

Our Voice

Community Literacy of Ontario

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Community-based Literacy Agencies: A Critical Part of Literacy Delivery!	1
CLO Survey Results: Programming	2-3
CLO Survey Results: Services, Partnerships, Community Linkages, and Needs	4-5
CLO Survey Results: Funding Issues	6-7
CLO Survey Results: HR Issues	8

Community-Based Literacy Agencies: A Critical Part of Literacy Delivery!

Community Literacy of Ontario has prepared this analysis of statistics from MTCU's Information Management System (IMS) for the period of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009. These statistics clearly show that Ontario's community literacy agencies are an essential and dynamic part of the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and Academic Upgrading (AU) program in this province.



LEARNER NUMBERS

Community literacy agencies serve a substantial number of adult learners in the province of Ontario. IMS statistics show that there were a total of 51,747 adult learners in LBS/AU programs in 2008-2009. **Almost one-third (31.2%) of adult learners were served by community literacy agencies.** The balance were served by college (40.1%) and school board programs (28.7%).



CONTACT HOURS

Ontario's community literacy agencies are also a substantial provider of learner contact hours in the province. According to IMS data, **community literacy agencies provided almost one-quarter (24.3%) of all learner contact hours** delivered in Ontario during 2008-2009. The colleges provided 49.1% of contact hours and the school boards 26.6%.



LEVELS

While community literacy agencies serve adult learners at all literacy levels, **the majority of learners (56%) are at LBS levels 1 and 2.** The IMS data from 2008/09 shows that 27% of learners served by community literacy agencies were at LBS level 1; 29% were at LBS level 2; 21% were at LBS level 3; 11% were at level 4; 6% were at level 5; 4% were in academic upgrading and 2% were unassessed.



LEARNER GOALS

Community literacy agencies serve learners with a variety of goal paths. In 2008-2009 training goals for learners in Ontario's community literacy agencies were as follows: Further training and education - 44%; Employment - 36%; and Independence - 20%.

Results of CLO's 2010 Survey: Programming

In December 2009 and January 2010 Community Literacy of Ontario sent out a survey to 100 Anglophone community literacy agencies in Ontario. The survey had three distinct components:

- ⇒ Programming issues
- ⇒ Human resource issues
- ⇒ Funding issues



CLO developed this survey in order to gain a current picture of the strengths, successes and challenges faced by community-based literacy agencies. CLO will use the data collected to promote the high value community literacy agencies bring to their communities. As well, the survey results will be extremely useful to our members, who continually use CLO data from past surveys in a wide variety of ways in their own programs.

A total of 70 community-based literacy agencies responded to this survey (a response rate of 70%). We are pleased to present the summarized data from this survey. All individual information collected in this survey is completely confidential.

We want to express our most sincere thanks to the agencies who took the time to respond to this important survey!

Geographic region

- ⇒ 31% of respondents were from the Central region
- ⇒ 29% of respondents were from the Western region
- ⇒ 24% of respondents were from the Northern region
- ⇒ 16% of respondents were from the Eastern region

The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 68

Type of geographic area

- ⇒ 41% of respondents were from programs from a mixed rural/urban area
- ⇒ 28% of respondents were from programs from a rural area
- ⇒ 18% of respondents were from programs from a large urban area of over 200,000 residents
- ⇒ 13% of respondents were from programs from a small urban area of 50,000 to 200,000 residents

The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 68

Number of LBS learners served by individual community-based literacy agencies in 2008-2009

- ⇒ The average number of learners served was 153 per agency
- ⇒ The range of the number of learners served was 20-730 per agency

Total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 65

Number of volunteers involved in individual community-based literacy agencies in 2008-2009

- ⇒ The average number of volunteers involved was 48 per agency
- ⇒ The range of the number of volunteers involved was 0 to 218 per agency

The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 65

Number of full-time staff employed in individual community-based literacy agencies in 2008-2009

- ⇒ The average number of full-time employees was 3.6 per agency
- ⇒ The range of the number of full-time employees was 1 - 28 per agency

The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 62

Models of literacy instruction in community-based literacy agencies

- ⇒ 55% of programs use a fairly even combination of 1-to-1 tutoring and small group instruction
- ⇒ 27% of programs mainly use small group instruction
- ⇒ 13% of programs mainly use 1-to-1 tutoring
- ⇒ 3% of programs use only small group instruction
- ⇒ 2% of programs use only 1-to-1 tutoring

The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 67



Results of CLO's 2010 Survey: Services, Partnerships, Community Linkages, and Needs

Services provided by community-based literacy agencies:

In addition to providing Literacy and Basic Skills training, community-based literacy agencies offer a wide array of other services to their communities.

