LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

Support Organization Program Guidelines

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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, Immigration, Training and Skills Development ("MLITSD", "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 functions: service delivery and service development. This LBS Support Organization Guidelines document is for the service development function. This document is intended to be a resource to help support organizations enable service providers deliver LBS programming directly to learners.

The function of service delivery is to deliver LBS programming that is learner-centred, goal-directed, transitions-oriented and results-based. Through the function of service development, support organizations enable service providers to deliver coordinated, quality services that are responsive to emerging needs identified by communities and the government within an integrated training and employment system. Support organizations are funded to provide this support to service providers.

The LBS Support Organization Guidelines provide the broad policy direction and information support organizations need to support the LBS program under their legal agreement with the ministry. There are separate (but complementary) guidelines for the service delivery function, entitled LBS Service Provider Guidelines. The two sets of guidelines are designed to be used together. LBS support organizations are encouraged to reference supporting documents on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) website

This LBS Support Organization 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 programming tailored to their goals 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 the 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 service coordination; culturally appropriate and goal-related informal and standard assessment tools and resources; goal path descriptions; task-based programming and assessment; 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
- 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

Support organizations do not provide instructional services directly to the adult learner. Service providers are the primary clients of support organizations. Secondary clients include other EO programs, key stakeholder partners and MLITSD. All clients should be provided with service that aligns with the below outlined principles of client and learner satisfaction and constantly strive towards 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 EO service delivery, including the LBS program:

- Accessibility
- Client-Centric
- Quality
- Integration
- Cost-Effectiveness
- Accountability
- Community-Based Coordination

Please refer to Section 2.2 Principles in the LBS Service Provider Guidelines for descriptions of each principle.

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 Advanced Education and Skills Development, Education, Citizenship and Immigration and International Trades, and Community and Social Services, along with Employment and Social Development Canada and employer organizations.

3. PROGRAM DELIVERY

LBS support organizations enable 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 that are further detailed in section 3.1.1:

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.

3.1. Roles and Responsibilities

While there are different categories of support organizations, their functions and activities are similar in that they broadly provide support to service providers to ensure the LBS program is:

- Coordinated and promoted in communities as a service system that avoids duplication;
- Of the highest quality;
- Responsive to emerging needs (identified by the community and government); and
- Integrated into the broader MLITSD: Employment Ontario (EO), Ministry of Education (EDU), and Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) employment, training and labour market programs.

Support organizations collectively support service providers to deliver the LBS program to culturally and linguistically diverse adult learners; in different instructional settings; using a variety of instructional materials and delivery modes; and in distinct geographic settings.

Support organizations have distinct roles and responsibilities within these broader common objectives and are further categorized as follows:

- **Regional networks** are located around the province and support all stream and sector LBS service providers by facilitating a literacy service 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.
- **Stream organizations** play an important role in that they work with MLITSD to identify and address LBS service issues that are specific to LBS learners across the province who are Deaf, Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone. They support stream specific service providers in all sectors to continuously improve delivery through information sharing and partnering at a provincial level. In addition, stream organizations develop culturally relevant learning resources and practitioner training that is relevant to delivery issues related to language and culture. Stream organizations collaborate with regional networks to improve stream specific organizational capacity.
- **Sector organizations** support LBS service providers across the province to deliver quality services for specific institutional and delivery settings (colleges, school boards, community-based). The sectors provide support primarily in English but work with the stream organizations to coordinate service provider access to appropriate language and culturally based resources and support. Francophone, Deaf and Indigenous community-based, college and school board service providers may also be supported by their corresponding stream organization. Sector organizations promote continuous improvement of delivery content, assessment and modes of delivery related to the five OALCF goal paths.
- **Service organizations** support the LBS system through strategic technical and technological support. In addition, service organizations support culturally specific resource development and publishing services for Francophone stream learners. In addition, service organizations provide technology and technical support to all streams.

A summary of roles and responsibilities within each type of support organization by service category may be found in Section 3.1.3.

All support organizations, as is appropriate to their roles and key responsibilities, support service providers to implement the OALCF.

All support organizations model continuous improvement and performance management practices as related to their business plan commitments.

LBS support organizations not only adhere to the EO Customer Service Expectations themselves but may also provide (when included in key activities for organizational capacity) support to service providers to develop:

- A customer service charter;
- A customer complaint and resolution process; and
- A customer needs identification process.

