

June 16, 2017

Dear Employment Ontario partners:

As part of the Ontario Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan, Minister Deb Matthews announced today that the government is investing \$185 million over four years in essential skills programming for adults, which will be provided through the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) funding envelope.

We are pleased to confirm more details about this investment. The LBS program will receive increases to base funding of \$20 million in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, \$25 million in 2018-2019, \$55 million in 2019-2020, and \$85 million in 2020-2021. These investments will double the base funding of LBS by the fourth year—in order to fill gaps in service delivery, support program sustainability, and build digital capacity in the network.

Funding for 2017-2018 will be allocated to support:

- across-the-board increases for all LBS service delivery sites, e-Channel service providers, support organizations, and regional networks.
- an increase in learners served, including serving learners in high-demand communities, and through e-channel.
- improvements to digital capacity and IT equipment across the LBS network.
- the launch of innovative literacy and essential skills training pilots to reach more learners.

The LBS network will be informed of their funding allocations for 2017-2018 by Friday, June 23, 2017. Allocations for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 will be communicated at a later date. However, we can confirm that funding dedicated to support across-the-board increases will be maintained in both 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

As you know, the recent evaluation and feedback from the LBS network identified opportunities for improvements to LBS, including clarifying program objectives, ensuring program design and management supports all learners, improving communications, and streamlining administration. The report also recommended that the ministry develop a new funding model for LBS and we agree that this is a priority for improvement.

The ministry will be reaching out to engage with the LBS network on the LBS evaluation and to help us prioritize program improvements. We see improving LBS as a multi-year, collaborative process.

In addition to LBS network engagement, we will work with LBS and other adult education partners to strengthen the broader adult education system to make it more seamless and

learner-centred. Building on the government’s commitment to strengthen support for core adult education and essential skills programs, we will work collaboratively to find ways to make it easier for adult learners to find programs that match their individual needs, move between programs and receive recognition for their learning.

Collectively, these measures support the government’s goal of ensuring all Ontario adults have the foundational skills they need to find meaningful work, adapt to changing technologies, and build occupational skills to grow their careers and contribute to their communities.

We look forward to working with LBS partners to strengthen the LBS program and better serve adults who would benefit from upgrading their skills.

For further information, please review the [questions and answers](#) that are available on the Employment Ontario Partners’ Gateway. Should you have any further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact your local ministry office.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by)

Shelley Unterlander  
Assistant Deputy Minister (Acting)  
Employment and Training Division

(Original signed by)

Erin McGinn  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Highly Skilled Workforce Division