

**CURRICULUM RESOURCE**

**Exploring Employment as a Greenhouse Worker**

**Exploring Employment as a Greenhouse Worker** will help adult learners enrolled in Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program who are interested in learning more about becoming greenhouse workers.

**Exploring Employment as a Greenhouse Worker** provides an overview of the hard and soft skills needed to work as a greenhouse worker. This resource embeds the Government of Canada’s Skills for Success model. Embedded tasks and the Supporting Activity align with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework and have been designed for learners with Level 2 skills.

**OALCF ALIGNMENT**

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	1
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A2. Interpret documents	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A3. Extract information from films, broadcasts, and presentations	N/A
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B2. Write continuous text	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B2. Write continuous text	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	2
Competency C - Understand and Use Numbers	C3. Use measures	2
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	N/A	1
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	N/A	2
Competency E - Manage Learning	N/A	2

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary School Credit
- Postsecondary
- Independence

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

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

NOTES:

## Acknowledgments



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The opinions expressed in this report are the opinions of Community Literacy of Ontario and do not necessarily reflect those of our funders.

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# EXPLORING EMPLOYMENT AS A GREENHOUSE WORKER

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## Introduction – For Practitioners

**Exploring Employment as a Greenhouse Worker** will help adult learners enrolled in Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program who are interested in learning more about becoming greenhouse workers.

**Exploring Employment as a Greenhouse Worker** provides an overview of the hard and soft skills needed to work as a greenhouse worker. This resource embeds the Government of Canada’s Skills for Success model. Tasks and the Supporting Activity align with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework.

This curriculum resource was researched and written by Jette Cosburn and Joanne Kaattari for Community Literacy of Ontario in the summer of 2023.

**This resource has been designed for learners with Level 2 skills.**

### Skills for Success

In 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 model is available on the government’s website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html>

### Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF)

The OALCF is a competency-based framework that Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills programs use to develop programs for each person receiving literacy support. The six competencies support learners as they work towards one or more of five goal paths:

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary School Credit
- Postsecondary
- Independence

For more information about the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework, visit the Ontario Government’s website at [https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs\\_oalcf\\_overview.html](https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs_oalcf_overview.html)

## Section 1 – Introduction to Working as a Greenhouse Worker

Do you enjoy growing and taking care of plants, flowers, shrubs, and trees? Then a job as a greenhouse worker might be good for you! This resource will help you to learn more about working as a greenhouse worker.

Community Literacy of Ontario's **Exploring Employment as a Greenhouse Worker** contains seven sections.

1. Introduction to Working as a Greenhouse Worker
  - What Does a Greenhouse Worker Do?
  - How Much Does a Greenhouse Worker Earn?
  - What Skills Does a Greenhouse Worker Need?
2. Ways to Get Training as a Greenhouse Worker
3. Greenhouse Workers and the Skills for Success
4. Would a Greenhouse Worker be a Good Job for Me?
5. Planning Your Next Steps
6. Supporting Activity
7. Additional Resources for Practitioners



## What Do Greenhouse Workers Do?

Here are some of the duties of a greenhouse worker:

- prepares soil for planting
- plants bulbs, seeds, and cuttings
- cares for trees, shrubs, flowers, and plants
- spray plants to prevent disease and pests
- waters plants
- prepares plants for sale
- gives information to customers
- serves customers
- maintains inventory
- orders materials

(Source: Canada Job Bank)

Watch this short video from WorkBC's Career Trek. It shows what it's like to work as a greenhouse worker:

<https://youtu.be/8zt55n163xc>



### ✓ Task:

Watch the video. List three duties that the greenhouse worker in the video does as part of their job.

\*\*Practitioners: Answer Key: Page 26

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A3, B2.1

SFS: Writing

### ✓ Task:

Discuss some of the greenhouse job features mentioned in the video with your teacher. For example, physical work. Share whether these are job features that you are interested in and why.

\*\*Practitioners: Answer Key: Page 26

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A3, B1.2

SFS: Communication

## How Much Does a Greenhouse Worker Earn?

In Ontario, as of June 2023, greenhouse workers earn an average of \$17.50 per hour.

## What Skills Does a Greenhouse Worker Need?

A greenhouse worker needs to know many things. You need both hard skills and soft skills to be a greenhouse worker. You do not need to have these skills now. If you choose to become a greenhouse worker, your employer and your co-workers will teach you what you need to know.

