

2024-2025

**Hamilton Literacy Service
Plan**

Literacy and Basic Skills

Your Partner in
Client Success



Community Report March 2024

Acknowledgements

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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)
- Workforce Planning Hamilton



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[Check out our Partnership Tool](#)



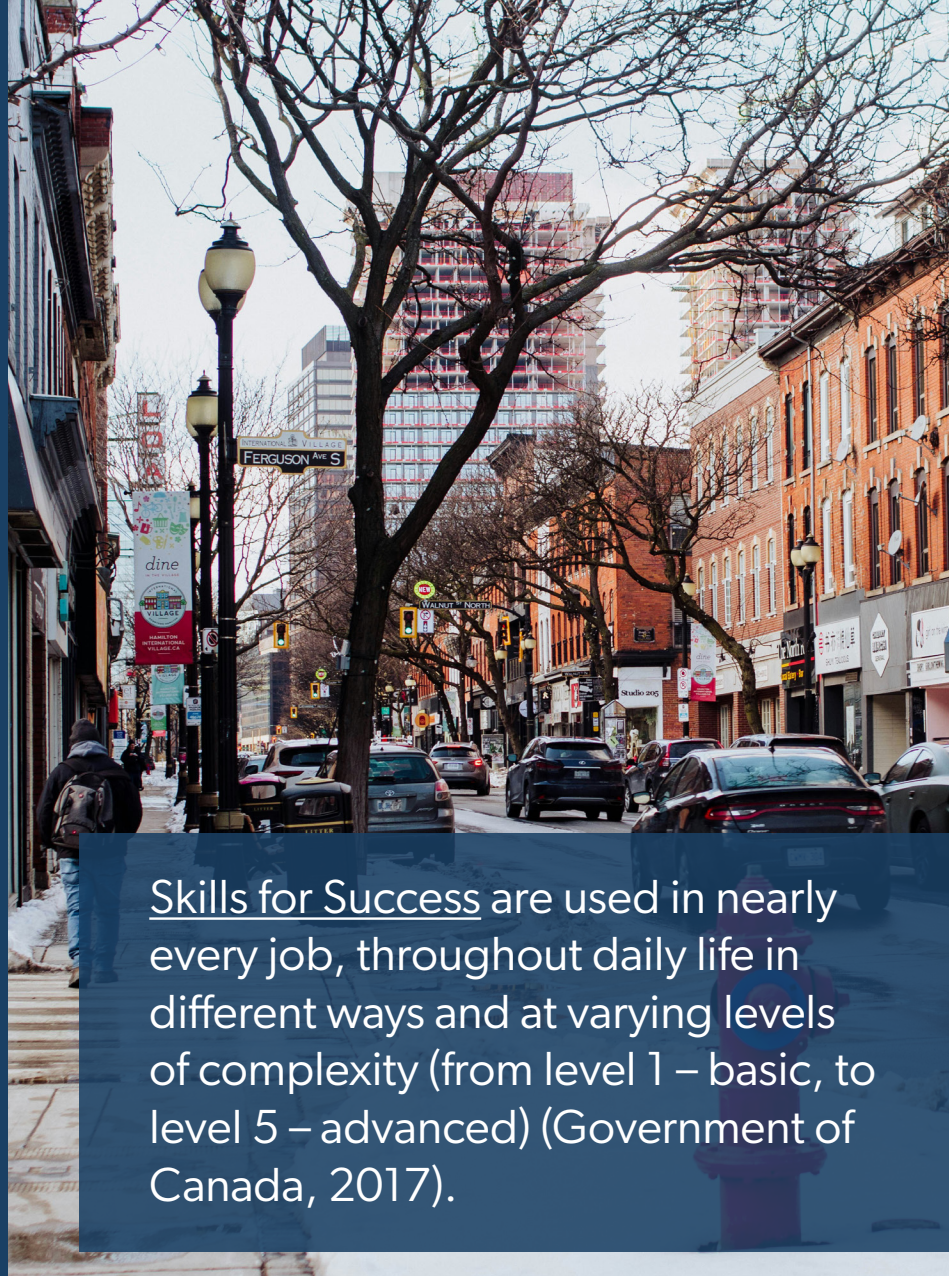
Literacy and Basic Skills

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 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 connected with 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.