A customer service charter expresses the value a support organization places on service quality by encouraging and responding to client feedback. It outlines the process and timeframe for dealing with customer compliments and complaints. Support organizations are free to write charters that include as many elements as they choose; however, the following three elements are mandatory:

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

Support organizations will report any service or organizational changes that result from their customer service activities to the ministry through the program monitoring process and reporting process. Meeting customer service expectations is vital to ensuring accountability, consistency in quality, customer experience and service improvement.

3.1.1. Support Organizations Service Categories

1. Support seamless client pathways across EO and the Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and non-EO programs.

This service category is undertaken by the regional networks and supported by the streams and contributes directly to the ability of service providers to meet the core measure of Service Coordination and the performance indicators of referral in and referral out of learners to services and supports that will enhance the learner's successful achievement of their goal path and transitions.

Seamless pathways result in:

- Coordinated LBS program service provision in a community;
- Coordinated and integrated LBS program service provision with EO programs and other key community services (e.g., English as a second language (ESL)/French as a second language (FSL) services, newcomer settlement

services, secondary school credit, skills training courses, post-secondary programs, Ontario Works); and

- Information and referral processes that support client mobility and articulation of LBS learning achievements.

The activities in this service category are achieved in large part through the literacy service planning and coordination process facilitated by regional networks and informed by stream organizations about cultural or linguistic considerations.

Literacy Service Planning and Coordination Process

The process involves all LBS service providers and, where possible, other community services, such as EO's Employment Service, Apprenticeship, Second Career, Labour Adjustment, Ontario Works, other services related to housing or mental health, and ESL/FSL services and support. Its purpose is to facilitate effective and efficient delivery of the LBS program within a broader system of education, training and labour market attachment services.

The results of the literacy service planning and coordination process provide the ministry with important evidence that the service providers have acted in a cooperative manner to eliminate duplication and to maximise value and access to learners. Service providers provide LBS services that focus on one or more goal paths according to the demonstrated success of learners being transition-ready and moving on to their selected goal. The planning and coordination process also contributes directly to the service providers' ability to meet the core measure of Suitability/ Learner Profile. Please refer to section 4.3 in the LBS Service Provider Guidelines for more information on suitability. The principal product of the local planning and co-ordination process is the literacy services plan for a specific community.

Literacy Service Plan

The Literacy Service Plan is developed annually by Regional Networks and identifies community literacy needs based on demographic and labour market information, including projections on the number of learners to be served, service gaps, service improvements and services to be delivered by service providers.

The Literacy Service Planning and Coordination Guide can be found on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) website (www.ontario.ca/eopg).

2. Support quality delivery by providing resource development and support (including instructional content, mode of instruction and assessment)

This service category contributes directly to the service providers' ability to meet the core measures of Goal Path Completion and Learner Progress.

Support organizations plan and deliver services that support service providers to implement the OALCF.

This service category includes:

- Resources and support, which are appropriate to the learner's language, culture, context and goal path;
- Resources and support compatible with the OALCF approach;
- Resources and supports that are responsive to learner's mode of preferred or required instructional method (distance/e-Channel, face-to-face, institution-based, one to one tutoring);
- LBS goal path programming and assessment consistent with expectations and requirements of learner transitions to employment, apprenticeship, secondary school credit, post-secondary and independence; and
- Professional development opportunities delivered by trained and skilled facilitators.

Support organizations support service providers to deliver a learning activity that is described by five goal paths: employment, apprenticeship, secondary school credit, post-secondary and independence.

The LBS Service Provider Guidelines provide details on assessment (Section 4.3 Performance Management Indicators), learner plan development (Section 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities) and training (Section 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities) which this service category addresses.

3. Support the improvement of service provider organizational capacity
This service category includes supporting service providers in:

- **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, the ministry's program agreement, guidelines, policies and procedures.

Please refer to the Table 1 Dimensions and Indicators of Organizational Capacity in Section 4.1 Performance Management System of the LBS Service Provider Guidelines for further detail on the elements of each organizational capacity indicator.

The Performance Management System seeks to sustain and improve results over time. Its foundation and success is in the strength of the service provider in planning, resourcing, communicating and measuring. While organizational capacity does not contribute directly to the measurable standard of overall service quality, these components are key to the ministry's decisions to fund service provision.

