SKILLSFORSUCCESS INITIATIVES
SERVICE DELIVERY PILOTS 2023/24
CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

From 2022 to 2024, Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program received federal funding to undertake projects in support of Canada's Skills for Success (SFS) framework.

Resource development and/or service delivery pilots were funded under five initiatives:

- **Supporting Underrepresented Groups;**
- **Supporting Apprenticeship Integration;**
- **Supporting Better Jobs Ontario Integration;**
- **Workplace Literacy;** and
- **Expanding and Enhancing Digital Delivery**.

Projects were designed in accordance with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF).

The goals of SFS initiatives are:

- to support ongoing LBS program development objectives by building capacity across cultural streams and delivery sectors;
- to strengthen LBS employment and apprenticeship outcomes;
- to integrate LBS services into the broader workforce development system; and
- to enhance and expand blended and fully distance learning opportunities.

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

PROGRAM: AMALGUIN ADULT LEARNING CENTRE – NEAR NORTH NETWORK
SECTOR: COMMUNITY-BASED   CULTURAL **STREAM:** ANGLOPHONE
INITIATIVE: WORKPLACE LITERACY

GOALS

Our goal is to produce, at minimum, eight Organizational Needs Assessments (ONAs) and provide skills training to at least one of each industry group we are targeting.

We are currently working on initial ONAs with those businesses who have identified skills gaps and are interested in a Skills for Success pilot program partnership.

Given the number of small businesses across our region, there is potential to develop a strong referral network which could help increase registrations and employment opportunities for apprentices or co-op placements for adult learners who wish to complete their OSSD.

Additionally, we valued the opportunity to spend time talking with local businesses to learn more about them and develop closer ties with them, something we have not been able to do in the past due to funding limitations. Having a staff member able to focus on these connections is extremely valuable and our hope is to be able to maintain them going forward.

LESSONS LEARNED

There appear to be two distinct types of training required to meet the needs of the various businesses we have spoken with so far.

The first is a continuous intake model, for employees currently working and who need to access their training on demand. The second is cohort training, for those businesses who hire the majority of their staff at the beginning of each season. This group can be served through in person class training soon after being hired, and immediately prior to the 'busy' season.

OUTCOMES

To date, we have communicated with a total of 15 businesses and expect to double that number by the end of 2023/2024.

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SNAPSHOT

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS: This pilot targets the owners and employees of local businesses requiring additional skills training to improve both business and personal employment outcomes.

As our agency serves 17 small, rural communities, we have targeted industries as opposed to any one or two businesses. We initially target 3 specific industries (manufacturing, grocers, tourism) for contact, but have since identified a fourth, non profit organizations. Each of our communities, for the most part, have at least one of each of the above, and given the smaller size of most of our local businesses this approach was seen as our best method of working with the most number of clients.

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TARGET AUDIENCE: Owners/employees of local businesses requiring additional skills training to improve outcomes
PARTNERS INVOLVED: Employment Services, Near North Network, RTO12, Almaguin Community Economic Development, Labour Market Group, Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce

REASON FOR PROJECT

As with many businesses recently, some of those in our region struggle to find qualified candidates and it was our hope that, where possible, our services could address some of the skills gaps identified.

Additionally, we valued the opportunity to spend time talking with local businesses to learn more about them and develop closer ties with them, something we have not been able to do in the past due to funding limitations. Having a staff member able to focus on these connections is extremely valuable and our hope is to be able to maintain them going forward.

PROJECT IMPACT

As noted above, it has been extremely helpful to be able to have the time to get out into the community and meet with businesses, both at their place of business and at events. Beyond the interactions directly with business owners, we have been able to engage more closely with support organizations such as our local Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Board, and our Regional Tourism Organization.

Many of the businesses we have spoken to so far have identified issues which are truly beyond our scope to address. Issues of housing and transportation, as well as over-regulation and liability concerns repeatedly come up in discussions. While we, as an agency, can not directly address those issues, we will continue to advocate on behalf of our communities and businesses to improve conditions.

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Of interest to us has been skills gaps which cross industries — and there is an opportunity to develop material which is applicable to many clients at different times and using different instructional models. Given the unknowns regarding ongoing funding for programs such as this, we will embed this idea of 'multiple use' in our program development. This will ensure that the training material which is created will have the broadest application going forward, including a high degree of relevance to our overall LBS program.

As our agency is not in a location with very large businesses, we felt it was best to throw the widest net possible, identifying industries, as opposed to individual businesses, in the beginning.

Success in meeting the needs of one business can be carried forward when talking to others within the same industry, as well as across industries (ie. food handling for both grocery stores and non profits).

As well, our area has an aging population which provides opportunities for digital skills development, particularly where technology is used daily for work (ie. HR platforms, electronic communications, etc.)

To date, we have identified several businesses which are interested in the SFS training partnership opportunities, however this would not be relevant to them until into the spring of 2024, a time for which we can not guarantee having the resources necessary to meet their needs.

Increased visibility of the programs and services we offer can only increase learner registrations and improved outcomes going forward. Having the opportunity to talk with those who might otherwise not see a need for our service has the potential to increase the number of those we serve.

As well, given the number of individual, small businesses across our region there is the potential to develop a strong referral network. This network may result in increased registrations, as well as employment opportunities for apprentices or co-op placements for adult learners wish to complete their OSSD.

As with other CoP we have participated in, it is extremely helpful to hear from other agencies and learn what they are doing and experiencing.

Our agency has never interacted so closely and directly with businesses, so information regarding ONAs and marketing to businesses was very helpful, as are many of the industry-specific training modules.

As our WL pilot is still in the development phase, we have not conducted surveys to date. We have heard from several business owners, however, that they are grateful that our services are available to them and to our shared communities.

ONAs are very helpful in creating a framework for capturing contacts and information about the businesses we reach out to, as well as providing initial discussion topics.

As well, it is useful as a tool to determine the seriousness of potential partners in so far as it can be an indicator of their willingness to engage and take the time needed to ensure the program's success.

We meet weekly with a consultant provided by our literacy network which has proven extremely useful. Additionally, funds were made available to provide honorariums to those businesses who fully engaged with the ONA process which has allowed us to identify trends and commonalities. While the ONA process can at times seem long, the lessons learned and successes achieved will make successfully engaging with other businesses more likely as we will have both the material and track record to prove our worth.

BENEFIT TO PARTICIPANTS / EMPLOYERS

MANUFACTURING: 5 employees, 'Train the Trainer' program for hiring new employees

GROCERS: 8 employees, 'Preparation for Digital Learning' program to ensure employees have the digital tools necessary to upgrade skills and certifications successfully using online platforms, self paced modules to refresh mandatory certificate training prior to testing.

TOURISM: 5 employees, 'Accessing Online Training for ESL", ensuring that ESL learners are able to navigate remote ESL programming and have the tools (such as translation apps, virtual meeting platforms, etc) needed to move forward

NON PROFIT: 8 volunteers, 'Preparation for Digital Learning' program to ensure employees have the digital tools necessary to upgrade skills and certifications successfully using online platforms, self paced modules to refresh mandatory certificate training prior to testing.