner for an activity for which an individual earns a wage or salary. Preparation for activities such as volunteering at a workplace, internships and community placements are also included in the employment goal path.

The apprenticeship goal path prepares learners for on-the-job training programs in the skilled trades. Preparation for specific vocational skills training is also included in the apprenticeship goal path.

The secondary school credit goal path prepares learners for Ontario Ministry of Education secondary school credit courses, leading to an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

The post-secondary goal path prepares learners for formal education opportunities at a college or university, for which high school completion or its equivalency is the normal entrance requirement.

The independence goal path prepares learners for the literacy and basic skills required in four functions that contribute to personal independence (managing basic needs, managing personal health, managing personal issues and relationships, and participating in the community).

LBS service providers must:

- Work with learners to develop a learner plan that reflects what the learner needs for the goal path.
- Ensure that the learner plan:
  - Includes the background information gathered in the learner profile.
  - Identifies necessary referrals throughout the process.
  - Identifies the learner's goal path.
  - Details the learning activities to prepare learners for their goal path.
  - Identifies milestone tasks that the learner needs to successfully demonstrate.
  - Identifies the culminating task.
  - Considers whether e-Channel delivery is appropriate for the learner.

- o Indicates dates and establishes time lines (date the learner plan was developed, start date and projected end date for learner's program, estimated time per week learner commits to their LBS training which includes both supervised and independent study and, dates for the learner and LBS Service Provider staff to review progress).
  - o Includes any other non-LBS requirements (certificates, courses, abilities) of the learner's goal path.
- Establish a process for regular and timely review of learner achievements, including successfully demonstrated milestone and culminating tasks, and other assessment results which indicate progress towards completion of goal path. If the learner is not on track or if the learner's goal has changed, the learner plan is revised to reflect changes in learning activities and expected outcomes.
- Provide the learner with a copy of the learner plan and keep a copy on file. Learner files must be made available for review by Ministry staff.

Training

The LBS program focuses on the literacy instruction that LBS service providers deliver to adult learners to enable them to acquire the necessary skills and competencies to transition to their goal.

The LBS program uses broad generic categories of learners' abilities (known as competencies) to organize the full range of learning addressed in the LBS program.

The competencies are:

- Find and use information;
- Communicate ideas and information;
- Understand and use numbers;
- Use digital technology;
- Manage learning; and
- Engage with others.

The six competencies cover the full range of ways in which learners will use their abilities once they reach their goals.

The OALCF describes learner proficiency at three levels of performance, and helps practitioners and learners clarify the connections between literacy development and the tasks learners perform in work, learning, and community settings.

For more information about the OALCF and the related tools and resources available, please refer to the OALCF website.

LBS service providers may use different training methods that meet the specific needs of the learners. However, all training must lead to measurable results that include completion of goal path, learner progress, and, once it becomes available, Learner Gains.

Training Duration

The Ministry does not require a specific minimum number of hours per week of training. There is a range of variables unique to each learner, such as:

- Rate of learner participation each week over a period of time;
- The available modes of delivery;
- The learner's goal; and
- The learner's profile.

However, training must be provided with enough frequency and intensity to produce measurable progress. The learner should commit a minimum of 10 hours per week to their learning to make sufficient progress and maintain the motivation necessary to achieve their goal. This minimum of effort may be achieved in class or synchronous settings, through independent or asynchronous study, or through a combination of supervised settings and independent study.

The Ministry does not prescribe content or curriculum. It does require that service providers demonstrate that their LBS programming will prepare the learner with the skills and abilities for achieving a required credential, meeting the entry expectations of an external institution, or gaining other learning requirements for successful transition to their goals. The goal path description documents available on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) website (www.ontario.ca/eopg) provide practitioners with information on what content may be appropriate to the learner.

Skills in using digital technology are essential for success in employment, education and training, and independence. All learners must have the opportunity to develop competency in the use of digital technology. The LBS program funds the teaching of digital technology, including computer skills and particular computer software applications.

LBS service providers must:

- Provide learners with training in the competencies and content necessary for their goal path;
- Provide instruction appropriate to adult learners and their goal path, as identified in their learner plan;

- Provide instruction that supports development of skills and knowledge, as well as the ability to integrate and use competencies to complete meaningful and authentic tasks;
- Deliver instruction that uses materials appropriate to adults and supports diverse learning approaches;
- Review and adjust training as needed;
- Support learners' transition to other education and training opportunities;
- Report learner information to the Ministry; and
- Coordinate learner's LBS training with other Employment Ontario services, as required

e-Channel

e-Channel literacy is web-based training program for those who choose or need self-directed or supported service. It serves learners in four streams: Indigenous, Francophone, Anglophone and Deaf, and e-Channel services are also available for learners in all goal paths.

In particular, e-Channel provides better access for persons with disabilities, and for learners in rural and remote communities. It can also be accessed by learners who are already being served by face-to-face LBS programs, and who wish to supplement their learning online.

Designated LBS service providers deliver and administer e-Channel, as an alternate mode of delivering the LBS program. Some computer proficiency is required for learners to be successful in distance learning via e-Channel. e-Channel service providers can help learners determine if they have the skills necessary to benefit from it.

In addition to all other requirements, e-Channel service providers must:

- Provide increased access and support e-Channel literacy training for adults who reside in Ontario and who,
    - Choose e-learning
    - Reside in rural and remote communities
    - Have disabilities
    - Also attend on-site or face-to-face literacy programs;
- Continuously improve and expand e-Channel learning materials and e-learning technology;
- Provide training to continuously improve the capacity of e-Channel instructors;
- Increase the number of learners accessing literacy and basic skills through web-based delivery options;

- Promote and raise awareness of e-Channel learning as an integral part of Employment Ontario services;
- Ensure that systems used for the collection of learner information have safeguards to protect learner privacy, and that consent is obtained during online registration (see Section 5.4 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy and Section 5.6 Information Management Requirements);
- Coordinate services and course offerings with all LBS service providers offering e-Channel literacy and adult upgrading services; and
  Continuously improve referral protocols with all LBS service providers to ensure service coordination across the delivery network.

