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Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines

Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines

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1. Introduction

Purpose of Guidelines

The *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* ensure that organizations receiving funding through the Community Adult Learning Program are familiar with the intent of the program and understand the requirements and expectations of grant recipients.

Since the late 1970s, the Government of Alberta has supported community-based adult learning across the province. Through the Community Adult Learning Program, Advanced Education invests approximately \$18 million each year to support the delivery of adult literacy and foundational learning, professional development for the staff and volunteers of grant recipients, and other initiatives that foster the advancement of community adult learning in Alberta.

As the first point of access for adult foundational learners, the community-based learning system has the crucial role of providing a non-threatening, flexible learning environment, as well as raising awareness and creating a culture of learning in communities. Grant recipients help adult foundational learners see themselves as learners, often for the first time, and build the confidence they need to acquire new skills and persevere in learning. As learners use new foundational skills in their daily lives, the skills are acquired more permanently, enabling individuals to pursue further learning, have satisfying and meaningful employment, and fully participate in community life.

Alberta's adult learners have a wide variety of cultures, traditions and experiences, all of which shape their attitudes towards learning. English language skills are essential for newcomers to settle into local communities, thrive in the workforce, and become full participants in society. The Community Adult Learning Program works closely with Indigenous communities to build partnerships founded on trust, openness and respect, and to improve access to (and success in) the learning system. Community-based learning organizations are well-positioned to respond to diverse learning needs through adaptable programs and supports made possible through strong partnerships and coordination of services.

Literacy and other foundational skills “have a significant influence on life outcomes – the ability to learn, health status, civic participation and social engagement, economic performance, and involvement with the justice system.”¹ Community adult learning organizations support Alberta's rural and economic development by coordinating with local businesses to identify learning gaps, and by tailoring programs and services accordingly. Through greater coordination, communities take control of their learning potential and attract more settlement, investment and development.

¹ [Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta's Next Generation Economy](#), 2010, p.4.

2. Strategic Policy Context

2.1. Advanced Education

The Community Adult Learning Program is supported by Government of Alberta policy. The following Advanced Education frameworks provide strategic context for the program.

Ministry Business Plan – Advanced Education 2020-2023

The Community Adult Learning Program supports the following outcomes in Advanced Education's *Business Plan*:

Albertans have the education and skills required to get rewarding careers in the current and future labour market, and to build economic prosperity.

The Community Adult Learning Program contributes to this outcome by supporting adult foundational learners—many of whom are underrepresented Albertans who have faced barriers to participating in learning, and/or have had previous negative experiences in formal education. The Community Adult Learning Program helps these individuals see themselves as learners, gain the confidence they need to succeed in further learning and training, enhance their employment opportunities and contribute to a modern and diverse workforce and society.

The adult learning system is fiscally responsible and demonstrates effective governance and accountability for achieving system direction and goals.

The Community Adult Learning Program demonstrates fiscal responsibility, effective governance, and accountability through grant recipients' adherence to the requirements outlined in the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*.

Roles and Mandates Policy Framework

The Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta's Adult Learning System, released in 2007 and updated in 2019, is the core policy for Alberta's advanced learning system, of which the community-based adult learning system is an integral partner. An important contribution of the framework is its identification of six types of post-secondary institutions, each with distinct and complementary roles. Most relevant to the Community Adult Learning Program, the framework includes the expectation that comprehensive community colleges collaborate with adult learning providers, other institutions, community, and industry to support regional access to foundational learning as well as certificate, diploma, and undergraduate degree programs. This responsibility is called regional stewardship (see section 3: Program Definitions). The requirement of comprehensive community colleges to collaborate with community-based adult learning providers does not change governance or funding arrangements. Rather, this collaboration enables all parties to more effectively address literacy and foundational learning needs.

Building Vibrant Learning Communities

Building Vibrant Learning Communities, released in 2007, is a guiding document that helped the development of the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*. The vision of this policy is that quality of life in communities is enhanced when strong community-based learning providers work collaboratively with post-secondary institutions so adults are able to engage in learning. All stakeholders—including government, communities, non-profit organizations, and post-secondary institutions—have a role to play in building vibrant learning communities.

Increasing Learner Access through System Alignment

Increasing Learner Access through System Alignment, released in January 2010, is a report developed by representatives of community organizations, Comprehensive Community Colleges and Advanced Education. The report proposes guidelines related to the regional access planning process and the stewardship role of the Comprehensive Community Colleges, and it further develops the concept of community learning centres.

A Learning Alberta: Final Report of the Steering Committee

In 2006, the *A Learning Alberta* Steering Committee held a multi-stage consultation that brought together thousands of Albertans. The committee's final report promoted foundational learning and the importance of increasing access to education. It acknowledged Alberta's diversity of learners and encouraged partnerships with Indigenous communities. The report said that employers, learning providers, schools and other organizations in every community should work together to ensure learners are able to access a broad range of programs. The report also highlighted the immeasurable benefits to the province resulting from the contributions of community-based organizations and their long history of community collaboration and mobilizing volunteers.²

Parent-Child Literacy Strategy

The *Parent-Child Literacy Strategy*, 2002, was based on research into early brain development that showed language acquisition is a critical contributor to literacy development and school readiness. The *Parent-Child Literacy Strategy* included the following goals:

1. Strengthen and build the basic literacy skills of parents;
2. Support and foster the involvement of parents in their children's learning; and
3. Develop and enhance community-based partnerships that support the development of language and literacy skills of families.

The Community Adult Learning Program continues to further the above goals by supporting family literacy programs as a mode of delivery for required and supplemental adult programming.

² [*Foundational Learning and Diversity Sub-Committee: Report to A Learning Alberta Steering Committee*, 2006, p.10.](#)

2.2. Government of Alberta

In addition to the above-mentioned frameworks, goals and principles specific to Advanced Education, the Community Adult Learning Program also supports the Government of Alberta's overall direction.

Government of Alberta Strategic Plan 2020-2023

The Government of Alberta is focused on eliminating barriers for job creators and expanding the province's economy. A strong private sector is vital for government to continue to protect health, education and services, and to provide supports for Albertans who need it the most. Through this approach, government is ensuring that Albertans receive high quality and sustainable services now and into the future.

The three key priorities outlined in the *Government of Alberta's Strategic Plan* are supporting job creation, making life better for Albertans, and standing up for Alberta. As a core component of Alberta's adult learning system, the Community Adult Learning Program supports the key priority of making life better for Albertans.

- An ongoing objective of the Community Adult Learning Program is strengthening quality education for adult foundational learners that delivers the best possible outcomes. The Community Adult Learning Program is committed to continuous improvement and reporting outcomes-based measures to demonstrate the impact of the program in changing the lives of adult foundational learners.
- By providing programs and services to adult foundational learners, many of whom are underrepresented and face barriers to participating in learning, the Community Adult Learning Program supports Albertans most in need.
- By closely connecting with community partners as part of their ongoing work, including partnerships with Indigenous peoples, Community Adult Learning Program grant recipients support the Government of Alberta's objectives of building better communities and collaborating with Indigenous Peoples to pursue opportunities and change lives.

Building on Alberta's Strengths: Alberta's Economic Development Framework

The *Alberta Economic Development Framework* intends to guide all stakeholders whose work impacts economic development towards a shared vision and affiliation. The Community Adult Learning Program aligns with the framework and its priorities by supporting regional economic development in communities and supporting the labour market to better anticipate and meet the needs of employers and workers.

Alberta's Social Policy Framework

In 2012, over 31,000 Albertans engaged in a process to create a social policy framework with the following vision:

In Alberta, everyone contributes to making our communities inclusive and welcoming. Everyone has opportunities to fulfill their potential and to benefit from our thriving social, economic and cultural life.

Alberta's Social Policy Framework, released in February 2013, is a call to action for collaboration that will guide the work of governments, community partners, and the private sector as they work together to make the vision of the framework a reality over the next 10-15 years.

Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta's Next Generation Economy

Living Literacy was released in 2009 and provides a framework for coordinating the efforts of the Government of Alberta and its partners to improve literacy levels for Albertans so they can thrive and contribute to Alberta's economy. *Living Literacy* reflects government priorities for increasing high school completion rates, increasing post-secondary participation, and building a skilled workforce to enhance quality of life for all Albertans.

Supporting Immigrants and Immigration to Alberta

Released in 2005, this policy framework highlights a vision where immigrants and their families choose to live in Alberta, where they are able to fully participate in community life and are valued for their cultural, economic and social contributions. The policy outlines the province's strategies for the attraction and retention of immigrants, and supporting their successful transition into society, including increasing access to English language learning opportunities. The Community Adult Learning Program supports this policy direction through the provision of English language learning and other supports for immigrants in local communities.

3. Program Definitions

Adult learning principles

Adult learning principles are the best practices that guide the development and delivery of adult foundational learning opportunities, where learning is relevant, practical, respectful, self-directed, strengths-based, builds on the learner’s knowledge and experience, and is oriented towards the learner’s goals. For more information, see Appendix 10.1.

Barriers

Barriers are the social, economic, and/or other kinds of challenges that learners face that interfere with their participation in learning. Barriers may be experienced both externally and internally. External barriers include a chronically disrupted learning journey, previous negative experiences with formal education, a lived experience of low income or poverty, experience with trauma or violence, and/or systemic marginalization and stigmatization. Internal barriers include diagnosed or undiagnosed learning difficulties/disabilities, developmental and/or cognitive delays, health/mental health issues, addictions issues, a fear of further stigmatization, and a sense of failure associated with learning.

