



2023-2024  
**Hamilton Literacy Service Plan**

# Literacy and Basic Skills

Your Partner in Client Success

Community Report March 2023

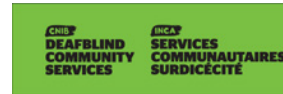
# Acknowledgements

This report is a collaboration of the Literacy Community Planning Committee. This committee consists of

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- Hamilton Employment Services
- Hamilton Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Learners
- Hamilton LBS Practitioners
- Learning Networks of Ontario (LNO)
- Provincial Support Organizations for Literacy (PSOL)
- Skills Development Flagship Members (including Ontario Works, Employment Ontario Employment Services and other employment and training providers in Hamilton)
- Western Region Community-Based Networking Group
- Workforce Planning Hamilton



# Highlights

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[Check out our Partnership Tool](#)

“I’m learning so much and I feel like what I’ve learned will prepare me for what comes next” (Learner, June 2022).

# Literacy and Basic Skills

A Critical Partner  
for Workforce  
Development

ABEA and local Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs work together to coordinate services and discuss ways to respond to emerging community needs. Our strength is strategic partnerships. Across the adult education network, we have deeply developed partnerships that support seamless learner transitions. For example, a learner may need individualized support from a tutor to work on fundamental literacy skills, while also attending a targeted training program to develop digital literacy skills to prepare for work. Or, network staff may meet with pre-apprenticeship clients to connect them with numeracy support to prepare them for the in-school portion of their program. Or, a program may partner with an employer to offer customized upgrading based on employee needs. In all cases, we ensure that clients and partners are also connected to the resources, supports and programs they need through service coordination and partnership development.

[Adult learning and literacy training in Ontario \(video, Ontario Government, 2 min\)](#)

# The Importance of Upskilling

It's not just about education on paper – it's also about the ever-evolving skills people need to succeed day-to-day – at home and on the job. Literacy and Basic Skills programs know that it's about getting the job, and it's about keeping the job. Employers continually cite foundational skills and soft skills as key issues for their labour force and/or talent pool. Employers need employees with up-to-date skills, and those skills are becoming more advanced, and entrenched in digital technology more and more.

## The Skills for Success are



Reading



Adaptability



Communication



Digital



Writing



Creativity and Innovation



Collaboration



Numeracy



Problem Solving

Learners are succeeding in Literacy and Basic Skills programs. 100% of learners consulted reported that they are making progress (Learner Consultation, June 2022).

## Literacy and Essential Skills (now Skills for Success)



are needed for work, learning and life



are the foundation for learning all other skills



help people evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change

Skills for Success are used in nearly every job, throughout daily life in different ways and at varying levels of complexity (from level 1 – basic, to level 5 – advanced) (Government of Canada, 2017).

**“I feel more prepared for the future”** (Learner, June 2022).

The Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework corresponds to the first 3 levels of the Skills for Success framework. They are used by all Ontario Literacy and Basic Skills programs.

Adults with higher skills have better outcomes in the labour market. They also typically have higher wages (The Survey of Adult Skills, OECD, 2018).

However, many Canadian adults have poor reading skills (17% scored at or below level 1) and poor numeracy skills (23% scored at or below level 1). Adults scoring at this level may **only** be able to complete reading tasks that involve short and simple texts and math tasks involving basic operations.

Low skills in literacy and numeracy can have significant effects on labour force attachment and can be a significant barrier to using digital technology – an ever increasing critical skill in the workforce. The pandemic has certainly shed a light on the importance of digital technology skills. Without them, and the ability to continue to learn new skills – many people will be left behind.

[The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies \(PIAAC\)](#) was released in 2013. It is an international study of adults measuring literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments.

## Some key findings



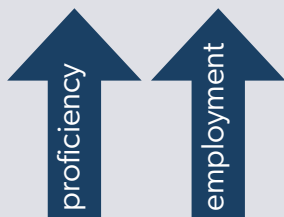
**More education does not automatically translate into better skills.** The longer a person is out of formal education, the weaker the direct relationship is between formal education and skills.

