

COMMUNITY LITERACY OF ONTARIO

UNDERSTANDING AND USING RESULTS-BASED DATA IN LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS PROGRAMS

MARCH 2015 E-COMMUNIQUE

Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to share our *Understanding and Using Results-based Data in Literacy and Basic Skills Programs E-Communiqué*. Results from our annual member survey and informal discussions have told us that our members want more information about the data generated from EOIS CaMS and how it can be used in LBS agencies.



The key principles that guide all the Employment Ontario (EO) programs, including the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program, are accessibility, a client-centric approach, quality programming, integration of services, cost-effectiveness, accountability and community-based coordination. When exploring data and how it is best used, it is important to think about the relationship between data and these key principles.

In addition to operating by these guiding principles, LBS service delivery agencies are expected to meet a variety of contractual commitments. These include:

- Meeting or exceeding the Service Quality Standard (SQS) target. **The current target value is 6.0.**
- Demonstrating organizational capacity for long-term sustainability of LBS.
- Ensuring collected data reflects reality.
- Demonstrating compliance with the MTCU agreement and LBS Service Provider Guidelines.
- Achieving continuous improvement targets as outlined in your individual 2014-2015 Business Plan. This includes understanding results achieved, the cause of the results achieved, and developing and adjusting strategies for improvement.

Collecting good data and understanding the data is the first step in being able to make informed, results-based decisions for your agency.



Employment Ontario relies on a Performance Management System to ensure good customer service and outcomes are achieved. One component of the system is the performance management framework, which outlines the data that is captured and entered into the Employment Ontario Information Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS). The performance management framework for LBS is being rolled out in phases. We are currently in Phase II-A, which will be in place for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. Phase II-B is the final phase, which is expected to be rolled out in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

The performance management framework is comprised of three dimensions and five core measures. The five measures that are in place and that are currently being measured (in Phase II-A) are listed in the table below. There will be seven core measures in total when the system reaches maturity.

OVERALL SERVICE QUALITY

Data related to the five core measures is captured in EOIS-CaMS. This source data for the five measures feeds into Report 64 on a monthly basis. Report 64 is the only performance measures report generated by the system. However, there are a variety of other reports available on EOIS-CaMS that you may wish to consult. The information in the reports can help you make decisions to strengthen and improve the LBS program. Many of the available reports are discussed in this e-Communiqué as they relate to the five core measures. These include the following:



- Literacy and Basic Skills All Data - Learner/Profile - #60B
- Literacy and Basic Skills All Data - Outcomes - #60D
- Literacy and Basic Skills Case Activity Report (Client Level) - #61

Dimension	Core Measures
Customer Service	Customer Satisfaction Service Coordination
Effectiveness	Suitability Progress
Efficiency	Learners Served

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION MEASURE (CUSTOMER SERVICE DIMENSION)
WEIGHT 15%**

What is it?	Relationships to EOIS-CaMS Data
A measure of the feedback from learners who exit the program about their satisfaction with the service they have received. The 2014-2015 target is 90%.	Customer Satisfaction is pulled from the "Customer Satisfaction" field of the "Close Service Plan" page. The service plan must be closed and have at least one competency in order to obtain this information.

It is important to ensure that learners are satisfied with the service they are receiving.

LBS service delivery agencies are currently required to ask the following question found on the LBS Exit and Follow-up Form:

"On a scale of 1 to 5, how likely are you to recommend the LBS Program to someone looking for similar services?" In order to make this count towards your customer satisfaction success measure goal of 90%, the response needs to be a "4" or "5".



How you ask this question can be very important, because you want to ensure the intent behind it is not misunderstood. For example, if a learner is accessing the LBS program and has not told other people they are doing this, the learner may feel uncomfortable answering "4 or 5" because they wouldn't "literally" recommend the program to someone else, even though they feel it is a great program.

You should have a mechanism in place to make sure this information has been collected prior to closing a service plan. A service plan "closing checklist" can be a quick and easy way to check that you have gathered all of the information that you need for reporting purposes.

Many agencies continue to use the original LBS *Learner Satisfaction Survey* to collect information about learner satisfaction. This survey asks a series of seven questions (including a variation of MTCU's recommended question) using a satisfaction scale of 1 to 5.

1. I made good progress in reaching the goal(s) I set in the program.
2. I found the learning activities to be useful in working toward my goal(s).
3. The staff of this agency explained the program clearly.
4. The staff of this agency treated me fairly.
5. The hours of the program were convenient for me.
6. I would tell other people to come to this agency to take part in the program.
7. Overall, I was satisfied with the program.



Collecting more information than is required will give you additional data to help you decide where you can make improvements to the program to ensure learners are satisfied.