Any combination of the above challenges are likely to influence a learner’s self-perception, which may, in turn, significantly impact learning. Adult foundational learners often lack a strong learning identity, belief in their ability to learn successfully, and the confidence needed to engage in learning. These individuals may also feel challenged on how to self-advocate and/or find the information and services they need to support their own learning. For further context, see the definition of foundational learner.

Basic digital skills

The ability of individuals to understand and use digital systems, tools, applications and networks in order to access and manage information and thrive in learning, the workplace and daily life. For more information, see section 5.1.4: Basic Digital Skills.

Canada’s *Skills for Success Framework* (forthcoming – formerly *Essential Skills Framework*)

Skills for success are the foundational and social-emotional skills needed to succeed in today’s workplace. Foundational skills are those on which all other skills are built, such as reading, writing, numeracy, digital and problem solving. Social-emotional skills are those that are needed to adapt and succeed in a diverse and technology driven workforce and society, such as adaptability, collaboration, creativity and communication. Although these skills can overlap and interact, together, they influence a wide range of personal, professional and societal outcomes.

Coaching and modeling

Coaching is the process of teaching a new skill and encouraging participants as they learn and practice that skill. Modeling is a teaching technique that encompasses the principle ‘do as I do.’

Comprehensive community college (CCC)

A public post-secondary institution responsible for stewarding adult learning opportunities within a defined region of Alberta. Colleges are responsible for understanding their geographic service regions to enhance strategic planning, identify and achieve goals, and meet regional learner and economic demand. This work is accomplished through greater system collaboration and alignment with community adult learning.

Cost-recovery

Cost-recovery means ensuring the organization recovers the full costs of delivering a program or service, including all direct and **indirect** costs.

Course

Courses are instructor-led educational experiences that focus on addressing participants’ learning goals through relevant, structured curriculum. The content of each individual session builds on the content of each previous session to ensure learners make steady progress towards the learning goals of the course. Therefore, it is important that learners attend each session. Course instructors measure learner skill development by assessing the extent to which learners meet the goals of the course. For more information, see Section 5.3.2: Courses.

Decision-making body

For the Community Adult Learning Program, the decision-making body is the body of members who jointly oversee the activities of the organization. This may be a board of directors, council, or committee operating with a legal host.

English language learner

English language learners are a diverse group who may or may not be born in Canada, and whose first language is not English. They could be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident; an Indigenous person; a refugee or immigrant at any stage of adjustment into Canadian society; or a temporary resident, whether a visitor to Canada, an international student, or a temporary foreign worker. They may also be of any economic or social background; for example, they could be a foreign-trained professional or a low-skilled labourer. An English language learner could have any level of formal education (or no formal education) and be at any foundational level of English language learning.

English language learning

The study and practice of the English language by individuals whose first language is other than English and who are unable to communicate fluently in English. English language learning helps them gain proficiency in speaking, reading, writing and listening in English. For more information, see section 5.1.5: English Language Learning.

English language literacy learner

English language literacy learners, sometimes referred to as ESL literacy learners, are individuals who have varying abilities to speak or understand spoken English, and who are acquiring basic literacy skills, often for the first time, in any language due to limited or interrupted formal education. These individuals often have little to no education or literacy skills in their first language(s), and need to learn literacy skills in English. English language literacy learning is a continuum, and English language literacy learners require learning that is tailored to their specific learning needs. For more information, see section 5.1.5: English Language Learning.

Family literacy programs

Family literacy programs funded by the Community Adult Learning Program prioritize the delivery of intentional activities that build adults' skills and promote the values and benefits of literacy for the entire family. In required programming, family literacy programs provide adult learners with opportunities to increase their own literacy and foundational skills that also enhance daily literacy practices for all family members. For more information, see section 5.3.3.

Formal learning

Learning that is acquired in an educational institution, is delivered through an organized and structured curriculum, is assessed by a qualified instructor and recognized with grades and parchment (e.g. degrees, diplomas, certificates).

Foundational learner

A foundational learner is an adult who chooses to engage in foundational learning opportunities such as literacy, numeracy, skills for learning, basic digital skills, and/or English language learning to address knowledge and skills gaps. Foundational learners often experience economic, social, and/or other challenges or barriers that may interfere with their learning—challenges that cannot be separated from the learning journey itself. Grant recipients must familiarize themselves with the nature of these challenges, discussed in section 5.1: Literacy and Foundational Learning.

Foundational learning

Learning opportunities that support the development of adult literacy, numeracy, skills for learning, basic digital skills, and/or proficiency in the English language. Foundational learning opportunities help individuals to pursue further learning, have satisfying and

meaningful employment, and fully participate in society. While the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* do not identify or mandate a specific “cut-off level” for foundational learning, in general terms, it can be thought of as up to and including approximately Grade 9 levels in the formal kindergarten to grade 12 system, or, in the case of adult literacy and numeracy, up to and including Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) level 2.

Knowledgeable referral

A referral is the process of sending an individual to another person or place for help, information or advice. Knowledgeable referrals are those that are made with confidence that the person or place to which an individual is referred is appropriate, and that the individual will be able to access the help, information or advice required.

Learning activities

Learning activities are instructor-led learning opportunities that are scheduled with set times for learners to improve their skills or knowledge on a particular topic through a participatory or hands-on approach. Unlike courses, learning activities generally do not involve a highly structured curriculum, and, because the content of individual sessions may or may not build on the content of previous sessions, learner success does not require attending every session. Instead, each session of a learning activity is designed to respond to the specific needs of learners in the room, allowing learners to build on the skills they bring with them. For more information, see section 5.3.4: Learning Activities.

Learner pathways

The chosen routes that learners take through a range of learning opportunities, including nonformal community-based learning, nonformal and formal post-secondary learning, transfer credit, and workplace training. Learner pathways are used to describe the learning options available to different learners.

Learner support services

The range of activities or services that grant recipients coordinate to support the learning and/or life journey of adult learners. They are opportunities for organizations to build relationships with learners, which may increase their confidence to participate in further learning. For more information, see section 5: Program Requirements.

Legal host

An entity approved by Advanced Education to act as the legal administrator for a service organization and receive a Community Adult Learning Program grant on behalf of the organization.

Literacy

The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated within varying contexts. For more information, see section 5.1.1: Adult Literacy.

Modes of delivery

The ways in which programming may be delivered to achieve learning objectives. The four modes of delivery include tutoring, courses, family literacy programs, and learning activities. For more information, see section 5.3: Modes of Delivery.

Nonformal learning

Learning that is acquired outside of the formal education system. These learning experiences are led by a facilitator, have identified learning goals, and tend to be flexible and voluntary with few if any prerequisites.

Numeracy

The ability to use, apply, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas. For more information, see section 5.1.2: Numeracy.

Partnership

A partnership is a collaborative, mutually beneficial relationship between a grant recipient and one or more partner organizations to support learning opportunities and activities related to the mandate of the Community Adult Learning Program. A partnership includes one or more of the following attributes:

- A formal commitment to work collaboratively, although the formality of partnerships may vary;
- A set of joint activities, priorities, commitments, roles and responsibilities;
- Financial or in-kind contributions to the learning opportunity;
- Mutual respect and trust;
- The sharing of intellectual or physical resources;
- A common goal to serve adult learners, particularly those with foundational learning needs, and a commitment to meeting program outcomes.

Regional stewardship

Refers to government's expectation that comprehensive community colleges engage in institutional leadership and collaboration with adult learning providers and other stakeholders for the purposes of increasing learner access through needs assessment, facilitating and coordinating foundational and post-secondary learning opportunities, as well as providing learner support services. Regional stewardship includes facilitating the

collection and sharing of information and knowledge, leveraging resources and building collective capacity, while determining, prioritizing, and enabling educational access to the full spectrum of learning opportunities available to learners in Alberta.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a key element in the delivery of effective adult learning. It refers to processes by which the instructor, together with the learner, systematically identifies, reinforces and builds upon the learner's existing skills and knowledge as they learn new skills and knowledge. Like the scaffolding placed around a single-storey bungalow during a renovation to add a second storey, the scaffolding placed around a learner is temporary and adjustable. As the learner becomes more confident and independent in their learning, the instructor and learner can begin to remove/adjust the scaffolding together.

Service organization

A service organization is an entity that delivers the approved activities that are set out in the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* and grant agreement. In most cases, the service organization is the grant recipient. Exceptions exist, however, when the legal host is the grant recipient. For further information, see the definition of legal host.

Skills for learning (formerly foundational life skills)

Learning opportunities that support the development of the fundamental skills and habits of learning that support foundational learners to build confidence, develop an identity as a learner, advocate for themselves, and engage in foundational and other learning. For more information, see section 5.1.3: Skills for Learning.

Tutoring

Tutoring is generally a volunteer-based practice in which a tutor facilitates an adult's learning through specialized, additional, or basic instruction, either individually or in a small group. The practice of tutoring is learner-centred and learner-driven, and is a two-way learning experience based on mutual respect from which the tutor and the adult learner(s) benefit. For more information, see section 5.3.1.

Vulnerable persons

A vulnerable person is an individual who, because of age (under 18 or over 65), a disability (physical or mental), or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependency on others, and/or is otherwise at greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of trust or authority towards them.³

³ [Volunteer Screening Terms & Definitions](#), Volunteer Alberta, 2017.

