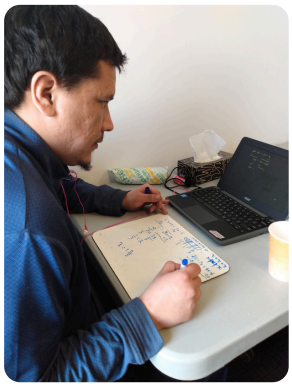
ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS

2026
National Report






EST. 1899
United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Canada's Literacy Gap Needs Urgent Action

What is the issue?



1 in 5 adults struggles with basic reading.
That's over 6.4 million people.

Why it matters?

Literacy shapes opportunity and equity.

Essential for jobs, health, and daily life

Improves individual and community well-being

Strengthens social and economic participation

A 1% increase in adult literacy is estimated to generate $67 billion annually for Canada.

Why now?

Rapid technological advancement
- Jobs are changing quickly with the rise of AI and new technologies.

Increasing education requirements
- More jobs now require at least a high school education or additional credentials..

Changing workplace skill demands
- Employers increasingly require stronger literacy, digital, and problem-solving skills.

The need for lifelong learning
- Adults must continue developing new skills throughout their careers to remain employable.

Why United For Literacy?

We offer FREE support
- Online and in-person literacy programs across Canada

We co-design with communities
- Partnering with local organizations to respond to needs

We build essential skills
- Reading, writing, numeracy, digital literacy, financial literacy, English as an Additional Language (EAL), and French as an Additional Language (FAL)

We strengthen communities
- Supporting individuals, families, and local literacy systems

How we work

We work in partnership with communities
- Staff, volunteers, and interns collaborate with community organizations to respond to needs

We strengthen local literacy services
- Build and support community-based literacy programs

We build community capacity
- Expand resources, skills, and local support systems

We offer wrap-around supports
- Provide healthy snacks, bus passes, job referrals, and more!

Where we work

Across Canada
Urban, rural, and remote communities
Every place is a learning place
Wherever people learn, connect and build their skills



Every learner has a goal. We help them reach it.

Our vision

All people in Canada have the literacy skills they need to achieve their potential.

We have a mission

Each day, we transform lives and strengthen communities through literacy.

Who We Served in 2025–2026

During 2025–2026, United for Literacy delivered adult literacy and essential skills programming in more than 30 communities across Canada, supporting adults with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and goals.

Many learners came to our programs seeking employment, educational opportunities, language development, greater confidence, or the skills needed to navigate everyday life. Through programs delivered at no cost to learners, participants received individualized support tailored to their needs and aspirations.

4,058
Adult Learners Supported

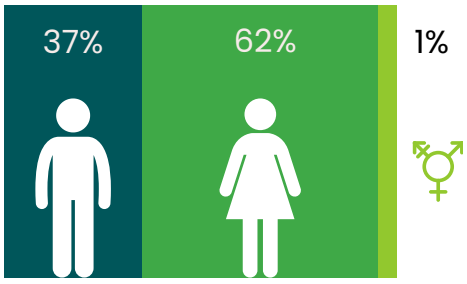
265
Volunteers Engaged and Trained

11
Provinces and Territories Reached

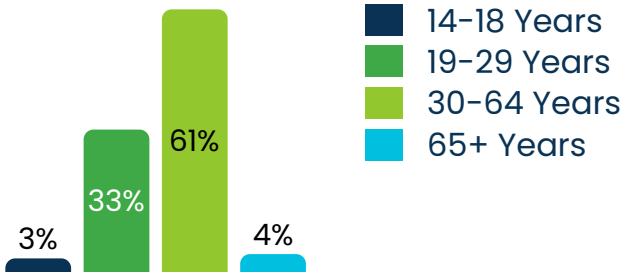
Learner Demographics

The following profile reflects the diversity of the adults who participated in our programs this year, demonstrating the broad and ongoing need for accessible literacy and essential skills support across Canada.