**2x** as likely to be unemployed

**Those with low literacy skills** are more than 2x as likely to be unemployed.



As the demand for skills continues to shift toward more advanced tasks, **individuals with poor literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to find themselves at risk.**



On average, **as adults' proficiency increases**, their chances of being in the labour force and **being employed increase.**

**1/2**

**Just over half of adults** scoring at or below level 1 are employed compared to 4 out of 5 adults scoring at level 4-5.

## Tackling skill deficits

will be important to enhance **longer-term employment** prospects and to expand the overall supply of skills.

“... Research shows that improving the skills of people at the lower end of the scale (Levels 1 and 2 on the five-level scale for literacy) will have more impact than improving the skills of people who are already at Level 3 or higher. As the people most at risk of losing their entire job to automation are the people employed in low-skilled jobs, upgrading their skills would have the added advantage of making them more employable in a new higher-skilled job.” (Canada West Foundation - [Literacy Lost: Canada's Basic Skills Shortfall](#) (Lane & Murray, 2018))

## Here's the Good News

### How Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Can Help

**Early intervention is key.** Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA) is the adult learning network in Hamilton. We can assist with educational pathway planning including outreach sessions, information, referrals and skills check-ins. We can [facilitate partnerships](#) with [Literacy and Basic Skills service providers](#). Clients will be more successful at work or in further education programs if they have an opportunity to review and upgrade their skills.





Adult upgrading programs help adults upgrade their communication, numeracy and digital skills to achieve their goals. We work with people living in poverty, marginalized groups and underrepresented groups with multiple barriers to employment. Service providers design programming to address the specific needs of learners. In Hamilton, we have programs that focus on serving learners who identify as Indigenous, Francophone, Deaf/Deafblind and Anglophone in order to support their learning needs and preferences.

Programs are learner-centred - learners work with practitioners to build a specific learner plan to help them transition to their next step quickly with the skills they need to succeed. The program is flexible and is built to run along side other programs - with in-class and online options - full/part-time studies. Many programs also offer targeted training programs which are short, specific courses like computers for work, food handling prep or health care aid training.

## LBS is a springboard for 5 goal pathways

-  Employment
-  Post-secondary
-  Apprenticeship
-  Secondary School Credit
-  Independence

### There are many benefits to participating in adult upgrading programs including being more likely to

-  obtain a high school diploma or equivalent
-  pursue post-secondary education
-  earn more income over time and manage it effectively
-  increase soft skills for further education and employment

## Early intervention is key.

# Our Focus for 2023-2024

Hamilton Literacy and Basic Skills programs continue to deliver innovative, quality programming to meet the needs of adult learners in our community.

Hamilton served 1,075 learners in 2021-2022. Even with the pressures of the pandemic, programs were able to serve 97% of the total target projections. The province as a whole served 80% of the target and the region served 83%. This is a testament to Hamilton's commitment to serve learners using various delivery methods and to be innovative and creative to keep learners engaged and progressing in stressful times.

26.3% of learners were employed at exit in 21-22, up 8.2% from 20-21. 33.1% of learners were in training and education at exit in 21-22. Those exiting to post-secondary increased by 5.8%.

**In 2023-2024 we'll be focusing on**

**1**

**Labour  
Market  
Challenges**

**2**

**Continued  
Need for  
Digital  
Technology  
Skills**

**3**

**Supporting  
People with  
Disabilities**

**4**

**Need for a  
Focus on  
Stability  
Supports**

**5**

**Apprenticeship/  
Skilled Trades**

# 1. Labour Market Challenges

“The advancement of workplace technologies, a growing digital economy and an aging workforce, means that cities must have a large and skilled labour force if they want to attract and retain globally competitive businesses” (EcDev Action Plan 2021-2025).

The unemployment rate for Hamilton in September 2022 was 4.6% (WPH, September Monthly Snapshot). Employment service partners explain that those that want to be working are working. Employment Services are assisting clients with multiple barriers to employment that are further from the labour market.

The youth unemployment rate is 10.8% (WPH September 2022 Monthly Snapshot), more than double the general unemployment rate. There seems to be widespread disengagement with this group and collective actions should be brainstormed to support this demographic.

## Top 5 In-demand Jobs (Aug 2022 - WPH Monthly Snapshot)



Given these jobs, there is a high-demand for Sales and Service-related occupations in the Hamilton region.