Follow-up

To document outcomes, LBS service providers contact learners at exit and at three, six and 12 months after they leave the program. This helps demonstrate the value and effectiveness of the four other delivery services.

LBS service providers must:

- Follow up with learners at three, six and 12 months after they leave the program to document their current status;
- Ensure that information collection and recording makes follow-up convenient and effective;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of their training activities, including learner feedback; and
- Maintain a process for receiving ongoing feedback and information from other service providers in the community, employers, and learners.

3.2. Funding

MLTSD funds LBS program service providers to provide learners with all five LBS services: Information and Referral, Assessment, Learner Plan Development, Training, and Follow up.

Currently, individual site allocations are determined during the annual business planning process. Based on business plans, available funding, and input from the Literacy Services Planning and Coordination (LSPC) Committee, Ministry staff make funding recommendations for approval. To determine the appropriate level of funding, the Ministry considers the following:

- Quality of services and results achieved, as demonstrated by past performance;

- Compliance with the LBS Program Guidelines;
- Projected activity levels expressed as numbers of learners to be served;
- Business plan reflects an agreement of literacy services planning and coordination in which site participated;
- Historic activity and funding levels;
- Geography (urban/small town/rural);
- Accessibility of services to clients and learners;
- Proximity to like services and the need for stand-alone services;
- Labour market pressures;
- Growth or rationalisation of the agency or its services;
- Customer satisfaction results.

3.2.1. Funding Categories

The Audit and Accountability Requirements listed in the service provider's transfer payment agreement provide a full description of the LBS program funding categories. The Audit and Accountability Requirements are amended for each fiscal year.

3.2.2. Literacy Services Planning and Coordination (LSPC) Process

The annual LBS funding cycle begins with the service providers in each community meeting to determine literacy services needs for the next fiscal year. Regional networks (see glossary) draft a plan of LBS service provision that addresses emerging community needs and ensures there is no duplication of services.

Similarly, e-Channel service providers plan and coordinate the literacy services for their virtual community on a province-wide basis. The resulting literacy services plan demonstrates to the Ministry that the service providers have cooperated to maximize value and access for learners.

The annual LBS Business Plan is informed by recommendations from the LSPC process.

3.2.3. Business Planning

Business planning is an essential element of LBS programming and an important component of the annual funding process. The time and effort devoted to thoughtful business planning helps to improve service delivery results.

Developing a business plan creates an opportunity for service providers to identify improvements, reassess goals, set new targets, and determine strategies. Preparing

annual business plans helps agencies tailor and focus their services and meet the directions and priorities of the Ministry.

The business plan describes the LBS service provider's capacity to deliver the LBS program, its service commitments, and improvements for the coming year. The business plan specifies milestones to measure progress toward the LBS Service Provider's targets and commitments. The Ministry's performance management system (PMS) allows the LBS program to demonstrate the results of its efforts and improve service.

The Ministry has developed measures and indicators in the areas of efficiency, effectiveness, and customer service (see Section 4.1.1 Dimensions and Measures of Service Quality Success). As set out in Schedule D of their legal agreement with the Ministry, LBS service providers must provide regular reports on their progress and achievements. Activities are also monitored throughout the year by Ministry staff and measured against the commitments service providers have made in their annual business plans.

More information on the Business Planning Cycle may be found in Section 4.2.

3.2.4. Fees

No fees are charged to clients and learners for contracted Ministry-funded LBS program services.

4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The LBS program Performance Management System (LBS PMS) will assist service providers to be more effective, customer-focused, and efficient in achieving a high standard of overall service quality.

The LBS PMS supports:

- Priority setting (what gets measured gets improved);
- Resource allocation (what gets measured gets funded);
- Evidence-based problem solving and decision making; and
- Continuous improvement based on data-driven decisions.

Under the LBS PMS, effectiveness, customer service, and efficiency results are monitored and reported on. All three are balanced and evaluated as part of overall service quality and in relation to one another. Many EO service providers have already adopted customer service measurement systems based on results.

The components of the LBS PMS include:

- Dimensions and Measures of Service Quality Success;
- LBS program Funding Decision Matrix (to be developed);
- LBS program Funding Model (to be developed); and
- Continuous Improvement in the Ministry's Business Planning Cycle.

The LBS program continues the implementation of performance measures of service quality success, and a standard for each one of these measures.

4.1. Performance Management System

Performance management systems evaluate service effectiveness, provide service benchmarks, and help service providers to continuously improve service.

The Ontario Public Service (OPS) relies on transparent and accountable performance management systems to support high quality customer service throughout the province.

In a transparent PMS, all stakeholders know what level of service is expected, how it is measured, how the service system is performing, and where there is room for improvement. Clients and learners will see improved service and results, while the Ontario government receives improved outcomes and value for money.

The benefits to the service provider are:

- Greater independence in determining delivery strategies, as Ministry staff take on a more strategic consulting approach to the relationship;
- Increased influence locally and with the Ministry in discussing changes to service plans, program design and resource allocations;
- Increased learning, from best practices and insight into customer satisfaction;
- Improved flexibility, efficiency, and strategies in planning and resource allocation;
- More productive communication with Ministry staff, because of clear and consistent measures and standards; and
- Greater ability to respond to sudden external shifts (community, economic or social) through a more responsive business management model.

