

**Working Together for Adult Literacy:
An Adult Literacy Strategy for New Brunswick**

**Action Plan
2010 - 2013**

Community Adult Learning Services Branch
Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

December 2010

Introduction

The province faces a number of challenges in the coming years in the form of demographic changes including an aging population and a smaller youth cohort and a restructuring of the economy away from the traditional sectors resulting in an increased need for skilled workers.

The current economic situation presents additional challenges, with government needing to support the economy and help maintain and create jobs.

It is now widely recognized that improving adult literacy skills is of fundamental importance to the growth and prosperity of our province. The International Adult Literacy Skills Survey (IALSS) of 2003 showed that 50 per cent of the population of New Brunswick, between the ages of 16 and 65, have less than IALSS Level 3 skills - the level deemed necessary to function in a modern, industrialized economy and society.

The vision is that New Brunswickers attain the literacy skills they need to participate fully at home, at work, and in their communities.

In December 2009, the Department of Post-Secondary, Education, Training and Labour (PETL) published *Working Together for Adult Literacy: An Adult Literacy Strategy for New Brunswick* (http://www.gnb.ca/0105/AdultLiteracy_web_Eng.pdf). This document provides a roadmap for further development of adult literacy and essential skills services in the province and serves to guide the efforts of government in partnership with private and non-profit sectors.

The strategy outlines four priorities: 1) reducing barriers and increasing participation; 2) increasing the number and range of adult literacy learning opportunities; 3) ensuring the quality and effectiveness of adult literacy programs; and 4) strengthening partnerships to develop a robust and effective adult literacy system.

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour has developed an action plan which outlines what the Community Adult Learning Services Branch, working with its partners, plans to do to operationalize the strategy. This action plan responds to the priorities outlined in *Working Together for Adult Literacy: An Adult Literacy Strategy for New Brunswick*.

The action plan is divided into two sections. The first section lays out the high level action plan to be executed within the next three years. The second section provides details for those actions planned for execution between April 2010 and September 2011. Further details will be developed over time for the longer term action items as these will be informed by the progress and success of actions carried out in the first 18 months of the action plan.

Action Plan for Implementing Working Together for Adult Literacy: An Adult Literacy Strategy for New Brunswick

1. High Level Action Plan

Item	Priorities, Objectives and Actions	April 2010 to September 2011	October 2011 to March 2013
Priority 1 - Reduce barriers and increase participation			
Objective 1.1	Develop, through research, understanding of local barriers; develop collaborative solutions to barriers		
Action 1.1.1	Undertake research on barriers to participation	✓	
Action 1.1.2	Develop further collaborative solutions and services to respond to priorities in research findings		✓
Objective 1.2	Promote the benefits of improving adult literacy skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce stigma - raise consciousness - encourage participation, and - engage employers 		
Action 1.2.1	Develop and launch marketing strategy	✓	
Action 1.2.2	Execute subsequent phases of marketing strategy		✓
Objective 1.3	Enable access to quality information and guidance regarding literacy opportunities, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community groups - agencies, and - government departments 		
Action 1.3.1	Increase the awareness level of referring government departments about adult literacy training opportunities and thereby increase the flow of client referrals	✓	
Action 1.3.2	Develop resources to provide information on the community-based services available to adults with literacy needs and develop a web-based, centralized point of reference for information on these programs and services	✓	
Action 1.3.3	Develop training for non-literacy organizations regarding how to identify clients with literacy difficulties along with appropriate service and referral strategies		✓
Priority 2 - Increase number and range of adult literacy opportunities			
Objective 2.1	Support the growth of existing services; increase the adult literacy service provider base		
Action 2.1.1	Continue to support growth in terms of the number and range of available learning opportunities	✓	