The Importance of Upskilling

It's not just about education on paper – it's also about the ever-evolving skills people need to succeed at home and on the job. Literacy and Basic Skills programs know that it's about getting the job, and it's also 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.



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).

Foundational Skills



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

The Skills for Success are



Reading



Adaptability



Communication



Digital



Writing



Creativity and Innovation



Collaboration



Numeracy



Problem Solving

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.



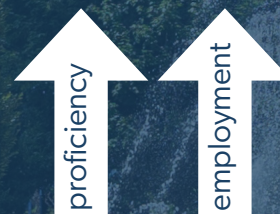
As the demand for skills continues to shift toward more advanced tasks, **individuals with poor literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to find themselves at risk.**

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.



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

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. Typically, they also 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 only short and simple texts and math tasks involving only 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.

“... 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. 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 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 with the skills they need to succeed. The program is flexible and is built to run along side other programs. Programs have in-class and online options and offer full and 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 like being more likely to



complete 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 2024-2025

Current Trends and Impact on Service Delivery

Trend 1.

There Continues to be a High Need for LBS Programming in Hamilton

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs continue to make a marked impact on the lives of learners in Hamilton. **98% of learners that responded to the Learner Consultation (2023) reported that they are making progress and 91% said that upgrading is making a difference.**

Learners commented, “I have more confidence,” “I can read a lot better” and “I feel that I am learning a lot and remembering what I did.” One learner commented, “I feel more emotionally and mentally stable, as one day I will be more successful” (Learner Consultation, 2023).

LBS programs continue to reach and exceed their targets. Programs in Hamilton served 1,173 learners in 2022-2023, 6% above target and up 8.8% from 2021-2022. In addition, 91% of learners completed all of their milestones and learning activities (roughly 10% more than the region or province).

The reach of LBS also continues to expand. We serve diverse learners from a range of backgrounds, identities and educational backgrounds. It’s important to note that we’re not only serving learners with less than a Grade 12 diploma (41%), but also many learners with a Grade 12 diploma (25%) and with higher education (32%). Regardless of their educational history, these learners assess at less than level 3 in a core competency and require LBS programming to reach their next step goals.

Trend 2.

Better Integration of LBS into the Workforce Development System and Labour Market Demands

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) is an integral part of the workforce development system – oftentimes utilized as the foundation supporting other programs such as Employment Services, Better Jobs Ontario and apprenticeship. Through the Skills for Success initiative, LBS is also serving employers, ensuring that workers have the skills they need to thrive and grow in their jobs. The network has been offering organizational needs assessments to local employers in 22-23 and 23-24. Through this work, employers reported that the services have been helpful to workers and will help to future-proof their companies. **“The service exceeded my expectations and allowed me to see opportunities for our team that I didn’t realize existed before” (Employer Feedback, 2023).**

The majority of learners in LBS programs are unemployed (69.6%), receiving social assistance (61.6%) or have no income (26.6%). However, **nearly 30% of Hamilton LBS learners are working and 17.3% of those learners are working full-time.** 40% of learners are on the employment goal path – expecting to transition directly to work or employment services from LBS. Another 45% of learners have further education/ training goals which, in all likelihood, are precursors to employment goals (EO Data, April-September 2023).

The Labour Market

The unemployment rate is currently 5.5% or 28,200 people in Hamilton (October 2023). 14.5% of youth are unemployed. Employers are searching for workers with communication, support and management skills. They are hiring individuals with at least a high school education (Workforce Planning Hamilton, Monthly Snapshot, September 2023). According to our Employment Partner Consultation (2023), employers are focused on retention and searching for employees with a good work ethic (committed, punctual, available and self-sufficient) with the ability to multi-task. They are also searching for apprentices and journeypersons. There were also comments that employer expectations are high in terms of education, training and experience.

Even with almost 30,000 people out of work in Hamilton, 36% of employers from the EmployerOne Survey 2023 (Workforce Planning Hamilton) indicated that recruitment was having the most negative impact on their business. 71% of employers reported that hiring was difficult or very difficult. 40% of employers rated Hamilton's labour supply as "fair" and 33% rated it as "poor." 13% of employers cited lack of qualifications (such as education level/credentials) as a reason for hard-to-fill positions.