4.1.1. Characteristics of Effective Performance Management Systems

The performance management system (PMS) is a vital tool for both service providers and the Ministry for service planning, delivery and management. It will assist service providers to be more effective, customer-focused and efficient in achieving a high standard of overall service quality.

Effective PMS:

- Define three dimensions of service delivery success: customer service, effectiveness, and efficiency;
- Identify four to eight inter-related core measures of performance;
- Establish measurable standards of performance in each service delivery dimension and in overall service quality, and incorporate indicators of organizational strength and capacity;
- Establish core measure standards based on what is (baseline), and targets based on what can be (continuous improvement);
- Are based on consistent, reliable and verifiable data;
- Link funding to a consistent standard of overall service quality;
- Are transparent and clarify performance expectations and the relationship to funding;
- Focus on continuous improvement, flexibility, adaptability, and constant evolution; and
- Reward excellence and innovation.

A PMS supports ongoing program design, development, innovation and decision-making. It sets out the core measures of performance that contribute to an overall service quality standard. It ensures that results are assessed for effectiveness, customer service, and efficiency, and that all three are balanced and evaluated as part of overall service quality.

4.1.2. Employment Ontario Information System - Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS)

A Case Management System (CaMS) is a component of the Employment Ontario Information System (EOIS). It helps the Ministry and LBS service providers to manage and administer EO programs and services. The system is a web-based application, where entered data is accessible in real time to authorized Ministry staff and LBS service providers.

4.1.3. Roles and Responsibilities

One of the key benefits of an effective PMS is the clarification of roles and responsibilities between service providers and the Ministry.

The Ministry's Role and Responsibilities

The Ministry defines the program and sets baseline standards for service delivery and quality. This includes:

- Designing the program and setting program policy;
- Providing guidelines to service providers;
- Developing reporting requirements and tools;
- Clarifying service delivery and performance expectations;
- Providing a transparent service and funding decision matrix; and
- Providing advice and guidance that clarifies Ministry expectations to organizations developing business and service plans.

The Ministry ensures transparency and accountability. This includes:

- Service level and funding decisions consistent with the annual business planning process;
- Monitoring and evaluating delivery performance against agreement commitments; and
- Monitoring agreement and guideline compliance.

Service Provider Role and Responsibilities

Service providers deliver services in accordance with the LBS Service Provider Guidelines, performance and accountability requirements, standards and LBS Service Provider agreements made through the literacy services planning and coordination process. This includes:

- Planning, implementing, and evaluating program delivery strategies and operational plans, including procedures for timely identification of risks and strategies to address those risks;
- Implementing processes and procedures that support client and organization-level service decisions consistent with program design and policy and with the LBS Service Provider agreements;
- Participating in community planning processes to accommodate the needs of regions, communities, and individuals; and
- Providing information and referral to EO programs and services and to other programs and services offered in the community.

Service providers manage resources. This includes:

- Allocating funding to meet agreement commitments;
- Providing budget and financial oversight; and
- Implementing effective financial and data reporting systems.

Service providers manage business systems. This includes:

- Developing, implementing and evaluating systems to effectively manage resources, information, agency and community-level communications, and customer service;
- Developing and sustaining organizational capacity to deliver the LBS program; and
- Maintaining current and relevant information to meet information and referral requirements for the EO network.

Shared Responsibilities

- Ongoing review and evaluation of service design, performance management framework and customer service expectations;
- Seeking to raise the level of service quality across the province so that all Ontarians have access to high quality services; and
- Identifying innovative practices in service design, delivery, and performance management.

All Ontario Public Service performance management systems support high quality customer service and results in a manner that is transparent and accountable.

4.1.4. Dimensions and Measures of Service Quality Success

The introduction of a Performance Management Framework (PMF) to the LBS program makes the program more effective, efficient and customer-focused. With the expertise and local knowledge of service providers, the LBS program provides the most

appropriate service to clients and learners. The LBS PMS clearly sets out three broad dimensions of service delivery success:

1. Effectiveness
2. Customer Service
3. Efficiency

These three dimensions are weighted to indicate their value when combined to measure overall service quality. The weights identified are according to the mature system. (i.e., all proposed seven performance measures).

Within each dimension of service quality, core measures of performance are identified and weighted.

1. Effectiveness: 50%

The Effectiveness dimension measures those being served by the LBS service provider and includes four performance measures: Suitability/Learner Profile (and what the services achieve for those learners), Completion of Goal Path, and Learner Progress (See Section 4.3 Performance Management Indicators).

Two measures of Effectiveness comprise 50% of the Ministry's evaluation of overall service quality. (See Section 4.3 Performance Management Indicators):

- **Suitability/Learner Profile** (20%) is a measure of LBS Learner characteristics. It examines and quantifies identified barriers to achieving the learner's goals related to employment, apprenticeship, post-secondary education, secondary school credit and independence. This measure ensures that the service providers are working with clients who are most in need of LBS services. Suitability/Learner Profile in the LBS PMS is measured with multiple suitability indicators, such as education level, time out of training, age, etc.
- **Learner Progress** (30%) is a measure of the successful completion of the required milestones on a learner's goal path.
- **Completion of Goal Path** is a measure of those who successfully complete all elements of the learner plan. Completion of Goal Path indicators are captured in EOIS CaMS, however, this measure is not presently factored into the PMF.
- **Learner Gains** is a measure of the gains learners show (using the IALSS 500-point scale) in areas of reading, document use and numeracy. As noted previously, there is currently no measure for Learner Gains, but this may be implemented at a later date.

2. Customer Service: 40%

The Customer Service dimension has two core performance measures: Customer Satisfaction and Service Coordination.

Customer Satisfaction (15%) is a measure of service satisfaction from learners exiting the program. Learners are asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 5, how likely they are to recommend the LBS program to someone looking for similar services.