- ⇒ 100% of agencies provide LBS services
- ⇒ 45% of agencies provide E-Channel learning
- ⇒ 33% of agencies provide an Academic Upgrading partnership with a college
- ⇒ 30% of agencies provide employment programming
- ⇒ 25% of agencies provide LINC/ESL
- ⇒ 25% of agencies provide family literacy programming
- ⇒ 15% of agencies provide Employment Services programs under Employment Ontario
- ⇒ 15% of agencies provide onsite workplace training
- ⇒ 9% of agencies provide an after-school homework club
- ⇒ 18% of agencies provide other services (i.e., computer training; Pre-GED and GED prep; computer training; food bank; job finding club; occupational curriculum; Employment Track Express; apprenticeship exam prep; programming for Ontario's correctional services)
- ⇒ *The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 67*

Community-based literacy agencies indicated that these are their current key needs and priorities:

Top priorities:

- ⇒ First priority: The need for increased and stable core funding from MTCU
- ⇒ Second priority: The need for additional staff or more hours for current part-time staff
- ⇒ Third priority: Ongoing staff training and professional development

Medium priorities:

- ⇒ The need for additional space or renovations to existing location
- ⇒ Increased linkages/streamlined processes with Employment Ontario partners
- ⇒ More communication from MTCU on key initiatives
- ⇒ Strategies for program promotion and marketing
- ⇒ Additional resources and curriculum
- ⇒ Strategies for learner recruitment
- ⇒ Customer service training
- ⇒ Support to enhance organizational capacity
- ⇒ Support for the recruitment/retention/training of volunteers
- ⇒ *The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 70*

Community-based literacy agencies engaged in the following types of partnerships during the past two years:

Community-based literacy agencies are integrally involved in their communities. Agencies develop strong community linkages through broad-based partnership activities, including:



- ⇒ Ontario Works - 83% of agencies
- ⇒ Other literacy providers - 81% of agencies
- ⇒ Local social service agencies - 79% of agencies
- ⇒ Other Employment Ontario agencies - 77% of agencies
- ⇒ Libraries - 64% of agencies
- ⇒ Local businesses - 42% of agencies
- ⇒ Community service clubs - 29% of agencies
- ⇒ Unions - 17% of agencies
- ⇒ Other - 20% (i.e., Action Centres, Salvation Army; United Way; health-related agencies; Early Years Centres; senior centres; church groups)
- ⇒ *The total number of agencies responding to this question was 66*

Community-based literacy agencies participated in the following types of events:

Community-based literacy agencies are highly involved in their communities, and they play a key role in marketing literacy to diverse community stakeholders (service clubs, employers, social service organizations, community partners, etc.). They also take part in a wide array of community events and actively show the “face of literacy” in their communities.

- ⇒ 86% of agencies make presentations to service clubs, community groups, social service agencies, employer groups, etc.
- ⇒ 86% of agencies participate in community fairs and events
- ⇒ 76% of agencies write articles in their local newspapers, submit press releases, etc.
- ⇒ 71% of agencies host promotional and fundraising events at their agencies such as open houses, book fairs, scrabble tournaments, etc.
- ⇒ 61% of agencies give community workshops on topics of general public interest (e.g., literacy issues, plain language, family literacy, computers, etc.)
- ⇒ 17% of agencies participate in other activities (e.g., volunteer fairs; family literacy events, library events; networking events, promotional activities at their local mall; speaking engagements at factories; etc.)
- ⇒ *The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 66*

Results of CLO's 2010 Survey: Funding Issues

In 2008-2009, the range of operating budgets from ALL SOURCES of revenue in community-based literacy agencies was:

- ⇒ 50% had a total operating budget of less than \$150,000
- ⇒ 18% had a total operating budget of between \$150,001 to \$250,000
- ⇒ 16% had a total operating budget of between \$250,001 to \$400,000
- ⇒ 16% had a total operating budget of over \$400,000
- ⇒ *The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 56*

In 2008-2009, what percentage of your annual operating budget came from OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING (non-MTCU core)?

- ⇒ In 2008-2009, on average almost **one-third** (29.5%) of the annual operating budget of community-based literacy agencies came from other sources of funding (non-MTCU).
- ⇒ *The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 52*

In 2008-2009, community-based literacy agencies received funding from the following sources in addition to core funding from MTCU:

- ⇒ Donations from individuals - 73% of agencies
- ⇒ Local fundraising events - 65% of agencies
- ⇒ United Way - 53% of agencies
- ⇒ Service clubs - 47% of agencies
- ⇒ Local community donations - 40% of agencies
- ⇒ Local businesses - 37% of agencies
- ⇒ Other provincial government departments - 31% of agencies
- ⇒ Corporations - 29% of agencies
- ⇒ Trillium Foundation - 19% of agencies
- ⇒ Federal government - 19% of agencies
- ⇒ Private foundations - 21% of agencies
- ⇒ Unions - 14% of agencies
- ⇒ Other sources - 16% of agencies (i.e., fee-for-service activities; sale of publications; annual giving campaign, community endowment fund, etc.)