When we asked our employment service partners, "What upgrading/training do your clients typically need to prepare for employment?" they reported

- short-term training like smart serve, fork lift, etc. - 92%
- digital technology - 69%
- soft skills - 69%
- Grade 12 diploma/equivalent - 69%
- writing - 46%
- language skills - 46%
- apprenticeship - 46%

When asked, "Approximately what percentage of your clients would benefit from Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) upgrading to prepare for employment or further education?" the majority of respondents answered 51-70%. They made referrals to upgrading programs for reading, writing and math skills, but also for digital technology skills, soft skills development and targeted training.

Programs in Hamilton served 1,173 learners in 2022-2023, 6% above target and up 8.8% from 2021-2022.

System Integration

Employment Services (ES) – Integrated Employment Services had 5,290 clients in 2022-2023 (Employment Ontario Data, 2023). 35% of clients had no source of income, followed by 32% identifying Ontario Works as their main income source. 2% of clients had less than grade 9 education and 12% had less than Grade 12. This means that 14% or 740 employment service clients had less than a Grade 12 education. 132 referrals from ES were reported by LBS programs in 22-23 (EO Data 2022-2023) – 2.5% of the total clients. If 51-70% of clients would benefit from upgrading, **there's a need to increase referral relationships to ensure clients have the support they need to increase their skills to find and keep a job.**

Better Jobs Ontario

The Better Jobs Ontario (BJO) program provides eligible applicants with funding for skills training programs for in-demand jobs. Programs must be less than 52 weeks in length. BJO is the new iteration of the Second Career program. It launched in April 2022. The program aims to assist people who may face challenges finding stable jobs such as gig workers, youth and people on social assistance. In 2022-2023 there were 147 BJO clients in Hamilton. Of those, .8% were employed, 32% were receiving Employment Insurance, 18% were receiving Ontario Works income support and 28% had no source of income. Very little data was available for educational history but 26% had a certificate or diploma and 63% were unknown. 9% of BJO participants across Ontario had less than a Grade 12 diploma (EO Data 2022-2023).

Time out of School - Ontario (unfortunately this data was not available for Hamilton).

- less than 3 months - 20%
- 3-6 months - 10%
- 6-12 months - 14%
- 12+ months - 28%
- unknown - 27%

It will be important to increase data capture for this program to design supports that are relevant to BJO clients. Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs should be utilized as a critical resource to support those that have been out of school for 6+ months (42-69% of clients in 22-23) to ensure they have the skills and support they need to succeed in their training program. This should be through educational pathway planning and skills check-ins with appropriate referrals into LBS programs for upskilling.

We surveyed our Better Jobs Ontario (BJO) stakeholders in 22-23 through our Skills for Success initiative. They agreed that upgrading programs should be utilized as a support program for BJO. **“Very beneficial to our clients to gain better understanding of supports available to them.”** “Provides options to move further along the path to employment; identified gaps and how to address them.” 100% of respondents agreed that this met their needs to support clients considering an application to Better Jobs Ontario.

Canada Ontario Job Grant

Interestingly, even though employers cited lack of qualifications as a reason for hard-to-fill positions, there was a 26% decrease in the number of employers (57) enrolling for the Canada Ontario Job Grant and a 43% decline in the number of participants (193) (Employment Ontario Data, 2023). Given our recent workplace literacy initiatives, we may be well positioned to encourage employers to utilize this program for worker upskilling and training through organizational needs assessments (if they continue).



Actions

1. System Navigation

With an increasing number of learners on the employment goal path, there's an increased demand for career guidance and pathway planning services. It's important that learners have access to current and local labour market information and understand the skills they'll need to succeed and their options to get there.



- a. ABEA will continue to offer educational pathway planning services for individuals, community partners and employers.
- b. Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs will continue to embed employment-related activities into learner plans and make referrals to Employment Services.
- c. The Literacy Community Planning (LCP) committee will continue to work to develop referral partnerships with Employment Services to support their clients to get, keep and grow in their job.
- d. ABEA and LBS programs will continue to help learners navigate their Grade 12 equivalency options (particularly in light of the cancellation of the GED).

