Curriculum Resource

Finding Services in Your Community

As a result of the multiple challenges faced by underrepresented adults in Literacy and Basic Skills programs, there is often an increased need for supports and services. Finding these supports can also be a challenge. CLO's Finding Services in Your Community provides tips about finding in-person and online services for learners based on their unique set of barriers and challenges. Using a problem-solving model can help to identify the need and the appropriate service(s).

This resource has been developed to support adult learners with Level 1 skills as they work towards their individual goals of work, further education and training, apprenticeship, or independence. It has links to both the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework and the Skills for Success model.

OALCF Alignment

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	**B2. Write continuous text**	**1**
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	**B3. Complete and create documents**	**2**
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	**N/A**	**1**
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	**N/A**	**2**
Competency E - Manage Learning	**N/A**	**1**

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

☒ Employment   ☒ Postsecondary
☒ Apprenticeship   ☒ Independence
☒ Secondary School Credit

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

☐ Adaptability   ☐ Numeracy
☐ Collaboration   ☒ Problem Solving
☐ Communication   ☐ Reading
☐ Creativity and innovation   ☐ Writing
☒ Digital

Notes: B3.2a

COMMUNITY LITERACY OF ONTARIO
Finding Services in Your Community

Introduction

Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) is pleased to share our **Finding Services in Your Community** resource. CLO has been funded by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to develop seven curriculum resources that meet the needs of underrepresented learners, introduce the Government of Canada's **Skills for Success** model, and align with the **Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework**.

Adult learners in Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs typically face multiple challenges besides low levels of literacy. From CLO's perspective, underrepresented learners are the adult learners in LBS programs who face additional barriers that make thriving in Ontario more difficult. Factors include but are not limited to:

- Poverty

- Disabilities

- Mental health issues

- Age-related challenges

- Learners who are Indigenous persons, visible minorities, or immigrants

- Gender inequality

- Sexual orientation discrimination

- Other socio-economic inequities

As a result of the multiple challenges faced by underrepresented adults in Literacy and Basic Skills programs, there is often an increased need for supports and services. Finding these supports can also be a challenge. CLO's *Finding Services in Your Community* provides tips about finding in-person and online services for learners based on their unique set of barriers and challenges. Using a problem-solving model can help to identify the need and the appropriate service(s).

This resource has been developed to support adult learners with Level 1 skills as they work towards their individual goals of work, further education and training, apprenticeship, or independence. It has links to both the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework and the Skills for Success model.

In May 2021, the Government of Canada introduced an update to its Essential Skills model. The updated model has been renamed **Skills for Success**. Information about the Skills for Success (SFS) model is available on the SFS website.

While developing our resources, CLO looked at the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation's (SRDC) research on the Skills for Success model. Literacy practitioners will be interested in the SRDC's *Skills for Success Implementation Guidance Final Report* as it supports implementation of the individual skills in the model. The SRDC's research report to support the launch of *Skills for Success: Structure evidence and recommendations – Final Report* is also recommended reading.

For Practitioners – More on the Skills for Success

While there are **nine Skills for Success**, in this resource CLO focusses, in part, on entry level skill components of Problem Solving. The information shared in this section is available in greater detail on the Skills for Success website.

Problem Solving

Problem solving is your ability to identify, analyze, propose solutions and make decisions. Problem solving helps you to address issues, monitor success and learn from the experience.

Problem Solving: Entry Level Proficiency

You can make decisions or solve problems when there are limited or familiar variables, all the information is provided, and the stakes are low with few consequences. You can use your general knowledge and skills to process information, do simple or routine troubleshooting if needed, identify the decision or solution, and confirm the issue is resolved.

Why is Problem Solving Important?

There are many factors that influence your choices every day. The way that you use information to make decisions and approach problems is impacted by many factors based on your individual circumstances. Strong problem-solving abilities will help you make informed decisions and support you as you solve problems that arise at home, work and socially.

Practitioners can read about the definitions, components and proficiency levels for the **nine Skills for Success** on the Government of Canada's website. For more information about the proficiencies, you can also read the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation's (SRDC) *Skills for Success Implementation Guidance Final Report*

Finding Services in Your Community is designed for Level 1 learners in Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills program.

Literacy practitioners can verbally share the content with learners with Level 1 skills. Learners with higher skill levels could use this resource independently.

Finding Services in Your Community

Finding Services in Your Community contains four sections:

1. About Community Services
2. Tips for Finding Services in Your Community
3. Finding the Services You Need: A Scenario
4. Supporting Activity

Section 1 – About Community Services

Just what are Community Services?