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Objective 2.2	Develop scalable models of delivery that are responsive to the needs of different target groups in both official languages: <i>priority groups are the employed and those seeking to improve their employability</i>		
Action 2.2.1	Continue to implement Workplace Essential Skills (WES) Program	✓	
Objective 2.3	Explore opportunities to embed literacy training within existing (non-literacy) learning opportunities		
Action 2.3.1	Identify instances where literacy training would improve the quality and effectiveness of non-literacy government services and programs with a view to developing appropriate solutions	✓	
Action 2.3.2	Support opportunities to embed literacy within existing non-literacy learning programs		✓
Objective 2.4	Encourage innovation that supports the strategy		
Action 2.4.1	Develop strategies to address barriers and develop new program models where different service delivery approaches are needed	✓	
Action 2.4.2	Encourage testing of new program models through pilot projects		✓
Priority 3 - Ensure quality and effectiveness of adult literacy programs			
Objective 3.1	Improve quality standards and assurance mechanisms		
Action 3.1.1	Implement Quality Standards and associated quality assurance framework	✓	
Objective 3.2	Review adult literacy teacher and practitioner qualifications, and improve professional development		
Action 3.2.1	Review hiring practices and requirements for literacy personnel involved in service delivery	✓	
Action 3.2.2	Review and refine professional development framework for literacy personnel	✓	
Action 3.2.3	Develop/define pathways for adult literacy and essential skills practitioners, including professional development and accreditation framework to support each		✓
Objective 3.3	Ensure that programs monitor learner progress and lead to relevant learner outcomes; ensure clearly defined learning pathways		
Action 3.3.1	Define and document current and planned learner pathways	✓	
Action 3.3.2	Review and revise definitions of learner outcomes and processes for monitoring learner progress	✓	
Objective 3.4	Review standard measures of progress and success, and processes for evaluation of programs		
Action 3.4.1	Develop program evaluation framework	✓	

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Action 3.4.2	Review and re-define functional needs for data collection, analysis and reporting	✓	
Action 3.4.3	Explore external evaluation element of Quality Framework		✓
Action 3.4.4	Review and refine quality framework		✓
Priority 4 - Strengthen partnerships to develop robust and effective adult literacy system			
Objective 4.1	Improve interdepartmental collaboration with non-governmental organizations and communities to develop collaborative and cohesive solutions in common areas of policy and service delivery including learner referrals, learner supports, learning opportunities for the specific target groups listed in the strategy		
Action 4.1.1	Participate in the New Brunswick Literacy Coordinating Committee	✓	
Action 4.1.2	Continue to work with CALNet Provincial Advisory Committee to support community-based service delivery	✓	
Objective 4.2	Develop and strengthen partnerships with industry, business, labour and community sectors		
Action 4.2.1	Further develop partnerships with industry, business, labour through Workplace Essential Skills Program	✓	
Action 4.2.2	Support provincial Family Literacy Strategy	✓	
Objective 4.3	Review and revise funding models to support both operational and developmental needs of partners, and to ensure continuity of services		
Action 4.3.1	Ongoing review of service delivery funding	✓	
Action 4.3.2	Review current adult literacy and essential skills landscape with stakeholders and revise action plan		✓
Objective 4.4	Develop a framework for distributed leadership, consultation, collaboration and sharing best practices in the stakeholder community		
Action 4.4.1	Strengthen further inter-departmental and stakeholder collaboration; review stakeholder roles and responsibilities		✓

2. Actions planned for April 2010 to September 2011

Priority 1: Reduce barriers and increase participation

Objective 1.1 **Develop through research, understanding of local barriers; develop collaborative solutions to reduce barriers**

Action 1.1.1 ***Undertake research on barriers to participation***

January 2011 – June 2011

In order to better understand the barriers that adults face in New Brunswick with regard to improving their literacy skills at provincial, regional and local levels, research activities will be undertaken. This will include the correlation and analysis of past data, from New Brunswick and other jurisdictions and the identification of gaps in knowledge and understanding. New research designed to gather information that will help close those gaps will be considered.

Objective 1.2 **Promote the benefits of improving adult literacy skills, to:**

- **reduce stigma**
- **raise consciousness**
- **encourage participation, and**
- **engage employers**

Action 1.2.1 ***Develop and launch marketing strategy***

June 2010 – August 2011

Effective promotion and recruitment is one of the most significant challenges that service delivery providers face today, due to the lack of awareness and understanding that exists on the need for and benefits of improving literacy skills.

In recognition of this, a comprehensive marketing strategy will be developed for New Brunswick which will address the communication needs of stakeholders. As defined in *Working Together for Adult Literacy*, the strategy should strive to reduce stigma, raise consciousness, encourage participation in programs and engage employers.

The strategy will be multi-dimensional in that it will consider provincial, regional and community level factors and address the needs of community-based and business-related stakeholders. It will also recognize and address the specific challenges associated with effectively reaching the target group.

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The province, as part of its role as a member of the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET), will ensure that New Brunswick's needs and circumstances are reflected in the regional adult literacy awareness campaign which CAMET plans to launch in Fall 2010.

New Brunswick marketing efforts will complement CAMET initiatives taking place in the Atlantic region.