You can:

- learn many skills on the job
- build your skills by taking courses in person or online
- find helpful information on the internet

### HARD SKILLS

Hard skills mean the skills you need to do a specific job. They are skills you can learn. For example, knowing what the best fertilizer is to use for different types of plants is a hard skill. These are skills related to the job of a greenhouse worker.

Here are some examples of hard skills needed by greenhouse workers:

- prepare the soil to plant different kinds of flowers, trees, and plants
- spray plants to protect them from pests and diseases
- understand how to use pesticides safely
- read instructions on how to care for plants
- communicate with customers and answer their questions
- use machinery, such as a tractor or a forklift (this only applies to some jobs and special training would be provided for this skill)



#### Task:

Look at the examples of the hard skills used by greenhouse workers. Discuss with your teacher or classmates whether you have used any of these skills at home or at a previous job. If you haven't used any of these skills, discuss ways that you could learn more about these skills.

**\*\*Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A1.1, B1.2

SFS: Communication, Reading



## SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills are personal qualities that you have. There are many kinds of soft skills. These are skills such as being friendly with customers. You can use soft skills in any job. These are skills you can also use at home and in the community.

Here are some examples of soft skills needed by greenhouse workers.

Greenhouse workers:

- enjoy learning
- can adapt to different situations
- communicate well with others
- listen to others
- show good customer service
- work well in a team
- follow instructions
- show up to work on time

For those who would like to learn more about other skills that greenhouse workers need, you could visit the Canada Job Bank website:

<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/summary-occupation/23339/ca>

### Task:

Look at the examples of the soft skills used by greenhouse workers. Discuss with your teacher two or more soft skills you might like to work on in the next month. Think about ways you can work on them. Set a date to talk about your progress.

**\*\*Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A1.2, B1.2, E2

SFS: Communication, Problem Solving, Reading

## Section 2 – Ways to Get Training as a Greenhouse Worker

### HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

Many employers prefer to hire greenhouse workers with a high school diploma. However, for some entry-level positions, the level of education needed may be lower.

If you want to upgrade and get your high school diploma, talk to a Literacy and Basic Skills practitioner about how you can do this.

### ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

The most common way to get training as a greenhouse worker is through on-the-job training. Supervisors and experienced co-workers provide basic training to new greenhouse workers.

This on-the-job training helps greenhouse workers know how to plant, care for, and harvest flowers, plants, and trees. Employees would also be trained in health and safety procedures, such as learning how to use pesticides safely.

### COLLEGE COURSES

The position of greenhouse worker does not require a college education. However, if you are interested in building your skills in this area, Ontario's colleges offer many interesting courses.

Here are some of the courses offered at Ontario colleges:

- Horticulture Technician
- Horticulture – Food and Farming
- Cannabis Production
- Greenhouse Technician



For learners who would like to learn more about college courses, you could visit this website: <https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en/programs/agriculture-animal-and-related-practices/horticulture-landscaping>

## APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeships are not available for greenhouse workers.

If learners are interested in other trades related to this topic, they could visit the Skilled Trades Ontario website at <https://www.skilledtradesontario.ca/>

## DIGITAL RESOURCES

You can also learn via websites, YouTube videos, and more. What are you interested in learning? Search the internet and you will find many learning opportunities!

### ✓ Task:

Look at the different ways to get training to become a greenhouse worker. Make a chart that shows what you think the pros and cons for each way would be if you wanted to take training. For example:

Highschool Diploma: Pro

It will help me with  
any job I apply for.

Con

I left in Grade 10, so it  
might take me awhile to get it

\*\*Practitioners:

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A1.2, B3.2b

SFS: Reading, Writing

## Section 3 – Greenhouse Workers and the Skills for Success

The Skills for Success are the everyday skills Canadians need for work, learning, and life. All nine Skills for Success are required to be a greenhouse worker.



### Adaptability

Adaptability is being able to change your goals when things change around you.

Here are some ways that adaptability skills are used by greenhouse workers:

- For two years, a greenhouse worker has worked planting and growing vegetables. They like working in this area. Their boss asks them to change areas and work with flowers instead. At first, the greenhouse worker does not want to work in a new area. But when they get used to the idea, they realize it might be interesting to learn about flowers.
- A greenhouse worker is busy watering plants. Customers keep interrupting them with questions. It feels like they will never finish watering the plants. The greenhouse worker doesn't want to get in trouble. They ask their supervisor what they should do. The supervisor says to always serve the customer first.



