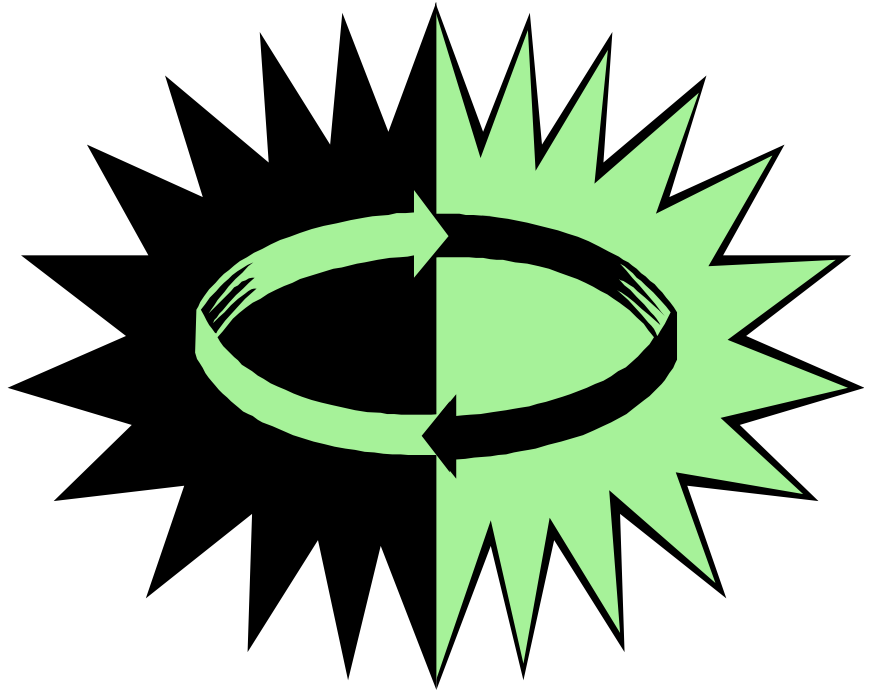


Chapter 5

Learner Access and Referral Policy Templates



CORE QUALITY STANDARDS

- ♦ **Community Focus**
- ♦ **Program Commitment to Learners**
- ♦ **Respect for Learners**
- ♦ **Access and Equity**
- ♦ **Ratio of Learners to Instructors**
- ♦ **Support Services**
- ♦ **Program Evaluation**

Applicable Service Quality Management Requirement

“A method for determining priorities for learner access to service, and a referral strategy”

LBS Program Guidelines June 1998: Part 2, Section 1, Page 9

The issues around access and equity for learners are extremely important. The agency has a duty to remain “learner focused” in when delivering service.

With respect to the referral of learners, it is the agency’s responsibility to:

- ◆ Ensure that the agency’s information and referral services build on and are complementary to other similar resources in the community, based in the literacy services plan
- ◆ Implement a systematic approach to tracking, reporting, and analyzing information and referral activity and follow-up.

(LBS Program Guidelines June 1998: Part 1, Section 3, Page 7)

- ☐ **CODE OF ETHICS:** The agency believes in the dignity and value of the learners. It is committed to increasing the learner's understanding of him/herself and others. All staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to and model appropriate behaviours in accordance with the guidelines outlined below.

WHY?

As professionals, the agency's staff and volunteers will promote the full development of each learner's potential and will endeavour to ensure that the total needs of each learner are met.

Code of Ethics [Procedures]:

1. *Staff and volunteers should be aware of and facilitate the delivery of appropriate services to each learner's educational, vocational, physical, medical, emotional and social needs.*
2. *Staff and volunteers will maintain professional objectivity and self-discipline so that the learner's needs remain the primary focus.*
3. *Staff and volunteers should recognize the need to further both their own knowledge and skills as well as assisting others to further themselves.*
4. *Staff and volunteers are obligated to safeguard information about learners. Any information shared is done only with others involved professionally with the learners and is done in a manner consistent with ethical and professional practice and only when it serves the best interest of the learner.*
5. *Staff will recognize the importance of other related disciplines in the delivery of service to the learners.*
6. *Staff have the responsibility to add to their professional body of knowledge through involvement in related projects, keeping up to date with MET publications and attending applicable training opportunities.*
7. *Staff and volunteers will respect the reputation and philosophy of the agency.*

Key Core Quality Standard:

2. Community Focus: A quality literacy program is rooted in the community that it serves. Learners participate in the decisions that affect them and their communities. The program reflects its own philosophy and objectives and strengthens individuals, their community and their cultural identity.

