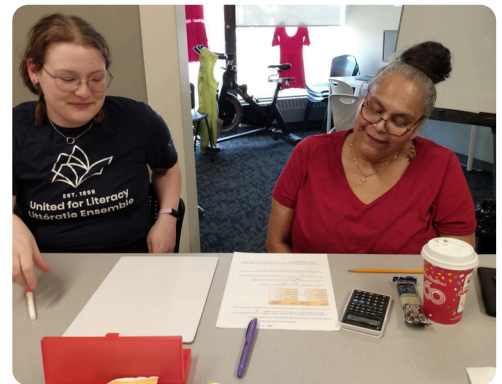
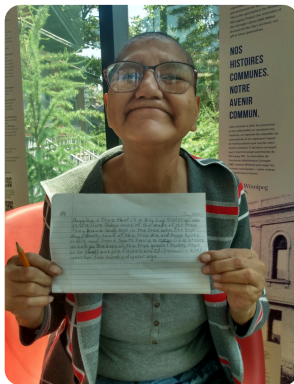


ADULT LITERACY REPORT

2024
National Report



EST. 1899
United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Thank You!

United for Literacy's adult programs are possible through the ongoing support of our funders, community partners, dedicated volunteers, and staff. Thanks to these generous contributions, adults have more opportunities to improve their literacy, digital, financial, workplace, and basic skills.

Who We Reach and What We Do

This year, adult literacy programs supported adults across Canada through online and in-person programs. Designed, delivered, and supported by staff, community partners, interns, and volunteers, these programs reach adults who are working to improve their reading, writing, math, digital, and financial skills or learn English or French as an additional language.

Every learner has a specific goal or dreams they want to achieve. That's why we use Student-Centered Individualized Learning, which is a collaborative approach that respects the learner's goals, interests, and experiences. In 2024 more than 4,580 adults participated in one of our 95 Literacy and Basic Skills programs across Canada.

Introduction to Adult Programs

Adult program participants have many goals, including but not limited to the following:

- increase essential skills
- complete high school education
- find sustainable employment
- enter post-secondary education
- have deeper, more meaningful engagement with their families and communities

United for Literacy instructors and tutors use adult-learning principles tailored to the learner's skills, interests, experience, culture, and goals. Programs are offered in English or French (depending on location) and are free of cost to the learners. This helps to create a supportive environment where participants can build their foundational skills and confidence, leading to a life of learning and discovery.

Community and Classroom-Based Programs

Building foundational skills is central to community- and classroom-based programs. These skills include **reading, writing, math, conversation, and financial literacy**. Current programs include:

- One-to-one tutoring
- English or French as an Additional Language
- Conversation groups for newcomers
- Families Learning Together
- Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC) high-school equivalency preparation
- Tech and digital literacy
- Literacy and basic skills support for adults with mild intellectual disabilities.

Offered to older youth and adults, these programs also help participants build the confidence to keep learning, try new things, and overcome challenges. Programs for adults take place in community spaces such as libraries, colleges, community organizations, Indigenous training organizations, social service and employment agencies, correctional facilities, and select United for Literacy offices.

Online Programs

United for Literacy offers online programs for adults looking for support with literacy and basic skills. Participants in the **National Online Adult Learning** (NOAL) program work on reading, writing, and basic technology skills. The **Learning Disabilities Project** offers comprehensive support for learners who face serious obstacles to reading, writing, and processing information, who may or may not have a diagnosed disability. In addition to these national programs, we utilize the internet to reach people where we do not have a physical presence and to augment our in-person offerings.

Workplace and Workforce Development Programs

Workplace programs are offered in direct partnership with employers, usually at the job site during work hours. This makes learning more accessible to employees. Workforce development programs occur almost exclusively in partner locations. Material is taught by dedicated Instructor-Coordiators who work directly with learners. **These programs focus on preparing people from communities that are underrepresented in the labour market to reengage in education, training, and employment opportunities.** Examples of these programs are New Directions, Learn Outside the Box, and the Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills program at hotels in Whitehorse.

