



Adult Foundational Learning Needs Assessment 2019

February 2020

Our Needs Assessment Process

Situational Assessment

- ▶ The Calgary Context
- ▶ Review of key literature/research in the field
- ▶ Review of Calgary Learns proposals and final reports

Community Input

- ▶ Consulting with Learners
- ▶ Consulting with Service Providers
- ▶ Consulting with Funders

Situational Assessment

1. The Calgary Context

Some significant changes in the landscape since our last needs assessment in 2014 include:

- ▶ The downturn in the Albertan economy
 - ▶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action
 - ▶ Welcoming increased number of refugees
 - ▶ Absence of a National Literacy Strategy
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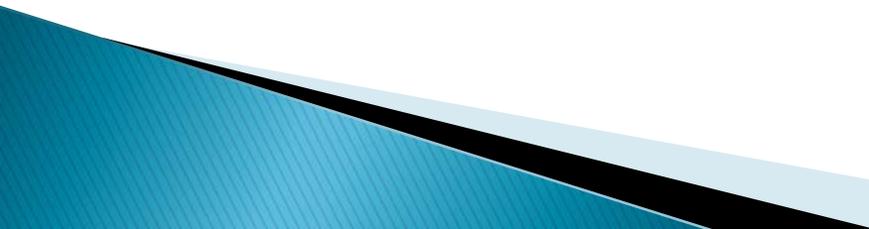
Situational Assessment

2. Key Findings in Literature Review

- **Foundational Learning is key :**
 - For Poverty Reduction
 - To Improving Economic Development
 - To targeting socio-cultural disparities

Situational Assessment cont'd

- **Links between Foundational Learning and Albertans' Well-Being**

- For adult foundational learners, their daily lives are continuously challenged by the detrimental effects of low literacy – their life experience often includes a lack of self-confidence, social isolation, poor communication skills, and a lack of knowledge of available resources. As the Calgary profile continues to diversify in age, immigration, and minority status, the socio-economic gap will widen with it. The gap in education and uneven distribution of income will lead to poorer health and social outcomes – all of which are intertwined with literacy proficiency.
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Situational Assessment cont'd

- **Adults need learning that:**
 - Is engaging and self-directed
 - Builds on past experience and knowledge
 - Supports learners in meeting their own goals
 - Is relevant
 - Is practical
 - Ensures respect

*Blueprint for Adult Literacy Programs
Literacy Assistance Center*



Community Input

1. Learners

What helps learners learn best?

- ▶ Continuous encouragement and support
- ▶ Access to learning tools
- ▶ Programs designed to meet diverse learning needs
- ▶ A safe and discrimination-free learning environment

What makes it challenging for learners to learn?

- ▶ Learning difficulties—losing focus and being distracted
- ▶ Time commitment of learning programs
- ▶ Limited access to affordable and accessible childcare, caregiving responsibilities
- ▶ Limited program eligibility once learners become Canadian citizens (English classes)

2. Service Providers

Service Providers believe...

- ▶ The delivery of adult foundational learning will be enhanced with:
 - Investing in pre-learning, includes consideration of learners' basic needs
 - Connecting with learners prior to sessions (i.e. creating welcoming and engaging spaces)
 - Growing a social network among learners
 - Re-considering evaluation metrics beyond quantitative outcomes and focus on the holistic learner experience
 - Investing in learning for facilitators and service providers
 - On-going, continuous funding. Funding that supports “basic needs” such as transportation, food (on-site) and childcare would be helpful

Adult Foundational Learning Needs Assessment Summary

1. Leverage Existing Success by:

- Continuing to focus on learner-centred approach
 - Social Justice lens to foundational learning
 - Ensure an andragogy framework
- Ensuring content is continuously updated
 - Relevant to learner goals
 - Reflective of the learners' everyday lives
- Nurturing collaborative partnerships
 - Help adult learners access more programs, services and supports

Summary cont'd

2. Essential Learning Needs for Future Investment

- Promote digital skills
- Enhance investment in “higher order” essential skills: oral communication, thinking skills and working with others
 - These skills contribute to foundation for learning all other skills
 - Enable people to better prepare for, get and keep a job
- Promote equity of adult foundational learning programs for marginalized populations

Summary cont'd

3. Final Learning to Bring Forward

- **Invest more in reducing the systemic barriers that impact learning**
 - Calgary Learns will continue to support learner centred and trauma informed programs

- **Invest in the PD for Service Providers**
 - Calgary Learns will continue to expand PD offerings
 - cross-training opportunities
 - increased funding
 - Communities of Practice

Summary cont'd

- **Invest in developing innovative data collection, reporting and sharing**
 - Calgary Learns will start a Community of Practice so practitioners can share best practices to streamline data collection and collectively identify gaps and trends
- **Invest in intersectoral collaboration**
 - Adult Literacy and Foundational Learning was named as a key lever of change in Enough for All 2.0
 - Calgary Learns will continue to be a champion of this lever. We are investing in the Literacy and Poverty project with funding allocated until June 2021

- ▶ Interested in reading the complete report?
 - Go to https://www.calgarylearns.com/wp-content/uploads/Calgary-Learns-Needs-Assessment_Jan-2020.pdf