Key Core Quality Standard:

5. Respect for Learners: A quality literacy program maintains good rapport and promotes mutual respect among learners, practitioners, and others in the organization. Programs provide a supportive learning environment, respect for learners' privacy, and constructive feedback on achievements.

- ☐ **LEARNER REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** The board of directors will have a learner member-at-large at all times.

WHY?

It is essential to have learner representation on the board of directors in order to ensure that the learners have a voice in the decisions made by the agency.

Procedures:

1. *The board will have at least one learner representative at all times.*
2. *This position is a voting position.*
3. *This position will be for a period of two years.*

Key Core Quality Standard:

2. Community Focus: A quality literacy program is rooted in the community that it serves. Learners participate in the decisions that affect them and their communities. The program reflects its own philosophy and objectives and strengthens individuals, their community and their cultural identity.

Features:

Learners participate in the program's planning and other activities.

- ◆ Learners are represented in a meaningful way on the Board of Directors (for community groups) and/or other committees or groups planning the direction and nature of the program's activities.
- ◆ Learners are given formal and informal support to enable their full and meaningful participation and the program documents the provision of these supports in some way.
- ◆ Learners participate in the planning and implementation of other activities of the program such as community and social events.

- ☐ **LEARNER EQUITY:** The program is committed to applying the principles of equity in its practices for dealing with learners.

WHY?

Principles of equity must be applied at all times when dealing with learners.

Procedures:

1. *The concept of equity for learners will be a board agenda item to be dealt with at least twice per year. Policies dealing with equity will be reviewed.*
2. *The agency will do outreach activities specifically targeted at equity groups. Some suggested activities include [list activities that your agency would include here]:*
3. *The executive director will prepare a written report describing all outreach activities directed at equity groups on a yearly basis.*
4. *It is the responsibility of the executive director to continually address the issue of equity for learners in the program. Curricula, materials and approaches used will be under constant scrutiny to ensure that they are sensitive to the needs of learners from equity groups.*
5. *Staff members, volunteers and board members should be aware of equity issues. It is the responsibility of the executive director to ensure that these groups are aware of the issues and to instill the need for sensitivity to learners from equity groups.*

Key Core Quality Standard:

7. **Equity:** A quality literacy program respects differences. It has structures and supports in place to increase access and equity outcomes to help learners from all backgrounds reach their goals.

Features:

The program is committed to serving people from all equity groups.

- ◆ The program has a policy indicating its commitment to serving people from all equity target groups.
- ◆ The program regularly reviews its policies, curricula, materials and approaches, in conjunction with learners and community equity groups, to identify ways in which it can improve access and facilitate improved outcomes.
- ◆ The program does outreach specifically targeted at equity groups.
- ◆ The program provides training for its staff, practitioners and volunteers regarding sensitivity to the characteristics and needs of people from equity groups.

- ☐ **LEARNER ACCESS:** The program sites are accessible to learners with physical disabilities or other barriers.

WHY?

The agency is committed to creating barrier free program sites and to providing supports and services within the limits of available resources. Sites should be accessible to allow for equal training and education opportunities for learners with disabilities.

Procedures:

1. *The program sites are safe and accessible for learners with disabilities.*
2. *The issue of site accessibility will be addressed yearly as a regular board agenda item. Learners and community disability organizations will be invited to attend this meeting.*
3. *The staff member assessing a learner entering the program will attempt to determine any necessary accommodations for a learner to be able to fully participate in the available programming.*
4. *Where a learner is unable to access a program due to physical limitations or barriers, the program will endeavour to make every accommodation possible so that the learner can participate. These accommodations may include but are not limited to:*
 - ◆ *Moving the program to a different room*
 - ◆ *Altering the programming or times available*
 - ◆ *Offering various supports such as childcare or transportation*
5. *Agency staff will foster a supportive environment by working to remove attitudinal barriers and inform and educate other community members.*

Key Core Quality Standard:

7. **Equity:** A quality literacy program respects differences. It has structures and supports in place to increase access and equity outcomes to help learners from all backgrounds reach their goals.

Features:

All components of the program are accessible to people with disabilities.

- ◆ The program sites, including interior spaces, equipment and materials, are accessible to people with disabilities.
- ◆ The program carries out a review, in conjunction with learners and community disability organizations, to identify and remedy any systematic barriers to full participation to people with disabilities.

- ♦ The program provides special supports, as required, to enable people with disabilities to participate.

The program adapts its processes, systems and practices to meet the unique cultural, physical and other needs of individuals wishing to participate in the program.