2. Targeted Training

LBS programs will continue to offer targeted training programs to prepare people for further education and employment with a focus on flexibility to accommodate those that are working, job seeking, have childcare commitments, etc. Training examples include digital technology, computer job readiness, food handlers and support with G licensing.

3. Employer Engagement

ABEA will follow up with employers that identified skills upgrading needs through the EmployerOne 2024 survey, in partnership with Workforce Planning Hamilton. We'll continue to partner with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce.



"I have more confidence," "I can read a lot better" and "I feel that I am learning a lot and remembering what I did."

Trend 3.

Continued Need for Increased Digital Technology Skills

Digital technology skills are critical for work, education, training and for living an independent life. Through our consultations we received feedback from literacy practitioners, employment service practitioners and managers, learners, Ontario Works, and the planning board. We also reviewed several research reports. They all reported that the need for both basic and more advanced digital technology skills is imperative. 69% of employment practitioners that responded to the Employment Partner Consultation (2023) reported that digital technology upgrading is needed for their clients to prepare for employment. Many employment service practitioners cited digital technology skills as a barrier to employment as well as the lack of access to technology (Employment Partner Consultation, 2023). Several literacy practitioners commented that the need for digital technology skills is a continuing and growing trend for learners.

As we expand our work with employers, the need for digital technology skills is a recurring theme. The use and integration of technology is consistently increasing and workers are being left behind. We're finding that the gap isn't in highly advanced, technical skills but foundational digital technology skills that may hold workers back or threaten their position.

Actions

1. Continue to offer digital technology upgrading

Continue to offer digital technology upgrading through core programming and through targeted training programs – offering flexibility in delivery options such as in-person, online, synchronous and asynchronous.

2. Continue to explore assistive technology and accessibility tools

Continue to explore assistive technology and accessibility tools to enhance learners' digital toolkit for learning.

3. Continue to support employers

ABEA will continue to support employers (as we're able) to assist with identifying needs and supporting workers to upgrade their skills.

“Very beneficial to our clients to gain better understanding of supports available to them.”



There's a need to increase referral relationships to ensure clients have the support they need to increase their skills to find and keep a job.
(Literacy Community Planning Committee, 2024)

Trend 4.

Supporting Learners from Underrepresented Groups in the Labour Market



Through the work of the Skills for Success initiative (22-23 and 23-24) we worked to expand Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) services to support more members from underrepresented groups. Our focus was on newcomers and youth. The network has enhanced local planning and coordination to support service delivery pilots focused on underrepresented groups. In 23-24 we had 3 pilot programs focused in this area.

Newcomers

Literacy practitioners report that they are serving more learners who are newcomers and speak English as a second language. 12.4% of learners identified as a newcomer in 2022-2023 (Employment Ontario Data, 2023).

46% of employment practitioners cited language skills as one of the skills needed to prepare for employment (Employment Partner Consultation, 2023). There were several comments about supporting newcomers with English language skills as well as with international education credentials to find work in their field.

The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) recently conducted an Immigrant Survey (2023) and the results have implications for our work. “Just over 70% of all participants experienced income inadequacy, and refugees, international students and newcomers were most likely to report their income was inadequate. In addition, despite participants being highly educated (with 72% having a bachelor’s degree or above), half of those working reported being employed in jobs that did not match their skills, education and experience. This percentage was higher among newcomers, temporary residents, refugees, racialized participants, women, and those with a bachelor’s degree.”

Two LBS providers launched Skills for Success pilots to support newcomers in 23-24. One pilot focused on informing and empowering participants with information about services available within the community. At the same time, they provided them with digital literacy skills that they can use to further their education and make them more marketable to employers. The second pilot focused on supporting Francophone newcomers with skills development to successfully transition to the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) program. Early results are very positive for both programs.

Youth

The youth unemployment rate continues to be more than double that of the general population (14.5% and 5.5% respectively). LBS programs in Hamilton continue to serve a high percentage of youth with over 30% of learners between the ages of 18-29. 18.7% of learners in 2022-2023 were 18-24 and an additional 11.4% were 25-29. One LBS program is running a Skills for Success pilot in the form of a mobile learning unit. The purpose is to remove some of the barriers youth face to access traditional programs by offering programming at community partner sites. Partnerships with youth-serving agencies have been established and programming has begun – so much so that pilot capacity was reached in the first half of this fiscal year.

