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Provincial Adult Literacy Profile Funders, Providers and Accountability

British Columbia

Total population (2007)	4,380,300
First Nations (2006)	196,070
Immigrant (2006) [Visible minority, 2001]	1,119,210 [836,440]
Francophone (2006)	54,745
Urban (2001)	85%
Rural (2001)	15%
Senior/65 yrs and older (2007)	617,800

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html?gaw=08001>

[BC Summary Tables:

<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/pro01/pro110-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

Public — Provincial Government

Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development/**AVED** (post-secondary education sector) and Ministry of Education/**MEd** (secondary education sector).

1. AVED has “the lead” on adult literacy and adult lifelong learning in British Columbia, in collaboration with other government ministries. Its adult literacy strategy, the **Adult Opportunities Action Plan**, aligns with a number of other broader government initiatives, including the MEd’s ReadNow Provincial Literacy Action Plan, the Ministry of Attorney General’s Welcome BC initiatives supporting new immigrants, the Ministry of Economic Development’s WorkBC Action Plan, and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation’s Transformative Change Accord.
2. MEd is responsible for literacy coordination under the **ReadNow Provincial Literacy Action Plan** promoting literacy programs and resources to help all BC’s population improve its reading skills. It also works to ensure that the province achieves its goal of “becoming the best educated, most literate place in North America”.

AVED and MEd work together through a Joint Committee on **Adult Basic Education/ABE** to provide support and basic learning opportunities for adults. Educational institutions offer a broad range of courses as part of the ABE Program, including fundamental academic skills, academic upgrading, and life skills or career preparation. An ABE Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the post-secondary institutions offering the program (colleges, universities, institutes). Working Committees function in specific areas of program instruction, e.g. Adult Literacy Fundamental Level.

A central component of the province’s adult literacy strategy is support for community-based programs. This support is provided by AVED’s **Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP)**. Through CALP, non-profit organizations, in partnership with post-secondary educational institutions, receive government support enabling them to offer adult literacy programs to adults wishing to improve their literacy. CALP goals include:

- the enhancement of adult literacy activities in BC
- the encouragement and improvement of partnerships between community groups, school districts and public post-secondary institutions
- the promotion of the active involvement of all sectors of society — governments, voluntary groups, educational institutions, business and labour — in improving adult literacy education in BC

Key Recent Statements and Directions

According to **AVED’s 2007 Adult Opportunities Action Plan/AOAP** the challenge is to ensure that the varied programs and services delivering adult literacy services complement each other and work well together, without duplication or overlooking gaps in individual communities. The AOAP also recognizes that each community and region has its own

literacy needs, reflecting its demographics and labour market. It is therefore essential to tailor literacy and other adult educational programs to specific demands. The Plan called for:

- school districts to play a key role in developing literacy plans for their districts, in partnership with their communities
- school districts and colleges to increase collaboration and plan regionally
- the establishment of Regional Literacy Coordinators to promote continued literacy program delivery, coordination and collaboration, as well as the appropriate combination of literacy programming to address regional needs
- the development of a central database of programs, resources and services available by community, to allow ministries to allocate funding effectively and efficiently

AVED's 2007-8 Annual Service Plan Report indicated that the Ministry had finalized and begun implementation of AOAP, defined as the provincial literacy strategy whose main goals include:

- reducing barriers
- increasing participation
- improving literacy success for key populations, such as Aboriginal people and immigrants

Regional Coordinators

In February 2008, AVED announced funding for the establishment of Regional Literacy Coordinators at 16 public post-secondary institutions "to enhance co-ordination and delivery of adult literacy programs".

Funding Streams at AVED

- ABE
- CALP — funding categories: Adult Literacy, Family Literacy and Aboriginal Literacy; Note: Francophone literacy organizations are provided with funding separately to deliver province-wide programs in addition to the above activities.

Recipients of funding for ABE

- secondary and post-secondary schools (colleges, universities, institutes, continuing education centres)
- community organizations

Funding amounts

- 2007-8: AVED provided \$86.25 million to fund the **Developmental Program** (which includes ABE, adult special education and ESL)
- 2008-09: AVED is providing \$2.4 million for 70 community-based adult literacy projects
- 2008: AVED provided \$1.6 million to fund Regional Literacy Coordinators at 16 public post-secondary educational institutions
- 2008: \$1.2 million provided to support Aboriginal family literacy programs across the province
- 2007-8: MEd provided \$35 million in funding to support ABE in school districts
- 2007-8: The Ministry of Attorney General provided \$16 million to support English Language Services

Since 2001, the BC government has invested more than \$140 million in new literacy initiatives, including pre-literacy and early learning programs.