4. Program Vision

Purpose

As a key component of Alberta's adult learning system, the Community Adult Learning Program supports a network of organizations to deliver part-time, nonformal literacy and foundational learning opportunities to address a significant social and economic issue: at least one in five adult Albertans face daily literacy and numeracy challenges.⁴

These individuals struggle to perform basic tasks, such as reading a medicine label or filling out a job application, and often face personal, cultural, social or economic challenges that create barriers to their participation in learning. These learners are also hard to reach and engage in learning, and due to the complexity of their lives, are difficult to retain in foundational programs. Adults with limited foundational skills are more likely to live in poverty and experience social isolation, health problems, encounters with the justice system, and other adverse socio-economic issues.

Vision

Changing lives through adult foundational learning in connected communities.

Outcomes

1. Adult learners persist in learning foundational skills that they use in their everyday lives.
2. Adult learners have access to relevant and engaging learning opportunities.
3. Adult learners benefit from community adult learning programs (CALPs) that are well-connected in their communities.

Logic Model

Advanced Education and its partners co-created a logic model and outcomes-based measurement and evaluation framework to provide a roadmap for achieving the program's vision, and to demonstrate the program's impact in Alberta (see Figure 1.0 on page 16). The logic model shows the relationship between the resources available to the program, the activities performed, and the results the program hopes to achieve. All activities that are required of grant recipients and contribute to the program vision and outcomes are discussed in Section 5: Program Requirements.

⁴ This statistic is based on the 2012 international literacy survey, Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), and includes learners who scored below PIAAC level 2.

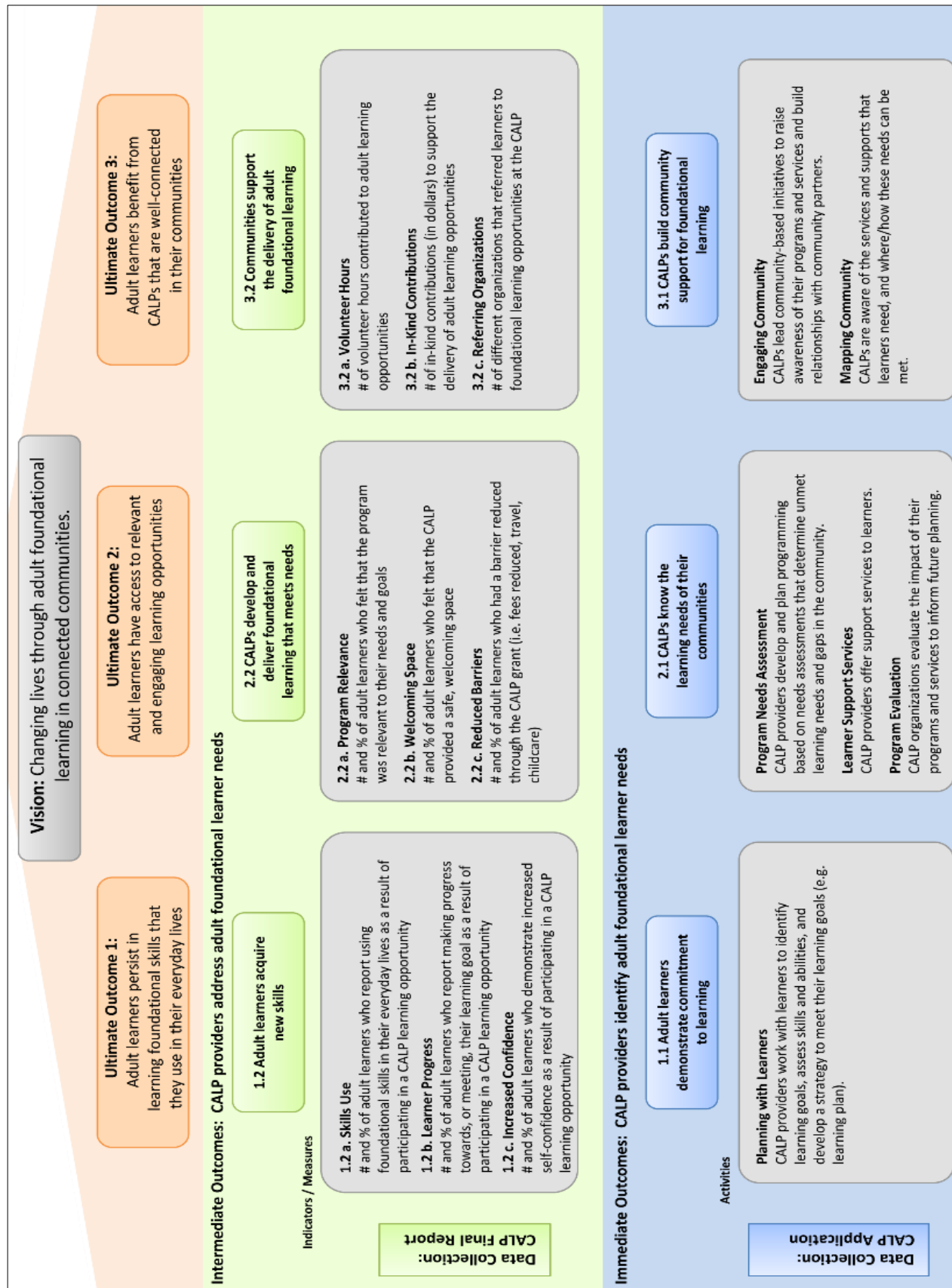


Figure 1.0 – CALP Logic Model

5. Program Requirements

The following requirements correspond to the 'approved activities' referenced in Community Adult Learning Program grant agreements.

Eligible programming areas

While the Community Adult Learning Program grant may be used to offer supplemental programming, the use of the grant must clearly prioritize required programming.

Required programming – literacy and foundational learning

Grant recipients must provide learning opportunities in literacy and foundational learning. Organizations have the flexibility to determine priorities within the required programming area based on a needs assessment in the community (see section 5.1: Literacy and Foundational Learning).

Supplemental programming – community capacity building

In addition to providing programming in the required programming area above, organizations may also provide supplemental learning opportunities in community capacity building to support the development of individuals, families and communities (see section 5.2: Community Capacity Building).

Ineligible programming

Grant funds cannot be used to support learning opportunities that fall outside of the eligible programming areas, including costs for staff time, instructor fees, learning materials, advertising and space. For example, learning opportunities in recreation, art and fitness are not eligible for grant support and may only be delivered on a cost-recovery basis.

Eligible learners

All adults 18 years and over who reside in Alberta are eligible to participate in learning opportunities and access services and supports funded through the Community Adult Learning Program. Priority must be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Youth may be served on an exception basis only with ministry approval, where community need is identified, when a more appropriate youth-serving organization is not available, and if the grant recipient has taken the necessary precautions (e.g., security clearances, vulnerable sector check, consent from legal guardian).

Collecting fees

For all learning opportunities, learners must pay fees so long as they are able to afford them. Grant funds can only be used to reduce fees for learners that demonstrate a financial need. Fees may cover partial or all costs, or even generate revenue above delivery costs. Grant recipients must collect fees for all programs and services with the exception of learning opportunities offered through the tutoring mode of delivery. Nonetheless, finances should not be an obstacle to learning, and fees must be reduced or eliminated for learners with financial barriers. To ensure access for learners with a financial barrier, organizations must have an effective policy in place to reduce fees.

Reducing financial barriers

The Community Adult Learning Program grant may be used in the following ways to reduce a financial barrier:

- Reduce or waive fees for learning opportunities when a financial barrier exists. Note: learners are still expected to pay fees for learning opportunities if their barriers are not financial.
- Provide on-site child-minding.
- Cover costs for transportation.

Professional development requirements

Grant recipients are expected to support staff, volunteers (those who work with learners as well as board members) and contracted instructors/facilitators/tutors to access professional development. Grant recipients should also promote cross-training and knowledge-sharing within their own organization. Foundational learners often have complex learning needs and may face one or more social or economic challenges, which means they require highly supportive and knowledgeable staff and volunteers who are aware of their needs and are competent and confident in literacy and foundational learning subject matter.

Grant recipients are responsible for staying informed of professional development opportunities supported by Advanced Education. The department encourages grant recipients to access the substantial amount of research and resources available on best practices in the literacy and foundational learning field, including e-learning workshops, specific to the Community Adult Learning Program, which are located on www.calp.ca.

Required training

All staff involved in the oversight and delivery of literacy and foundational learning programming must complete the Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning training within the grant term. New staff are encouraged to take the training in their first year of employment.

Grant recipients are required to ensure that contracted instructors, facilitators, tutors, and volunteers who work with adult foundational learners are highly familiar with the central themes of Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning, including adult learning principles and practical application of the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*.

Additional professional development requirements exist for individuals involved in the delivery of family literacy programs (see section 5.3: Modes of Delivery).

Professional development surveys

Grant recipients are expected to respond to surveys from Advanced Education and professional development providers. Government uses survey data to evaluate the impact of professional development investments and make improvements to enhance quality and effectiveness.

Activities

Organizational planning

Grant recipients engage in continuous strategic planning to deliver programs and services that align closely with the program focus on literacy and foundational learning, and to respond to learning needs and gaps in the community. Strategic planning includes exploring strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, and helps organizations define success, chart the path forward, and identify required resources, such as human resources and training. Organizational planning also includes succession planning, ensuring all staff have suitable training and knowledge of organizational operations, and identifying mechanisms for sharing staff learnings, including those from professional development.