People with Disabilities

Hamilton continues to serve a high percentage of learners that identify as having a disability (42%). This is significantly more than the region (34%) and the province (28%) (Employment Ontario Data, 2023). Several LBS practitioners reported serving many learners with learning disabilities. They continue to seek out ways to assist them to upgrade their skills (Literacy and Basic Skills Practitioner Consultation, 2023).



“One of the “benefits” [of] post-Covid has been the opportunity to revisit programs, adapt them to the needs of learners & be more creative in program delivery” (LBS Practitioner Consultation, 2023).

Seniors

In 2022-2023, 21% of learners were over the age of 55. This is a 5.4% increase from 21-22 and is higher than the western region (12.8%) and Ontario (14.4%) (EO Data, 2023). This may point to the continued trend of people 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. This is especially true for digital technology skills. Also, there’s a need for “senior’s programming for those living in social isolation” (LBS Practitioner, October 2022). The Hamilton Literacy Council continues to develop programming to serve the needs of seniors in our community.



Actions

1. Continue to increase connections

Continue to increase connections between adult literacy and language programs so learners can achieve their goals. There is a need for increased flexibility in programming. “One of the ‘benefits’ [of] post- Covid has been the opportunity to revisit programs, adapt them to the needs of learners & be more creative in program delivery” (LBS Practitioner Consultation, 2023).

2. Work with our newcomer partners

Work with our newcomer partners to identify ways that LBS and the larger adult education system can support newcomers to upgrade their skills, get the training and education they need and find meaningful employment. This will include following the work of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) to continue to find ways to support newcomers in our community.

3. Continue to seek out and offer professional development

Continue to seek out and offer professional development focused on serving underrepresented groups with a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion.

4. Explore ways to co-design and co-deliver programming

Explore ways to co-design and co-deliver programming for underrepresented groups in partnership with organizations serving these target populations. For example, reach out to retirement communities to assess the need for training to assist them to stay in touch with their community.

Trend 5.

We Need to Support Our Most Vulnerable



Poverty

In 2021, 9% of Hamiltonians were in the low-income after-tax (LIM-AT) group and 12% were in the low-income before-tax (LIM-BT) group (Workforce Planning Hamilton 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” (Social Planning and Research Council, Hamilton’s Social Landscape, 2021). This statement is echoed in our Ontario Works Consultation (2023). Clients are using food banks, but the food banks can’t keep up with the demand. The longer a person remains on social assistance, the harder it is to exit.

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs continue to serve learners who have no income or are receiving social assistance (62% in the first half of 23-24 – an increase of almost 4% from last year). This is higher than the western region (51%) and Ontario (48%).