Community services can help people who have greater needs and fewer opportunities.

We all need help from community services. This could be because:

- We need help finding or paying for housing.

- We need income support.

- We want to find a new job.

- We want to improve our skills.

- We need mental health support for our family or ourselves.

- We need to find daycare for our kids.

- Our parents are getting old and need more support.

> **Asking for help is never a sign of weakness. It's one of the bravest things you can do."**
>
> **Lily Collins**

Services in Your Community

There are many different types of community services, including:

- Literacy and Basic Skills programs
- Employment services
- Ontario Works
- Ontario Disability Support Program
- Employment Insurance
- Home and Community Care
- Services for people with disabilities
- Supports for people with certain diseases
- And so much more…

Bigger cities such as Toronto and Ottawa have more services available. Sometimes people must travel to bigger cities to get services.

Many different organizations provide the services that help.

- The Governments of Canada, Ontario and even municipalities provide services.

- Nonprofit organizations provide many services.

- Large organizations have service sites in communities across Ontario. Small community-based organizations provide services only locally.

- Services are offered both in person and online.

- Some services are known by most people, such as hospital services. Other services aren't well known.

Sometimes, knowing **how** to access services may be difficult or confusing. Then it can be hard to get help if you need it. We will help you learn how in Section 2.

People need and deserve services to help their families and themselves!

Online Services

More services are now offered online.

There are many good things about online services. This has made services more available. Here are some examples:

- You can have an online appointment with a heart specialist who lives in a different city. You don't even need to leave home.

- You can get counselling services online when it suits you best.

- You can attend an online support group with people across Ontario.

- You can attend an online meeting to learn how to help a family member with dementia.

- You may be able to get an online appointment faster than waiting for an in-person appointment.

There are some negative things about online services, too. Here are some examples:

- You may miss connecting in person. Online can feel cold and less friendly.

- Sometimes, it's hard to access online services.
    - You may not have good digital literacy skills.
    - Internet use may be too expensive.
    - You may not even have access to internet.

- If online services are hard for you, you could:
    - Tell people you find it hard to use online services. Ask if you could get services in person.
    - Ask for help in accessing the online services. For example, someone could help you go online for your appointment.
    - You could improve your digital skills. Ask your literacy practitioner about how to do this.

Something to Think About…

Did you know that there are many different community services? Share your thoughts with another learner or practitioner.

Section 2 – Tips for Finding Community Services

It can be hard to find services! Here are some top tips to find community services:

- ### Tip #1 – Contact 211 Ontario

211 Ontario is a **great** resource! It is a telephone helpline that connects people to services. 211 can find social services, programs and supports in **your** community. You can talk over the phone to a **real live person.** They can tell you where to find the services you need. 211 offers services in many languages. You can also search 211's website.

211 covers many topics areas, including:

- Disabilities
- Emergency services
- Employment and training
- Financial assistance
- Food
- Healthcare
- Homelessness

- Housing
- Indigenous
- LGBTQ+
- Mental health
- Newcomers
- Older adults
- Youth

Here is how you can connect with 211 Ontario:

- Call 211

- Text 211

- Go to the 211 website at https://211ontario.ca/

- Email gethelp@211ontario.ca

- Chat with them online at https://211ontario.ca/chat/

Their telephone services are available Monday to Friday from 7am to 9pm. Their website can be used at any time to find information.

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211 Ontario in Action - Practitioner Demonstration:

A practitioner can easily call 211 on their smart phone and use the speaker to allow the learner(s) to hear how this service works. Sample questions could be:

- I need food. Can you help me?
- I lost my health card. How can I get a new one?

• Tip #2 – Get Your Information from Trusted Sources

We live in an information age. This means we get a lot of information. Some of that information isn't true. It can be hard to know the best services for you. Here are some ways to find **good information** about services:

- ## Ask people who work in that area
  - People who do the job will know where you should go. For example, you want to know more about homecare for your dad. You can ask a friend who is a Personal Support Worker.

- ## Ask people who have used those services
  - A person who has already used a service can recommend it. For example, your son has mental health issues. You can ask a parent who got help for the same thing.

- ## Contact your public library
  - Librarians are great at helping people find information. You can go into your library and ask for information, or you can call or email them.

- ## Ask your literacy practitioner
  - Literacy practitioners know a lot about different community services!