- ⇒ *The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 62*

With the new funding received from MTCU in 2009, community-based literacy agencies were able to:

- ⇒ Purchase additional resources and learning materials for learners - 88% of agencies
- ⇒ Provide literacy instruction to more adult learners - 83% of agencies
- ⇒ Provide enhanced support to current learners (e.g., additional tutoring for learners who require more support, new resources, offering programs with hands-on experience and/or volunteering for learners, extra computer classes, assistive technologies, mentoring, etc.) - 75% of agencies
- ⇒ Provide new types of literacy programming (e.g., providing a new small group program, a youth-focused program, more online programming, financial literacy programming, transition to work program, workplace literacy, etc.) - 68% of agencies
- ⇒ Increase their hours of service - 68% of agencies
- ⇒ Engage in increased marketing and community promotional activities - 63% of agencies
- ⇒ Purchase new technology (computers, software and resources) - 60% of agencies
- ⇒ Offer additional PD to staff - 60% of agencies
- ⇒ Hire new staff - 58% of agencies
- ⇒ Offer literacy programming to new client groups (e.g., single parents, youth, older workers, laid-off workers, employed workers who need an evening class, Second Career students, etc.) - 50%
- ⇒ Offer literacy services in new program site(s) - 42% of agencies
- ⇒ Recruit new volunteers or provide enhanced support/training to current volunteers - 41% of agencies
- ⇒ Keep a program or service open that would have been in danger of closing - 36% of agencies
- ⇒ Purchase new office equipment - 36% of agencies
- ⇒ Expand their current office space - 32% of agencies
- ⇒ Engage in more partnership activities with other service providers - 32% of agencies
- ⇒ *The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 59*

Community-based literacy agencies indicated that they would experience the following impacts on their programs if the additional MTCU funding does not continue past March 31, 2010:

Top impacts

- ⇒ Reduction in overall services provided
- ⇒ Discontinuation or reduction of some types of programming (e.g., computer classes, program for laid-off workers, program for under-employed workers, program for youth, etc.)
- ⇒ Reduced staffing
- ⇒ Reduced hours of operation
- ⇒ Increase in client waiting lists
- ⇒ Reduced number of program sites and locations

Medium impacts

- ⇒ Reduced ability to market and promote their programs
- ⇒ Reduced ability to recruit and support volunteer tutors
- ⇒ Reduced ability to provide updated technology, computers and computer labs to learners
- ⇒ More staff and volunteer time will be taken away to engage in fundraising
- ⇒ Reduced ability to engage in partnership activities in their community
- ⇒ Negative impact on staff retention
- ⇒ Reduction in the size of classroom space / and/or forced to relocate
- ⇒ *The total number of literacy agencies responding to this question was 56*

Survey Results: HR Issues

As of December 2009, average rates of pay for staff positions in community-based literacy agencies were:

Executive Director or other management position *(respondents for this position = 41)*

- ⇒ The average hourly rate of pay for this position = \$26.05
- ⇒ The salary range for this position was \$17 to \$44

Program Coordinator or Student/Tutor Coordinator *(respondents for this position = 37)*

- ⇒ The average hourly rate of pay for this position = \$20.26
- ⇒ The salary range for this position was \$13 to \$32.25

Administrative Assistant *(respondents for this position = 33)*

- ⇒ The average hourly rate of pay for this position = \$15.06
- ⇒ The salary range for this position was \$11.40 to \$20.00

Paid Instructor *(respondents for this position = 47)*

- ⇒ The average hourly rate of pay for this position = \$18.70
- ⇒ The salary range for this position was \$13.00 to \$39.63



In addition to mandatory EI and CPP, community-based literacy agencies offered the following types of benefits:

- ⇒ 50% of agencies provide health and dental benefits
- ⇒ 48% of agencies provide WSIB or other employer liability insurance
- ⇒ 40% of agencies provide long-term disability
- ⇒ 34% of agencies provide life insurance
- ⇒ 27% of agencies provide short-term disability
- ⇒ 24% of agencies provide pension plan
- ⇒ 19% of agencies provide employer RRSP contributions
- ⇒ 12% of agencies provide other benefits
- ⇒ 3% of agencies provide a percentage of salary "in lieu of benefits"
- ⇒ 37% of agencies do not provide any health, dental or pension benefits
- ⇒ *Total number of respondents to this question was 62*

Has your agency experienced problems (or do you anticipate problems in the near future) with staff retention due to low salaries and benefit levels or due to your agency's inability to give raises that keep up with inflation?

- ⇒ 67% of agencies responded YES
- ⇒ 17% of agencies responded NO
- ⇒ 16% of agencies responded NOT SURE
- ⇒ *Total number of respondents to this question was 64*

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