4. Support the collection and distribution of research findings and contribute regional, sector or stream perspective to LBS related research projects

Support organizations may conduct research as part of their core activities. All support organizations keep up to date on relevant research and communicate or distribute any new findings to improve service delivery and administrative practices and inform public policy on adult literacy.

This service category includes:

- Organizational capacity development based on continuous improvement;
- Quality resource development and delivery based on Canadian and international adult literacy practices;
- Coordinated and integrated services informed by relevant and current research; and
- Implementation of the LBS performance management framework and implementation of the OALCF.

Support organizations also provide their unique regional, sector or stream perspective and expertise to LBS related research projects.

3.1.2. Employment Ontario Information and Referral Network and Services

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.

Please refer to Section 2.4 Program Components and Section 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities in the LBS Service Provider Guidelines on the information and referral obligations of the service provider.

Regional networks and stream organizations support service providers to improve their organizational capacity to develop and implement community-wide information and referral tools and processes. These support organizations provide leadership, facilitation or coordination of appropriate tools and process development to help service providers deliver information and referral services which include a common screening assessment.

As agreed to by the community literacy service planning and coordination committee, a regional network may provide direct services to clients for information and referral and assessment. When support organizations provide direct services to clients, they must adhere to all relevant MLITSD privacy requirements with respect to client personal information collection and consent. Please see Section 5.3 (Access to Information and Protection of Privacy) for more detail.

3.1.3. Summary of Roles and Responsibilities of Support Organization Type by Service Category

The following tables outline in detail the specific roles and responsibilities under the four service categories for the different types of support organizations:

Regional Networks
Service Category:
1. Support seamless client pathways across EO and Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and non-EO programs
Roles
- Support all LBS service providers by facilitating a literacy service planning and coordination process in each community   - This process strives to improve and integrate LBS services within the broader MLITSD: EO and EDU system. Regional networks work closely with stream organizations to embed cultural and linguistic considerations as they affect community planning
Responsibilities
Coordinate and facilitate a local planning and co-ordination process that involves all streams and leads to the development of the literacy service plan

- Establish links to the planning activities of related community programs and services

- Provide support to the participants in local planning and co-ordination (help determine planning process, gather and support analysis of key data, provide administrative support, orient new LBS service providers to process)

- Provide support to the planning process (includes researching and analysing the community in terms of its social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and literacy training needs)

- Support coordination of LBS services to ensure learners have accurate and timely referrals, portable learner plans, learning achievements described clearly and in a common way and goal path training supporting learners to achieve successful transitions

- Support the development and implementation of community-wide communication about the integrated EO system and information and referral tools and processes.

Service Category:
2. Support quality delivery by providing resource development and support
(including instructional content, mode of instruction and assessment)

Roles

- Provide informed advice to service providers of goal path specific tools and resources

Responsibilities

- Link service providers with professional development opportunities and to key tools and resources to provide quality instruction and assessment services

Service Category:
3.   Support the improvement of service provider organizational capacity

Roles

- Support LBS service providers in all streams to continuously improve their organizational capacity to deliver the LBS Program by linking service providers to appropriate professional development opportunities, by coaching service providers when requested, and by communicating information about key resources
- Regional networks work closely with stream organizations to coordinate their activities to support service provider organizational capacity

Responsibilities	
• Support service providers to meet EO customer service expectations (e.g., development of a customer service charter)	
• Support service providers to meet EO information and referral network and services requirements	
• Support service providers to determine and respond to areas for program improvement	
• Support service providers to deliver services, manage resources and manage business systems through resource development and professional development opportunities	
• Support service providers to develop administrative systems that support the organization's business commitments to customer service, quality and operational performance. Support service providers to use the standard assessment tools (milestones, culminating tasks) in a consistent and reliable way and to help service providers understand the relationship between standard assessment for the LBS PMS and the organization's broader assessment strategy	

Service Category:
4. Support the collection and distribution of research findings and contribute regional, sector or stream perspective to LBS related research projects
Roles
• Provide service providers with information about the availability of tools, resources
Responsibilities
• Provide service providers with linkages to research results or projects relevant to their community
• Provide input to LBS research projects on regional issues and considerations