Service Coordination (25%) is a measure of how the service provider supports access to and from other education, training and community services, and how this is effectively incorporated into a learner's plan.

Service Coordination tracks how well a service provider works within the LBS and EO delivery system and in the community. It measures the percentage of learners in the LBS program who experience effective, supported referrals into, during or at exit from the LBS program. (See Section 4.3 Performance Management Indicators)

The measures of Customer Service contribute 40% to the Ministry's evaluation of overall service quality. (See Section 4.3 Performance Management Indicators)

3. Efficiency: 10%

Efficiency is the final dimension of service quality and includes one core measure and one indicator. Efficiency measures the percentage of the targeted number of learners with an active learner plan (see glossary) who are served (See Section 4.3 Performance Management Indicators).

90% of the Overall Service Quality Standard will be based on Effectiveness and Customer Service, while 10% is on Efficiency.

Achieving the standard of overall service quality is key to receiving stable and ongoing funding. The Ministry sets a provincial baseline for each core measure and weighs their impact on overall service quality. Service provider performance is measured against this baseline and their contracted commitments. Service providers must commit to improve performance on any of the core measures in which they have fallen below the provincial standard.

Service providers can plan the most appropriate activities to achieve that standard, and to distribute and manage their resources accordingly (See Section 4.3 Performance Management Indicators).

Setting Performance Baselines

Effective performance management systems use accurate and verifiable data (based on actual performance) to set baseline performance standards. Performance commitments listed in the service provider's annual business plan must meet (or exceed) the provincial service quality standard (baseline), and outline improvement in the organization's actual results.

Baseline standards are adjusted to reflect changes to system-wide performance. The Ministry will confirm the performance baselines annually, as part of the business planning cycle. Performance measure definitions and data indicators may also change, as real data becomes available for analysis and as a result of discussion with service providers.

Organizational Capacity

The LBS PMS seeks to sustain and improve results over time. Its foundation and success are in the strength of the service provider in planning, resourcing, communicating and measuring. These are the components of organizational capacity. While they do not contribute directly to the measurable standard of overall service quality, they are key to the Ministry's service funding decisions.

Planning

The service provider is able to develop, implement, monitor, and modify action plans to achieve their contracted commitments with the Ministry.

Resourcing

The service provider is able to develop and allocate resources to achieve their contracted commitments with the Ministry.

Communicating

The service provider is able to interact with its staff, the Ministry, and with the community in terms of issues, policies and programs that affect clients/learners and the community.

Measuring

The service provider is able to evaluate its success against its business plan, its legal agreement with the Ministry, guidelines, policies and procedures.

Table 1: Dimensions and Indicators of Organizational Capacity

DIMENSIONS	ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY INDICATORS	DEFINITION
Planning	Demonstrated use of data	The service provider has evidence that data (non-financial), including local Labour Market Information, is analyzed and evaluated to make both short and long term programmatic/service changes that reflect local labour market and community needs.
Resourcing	Administrative Processes	The service provider has administrative systems in place (Admin, Finance, HR, IT) that support the organization's business commitments to customer service, quality and operational performance.

DIMENSIONS	ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY INDICATORS	DEFINITION
Resourcing	Financial Performance Results	The service provider is able to demonstrate it has financial controls and processes in place to track and manage the efficient use of "annual" budget allocations in providing service throughout the fiscal year (period of time for which the budget is allocated). Reporting is accurate and timely.
Communicating	Community coordination	The service provider is able to demonstrate that it seeks out and coordinates services with other agencies/organizations in the community including other EO service providers, school boards, Ontario Works, Employment and Social Development Canada - Service Canada, employer associations and other service providers. The organization participates in local community planning processes.
	Governance	The service provider has: • Evidence of Annual General Meetings (AGMs) taking place in which the community is invited and/or involved; or • Evidence of governance structure which has processes/policies in place to ensure accountability to funders, clients, community and its own staff; and a mission or mandate consistent with Employment Ontario goals and objectives.
Measuring	Customer Satisfaction and Results Management	The service provider has a customer service charter in place that commits to a standard of customer service including a process for customer feedback and timely agency response. The organization has systems and processes in place to track performance against agreement commitments and standards.

DIMENSIONS	ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY INDICATORS	DEFINITION
Measuring	Service Delivery	The service provider's mandate/objectives are aligned with the services provided.

4.2. Business Planning Cycle

The purpose of the business planning process is for service providers and support organizations to plan and communicate to MLTSD how they will achieve their commitment to service levels, service quality standards, and continuous improvement targets, in agreement with the Ministry, within budget and within the annual business management cycle.

The Ministry operates on a fiscal year based business management cycle (April 1st to March 31st). The business plan reflects this business management cycle and includes deliverables and progress indicators to be measured during the fiscal year. LBS service providers must submit a business plan for each service delivery site where LBS services are offered.

Once completed, the LBS business plan will inform the responsibilities and performance commitment targets and deliverables in the LBS agreement. The business plan also provides the Ministry with their LBS service delivery and support organization deliverables and progress indicators that will be monitored through discussions with LBS consultants. Organizations will also be monitored through reports such as the Quarterly Status and Adjustment Report (QSAR) and monthly reports generated by the Employment Ontario Information System—Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS).

4.2.1. LBS Service Provider Site Business Plan

The Business Plan outlines an organization's plans to deliver all five services of the LBS Program:

- Information and Referral
- Assessment Learner Plan
- Development
- Training
- Follow-up

Service providers must set and meet LBS Performance Management targets. In addition, service providers are required to deliver LBS programming focusing on specific goal paths and OALCF complexity levels within communities as agreed at the Literacy Services Planning and Coordination meetings, facilitated by regional networks.