Objective 1.3 Enable access to quality information and guidance regarding literacy opportunities, through:

- **community groups**
- **agencies, and**
- **government departments**

Action 1.3.1 Increase the awareness level of referring government departments about adult literacy training opportunities and thereby increase the flow of client referrals

January 2011 – March 2011

In recognition of the fact that PETL's Employment Division and the Department of Social Development both work with employable adults with literacy needs, a concerted effort will be made to raise mutual awareness and understanding internally and to develop formal processes which will enable departments to work together and with adult literacy service delivery providers to provide seamless, more holistic services.

A mechanism will be developed to explore and develop a more collaborative approach to client referrals.

Action 1.3.2 Develop resources to provide information on the community-based services available to adults with literacy needs and develop a web-based, centralized point of reference for information on these programs and services

April 2010 – March 2011

A number of resources will be developed to provide detailed and cohesive information regarding community-based adult literacy programs available to adults. These resources will recognize the particular challenges of the target group and will utilize appropriate media, including non-print technology to distribute information to community groups, referral agencies and government departments. A web-based, centralized point of reference for this information on programs and services will be created.

Priority 2: Increase the number and range of effective adult literacy learning opportunities

Objective 2.1 **Support the growth of existing services; increase the adult literacy service provider base**

Action 2.1.1 ***Continue to support growth in terms of the number and range of available learning opportunities***

Ongoing

To date, PETL has supported additional Community Adult Learning Network (CALNet) classes across the province, the capacity building efforts of Laubach Literacy New Brunswick (LLNB), and the implementation of a major, new Workplace Essential Skills (WES) program. This support will be ongoing within the parameters of available funding and will also include support for the development of Francophone one-to-one adult literacy tutoring and for innovative models of delivery that respond to challenges identified within the research detailed in Priority 1.

Objective 2.2 **Develop scalable models of delivery that are responsive to the needs of different target groups in both official languages: priority groups are the employed and those seeking to improve their employability**

Action 2.2.1 ***Continue to implement Workplace Essential Skills (WES) Program***

Ongoing

The focus for 2010-2011 is the consolidation and growth of the Workplace Essential Skills (WES) model initiated in 2009. As the supporting infrastructure is now in place, activity can be increased across the province. Regional action plans will be developed which will outline how the essential skills of that region will be supported by the WES Program. A rigorous monitoring and review process has been established and the model will be subject to continuous improvement based on analysis of program data.

The ongoing role of the two Centres of Excellence will be further clarified and detailed action plans will be developed. A major focus for the centres will be the development of a flexible model of trainer training, and accreditation and/or certification of that training.

The target for 2010-2011 is 30 new WES initiatives, providing training for 280 learners, with a mix of workplace and sector initiatives, labour-exchange and/or community based initiatives.

Objective 2.3 **Explore opportunities to embed literacy training within existing (non-literacy) learning opportunities**

Action 2.3.1 ***Identify instances where literacy training would improve the quality and effectiveness of non-literacy government services and programs with a view to developing appropriate solutions***

January 2011 – September 2011

PETL will work with government partners to identify opportunities to embed literacy training within other learning and training programs, thereby improving the overall learning effectiveness and increasing the likelihood of adult learners' success. Support for identified opportunities will be pursued where resources permit.

Objective 2.4 **Encourage innovation that supports the strategy**

Action 2.4.1 ***Develop strategies to address barriers and develop new program models where different service delivery approaches are needed***

January 2011 – September 2011

The findings of the research under the first objective of Priority 1 will drive the identification and prioritization of actions to minimize and/or remove identified barriers. Specific areas will be identified that require new and different approaches.

<p>Priority 3: Ensure the quality and effectiveness of adult literacy programs</p>

Objective 3.1 **Improve quality standards and assurance mechanisms**

Action 3.1.1 ***Implement Quality Standards and associated quality assurance framework***

September 2010 – September 2011

The *Quality Framework for Adult Literacy and Essentials Skills Service Delivery* has been developed. A series of presentations to service delivery partners to review the final deliverables and training for key groups who will be responsible for coordination, consultation, internal assessment and/or evaluation related to the framework will follow.

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Ongoing support for the introduction and integration of the quality framework, the quality assurance elements and the development of a continuous improvement culture will be provided and a formal review of progress and further stakeholder feedback will be sought in Fall 2011.

Objective 3.2 Review adult literacy teacher and practitioner qualifications, and improve professional development

Action 3.2.1 Review hiring practices and requirements for literacy personnel involved in service delivery

April 2010 – December 2010

A significant factor in the quality and effectiveness of programs is the combined knowledge, skills and qualities of the teacher or trainer. In recognition of the importance of ensuring high quality teaching and training practice, work will be undertaken to review and refine recommended practices relating to the hiring of staff. This will include detailed job specifications (including qualifications, knowledge and skills required) for the key roles of literacy personnel.

