Human Resources and
Skills Development Canada

Ressources humaines et
Développement des compétences Canada

People • Partnerships • Knowledge

Skills and Employment

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills

Developing Partnerships to support Literacy and Essential Skills

This tool is designed to help you develop effective partnerships for supporting Literacy and Essential Skills (LES). It offers a simple four-step process to help you get started and includes tips for building and maintaining successful partnerships.

How can you benefit from partnerships?

- Lower investments that are required by each partner (e.g. costs can be shared)
- Facilitate the sharing of knowledge of new trends, best practices, etc.
- Enhance the success of LES initiatives
- Provide access to resources that may not otherwise be possible (e.g. funding)

The **Office of Literacy and Essential Skills** has developed a series of free and easy-to-use tools to help address LES challenges. The *Literacy and Essential Skills Toolkit* is a good starting point to help you learn more about LES and develop an LES training program. Tools are categorized into three key areas: assessment, learning, and training supports. Choose the tools most relevant for you by downloading them from our website, or ordering copies from our warehouse.

Tips for successful partnerships

- Identify common goals (e.g. to improve the oral communication skills of information technology staff so that they can provide better client service).
- Share information and keep lines of communication open help to demonstrate commitment and build trust—two critical ingredients for success.
- Define the scope of the partnership. Establish timeframes and responsibilities so that partners know what is expected of them.
- Support from senior management will encourage other staff members to participate in the partnership.
- Try to understand the unique challenges faced by other partners (e.g., slower decision-making processes). Keep in mind the benefits of working together and that it improves over time as the partners get to know one another.
- Celebrate achievements by sharing success stories and promoting best practices.

Who can be a partner and how can they help you?

There are many different types of partners that can help you support LES. Here are some potential partners to consider:

- ■ *Federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments* can provide information on programs in your area and may have funding to support your efforts.
- ■ *Other businesses* can share costs and other resources.
- ■ *Industry/business associations and sector councils* can provide labour market information and resources available within a specific industry and introduce you to other potential partners.
- ■ *Unions and employee associations* provide training for members and can link you to other resources, service providers and partners.
- ■ *Community colleges and school boards* may have existing LES programs aimed at employees, employers or practitioners. They may also be able to recommend other local training providers.
- ■ *Community organizations (e.g., workplace education and literacy organizations)* can provide information and advice on workplace learning, literacy and community resources. They may deliver programs related to LES and can assist with evaluation of programs.
- ■ *National literacy organizations and provincial/territorial coalitions* are experts in promoting public awareness on the importance of literacy. They can provide valuable information and resources.

What are the steps to building an effective partnership?

STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR PARTNERSHIP GOAL(S)

The first step to developing a partnership is identifying why the partnership is needed: What do you want to achieve through this partnership? While the partnership will change over time, it is important to have a clear idea of your purpose before contacting potential partners. *Define your goals in the space below.*

GOAL(S) _____

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STEP 2: IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PARTNER(S)

Before contacting potential partners:

- ❏ Determine internal support for partnerships with other organizations
- ❏ Confirm the level of interest and awareness of partners with respect to LES
- ❏ Assess what potential partners have to offer in terms of knowledge, skills and/or resources

As you contact potential partners, use the chart below to record important information.

Potential Partner	Name/Contact Information	How they can help

STEP 3: BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

Once you have identified potential partners, the checklist below can help lay the foundation for a successful partnership.

- ❏ Meet with potential partners to explore common goals (ensure goals are realistic and clear)
- ❏ Agree on roles, responsibilities and level of commitment
- ❏ Discuss possible challenges and how they might be dealt with
- ❏ Establish basic ground rules with partners (e.g. how information will be shared, how work will be coordinated, confidentiality)
- ❏ Work with partners to identify activities and tasks to help achieve training objectives
- ❏ Identify responsibilities and timelines for activities
- ❏ Establish a plan for communicating the activities and progress

STEP 4: MAINTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

A positive partnership requires ongoing effort. The checklist below can help the partnership grow.

- ❏ Communicate with partners regularly
- ❏ Help each partner understand the needs and challenges of other partners
- ❏ Establish a process to discuss and negotiate issues or challenges
- ❏ Monitor progress: Are partners achieving what was expected?

Notes:

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To learn more about literacy and essential skills and other related tools, visit
hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills

**Literacy and Essential Skills—
for LEARNING, WORK and LIFE**