See the EOPG to see the latest Business Planning templates and supporting materials.

4.2.2. Evaluation for Continuous Improvement

A quality Employment Ontario program evaluates its effectiveness annually. Evaluation of the LBS program is a continuous process that includes input from all stakeholders, including clients and learners, staff, referring organizations, community partners, funders, and goal path stakeholders. Evidence of continuous improvement in organizational capacity and performance is a key aspect of evaluation.

As a good business practice, LBS service providers may choose to develop an internal organization evaluation system that includes:

- Monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure LBS program activities and outcomes are consistent with those specified in the agreement and the LBS Service Provider Guidelines;
- A management review of learner files;
- A method for gathering other service delivery organization and stakeholder input and feedback;
- A method for gathering learner input and feedback;
- Review and analysis of LBS service delivery organization statistics, either to adjust service delivery where appropriate, or to provide the rationale for variances between projected and actual results; and
- Review and analysis of financial information, including expenditure patterns and any implications for ongoing programming.

4.3. Performance Management Indicators

The LBS program Performance Management Framework includes indicators for:

1. Customer Service
2. Effectiveness
3. Efficiency

Table 2: Performance Management Framework and Provincial Service Quality Standard

DIMENSION	MEASURE	WEIGHT	STANDARD	SQS VALUE
Customer Service (40%)	Customer Satisfaction	15 %	90%	1.35
	Service Coordination	25%	50%	1.25
Effectiveness (50%)	Suitability / Learner Profile (all 12 indicators)	20%	30%	0.6
	Learner Progress	30%	60%	1.8
Efficiency 10%)	Learners Served	10%	90%	0.9
OVERALL SERVICE QUALITY STANDARD				5.9

4.3.1. Customer Service

The Customer Service dimension includes two core performance measures:

- Customer satisfaction with the LBS program delivered by the service provider.
- Service coordination, which tracks supported referrals in and out of the LBS program.

Customer Satisfaction (15%)

Customer Satisfaction is a measure of feedback from learners about the LBS program.

Customer satisfaction will be determined as a percentage of all exiting learners who have completed the satisfaction survey and who rate the program as a 4 or a 5 (see ratings below). The target is 90%.

At exit from service, service providers will ask the following question to learners participating in the LBS program i.e. "On a 1-5 scale, how likely are you to recommend the LBS program to someone looking for similar services as those you received?"

1. Strongly not recommended
2. Rather not recommend
3. No general opinion
4. Generally recommend
5. Strongly recommend

Service Coordination (25%)

Service Coordination is a measure of how the service provider has coordinated and integrated supported access to other services to support the client's Service Plan and Learner Plan (see glossary). Service Coordination measures the percentage of learners who experience effective, supported referrals into, during or at exit from the LBS program.

A formalized referral (either face-to-face, by email or by telephone call) is made by the LBS program Service Provider on behalf of the client to the other organization (employment/education/training/community services). It also recognizes formalized referrals made to the LBS program Service Provider from another community organization on behalf of a client.

Table 3: Indicators of Service Coordination

INDICATORS OF SERVICE COORDINATION	DEFINITION
Referred in from other organizations at entrance	The client has been formally referred, through a recognized referral process (not word-of-mouth) to an LBS program service provider from either another EO service provider, a community organization, or services such as EO Action Centre, Ontario Works, other government training programs, language assessment centres, Ontario Disability Support Program, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), Probation and Parole.
(Referred out) Registered in education at entrance, during and at exit	The client has confirmed that he/she is registered, as a result of the LBS program service provider, in an education program that will provide them with a recognized high school or high school equivalent certification, e.g. General Education Diploma (GED) preparatory, Independent Learning Centre (ILC) - day or evening, high school, certificate program, or in a post-secondary education program.
(Referred out) Registered/participating in training at entrance, during and at exit	The client has confirmed that he/she is registered or participating in training as a result of the LBS program service provider: • EO training initiatives including pre-apprenticeship/ Apprenticeship, Co-Op Diploma Apprenticeship Program, LBS Service Provider. • Other training initiatives such as Language Services (e.g., English as a second language (ESL)/French as a second language (FSL); MLTSD Bridge Training for Immigrants; other government training.

INDICATORS OF SERVICE COORDINATION	DEFINITION
(Referred out) Registered or confirmed receiving services with employment Service Provider at entrance, during and at exit	The client has confirmed that he/she is registered with an Employment Service (ES) Service Provider to receive or is receiving, as a result of the LBS program Service Provider, one or more of the following types of supports – Employment Service, EO Action Centre.
(Referred out) Registered or confirmed receiving services with other community resources that support achievement of goals at entrance, during and at exit	The client has confirmed that he/she is registered to receive or is receiving, as a result of the LBS program service provider, one or more of the following types of supports – childcare, educational/academic services, financial planning, health/counselling services, housing services, language services- assessment, legal services, newcomer services, regulatory bodies.
(Referred out) Referred out to other EO Employment programs	The client has confirmed that he/she is registered to receive services through other EO employment-related programs.

4.3.2. Effectiveness

The LBS program's effectiveness is measured by the service provider's learners' Suitability/Learner Profile and by and what the services achieve for those measured by their progress.

These two performance measures combine to comprise Effectiveness, which is worth a total of 50% of the overall Service Quality Target or standard. Effectiveness comprises Suitability/Learner Profile (20%) and Learner Progress (30%)

Learner Completion of Goal Path and Learner Gains are included in the OALCF documents as additional measures of effectiveness.

Completion of Goal Path indicators are captured in EOIS CaMS; however, this measure is not presently factored into the PMF.

There is currently no measure for Learner Gains, but this may be implemented later.