### Collaboration

Collaboration means working well with other people.

Here are some ways that collaboration skills are used by greenhouse workers:

- In early spring, it's time to plant flower and vegetable seeds. It's a big job and a whole team shares the work.
- On Mother's Day weekend, it seems like everyone wants to come to the greenhouse! All greenhouse workers must work together to make sure that all customers get great service.
- Moving heavy plant trays is hard. Greenhouse workers take turns doing this job. They make sure everyone has a mix of hard and easier jobs.



## Communication

Communication is your ability to speak, listen, and share information and ideas.

Here are some ways that communication skills are used by greenhouse workers:

- Greenhouse workers communicate with their co-workers and supervisors about the work that needs to be done each day.
- In commercial greenhouses, greenhouse workers talk to customers.
  - They might:
    - share where to find plants or flowers
    - tell customers how to care for their plants
    - tell customers the best way to plant roses
- Greenhouse workers ask their boss or co-workers questions about things they don't understand. For example, they might ask what kind of spray should be used when a rose is being eaten by beetles.



## Creativity and Innovation

Creativity and innovation mean you can imagine and come up with new ideas.

Here are some ways that creativity and innovation are used by greenhouse workers:

- A greenhouse worker notices that many customers are asking to buy trilliums for their gardens. Their greenhouse does not have any trilliums for sale. The greenhouse worker searches the internet and learns that there is a wildflower farm nearby. They share this information with their boss. The boss agrees to order trilliums from this farm for their customers.
- A customer from Manitoba tells a greenhouse worker about a new kind of rose that is very popular in their province. The greenhouse worker looks up this rose online and sees that it is very beautiful. They also learn that this rose grows well in cold climates. The greenhouse worker tells the boss about this new rose and shares the information they found on the internet. The boss decides to order this rose for customers.



## Digital

Digital skills mean your ability to use digital technology to find, create, and share information and content.

Here are some ways that digital skills are used by greenhouse workers.

Greenhouse workers might:

- access training via online courses, videos, and websites
- use Excel spreadsheets for inventory control
- look up answers on the internet when a customer asks a difficult question
- operate an electronic cash register
- download apps to help them identify plants
- post pictures on the company's Facebook page



## Numeracy

Numeracy means you can work with and understand math.

Here are some ways that math skills are used by greenhouse workers.

Greenhouse workers might:

- calculate the amount of fertilizer a customer needs based on the size of their lawn
- review inventory and order more products when supplies are low
- estimate the cost of creating a small vegetable garden for a customer
- figure out how much plant food to add to a litre of water based on the information on the product label
- calculate how much fertilizer to add to flowers, plants, and trees based on their type, size, and the requirements on the product label



## Problem solving

Problem solving means you can find solutions when things go wrong.

Here are some ways that problem-solving skills are used by greenhouse workers:

- A greenhouse worker notices that there is a caterpillar infestation in several birch trees. These birch trees are a favourite of many customers. The caterpillars could hurt the trees. The greenhouse worker looks in the manual to find the best way to safely get rid of caterpillars. They also check online for ideas. They confirm their solution with their supervisor.
- A greenhouse worker notices many of the flowers are looking very dry. Some are even dying! The flowers get watered once per day. The greenhouse worker suggests to their boss that the flowers need to be watered twice per day.
- The pipes freeze in one of the greenhouses on a cold day in the winter. The plants will die if action isn't taken. The greenhouse workers decide to cover the plants in blankets. Then, they quickly move them to another greenhouse.



## Reading

Reading is your ability to understand written words.

Here are some ways that reading skills are used by greenhouse workers.

Greenhouse workers:

- read training materials
- read instructions on product labels
- read workplace safety materials
- read memos from supervisors
- read their weekly shift schedule



## Writing

Writing means you share information and ideas using words and sentences.

Here are some ways that writing skills are used by greenhouse workers.

Greenhouse workers:

- write notes to other staff about
  - customer requests
  - out-of-stock items
  - issues that happened during a shift
- write notes to customers (for example, to tell them about the watering instructions for a new plant)
- write emails to customers with follow-up information
- fill out a form if an injury has occurred



### Task:

Read about the Skills for Success needed to be a greenhouse worker. Write an email describing your two strongest Skills for Success. Send the email to your teacher.