Engaging community

Grant recipients lead community-based initiatives to raise awareness of their programs and services and build relationships with community partners, including their local comprehensive community college. In doing so, grant recipients are able to leverage local resources, attract volunteers and solicit financial contributions.

Mapping community

Grant recipients are aware of the services and supports learners need and where/how these needs can be met. Through community mapping and building strong connections to other learning and service providers, including their local comprehensive community college, grant recipients create seamless pathways for learners and promote the concept that ‘any door is the right door.’ It is only within a well-connected network that learners can find their way to the services and supports they need, whether through direct programming at funded organizations or indirectly through coordinated knowledgeable referrals.

Program needs assessment

Grant recipients develop and plan their programming based on needs assessments. Needs assessments determine unmet learning needs in the community. To ensure the appropriate allocation of resources and supports, grant recipients assess the needs of their communities on a regular basis and make strategic decisions based on knowledge gained from needs assessments, including greater awareness of social and economic barriers that may prevent adults from participating in foundational learning. Needs assessments may be formal or informal and should consider information from other sources, such as needs assessments completed by other organizations, statistical data and demographic information. Needs assessments should also be informed by mapping and engaging with the community.

Planning with learners

Grant recipients work with adult foundational learners to identify their learning goals, assess their skills and abilities, and develop a strategy to meet their learning goals. Grant recipients have a responsibility to understand why a learner might go to them for learning and what supports they may need in order to be successful. Grant recipients must develop intake processes that help set goals and/or create learning plans for individual learners. Grant recipients should be aware of the wide range of reasons that may motivate someone to return to learning, including their desire to go to college or become an apprentice, get a job or seek a promotion, support their children's education, become more independent, and/or adapt to changes in their lives.

Safe and welcoming space

Many adult foundational learners may not have had positive experiences in the traditional educational system. By creating a safe and welcoming learning environment, grant recipients enable adult learners to explore their unique learning needs without fear of shame or judgment. Grant recipients play a vital role in providing learners with access to the information, services and learning opportunities they need to be successful.

Reducing financial barriers

Adult foundational learners may face a broad range of economic and/or social challenges that act as barriers to learning. However, when external supports are available to help alleviate barriers, many adult learners show the resilience and persistence necessary to pursue their learning goals. To promote a learner's success, the grant may be used when a learner faces a financial barrier to reduce/waive fees, provide on-site childminding, and/or provide travel.

Relevant programming

When learning opportunities are relevant to the needs, goals, and motivations of the learner, adults are more likely to be engaged in their learning and achieve their goals. To be relevant, funded programs should offer learner-centred programming that considers any number of factors, including the cultural, social, economic, and/or historical context of the learner.

Learner support services

Grant recipients provide Learner Support Services to assist individuals to transition to programs and services that will help them to meet their learning goals. Learner Support Services are a range of activities that grant recipients coordinate to support the learning and/or life journey of adult learners. They are opportunities for organizations to build relationships with learners, which may increase their confidence to participate in further learning. These services are particularly important for foundational learners that face social and/or economic barriers. Learner support services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Providing access to information about post-secondary and other learning opportunities, including costs and funding options;
- Coaching and mentoring on how to access and use information and resources;
- Providing space and creating a safe and welcoming environment for learners to be connected to community supports and services;
- Assistance with forms and/or providing access to, and assistance with, basic technology;
- Helping newcomers to Alberta with knowledgeable referrals to citizenship and immigration services, and supporting their independence and self-advocacy skills;
- Providing knowledgeable referrals to services and supports within the community, such as career counseling/employment services, child-minding, transportation and other government programs and agencies;
- Exam invigilation;
- Assistance with job searches and/or resume support; and
- Supporting learning offered by a partner through activities such as onsite support, access to technology or classroom space, administration and/or other support.

While learner support services are important, the use of the grant must clearly prioritize required programming.

Program evaluation

By collecting outcomes data according to the logic model, grant recipients evaluate the impact of their required programming and services, which helps inform their future planning. Data from grant recipients across the province also helps Advanced Education demonstrate the broad benefits of community-based adult foundational learning.

Facilitating formal learning

Grant recipients work with post-secondary institutions, particularly comprehensive community colleges, and other providers to enhance access to formal learning opportunities, such as academic upgrading, certificate programs and other post-secondary learning opportunities. This may include partnerships, as defined in section 3: Program Definitions.

5.1. Literacy and Foundational Learning

Literacy, numeracy, the skills and habits needed to engage in learning, the ability to use basic digital technology, and proficiency in the English language are core skills Albertans need to be able to participate actively in society, pursue further learning, and be successful in their work. For this reason, the Community Adult Learning Program is focused on ensuring adult foundational learners in all funded communities are able to access learning opportunities and supports in these areas.

In addition to the requirements outlined in section 5, the following requirements apply to the delivery of learning opportunities in the literacy and foundational learning programming area. All learning opportunities, services and supports must be approved through the Community Adult Learning Program grant application process.

Categories

Within this programming area, based on the level of need in the community, grant recipients must provide learning opportunities to support the development of at least one of the following categories:

- Adult literacy
- Numeracy
- Skills for learning
- Basic digital skills
- English language learning

These learning opportunities must be available locally, whether in-person or through the use of technology. Organizations must deliver these learning opportunities directly or in partnership with other delivery providers in the community (see section 3: Program Definitions). The Community Adult Learning Program grant must be prioritized towards responding to learning needs that are not already met by other learning providers in the community.

Organizations have the flexibility to choose the modes of delivery that will best meet the needs of the community as outlined in section 5.3. Organizations are encouraged to use innovative and creative approaches.

Foundational learners

The Community Adult Learning Program is intended primarily to address the foundational literacy and learning needs of adults in Alberta. The *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* refer to these adults as foundational learners, defined below.

Definition and context

A foundational learner is an adult who chooses to engage in foundational learning opportunities such as literacy, numeracy, skills for learning, basic digital skills, and/or English language learning to address knowledge and skills gaps. Foundational learners often experience economic and/or social challenges, or barriers, that may interfere with their learning – challenges that cannot be separated from the learning journey itself. Grant recipients must familiarize themselves with the nature of these challenges, discussed below.

Adult foundational learners often do not see themselves as learners. They often experience a chronically disrupted learning journey, and as a result, these individuals may not have a strong learning identity and/or the belief and confidence needed to engage and remain in learning.

A number of factors may underline the self-perception of adult foundational learners, including undiagnosed or unaddressed learning difficulties, diagnosed learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, cognitive delays, trauma or violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, health/mental health issues, addictions, and/or previous negative experiences in formal education.

Adult foundational learners may feel challenged advocating for themselves and/or their families, or finding the information and services they need to support their own learning.

These individuals often experience systemic marginalization and stigmatization and may be fearful of further stigmatization. They may also experience a sense of failure associated with education and learning.

Foundational skill levels often have a close connection with low income and poverty. Foundational learners may experience food insecurity, lack of transportation, lack of childcare, and lack of access to stable housing. National and international research has shown that there is a strong correlation between low literacy and the experience of poverty, and that improvement in literacy and other foundational skills closely correlate to increased economic and social opportunities.

5.1.1. Adult Literacy

Definition and primary intended learning objectives

In addition to the requirements in sections 5 and 5.1, grant recipients are also required to consider the following information. Adult Literacy is defined in the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* as the ability of adults to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and use printed and written materials associated within varying contexts. The primary intended learning objective of learning opportunities in this category should be the development of reading and writing skills up to and including a pre-GED level. Learning opportunities in adult literacy may support the development of several skills for success from the forthcoming *Canada's Skills for Success Framework*—primarily reading and writing (defined below) but, in addition, may include communication, collaboration, creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability.

- Reading includes understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs, graphs, charts and/or tables.
- Writing includes communicating by arranging words, numbers and symbols on paper or a computer screen.

Please note this category should not include learning opportunities for English language learners; these should be offered in the English language learning category, below (section 5.1.3).

Adult literacy learners

In addition to the definition of foundational learners in section 5.1, grant recipients are also required to consider the following information. Adult literacy learners are fluent in either official language, and generally speaking, were born and raised in Canada. They may be employed, whether or not they have a high school education. Adult literacy learners are looking for a way to improve their lives; however, they may not necessarily recognize the skills required to do so. They may have several well-developed skills for success. For example, they may have excellent verbal or non-verbal communication skills. However, they may need to improve their reading and/or writing.

5.1.2. Numeracy

Definition and primary intended learning objectives

In addition to the requirements in sections 5 and 5.1, grant recipients are also required to consider the following information. Numeracy is defined in the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* as the **ability** to use, apply, interpret, and communicate mathematical information and ideas. The primary intended learning objective of learning opportunities in this category should be using numbers and thinking in quantitative terms to complete tasks, up to and including a pre-GED level. Learning opportunities in numeracy may support the development of several skills for success from the forthcoming *Canada's Skills for Success Framework*—primarily numeracy but, in addition, may include problem-solving and adaptability.

