CONNECTING
The DOTS
Accountability and Adult Literacy • www.literacyandaccountability.ca •

Provincial Adult Literacy Profile
Funders, Providers and Accountability

Alberta

Total population (2007)	3,474,000
First Nations (2006)	188,365 (reporting aboriginal identity)
Immigrant (2006) [Visible minority, 2001]	527,030 [329,925]
Francophone (2006)	61,225
Urban (2001)	81% (mostly Calgary and Edmonton
Rural (2001)	19%
Senior/65 yrs and older (2007)	361,900

http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html?gaw=08001
[Alberta Summary Tables:
http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/pro01/pro109-eng.htm]

Methodology
One objective of Connecting the Dots is to provide the first pan-Canadian overview of funding, delivery, and accountability practices in adult literacy services. The Provincial/Territorial Adult Literacy Profiles is one of the deliverables that helps meet that objective. Each profile offers a "snapshot" of adult literacy funding, services and accountability practices for a specific province or territory. It was constructed exclusively on the basis of online research using a variety of web sites. No interviews with literacy funders, providers or practitioners were conducted in this process. Online research for this profile was conducted between December 3 and 19, 2008, and represents the information that was publicly available at that point in time. It should not be used for further research purposes without validation. The date when web pages were last modified is noted when such information was indicated.

1.   Funders

Provincial Government: **Alberta Advanced Education and Technology** (**AAET**)

AAET promotes and supports adult literacy through the **Community Adult Learning Program** (**CALP**). Its 2007 Annual Report states that CALP "provides lifelong learning opportunities in communities throughout Alberta with an emphasis on reaching under-represented learners. The program contributes to two policy outcomes in *A Learning Alberta*'s strategic policy framework – "a learner-centred society and vibrant learning communities". One of the goals of the program is to promote and support "foundational learning" i.e. adult literacy (including numeracy) and English as a Second Language.

Key Recent Statements and Directions
A collaborative process has been underway to develop a literacy policy for Alberta. Provincial government representatives from AAET, the Departments of Justice, Human Resources and Employment, and Community Development served as advisors to the project, which was put together by members of literacy groups and programs, colleges, unions, libraries, industry, and community agencies. The policy framework is intended to support the government's vision, focusing on the following shared principles:

- comprehensiveness and inclusion
- awareness of literacy needs, availability of programs, an environment supportive of literacy learners and a spirit of welcoming all who want to improve their literacy level
- accessibility by reducing and eliminating of barriers
- sustainability through consistent and long-term commitments to develop and support a learning culture in Alberta

AAET released the *Vibrant Learning Communities Framework and Action Plan* (2008) "to strengthen the ability of Community Adult Learning Councils and other community literacy providers to provide local programs and services, clarify their important role, and create greater alignment with the public post-secondary system, specifically, with Comprehensive Community Institutions."

Government of Alberta published *Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta's Publicly Funded Advanced Education System* (2007). Designated 11 of 14 colleges as Comprehensive Community Institutions "which have a broader role in working with community learning providers in meeting literacy and foundational learning needs, and ensuring access to a broad spectrum of learning for a geographic service region."

AAET funding amounts
- 2006-7: Funding provided by AAET for community-based adult learning (adult literacy, family literacy, ESL) was $10 million in 2006/07

- Foundational Learning Fund introduced in 2008 "to increase access to adult literacy and English language learning programs" by offering CALP organizations opportunities for additional AAET support.
- Total 2007-8 funding for education and technology provided by AAET was 3.0 billion. The 2008-9 Budget increases funding to 3.4 billion, with about 60% of this total going towards the support of adult, i.e. post-secondary learning.

AAET Funding Streams
Through CALP, AAET provides support for:
1. Adult Learning Councils (CALCS) — In 2006/07, 68 of 83 Councils received a base grant of less than $40,000 to operate and provide non-formal, non-credit, community-based learning opportunities to adults in specific geographic regions in: literacy, English as a Second Language/French as a Second Language, employability enhancement and community issues.

2. Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Services (VTALS) — Annual grants of $25,000 or less are provided to 54 of 73 organizations.