Populations served — a wide range of individuals, families, communities and demographic groups, including Aboriginals, immigrants, and people with disabilities.

Profile of ABE learners (all levels), 2005:

- *Gender:* 59% women
- *Family Status:* 56% single with no children, 10% with children and part of a couple, 10% single parents
- *Education Level:* 70%+ with secondary school diploma
- *Population Groups:* 12% Aboriginal, 12% with a long-term condition or health problem limiting activities, 23% learned English as a second language
- *Reasons for Enrolling:* 49% to qualify to enter a post-secondary program or institution, 37% to upgrade for further education or training, 13% to obtain secondary school graduation (other reasons — improving basic skills, changing careers, learning job skills, and personal interest.

Volunteers: statistics not located

Number of learners (in 2007-8)

- 8,056 FTE (“full-time equivalent”) adult learners in ABE (post-secondary schools)
- 7,500 in Community Adult programs
- 25,333 in Ministry of Education (secondary schools)

Public — Other Funding

1. other provincial ministries/departments
2. federal government

Private and Non-Profit Funding

Additional support is provided by the private sector, from corporations, foundations and individuals, as well as from Literacy BC and Literacy Now.

Sources Section 1

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/>
<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/handbook.pdf> (2008)
<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/welcome.htm>
http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/adulteducation/adult_opportunities_plan07.pdf (Sept. 2007)
<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/welcome.htm>
http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/CALP_2008-09-YearEnd-DataReport.pdf (2008)
<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/postsec.htm>
http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/ABE_Report_of_Findings.pdf
http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual_Reports/2007_2008/ae/ae.pdf (2008)
<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/CONFINTA%20VI/CANADA%20FINAL%20CONFINTA%20VI%20EN.pdf> (Oct. 2008)
<http://www.literacybc.ca/supportinglearners/financialaid.php>
<http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/AR2008.pdf> (2008)

2. Providers

ABE Program Providers

1. at **public post-secondary institutions** — 18 colleges, universities, institutes across the province:
 - a. Programs are offered in a variety of formats, ranging from semester classes to individualized courses, including distance education and community outreach with tutoring assistance.
 - b. Programs are transferable around the province
 - c. Courses can be taken as prerequisites for other programs in the post-secondary sector or as leading to the BC Adult Graduation Diploma (BCAGD).
2. at **local high schools**: in almost every school district
 - a. Adult learners have several options — they may finish a course necessary to receive their high school diploma, or they may complete a reduced number of credits, opt out of provincial exams, and work toward their BCAGD.
3. **online** through the BC's virtual school, LearnNowBC (www.LearnNowBC.ca)

ABE at the Adult Literacy Fundamental (ALF) level provides instruction in reading and writing, mathematics and skills/strategies for learning. Computer skills are included.

Community Adult Literacy Providers

Besides educational institutions, **community organizations** also offer adult literacy programs and services through CALP. These include:

- non-profit societies
- training organizations
- voluntary sector organizations
- professional associations
- educational sector organizations
- workplace organizations (sector councils, unions and business associations)
- municipalities
- community-based literacy programs
- First Nations Bands
- Aboriginal organizations

Types of Adult Literacy Programs Offered

A range of programs is offered locally, tailored to the needs of communities, varied demographic groups, individuals and families, and responding to their specific daily, academic and vocational needs.

Provincial Organizations

Literacy BC — BC’s literacy coalition, “an independent, non-partisan, membership-based, registered not-for-profit organisation” promoting and supporting literacy and lifelong learning in BC by:

- supporting adult learners and their families
- promoting innovation in practice
- raising public awareness
- building capacity
- partnering in policy development

Adult Basic Education Association of BC/ABEABC — an organization comprised of instructors and community members interested in ABE and literacy. It works to help ensure that ABE continues to receive appropriate support and contributes to maintaining and enhancing the quality of available programs. It is “proactive in the development of policy, delivery, and evaluation of accessible, relevant, high quality education for adults in British Columbia... focusing on excellence in professional development”.

Literacy Now, now part of **Legacies Now**, a non-profit organization working in partnership with community organizations, non-government organizations, the private sector and all levels of government “to develop sustainable legacies in sport and recreation, the arts, literacy, volunteerism and communities... [by assisting] communities to discover and create unique and inclusive social and economic opportunities leading up to and beyond the 2010 Games”. In the area of literacy, the organization’s goals are to “increase the access to and equity of literacy initiatives throughout the province, sustain literacy initiatives leading to greater success for members of the community to build community capacity; and increase literacy levels across the lifespan.”

