

# Laubach Literacy Ontario

65 Noecker St., Room 8A  
Waterloo, Ontario, N2J 2R6  
Tel: (519) 743-3309 Fax: (519) 743-7520  
Toll Free: 1-866 608-2574  
Web: www.laubach-on.ca



## LITERACY FACTS

The need for literacy and essential skills training has never been greater. 42% of adults in Canada do not have the minimum literacy skills to cope with everyday life and work. Of those 42%, the 15% with lowest literacy levels have serious difficulty dealing with any printed material. Low literacy skills are directly linked to poverty, poor health and high unemployment:

### WORK

People with low literacy skills are about **twice as likely to be unemployed** for six or more months as those with higher skills.

50% of Canadian adults with low numeracy scores are **2.5 times more likely to receive social assistance** compared with those with higher scores.

Adults who scored at lower literacy levels only have a **50% chance of finding another job** — even after 52 weeks of unemployment.

### POVERTY

Between 22% and 50% of adults with lower levels of literacy live in **low-income households** compared with only 8% of those with high-level literacy skills.

### JUSTICE

Offenders experience literacy problems at **three times the rate** of the general population. The average education level of newly admitted offenders serving two years or more is **Grade 7**.

### HEALTH

Some direct effects of living with low literacy include increased hospitalizations and misinterpreted medication instructions. **Literacy skills are the strongest predictors of an individual's health status.**

*Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey (Statistics Canada and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005, ABC Canada, and North Bay Literacy Council's Literacy and Health Project).*

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Our community-based programs are increasingly seeing a broader range of learners, some with increasingly severe barriers such as:

- ❑ Younger people who have experienced homelessness, poverty, bad school experiences, travel issues, lack of commitment. Many are receiving welfare
- ❑ People with behavioural problems, learning disabilities, lack of life skills, drug addictions, mental health issues, low self-esteem
- ❑ Issues such as transportation, hunger, abuse, drug dependency
- ❑ Learners requiring more basic training: life skills; pre-employment skills; writing skills preparation of resume and cover letters.
- ❑ More laid-off workers and new Canadians needing ESL
- ❑ An increase in the total number of individuals interested in obtaining their GED high school equivalency

---

While the demands have increased, community-based literacy programs are in crisis. Feedback from member agencies indicate that the biggest issue they face is lack of adequate, ongoing core funding. After ten years of increased accountability and Ministry reporting demands, with no corresponding increase in core funding, community-based programs are struggling to keep their doors open. “We have finally reached the point where we can NOT do more with less...we can do less with less!” The years of underfunding have created the following issues:

*“We deal with the basic learners. We take the people that need the education the most and we prepare them to go to adult learning centers, get high school graduation diplomas or take college courses.” (from Midland Free Press)*

- ❑ Difficulties attracting and keeping qualified staff
- ❑ Limited ability to reach the numbers of learners that need to be reached
- ❑ Inability to meet the projected needs for low literacy numbers
- ❑ Nothing left to cut or trim except the programs
- ❑ Most CB organizations are working in office/accommodations that are inadequate. More funds are required to locate these organizations in accessible, safe and healthy environments.
- ❑ It is becoming more difficult to get volunteers. One-to-one tutoring is best for high-risk learners. Staff time needed to recruit, train, and retain volunteers.
- ❑ More time and training for staff, tutor-trainers and volunteers is needed to gain essential skills expertise that is specific to certain jobs.

In July MTCU announced that an additional \$33 million is being invested to provide literacy training to an additional 13,000 learners. This funding is for the remainder of 2009-2010 only. This is not tied to base funding and represents year one of a two-year strategy. No decisions have been made for 2010-2011. While our community based programs have made great use of these funds to meet pent-up demand, we need to find a way to provide ongoing support to meet the needs of our learners. Working together we can ensure progress is sustained.

## About Laubach Literacy Ontario (LLO)

- ❑ LLO is a grass-roots, volunteer driven provincial organization that represents a network of 52 community-based literacy programs across Ontario (this includes several programs operating out of school boards and one prison program).
- ❑ LLO was formed in 1981 as a charitable non-profit organization, and incorporated in 1992. Since the early '90's, we have successfully managed over 30 provincial and federal projects, with the support and involvement of a host of volunteers and member programs.
- ❑ Our member programs use the services of trained volunteer tutors and tutor-trainers. Their tutors provide one-on-one and small group instruction to an average of 3,500 adult students a year. With tutors reporting over 200,000 volunteer hours, this represents a contribution of over three million dollars to the Canadian economy each year.
- ❑ We are a member of the Ontario Literacy Coalition, Community Literacy of Ontario, Volunteer Canada, ProLiteracy Worldwide (formerly Laubach Literacy International), and part of the Employment Ontario Network.

---

**Laubach Literacy Ontario** supports its member agencies in the achievement of higher levels of literacy throughout the province.

Tel: (519) 743-3309 • Toll Free: 1-866 608-2574 • Web: [www.laubach-on.ca](http://www.laubach-on.ca)