Here are some additional exit interview questions that you might want to consider:

1. What program materials and activities did you find helpful?
2. How are you using new skills learned during this program in your everyday life?
3. What would you change about the program and why?
4. What suggestions do you have for making the literacy program better?
5. Did you get the support you needed (bus fare, etc.)?
6. What can you do now that you couldn't do before you came to our program?
7. Your plan outlines next steps. Do you need more information? Do you clearly understand your next steps?

Remember that it is important to collect the data, but it is even more important to use it to inform your program planning. All staff should be aware of the feedback that is collected. Collecting, collating and sharing information on a monthly or quarterly basis can help you make decisions and continuously improve the program throughout the year.

- You can also implement other methods to collect learner feedback on a regular basis.
- Informal or formal focus groups can generate great information.
- Offering snacks or incentives to participants will increase the number of people who attend the feedback gathering meetings.
- An anonymous suggestion box is a simple way for people to share feedback without being identified.
- Online tools like SurveyMonkey or FluidSurveys can be used to collect feedback and support the integration of digital technology skills into the program.

Report #64 will provide you with a summary of the percentage of learners who were satisfied at exit. If you are not achieving a target of at least 90% every month, consider implementing additional methods to collect feedback and act on the information that you receive.



**SERVICE COORDINATION MEASURE (CUSTOMER SERVICE DIMENSION)
WEIGHT 25%**

What is it?	Relationships to EOIS-CaMS Data
<p>A measure of how the service provider's coordination, integration and supported access to and from services are effectively incorporated into a client's LBS learner plan. Percentage of learners who experience effective, supported referrals into, during or at exit from the LBS program. The 2014-2015 target is 50%.</p>	<p>Only one referral is counted per service plan, regardless of whether or not there are multiple referrals in the service plan.</p> <p>"Referred In" numbers are pulled from the "Service Plan Home" page, on the "Case Details" panel, in the "Referred In" field, when a service plan is opened.</p> <p>"Referred Out" numbers are captured as a plan item on the service plan. "Referred Out" referral plan items must be noted in the four "Referred Out" calculations, detailed in the Report #64 guide, in order to count for service coordination. These referral plan items are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred out registered in education • Referred out registered in training • Referred out registered in ES • Registered or confirming for receiving service with community resources that support learning

It is important to ensure that your agency is communicating with other partners in the community and providing referrals to services that can help learners achieve their goals.

You can find where "referrals in" come from and where "referrals out" are being made by reviewing Report #60B (Literacy and Basic Skills All Data - Learner/Profile - #60B). This report is available monthly and gives you the number and percentage by type of referral. Any type of referral with a zero value is a potential referral partner to consider. The category of "referrals to other community resources" is often underused, even though it is broad and can capture a number of local referrals.



One strategy is to match up the five goal paths with potential services in your community where referrals would make sense. If a learner has an employment goal, referring them to an employment service agency as soon as possible might help them move towards that goal more quickly. Sending learners to information sessions held by other agencies can pave the way for a more structured referral, when appropriate, in the process. Offering itinerant or off-site LBS services at another community agency could boost your referrals as well.

Making referrals a standing agenda item for the local service-planning table is a great practice. This allows for the identification of new referral partners and the sharing of information and referral protocols.



**SUITABILITY/LEARNER PROFILE MEASURE (EFFECTIVENESS DIMENSION)
WEIGHT 20%**

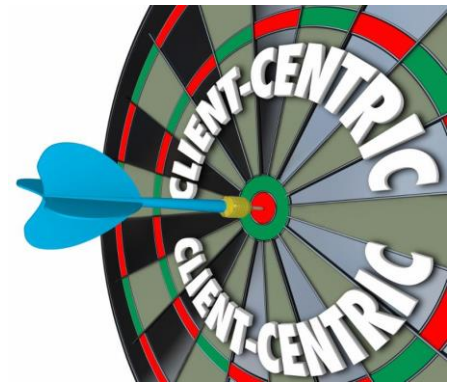
What is it?	Relationships to EOIS-CaMS Data
<p>A measure of who is being served. Agencies need to show that they are serving learners who, on average, are experiencing at least 30% of the identified suitability indicators. The 2014-2015 target is 30%.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. < Grade 12 2. OW/ODSP recipient 3. No source of income 4. Crown ward <p>(Note: you can only select on of these three options)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. More than 6 years out of education 6. More than 6 years without training <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Age over 45 and under 64 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. History of interrupted education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Person with disability 10. Aboriginal 11. Deaf 12. Francophone 	<p>Client Summary page in the service plan</p> <p>Determined based on the date of birth (age of the person when a case is opened) on the person home page (EO case) and started date from the Service Plan home page</p> <p>Client Summary page in the service plan</p> <p>Person home page (EO Case)</p>

A goal of the LBS Program is to provide training and upgrading for hard to serve learners. The suitability indicators have been chosen to ensure that LBS is targeting those learners most in need of service.