Employers need workers, but are also preparing for a possible recession. This will have a huge impact on job demand and loss. Employers are searching for workers who are “motivated [and] engaged” (Employment Practitioner, October 2022). “They are looking for people who are ready, willing and able to work. Employers are easing their hiring requirements if someone is willing to work, they will provide all the training” (Employment Practitioner, October 2022).

In Workforce Planning Hamilton’s EmployerOne Survey (2022), many employers reported that the availability of qualified labour in Hamilton was ‘Poor’ at 39%. When asked why positions were hard to fill, employers reported

**20%**

not enough applicants

**16%**

applicants have insufficient motivation, attitude or interpersonal abilities

**16%**

applicants have insufficient qualifications

**13%**

applicants have insufficient technical skills

**“We have job seekers and a lot of open employment opportunities but find it difficult to make a match for a good fit.”** Hamilton Employment Practitioner, October 2022

Employment partners were consulted in October 2022. They report that the job seekers they’re working with need the following to prepare for employment

- short term training (like SmartServe, Food Handlers, etc.)
- soft skills
- apprenticeship training
- digital skills
- Grade 12 diploma/equivalent
- literacy skills - reading, writing and math (the majority of employment partners surveyed reported that between 11-30% or 31-51% of their clients would benefit from upgrading in Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS))

54% of employment practitioners consulted referred clients to LBS in the past year. These referrals were mostly for upgrading in reading, writing, math and digital skills (Employment Partner Consultation, October 2022).

LBS programs in Hamilton continue to serve many learners with less than a Grade 12 diploma (41.5%). However, as we’ve noted in the past several years, many learners have their Grade 12 diploma or higher education (56.9%) but still need upgrading for their next step, including employment.

In 2021-22 employment surpassed secondary school credit as the most popular goal path among learners (32.8%). This is an increase of 12.4% from the previous year.

Interestingly, there was an increase in learners 45-54 (up 3.7% to 16.5% of total learners) and learners 55+ (up 4.7% to 15.5%). This may point to the continued trend of having to work longer because of increased costs of living and the need to continue to upgrade skills to keep pace with the labour market.

**“Training should also be a major focus in the labour market”** (WPH Labour Market Plan 2021).

## **Actions - to address these needs we will**

### **a. Offer Flexible Learning Options**

Programs will continue to offer flexible programming in a variety of methods to meet the needs of learners who are working. 31.3% of learners were employed in 21-22. 16.6% of learners were working full-time while upgrading. It will be critical to offer both full and part-time upgrading options in-person as well as online.

### **b. Continue to Offer Targeted Training Programs**

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs will continue to offer targeted training to respond to the employment preparation needs of clients and job seekers. This will include training such as computer job readiness. "Computer job readiness is valuable training for many" (Employment Practitioner, October 2022). It will also include programs such as G1 Drivers Literacy Prep, Food Handler Prep and Certification, Health Service Support Worker, etc.

### **c. Increase Connections between Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and the larger Employment Ontario (EO) Network**

#### **Hamilton EO Network**

ABEA will continue to convene the Hamilton EO Network to increase awareness of programs and continue to develop referral relationships between programs. There is a need for "more time for the frontline instructors to... cultivate the partnerships" with employment and other programs (LBS Practitioner, October 2022).

#### **Better Integration with Better Jobs Ontario (BJO)**

Through the Skills for Success initiative, ABEA will continue to plan and coordinate services to increase the linkages between Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and Better Jobs Ontario by working with various community partners. ABEA will continue to deliver and evaluate centralized assessment to ensure that clients have the supports they need to succeed in their training, including referrals to BJO Prep Programs. ABEA will also continue to lead the provincial BJO Community of Practice and bring key messages to local programs.

## **Literacy and Employment Partner Monthly Newsletter**

ABEA will also continue to produce a monthly newsletter to share program updates and events with literacy, education and employment practitioners. “I think the newsletter is fantastic and provides tons of valuable information regarding employment and training programs. I find it very valuable and have referred to it on multiple occasions” (Employment Practitioner, October 2022).