   The major, urban VTALS and CALCS serve as **funding agencies** supporting local literacy societies, organizations and programs.

Populations served through CALP
- Aboriginal
- immigrant
- rural population
- other under-represented adults (seniors, youth, special needs, inmates)
- families

Volunteers participating in CALP in 2007: over 2,757 (or 142,682 volunteer hours)
- CALCS rely on volunteers for governance on the local boards of directors and for management committees
- VTALS rely on volunteers for tutoring

Number of learners supported by CALP grants:
According to 2007 CALP Annual Report —
- 60,505 (participating in 5,656 programs)
- 5,470 of total participated in 566 "foundational literacy" programs
According to 2008 AAET Annual Report —
- 96,000 (participating in over 6,700 programs)

Profile adult learners
In 2006, VTALS categorized its learners as follows:
- *Gender*: 61% female, 39% male
- *Age*: 41%, 36-55 years of age, 39% 20-35 years of age
- *Education Levels in Canada*: 37% with more than 10 years of schooling, 23% with

7-9 years, and 24% had attended special education classes
- *Education Levels outside Canada*: 67% with more than ten years of schooling
- *Family Literacy*: AAET also provides support specifically for family literacy as part of its Parent-Child Literacy Strategy, offering a maximum of $40,000 a year to individual organizations serving disadvantaged adults with pre-school children. There are currently:
- 43 family literacy programs
- 9 aboriginal family literacy programs (in urban centres, rural communities and Métis Settlements)
- a total of 7,000 parents served annually in about 118 urban and rural communities

Public — Other Funding

Literacy societies, organizations and programs also receive contributions from other public sources. These sources can sometimes be identified online by examining the annual reports or particular organizations. Not all organizations have a web page, however, and not all publish an annual report. Other public funders can include:

1. other provincial ministries or departments (for example, Alberta Office of Literacy and Social Skills, Aboriginal Relations)
2. federal government (OLES/Office of Literacy and Essential Skills — HRSDC/Human Resources and Social Development Canada)
3. municipalities (school councils and boards of education)
4. First National Government and aboriginal organizations

Private Funding

Additional support is provided by the private sector, from corporations, foundations, professional associations and individuals. This information is sometimes available on the web pages and/or posted annual reports of particular organizations.

Sources Section 1

http://www.advancededandtech.gov.ab.ca/other/ (2008)
http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/CONFINTEA%20VI/CANADA%20FINAL%20CONFINTEA%20VI%20EN.pdf (Oct. 2008)
http://www.advancededandtech.alberta.ca/other/BuildingVibrantLearningCommunities.pdf (Dec. 2007)
http://www.advancededandtech.gov.ab.ca/annualreport/2008/Annual_Report.pdf (2008)
http://www.advancededandtech.gov.ab.ca/department/budget/2008/total.asp (2008)
http://alberta.ca/acn/200804/23355776235DA-E81D-DB69- 0E376B4EFF7CE71F.html (April 2008)
http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/department/budget/2006/ (2008)
http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/department/budget/2006/default.asp#Community (2008)
http://www.advancededandtech.gov.ab.ca/other/CALP_Annual_Report_2007.pdf (Sept. 2008)
http://www.communitylearning.info/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=%2fZks9lDUKZU%3d&tabid=61&mid=470 (Sept. 2008)
http://www.nald.ca/alsurvey/searches/searchresult.asp?Typee=location

2. Providers

Organizations/Programs Supported by AAET
The community learning providers funded by AAET "are primarily voluntary sector grassroots organizations independent from government with an accessible, local presence; local governance, input and leadership from community members; significant in-kind, volunteer and financial support from the local community; and efficient and sustained services and programming that address locally determined learning needs". They work to:

- improve the accessibility of adult learning, particularly for those from under-represented groups
- provide local opportunities for adults to acquire important foundation skills such as literacy and English language proficiency
- address non-formal learning needs in communities
- mobilize volunteers and other community resources to support learning
- collaborate with other organizations to addressing individual and community issues through learning