Our Year in Numbers

United for Literacy reaches a diverse range of people from a variety of backgrounds. This is in keeping with the “All welcome!” approach on which we were founded. Our 2024-25 adult programs

- reached **4,589** total adult learners
- were supported by **417** volunteers who were hired and trained to work with adult learners

Participant Demographics

Gender



55%

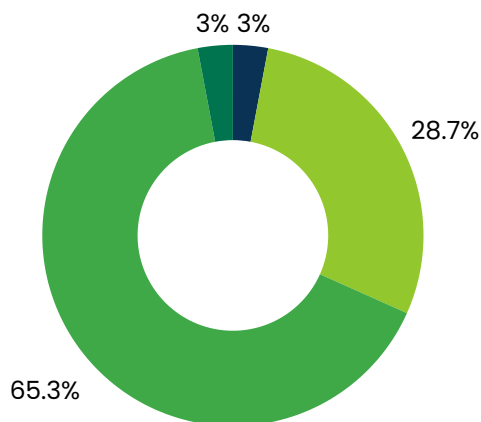


49%



1%

Age

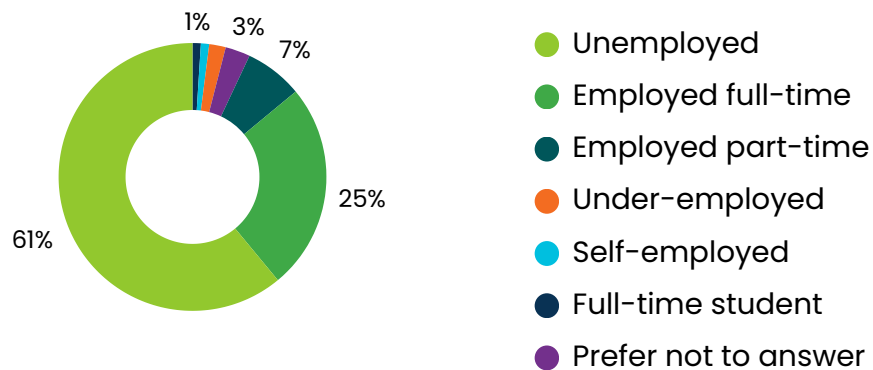


Our Year in Numbers

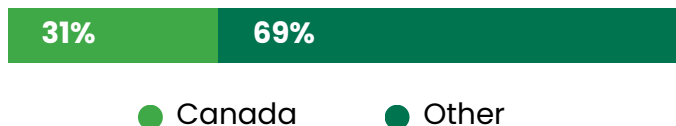
- **Employment Experience**

- 8% no work experience
- 72% worked in Canada
- 19% worked, but not in Canada

- **Education/Employment Status at Time of Registration**



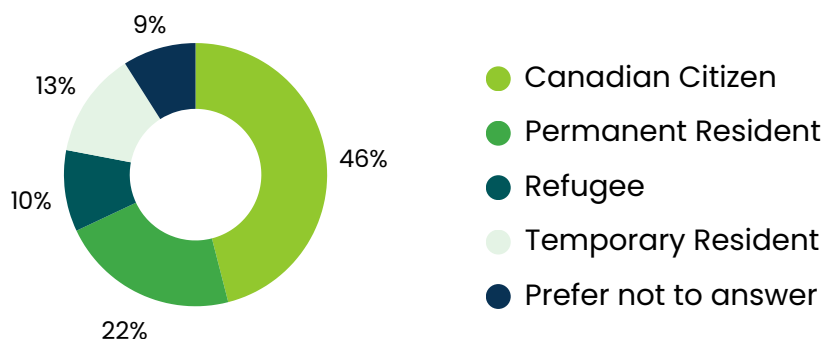
- **Country of Birth:**



- **The top five other countries of birth are:**

Nigeria (11%), India (8%), Colombia (7%), Sudan (6%) and Uganda (6%).

- **Status in Canada:**



Program Impact

Adult and out-of-school youth learners are evaluated throughout their participation in our programs. Below is the percentage of learners who reported improving their skills during the 2024-2025 program period:

- Reading: **97%**
- Writing: **96%**
- Math: **74%**
- Document use: **94%**
- Technology use: **89%**

When surveyed, most learners and tutors reported improvement in key areas:

- **98%** of learners say that they have gained skills they need to achieve their specific life goals
- **99%** of learners say that they made progress towards their learning goals
- **100%** of tutors noticed that adult learners show increased confidence after attending a program at United for Literacy
- **96%** of tutors observed that their learners improved their reading skills after participating in the United for Literacy program

Literacy Changes Everything The Need for Action

Literacy touches every aspect of our lives and has a profound influence on our well-being, especially in our tech-based, knowledge-rich society. Canada's current literacy levels fall short of what is required for success in a knowledge-driven economy. In fact, the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) 2024 (Government of Canada, 2024) reported that **one in five working-age adults in Canada has difficulty with simple reading tasks**.