**\*\*Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A1.2, B2.2, D.1

SFS: Digital, Reading, Writing



## Section 4 – Would Greenhouse Worker be a Good Job for Me?

Here are some questions you could ask yourself to help you decide if a job as a greenhouse worker would be good for you.

Do you like caring for plants, flowers, and trees?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Can you do physical work and stand on your feet most of the day?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you like working with your hands?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Can you lift, load, and carry heavy items?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you work well with others?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you have good customer service skills?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you have good communication skills?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill

Do you like learning on the job?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Greenhouses can be hot, humid, and dirty. Lighting can be very bright in a greenhouse. Would you be comfortable working in a greenhouse environment?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Greenhouse workers often must work outdoors. The weather can be cold or hot, or windy or rainy. Are you comfortable working outdoors?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill

**Task:**

Complete the chart. Review your responses. Explain to your teacher why you would or would not be a good greenhouse worker.

**\*\*Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A2.2, B1.2, B3.2a,  
SFS: Communication, Problem Solving, Reading, Writing

This video gives a helpful overview of what it's like to work in a greenhouse. It also shares information on both the benefits and challenges: <https://youtu.be/KQJn6fJu6VM>



## Section 5 – Planning Your Next Steps

We've explored the basics of having a job as a greenhouse worker. We've looked at:

- What Does a Greenhouse Worker Do?
- How Much Does a Greenhouse Worker Earn?
- What Skills Does a Greenhouse Worker Need?
- Ways to Get Training as a Greenhouse Worker
- Greenhouse Workers and the Skills for Success
- Would Greenhouse Worker be a Good Job for Me?



Talk with a literacy practitioner about what you learned. Review any sections that you want to learn more about. If you are interested in being a greenhouse worker, here are some next steps you could take:

- Talk with a literacy practitioner about what you learned. Is greenhouse worker a job you want to learn more about? Your literacy practitioner can help you plan your next steps.
- Now you know more about the skills needed to be a greenhouse worker. Do you need to upgrade your reading, writing, or math skills? Do you need to complete your high school diploma? Do you need to work on some of your soft skills? Your literacy practitioner can help you figure this out.
- There are Literacy and Basic Skills Programs across Ontario that can help you upgrade your skills. Talk to your literacy practitioner about how you could do this.
- Your literacy practitioner can also refer you to Employment Services. Employment Services can tell you more about jobs and training. You can find a list of Employment Services on this website:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario>
- Learn more about this job to help you decide. Search YouTube for videos about working in a greenhouse. Look on the internet for ideas. Visit Indeed.ca or the Canada Job Bank to search for greenhouse worker jobs.

**Good luck in finding a job that suits your needs, skills, and interests!**

**✓ Task:**

Do a Google search using the words “greenhouse worker”. Make a list of five resources that you find during your search. Make a note of which resource interests you the most based on their short descriptions.

**\*\*Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A1.2, B2.2, B3.1b, D.2

SFS: Digital, Reading, Writing



## Section 6 – Supporting Activity

### Instructions for Practitioners

This **sample activity** can be used for learners interested in a career as a greenhouse worker. It is suitable for one learner or for a small group of learners. It can be changed to meet individual needs.

This activity uses elements of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework's (OALCF) Competencies with Level 1 and 2 Tasks and Indicators.

The tasks in this activity also include Entry and Intermediate components and elements of a variety of the Skills for Success (SFS). Descriptions of the SFS needed by a greenhouse worker are available in Section 3 of this resource. Visit the SFS website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html> if you would like more information about the SFS level components and elements.

A computer or tablet will be used during this activity.

## Activity

### Introduction to the Activity

It has been noted that greenhouse workers use many hard and soft skills in their jobs. They need to be able to problem solve, adapt to change, communicate, engage with others, and more. There are a variety of job duties that are part of a greenhouse worker's job description.

While the activity includes some of the skills that are often required for a greenhouse worker, it is focused on the learners' different skills and competencies required to complete each task.

## Task 1 – Make a list of soft skills

Ask the learner to make a chart of five skills a greenhouse worker might need to use if they were working in the store section of a greenhouse.

Ask the learner to prioritize each skill as very important, important, or less important.