All of these organizations have comprehensive web sites with extensive links for learners and practitioners. Annual reports are also posted (except for ABEABC).

Organizations Promoting/Providing Practitioner Training and PD

- AVED
- MEd
- Literacy BC
- ABEABC
- Literacy Now

Sources Section 2

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/>

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/handbook.pdf> (2008)

http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/adulteducation/adult_opportunities_plan07.pdf (Sept. 2007)

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/welcome.htm>

http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/ABE_Report_of_Findings.pdf

<http://www.literacybc.ca/>

<http://www.abeabc.ca/>

<http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/>

http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/fileadmin/user_upload/About_Us/Annual_Reports/2010LegaciesNowSocietyFS_June_30_2008.pdf (30 June 2008)
www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/calp08/calp-guide08.doc (2008)

3. Accountability/Reporting

AVED Reporting and Reporting to AVED

The Post-Secondary Educational System Accountability Framework

1999-2000 — An Accountability Framework and Program Quality Guidelines for ABE were produced.

Nov. 2003 — Following a consultation process in 2002, a new **Accountability Framework** was introduced in the post-secondary educational system that “streamlined and harmonized within an annual cycle” AVED’s planning and reporting activities, as well as those of public post-secondary institutions. The new Framework seeks to produce “greater coherence and integration” within the system while allowing institutions “the flexibility and autonomy to offer the programs and services their communities need while simultaneously working toward the broader strategic goals that government identifies for the system”. The Framework will be periodically adjusted in response to annual evaluation and review. Currently, it has three key features:

1. the use of **performance measures** to gauge progress toward achieving goals, emphasizing outcomes “to assess the effectiveness of strategies, to indicate whether public expenditures provide value, and to determine whether individual institutions and the system achieve identified goals and objectives”
2. a **consistent, harmonized system** of reporting, including publicly available annual reports describing the strategies undertaken to achieve goals and objectives, and the results of these activities — AVED reporting on system-level activities and results and each institution reporting on its individual activities and results
3. a clear **emphasis on outcomes** — tracking these to assess whether shared goals and objectives are achieved, whether public expenditures are effective and provide value, and whether publicly-funded organizations are performing well

Reporting in the Literacy Sector

Currently, literacy in BC is measured using a range of frameworks and outcomes. Reviewing these, AVED’s 2007 Adult Opportunities Action Plan, the provincial literacy strategy, called for:

- joint outcomes surveys for public post-secondary institutions and school-based programs
- program and system evaluations
- better, more frequent data about progress towards the goal of adult literacy at provincial and individual levels to make sure decisions are well informed
- a provincial system for monitoring progress of learners
- a common data and accountability framework for ABE, including performance indicators to coordinate collection of information on adult learners, monitor progress and track the movement of learners between systems and into the workforce

CALP Reporting to AVED

Community organizations funded through CALP must provide AVED with information on the types of programs offered, the number of learners served, and the literacy levels of learners — through a year-end data report.

AVED is currently working with community partners and Literacy BC to develop and implement an assessment monitoring framework that will require funding recipients to report on how their program results support the objectives and expected outcomes of the CALP. In 2008, AVED was scheduled to consult with Regional Literacy Coordinators and other stakeholders on various CALP-related issues, including improvements to the current CALP program, the application process and reporting requirements.

Literacy BC Work on Accountability

In partnership with Literacy Now, Literacy BC has been involved in developing a set of learning benchmarks for community literacy programming in BC. The first phase of the project “proposed a values-based approach to monitoring and assessment within the community literacy sector”.

In partnership with The Centre for Literacy of Quebec, the Movement for Canadian Literacy, and RiPAL-BC, Literacy BC is also involved in a “groundbreaking national project on accountability and adult literacy” — *Connecting the Dots*. The project allows funders and practitioners to “examine the impact of accountability on the adult literacy field across the country and explore new ways of approaching it”.

Literacy BC’s *From the Ground Up* project has produced a set of tools for literacy evaluation, each developed by a community literacy group or program from different parts of the province.

Sources Section 3

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/handbook.pdf> (2008)

http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/adulteducation/adult_opportunities_plan07.pdf (Sept. 2007)

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/welcome.htm>

http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/CALP_2008-09-YearEnd-DataReport.pdf

http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/framework/documents/policy_paper.pdf (Nov. 2003)

<http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/AR2008.pdf> (last modified 23 Oct. 2008)

<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/CONFITEA%20VI/CANADA%20FINAL%20CONFITEA%20VI%20EN.pdf> (Oct. 2008)

www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/calp08/calp-guide08.doc (2008)