## **Labour Market Information**

The Career Pathways Online Tool will be made widely available to practitioners, learners, job seekers and employers. This tool showcases in-demand entry and mid-level jobs in our region (Hamilton-Niagara-Grand Erie) in 10 sectors. It outlines key labour market information about the job, the skills and training needed for entry-level positions and how to advance to a mid-level career.

### **d. Increase Engagement with Employers**

#### **Skills for Success - Workplace Literacy initiative**

ABEA will continue to participate in the planning and coordination of workplace literacy pilots locally and will continue to be a member of the provincial Community of Practice around this initiative.



## 2. Continued Need for Increased Digital Technology Skills

“Not all Hamiltonians have benefited equally from society’s advancement into an increasingly connected and digital future, multiple barriers still exist including geographic location, age, income and ability. Bridging the digital divide is essential to the advancement of Hamilton’s economy. An increasingly digital economy requires a population that has access to the essential infrastructure, equipment and technical skills required to participate” (EcDev Action Plan 2021-2025).

**Digital Exclusion** is when people don’t have access to technology and digital skills training.

**Digital Divide** is the economic, educational, and social inequalities between people who have devices and access to Internet and those that don’t or don’t know how to use them.

Digital literacy skills are necessary to participate effectively in today’s world (Marco Campana, Digital Inclusion, 2022).

Because of the pandemic, there is a greater need for people to use technology to engage in their community. This can include things like

- working from home
- learning and taking training online
- using social media
- getting medical care through digital apps (Campana, 2022)

The demand for training in digital technology has increased (WPH Labour Market Plan 2021). From the EmployerOne survey (2022) we know that employers are continually requiring more

advanced skills for jobs and are continuing to integrate technology (Workforce Planning Hamilton, 2022). This not only impacts older workers who many need to learn/upgrade these skills but also youth who - despite being quite adept with smartphones - lack employment-related digital skills.

38% of employment practitioners consulted reported that job seekers don’t have the digital skills they need to succeed in the labour market (Employment Partner Consultation, October 2022). “There are many people who do not have the skills to operate virtually and many who do not have access to the technology to interact online.” (Employment Practitioner, October 2022). “We do see our older adults coming into service with low literacy and low digital literacy skills and are not comfortable using technology” (Employment Practitioner, October 2022).

LBS Practitioners report an “**increased demand for digital literacy training,**” including “**senior digital literacy**” and “**online programming**” (October 2022). It will be important to continue to develop and offer digital literacy training. “Many learners have expressed that after taking a computer course they are much more comfortable with computers - able to troubleshoot on their own at home without being worried/hesitant to do something incorrect” (LBS Practitioner, October 2022).

**97% of learners reported that upgrading is making a difference** (Learner Consultation, June 2022).



## Actions – to address these needs we will

- a. Follow the digital skills work through the Skills for Success initiative to stay up-to-date with new resources, digital integration and development strategies.
- b. Continue to develop and offer targeted digital training programs with a focus on developing skills to be an adaptive digital learner. Programs will give learners an opportunity to develop transferable skills and build confidence and resilience. Program examples include Computer Basics, Social Media for Beginners, etc. We'll support older workers with programs such as Computer Job Readiness and Basic Computer Skills. We'll support seniors to develop their digital literacy skills with programs such as iPad for Seniors.
- c. Learn from our partner programs serving learners with disabilities about their learners' adaptive technology needs. We will advocate for the purchase of adaptive technologies to support learners. We will also continue to advocate for increased access to digital technology and reliable Internet in our community.
- d. Explore and possibly develop programming for the digital skills needed for specific jobs. In these programs, the goal would be for learners to apply practical skills using modular programming to remove any digital skills barriers to employment.

## 3. Supporting People with Disabilities

42.9% of learners in Hamilton identified as having a disability in 2021-2022. This is an increase of 9% from the previous year (33.9%). It's significantly higher than the western region (31%) and Ontario (24.9%).

### Mental Health Challenges

"Canadians are facing a significant increase in mental health conditions due to the pandemic. Broadly, 20% of Canadians indicate they are accessing some sort of mental health support right now and an additional 13% believe they should be. Troublingly, a growing number of people—as many as 8% of those working or in school—find themselves 'losing days every week to mental health issues' (Frontier College, Literacy and Mental Health Discussion Paper 2022).