5.1.3. Skills for Learning

Definition and primary intended learning objectives

In addition to the requirements in sections 5 and 5.1, grant recipients are also required to consider the following information. The skills for learning category is defined in the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* as learning opportunities that support the development of the fundamental skills and habits of learning that support foundational learners to build confidence, develop an identity as a learner, advocate for themselves, and engage in foundational and other learning. While it may involve practicing a range of foundational skills, the primary intended learning objective of learning opportunities in the skills for learning category is to help learners build the following skills and habits needed to set and achieve their learning goals, be successful in further learning, and increase confidence in their ability to be a more self-directed, independent learner. These skills and habits include:

Recognizing oneself as a learner, by supporting the learner to:

- Trust that they contribute valuable knowledge and skills, which are essential to their learning.
- Link new learning to prior knowledge, skills, and/or real world context to make learning relevant.

Taking risks in learning, by supporting the learner to:

- Take learning risks and practice bravery without fear of shame or judgment.
- Build new knowledge and skill development in support of their goals.
- Recognize that all adults have different learning styles and needs, and that, with greater understanding of these, learning is increasingly possible.

Actively engaging in the act of learning, by supporting the learner to:

- Trust that the more actively they participate in their own learning journey, the more likely they are to achieve their learning goals.
- Set clear learning goals and have the confidence to take increasing responsibility for, and control over, those goals.
- Strengthen their ability to make informed decisions in learning.

Developing learning strategies, by supporting the learner to:

- Adopt practical strategies to achieve their goals, including increased organization at home or work, time management, and enhanced memory skills.

- Become more confident in their ability to assess their own learning progress, including having the knowledge, skills and tools to support self-checking for accuracy when completing a task.
- Transfer problem-solving strategies between learning and daily life.
- Embrace challenges and persevere through setbacks in learning.

Building collaboration skills in learning, by supporting the learner to:

- Engage effectively and work with others in a learning setting, and apply those skills elsewhere.
- Develop and nurture positive relationships and a sense of belonging in a learning community.

Strengthening communication skills in learning, by supporting the learner to:

- Enhance their non-verbal and oral communication skills in a learning setting to support the application of those skills in meeting the demands of their day-to-day tasks and responsibilities.

Learning opportunities in the skills for learning category may support the development of several skills for success from the forthcoming *Canada's Skills for Success Framework*: collaboration, communication, problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability.

5.1.4. Basic Digital Skills

Definition and primary intended learning objectives

In addition to the requirements in sections 5 and 5.1, grant recipients are also required to consider the following information. Basic digital skills are defined in the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* as the ability of individuals to understand and use digital systems, tools, applications, and networks in order to access and manage information and thrive in learning, the workplace, and daily life. The primary intended learning objective of this category is the application and understanding of key concepts across a range of contexts, situations, and digital platforms including hardware, software, navigation, settings, safety, and connectivity.

Learning opportunities in the basic digital skills category may support the development of several skills for success from the forthcoming *Canada's Skills for Success Framework*—primarily digital skills but, in addition, may include reading, writing, communication, collaboration, problem-solving and adaptability.

5.1.5. English Language Learning

Definition and primary intended learning objectives

In addition to the requirements in sections 5 and 5.1, grant recipients are also required to consider the following information. English language learning is defined in the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* as the study and practice of the English language by individuals whose first language is other than English and who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English. The primary intended learning objective in this category should be to help learners gain proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing in English. This category corresponds to the following skills for success from the forthcoming Canada's *Skills for Success Framework*: primarily reading, writing and communication but, in addition, may include collaboration, creativity, problem-solving and adaptability.

English language learners

English language learners are a diverse group who may or may not be born in Canada, and whose first language is not English. They could be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident; an Indigenous person; a refugee or immigrant at any stage of adjustment into Canadian society; or a temporary resident, whether a visitor to Canada, an international student, or a temporary foreign worker. They may also be of any economic or social background; for example, they could be a foreign-trained professional or a low-skilled labourer. An English language learner could have any level of formal education (or no formal education) and be at any foundational level of English language learning.

English language literacy learners

English language literacy learners, sometimes referred to as ESL literacy learners, are individuals who have varying abilities to speak or understand spoken English, and who are acquiring basic literacy skills, often for the first time, in any language due to limited or interrupted formal education. These individuals often have little to no education or literacy skills in their first language(s), and need to learn literacy skills in English. English language literacy learning is a continuum and English language literacy learners require learning contexts that are tailored to their specific learning needs.

5.2. Community Capacity Building

The Community Adult Learning Program recognizes that successful learning outcomes are intertwined with the ability of communities to support the development of the individual, the family, and the broader community itself. Grant recipients are well positioned to build vibrant learning communities in which individuals, families, and communities can thrive and reach their full potential. For this reason, in addition to offering learning opportunities in the literacy and foundational learning programming area, grant recipients may also offer learning opportunities in community capacity building.

Community capacity building programming may build on the literacy and foundational skills a learner is trying to achieve, or has achieved, and is an opportunity to attract learners who may not yet recognize the need to improve their literacy and foundational skills. Learners in this supplemental programming area do not have to be current or former participants in required programming to participate.

In addition to the requirements outlined in section 5, the following requirements apply to the delivery of learning opportunities to support community capacity building. All programs and services must be approved through the Community Adult Learning Program grant application process.

Delivery of community capacity building

Learning opportunities offered in the community capacity building programming area support the development of the individual, the family and/or the community. Examples include learning opportunities that:

- Support the achievement of a high school equivalency credential—e.g. General Equivalency Diploma (GED);
- Raise awareness on undiagnosed or unaddressed learning difficulties, diagnosed learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or cognitive delays and the subsequent impact on engaging in learning and accessing services and resources;
- Raise awareness about mental health issues;
- Raise awareness of the prevention of, and support for, victims of violence and abuse;
- Raise awareness of the prevention of substance abuse;
- Support Indigenous, French or local languages/cultures;
- Promote inclusion and acceptance of individuals and groups within the community;
- Promote parenting skills; and

- Support workplace readiness and safety, including computer software and application skill development.

Grant recipients must collect fees from participants in community capacity building programming wherever possible. Unless the learner has a financial barrier, these learning opportunities must be cost-recovery or revenue generating. Recipients are encouraged to partner with other agencies in the community to deliver these learning opportunities.

Relationship to literacy and foundational learning

Community capacity building is offered primarily as an opportunity to bridge learners into literacy and foundational learning. Staff, contracted instructors/facilitators and/or tutors should make a concerted effort to identify any foundational learning skill gaps of learners participating in community capacity building, and encourage their transition to literacy and foundational learning. Individuals involved in the delivery of community capacity building should regularly inform learners, during each learning opportunity, of available literacy and foundational learning programming.

5.3. Modes of Delivery

Modes of delivery are the ways in which required or supplemental programming may be delivered towards the achievement of learning objectives. Programming may be delivered through one or more of the following modes of delivery:

- Tutoring
- Courses
- Family literacy programs
- Learning activities

Grant recipients should choose modes of delivery that will most effectively address the learning needs of their learners and communities, with careful consideration given to the benefits, intensity, duration and professional development requirements of a particular mode, as outlined below. Research suggests that adults who have specific objectives for their learning and the ability to monitor and measure their own progress are more likely to persist in learning. Therefore, grant recipients should also consider that, for all modes of delivery, assessment—at the beginning, during, and at the end of a learning opportunity—is a best practice in the field of literacy and foundational learning.

5.3.1. Tutoring

Definition and benefits

Tutoring is generally a volunteer-based practice in which a tutor facilitates an adult's learning through specialized, additional, or basic instruction, either individually or in a small group. The practice of tutoring is learner-centred and learner-driven, and is a two-way learning experience based on mutual respect from which the tutor and the adult learner(s) benefit. Through tutoring, adult learners develop an identity of themselves as learners and build confidence in themselves so that they can learn independently and make progress towards their learning goals.

The tutoring mode of delivery may be beneficial or appropriate in a number of contexts, including when grant recipients:

- Want to support reluctant or marginalized learners who are uneasy about returning to learning, and need to build confidence in order to continue and persevere in learning;
- Want to offer a 'just-in-time,' flexible, and self-directed approach that meets learners where they are at;
- Are serving learners with complex learning needs that require consistent and sustained instruction;

- Want to build and sustain their capacity to offer a broader range of foundational learning options;
- Want to scaffold learners into a future learning opportunity or support learners to be successful in a group learning opportunity;
- Are located in small communities and work with a small number of learners with a wide range of needs who cannot be easily grouped together into learning opportunities using other modes of delivery; and/or
- Have limited grant dollars to spend on hiring instructors for program delivery.

Coaching and modeling

Tutors who work with adult learners must be intentional about integrating strengths-based coaching and modeling strategies and activities based on adult learning principles in which learning is relevant, practical, respectful, self-directed, builds on the learner's knowledge and experience, and is oriented towards the learner's goals. Literacy and foundational learners in particular can begin to advocate for their own learning through effective coaching and modeling.

Intensity and duration

As a mode of delivery, tutoring has the potential to support learners to make progress towards learning outcomes, and lasting changes in an adult learner's life, when it is of sufficient intensity in terms of hours and of sufficient duration in terms of length.

Professional development

Grant recipients are expected to ensure that all staff and tutors have the ongoing professional development they need to build a quality tutoring program. In keeping with section 5.1, all staff responsible for coordinating a tutor program must complete Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning within the grant term, preferably prior to program start.

Tutors are eligible, but not required, to participate in Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning. However, grant recipients are required to ensure that tutors are highly familiar with the central themes of Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning, including adult learning principles and application of the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* in a practical context.