Stream Organizations
Service Category:
1. Support seamless client pathways across EO and Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and non-EO programs
Roles
• Raise public awareness of literacy programs and the need for literacy services for the streams

• Support Anglophone, Deaf, Francophone and Native stream service providers to plan and coordinate services provincially
• Identify issues and contribute to resolutions re: barriers to learner mobility for stream specific learners across the EO network and broader programming. Work with regional networks and sector organizations to provide information about cultural and language considerations affecting community planning of literacy services.   • Facilitate collaboration among provincial partners that contribute to improvements for stream specific learners who experience barriers to learning, participation in adult education programs and mobility across broader MLITSD: EO and EDU programming.

Service Category:

2. Support quality delivery by providing resource development and support

(including instructional content, mode of instruction and assessment)

Roles

- Identify and work with MLITSD to address LBS service provision issues specific to LBS learners across the province and contribute to the development and implementation of instructional, assessment, and support methodologies appropriate to the cultural and linguistic needs of learners

Responsibilities

- Identify gaps in instructional resources and assessment tools appropriate to learner's language, culture, context and goal path and contribute to proposing solutions.

- Support the development of culturally relevant training, research, networking and instructional resources that improve the quality and relevance of stream specific adult learners.

- Communicate through e.g., website postings, e-bulletins and newsletters to service providers resources and training opportunities relevant to the stream.

- Provide stream specific professional development opportunities to practitioners to support continuous improvement of service delivery.

Service Category:

3.   Support the improvement of service provider organizational capacity

Roles

- Support LBS service providers to address cultural or linguistic issues which may impact the service provider's ability to continuously improve their

organizational capacity to deliver the LBS program by linking service providers to appropriate training opportunities, by coaching service providers when requested, and by communicating information about key resources

- Provide stream specific professional development opportunities to administrators to meet the expectations of the EO Service Delivery Framework.

- Coordinate stream specific professional development and training with regional networks and sectors.

- Coordinate with regional networks and sectors to provide stream specific support to service providers to use the standard assessment tools (milestones, culminating tasks) in a consistent and reliable way and to help service providers understand the relationship between standard assessment for the LBS PMS and the organization's broader assessment strategy.

Service Category:

Support the collection and distribution of research findings and contribute regional, sector or stream perspective to LBS related research projects.

Roles

- Support organizational capacity development
- Develop field capacity and advise public policy

- Support research projects that build on provincial, Canadian and international research results to develop service providers' capacity to improve service delivery results for learners.

- Provide input to LBS research projects on language and cultural issues and considerations.

Sector Organizations

Service Category:

1. Support seamless client pathways across EO and Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and non-EO programs

Roles

- Support service providers to deliver quality services for specific institutional and delivery settings (colleges, school boards, community-based)
- Support service providers to use specific instructional methodologies (distance, face-to-face, volunteer one to one tutoring) that match learner needs and goal paths

- Support the development of curriculum appropriate to the goal paths of the learners based on goal requirement research
- Work closely with stream organizations that provide support for and knowledge about cultural and linguistic considerations as they affect service delivery

Responsibilities

- Support LBS goal path programming and assessment methods that are consistent with expectations and requirements for learner transitions to employment, apprenticeship and skills training, secondary school credit, postsecondary and independence.

- Identify changing needs and requirements for successful learner transition and contribute to resolutions.

- Support service providers through communication (e.g., web postings, e-bulletins) to access resources and support compatible with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) transitions-oriented approach.

- Identify changes in institutional service delivery settings that impact learner mobility and transitions and contribute to resolutions.

- Work with streams to identify cultural or language barriers to learner mobility within an instructional setting and contribute to resolutions.

Service Category:

2. Support quality delivery by providing resource development and support

(including instructional content, mode of instruction and assessment)

Roles

- Promote continuous improvement in literacy service delivery practices

Responsibilities

- Support the development of resources and support responsive to learner's mode of preferred or required instructional method (distance/e-Channel, face-to-face, institution-based, one to one tutoring).

- Support development of and access to professional development opportunities to develop trained and skilled literacy practitioners.