Gender



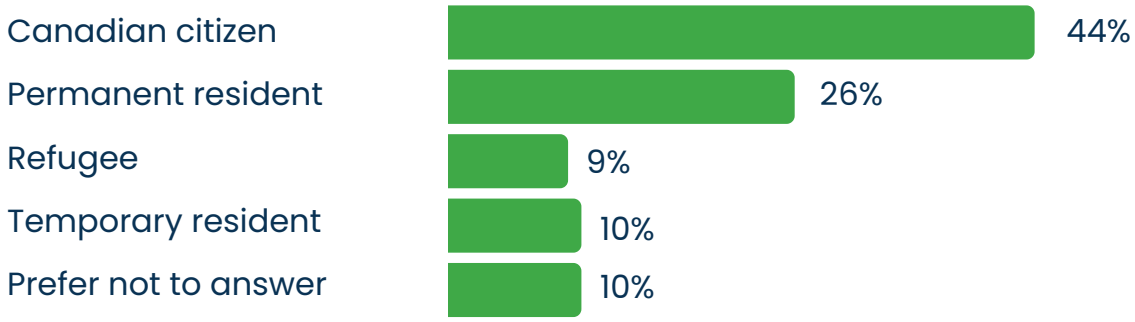
Age



Country of Birth

While 29% of learners were born in Canada, 71% were born elsewhere. Among learners born outside Canada, the most common countries of birth were Colombia (7%), Eritrea (6%), Sudan (5%), Cameroon (4%), and Afghanistan (4%).

Status in Canada



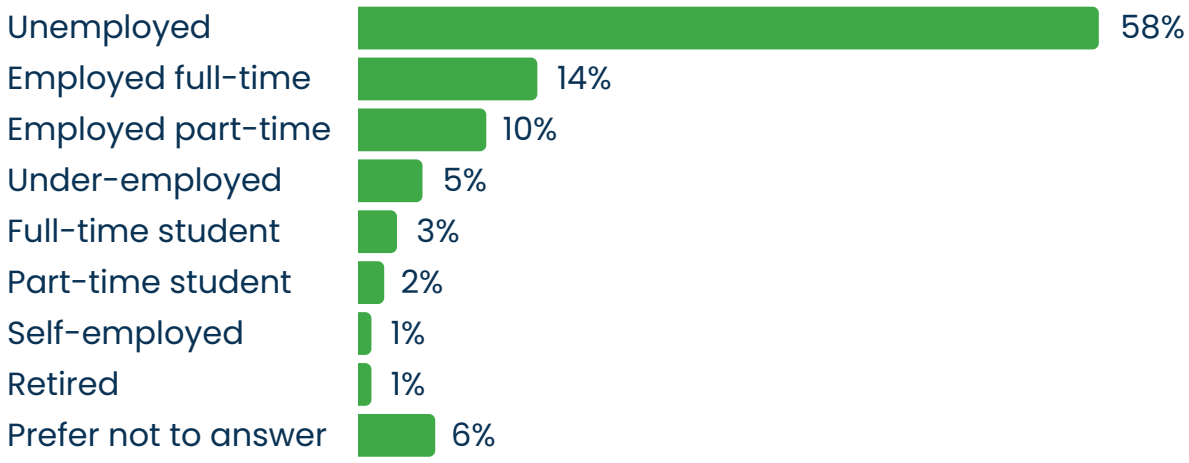
Employment Experience

14%
no work experience

55%
worked in Canada

31%
worked internationally

Education/Employment Status at Time of Registration



Program Impact

After participating in a United for Literacy Adult Literacy and Essential Skills Programs, learners report not only improved education and employment outcomes but also report greater involvement in their community and family's education — literacy is more than the ability to read and write. It is the ability to reach your full potential.

Here is what the learners reported in 2025-26:

- **100%** said they improved their reading skills
- **96%** said they improved their writing skills
- **100%** said they improved their numeracy skills
- **100%** said they improved their document use skills
- **97%** said they improved their technology use skills
- **100%** said they improved their communication skills

United for Literacy is committed to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI). Read more about the commitment **here.**

When surveyed, learners felt:

- **100%** Welcomed
- **97%** Seen and accepted

Continuous program improvements

Last year, we revised our self-assessments and surveys to make them shorter, clearer, and easier to fill out. These changes reduce the burden on staff while improving data quality and consistency.

Learner Story

In Winnipeg, our free Learn Outside the Box program helps adults prepare for the Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC), Canada's high school equivalency credential. One participant shared how the program supported them on their journey:

> *"I think it went pretty good!" said one participant. "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.

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.

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

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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