Action 3.2.2 Review and refine professional development framework for practitioners

April 2010 – September 2010

In recognition of the fact that one of the most significant factors in learners' literacy outcomes is the quality of teaching or training, the current professional development framework will be reviewed and revised, as appropriate. A training and development needs assessment will be undertaken, which will inform the development of the revised framework. The outcome will be a flexible framework that recognizes different learning styles and allows for continuous growth.

Objective 3.3 Ensure that programs monitor learner progress and lead to relevant learner outcomes; ensure clearly defined learning pathways

Action 3.3.1 Define and document current and planned learner pathways

April 2010 – March 2011

The task of defining and documenting current learner pathways is under way. This will provide clear information for learners regarding progression routes available and options open to them.

Action 3.3.2 ***Review and revise definitions of learner outcomes and processes for monitoring learner progress***
January 2011 – June 2011

Current processes for monitoring learner progress will be reviewed and revised where appropriate to ensure that they incorporate definitions of outcomes which are relevant and meaningful to learners and are consistent with program objectives.

Objective 3.4 **Review standard measures of progress and success, and processes for evaluation of programs**

Action 3.4.1 ***Develop program evaluation framework***
January 2011 – March 2011

In response to the growth of adult literacy service delivery and the development of alternate models of delivery in the province, work will be undertaken to develop a comprehensive program evaluation framework, consolidating measures at the highest level and cascading down to program measures. Current performance indicators and program level evaluation models will be reviewed and revised to ensure a level of consistency and cohesion.

Action 3.4.2 ***Review and re-define functional needs for data collection, analysis and reporting***
January 2011 – June 2011

A review will be undertaken of the data collection, analysis and reporting practices utilized within the different programs with a view to developing a cohesive functional model that supports the program evaluation framework. This will include the review of current computer-based tools and recommendations for future use of technology to support the overall needs of the program evaluation framework, program management and individual service delivery providers.

<p>Priority 4: Strengthen partnerships to develop a robust and effective adult literacy system</p>

Objective 4.1 **Improve interdepartmental collaboration with non-governmental organizations and communities to develop collaborative and cohesive solutions in common areas of policy and service delivery including learner referrals, learner supports, learning opportunities for the specific target groups listed in the strategy.**

Action 4.1.1 **Participate in the New Brunswick Literacy Coordinating Committee**

Ongoing

Following the *Literacy Summit* in Spring 2009, the New Brunswick Literacy Coordinating Committee (NBLCC) was formed. The NBLCC includes representatives from government departments and non-government stakeholders in literacy.

The committee's mandate is to address three priority areas for action identified by the Summit: a provincial strategy for literacy; a comprehensive inventory of literacy services in the province; and a public awareness campaign that communicates the importance of literacy and lifelong learning. The representatives from the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour will ensure that the needs and interests of adult literacy learners are considered in each of these areas.

Action 4.1.2 **Continue to work with CALNet Provincial Advisory Committee to support community-based service delivery**

Ongoing

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL) will continue to work with the CALNet Provincial Advisory Committee to develop and maintain effective partnerships and to collaborate in the delivery of quality community adult learning programs and services throughout the province.

The desired outcome of the group's work is a better understanding of the needs of learners and of the programs and services required to address these needs within their home communities. The group will ensure that the needs and interests of community-based adult literacy learners are recognized and considered, not only in service delivery but also within the proposed action items identified within this action plan.

Objective 4.2 **Develop and strengthen partnerships with industry, business, labour and community sectors**

Action 4.2.1 **Further develop partnerships with industry, business and labour through Workplace Essential Skills Program**

April 2010 – September 2011

The Workplace Essential Skills (WES) delivery model requires the involvement of employers and unions. The WES team also routinely reaches out to representatives of enterprise networks and business groups on a provincial and regional basis. Therefore, new and productive partnerships will be developed through the WES Program.

Action 4.2.2 Support provincial Family Literacy Strategy

April 2010 – September 2011

In Fall 2009 the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick (LCNB) launched a provincial Family Literacy Strategy. PETL will work with LCNB to determine the most appropriate way/s of supporting the strategy. PETL will also continue to work with la Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick (FANB) to support its family literacy initiatives.

Objective 4.3 Review and revise funding models to support both operational and developmental needs of partners, and to ensure continuity of services

Action 4.3.1 Ongoing review of service delivery funding

Ongoing

Letters of Agreement with service delivery partners will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure effectiveness.

Objective 4.4 Develop a framework for distributed leadership, consultation, collaboration and sharing best practices in the stakeholder community

Action related to this objective planned for October 2011 to March 2013.