Service Category:
3. Support the improvement of service provider organizational capacity
Roles
• Promote continuous improvement in service providers' organizational capacity
• Share information via web-postings, e-bulletins, newsletters, exemplary resources and tools, and hosting sector specific websites to improve service provider access to timely information and products that contribute to improved organizational capacity. • Support service providers to use the standard assessment tools (milestones, culminating tasks) in a consistent and reliable way and help service providers understand the relationship between standard assessment for the LBS PMS and the organization's broader assessment strategy.

Service category:
4. Support the collection and distribution of research findings and contribute regional, sector or stream perspective to LBS related research projects.
Roles
• Research and share information related to learners accessing particular instructional settings and delivery modes
Responsibilities
• Research needs of practitioners and learners in colleges, school board and community-based delivery settings and communicate results to streams, regional networks and service organizations. • Promote best practices provincially to inform service providers in particular delivery settings. • Provide input to LBS research projects on institutional and delivery mode issues and considerations.

Service Organizations
Service category:
1. Support seamless client pathways across EO and Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and non-EO programs
Roles
• Support improvement of both service provider and learner in the use of digital technology for training purposes
Responsibilities
• Through professional development opportunities and resource development, support service providers to increase their use of online courses, web-based resources and distance education programs for all goal path programs to increase the learner's competency to use digital technology to access broader labour force, education and training opportunities.
Service Category:
2. Support quality delivery by providing resource development and support (including instructional content, mode of instruction and assessment)
Roles
• Support the development and use of tools and resources for all delivery modes that contribute to improved practices • Provide technical support for distance delivery (platforms for on-line service delivery)
Responsibilities
• Support quality resource development, delivery and publishing with particular focus on OALCF compatible resources for Indigenous and Francophone streams that contribute to improved literacy delivery practices. • Provide technological development and training support to increase the capacity of service providers to use technology to expand service provision options across the province. • Provide the technical support required to access on-line adult literacy learning programs and services. • Publish and promote developed resources (on-line catalogues) for Indigenous and Francophone stream learners that support culture, language and goal paths (independence, workplace and skills training).

Service category:
3. Support the improvement of service provider organizational capacity
Roles
• Provide learning resource development and publishing services specific to the Indigenous and Francophone streams
Responsibilities
• Support the development of tools and modes of delivery that help service providers increase their organizational capacity to deliver quality literacy service.   • Develop knowledge-based centres of excellence for resource standards, innovative use of technology in adult basic education, Indigenous and Francophone resource development.
Service category:
4. Support the collection and distribution of research findings and contribute regional, sector or stream perspective to LBS related research projects.
Roles
• Develop resources based on Ontario, Canadian and international best practices
Responsibilities
• Support coordinated and integrated services informed by relevant and current national and international research.   • Across sectors and streams, support research and promote best practices in innovative use of technology, research, design and dissemination of information and resources.   • Provide input to LBS research projects on issues and considerations related to products and services provided through core activities.

3.2. Funding

The LBS program focuses on learner needs and ministry funding decisions reflect an organization's success in meeting these needs directly (service providers) or indirectly through support activities (support organizations). Funding is results-based and allocation decisions take into account how well support organizations achieve the results negotiated in their annual business plans.

Funding for LBS support organizations is based on services delivered. Funding decisions respect the variety of approaches that are necessary to meet adult learners' needs and to accommodate the complexity of the literacy field.

3.2.1 Funding Categories

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

3.2.2 Research and development

Both LBS service providers and support organizations have a role in research and development. Service providers use research results for program improvement and participate in some research projects through surveys or focus groups. However, support organizations (sectors, regional networks, streams and service organizations) have a mandated responsibility in fostering the development of Ontario's literacy field.

Projects involving partnerships between support organizations and one or more other organizations can be considered for funding.

4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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

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

Please refer to Section 4.1 Performance Management System in the LBS Service Provider Guidelines for more detail on the LBS PMS.

In consultation with the ministry, support organizations help service providers understand the connection between the components of organizational capacity and the features of the LBS PMS (dimensions of success, core measures, performance indicators, collection of consistent, reliable and verifiable data, overall service quality and continuous improvement). By strengthening organizational capacity, service providers are better positioned to meet the expectations of the LBS PMS. For example:

- Regional networks facilitate a community-wide literacy service planning and coordination process which engages the service provider in understanding a planning process based on sound data and recorded results.
- Sector organizations provide service providers with program evaluation tools and results that address a particular mode of program delivery and that may contribute to improved effectiveness results.