Grant recipients should promote cross-training and knowledge-sharing within their own organization, and should provide professional development opportunities that prepare tutors to support the complex needs of learners, including identifying and addressing meaningful learning goals and monitoring progress based on those goals. Advanced Education encourages grant recipients to access the substantial amount of research and resources available on best practices in the tutoring field, including e-learning workshops, specific to the Community Adult Learning Program located at www.calp.ca.

5.3.2. Courses

Definition and benefits

Courses are instructor-led educational experiences that focus on addressing participants' learning goals through relevant, structured curriculum. The content of each individual session builds on the content of each previous session to ensure learners make steady progress towards the learning goals of the course, increasing the importance of a learner attending each session. Course instructors measure learner skill development by assessing the extent to which learners meet the goals of the course.

This mode of delivery may be beneficial or appropriate in a number of contexts, including when grant recipients:

- Have a cohort of learners with similar learning needs;
- Have the staff capacity to deliver educational experiences that focus on addressing participants' learning goals through relevant, structured curriculum; and/or
- Have access to instructors who are well-versed in serving foundational learners in a group setting, and who are able to measure the skill development of learners in relation to the course goals.

Coaching and modeling

Instructors that work with adult learners must be intentional about integrating coaching and modeling strategies and activities based on adult learning principles in which learning is relevant, practical, respectful, self-directed, strengths-based, builds on the learner's knowledge and experience, and is oriented towards the learner's goals. For more information on adult learning principles, see Appendix 10.2. Literacy and foundational learners in particular can begin to advocate for their own learning through effective coaching and modeling.

Intensity and duration

As a mode of delivery, courses have the potential to support learners to make progress towards learning outcomes and lasting changes in an adult learner when they are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours and of sufficient duration in terms of length. For this reason, courses may not be offered on a drop-in basis and should involve a pre-arranged time for instruction.

Professional development

In keeping with section 5.1, all staff responsible for the direct delivery of a course must complete Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning within the grant term, preferably prior to program start.

Contracted course instructors and facilitators are eligible, but not required, to complete Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning. However, grant recipients are required to ensure that contracted instructors/facilitators are highly familiar with the central themes of Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning, including adult learning principles and application of the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* in a practical context.

Grant recipients should promote cross-training and knowledge-sharing within their own organization, and should encourage staff and volunteers to access the substantial amount of research and resources available on best practices on the delivery of Literacy and Foundational Learning, including e-learning workshops, specific to the Community Adult Learning Program located at www.calp.ca.

5.3.3. Family Literacy Programs

Definition and benefits

Community Adult Learning Program-funded family literacy programs prioritize the delivery of intentional activities that build adults' skills and promote the values and benefits of literacy for the entire family. In Required Programming, family literacy programs provide adult learners with opportunities to increase their own literacy and foundational skills that also strengthen daily literacy activities for all family members.

This mode of delivery may be beneficial or appropriate for adult foundational learners when grant recipients:

- Recognize that some adult learners are more likely to attend programming for the sake of their children – preparing them to attend kindergarten, helping them with their homework, and supporting them to improve social skills and self-esteem – and leveraging that opportunity to focus on the adult's foundational learning needs;
- Understand that adults tend to persist longer in family literacy programs than in other programs, and therefore have more opportunities to learn;
- Recognize the opportunity to transition adult learners into literacy and foundational learning opportunities offered through another mode of delivery;
- Want to help adults to build confidence, their ability to advocate for themselves and their families, and build their identity as a learner while practicing and/or developing skills in a safe and welcoming environment; and/or
- Recognize that the family literacy programs mode of delivery is an effective approach to identifying adults' skills gaps and to facilitate their participation in planned adult foundational learning experiences.

Children

Children may be present for all or part of a Community Adult Learning Program-funded family literacy program, or they may not be directly involved at all.

Where programs are providing child-minding on-site during adult learning programs, it is encouraged that age and stage appropriate programming with an oral language and early literacy development focus will be provided for the children in a child-safe and child-appropriate environment.

Responsive learning opportunities

Learning opportunities offered through the family literacy programs mode of delivery, including those based on a pre-designed model, must respond, and be adaptive, to the needs and goals of adult learner participants. This statement is particularly true for literacy and foundational learning programs. See section 5: Program Requirements for more information on planning with learners. Programs cannot be designed around the purchase and passive distribution of children's books or resources and materials.

Intensity and Duration

As a mode of delivery, family literacy programs must be designed to encourage the participation of adult learners through attendance at multiple sessions over a number of weeks. By building an adult learner's confidence, fostering a more positive outlook on learning, helping adults see their potential as learners, and practicing a range of foundational and other skills, family literacy programs have the potential to break the cycle of low literacy and foundational skills. However, this potential is possible only when programs are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours and of sufficient duration in terms of length of the program in order to make lasting changes in a family, and see progress towards learning outcomes. One-time drop-in events can be used as strategies for participant recruitment, advertising or awareness-raising, but participant numbers for these events should not be included in final reporting.

Coaching and modeling

For family literacy programs focused on building adult skills in one or more of the literacy and foundational learning categories, facilitators must also be intentional about coaching and modeling strategies and activities based on adult learning principles in which learning is relevant, practical, respectful, self-directed, strengths-based, builds on the learner's knowledge and experience, and is oriented towards the learner's goals. For more information on adult learning principles, see Appendix 10.1. As one component of a program, the family literacy programs mode of delivery may spend time on actively coaching and modeling strategies and activities to parents to support the literacy needs of the family.

Professional Development

CALP Essentials for Family Literacy Programs

In addition to the professional development requirements outlined in section 5.1, particularly the completion of Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning, all staff responsible for the oversight and direct delivery of family literacy programs, including contracted facilitators and instructors and volunteers, must have completed CALP Essentials for Family Literacy Programs within the grant term, preferably prior to the start of the program. Grant recipients are required to ensure that contracted instructors, facilitators, and volunteers who deliver family literacy programs have either completed Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning or are highly familiar with the central

themes of Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning, including adult learning principles and practical application of the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*.

Grant recipients that use family literacy programs as a mode of delivery should base those programs on the promising practices of the family literacy field. Advanced Education encourages grant recipients to access the substantial amount of research and resources available on promising practices on the delivery of Literacy and Foundational Learning, including family literacy programs, much of it located at www.calp.ca.

5.3.4. Learning Activities

Definition and benefits

Learning activities are instructor-led learning opportunities that are scheduled with set times for learners to improve their skills or knowledge on a particular topic through a participatory or hands-on approach. Unlike courses, learning activities generally do not involve a highly structured curriculum, and, because the content of individual sessions may or may not build on the content of previous sessions, learner success does not require attending every session. Instead, each session of a learning activity is designed to respond to the specific needs of learners in the room, allowing learners to build on the skills they bring with them.

The learning activity mode of delivery may be beneficial or appropriate when grant recipients:

- Want to provide learners with flexibility to accommodate their busy lives, and recognize that learners in their communities may be unable to attend on a consistent basis;
- Want their learning opportunities to be responsive to the needs of learners in the room rather than focus on a more rigid curriculum; and/or
- Have a cohort of learners interested in the content area.

Coaching and modeling

Instructors that work with adult learners must be intentional about integrating coaching and modeling strategies and activities based on adult learning principles in which learning is relevant, practical, respectful, self-directed, strengths-based, builds on the learner's knowledge and experience, and is oriented towards the learner's goals. For more information on adult learning principles, see Appendix 10.1. Literacy and foundational learners in particular can begin to advocate for their own learning through effective coaching and modeling.

Intensity and duration

As a mode of delivery, learning activities have the potential to support learners to make progress towards learning outcomes and lasting changes in an adult learner when they are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours and of sufficient duration in terms of length.

Professional development

In keeping with section 5.1, all staff responsible for the oversight and direct delivery of a learning activity must complete Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning within the grant term, preferably prior to program start.

Contracted learning activity instructors and facilitators are eligible, but not required, to complete Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning. However, grant recipients are required to ensure that contracted instructors/facilitators are highly familiar with the central themes of Introduction to

Adult Foundational Learning, including adult learning principles and the practical application of the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*.

Grant recipients should promote cross-training and knowledge-sharing within their own organization, and should encourage staff and volunteers to access the substantial amount of research and resources available on best practices on the delivery of Literacy and Foundational Learning, including e-learning workshops specific to the Community Adult Learning Program located at www.calp.ca.

6. Legal and Operational Requirements

6.1. Grant Agreement

Organizations that receive a grant through the Community Adult Learning Program are required to sign a grant agreement with the department. The grant agreement establishes the obligations of grant recipients with respect to use of, and accounting for, Community Adult Learning Program grant funding. Three important obligations are listed below, which are fully articulated in the grant agreement. Eligible service organizations must:

- a. Develop and submit grant applications and final reports, including financial statements, in a format specified by Advanced Education and adhere to the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*. See section 6.2.c for specific requirements on the submission of financial statements.
- b. Ensure that a valid police information check, criminal record check, vulnerable sector check, or other such security screening protocol will be completed for any individuals who work with, or have the potential to have unsupervised access to, vulnerable persons at any time during the grant term.
- c. Insure the operations of the organization under a contract of general liability insurance, in an amount of not less than \$2,000,000 inclusive per occurrence. Operations must be insured against bodily injury, personal injury and property damage, including loss of use. In cases where the service organization is not a legal entity, this requirement is the responsibility of the Legal Host.