From Workforce Planning Hamilton's Labour Market Plan consultations (2021), community and employment partners report that the mental health of clients is becoming one of the top priorities. In the EmployerOne 2022 report, 58% of employers reported that employee mental health had the highest negative impact during the pandemic.

### Learning Disabilities

It is estimated that between 5-10% of Canadians have a learning disability (Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, 2015). In adult upgrading programs, it's likely much higher. Several practitioners that were consulted listed learning disabilities as a key learner trend in their programs. This has been an ongoing topic at frontline working group meetings and will be highlighted at the practitioner conference in November.



## Actions – to address these needs we will

a. Incorporate mental health learning into program delivery. Some learners might find accessing mental health supports and resources intimidating or challenging. This could make them feel isolated and vulnerable. This will become an ongoing topic at frontline working group meetings to discuss and share resources and learn from mental health community partners. This could include topics such as self-care and mental health check-ins.

b. Provide learning challenges assessments and consultations with practitioners to explore learning strategies for particular learners (ABEA).

## 4. There is a strong need for a focus on stability supports.

In 2021, 9% of Hamiltonians were in the low-income after-tax (LIM-AT) group. In comparison, 12% were in the low-income before-tax (LIM-BT) group (WPH Demographic Profile from 2021 Census). This accounts for 76,210 and 94,715 people respectively. “For individuals and families living on social assistance, the gap in income to reach the poverty line is staggering. The deep poverty experienced by social assistance recipients means daily life is focused solely on survival” (SPRC, Hamilton’s Social Landscape, 2021).

In consultation with both Ontario Works and Workforce Planning Hamilton we recognize that there are many people who are not ready for pre-employment/employment activities. This is for several reasons including living in poverty, disengaged from the labour market, concerns around the pandemic, interrupted educational history, long time out of formal education/training, physical/mental health concerns, etc.

In LBS we continue to serve learners who have no income or are receiving social assistance (54% in 21-22). This is higher than the western region (46.5%) and Ontario (43.4%).

Inflation is a huge concern for clients who are struggling to meet their basic needs. In August 2022 inflation had decreased to 7% (WPH September Snapshot), but clients continue to struggle with rent, food security and the increased costs of day-to-day necessities (SPRC, 2021). Many Ontario Works clients have been on assistance for longer amounts of time (greater than 36 months). These times could be much longer if clients were off benefits for a time and then returned. Clients are spending most of their energy on basic needs. Many are having difficulty even identifying other barriers that may be impacting them beyond these basic needs.

“We often see clients go into survival jobs with intent to upgrade skills, however, their capacity is consumed by their survival job as they are often working full-time (or close to) and struggling with day-to-day housing costs, food costs, disability costs etc.”  
Hamilton Employment Practitioner, October 2022

From the Employment Partner consultation (October 2022) we learned that job seekers are facing several barriers including

- substance use
- homelessness
- mental health concerns (particularly social anxiety and depression)
- lack of childcare and transportation
- lack of formal education as well as skills for success

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) practitioners report many learners with mental health challenges and learning disabilities (LBS Practitioner Consultation, October 2022).

Learners that were consulted (June 2022) reported a variety of barriers that make it hard to continue with upgrading including

- financial issues (working and having difficulty finding time to study)
- family issues (caring for elderly parents, being a single parent, childcare concerns)
- health issues

LBS is a safe space for support and goal setting, to build trust and connect to wrap around supports.

One practitioner commented that some learners are “battling addiction but still com[e] to school because it is a good support, distraction and confidence booster when they do well” (October 2022).