Support organizations are required to model continuous improvement of performance management in their own practices.

4.1. LBS Performance Management System

The introduction of a Performance Management System (PMS) to the service delivery function of the LBS program aims at making 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 so that they can achieve the best outcomes.

Please refer to Section 4.1 Performance Management System in the LBS Service Provider Guidelines for the details on the LBS PMS.

It is within the scope of the four service categories and business priorities for support organizations to help service providers develop the organizational capacity which underpins the LBS PMS.

Through the provision of training, resource development, support, research and facilitation, support organizations have a role to help service providers meet the responsibilities of service quality and performance management. Support organizations are responsible for determining the most appropriate way they can support service providers to deliver services, manage resources and manage business systems.

When service providers deliver LBS services, they include:

- 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.

For service providers to manage resources, it includes:

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

When service providers manage their 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.

In addition, service providers also share the following responsibilities with the ministry:

- Ongoing review and evaluation of service design, the PMF 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.
- Identifying innovative practices in service design, delivery, and performance management.

4.1.1. Dimensions and Measures of Service Quality Success for Service Providers

Support organizations have a role to play in helping service providers make the connection between existing tools and resources that reflect learner characteristics and goals with the performance indicators for core measures.

The Literacy and Basic Skills Performance Management System sets out three broad dimensions of service delivery success, as detailed below:

- Effectiveness
- Customer Service
- Efficiency

Please refer to Section 4.1 Performance Management System of the LBS Service Provider Guidelines for a full description of the core measures. Support organizations help service providers connect the core measures to good practice. For example:

- Stream, sector and regional networks have a role to play in helping service providers use the standard assessment tools (milestones, culminating tasks) in a consistent and reliable way and to help service providers understand the relationship between standard assessment for the LBS PMS and the organization's broader assessment strategy.
- Regional network and stream support organizations have a role to play in helping service providers make appropriate information and referral decisions both to coordinate services and to provide learners with information and referrals to required learner supports.
- The regional networks and streams play a critical role in working with service providers who have unique cultural, linguistic, institutional or geographic circumstances and challenges that impact on their ability to achieve the organizational capacity to confidently implement the LBS PMS.

Network and stream support organizations will determine ways in which they will support the service provider in:

- Planning (demonstrated use of data)
- Resourcing (administrative processes, financial performance results)
- Communicating (community coordination and governance)
- Measuring (customer satisfaction and results management using the PMF)

Please refer to Section 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities in the LBS Service Provider Guidelines for detailed definitions for the elements of organizational capacity.

4.1.2. Importance of Service Categories

LBS service providers are required to demonstrate that their services do not duplicate other LBS services in a community and that they provide an integrated and comprehensive service to learners. Similarly, the support organizations are also required to ensure that in combination, all service providers have access to the same high quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate service support as outlined in the four service categories.

4.2. Business Planning Cycle

The ministry operates on an annual business management cycle. Within the business management cycle, the service providers, support organizations and the ministry work together to address the needs of the community and to ensure continuous improvement of the LBS program.

The purpose of the business planning process is for service providers and support organizations to plan and communicate to MLITSD how they will achieve their service and quality commitments 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.

Please refer to Section 4.2 Business Planning Cycle in the LBS Service Provider Guidelines for more detail of the business management cycle.

Support organizations have an important role to play in helping service providers understand and implement the four steps service providers use to manage the success of their services on an ongoing basis:

- Understanding the results achieved to date
- Understanding the cause of the achieved results

- Developing strategies for improvements
- Reviewing and adjusting on an ongoing basis

By modeling these same four steps in their own practices, support organizations provide leadership in how to manage the success of services. Regional networks, stream and sector organizations as part of organizational capacity can provide facilitation services, resource development, linkages to professional development opportunities to increase service providers' skills to analyse organizational results and model continuous improvement in all their practices.

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 support organizations to identify improvements, reassess goals, set new targets, and determine strategies. Preparing annual business plans helps organizations tailor and focus their services and meet the directions and priorities of the ministry. A business plan describes the organization's goals, service commitments and improvements for the coming year. The business plan specifies the indicators that will show what progress will be achieved by what date toward the LBS support organizations 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 for the LBS program in the areas of efficiency, effectiveness, and customer service. Currently, service providers use the LBS PMF to enter data in the EO Information System Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS) in order to generate reports related to the measures and indicators. The support organizations support service providers to meet their LBS PMF accountability requirements and all support organizations model continuous improvement of performance management in their own practices.