If, at any time, a discrepancy is found to exist between the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* and the grant agreement, the latter document shall govern the legal responsibilities of the grant recipient. Grant recipients are responsible for carefully reviewing the grant agreement once it is received, for signing and returning it to the department, and for ensuring that all decision-making body members and staff have regular access to the agreement.

6.2. Service Organizations

Eligible service organizations that are funded to deliver the Community Adult Learning Program must:

- a. Be a legal entity incorporated for a minimum of two years under one of the following Alberta statutes:
 - i. the *Societies Act*;
 - ii. part 9 of the *Companies Act*;
 - iii. the *Libraries Act*;
 - iv. the *Métis Settlements Act*; or
 - v. the *Post-secondary Learning Act*.

In cases where the service organization is not a legal entity, a legal host approved by the department may receive the grant on behalf of the service organization.

- b. Operate as an effective service organization with sound practices in governance, and in the planning and management of programs, finances, and personnel.
- c. Submit financial statements when applying for grant funding, as follows:
 - I. Organizations receiving a Community Adult Learning Program grant less than \$200,000 (excluding post-secondary institutions) must submit a financial statement approved by the decision-making body (including a statement of financial position and a statement of operations) that reflects the fiscal year of the organization as stated in the organization's bylaws.
 - II. Organizations receiving a Community Adult Learning Program grant of \$200,000 or more must submit an audited financial statement that reflects the fiscal year of the organization as stated in the organization's bylaws.
- d. Act as the legal employer of individuals hired to administer the Community Adult Learning Program. In cases where the service organization is not a legal entity, this requirement is the responsibility of the legal host.
- e. Act as the financial administrator for the Community Adult Learning Program grant. In cases where the service organization is not a legal entity, this requirement is the responsibility of the legal host.
- f. Oversee and direct learning opportunities enabled by the Community Adult Learning Program grant.

- g. Ensure the learning opportunities, supports and services supported by the Community Adult Learning Program meet needs, benefit learners, and are provided in a cost-effective manner to maximize the use of public funds, and are provided in cooperation with other related service organizations in the community.
- h. Ensure criteria and processes are in place for reducing the social and economic barriers facing learners.
- i. Comply with Alberta's *Personal Information Protection Act* and *Workers' Compensation Act*, if applicable.

A number of additional requirements apply only to service organizations incorporated under the *Societies Act* and service organizations operating under a legal host. These service organizations must:

- j. Ensure the decision-making body consists of at least five individuals from within the community who have a declared interest in adult learning. No represented employer or organization can have more than one vote on the decision-making body, including the legal host.
- k. Determine bylaws, structure and decision-making processes, develop and adhere to operational policies and procedures, including conflict of interest guidelines, and examine and vote on matters in accordance with the written policies and procedures.
- l. Hold regular meetings and maintain a record of minutes documenting key decisions on personnel, program, and funding allocations.
- m. Keep the department informed of changes to the current board membership and signing authorities.
- n. Ensure the department has current copies of the organization's bylaws, and financial and personnel policies and procedures.
- o. Ensure that annual returns are filed yearly with Alberta Corporate Registry.

6.3. Legal Hosts

In cases where a legal host receives the Community Adult Learning Program grant on behalf of a service organization, the legal host must:

- a. Ensure the service organization and decision-making body comply with the legal and operational requirements outlined in sections 6.1 and 6.2.
- b. Act as the legal employer of individuals hired to administer the Community Adult Learning Program.
- c. Act as the legal financial administrator for the Community Adult Learning Program grant.
- d. Provide a representative to serve as a member on the decision-making body of the service organization.
- e. Ensure the employer, financial, and program responsibilities of both the legal host and the service organization are clearly articulated in written form (e.g. Legal Host Agreement) and submitted to the department.
- f. Insure the operations of the service organization under a contract of general liability insurance, in an amount of not less than \$2,000,000 inclusive per occurrence. Operations must be insured against bodily injury, personal injury and property damage, including loss of use.

7. Financial Requirements

Grant recipients must familiarize themselves with the legal financial obligations set out in the grant agreement. Further financial requirements related to eligible and ineligible expenses are below.

7.1. Eligible Expenses

The grant, as well as interest and any income generated on the grant, can be used for the following:

- a. Operations: expenses related to the operation of the office, such as rent, wages/salaries, supplies, insurance and internet.
- b. Program delivery: expenses related to the delivery of learning opportunities within the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*, such as instructor/facilitator/tutor salaries, facility rental, advertising, materials, resources and supplies, travel costs for instructors/facilitators/tutors and volunteer recruitment and recognition.
- c. Participant supports: expenses related to reducing barriers for learners to access programs and services, such as transportation, child-minding and snacks.
- d. Professional development: expenses related to training and professional development for staff, the decision-making body, volunteers, and contracted instructors/facilitators/tutors to support the delivery of the program. Examples include training course fees, travel, subsistence and accommodation.
- e. Furniture, fixtures and equipment: expenses related to the purchase of movable furniture, fixtures or equipment with no permanent connection to the structure of the building or utilities. Examples include desks, chairs, computers, electronic equipment, tables and partitions. Organizations may use up to \$5,000 per grant term towards the purchase of these items.
- f. Grants to organizations: expenses related to the distribution of grant dollars to other adult learning organizations. These expenses are applicable only to granting councils.

7.2. Ineligible Expenses

The grant, as well as interest and any income generated on the grant, cannot be used for the following:

- a. Other learning opportunities: any costs for learning opportunities outside of the Community Adult Learning Program, including staff time, facility rental, instructor fees, advertising, and materials.
- b. Learner subsidy: grant dollars cannot be provided directly to learners.
- c. Furniture, fixtures and equipment: expenses related to the purchase of movable furniture, fixtures or equipment over \$5,000 per grant term.
- d. Capital: expenses related to the purchase of land or buildings, the construction or renovation of a building, and the purchase of motor vehicles.
- e. Professional development: expenses related to training and professional development opportunities outside of Alberta, as well as training and professional development opportunities that are unrelated to the Community Adult Learning Program mandate, for staff, the decision-making body and volunteers.
- f. Advertising: expenses related to advertising programs and services that fall outside of the Community Adult Learning Program. Programs and services delivered by other organizations must be advertised on a cost-recovery basis, including costs for staff time, printing and distribution. This includes advertising within community program brochures.
- g. Reserve fund: grant dollars cannot be put into an organization's reserve fund.
- h. Other ineligible expenses: loan fees, debt principal payments, deficit funding, and speculative fundraising ventures.

8. Granting Councils

In addition to all other sections of the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*, section 8 identifies specific requirements pertaining to granting councils. Grant recipients in large urban centres may be eligible to operate as granting councils, entrusted to award and distribute Community Adult Learning Program grants to recipient organizations in their community.

8.1. Purpose

Granting councils help achieve the vision and outcomes of the Community Adult Learning Program in large urban centres by allocating grants to support multiple organizations to provide programming and services for foundational learners. In addition, granting councils may use their Community Adult Learning Program grants to support the governance and operations of their organizations, which involves three primary functions, as outlined below.

Funding

By allocating the majority portion of their Community Adult Learning Program grants to eligible recipient organizations, granting councils support adult foundational learning through programs and services in their cities. This work includes, but is not limited to:

- Having a clear picture of adult foundational learning needs in the communities they serve;
- Implementing effective and accountable practices in funding allocation processes; and
- Monitoring grant recipients to ensure they are meeting expectations in compliance with the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*.

Professional Development

Granting councils support staff, instructor/facilitator, and volunteer excellence in recipient organizations by coordinating and delivering professional development opportunities. This work includes but is not limited to:

- Assessing the professional development needs of recipient organization staff and/or volunteers;
- Addressing the professional development needs of recipient organization staff and/or volunteers, as outlined below:
 - Using granting council operations dollars to further support other expenses associated with the professional development of recipient organization staff and volunteers;

- Funding special projects or initiatives that focus on the development and/or delivery of professional development learning opportunities, curriculum or resources; and/or
- Coordinating with other provincial professional development providers and within the Regional Support Network to deliver required, relevant and recommended professional development learning opportunities to recipient organizations;
- Supporting recipient organizations to collect data on outcomes and/or evaluate programming.

Collaboration

Granting councils demonstrate leadership by building a culture of collaboration and influencing others in their communities to engage in the field of adult literacy and foundational learning. By working closely with their recipient organizations and other partners, granting councils drive the mandate and priorities of the Community Adult Learning Program forward. This work includes, but is not limited to:

- Building awareness of the needs of adult foundational learners in the community; and/or
- Developing strategies in conjunction with recipient organizations and other partners to increase collaboration that benefits adult foundational learners.

8.2. Granting Requirements

The requirements and expectations outlined in all sections of the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* apply to granting councils. Additional granting council requirements are outlined below. Granting Councils must:

- a. Consider applications for funding from legal entities incorporated for a minimum of two years under one of the following Alberta Statutes: the *Societies Act*, part 9 of the *Companies Act*, the *Libraries Act*, the *Métis Settlements Act*, or the *Post-secondary Learning Act*.
- b. Not provide programming grants to individuals or for-profit companies.
- c. Develop and adhere to written policies and procedures consistent with the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* and Advanced Education Grants Regulation 121/2008, which guide decision-making in the allocation of grants, and make these policies and procedures available to Advanced Education upon request.
- d. Ensure all recipient organizations are in compliance and/or in alignment with the requirements outlined in all sections the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*, including:

- Ensuring compliance with the requirements and expectations of section 4: Program Vision and section 5: Program Requirements; and
 - Ensuring alignment with the requirements and expectations of section 6: Operational Requirements and section 7: Financial Requirements in granting council policies, procedures, and granting documents.
- e. Ensure all funding decisions are approved by the decision-making body and recorded in minutes, and approved by the department prior to being awarded to applicants.