- **Contact trusted organizations**
  - o Some organizations have operated for many years. They have always provided good services. Many people know about them and trust them. Here are some examples of trusted organizations:
    - Canadian Cancer Society – for families impacted by cancer
    - Canadian Mental Health Association – for mental health issues
    - Alzheimer's Society – for those impacted by dementia

- **Search online**
  - o Search the internet for the services you need. But be careful with online information. Some of it is true. Some of it is not. We talk more about this in the next section.
  - o Ask for recommendations in your local community Facebook group. Many of these groups will now let you post anonymously if you don't feel comfortable asking for sensitive information on social media.

• Tip #3 – Find Reliable Information on the Internet

Searching online is a great way to find information and services. There is a lot of reliable information on the internet. Reliable means it can be believed and trusted.

But you need to be careful. There is also a lot of wrong information. For example,

- Fake news about services. Fake news includes false stories that look like real news. Fake news is spread on the internet and social media.

- There are even fraud attempts. A fraud is something that is not what it looks to be. Websites that are frauds offer unreal services. But it is a trick to get your money or personal information.

You may not know how to search the internet very well. That's okay. Ask others for help finding reliable services. Librarians, your literacy practitioner and others you trust could help.

Also, call 211 Ontario. We showed you how to contact 211 earlier. They will help you find trusted services!

Make sure you are getting true information about services when you are online. Here are some things to watch out for:

- What is the purpose of the website?

    o Is the website providing helpful information?

    o Or is it trying to sell things to you or get personal information?

- Search the name of the website on Google.

    o Search for the website or organization name. This may show negative reviews. People may have written about problems with the website.

    o Check their Facebook page. You can see how long it has been on Facebook. You can see if they often make posts. You might be able to see reviews and ratings, too.

- If you aren't sure about whether a website is reliable, ask someone you trust.

Something to Think About...

How could you get trusted information about services for you or your family?

Share your thoughts with another learner or literacy practitioner.

Section 3 – Finding Community Services: A Scenario

Wendy lives in Orillia with her two teenaged sons. Her 82-year old mother Myra also lives with them. Wendy works full-time at the Post Office. She also cares for her mother. Her mother has problems with her eyes. Wendy finds that her mother suddenly needs more care. It is getting very difficult for both Wendy and Myra.

How can Wendy use problem solving to find services for her family?

STEP 1: Identify the need

- Recently, Wendy's mother Myra learned she has serious vision loss. She is almost blind. The whole family is confused and upset. They don't know what they will do to manage.

- Wendy knows that her family needs more help and services.

- Myra needs help at home during the day when Wendy works.

- Myra needs to learn about technology to help with low vision.

- Wendy is stressed. There is so much to do!

STEP 2: Gather information

- Wendy calls 211 to ask about community services for Myra.
- Wendy also asks a co-worker for ideas. Her co-worker has faced this same situation.
- Wendy searches the internet for ideas.
- Wendy asks for ideas on a community Facebook group for Orillia.

STEP 3: Explore possible actions

- Wendy learns about three different organizations that can help Myra:

  o Home and Community Care Support Services
    - *They can provide free homecare services for Myra two times per week.*

  o CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind)
    - *They can teach Myra to use technology to help with vision loss.*

  o Private homecare services
    - *They can provide in-home services to Myra for $35 per hour.*

STEP 4: Decide the best action to take

- Wendy cannot afford private homecare for her mother.

- She considers Home and Community Care Support Services. Two days a week is not enough, but Wendy has no choice. She will try it out and decide what to do later.

- The CNIB services will help Myra very much.

STEP 5: Act

- Wendy contacts the CNIB and Home and Community Care Support Services. They will start helping Myra as soon as possible.

STEP 6: Did it work?

- Myra has been getting services for three months. She likes the CNIB services. Myra has learned about technologies to help her with vision loss.

- Homecare twice per week is still not enough. Myra needs help every day with lunch.

- Home and Community Care Support Services arranged for Myra to receive "Meals on Wheels" lunches five days per week.

- Things are still hard, but they are better. The community services have helped the family live with Myra's vision loss.

Something to Think About...

Do you think Wendy made good choices? Why or why not?
Share your thoughts with another learner or practitioner.

Section 4 – Supporting Activity – 211 Ontario website

Instructions for Practitioners

After sharing the content from this resource with the learner(s), you can ask them to complete the following activity. This activity is suitable for an individual learner or for a small group of learners.