If your suitability performance measure is low, Report #60B (Literacy and Basic Skills All Data - Learner Profile - #60B) will tell you whether you have any learners with missing client profiles. Several suitability indicators are captured in the client profile, so a missing profile will mean a missed opportunity to capture those indicators.



Make sure staff members are comfortable asking questions to gather as much information as possible from potential learners as they complete the Participant Registration Form (PRF). If information is disclosed later, ensure that it is captured and revised on the PRF and that CaMS is also updated.



Report #60B (Literacy and Basic Skills All Data - Learner/Profile - #60B) summarizes data related to suitability. Use this report to determine whether some groups are underrepresented at your agency. For example, if you have a very low number of individuals with Ontario Works (OW) as a source of income, you might consider targeting that group by providing OW with information about the services you are offering. You could also ask OW what type of programming would be beneficial for their clients and deliver something specific for that group.

The Literacy and Basic Skills Case Activity Report (Client Level) #61 provides you with client data in a spreadsheet that can be sorted in various ways to look closely at data. You can use this report to compare different characteristics. For example, you can compare the clients that indicated the Ontario Disability Support Program as their source of income with the number of clients that self-identified as a person with a disability. If the numbers are not aligning, you might revisit the types of questions asked during intake to ensure the clients are encouraged to provide as much information as possible. Another example could be comparing goal path with outcome.

**LEARNER PROGRESS MEASURE (EFFECTIVENESS DIMENSION)
WEIGHT 30%**

What is it?	Relationships to EOIS-CaMS Data
<p>A measure of the successful completion of the required milestones related to the learner's goal path.</p> <p>Milestone Tasks During the service, and at exit, the percentage of learners who complete at least one required milestone.</p> <p>The 2014-2015 target is 60%.</p>	<p>Milestone data comes from the competency plan items related to the six OALCF task groups.</p> <p>Each learner must attain at least one milestone. This information must be recorded in the service plan and the milestone must be successfully completed in the current reporting period.</p>

The milestone tasks are meant to provide evidence that learners are making progress along their chosen goal path.



Since all learners in the LBS Program are expected to complete milestones to demonstrate progress, an explanation of this should be included in the learners' orientation. Learners should be aware that they will be completing milestones and understand that milestones are not "tests" but rather assessment tools or markers of their achievements. Learners should also be involved in the selection of appropriate milestones for their learning plan. Making learners aware of milestones as early as possible by involving them in the selection will have a positive impact on the completion and success rate.



In order to administer milestones, staff should be provided with access to adequate training. The actual milestones and the User Guide for milestones are available on the Milestone Portal, hosted by Contact North. In addition, there are a number of writing samples available on the portal that provide scoring guidance for several of the milestones. The portal can only be accessed by secure login, which must be attained through an Employment and Training Consultant.

Keeping track of when milestones are administered is key to ensuring that progress is reflected in Report #64. A Milestone must be attained within the current reporting period (current fiscal year) to count for learner progress, so you will want to make sure they are completed and entered into CaMS in a timely fashion.

Report #60D (Literacy and Basic Skills All Data - Outcomes - #60D) tells you how many milestones, on average, were completed by a goal path. If you have a goal path with a low number of milestones, on average, this could be a red flag. Perhaps you need to review the curriculum being used to support that goal path and make adjustments. Maybe staff members working with learners on that goal path need additional training and support.

**LEARNERS SERVED MEASURE (EFFECTIVENESS DIMENSION)
WEIGHT 10%**

What is it?	Relationship to EOIS-CaMS Data
<p>A measure of the percentage of the targeted number of learners with an active service plan who are served.</p> <p>Learners with an active learner plan against the LBS service provider's agreement target.</p> <p>The 2014-2015 target is 90%.</p> <p>Individual agency target is 100%.</p>	<p>The system keeps track of all learners in the current fiscal year to determine this measure. Carry-over learners (from the previous fiscal year) and new learners go into the count.</p> <p>A learner must have at least one completed or in progress milestone on their service plan to "count".</p> <p>The service plan must also have an "active" status in CaMS.</p>



This is a measure related to your agency capacity. An agency is funded to deliver service to a set number of learners in a fiscal year.

Are you reaching 100% for learners served every month? Typically in the first few months, this number will be greater than 100% if you have a group of carry-over learners. This number is pro-rated for the whole year; so if your agency is contracted to serve 120 learners, the system recognizes that as 10 learners per month. The calculation done by CaMS is based on whether you are meeting the pro-rated number.