Housing

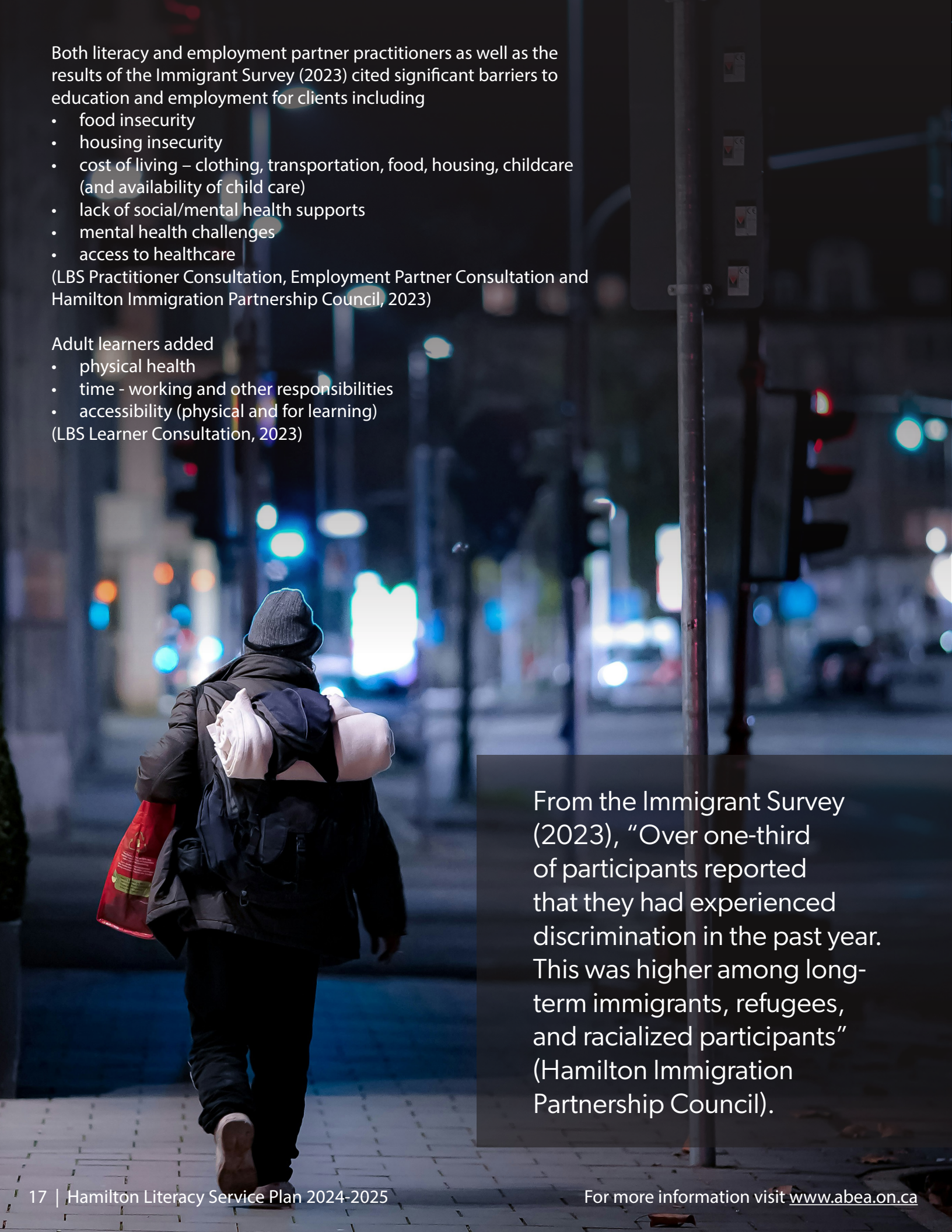
The City of Hamilton declared homelessness as a state of emergency in April 2023, joining the City of Toronto, Ottawa and Niagara Region (City of Hamilton, 2023). Average rent prices in Hamilton in 2023 for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,901, a 16.3% increase from last year (Workforce Planning Hamilton, Housing Report, 2023). “Existing affordable rental housing is eroding: Hamilton has lost 23 affordable private rental units for every one affordable unit it has built over the past decade” (Hamilton Community Foundation, Vital Signs, 2023). In 2022, for a person on Ontario Works, the maximum shelter amount for a single person was \$390 and \$497 if receiving ODSP. This is less than half of the \$920 average monthly rent for a bachelor apartment (Hamilton Community Foundation, Vital Signs, 2023).

The situation isn’t better for newcomers. From the Immigrant Survey, “Four in 10 participants said their housing was unaffordable, with bigger proportions among newcomers, racialized immigrants, refugees, refugee claimants, international students and Ukrainian temporary residents” (Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, 2023).

Mental Health Challenges

Several literacy practitioners reported that mental health challenges are a prominent barrier for learners (Literacy and Basic Skills Practitioner Consultation, 2023). Waitlists for adult services in the community are an issue – particularly health care and mental health services (Ontario Works Consultation, 2023). In addition, a third of the newcomers that responded to the Immigrant Survey (2023) reported feelings of isolation, “revealing that they felt very isolated in the past year” (Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council).





Both literacy and employment partner practitioners as well as the results of the Immigrant Survey (2023) cited significant barriers to education and employment for clients including

- food insecurity
- housing insecurity
- cost of living – clothing, transportation, food, housing, childcare (and availability of child care)
- lack of social/mental health supports
- mental health challenges
- access to healthcare

(LBS Practitioner Consultation, Employment Partner Consultation and Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, 2023)

Adult learners added

- physical health
- time - working and other responsibilities
- accessibility (physical and for learning)

(LBS Learner Consultation, 2023)

From the Immigrant Survey (2023), “Over one-third of participants reported that they had experienced discrimination in the past year. This was higher among long-term immigrants, refugees, and racialized participants” (Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council).