Those struggling to read may be our neighbours, our colleagues, or family members. These are people who want to build the literacy skills needed to continue going to school, to retain meaningful employment, and to navigate our complex world. However, they face barriers every single day. Investing resources in literacy programs is needed to address unemployment rates and the rising cost of living, which can boost Canada's overall prosperity.

Our experience shows that **we need to offer literacy support to those who face the greatest barriers: people experiencing poverty, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, and individuals living in rural or remote areas.** Our current [Strategic Plan](#) outlines our intent to remain committed to that work. We have learned that this can be accomplished by partnering with local organizations. We also recruit and train volunteers from within these communities to help deliver our literacy programs.

By 2029, our goal is to reach 25,000 learners each year. By 2035, we aim to double that to 50,000 people annually. These are individuals we want to support as they work toward new goals for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Further Reading

If you'd like to learn more about United for Literacy, our partnerships and programs, and the issue of literacy, please explore our [website](#). To get started, please read these articles and reports:

[Adult Learning and Justice Reform: The Value of Literacy Programs for Incarcerated People](#)

[Investing in Adult Learning for Economic Resilience: The Case for the CAEC](#)

[Your Questions About the CAEC Answered: A Guide for Adult Learners](#)

[Opinion: Literacy is Key to Economic Growth \(Special to Financial Post\)](#)

[The GED Is No Longer Available: Introducing the Canadian Adult Education Credential \(CAEC\)](#)

[Unlocking Potential: Literacy and Skills for Success in Canada's North](#)

In Their Own Words

From Learners

After writing the GED exam, Tucker sent this message:



*"I think it went pretty good! I don't want to be overconfident, but I think I passed. Thank you so much for everything." A few weeks later, he sent an update: **"I passed!!!!"** He is now enrolled in Year 2 of a business administration program at Red River College.*

Learn Outside the Box Program



*"I always felt like I was missing out because I couldn't read and communicate properly. At work, I struggled with instructions and often felt ashamed. But joining United for Literacy has been a game-changer. The teacher, Jill, has been incredibly supportive, always encouraging me, and never judging me for my mistakes. She makes learning fun and accessible, and I finally feel like I'm catching up. **It's such a relief to feel confident in my understanding and reading.** I'm beyond thankful for United for Literacy. They've given me the tools I need to improve my life and my future."*

Learner, North Shore – Schreiber Literacy and Basic Skills



*"I started the program with a person at my side to help me with the translation, now I go to Doctor alone, **I talk to the teachers at my son's school.** I feel that I can interact more comfortably now."*

Learner, National Online Adult Learning (NOAL) Program

In Their Own Words

From Volunteers



*"Overall, participants have noted how the program has improved their confidence conversing with Canadians. Many have noted how the meetings have helped them to acclimate more quickly, learning customs and expectations. For many of those newcomers who do not have family or close friends nearby, **a sense of community and being cared about** is also a feature of the meetings that they appreciate. Some individuals have been able to obtain work in English or develop the courage to take post-secondary courses in English as a result of the meetings."*
Volunteer, Accueil Francophone



*"It is **an honour and a pleasure to assist learners** to strengthen their fluency in English. I am grateful to UFL for the training and networking, educational materials for the learners and workshops for the tutors. I have recommended UFL to many individuals for themselves or for their organizations. Literacy and fluency are major pieces required to attain self-sufficiency and to acclimate to new surroundings."*
Volunteer, Ukrainian English Conversation Club



*"I joined United for Literacy because I was looking for an opportunity to improve my skills as an educator, but I also learned much more than simple teaching and tutoring skills. **This has been a really meaningful experience**, and it's been great to not only spend my time improving my skills, but making a difference in someone else's life. I've seen a lot of growth from my learner and I'm grateful that I had the chance to help him achieve his literacy goals."*
Volunteer, Jamaica Association

Reference

Government of Canada, S. C. (2024, December 6). Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). Surveys and statistical programs. <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=4406>



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my life and my future.**

Learner, North Shore – Schreiber Literacy and Basic Skills