The following requirements also apply to granting councils that receive \$500,000 or more in annual Community Adult Learning Program funding from Advanced Education. In these cases, granting councils must:

- f. Allocate a minimum of 80% of the annual grant to recipient organizations, of which up to 15% may be allocated towards special projects. Special projects are activities that will enhance the mandate of the Community Adult Learning Program, as well as the development or delivery of professional development opportunities for recipient organizations. Special projects must be carried out through a grant or contract to a legal entity or individual to provide a deliverable such as instruction, a curriculum or learning resource. Special project grant/contract applications may include food or venue costs, but granting councils may not use this funding to support the food or venue costs in their direct provision of professional development to recipients.
- g. Of the minimum 80% of the annual grant allocated to recipient organizations in (f), award no more than 15% to a single provider, unless the department gives written approval to exceed this amount.

The following requirements also apply to granting councils that receive less than \$500,000 in annual Community Adult Learning Program funding from Advanced Education. In these cases, granting councils must:

- h. Allocate a minimum of 60% of the annual grant to recipient organizations, of which up to 15% may be allocated towards special projects. Special projects are activities that will enhance the mandate of the Community Adult Learning Program, as well as the development or delivery of professional development opportunities for recipient organizations. Special projects must be carried out through a grant or contract to a legal entity or individual to provide a deliverable such as instruction, a curriculum, or learning resource. Special project grant/contract applications may include food or venue costs, but granting councils may not use this funding to support the food or venue costs in their direct provision of professional development to recipients.

9. Accountability and Compliance

Albertans expect that the province's advanced learning system demonstrates accountability for the investment of public dollars. As part of Alberta's advanced learning system, Community Adult Learning Program grant recipients demonstrate accountability through compliance with the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*.

9.1. Enhanced Monitoring and Reporting

Grant recipients that do not demonstrate compliance with the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* will be subject to enhanced monitoring and reporting, and should become familiar with the following information:

- The grant recipient will receive a list of performance expectations that outline specific areas of improvement, which are required to become compliant with the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*.
- The grant recipient will be required to submit a progress report to the department at a specified date to outline progress towards the identified performance expectations.
- A department review panel will be convened to review the progress report to assess the grant recipient's progress towards the identified performance expectations.
- The review panel's assessment of the progress report may lead to one of the following results:
 - Progress towards the identified performance expectations is determined to be sufficient, in which case the grant recipient may continue with the regular grant process.
 - Progress towards the identified performance expectations is determined to be not sufficient, in which case the grant recipient may be eligible to apply for funding through a competitive grant application process called an open competition.
- The review panel will not review progress reports that are submitted late. Late submissions will initiate an open competition for Community Adult Learning Program funding in the community.

9.2. Open Competitions

Organizations that apply for Community Adult Learning Program funding through a competitive grant application process may wish to become familiar with the following information:

- A review panel with a minimum of three department staff will evaluate Community Adult Learning Program open applications based on the merit of each application, and according to a pre-established rubric.
- To maintain a fair and transparent process, the open competition grant review process is not iterative or interactive, and all decisions of the review panel are final.
- No more than one open competition will be held in a particular community per year, even if the open competition does not result in a successful applicant.
- If a currently funded organization is unsuccessful competing in an open competition, it will not receive Community Adult Learning Program open competition grant funding in the subsequent grant term.
- The review panel will not review open competition applications that are submitted late.

10. Appendices

10.1. Knowles' Adult Learning Principles⁵

In order to maximize the impact that eligible programming has on the lives of adult foundational learners, grant recipients should recognize the use of the adult learning principles, outlined below, as a best practice in the design and delivery of all funded learning opportunities. Adults need learning that:

- Is self-directed
- Builds on their rich store of past experience and knowledge
- Helps them meet their own goals
- Is relevant
- Is practical
- Provides respect

These adult learning principles are based on the work of Malcolm Knowles. In 1970, Malcolm Knowles revolutionized the field of teaching, otherwise known as pedagogy, by introducing the term andragogy and creating a clear distinction between teaching children and adults.

Knowles based his theory of andragogy on **five assumptions** that characterize adult learners:

Self-concept

A learner in adulthood is self-directed. As a result, adult learners:

- Require autonomy
- Want to be leaders in their own learning
- Need to feel respected
- Often have previous experiences with education that will influence their perception of themselves as a learner

⁵*The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. 1970 by Malcolm S. Knowles

Experience

All adult learners bring past experience and knowledge to their learning. A learning environment that does not acknowledge this wealth of experience will minimize a learner's feelings of self-worth.

Readiness to Learn

Throughout adulthood, learners take on different roles. The literacy and foundational learning requirements of each of those roles differ and are often the impetus of learner goals.

Orientation to Learning

Adults pursue learning that is practical, relevant and applicable to their everyday lives. They often come to learning to satisfy an immediate need or solve a problem.

Motivation to Learn

Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators can prompt a learner's return to learning. However, a learner's internal motivation leads them to better persist in learning.

10.2. Changes to the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*

This section captures changes to the *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines* since 2018.

Section		Change
2	Strategic Policy Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included <i>Advanced Education Business Plan 2020-2023</i>. • Updated <i>Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta's Adult Learning System</i> to reflect policy changes implemented in March 2019 and to reflect the February 2019 amendments to Alberta's <i>Post-secondary Learning Act</i>. • Included <i>Government of Alberta Strategic Plan 2020-2023</i>.
3	Program Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/revised definitions added for 'Barriers,' 'Basic digital skills,' 'Canada's <i>Skills for Success Framework</i>,' 'Course,' 'English language learner,' English language literacy learner,' 'Family literacy programs,' 'Foundational learner,' 'Learning activities,' 'Regional stewardship,' 'Scaffolding,' 'Service organization,' 'Skills for Learning' (formerly Foundational Life Skills), and 'Tutoring.'
5	Program Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Activities' (organization activities required to achieve the program vision and outcomes) moved from Section 4: Program Vision to Section 5: Program Requirements. • Updated 'Collecting Fees' subsection. With the exception of tutoring, if a learner is able to pay, they must pay fees. • Updated 'Professional Development Requirements' subsection to clarify training requirements for contracted instructors/facilitators, tutors, and volunteers.
5.1	Literacy and Foundational Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive definition and description of foundational learner has been added to this section. • Revised language in all subheadings from 'Intended Outcomes' to 'Primary intended learning objectives.'

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised and renamed section 5.1.3: ‘Skills for Learning’ (formerly Foundational Life Skills). Revised section 5.1.4: ‘Basic Digital Skills.’ All categories of literacy and foundational learning have been updated to reflect changes to the forthcoming Canada’s <i>Skills for Success Framework</i> (currently known as Canada’s <i>Essential Skills Framework</i>).
5.2	Community Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarified and revised language in the list of community capacity building programming themes, including clarifying that the delivery of community capacity building programming includes French language learning. Added new community capacity building theme: ‘promote inclusion and acceptance of individuals and groups within the community.’ Added that community capacity building is offered primarily as an opportunity to bridge learners into literacy and foundational learning and that individuals involved in the delivery of community capacity building should regularly inform learners, during each learning opportunity, of available literacy and foundational learning programming.
5.3	Modes of Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development requirements have been updated for all modes of delivery, specifically, the department’s professional development expectations of contracted instructors/facilitators, tutors, and volunteers.
5.3.3	Family Literacy Programs (Modes of Delivery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 5.3.3 has been revised and renamed: ‘Family literacy programs’ (formerly Family Literacy). Revised list of reasons why the family literacy programs mode of delivery may be considered a beneficial or appropriate mode. Removed requirement that CALP-funded family literacy programs be directed towards the parents of children up to six years of age.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CALP-funded family literacy programs offered in literacy and foundational learning may only serve foundational learners as defined in section 5.1: Literacy and Foundational Learning. • For all CALP-funded family literacy programs, fees must be charged unless the learner faces a financial barrier. • Added subsection called ‘Responsive learning opportunities.’ • Revised subsection on ‘Intensity and duration.’
6	Legal and Organizational Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of this section has been changed from ‘Organizational Requirements’ to ‘Legal and Organizational requirements.’ • Added subsection 6.1: Grant Agreement to reinforce that all CALP grant recipients are expected to sign a grant agreement, that the agreement contains legal requirements, and that all decision-making body and staff should have regular access to it. • Reorganized section 6.2: Service Organizations to clarify which organizational requirements apply to all service organizations, and which apply only to service organizations incorporated under the <i>Societies Act</i> or operating under a legal host.
7	Financial Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requirement to submit financial statements with grant applications has been moved to section 6.2.c. • All other financial requirements, apart from eligible and ineligible expenses, can be found in the Community Adult Learning Program grant agreement.
All	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care is now referred to as ‘child-minding.’ • The term ‘grant recipient’ has, in most cases, replaced the term ‘funded organizations.’ This change is intended to be more reflective of contexts in which the Community Adult Learning Program grant is often only one of several grant or contract-based programs housed within a larger organization.