The Suitability/Learner Profile (20%) is a measure of LBS Learner characteristics. It examines and quantifies identified client barriers to learning. This measure ensures that the service providers are providing services to the learners who can most benefit from the LBS program.

Service providers must serve learners who, on average, are experiencing at least 30% of identified suitability indicators. This is an average and does not mean that every single learner must have exactly 30% of the identified indicators.
This information is collected at entrance to the LBS program but is calculated at exit in the performance report.

Table 4: Indicators of Suitability

INDICATORS OF SUITABILITY	DEFINITION
Education level attained	The highest education level the individual has completed at service/program entrance is: • < grade 12.
Source of income	The individual has identified his/her source of income as one of the following: • Ontario Works (OW) • Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) • No source of income • Crown Ward extended care and maintenance
Time out of school	The individual has been out of education for 6 years or more.
Time out of training	The individual has been out of training for 6 years or more.
Age	The individual is: Older than 45 years of age and under 64 years of age.
History of interrupted education	The individual has identified that he/she has had a history of interrupted primary and secondary education.
Person with disability	The individual has self-identified as a person with a disability as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with

INDICATORS OF SUITABILITY	DEFINITION
	Disabilities Act (AODA) and Ontario Human Rights Code definition. This includes persons who have: • Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device. • A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability. • A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language. • A mental disorder. • An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 ("handicap").
Indigenous person	A person of Indigenous ancestry.
Deaf	The individual has self-identified as Deaf.
Francophone	Those persons whose first language is French, plus those whose first language are neither French nor English but have a knowledge of French as an Official Language and use French at home.

Learner Progress (30%) measures, during service and at exit, the percentage of learners who successfully complete at least one required milestone related to their individual learner plan and goal path (i.e., employment, apprenticeship, secondary school credit, post-secondary education, independence).

4.3.3. Efficiency

The Efficiency dimension of the LBS program includes one measure – Learners Served.

Learners Served measures the percentage of learners with either an active or a closed learner plan served within the same fiscal year against the LBS service provider's agreement efficiency target.

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework and the LBS program Performance Management System outline the Ministry's expectations of service providers. The following administration guidelines provide further information, tools and resources service providers need to manage the LBS program.

The administration guidelines describe the obligations service providers must meet to fulfill their agreement, and the requirements for information management, documentation, and reporting.

5.1. Service Provider Agreement

LBS service providers enter into legal agreements with MLTSD to deliver the LBS program directly to learners. These service provider agreements govern the relationship between service providers and the Ministry and set out the details for accountability and legal requirements for service delivery.

The legal agreement between the service provider and the Ministry specifies:

- The legal responsibilities of the service provider and the Ministry regarding the delivery of the LBS program, as outlined in the LBS Service Provider Guidelines.
- The budget and performance commitments.
- The reporting, accounting and review, and audit and accountability requirements.

The agreement ties into the Ministry's annual business cycle requirements, and reflect any updates or revisions resulting from the Performance Management Framework.

Agreements will be:

- Negotiated annually
- Used for monitoring, evaluation and accountability purposes

The agreement outlines a service provider's budget allocation and performance commitments.

5.2. Program Facilities and Facilities Leases

The service provider must deliver the contracted service in a facility that is accessible to all participants, including persons with disabilities.

Where services are not fully accessible to the physically disabled, the service provider accommodates them by serving them in an accessible location or through partnership with another organization.

When appropriate, service providers can refer persons with disabilities to the services of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). ODSP helps individuals with their specific needs and provides a range of supports facilitating employment and independence, such as: technological aids, supports, devices and personnel supports such as transcribing; and sign language interpretation.

5.2.1. Facility Leases

The Ministry recognizes the importance of co-location arrangements with community stakeholders such as Apprenticeship, other Employment Ontario programs, and other community services as one of several service delivery options. These arrangements can enhance customer service, community access, and cost-efficiency.

Where the LBS program is co-located with other programs and services, LBS funds must be used to cover only the costs directly related to the delivery of the LBS program.

If relocation or renovation of the facility is required, the service provider must have prior written approval from the Ministry before agreements or financial commitments are made.

5.3. Acknowledgement of Ontario Government Support

Any communication/message to the public about the LBS Program (print, online or broadcast) must include the Employment Ontario logo and message. This includes news releases, posters, flyers, brochures, newspaper displays and classified advertising, radio and/or television advertising, billboards, transit shelters, and newsletters, and any other media produced by service providers.

Service providers must place prominently, in public view, any signs supplied by the Ministry and other signs that clearly identify Employment Ontario and/or the Literacy and Basic Skills Program at each funded site.

If a Service Provider is involved in a joint marketing and communications campaign with programs funded by other sponsors, the Employment Ontario message must be placed in a prominent position, comparable in location and size to that of other sponsors. This guideline applies to the appearance of the logo and message in promotional materials, as well as signage displayed in the service provider's office.

Service providers must use official hard copy or digital master artwork when reproducing the Employment Ontario logo, and may not alter or add to it in any way.

Detailed Employment Ontario Visibility Guidelines are available on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) website.

5.4. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Ontario is developing mandatory accessibility standards that will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. The standards are being developed to achieve real results in stages. The AODA is expected to be fully implemented by 2025. The AODA standards include customer service, employment, information and communication, transportation, and the built environment.

Additional information on the AODA is available at http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca (Frequently Accessed Law section) or through:

Publications Ontario
777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
Tel: 1-800-668-9938, or in Toronto at (416) 326-5300

5.5. Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

Under the agreement with the Ministry, service providers agree to protect the personal information they collect, use and disclose, in order to deliver and report on the LBS program.