Actions

1. Continue to provide ways to increase understanding and awareness

Continue to provide meaningful ways for practitioners to increase understanding and awareness of the barriers and needs of learners.

2. Integrate self-management skills

Integrate self-management and stress-management skills into programming.

3. Continue to make community referrals

Continue to make appropriate community referrals to connect learners with the services they need. This will be with both overt referrals but also passive referrals – offering information/resources so people can take it discretely.

4. Facilitate sessions for learners

Facilitate sessions for learners that showcase those that have completed the program with good results. For example, through the Leaders in Literacy Event hosted annually by ABEA.

Trend 6.

Apprenticeship/
Skilled Trades
People Crisis



“The need for tradespersons is now higher than ever in Hamilton” (Workforce Planning Hamilton, EmployerOne 2023). Workforce Planning Hamilton (WPH) published the Under Pressure 2.0 report in 2020. It focused on the skilled trades shortage in Hamilton. The report identified a hiring crisis in the skilled trades. Causes included high training costs, low retention rates and an unqualified labour pool. This shortage has been amplified in 2023. Employers from the EmployerOne 2023 were hiring trades occupations the most. Trades Persons was the most hard-to-fill occupation at 32%.

1,183 people registered for an apprenticeship in Hamilton in 2022-2023, an increase of 32% from the previous year. Not surprisingly, 49.7% of new registrants were in the 15-24 age group or youth. However, 47.5% were in the 25-44 age group, signaling that entry into the skilled trades is happening later in life as well. In 2022-2023 there were 3,721 active apprentices (Employment Ontario Data, Workforce Planning Hamilton, 2023).

This trend is also occurring across the country. New registrations fell dramatically in 2020 by 27% and completions by 32%. However, in 2021, new registrations were up 36% (an almost complete recovery to pre-pandemic levels) and completions rose by 37%. The recovery has been notably lower for apprentices identifying as women. That being said, overall completions remain low – 47% for men and 34% for women in 2021 (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, National Registration and Completion Trends in Red Seal Trades 2023).

46% of employment practitioners surveyed reported that apprenticeship was needed for employment. When asked how adult upgrading programs could assist, there was a comment about the need for directed skilled trades training (Employment Partner Consultation, 2023). Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs certainly have a critical role to play in supporting pre-apprentices.

