



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: ST. ALBERT LEARNING CENTRE 'THE CLEANER PROGRAM' PILOT

SECTOR: SCHOOL BOARD CULTURAL STREAM: ANGLOPHONE

INITIATIVE: UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

GOALS

The motivation behind undertaking this project stems from a comprehensive understanding of the special education landscape, particularly the observed gap in services for students in Sudbury as they transition out of secondary school.

Sustaining this initiative could enable the development of specialized educational and vocational guidance resources.

LESSONS LEARNED

Reflecting on our experience, several key lessons have emerged to guide the development and delivery of future programs or projects. Foremost is the recognition of the paramount importance of building strong relationships. Establishing connections with learners, community members, and stakeholders proved to be foundational for the success of our program.

Another crucial lesson is the necessity of proactive program promotion, particularly among individuals belong-

ing to minority groups who may have faced disadvantages during their earlier education. Building trust within this demographic is essential, emphasizing the program's distinctiveness and commitment to addressing their unique needs.

OUTCOMES

One unexpected outcome was the shift in attitudes and perceptions towards individuals with disabilities within the school. Previously seen primarily as a second-chance institution for those without an OSSD, the school's reputation did not extend to serving individuals with intellectual disabilities. The program became a catalyst for change, fostering a more accepting environment and encouraging everyone to recognize possibilities beyond disabilities.

One participant's **co-op placement employer hired him for a part-time position**. This not only provides financial independence but also allows him the flexibility to continue his studies, bringing him closer to achieving his full OSSD.



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CASE STUDY

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SNAPSHOT

The service delivery pilot of "The Cleaner Program" at St. Albert Learning Centre in Sudbury, Ontario, is currently taking registration for its second round, with a third session scheduled to happen in March 2024.

The program targets individuals without an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), recipients of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program, newcomers, refugees and those with low literacy/numeracy rates.

The initiative is a collaborative effort involving key partners, including the City of Greater Sudbury, YMCA Employment Agency, March of Dimes, and our very own school board—expressing a keen interest in hiring program graduates.

REASON FOR PROJECT

The motivation behind undertaking this project stems from a comprehensive understanding of the special education landscape, particularly the observed gap in services for students in Sudbury as they transition out of secondary school. Drawing on my extensive experience in the field, it became evident that there was a substantial need to address the educational and training requirements of individuals post-secondary school services.

Furthermore, the selection of Sudbury as a participant in the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program has brought an influx of newcomers, including spouses seeking meaningful training opportunities. Recognizing this demographic shift, the project aims to cater to the specific needs of this diverse group, aligning with the broader community development initiatives associated with immigration programs.

An additional driving force for the project is a long-standing aspiration to provide continued support and opportunities for students as they transition into adult services. The identified need, coupled with the availability of funding through this opportunity, not only eliminated any hesitations but also provided compelling reasons to initiate and execute the project.

This project is not just a response to a recognized gap but also a proactive effort to contribute to the educational and vocational growth of individuals in the community during a crucial transitional phase in their lives.

PROJECT IMPACT

Assessing the impact of our service delivery pilot, which is still ongoing, reveals some noteworthy changes for both learners and project partners. While quantifying impact can be challenging, observable shifts in our school's reputation are becoming apparent, positioning us as a comprehensive service provider for learners across all levels.

One significant outcome is the evolving perception of our school within the community. The service delivery pilot has played a pivotal role in altering our reputation, positioning us as an institution capable of meeting the diverse educational needs of learners.

Additionally, the project has proven instrumental in fostering increased community partnerships. By simply offering this initiative, we have experienced a surge in collaborations with external entities.

This network of partnerships signifies a growing recognition of our school as a hub for innovative and inclusive educational initiatives, further contributing to our ability to address the diverse needs of learners in the community. In essence, while measuring the full impact may pose challenges, the tangible shifts in our school's reputation and the establishment of valuable community partnerships serve as prominent indicators of the positive influence our service delivery pilot is having on both learners and collaborative partners.