5.5.1. Privacy Policy and Privacy Training

The legal agreement requires service providers to:

- Establish and implement a publicly available privacy policy that complies with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), a federal statute that regulates how private sector organizations collect, use and disclose personal information in the course of commercial activities, or the Canadian Standards Association's (CSA) Code for the Protection of Personal Information;
- Designate an official responsible for compliance with the privacy protection provisions of the legal agreement; and
- Implement appropriate privacy protection training of employees and subcontractors with access to the personal information of learners.

Service providers must ensure that their employees, volunteers and contractors with access to the personal information of learners are aware of its privacy policy, and the privacy protection provisions of the legal agreement.

Not all LBS service providers will be subject to PIPEDA. LBS service providers may want to contact the federal Privacy Commissioner to help them to determine whether they are subject to PIPEDA.

If LBS service providers are not subject to PIPEDA, their privacy policy must be based on the 10 basic principles set out in the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Code for the Protection of Personal Information.

PIPEDA is available at http://www.priv.gc.ca as well as a fact sheet on the application of PIPEDA to Charitable and Non-Profit Organizations.

The CSA Code for the Protection of Personal Information is available at www.csa.ca.

5.5.2 Ministry Access to Personal Information in the Custody or under the Control of the Service Provider

The Ministry does not have custody or control of an LBS service provider's records.

However, under the legal agreement with the Ministry, the LBS service providers agree to make certain information, including pertinent limited personal information, available to

the Ministry, for the purpose of administering and financing the LBS program. Administration includes:

- Assessing the service provider's performance, including its effectiveness, efficiency and customer service results; monitoring, inspecting, investigating, auditing and enforcing the service provider's compliance with the legal agreement with the Ministry;
- Planning, evaluating and monitoring the LBS program (including conducting surveys) and conducting policy and statistical analysis and research related to all aspects of the LBS program; and
- Promoting the LBS program, including related public relations campaigns.

To comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), the Ministry will obtain the consent of the affected individuals for the indirect collection of their limited personal information. In addition, the Ministry will give these individuals notice of how it will use their personal information. One of these uses is sharing an individual's personal information with third parties, such as other service providers and other government departments.

The legal agreement with the Ministry requires the LBS service providers to obtain the consent of every learner for the indirect collection of personal information by the Ministry, and to give notice of the uses the Ministry will make of their personal information. The consent and the notice are set out as a schedule to the legal agreement and can also be found on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) website.

5.6. Documentation Requirements

5.6.1. Learner files

LBS service providers must maintain a file for each learner who uses LBS program services. A file is not required for clients who use only the information and referral service.

LBS service providers must ensure that each learner file includes:

- Rationale for decisions made by the LBS Service Provider;

- Participant Registration Form (see Section 5.9 Program Forms);
- Learner Plan (see Section 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities);
- Evidence of learner progress (see Section 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities);
- Training Support documentation, if applicable (see below); and
- LBS Program Exit and Follow-Up Form (see Section 5.9 Program Forms).

All LBS service delivery organizations are eligible to apply for training support funding.

LBS service providers who administer Training Supports must:

- Maintain supporting documentation for all training support disbursements, including learners' applications for training support, attendance records, original receipts, type of expense, and amounts paid out; and
- Meet Revenue Canada requirements regarding taxable benefits.

Organizations will report on the number of learners who received training support and the total amount expended.

5.7. Information Management Requirements

Personal information must be managed to ensure the respect of privacy and adherence to all contractual requirements and applicable laws.

LBS service providers should establish effective documentation, records, and systems as essential components of good service delivery and sound case management practice. LBS service providers need information management systems that enable them to demonstrate that services are being delivered according to the LBS Service Provider Guidelines. Effective systems are necessary to ensure that all legal and accountability requirements are met.

5.8. Audit and Accountability Requirements

5.8.1. Organization Training Support Policies

To administer their training support funds, organizations are responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures to support their allocation of training support

to minimize barriers to participation and encourage learners to persist. Policies and procedures should include:

- Eligibility criteria for learners, and the documentation they must provide to establish need and to verify expenses;
- Eligible child care service providers (cannot be the learner's spouse or relatives living with the learner);
- Eligible expenses, for example, maximum rates for child care, accommodation for persons with disabilities, public transit, private cars, car pools, and parking; and
- Policy and procedures for payment, including direct payment to learners; and indirect payment to suppliers, and circumstances where advance payment may be possible.

5.9. Program Forms

Some program forms have been developed for the delivery of the LBS program. They are:

- LBS Participant Registration form; and the
- LBS Program Exit and Follow-Up form

These forms are mandatory and **may not be** altered by the LBS Service Provider.

The LBS program Participant Registration form includes the learner's consent to the collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal information for use by the Ministry. For e-Channel, service providers collect the same information that is contained in the LBS Participation Registration form posted on the EOPG website and on the MGCS Central Forms Repository. They are not required to use the actual form per se. The notice of collection and consent which they use is listed as an appendix within their legal agreement with the Ministry.

The use of these forms ensures:

- Consistency in the administration of the programs and services;
- That each service provider is collecting, using, disclosing and retaining the limited personal information necessary to complete the programs and services;
- That the Ministry has obtained the consent of the program/service participants to the indirect collection of their personal information;

- The provision of the notice of indirect collection of personal information that the Ministry is required to provide to program/service participants under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA); and
- The difference between the Ministry's indirect collection and use of personal information and the service provider's own collection and use of personal information for their purposes.

If a service provider needs additional consents or other documents to delineate their collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal information, or meet its legal obligations under the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Canada) or any other pertinent legislation, the service provider must develop a separate document for this purpose. Note: The Ministry's LBS program Participant Registration form may not be altered for these purposes.

NOTE: All LBS program forms are available on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) website.

