

Working conditions for literacy coordinators in Alberta – 2005

	Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs	Community Adult Literacy Centres
Hours of work		
Hours paid per week (average)	25	29
Actual hours worked each week (average)	30	35.5
Range of hours paid per week	10 – 40	12 – 40
Range of hours worked per week	12.5 – 47	15 – 60
Pay		
Hourly wage (average)	\$17.57	\$18.42
Hourly wage (range)	\$10 – \$30	\$12.50 – \$28
Percentage with no benefits package	71%	62%
Experience		
Average years of experience	6 years	7 years
Range of experience	.5 – 20 years	
Education		
Masters degree	1	3
Two Bachelors degrees	6	0
Bachelors degree	14	11
Diploma or certificate	5	6
Some post-secondary education	11	14
High school	1	5
Total number of respondents	38	39

SOURCES:

Literacy Alberta (2005). Survey of coordinators.
Thanks to Berniece Gowan.

Towards a Profile of the Adult Literacy Sector

For many years, people in the literacy field have talked about professionalization. Some adult literacy educators are in favour, while others are sceptical. Does this mean that everyone working in literacy—paid staff and volunteers—would have to meet a set of standards? How would the field benefit? How would individual educators benefit? Would professionalization help to raise the profile of adult literacy in Canada?

We can't answer these or other questions without conducting a thorough and systematic study of our field. The first step in this study is to understand who works in our field now, and under what conditions. The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) hired Sue Folinsbee to conduct an initial review of working conditions for adult literacy educators. Sue looked at major research papers and reports and talked to key informants from our coalitions and other organizations. She collected information about how people are hired, their education and their ongoing training. She also looked at models from a range of related sectors from Canada and other countries.

A project advisory committee is reviewing and analyzing the data. Our next step is to develop a proposal for a thorough sector study. For more information contact the project manager, Lindsay Kennedy, at lindsay@literacy.ca. ■