



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: UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

GOALS

- Address the **significant deficiency in trained PSWs** and the challenges this presents to our communities
- Provide opportunities to **increase sustainable employment outcomes** and/or **transition people off financial assistance programs**
- **Support barriered learners** with the long-term goal of becoming a PSW
- Address the needs of the significant number of applicants who required **academic upgrading, language development and soft skill training** in order to receive acceptance and/or successfully complete the program

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** 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.

OUTCOMES

- Through the case management process, learners have gained access to supports that ensure food security, accessibility to weather appropriate clothing, employment opportunities, counselling and legal services and much more. Arguably, this has helped the PSW program as the students exiting Pre-PSW have not only prepared themselves academically but they have also been referred to various community resources to **increase their success in and out of the classroom.**



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SNAPSHOT

The SPs SFS initiative, Personal Support Worker Prep classroom, is co-located at Lifetime Learning Centre in St. Catharines with many other adult education options, including the DSBN's PSW program. This target audience is individuals who require language, academic and/or other up skilling due to various barriers being faced. Partnerships with DSBNs Transition to Employment, PSW and ESL programs have significantly impacted the success of this initiative. The project aims to serve 30 individuals and targets have been achieved, with many active learners currently and planning to continue to access the offered support.

REASON FOR PROJECT

Consistently reviewing local labour market trends, the SP is aware of the significant deficiency in trained PSWs. 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 from financial assistant programs. This revelation, along with the established partnership with DSBN PSW program, greatly contributed to recognizing the need for providing this support. It was determined, through this partnership, that a remarkable amount of applicants required academic upgrading, language development and soft skill training in order to receive acceptance and/or successfully complete the program.

PROJECT IMPACT

This project has allowed the opportunity to support many barriered learners who have the long-term goal of becoming a PSW. Throughout the duration of our classes, learners have entered with a variety of needs/objectives and have been met with individualized plans to help them obtain their goals. Academically, learners are provided the opportunity to be exposed to Human Anatomy, Medical Terminology, Biology and much more healthcare specific curriculum. Individuals who are presently studying PSW have been offered homework support. The case management component of this program has laid the foundation for success. Through this process, learners have gained access to supports that ensure food security, accessibility to weather appropriate clothing, employment opportunities, counselling and legal services and much more. Arguably, this has helped the PSW program as the students exiting Pre-PSW have not only prepared themselves academically but they have also been referred to various community resources to increase their success in and out of the classroom.

LESSONS LEARNED

Alternate forms of support are exceptionally important to the success of learners accessing this type of programs. Referrals and community connections, such as clothing/ food needs, mental health services and transportation supports significantly impact positive outcomes for individuals. Furthermore, strategic marketing for projects of this type, is necessary to ensure the SP can support the demand presented. The partnership with our formalized PSW program provided ample referrals to complete the target set for this specific initiative.

Some precepts to be mindful of when hosting a similar project include providing a barrier free referral services, consistent communication and service delivery, strategic marketing, individualized classroom offerings and a focus on alternate supports. In addition, providing a classroom with drop in options and longer days provides flexibility and greater opportunity. Furthermore, partnering with a ES provider, or making referrals to local ES agencies, greatly impacts the future outcomes of participants. Job seeking, applications, interviewing and other career exploration are other essential needs of many learners. Connecting to ES presents the opportunity to identify and assist with other needs and paves the way for seamless transitions into employment upon completion.

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. Providing a classroom with flexible options and individualized lessons compliments adult learning needs and principles. As a result, participants increase their capacities and become qualified individuals to secure reliable employment. In addition, providers of **PSW programs would benefit from having prepared individuals applying for and attending their trainings as well as employers, who will have an opportunity to hire PSW's presenting 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 we're engaging and allowed the SP to share their innovative ideas, ask questions and network with LBS professionals throughout the province. There is much diversity in target audiences for the URG pilots across service providers. Many of the shared resources were certainly creative; but, due to the differences in who each project aimed to serve, there were times it was challenging for the instructors to sift through and determine what was useful and transferable to our specific needs.

RESOURCES USED TO IDENTIFY UG's IN THE COMMUNITY

Reviewing labour market reports prepared by Workforce Collective and Niagara Economic Development provided much insight and awareness surrounding the need for trained Personal Support Workers in our community.

Also identified through these insightful reports was the need to create offerings that increase peoples ability to find sustainable employment opportunities. In addition, internally collected data, such as referral sources, requests, needs and outcomes were also evaluated to determine initial need. Participation in network meetings echoed the importance of an accessible space to prepare for and successfully complete formalized PSW programming.

PARTICIPANT: **MARGARET**

PRE-PSW TRAINING PROGRAM PILOT

How did this participant become involved in your project?

Margaret applied for the PSW program and was accepted; however, she was waiting for her Brown Paper. As such, Margaret joined the Pre-PSW Program in the meantime as it had been quite some time since attending a class and she felt academic upgrading would be of great benefit.

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

Margaret's goals were to participate in academic preparation for the PSW Program as well as seek sustainable employment. The plan was to complete academic work while job seeking and preparing for her immigration appointments. Moreover, Margaret was seeking assistance with community agencies for food, shelter, clothing and volunteer options for networking purposes.

What makes their story unique?

Margaret is a refugee claimant and a dedicated learner who actively participated in the Pre-PSW program. Margaret has dedicated herself to multiple volunteer opportunities in addition to joining Skills for Success. **Despite facing a multitude of barriers as a newcomer to Canada, Margaret sought out opportunities to help her peers** through friendship, networking, and sharing of resources. Her passion for community engagement and self-advocacy has propelled her into a favourable position for employment opportunities as well as interpersonal relationships.

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

Margaret successfully completed multiple units pertaining to health sciences while simultaneously involving herself in the community. She is now supported by multiple community agencies to help with food security, appropriate winter attire and is now working towards accessible housing close to her new employer. **Margaret was hired** by the DSBN as a custodian due to the connections she has made throughout her time studying in Skills for Success as well as her dedication to self-advancement.

MARGARET SAYS...

"When coming to Canada, I wanted to be a Personal Support Worker but I had no idea what it involved to become one. After my interview for the course, I was directed to the PSW Preparation Course.

I was able to learn about human anatomy and medication terminology. **It has also expanded my ability to interact with other people. I also learned how to use a computer better than before.**

I was slowly getting into a depression without me knowing but since enrolling with the class, I was able to talk with the instructor who encouraged me and gave me different activities and hence, **I had purpose to wake up every day and be able to come for my classes.**

The instructor reached out to a couple different food banks where I was offered food and clothes since I was unemployed and didn't have any income. She helped me through getting employment by training me on how to write a resume and a cover letter. **I learned to present my case and discuss my transferrable skills to potential employers at job fairs and in interviews. This helped me to get a job and I am so grateful."**