GLOSSARY

Terms	Definitions
Basic Skills	The additional skills a learner needs to use their literacy skills, such as digital technology, interpersonal skills, problem solving, and critical thinking.
Clients	Adults who access information and referral or assessment services, but who will not be receiving LBS training services at the service provider site.
Competencies	Competencies are broad, generic categories of learners' abilities that capture and organize the learning in a program.
Culminating Task	A key indicator of a learner's readiness to transition to the selected goal. A culminating task is more complex than a milestone task, but is similarly aligned with the curriculum framework, which is part of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF).
Curriculum Framework	Sets out the content of learning within a system, using an established set of organizing principles. Within the OALCF, the curriculum framework refers specifically to the six competencies that organize learning content and describe learning proficiency, using three levels of performance.
EOIS-CaMS	Employment Ontario Information System-Case Management System: A web-based, real-time software solution that supports the administration and management of clients participating in EO programs and services. Authorized Ministry and service provider staff access the system, in which specific information is accessible across the province.
Goal	The goal is what the learner wants to achieve once leaving the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program. It is the next step to which the learner transitions after completing the LBS program.
Goal Path	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, post-secondary and

Terms	Definitions
	independence.
IALSS (now replaced by PIAAC)	The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) conducts an international survey to measure the key cognitive and workplace skills needed for individuals to participate in society and for economies to prosper. The survey is administered every 10 years and has had two cycles so far. Previous to PIAAC, the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) was conducted in Canada in 2003, and rated proficiency in four domains: prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving, on the basis of levels one to five (lowest to highest). Level 3 is recognized internationally as the desired threshold for coping with the increasing skill demands of a knowledge society.
Income Support	Government payments to a learner or client which include Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Crown Ward Extended Care and maintenance (ECM), and Employment Insurance (EI).
LBS PMS	The Literacy and Basic Skills Performance Management System: A tool for both service providers and the Ministry to evaluate service effectiveness, provide service benchmarks, and help service providers continuously improve services. The LBS PMS includes three inter-related components: the LBS Performance Management Framework, Continuous Improvement, and Business Intelligence.
Learner	An adult who receives LBS training services to achieve a milestone or learning activity and has a learner plan.
Learning Activities	Learning Activities help learners to develop the skills required to master a competency and gain the specific knowledge required for their goal. Learning activities are highly individualized, and enable service providers to customize the learner plan.
Learner Plan	Describes the learning or program elements that prepare learners for their goal beyond the LBS program. It includes the learner's

Terms	Definitions
	goal, background information, assessment results, milestone tasks, culminating task, learning activities, program duration, additional supports required, and referral results.
Literacy	The ability of individuals to apply communication, numeracy and digital skills to find, use, create and think critically about information and ideas. Literacy involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to achieve their goals, solve problems, make decisions, participate fully in our increasingly diverse and technological society, and contribute to the innovation economy.
Literacy Services Plan	Annual plans developed by regional networks that identify community literacy needs based on demographic and labour market information, including projections on number of learners to be served, service gaps, service improvements, and services to be delivered.
LSPC	Literacy Services Planning and Coordination: A process facilitated by the regional network to ensure that all LBS services in a community are complementary and seamless, and meet as many needs as resources allow.
Milestone	A goal-related assessment activity that learners complete to demonstrate their ability to carry out goal-related tasks. Milestones are aligned to the competencies and complexity levels found in the OALCF curriculum framework and are standard indicators of learner progress towards completion of goal path. Milestones answer the question, "Can learners apply the skills they are developing to purposeful tasks?"
OALCF	Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework: Refers to all the features of delivering a competency-based program, including competencies, assessment, learner transitions to employment, apprenticeship, post-secondary education, secondary school credit, independence, and learning materials.
PMF	Performance Management Framework: A component of the LBS PMS. The PMF is a clear, strategic system that defines what is

Terms	Definitions
	important and what is expected through the use of three dimensions of success -Customer Service, Effectiveness, and Efficiency.
Regional Networks	Support organizations which are located around the province and which support all stream and sector LBS service providers, by facilitating a literacy services planning and coordination process in each community. They support LBS service providers to continuously improve their organizational capacity to deliver the LBS program. Regional networks work closely with stream, sector and service organizations to support the coordination and delivery of professional development opportunities in a community.
Support Organizations	The LBS program has literacy support organizations that assist the front-line LBS service providers. These support organizations include: • organizations that support the Anglophone, Francophone, Deaf and Indigenous streams; • service-provider sector organizations (college, school board, community based); • regional networks to support planning, and delivery network capacity; • provincial organizations that provide technology-specific support for programs in all streams, including e-Channel. Service categories for LBS Support Organizations may be found in Appendix B.
Training Supports	Training Supports for Learners are "flow-through" funds for individuals to remove financial barriers to participation in the LBS program. Training supports could cover various needs such as, but not limited to: child care, transportation and accommodation(s) for persons with disabilities. Training supports should reflect the individual needs of learners, based on a needs assessment, to help them to participate in the LBS program. Service providers should use their discretion in

Terms	Definitions
	deciding how to use training supports for learners but must follow the audit and accountability requirements outlined in the agreement.

APPENDIX A:

SERVICE CATEGORIES FOR LBS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

LBS support organizations support service providers to deliver coordinated, quality services. These services are responsive to emerging needs (identified by the community and government) within an integrated training and employment system. To achieve these objectives, support organizations undertake activities in four service categories:

Service Categories

1. Support seamless client pathways across EO and Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), and non-EO programs.
2. Support quality delivery by providing resource development and support (including instructional content, mode of instruction and assessment).
3. Support the improvement of Service Provider organizational capacity.
4. Support the collection and distribution of research findings and contribute a regional, sector or stream perspective to LBS related research projects.