The chart should have two categories: Skills and Priority/Importance. The learner can use examples from the different sections of this resource, or they can come up with their own. (B3.2b)

Some possible answers might be:

Actions	Priority / Importance (Very important /Important/ Less Important)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowing how to use the cash register</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being organized</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talking to customers</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solving problems</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing good customer service</li> </ul>	

### OALCF B3.2B:

#### Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information

- Task Group: Complete and Create Documents (B3)
- B3.2b: Create simple documents to sort, display, and organize information

#### Embedded Skills for Success:

- Writing

## Task 2 – Discuss the chart

Ask the learner to discuss with their teacher or classmates why they thought the skills in their chart were very important, important, or less important for someone wishing to be a greenhouse worker. (B1.2)

### OALCF B1.2:

#### Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information

- Task Group: Interact with others (B1)
- B1.2 Initiate and maintain interactions with one or more persons to discuss, explain, or exchange information and opinions

#### Embedded Skills for Success:

- Communication

## Task 3 – List ways to learn about plants

Ask the learner to write about three ways that a greenhouse worker could learn more about the plants in the greenhouse where they work. Ask the learner to share their ideas with the teacher or their classmates. (B1.2, B2.2)

### OALCF B1.2 and B2.2:

#### Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information

- Task Group: Interact with others (B1)
- B1.2. Initiate and maintain interactions with one or more persons to discuss, explain, or exchange information and opinions
  
- Task Group: Write continuous text (B2)
- Write texts to explain and describe information ideas

#### Embedded Skills for Success:

- Communication, Problem Solving, Writing

**Task 4 – Calculate potting soil**

Ask the learner to calculate how many bags of soil a greenhouse worker would need to pot 1,500 flowers, if one bag of soil pots 350 flowers. (C3.2)

**OALCF C3.2:**

Competency C: Understand and Use Numbers

- Task Group: Use Measures (C3)
- C3.2. Use measures to make one-step calculations

**Embedded Skills for Success:**

- Numeracy, Problem Solving





## Section 7 – Additional Resources for Practitioners

- Learn all about the Skills for Success at:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html>
- An excellent resource is the Government of Canada’s Occupational and Skills Information System (OaSIS). OaSIS provides a comprehensive framework of the skills, abilities, personal attributes, competencies, knowledge, interests, and employment requirements that are usually needed to work in over 900 different occupations. See: <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Oasis/OasisWelcome>  
Here is the OaSIS link to Greenhouse worker:  
<https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Oasis/ViewOccupationalProfile?objectid=8OqhxUM3Z3%2FMEfw3dELPoKrgywVwsKdFI13cc4e4rs3uitlt02yWdu2DVrwlAle>
- While not currently maintained or updated to the Skills for Success, here is the link to the Essential Skills Profiles for Greenhouse Workers:  
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/summary-occupation/23339/ca>  
These profiles contain helpful information on the essential skills required for the job.
- Here is the link to the Federal Government’s National Occupational Classification (NOC) Code information for Nursery and Greenhouse Labourers:  
<https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Structure/NocProfile?objectid=yOD0tnA%2Fi76eNmhg0WUpNMnGnsU3YU%2Fv7MHUQCP6abE%3D>
- If learners in your LBS program want to learn more on this topic, CLO and Tri County Literacy Council have created a helpful resource called “Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Worker Curriculum”:  
<https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/Landscaping%20Curriculum%20-%20Feb%205%202020.pdf>
- The Indeed.ca website has a Career Guide that clearly lays out the role of a Greenhouse Worker. Check out their video: What Does a Greenhouse Worker Do? <https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/what-does-greenhouse-worker-do>

## Section 8 – Answer Key

Watch this short video from WorkBC's Career Trek. It shows what it's like to work as a greenhouse worker: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zt55n163xc>

### ✓ Task – Page 7:

After watching the video, list three duties that the greenhouse worker in the video does as part of their job.

Possible Answers:

- Plant /nurture seeds
- Work with plants, flowers, shrubs, trees
- Work with customers
- Work in the store
- Transplant plants
- Mix soil
- Fertilize plants

\*\*Practitioners:

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A3, B2.1

SFS: Writing

### ✓ Task – Page 7:

Discuss with your teacher some of the greenhouse job features mentioned in the video - for example, physical work. Share whether these are job features that you are interested in and why.

Possible Answers:

- Physical work
- Hands-on-work
- Green thumb – like plants
- Sometimes can work alone
- Working/digging in the dirt – getting your hands dirty

\*\*Practitioners:

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A3, B1.2

SFS: Communication