LESSONS LEARNED

Reflecting on our experience, several key lessons have emerged to guide the development and delivery of future programs or projects. Foremost is the recognition of the paramount importance of building strong relationships. Establishing connections with learners, community members, and stakeholders proved to be foundational for the success of our program.

Another crucial lesson involves the necessity of proactive program promotion, particularly among individuals belonging to minority groups who may have faced disadvantages during their earlier education. Building trust within this demographic is essential, emphasizing the program's distinctiveness and commitment to addressing their unique needs.

Furthermore, our experience highlighted the vital role of community partnerships in disseminating program information effectively. In a world saturated with information, collaborating with local organizations and partners becomes instrumental in reaching the target audience. The lessons learned underscore the significance of a strategic and collaborative approach in creating, promoting, and ensuring the success of future initiatives.

BEST PRACTICES

Drawing from our experience, one prominent best practice involves establishing meaningful connections with key individuals across various organizations. Cultivating these relationships ensures that crucial information is effectively shared with service providers, who play a pivotal role in building trust with their clients. This trust, in turn, can significantly support individuals in registering for and engaging with the program.

In our case, forging connections with influential figures in the Greater City of Sudbury, as well as managers within the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program, proved to be instrumental. These partnerships not only facilitated the dissemination of information but also leveraged existing trusting relationships between service providers and their clients, thereby increasing the likelihood of program enrollment.

This best practice underscores the importance of strategic networking and collaboration with key stakeholders, emphasizing the role of service providers as crucial intermediaries. By prioritizing these relationships, future programs can maximize their reach, enhance credibility, and effectively address the needs of their target audience.

FUTURE IMPACT POTENTIAL

1. Extended Reach through Secondary Schools Collaboration:

Continuing this initiative and securing ongoing funding could lead to partnerships with each secondary school. Collaborating with these schools to present the program to students on the verge of transitioning into the adult world would extend the initiative's reach. This proactive engagement at the secondary school level can effectively inform and guide students in making informed decisions about their post-secondary education and training options, potentially leading to increased enrollment and positive outcomes.

2. Enhanced Educational and Vocational Guidance:

Sustaining this initiative could enable the development of specialized educational and vocational guidance resources. By tailoring information and support for individuals at different stages of transitioning to the adult world, the program

can provide targeted assistance. This approach ensures that participants receive comprehensive and personalized guidance, addressing their unique needs and facilitating a smoother transition into adult services, education, or the workforce.

RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

Feedback on Community of Practice Meetings and Resources:

The meetings provided valuable support during the initial stages of the proposal development. These sessions were instrumental in offering both support and informative insights, contributing to the successful formulation of our proposal.

Although the support was beneficial in the pre-funding phase, subsequent time constraints prevented participation in other meetings after securing the funding.

To identify underrepresented groups (UGs) in our community, we collaborated closely with a representative from the City of Greater Sudbury. Despite not having specific data on the unrepresented group, the city representative played a pivotal role in generating a job demand report tailored to our proposal.

BENEFIT TO PARTICIPANTS / EMPLOYERS

PARTICIPANT: **JACOB**

THE CLEANER PROGRAM PILOT

JACOB initially became involved in the project as an 18 year old student facing challenges in the secondary program. Struggling to earn credits and exhibiting concerning behaviours, it was apparent that a different approach was needed, as the existing methods were not proving effective.

Jacob's goals were to attend school regularly, earn credits, and ultimately graduate with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). His aspirations were tied to working as a cleaner at Health Sciences North alongside his father. We believe the incentive to work with his father gave him the motivation to complete the program. Jacob hoped to overcome the challenges he faced in the traditional educational setting, driven by the recent understanding of his Fetal Alcohol Syndrome diagnosis. His participation aimed to pave the way for success in earning his OSSD and pursuing a career aligned with his aspirations.

What sets Jacob's story apart is the unique perspective provided by his recent diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. This revelation adds depth to his journey, highlighting the challenges he had encountered throughout his elementary and secondary school years.

Jacob's participation yielded several positive outcomes. He successfully earned a co-op credit by completing the Cleaner program, he further completed the program without any issues or incidents and he also formed meaningful connections with friends, family, and service providers. Furthermore, **his co-op placement employer was impressed, leading to Jacob being hired for a part-time position.** This part-time employment not only provides financial independence but also allows him the flexibility to continue his studies at St. Albert Learning Centre, bringing him closer to achieving his full OSSD.

