



# 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: DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA – NIAGARA REGION**

**SECTOR: SCHOOL BOARD CULTURAL STREAM: ANGLOPHONE**

**INITIATIVE: WORKPLACE LITERACY**

### GOALS

- **Address the significant deficiency in skilled workers** for entry level positions in local businesses.
- Provide opportunities to **increase sustainable employment outcomes** and/or **transition people off financial assistance programs.**
- **Support employers** who need to onboard and retain quality staff, offering more hands-on skills training than the employer can provide.
- **Support job seekers** who are un/underemployed and need to increase capacities to secure viable employment.
- **Allow learners to gain valuable work skills,** complete certificate trainings and improve job search skills.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- **Alternate forms of support** are exceptionally important to learner success.

- **Referrals and community connections,** such as clothing/ food needs, mental health services and transportation supports significantly impact positive outcomes.
- Providing **ES support** through TTE or other agencies, before, during and after service, is key to the ongoing achievements of participants.
- **Strategic marketing** is necessary to ensure that the SP can support high demand.
- **Relationships** with local employers, EO ES, OW, ODSP, alternate LBS providers and other community agencies provide sufficient referrals to surpass targets.

### OUTCOMES

- **Many participants are now employed in sustainable jobs** through program partnerships.



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### SNAPSHOT

The SPs SFS Workplace Literacy initiative is inclusive of three programs. Two programs are co-located at Lifetime Learning Centre in St. Catharines with many other adult education options and one is hosted at The Best Western Hotel in St. Catharines. The target audience is individuals who require interpersonal skill development, language, academic and/or other upgrading as well as hands-on training, due to various barriers being faced. Partnerships with DSBN's Custodial Services as well as Best Western have had significant impact on the success of this initiative. The project aims to serve 115 individuals and is projected to be completed in early 2024.

### REASON FOR PROJECT

Consistently reviewing local labour market trends, the SP is aware of the significant deficiency in skilled workers for entry level positions. It is recognized that this shortage directly affects many individuals in our community as well as presents an opportunity to increase sustainable employment outcomes and/or transition people off of financial assistant programs. This revelation, along with the established partnership with DSBN TTE, Custodial Services, Best Western and many other Niagara employers, highlighted the need for this type of training. It was also determined that a remarkable number of employees previously hired by these employers required soft skill training around time management and communication and more hands-on skills training that the employer is unable to provide.

### PROJECT IMPACT

This project has provided the opportunity to support both employers who need to onboard and retain quality staff as well as job seekers who are un/underemployed and are required to increase their capacities in order to secure viable employment. Participating in any of the trainings allows for learners to explore and experience work within the particular field, gain valuable work skills, complete certificate trainings, as well as increase capacities related to job searching. Learners in the program are given interviews with the employers upon completion of the training and **many participants are now employed in sustainable jobs** through program partnerships.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Alternate forms of support are exceptionally important to the success of learners accessing training. Referrals and community connections, such as clothing/ food needs, mental health services and transportation supports significantly impact positive outcomes for individuals. Providing ES support through TTE or other agencies, before, during and after service, is a key factor to the ongoing achievements of these participants. Furthermore, strategic marketing for projects of this nature is necessary to ensure the SP can support the high demand presented. Developed relationships with local employers, EO ES, OW, ODSP, alternate LBS providers and other community agencies provides a sufficient amount of referrals to surpass targets set for the Workplace Literacy initiatives.

It is highly recommended to **prioritize employer needs** when developing Workplace/ Workforce training programs as well as take into account the commonly seen issues with job retention in order to curate and facilitate curriculum/ programming that produces quality trained individuals to fill job vacancies. Furthermore, working closely with DSBN Transition to Employment, as well as connecting with other ES providers, greatly impacts the future positive outcomes of participants. **Job seeking, job development, on-boarding and retention services** are a few of the other essential components to securing employment, which is additionally supported through these partnerships.

Providing **ample opportunity to identify and support all types of needs** before, during and after service allows for secure transitions into employment upon completion. **Clear, consistent communication with all partners** is of utmost importance. Some other precepts to be mindful of when hosting similar initiatives include providing a **barrier-free and accessible** intake and referral process, consistent communication and service delivery, strategic marketing, individualized classroom offerings and a focus on providing **alternate supports**. In addition, providing **multiple start dates and ongoing intake** allows for adult learners, who often have multiple commitments, choose a program time that suits their schedule best.

## FUTURE IMPACT POTENTIAL

The continuation of funding would significantly support and impact **newcomers, ESL individuals, those who have been out of education/ training for extended time**, are **underemployed or unemployed**, people who **identify as having a disability and/or are facing mental health concerns**, anxiety, etc. Using multiple delivery modes, providing certifications, including hands-on skill development as well as offering a variety of supports compliments adult learning needs and principles.

As a result, **participants increase their capacities and become qualified individuals to secure reliable employment**. Further to this, **employers have an opportunity to hire trained individuals** who offer a variety of transferable skills to contribute to their workplace.

## RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

The assistance provided through **Community of Practice was useful and supportive** to program delivery. The meetings were engaging and allowed the SP to share their innovative ideas, ask questions and network with LBS professionals throughout the province. The focus of Workplace Literacy initiatives are closely aligned, making the resources and discussions highly transferable and easy to adapt and/or implement.

## BENEFIT TO PARTICIPANTS / EMPLOYERS

There were two main employer partners included in developing and facilitating these trainings, but **countless employers benefited, as successful participants secured jobs across the Niagara Region**.

115 learners will have completed the training by the end of this fiscal, whom all received thorough **training specific to employer needs**. Learners will improve upon **interpersonal and soft skills**, participate in **hands-on training** as well as receive **practical theory and upskilling**.

The class also assists individuals with **completing certifications** required for employment, **resume and cover letter writing** as well as **interviewing**.



DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA

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May 30, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the DSBN Literacy and Basic Skills/LBS, in creating the newest program "Custodial Services Training" being offered to the community. Mr. Peter Legault and I met with the team at the Lifetime Learning Centre to listen to their presentation of the program and to collaborate the concept of this program. The team had created a well thought out detailed program to give individuals the basic hands-on theory and practical training of the duties of a custodial position.

The DSBN Literacy and Basic Skills/LBS Program has given individuals in all aspects of life the basic skills that are required in the service industry, for either school boards, health care institutes, or the hospitality sector. This will benefit the individuals wanting to start a career in the custodial industries. The LLC can also help the participants with resumes, mock interviews, and help them with on boarding skills.

Having this program gives the individuals the confidence in attending interviews and can discuss in detail the responsibility of custodial services with the companies. Plus, it aids businesses in selecting employees that have knowledge and experience to reduces the training time to new staff as well.

I can only imagine how this program will grow in the future as companies hear about this on-boarding program and will recruit trained individuals for their businesses. The Facilities Services department will definitely reach out to interview clients that have taken the initiative to attend and learn this skilled trade.

Sincerely,

Cindy Desruisseaux

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## PARTICIPANT 1: **ARTHUR**

### **CUSTODIAL SERVICES** TRAINING PROGRAM PILOT

#### **How did this participant become involved in your project?**

Arthur heard about the project through the Health Care Job Fair hosted by DSBN Transition to Employment.

#### **What were/are their goals? What do/did they hope to achieve by participating?**

Arthur's goals were to be hired by the DSBN. He was already employed as a custodian by a private school in Welland. By participating, he hoped to learn additional skills, prove his ability and secure employment with DSBN.

#### **What makes their story unique?**

Arthur's story is unique because **he was hired on the spot at his preliminary interview**, during the training.

#### **How did they benefit / how are they benefitting from their participation?**

He benefitted from participating because he was able to make a positive impact on his classmates and his instructor. Arthur is now working as a custodian for the DSBN. Arthur could not stop showing his appreciation for his ability to participate in the training. His hope is that with full time employment with the DSBN, he will be able to bring his family to Canada.

## PARTICIPANT 2: **SHANKERA**

### **PRE-EMPLOYMENT** TRAINING PROGRAM PILOT

#### **How did this participant become involved in your project?**

Shankera became aware of the Pre-Employment program through Literacy and Basic Skills through her worker at Ontario Works. As a refugee from the Bahamas, she is currently accessing services to provide stability for her family until she was able to support herself from employment. She came to Canada with many years of experience in the Medical Office Administration field as well as working in Human Resources.

#### **What were/are their goals? What do/did they hope to achieve by participating?**

Her goal was to find employment within her field in Canada.

#### **What makes their story unique?**

She is a mom to 3 children that keep her busy, but she felt it was important to prepare herself in any way that she could do get into her field in Canada. She began the program unaware of what to expect and finished each activity and assessment very strong. She always had a positive attitude and was eager to learn to get into a position to become employed in her field in her new home country. During Shankera's time in the program, she developed important workplace practice skills, communication and conflict strategies as well as the completion of WHMIS, AODA and Health and Safety. Notable, she completed First Aid and CPR which was imperative to her being hired in her field.

#### **How did they benefit / how are they benefitting from their participation?**

**Shankera is now employed** part-time and has the time she needs to dedicate to her kids.

#### **Can they provide a quote or comment in their own words?**

"The job program was great, I learned a lot and was job ready."

## PARTICIPANT 3: **GINA**

### **HOUSEKEEPING** TRAINING PROGRAM PILOT

#### **How did this participant become involved in your project?**

Gina saw our flyer and wanted to join the housekeeping training

#### **What were/are their goals? What do/did they hope to achieve by participating?**

Before moving to Canada, Gina was working as a housekeeper in her home country. Her goal was to build the skills and experience to be able to find employment in the hospitality industry in Canada and help provide for her family.

#### **What makes their story unique?**

As a newcomer, Gina was facing challenges finding employment due to not having work experience in Canada.

#### **How did they benefit / how are they benefitting from their participation?**

With the training and certificates she received in the program, Gina was able to obtain her first job since moving to Canada. She was **hired for full-time hours by the hotel before the training was even completed.**

A few months after working, she was able to save enough money to get a car.