



EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

35 Jackes Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4T 1E2
Canada
unitedforliteracy.ca

Charitable Registration Number
10740 8445 RR0001

Request for Proposal (RFP)

2025–27 Project: Root Causes of Low Literacy in Canada

United for Literacy is seeking professional services to conduct an 18-month research project (October 2025 – March 2027) exploring the root causes of low literacy and identifying strategies to better support underrepresented groups in the labour market, between October 2025 and March 2027. This RFP document provides the information required to prepare a research proposal. We are seeking a research partner with the expertise and capacity to design and implement the United for Literacy research project, which is made possible with funding from the Government of Canada's department of Employment and Social Development.

- **RFP Issued: August 5, 2025**
- **Letter of Intent deadline: August 19, 2025**
Please provide a 3–5 page summary of how you would design the research project, including a preliminary cost estimate. Only those invited after review of the LOI will be asked to submit a full proposal.
- **Deadline for written questions (email):** By August 26, 2025
- **Proposal submission deadline: September 5, 2025**
Please provide a 5–10 page research proposal with budget details.
- **Interviews/Presentations: September 24 – October 1, 2025**
- **Final selection and notification: October 8, 2025**

The final selection will be based on the following criteria:

- The assessed compatibility of the selected supplier to the United for Literacy corporate culture and mission statement.
- The assessed ability of the selected supplier's services to provide high quality, timely and cost-effective research services.
- The evaluated total cost of the selected supplier's service.
- The assessed ability of the selected supplier to consistently meet United for Literacy's and its funder's requirements throughout the length of the proposed commitment.

Should you have questions, please contact Janine Kozlowski, Research Analyst at:
[**jkozlowski@unitedforliteracy.ca**](mailto:jkozlowski@unitedforliteracy.ca)

We look forward to receiving your proposal and the opportunity to work together.



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About United for Literacy

United for Literacy, formerly Frontier College, is the national registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth, and adults through literacy. Since 1899, our *All Welcome!* approach and innovative services have been transforming every place into a learning place. In the past year, nearly 40,000 children, youth, and adults in over 180 urban, rural, and remote places across Canada (including 137 Indigenous communities), gained access to free, inclusive literacy and numeracy programs, in person and online, supported by over 1,300 trained volunteer tutors. United for Literacy is accredited under the Imagine Canada Standards program. For more information visit [United for Literacy - National charitable literacy organization](http://unitedforliteracy.ca).

United for Literacy is seeking research and consulting services to conduct a comprehensive study on the concept of Literacy as it relates to the current Canadian labour market. The project will explore the roots causes of low literacy and identify strategies to better support underrepresented groups in accessing and retaining employment. This includes analyzing labour market trends, service gaps, and the challenges faced by diverse job seekers, including individuals from diverse backgrounds such as newcomers, racialized groups, people with disabilities, members of official language minority communities, as well as individuals from First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities. The study will culminate in policy and process recommendations aimed at enhancing employment supports for job seekers, thereby improving their access to employment and retention, and improving Canadian labour market outcomes.

Overview

Substantial evidence supports the relationship between literacy and the labour market. United for Literacy is seeking to help fill a gap in policy research by exploring how literacy investment can contribute to improving Canadian labour market outcomes, while raising awareness of literacy issues among Canadians and supporting literacy practitioners working with lower skilled adults in supporting their employment growth.



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Project activities for the current RFP:

1. Conduct primary and secondary research using quantitative and qualitative methods. This will include new data collection and participatory approaches with compensation for participants as well as ensure that gender equity is reflected in the sampling frame. Leading to the production of a United for Literacy national research report focused on understanding root causes of low literacy and strategies to better support underrepresented groups in accessing and retaining employment, including identification of best practices and innovations in Canada, and internationally if resources permit.
2. Produce a bilingual, English and French, National Research Report on behalf of United for Literacy for dissemination to literacy and social service practitioners, policy makers, and public and private investors.

Project Deliverables

A National Research Report addressing the following objectives:

- Increase awareness of the lived experience and learning needs of individuals with low literacy faced by marginalized and multi-barriered Canadians.
- Better identify ways of helping underrepresented groups to prepare for, return to, or keep employment and be productive participants in the labour force.
- Inform public (governments), non-profit and employment sectors by disseminating the research results to advise labour market challenges, and other broad public policy issues intersecting with low literacy such as public health and corrections/justice.

Specifications:

- Research design and methodology to be determined in consultation with United for Literacy, including a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, and primary and secondary research.
- Geographic scope is Canada, including both official language communities, with the option to consider comparable international evidence.
- Sample source and data collection will be handled by contractor.
- Report to include clear language Executive Summary (Grade 8 reading level) and data tables. Include case studies if possible.



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- Report to be credited to United for Literacy (institutional author / first author) with contractor recognition by name and logo on inside cover, and by name in the research methodology section of the report.

Timeline

All project activities must be completed by **March 1, 2027**, with specific deliverables as follows:

- National Research Report ready for publication by January 15, 2027.
- National Report launch to take place in Feb 2027.

Requests for Proposal Requirements

- **Letter of Intent:** By Aug 19, 2025, please provide a 3-5 page summary of how you would design the research project, including a preliminary cost estimate. Successful candidates will be invited to submit a full written proposal.
- **Deadline for written questions (email):** By August 26, 2025
- **Full proposal:** By September 5, 2025, please provide a 5-10 page research proposal with budget details.

Detailed RFP Responses: Please provide a **written proposal** outlining the following:

- **Background** – A description of your agency and its services (please include your agency's commitment to charitable or community work, if any)
- **Qualifications** – Your credentials in relation to this project, including examples of similar social research projects you have undertaken (include links to reports)
- **Research plan** – How you will go about answering the research questions, including proposed methodology for primary research, and expected scope of secondary research.
- **Budget** – Information about your fee structure, including payment schedule and total costs to complete the project.
- **Critical Path** – A timeline for completing the project, broken down by project phase (design, data collection, analysis, report development/approval/translation). Include anticipated check-ins with United for Literacy.



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- **Capacity** – A description of the team assigned to this project, and how your agency would handle the French aspects of this project.
- **References** – Three references for any organizations (preferably charitable, not-for profit) you currently work or recently worked with.
- **Other information** – Anything else you think we should know.

Submission details: Please send Letters of Interest and full RFP responses in electronic format to jkozlowski@unitedforliteracy.ca

We look forward to receiving your proposal and the opportunity to work together!