



# Literacy Alberta Strategic Plan

July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2014

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## The Kananaskis Charter

**As a group of people with a common purpose we improve lives in Alberta and beyond.  
We speak boldly for a fully literate society. We believe in trust, candid dialogue,  
informed decision making, courageous leadership and continuous improvement.**

## **Our Strategic Planning Process:**

A fulsome strategic planning process begins with understanding the environment in which an organization works, see step one in the illustration below. For Literacy Alberta (LA) this environmental scan was accomplished through a rigorous community engagement process. Any organization, when considering its strategic future must talk to its organizational stakeholders. Literacy Alberta found a perfect opportunity to engage with direct stakeholders, board and senior management of Alberta Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs (VTALPS), and its partners from the Community Learning Network and the Community Adult Learning Programs in the fall of 2010 at the Literacy and Learning Symposium. Through a governance forum and at the Annual General Meeting Literacy Alberta discovered what their stakeholders and partners were thinking. These individuals also provided LA with their advice about the strategic direction LA needed to consider in fulfilling their mandate and achieve their Vision and organizational outcomes.

Armed with this information the board met in April 2011 to reconsider their current strategic direction. Prior to beginning their planning retreat the Board met, on Friday afternoon, with both their provincial and federal funders to enter into dialogue about the future as envisaged by both funding bodies and LA. The remainder of the weekend was spent thinking, debating, having conversations, and laughing. Through this the board determined that several elements of their existing strategic plan would remain untouched, these elements included: defined moral ownership, organizational vision, some core businesses and some organizational outcomes. Changes were made to the organization's mission, some core businesses, and some outcome statements.

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## **Planning Assumptions:**

- The Strategic Plan is the Board's Vision and Direction, informed by Executive Leadership, to the organization.
- The board as a team (of those members present) considers, debates, has dialogue, makes decisions and then speaks with one voice on the decisions made at the planning retreat.
- A business plan that puts "meat on the bones" of this Strategic Plan, specifically the strategic priorities, is the job of the Executive Staff to develop and provide to the Board for information and possible feedback.



### **Organizational Overview:**

- Literacy Alberta is eight years old and was legally incorporated as a Society in December 2003.
- LA was formed through the merger of Alberta Association of Adult Literacy (AAAL) and Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA).
- LA has a provincial mandate, and the hub of operations and governance is in Calgary Alberta.
- The annual budget for LA is approximately 1.4 million dollars.
- LA is governed through a Policy Governance model, with the board setting strategic direction and monitoring organizational success through Executive Limitation and Organizational Outcomes and also through the ongoing monitoring of the financial health of the organization.
- LA employs 7.2 FTE (8 people) in the Calgary office and 1.8 FTE's (2 people) in the Edmonton area.
- Key programs and services of Literacy Alberta are:
  - Professional development programs, including essential skills training and literacy coordinator training.
  - Literacy Audit workshops for community agencies, health organizations and corporate workplaces.
  - LearningLinks, Canada's largest resource centre for literacy, essential skills and learning difficulties, operated in partnership.
  - The Literacy Alberta Help Line, our free, confidential information and referral service.
  - The annual Literacy and Learning Symposium for literacy and adult learning practitioners, instructors, tutors and adult learners.
  - Plain Language services for materials and documents.

## **Key Stakeholders and Partners:**

Literacy Alberta provides the programs and services as outlined above to seventy Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs. In addition LA works closely with many organizations including other literacy and learning organizations, employers, various government departments at all levels, and non-profit organizations serving similar clientele.

## **Our Guiding Principles or Values:**

- Albertans have the right to develop literacy and basic skills.
- These skills help us to take part in the social, economic, political, and cultural life in Alberta.
- We all have an equal chance to gain, develop, keep, and add to literacy and basic skills whatever our situation.
- We need to commit to learning throughout life.
- This commitment leads to a society that values educated, healthy, and productive people, families, communities, and workplaces.

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## **Our Moral Ownership<sup>1</sup>**

All people living in Alberta.

## **Vision Statement<sup>2</sup>**

All Albertans are able to develop and maintain the literacy and essential skills they need in order to participate fully in their communities.

## **Mission Statement<sup>3</sup>**

Building literacy and essential skills in Alberta through inspiration, innovation and collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> *Moral Ownership – Policy Governance recognizes foremost that boards exist own the organization on behalf of some identifiable ownership to which they are answerable – Basics Principles of Policy Governance – John and Miriam Carver; Jossey – Bass, 1996*

<sup>2</sup> *The difference made in the future because we exist*

<sup>3</sup> *What we do*

## Core Businesses

1. Influencing decision makers, businesses and learners
2. Awareness – Provide information and resources to create change
3. Research, Evaluation And Development (READ)
4. Systems Development (Network/Partnerships and Collaborations)
5. Training – Practitioners, Trainers, Workplace

## Organizational Outcomes Statements<sup>4</sup>

### *Outcome #1:*

Literacy Alberta **creates and disseminates knowledge about literacy in order to improve awareness and practice.**

Measures:

- The knowledge tools of Literacy Alberta (Help Line, Website, Share, LearningLinks Resource Centre) are being accessed and expanding their reach.
- Past and current research findings are being used to inform policy, practice and programming of literacy programs in Alberta.

### *Outcome #2:*

Literacy Alberta **enhances the capacity of Albertans to increase literacy levels.**

Measures:

- Increased training opportunities, reflective of best practice, are available to Literacy Practitioners.
- People living in Alberta are provided with many opportunities to build foundational literacy skills close to their homes or places of work.

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<sup>4</sup> *strategic organizational priorities*

*Outcome #3:*

Literacy Alberta **influences stakeholders to ensure literacy thrives in Alberta.**

Measures:

- Literacy Alberta works collaboratively to implement the Provincial Literacy Framework.
- New relationships are built and existing relationships strengthened with all orders of government, employers/workplaces and communities.

*Outcome #4:*

Literacy Alberta **assists in the creation of a coordinated literacy system in Alberta.**

Measures:

- Literacy Alberta actively and positively supports endeavors to work more closely with learning and literacy partners
- LA works systemically to enhance the coordination of literacy in the province.
- LA is a partner of choice

*Outcome #5:*

Literacy Alberta **is a healthy organization.**

Measures:

- The board and staff demonstrate a commitment to the organization's vision, mission and values.
- Board Members understand their roles, responsibilities, and governance model and govern with excellence.
- All people (volunteers, staff and board) indicate their satisfaction with working for the organization.
- Core Business Processes and governance models provide accountability structures.