JACOB SAYS...

"Never give up on your dreams no matter how big or small and follow your heart." These words capture the spirit of his journey, emphasizing resilience, determination, and the pursuit of personal aspirations. Additionally, Jacob highlights a practical skill acquired during the program, stating, "I learned how to work safely using PPE."

This showcases the tangible and practical knowledge gained through his participation in the program, underscoring its real-world impact on his life. Jacob's story serves as an inspiring testament to the transformative power of education, determination, and the pursuit of one's dreams.

PARTICIPANT: **JOEY**

THE CLEANER PROGRAM PILOT

JOEY, a 30 year old graduate of the cleaner program at St. Albert Learning Centre, embarked on a transformative journey after spending three years at home due to the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic. Born with Williams Syndrome, Joey's resilience and pursuit of growth became even more pronounced as he navigated these unique circumstances.

Acknowledging Joey's potential and recognizing the need for opportunities, Mrs. Rasso, the current principal of St. Albert Learning Centre, extended an invitation for him to enroll in the cleaner program. This decision was influenced by a shared history between his parents and Mrs. Rasso, who, having been one of Joey's primary education teachers, observed his determination and potential during his early years of development.

Joey's primary goal in joining the program was to graduate and acquire tangible job skills. His journey unfolds as a remarkable tale of overcoming challenges, as he had previously attended a private college in the United States for five years, majoring in music and art despite his Williams Syndrome. This prior experience, including cleaning a yoga studio with classmates, laid the foundation for the skills he further developed at St. Albert's, providing him with a more comprehensive understanding of effective cleaning techniques.

Joey's narrative unfolds as a testament to his remarkable accomplishments, consistently positive and well-mannered demeanor, and self-motivation. His ability to transcend obstacles and achieve success not only shaped his personal journey but also had a broader impact on the school community. One unexpected yet inevitable outcome was the shift in attitudes and perceptions towards individuals with disabilities within the school. Previously seen primarily as a second-chance institution for those without an OSSD, the school's reputation did not extend to serving individuals with intellectual disabilities. However, Joey's presence and success became a catalyst for change, fostering a more accepting environment and encouraging everyone to recognize possibilities beyond disabilities.

This transformation was evident, with the school shedding its prior image and embracing a newfound understanding. The seriousness of an adult education school took on a brighter tone with Joey's daily radiant smile and positive attitude. Mrs. Rasso remarked upon the tangible difference that Joey's presence brought to the overall atmosphere of the school. **His journey not only enhanced his personal and professional growth but also sparked a positive ripple effect, reshaping perceptions and fostering a more inclusive and optimistic educational community.**

Joey's profound impact extends beyond his individual journey, echoing the sentiment he shares with a powerful statement: **"Just believe in yourself."** This case study serves as more than a testament to the resilience of one individual; it stands as a testament to the transformative power of inclusion.

Joey's participation in the program has been instrumental in reshaping perceptions and fostering a more inclusive environment within our school community. His journey not only emphasizes the significance of mentorship and support in nurturing personal and professional growth but also underscores the broader societal importance of embracing and empowering individuals with unique challenges, such as Williams Syndrome.

Joey brought immeasurable joy to everyone, especially the staff, infusing the school with positivity and creating an atmosphere where belief in oneself and others flourishes. By believing in ourselves and each other, we contribute to a more compassionate and supportive community, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

CHRISTINA RASSO, PRINCIPAL

"Having had the privilege of teaching both Joey and Jacob years ago, it is a source of great pride that, in my current role as the principal of an adult education school, I have the opportunity to witness the unique journeys of success each student has undertaken. These exceptional individuals, who faced distinct challenges, exemplify the positive outcomes that our initiative can achieve.

Although our first round of participation saw only two students, the success stories of both Joey and Jacob serve as powerful testaments to the impact of our program. Their achievements not only underscore their personal determination but also emphasize the importance of tailored educational approaches."