These organizations include:

1. **Adult Learning Councils** (CALCS)
   a. voluntary associations, either incorporated under the Societies Act or hosted by a legal entity
   b. 83 in operation, providing learning opportunities in about 253 cities, towns and villages
   c. offer non-formal, non-credit, community-based programs to adults in specific geographic regions in: literacy, ESL/FSL, employability enhancement and community issues
2. **Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Services** (VTALS)
   a. offered by 51 CALCS and 22 incorporated literacy societies that receive a separate grant to provide a volunteer-tutor adult literacy service. Available in about 60 towns and cities
   b. 2,000 learners matched annually with volunteer tutors collectively donating 93,000 hours
3. **Incorporated Literacy Societies** (15 listed in the 2007 CALP Annual Report)
4. **Other organizations** (e.g. libraries, colleges – 7 listed)
5. **Aboriginal Organizations**

Programs Offered through CALP
A wide range of programs is offered, depending upon community's needs. Family literacy is an important category, numbering 42 general programs and 9 programs specifically for aboriginal populations. Literacy programs serving aboriginal learners often include an aboriginal language/literacy component.

Provincial Literacy Coalition
Literacy Alberta/LA — made up of 300 members and is part of the Movement for Canadian Literacy. It promotes and supports the raising of literacy levels in the province by: holding public awareness campaigns, providing input on public policy, offering professional development programs for literacy practitioners and a comprehensive tutor-training program, hosting conferences and workshops and operating a free Literacy Hotline. The coalition has a comprehensive web page with extensive links for learners and practitioners. Annual reports are also posted.

Organizations Promoting/Providing Practitioner Training and PD
1. VTALS
2. CALCS
3. LA
4. Community Learning Network

Sources Section 2

http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/other/BuildingVibrantLearningCommunities.pdf (Dec. 2007)
http://www.advancededandtech.gov.ab.ca/other/continuinged/councils.asp (2008)
http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/other/literacy/volunteertutor.asp (2008)
http://www.advancededandtech.gov.ab.ca/other/CALP_Annual_Report_2007.pdf (Sept. 2008)
http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/CONFINTEA%20VI/CANADA%20FINAL%20CONFINTEA%20VI%20EN.pdf (Oct. 2008)
http://www.literacy-alberta.ca/about.htm
http://www.communitylearning.info/
http://www.johnhoward.ca/jhsmiss.htm (last updated November 17, 2008)
http://www.nald.ca/alsurvey/searches/searchresult.asp?Typee=location

3. Accountability/Reporting

Providers: Reporting to AAET
AAET requires:
- **statistical reports** from VTALS, CALCS and incorporated literacy societies and other organizations it funds
- reporting on how closely programs met CALP's **target** of 80% or more of participants expressing **satisfaction** with the learning opportunity, and 80% or more achieving their learning goals

In 2007, AAET received 211 reports providing per program:
- number of learning opportunities, classes or workshops offered
- number of registrants
- profile of learners (demographic group, age, gender, educational background, special needs)
- learners' goals/motivations
- feedback from learners — learners' satisfaction with program (ascertained through **participant questionnaires** issued to learners)

- major barriers accessing programs

CALP Annual Reports list the aggregate results of the reports submitted by the organizations AAET funds.

Funders: Reporting by AAET
AAET provides a detailed breakdown of its own outcomes and performance measures in all areas it funds, including community-based learning, in its Annual Report and Budgets. For community-based learning, AAET reports on whether there is a "broad array of programs available" and whether there are "effective partnerships among government, communities, employers and learning providers". The data is collected from learners, educators and employers and is based on a variety of sources, such as enrolment and graduation data, student aid/scholarship figures and surveys.

Sources Section 3
http://www.advancededandtech.gov.ab.ca/other/CALP_Annual_Report_2007.pdf (Sept. 2008)
http://www.advancededandtech.gov.ab.ca/annualreport/2008/Annual_Report.pdf (Sept. 2008)
http://www.finance.alberta.ca/publications/budget/budget2008/govbp.pdf (Nov. 2008)