## Actions – to address these needs we will

- a.** Continue to partner with Mohawk College’s Challenge 2025 initiative on the Employee Pathways Action Team and support the “Growing Confidence and Moving Forward” program. This program supports participants with goal setting, overall wellbeing, discovering interests and creating a plan for the future. Upgrading programs play a key role in this to support people to upgrade their skills (including the peripheral skills of self-motivation, commitment, routine, self-advocacy, etc.) to be better prepared for employment activities in the future.
- b.** Continue to connect with the Hamilton Stability Supports Community of Practice group through the City of Hamilton to share information about Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programming and encourage referrals.
- c.** Utilize frontline working group meetings to share community resources through partner presentations. LBS Practitioners need “more connections with community services to direct our students to (food banks, soup kitchens, addictions, housing)” (October 2022).
- d.** Continue to connect and consult with HSR around the planned discontinuation of special bus tickets in favour of Presto Cards. Not only is subsidized transportation key to participation in our programs for many of our learners, but it will add administrative burden on literacy and other social services providers. The move to Presto cards may reduce or eliminate stigmatization, but at the same time brings an added layer of complexity.

## 5. Apprenticeship/Skilled Trades

There are currently more than 360,000 skilled trades jobs unfilled across Ontario. 1 in 5 new job openings in Ontario are projected to be in the skilled trades by 2025 (Ontario News Release, October 18, 2022). From 2019 to 2020, new registrations declined in all provinces and all trade programs. 3 trades dropped by more than 40% - cook, welder and heavy-duty equipment technician. Program completions also declined across all Red Seal trades in 2020 (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) Results 2022). In the years from 2022 to 2026, an estimated 122,380 new journeypersons will be needed in the Red Seal trades. 256,000 apprentices will need to be recruited to keep pace with certification demand (CAF 2022).

According to Hamilton Employment Ontario data from April 2018 to March 2021 there has been a significant decrease in the number of registrations from 1,327 in 2018-2019 to 715 in 2020-2021. There was a 42% decrease from 1,235 in 2019-2020 to 715 in 2020-2021 (Workforce Planning Hamilton Labour Market Plan 2021). There is a lot of “earlier retirement and an overall shortage of workers, especially in trades” (Employment Practitioner, October 2022).

Hamilton has had an increase in the number of learners on the apprenticeship goal path in recent years – up to 7.2% in 2020-2021. We attribute this to increased awareness of the apprenticeship goal path as well as formal partnerships with pre-apprenticeship programs. However, there was a decrease in the pre-apprenticeship partnerships 2021-2022. This has accounted for the drop to 5.7%. We are hopeful that our work through the Skills for Success initiative focused on apprenticeship will increase partnerships with pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. This will hopefully result in increased learners on the apprenticeship goal path.

There are several studies that have focused on best practices in apprenticeship and possible changes needed to delivery.

The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF 2021) suggests that

- the principles of inclusion, multiple delivery methods and multiple methods of assessment should be integrated to make content accessible for a variety of different learners
- a more social model should be used when diagnosing persons with disabilities - less pressure should be put on individuals to self-identify, this would allow more apprentices to access the supports they need, leading to improved learning outcomes
- upfront and preventative help is the focus to build learner confidence, addressing skills gaps at the beginning of their program and supporting them through the levels of their technical training, reducing incompletions

Community Literacy Ontario, Apprenticeship and the Skilled Trades through the lens of Literacy and Basic Skills, 2022 also makes many valuable points. This report suggests that many learners who would benefit from apprenticing in a skilled trade are unaware of the opportunities available. There is also confusion around the actual level of education needed to sign as an apprentice which has created challenges for learners.

# Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs can help apprentices/ pre-apprentices

- upgrade their skills to prepare for in-class training
- prepare to get the academic requirement for the trade, for example, transition into credit
- develop strong test-taking skills to study for Level 1, 2 or 3 tests or the Certificate of Qualification (C of Q)



# Actions

## a. Skills for Success - Apprenticeship

We'll follow the Skills for Success initiative for apprenticeship and stay up-to-date with new resources and strategies developed. ABEA will continue to support planning and service coordination to better integrate LBS into pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training. ABEA will also continue to participate in the Community of Practice group and share key messages with the Literacy Community Planning (LCP) committee. Through this initiative we will also work with the ministry to explore additional supports that we can provide apprentices.

These could include

- skills check-ins after signing as an apprentice to determine if skills upgrading is needed before the 1st level of training with referrals to upgrading programs as needed
- consultations with apprentices who don't pass a level of their in-school training
- consultations with apprentices who may have learning challenges - these consultations will include recommendations for testing accommodations for in-school training or the CoQ

## b. Knowledge of Apprenticeship Programs, Pathways and Connections

We will create a resource of the local pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training programs and supports available (for example, Employment Services). We'll share Workforce Planning Hamilton's apprenticeship toolkit with learners and practitioners.