- ♦ The program identifies individual needs and preferences as part of initial and subsequent assessments and learning plans specify how these will be addressed.
- ♦ The location and hours of the program are accessible to learners, for example, easily reached by public transportation.
- ♦ Facilities are safe, well lit and inviting.

Key Core Quality Standard:

14. Support Services: A quality literacy program helps learners get the support services that they need, either in the program or in the community. For example, these services are transportation, childcare, counseling, and information and referral for economic and social needs.

Features:

The program is committed to assisting learners to overcome barriers to participation in the program.

- ♦ The program has a policy indicating its commitment to assisting learners to overcome barriers to participation.
- ♦ The program provides supports and reasonable accommodation, directly and through referral to other services, to enable learners to overcome barriers they face.
- ♦ The program modifies its setting and provides assistance as required to enable people with disabilities to participate.
- ♦ The program takes into account the needs of learners, such as childcare and transportation, in scheduling its activities.
- ♦ The program regularly consults its learners, practitioners and others to consider if it has hidden barriers which make it difficult or impossible for some people to participate.
- ♦ The program identifies common problems and support needs faced by its learners, for example by bringing these to the attention of other organizations in the community.

- ❑ **REFERRAL OF LEARNERS:** Learners that cannot be accommodated by the agency or would be better served by another literacy program will be referred appropriately.

WHY?

Learners must be able to acquire the skills that they need in order to achieve their goals. Some programs will better serve learners than others. Agency staff must be aware of the limitations of the programming that is offered internally and also of the availability of other programs in the community.

Procedures:

1. *When a learner makes initial contact with the program, the program coordinator will make appropriate inquiries to determine if the learner should be assessed for the programming offered.*
2. *If it is apparent that the learner would be better served by another agency, the learner will be referred verbally to that agency. The learner should be given the following information:*
 - *Name of agency*
 - *Contact person*
 - *Telephone number*
3. *The program coordinator will record the referral on the appropriate tracking sheet (see below).*
4. *A follow up "Referral" form will be faxed to the other agency.*
5. *The program coordinator will follow up by telephone within 14 days of making the referral with the other agency. The results of this follow up call be recorded on the Referral Tracking Sheet (see example on next page).*

REFERRAL TRACKING SHEET

DATE/TIME	CLIENT NAME	REFERRED FROM	REFERRED TO	IS FOLLOW UP NECESSARY ?		AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT
DATE:				<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
TIME:				NOTES:		
DATE:				<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
TIME:				NOTES:		
DATE:				<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
TIME:				NOTES:		
DATE:				<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
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DATE:				<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
TIME:				NOTES:		

- ❑ LEARNER INTAKE:** When a learner contacts the program a standardized intake process is completed.

WHY?

When a learner enters the program certain information must be collected. Formalization of the intake process ensures consistency in the treatment of learners and the information collected.

Procedures:

1. *When a learner contacts the program an appointment is set to complete an intake and assessment at a mutually convenient time for the learner and the program coordinator.*
2. *The student data record is completed at the intake session. Some of the information collected is used to complete the "LBS Program Statistical and Financial Report." Information collected on the student data record includes:*
 - *Name, Address, Contact Phone numbers*
 - *Age, Sex, Marital Status*
 - *Source of Income*
 - *Participant Status (Aboriginal, Francophone, Person with Disability, Minority)*
 - *Referral Source*
 - *Educational Background (Last grade completed, last school attended)*
 - *Employment Status/Profile*
 - *Special needs (e.g.: travel, scheduling)*
 - *Long and short term goals*
3. *The program coordinator will attempt to identify any support needs of the learner during the intake. Where appropriate the learner may be referred to other known community agencies for support.*
4. *When a learner is referred from another agency the program coordinator has the referring agency complete a questionnaire. This informs the referral tracking process. (See Sample Questionnaire on next page)*

Key Core Quality Standard:

3. **Program Commitment to Learners:** A quality literacy program values, plans for and provides opportunities for learners to increase literacy and numeracy skills, life skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

Features:

The program fosters improvements in literacy and numeracy skills for all learners.

- ◆ Initial and ongoing assessments are done and used.

Key Core Quality Standard:

14. Support Services: A quality literacy program helps learners get the support services that they need, either in the program or in the community. For example, these services are transportation, childcare, counseling, and information and referral for economic and social needs.

Features:

The program assists learners in identifying their support needs.

- ◆ The program gives learners an opportunity to identify any support needs during their initial interviews.
- ◆ The program provides a means for learners to indicate, at any time, any special needs they have or barriers to participation which they are facing.

The program supports its learners in obtaining the community-based services which they require.