The following activity incorporates elements of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework's (OALCF) Competencies with Level 1 and 2 Tasks and Indicators. The OALCF Competency, Task Group and Level indicators, and Skills for Success components and proficiencies can be used to discuss performance, determine skill progression, and identify some possible next steps to further develop learner proficiency.

While the activity also contains other Skills for Success, in this resource we are focussing on the Problem Solving and Digital skills. Detailed information about the components and proficiency levels for all of the **nine Skills for Success** is available on the Government of Canada's Skills for Success website.

Tasks 1 - 6 incorporate various skill components and elements of Entry Level proficiency (Skills for Success) from the Problem Solving and Digital skills.

Problem Solving: Entry Level Proficiency

You can make decisions or solve problems when there are limited or familiar variables, all of the information is provided, and the stakes are low with few consequences. You can use your general knowledge and skills to process information, do simple or routine troubleshooting if needed, identify the decision or solution, and confirm the issue is resolved.

Digital: Entry Level Proficiency

You can use basic functions of familiar digital devices. You need guidance to find and evaluate the relevance and reliability of online information, and to engage in safe online practices.

A computer, smart phone or tablet will be used during this activity. A blank sheet of paper and pen are required. A copy of the Problem Solving Components Chart and the Digital Components Chart will also be required for the final task.

ACTIVITY

Introduction to the activity

Remind learners about the wide range of services that are available in your community. Often these services assist you with a problem or support people through difficult times in their lives. You can provide some examples from Section 1 and Section 2:

- Literacy and Basic Skills programs
- Training and employment services
- Ontario Works
- Employment Insurance
- Healthcare
- Services for people with disabilities
- Financial services
- Housing support

As mentioned in Section 2, one way to look for services to help you when difficult times or situations happen is to use the 211 website.

Practitioners, please write the link to the 211 website where it is easily visible to the learner(s). https://211ontario.ca/

Task 1 – Open the 211 Ontario website

Ask the learner(s) to use their computer, phone or tablet to open the 211 website using the link you have provided.

Ask learners to click on the Welcome icon – there will be the option of English or French.

Practitioners can help with accessing the website, if necessary.

This task incorporates elements of the following OALCF Competency:

Competency D: Use Digital Technology
- Task Group: No Task Group
  - D.1 Perform simple digital tasks according to a set procedure

Task 2 – Review the topics on the 211 Ontario website

Ask the learner(s) to take a few minutes to look at the topics on the 211 website.

Ask the learner(s) to write down three topics that might provide them with information that could be useful in their everyday life.

This task incorporates elements of the following OALCF Competencies:

Competency D: Use Digital Technology
- Task Group: No Task Group
  - D.1 Perform simple digital tasks according to a set procedure

Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information
- Task Group: Write continuous text (B2)
  - B2.1 Write brief texts to convey simple ideas and factual information

Task 3 – Enter your location

Before the learner(s) can use the website, they will need to enter their location in the box at the top left corner of the page.

Ask the learner to enter their location.

Practitioner support may be required for this task.

FIND COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL RESOURCES

| Topics | FAQ | Map | Advanced Search |

Enter Your Location (Required*)

Barrie

Enter Your Keywords or Choose a Topic Below

Search terms

Sea

This task incorporates elements of the following OALCF Competencies:
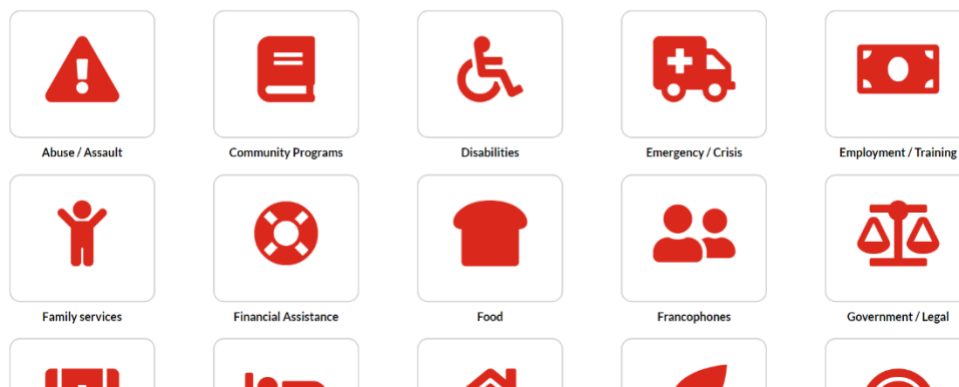
Competency D: Use Digital Technology
- Task Group: No Task Group
    - D.1 Perform simple digital tasks according to a set procedure

Task 4 – Choose a topic to explore

Ask the learner(s) to choose one topic from their list to focus on. They should choose an area where they or someone they know could use support with a specific need or challenge. Ask learners to click on the icon for that topic.