The first thing you should do, if you are not meeting this measure, is to confirm that all the service plans are actually in CaMS. Data should be entered into the system in a timely fashion. You also need to confirm that all of the service plans in the system have a status of "active". This can be determined by looking at the list of open cases in CaMS on the "My Cases" screen. Report #61 [Literacy and Basic Skills Case Activity Report (Client Level) #61] will also tell you the status of all the service plans.

Every service delivery agency is different and will have local referral cycles, which could cause the agency to be under or over the 100% for efficiency in any given month. It is important to understand how local cycles affect intake. For example, a school board program, which focuses on the secondary school credit goal path, might experience a higher number of referrals in the fall and the late winter because referrals are coming in from a credit program. This is due to the fact that fall and late winter are the traditional start seasons for new terms in the school board credit system.

If your "learners served" number is consistently low, you may need to look to other data sources to help you build a strategy for improvement. Report #60A (Literacy and Basic Skills All Data - IR - #60A) gives you aggregate data for any information sessions and outreach activities that you have done. It tells you how many information sessions you have done and the total number of attendees (year to date) at these sessions. If you are not doing any information sessions or outreach activities, you might want to consider integrating them as part of your marketing strategy to attract new customers.

Another place to look is Report #60B (Literacy and Basic Skills All Data - Learner Profile - #60B). All the "referrals in" are captured on report #60B. A quick scan of this data will tell you whether you may be missing opportunities for learners, if there are organizations on that list that are not making referrals to your agency right now. A targeted marketing plan, or even a quick phone call, could increase the number of referrals.

Keeping attendance and tracking new learner starts can help you understand local patterns or cycles. This can help inform you as to when you need to focus on marketing and outreach strategies to attract new learners.



THE MEASURE YOU SHOULD BE WATCHING CLOSELY: COMPLETIONS (EFFECTIVENESS DIMENSION)

Completion of goal path is a measure of who successfully completes all elements in the learner plan. This includes completion of milestones, learning activities and culminating tasks.

- **Milestone Tasks:** Milestone data comes from the competency plan items related to the six OALCF task groups.
- **Culminating Tasks:** The culminating task is reported when a file is closed.
- **Learning Activities:** Learning activities can be entered on the service plan and should be on the Learner Plan Template. Learning activities are reported when a file is closed.



Although completions are not current being counted, the data is available on Report #64. You should be aware of how your agency is performing in comparison to other agencies in your region and in the province. Roll-up reports for the four regions and the entire province are available on CaMS.

THE MEASURE YOU SHOULD HAVE ON YOUR RADAR: LEARNER GAINS (EFFECTIVENESS DIMENSION)

The anticipated release date for an MTCU approved, standardized Learner Gains assessment is April 2015, with full implementation expected in 2016. This assessment (used at program entrance and exit) will show the gains made by learners (using the IALSS 500 point scale) in the areas of prose, document literacy, and numeracy.

RESOURCES

The main source of information about performance management can be found on the Employment Ontario Partner's Gateway (EOPG):

www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs_performance_management.html

User Guides

Chapter 8B: Service Plan Management for Literacy and Basic Skills

www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/eotransformation/cams_day1/userguide/eois_cams_ch8_sp_management_lbs.pdf

Report Guides

The report guides are accessible within CaMS in the reports section. The guide for Report #64 can also be accessed from EOPG: *Literacy & Basic Skills Detailed Service Quality Report #64*

www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/eotransformation/cams_reporting/eois-cams_reporting_lbs_dsqr.pdf



Where Can I Get More Training?

1. If you have specific questions, you should always ask your local Employment and Training Consultant.
2. The resources for the LBS Performance Management Systems Reports Training Phases are posted on EOPG. You will find a *Participant Guide*, a *Trainer Guide* and a *Slide Deck*.
www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs_performance_management.html
3. Community Literacy of Ontario's Literacy Basics website has a number of online modules that will support your understanding of LBS. <http://literacybasics.ca/#>
4. Literacy Link South Central provides bi-monthly newsletters focused on performance management. www.llsc.on.ca/about-us/resources

CONCLUSION

Evaluation has always been important for Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) practitioners. Important not only for providing feedback to our funder but important for improving programming and results for LBS learners.

It is CLO's hope that this e-communiqué has provided you with a better understanding of the data that is being collected in EOIS CaMS and how it can be used when considering performance management in LBS programming.

As always, we invite our members to share any additional resources or ideas about this important topic. You can contact us via email, Twitter or Facebook.

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Would you like to know more about Community Literacy of Ontario? Then please visit our website at www.communityliteracyofontario.ca or follow us on Twitter [@Love4Literacy](https://twitter.com/Love4Literacy).



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