- ◆ The program is aware of community services which may be applicable to its learners.
- ◆ The program has information available in plain language about community services which may be of interest to its learners.
- ◆ The program makes referrals of learners to community services.
- ◆ The program plays an active role in enabling learners to get the support they require.

Key Core Quality Standard:

15. Organizational Links: A quality literacy program has community and organizational links:

- To meet program goals
- To help learners move successfully from one educational program to another, to greater community involvement, to further training, or to employment
- To integrate and strengthen literacy delivery at the local level
- To ensure that literacy education is integrated within the broader educational and training system

Features:

The program has working relationships with community groups, employment and social service programs and with other organizations that could be sources for attracting learners or which could assist learners with other needs, during or following their participation in the program.

- ◆ The program identifies other programs which may be a source of referrals or relevant for its learners' needs and makes this information available to its practitioners and learners.

Key Core Quality Standard:

18. Program Evaluation: A quality literacy program evaluates its effectiveness annually. Evaluation of the program is a participatory and continuous process.

Features:

Evaluation is a participatory process.

- ◆ Community partners and other key stakeholders outside the program are given an opportunity to participate in the evaluation where they can provide meaningful input.

Questionnaire for Referral Sources

Referral Agency: _____ **Staff Contact:** _____

- 1. How long have you been aware of this service?**
- 2. How would you rate your understanding of this service?**
- 3. What questions do you have about this service that have not been answered?**
- 4. Do you have Adult Basic Literacy program material available for (a) reference for your staff or (b) for clients?**
- 5. How does the Adult Basic Literacy program complement the service that you offer?**
- 6. Comment on your situation with these services?**
- 7. What is the profile of clients that you are likely to refer?**
- 8. What improvements do you recommend for this program?**

*Source: Adult Basic Literacy Program
Tillsonburg and District Mutli-Service Centre Tillsonburg, Ontario*

- ☐ **PROGRAMMING OPTIONS:** The agency offers a variety of programming options to meet the needs of the learners that it is serving.

WHY?

There are a diversity of adult learners and learning styles. For example, some learners are able to acquire the skills they need in a group setting and some require one on one attention.

Procedures:

1. *When a learner enters the program their learning style and preferences are determined and they are placed in the program that best suits their needs.*
2. *The agency offers one on one tutoring and small group sessions [or whatever your agency actually offers].*
3. *Where the programming offered is not suitable for the learner, they will be referred appropriately to another program in the community. The process outlined in the policy entitled "LEARNER REFERRAL" will be followed.*
4. *Where there is no other suitable programming available for the learner the agency will put forth its best effort to accommodate the learner's needs internally provided that the training to be offered fits within the mandate and financial restrictions of the agency.*
5. *The programming offered by the agency will be reviewed on a yearly basis in order to ensure that the needs of the learner are being met. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to the following:*
 - *Input from learners*
 - *Input from practitioners*
 - *Contact hour statistics*
 - *Information from other literacy programs in the community*
 - *Financial restrictions*
 - *Effectiveness of the mode of instruction offered*
 - *Ratio of instructors to learners*

Key Core Quality Standard:

3. Program Commitment to Learners: A quality literacy program values, plans for and provides opportunities for learners to increase literacy and numeracy skills, life skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

Features:

The program fosters improvements in literacy and numeracy skills for all learners.

- ◆ Learners are presented with a mix of formal and informal opportunities for learning and practising literacy/numeracy

The program values and supports the development of independence, critical thinking and problem solving.

Key Core Quality Standard:

10. Ratio of Learners to Instructors: A quality literacy program has a ration of learners to instructors which is appropriate to learner's needs and levels as well as to the mode of instruction.

Features:

The program has a realistic ratio of instructors to learners to ensure that diverse needs of the learners can be met.

- ◆ The program has a policy of establishing appropriate ratios of instructors to learners for different modes and levels of instruction, based upon its own experiences, research and evaluation, shared information with other literacy programs, and the literature on the effectiveness of literacy training.
- ◆ The program's policy on ratio is used for a basis for establishing staff levels and targets for recruiting and training volunteer tutors and for deciding upon its allocation of resources for various modes of instruction (for example one-on-one vs. group instruction).
- ◆ The program's policy on ratios is used as a basis for deciding how many learners the program can accommodate at any one time.

Ratios are adjusted, as appropriate, to take into consideration special needs and circumstances of learners.

- ◆ Initial and ongoing assessments identify the need for additional or special instruction, as well as the appropriateness of a different mode of instruction (for example one-on-one in comparison with a group setting).
- ◆ Smaller class or additional instructors or other supporters are used for learners with special needs, such as people with multiple handicaps, who require additional assistance.