FIND RESOURCES BY TOPIC

Abuse / Assault · Community Programs · Disabilities · Emergency / Crisis · Employment / Training

Family services · Financial Assistance · Food · Francophones · Government / Legal

This task incorporates elements of the following OALCF Competency:

Competency D: Use Digital Technology
- Task Group: No Task Group
    - D.1 Perform simple digital tasks according to a set procedure

Task 5 – Explore the resources

Ask the learner(s) to take 10 minutes to briefly look at some of the different resources that are listed under this topic. **If learners are not comfortable navigating in and out of the different resources on their own, practitioner assistance may be required.**

This task incorporates elements of the following OALCF Competency:

Competency D: Use Digital Technology
- Task Group: No Task Group
  - o D.2 Perform well-defined, multi-step digital tasks

Task 6 – Reflect on the resources

Ask the learner(s) to think about how these resources could be used to support the need or challenge they chose.

This task incorporates elements of the following OALCF Competency:

Competency E: Manage Learning
- Task Group: No Task Group
  - o E.1 Set short-term goals, begin to use limited learning strategies, and begin to monitor own learning

Task 7 – Problem Solving Components Chart

This chart encourages self-reflection and reinforces some of the Problem Solving skill components used in the first six tasks.

Practitioner assistance may be required to support the learner(s) with lower skill levels as they complete the chart.

This chart can be adapted to reflect the Problem-Solving skill components to suit individual learner's goals and skill levels. The full components list is available on the Skills for Success website.

The wording of the skill components has been simplified in the following chart to better meet the needs of adults in Literacy and Basic Skills programs.

Ask the learner(s) to complete the Problem Solving Chart using checkmarks to show how they used Problem Solving when they chose one topic from the 211 Ontario website for their focus.

Practitioner instructions to learner(s):

Earlier, we talked about services in the community that can support you in different aspects of your life. In our activity, you visited the 211 website. You chose one topic to focus on that might support you or someone you know with a specific need or challenge in that topic area.

The questions in this chart are about ways you might have used problem solving as you explored the 211 website.

Place a checkmark beside each question to show how you used problem solving in the activity.

When you visited the 211 Ontario website, did you	A lot	A little	Not at all
• Make a list of topic areas that might be useful to you in your everyday life?			
• Identify one topic that could support you or someone you know with a specific need or challenge?			
• Look at some of the resources under this topic area?			
• Think about how these resources could be used to support the need or challenge?			

This chart incorporates elements of the following OALCF Competencies and Task Groups:

Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information
- Task Group: Complete and create documents (B3)
  - B3.2 a Use layout to determine were to make entries in simple documents

Competency E: Manage Learning
- Task Group: No Task Group
  - E.1 Set short-term goals, begin to use limited learning strategies, and begin to monitor own learning

Task 8 – Digital Components Chart

This chart encourages self-reflection and reinforces some of the Digital skill components used in the first six tasks.

Practitioner assistance may be required to support the learner(s) with lower skill levels as they complete the chart.

This chart can be adapted to reflect the Digital skill components to suit individual learner's goals and skill levels. The full components list is available on the Skills for Success website.

The wording of the skill components has been simplified in the following chart to better meet the needs of adults in Literacy and Basic Skills programs.

Ask the learner(s) to complete the Digital Components Chart using checkmarks to show how they used Digital skills when using the 211 Ontario website.

Practitioner instructions to learner(s):

During our earlier activity, you visited the 211 website. The questions in this chart are about ways you might have used digital skills as you explored the 211 website.

Place a checkmark beside each question to show how you used digital skills in the activity.

When you visited the 211 Ontario website, did you	A lot	A little	Not at all
• Use a computer, tablet or smart phone?			
• Know how to open the website?			
• Know how to enter your location?			
• Know how to click on the topic icons?			
• Know how to scroll through the resources?			

This chart incorporates elements of the following OALCF Competencies and Task Groups:

Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information
- Task Group: Complete and create documents (B3)
  - B3.2 a Use layout to determine were to make entries in simple documents

Competency E: Manage Learning
- Task Group: No Task Group
  - E.1 Set short-term goals, begin to use limited learning strategies, and begin to monitor own learning