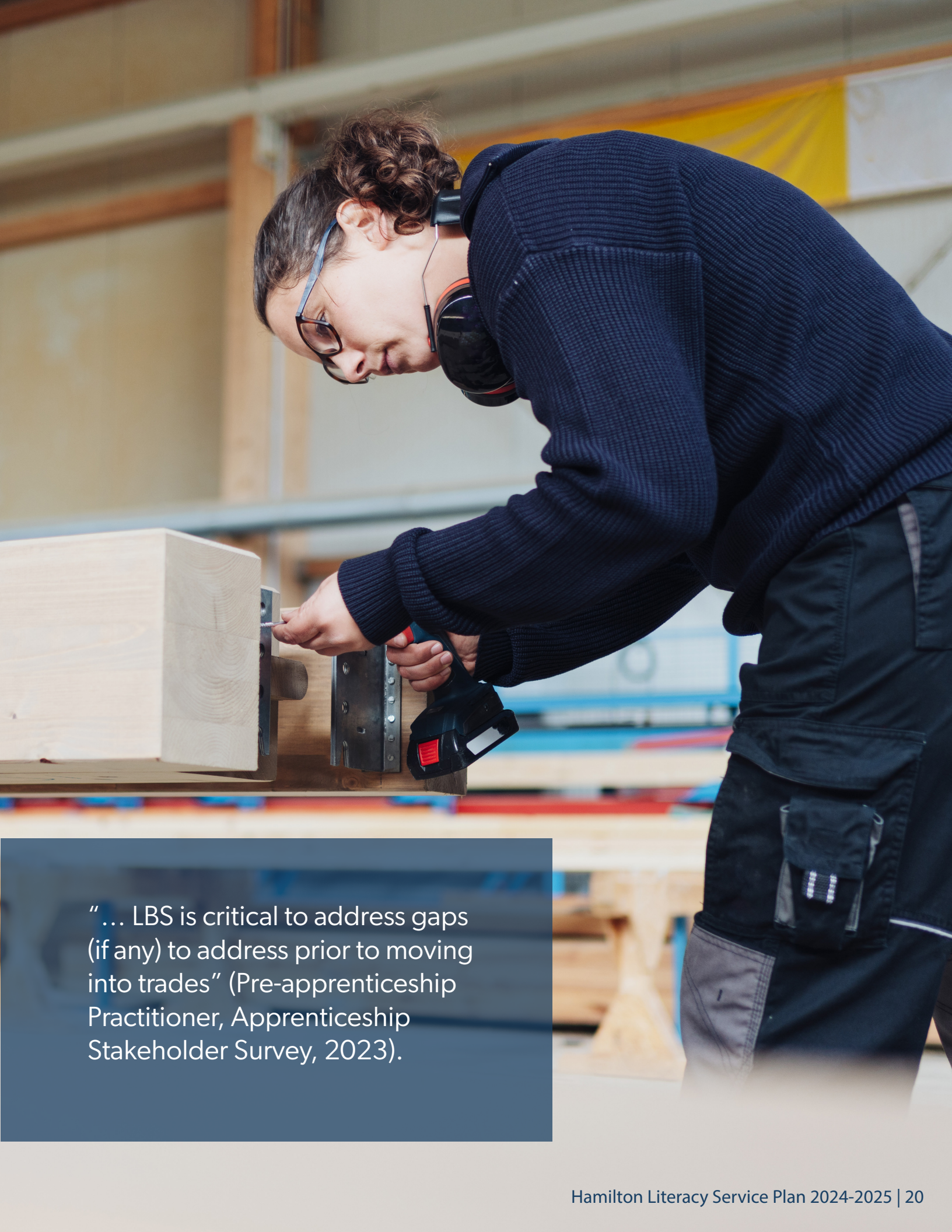
LBS Supporting Pre-Apprentices

In LBS, learners on the apprenticeship goal path have increased 5.7% to 10.3% in the first half of 2023-2024 (EO Data, April-September 2023). This can be mostly attributed to our Skills for Success work to better support the integration of LBS within the apprenticeship system. In late 2022, the network reached out to our local apprenticeship stakeholders and discussed their pre-apprenticeship proposals. Through these discussions, we were able to coordinate LBS programming through the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. It has been embedded into the funded pre-apprenticeship programs as a skills primer to better prepare participants for their technical skills training.

Enhanced service coordination is critical to the success of these relationships. Feedback from the Skills for Success – Apprenticeship Stakeholder Survey (2023) of apprenticeship stakeholders confirmed that

- the information, service coordination and planning from the network was helpful
- apprenticeship clients will benefit from partnerships with LBS programs
- educational planning and LBS programs are relevant to apprenticeship clients to help them prepare for apprenticeship training





“... LBS is critical to address gaps (if any) to address prior to moving into trades” (Pre-apprenticeship Practitioner, Apprenticeship Stakeholder Survey, 2023).



Actions

1. Continue to create partnerships

Continue to create partnerships with apprenticeship stakeholders in order to embed LBS programming into the apprenticeship continuum for clients/learners to increase successful transitions to apprenticeship training and completion.

2. Continue to increase the capacity of practitioners

Continue to increase the capacity of adult literacy practitioners to serve learners on the apprenticeship goal path by sharing professional development opportunities, resources and instructional materials.

3. Consider developing and delivering training programs

Consider developing and delivering targeted training programs for apprenticeship/skilled trades.

4. Continue to support planning and service coordination

ABEA will continue to support planning and service coordination to better integrate LBS into pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training. We will also continue to work with the ministry to explore additional supports that we can provide apprentices.

These could include

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

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 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 employment skills. These skills are based on job profiles. Targeted training is offered when 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

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 continually adapt to serve more learners who are working. For example, there are evening programs and online or blended learning options. 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!](#)

Please share this with colleagues and clients to learn more about this great program.

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