

The Canada Life Literacy Innovation Award

Frequently Asked Questions

A Question of Innovation

Q: What do you mean by innovative?

A: When we say we're looking for innovative literacy programming, we mean that you've tried something new, maybe even taken a risk. Perhaps you're reaching a marginalized or underserved community, or teaching literacy in a new and different way. Your program fills a gap, and it's making a difference. Not sure if your program could be considered innovative? Give us a call and tell us about it. We're happy to advise you on your program's eligibility before you put your application together.

Q: My program isn't innovative, but it does have excellent results. Should I still apply?

A: Unfortunately, if your program isn't innovative, it won't be a competitive application for this award. Instead of applying, contact us and tell us about the great work you're doing. We'll see what else we can do to share your program with the rest of the field.

Program & Applicant Eligibility

Q: What if my program hasn't been running for 12 months yet?

A: Unfortunately, your program isn't eligible for the award this year. Please consider applying next time.

Q: What if my program is a pilot?

A: If your program is a pilot that has run for 12 months, it is eligible! If it has run for less time, it is not eligible. In the latter case, contact us and tell us about your pilot. We'll see what else we can do to share your innovative pilot with the rest of the field.

Q: I'm not a registered charity. Can I still apply?

A: If you're not a registered charity, but you are a non-profit organization, then you can still apply. If you aren't a non-profit, unfortunately you're not eligible for this award.

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Program & Applicant Eligibility *continued*

Q: I don't have quantitative data to show the success of the program. Can I still apply?

A: If you don't yet have quantitative data, you may want to consider applying next time once you have gathered the data. Submissions are evaluated based on data that demonstrates the impact on participants and the community. Even if your program is incredible and completely new, you'll be competing with other submissions that are able to show the numbers behind their work.

Q: What do you mean by quantitative?

A: When we say we're looking for quantitative data, we mean real numbers. Tell us about the statistical impact your program has had/is having in your community. For example, *"This program reached 52 participants in 2016. Enrolment numbers have increased by 30 percent and it has been determined that for every dollar invested in the program, approximately \$5 is created in social and economic value."*

Q: What do you mean by qualitative?

A: When we say we're looking for qualitative data, we mean anecdotes. Tell us how your programming is creating positive change in your community. For instance, you could tell us about a particular learner's success in your program and how this has directly affected their personal growth: *"When Karen joined our program in 2015 she was unable to find work and faced a number of barriers to steady employment. While in our program, she improved her language and numeracy skills and her confidence experienced a real boost. Karen has since found work that is both challenging and fulfilling."*

Q: I'd rather submit an application on behalf of my whole organization, rather than one particular program. Can I do that?

A: Your submission must be for one program. This award recognizes a single program, not all of the great work your organization is doing. If you have a few really innovative programs and aren't sure what to submit, contact us to chat about it.

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Program & Applicant Eligibility *continued*

Q: Can I submit more than one program?

A: Yes, you can submit more than one program! You can even submit a program you've submitted before—as long as it hasn't already won the award.

Q: Would a conference be considered a “program?”

A: Unfortunately, not. Even though important learning might take place at a conference, it would not be considered a program and would not be eligible for the award.

Q: My program serves youth. Is it eligible?

A: If your program serves youth ages 18 and up, then it is eligible for the award.

Evaluation & Assessment

Q: How do you determine who wins? How do you evaluate the applications?

A: We look at many factors, but the most important pieces are 1) how innovative is your program, and 2) how well you can show that your program is making positive change. If you're not sure whether your program is competitive, give us a call. We're happy to advise you before you start the application process, but first, have a look at our **evaluation criteria** below:

- Program is innovative to the literacy field. (Weight: 40%)
- Program shows demonstrated results in helping Canadians live a fully engaged life. (Weight: 20%)
- Program offers an education training experience for adults, teaching skills that enhance engagement of life, community, workplace and/or family. (Weight: 10%)
- Program activities well planned and organized. (Weight: 10%)
- Program is sharable across the literacy community. (Weight: 5%)
- Program engages partners in design, delivery and/or outcomes. (Weight: 5%)
- Program fills a need in the community that impacts adult learners. (Weight: 10%)

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Q: Who won last year's Literacy Innovation Award?

A: 2023's top award winner was Sioux-Hudson Literacy Council in Sioux Lookout, ON, with their program, *Good Learning Anywhere*. The honourable mention awards went to Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Literacy Network in Sheet Harbour, NS, and Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick in Fredericton, NB.

For more information about past winners visit our website: abclifeliteracy.ca/lia

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Still Have Questions?

Q: Will you review my application for me before I submit it?

A: Unfortunately, we aren't able to read and advise you on an entire application. However, if you have a specific question about a particular section of the application, please contact us.

Q: To best present my program, I want to include additional information: more testimonials, a video, a newspaper article, and/or more numbers. Can I include an appendix with my application?

A: Unfortunately, due to capacity, we can only review the application form and 2 letters of reference that we request for all our submissions; please do not send us additional material. This helps keep the review process fair and consistent for all applicants.

Q: I have a lot of other questions. Can I call or email you to talk about them?

A: Absolutely. Reach out to Ellie Tamura at etamura@abclifeliteracy.ca. She'll do her best to get back to you within two business days.

Best of luck with your application!