We will use the frontline working group meetings to share apprenticeship-specific materials with practitioners and discuss how it might be integrated into their programs. We'll ask local training programs to do a presentation about the programs.

We'll work with local providers, including the Community Apprenticeship Hub through Mohawk College, to help learners navigate the apprenticeship system and their options, keeping abreast of updates from Skilled Trades Ontario.

Learners interested in apprenticeship will be connected with local Employment Services (ES) to get support with employment preparation and connections to employers in the Skilled Trades.

# Partnerships with Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)

Here are some scenarios of how we can work closer together.

**Stabilization** – Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) can assist clients to increase their Skills for Success in reading, writing, math, digital technology and more and gain the soft skills and confidence needed to set achievable employment goals.

It includes those who

- are early school leavers – don't have their Grade 12/ equivalent
- report difficulties with literacy/numeracy skills (or don't have the skills for their employment goal)
- have little experience or have difficulty with digital technology
- are unsure of their skills or the program they need
- want options and information to meet their upgrading needs
- have or may have a learning disability or learning challenge
- lack soft skills/work skills for employment

Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA) is the first point of contact for upgrading programs in Hamilton. [Refer clients here.](#)

Referrals/action plans through ABEA can be made to all adult education programs including

- Academic upgrading programs (including GED preparation and targeted skills/employment training programs)
- Credit programs (secondary school diploma)
- Apprenticeship
- Post-secondary
- Short-term training/licenses
- Digital technology upgrading

**Pre-Employment** – Adult upgrading programs can assist clients with specific skills for the job they are preparing for based on skills profiles and offer targeted training if needed and available.

**Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship** - There has been a lot of targeted curriculum developed in Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) around the skilled trades. In this way, programs can support foundational upgrading to specific trades and can also promote the apprenticeship/skilled trades option to learners without clearly defined employment goals. LBS programs can also support signed apprentices to prepare for the academic workload and to prepare for the Certificate of Qualification exam by working on study skills and test-taking.

Check out this [video](#) highlighting the benefits of upgrading for apprenticeship.

**Employment** - Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) can assist with retention by helping workers upgrade specific skills needed for their current job as well as those needed for advancement to take advantage of any career ladders offered. We can assist workers at risk of losing their job due to increased skill demands, automation and/or soft skills or employability skills.

LBS, by its very nature, is flexible. Programs are continually finding ways to serve more learners who are working – evenings, online, blended, etc. LBS can play a role in long-term employment retention as well as improvement of employment outcomes. With continued skills upgrading clients can not only keep their jobs, they can get better ones. Key areas of support are digital literacy, financial literacy, job-related literacy and numeracy tasks, and upgrading to access further education and training.

Are you working with clients interested in exploring in-demand, entry level jobs with opportunity for growth? Check out the [Career Pathways](#) tool developed by ABEA and partners.

LBS programs are, at any given moment, working with hundreds of learners across the city. Learners are working to transition to their next step. **In this way, LBS programs act as a recruitment pipeline for many programs. Do you offer a program that might be of interest to adult learners? [Connect with us today so we can learn more!](#)**

Partnering with LBS can provide your participants/employees with the educational support they need to be successful in their training, further education and employment.

**[Click here for the full community partner toolkit.](#)**



## **What ABEA Can Offer**

As the Learning Network, we are your first point of contact for adult education in Hamilton. We facilitate partnership coordination. If you're looking to partner with a service provider, we can facilitate a meeting with one, several or all service providers as needed.

We also offer

- educational planning presentations to client and staff groups
- individual educational interviews
- skills check-ins - Refer clients who have been out of school for a long time, are unsure of their skills, report learning challenges, have difficulties with daily literacy tasks, need a Grade 12/ equivalent, etc.

## **Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program Partnerships**

A key component to the LBS program is that it is flexible and customizable. If planned and resourced, programming can be created and delivered to meet specific community needs onsite, or at a partner location.

[Connect with us today to learn more!](#)