The support organization business plan must include:

- Commitments (services/activities and deliverables);
- Timelines for the achievement of the commitments;
- A description of the organization's capacity to deliver the services/activities proposed in the business plan; and
- Continuous improvement (i.e., understanding results and causes and improvement strategies).

Support organizations include details in their business plan to demonstrate the relationship between:

- The four business plan service category commitments (deliverables and activities);
- The annual MLITSD business priorities; and
- The support organization's specific designation (as regional network, stream, sector or service organization).

Under the legal agreement with the ministry, the support organization must provide the ministry reports on the achievement of the business plan commitments.

Future funding for support organizations is influenced by the ability of support organizations to successfully meet their contractual obligations, including but not limited to timely submission of accurate business plans and progress and financial reports.

4.2.1. Business Priorities

The LBS program objectives are stable components of the LBS program and are outlined in the Service Provider Guidelines. Similarly, the Performance Management Framework, the five service provider services and the four support organization service categories are also stable features of the LBS program. They each provide predictable shape and direction to the LBS program without limiting the ministry's ability to be flexible and responsive to changing priorities.

Setting annual business priorities is the mechanism by which the LBS program can shift the focus and emphasis of service provider and support organization activities within the broader program objectives in order to respond to emerging needs and ministry initiatives. Annual business priorities will be introduced during Business Planning each year.

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The administration guidelines provide further information, tools and resources needed by service providers and support organizations to manage the LBS program. They describe the obligations that service providers and support organizations must meet to fulfill their agreement, information management, documentation and reporting requirements.

5.1. Support Organization Agreement

Support organizations of the LBS program will be required to sign an agreement with the ministry which details all the accountability and legal requirements. The legal agreement between the support organization and the ministry specifies:

- The legal responsibilities of the support organization and the ministry regarding the provision of service development for the LBS program as outlined in the LBS Support Organization Guidelines.
- The Reporting, Accounting and Review requirements.
- Requirements regarding funding and carrying out the service development functions of the LBS program.

The agreement ties into the ministry's annual business cycle requirements, and reflect any updates or revisions resulting from the PMF.

Agreements will be:

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

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

5.2. Acknowledgement of Ontario Government Support

All products, events, services, or programming resulting from LBS funding must acknowledge the financial support of MLITSD. More information is available in Section 5.3Acknowledgement of Ontario Government Support of the LBS Service Provider Guidelines.

5.3. Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

Under the agreement with the ministry, support organizations agree to protect the personal information they collect, use and disclose in order to deliver and report on the LBS program.

The legal agreement requires support organizations 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 who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the privacy protection provisions of the legal agreement; and
- Implement appropriate privacy protection training of employees and subcontractors who have access to personal information of individual learners.

Support organizations must ensure that their employees, volunteers and contractors who need to have access to personal information of learners are aware of its privacy policy and the privacy protection provisions of the legal agreement.

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

If LBS support organizations 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 the Office of the Privacy Commissioner website 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 on the CSA website.

5.3.1 Ministry Access to Personal Information in the Custody or under the Control of the Support Organization

The ministry does not have custody or control of an LBS support organization's records.

However, under the legal agreement with the ministry, the LBS support organizations 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 support organization performance, including its effectiveness and, efficiency;
- Monitoring, inspecting, investigating, auditing and enforcing support organization 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, which may include public relations campaigns related to the LBS program.

In order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), the ministry will need to obtain the consent of the affected individuals to the indirect collection of their limited personal information. In addition, the ministry will need to give these individuals notice of the uses it proposes to make of their personal information. One of these uses is sharing an individual's personal information with external third parties such as other service providers and other government departments.

The legal agreement with the ministry requires the LBS support organizations 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.

5.4. 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

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 proposer. 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 Service 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 Service 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 framework 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 service 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.
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 Literacy and Basic Skills program. Service providers should use their discretion in deciding how to use training supports for learners

Terms	Definitions
	but must follow the audit and accountability requirements outlined in the agreement.