

Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners – Independence

Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
October 2011



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Independence Summary

What is the learner's goal¹?

The independence goal path description examines the connection between Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) service provision and transition to independence in relation to a variety of tasks in a learner's home, personal life and community.

Learners may select the independence goal initially and then may choose a different goal based on their needs, interests and level of progress. In some cases, learners may work on literacy and basic skills development for multiple objectives for independence (e.g. a learners may wish to develop skills to manage both their basic nutritional needs and health issues at the same time).

Role of LBS Service Providers

LBS service providers help learners examine the benefits and opportunities in pursuing an independence goal, as well as review what is involved in the process. LBS service providers work with a learner to explore whether an independence goal is appropriate to the learner's needs and abilities, is feasible within the learner's means, and is achievable in the learner's community. If independence is not a suitable goal, the LBS service provider should help the learner explore alternative options and/or other goals.

LBS service providers develop a learner plan that describes the learner's goal path and includes the learning activities, resources and assessment tools that prepare a learner for transitioning to independence.

Key questions when discussing a learner's independence goal:

1. Has the learner already identified a goal with another agency? If not, the LBS service provider should support the learner in identifying a goal.
2. Is the independence goal desired by the learner realistic in terms of abilities and the resources available to them, including time commitments?

¹ This goal path description has been adapted from: [Foundations for Independence Project Report](#) by Community Literacy of Ontario.

3. Is the goal appropriate to the learner's needs and/or wants?
4. What tools, resources, experiences and training does the learner already have to achieve this goal?
5. Are there other program options that could prepare the learner for this goal?

What is independence?

An independence goal can encompass a variety of outcomes, expectations or concepts of success based on a learner's particular needs. In general however, LBS programming for independence can be organized under four broad sets of objectives:

- manage basic needs
- manage health
- manage personal issues and relationships
- participate fully as a member of the community

Key Questions:

1. What are the learner's purposes and/or needs for achieving independence?
2. What are the challenges for the learner in achieving independence?

Who is eligible and what are the entrance requirements?**Independence**

This goal is open to all adults in Ontario. Learners typically work on literacy and basic skills related to the four objectives listed in the section above.

Key Questions:

1. What is the learner's highest level of education or training?
2. What is the timeframe for completing this goal?
3. What are the programming options that align with the learner's needs? (e.g. evening or daytime)
4. Can the learner commit to a set attendance schedule?

How are achievements for this goal recognized?

Due to the variety of learner objectives and the transitions associated with this goal, achievement may be unique for each learner. Learners, in consultation with the LBS provider, determine when they can transition to the level of independence they require/desire and what constitutes achievement.

Programming for independence helps learners develop the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to meet a variety of personal development and community participation objectives. Independence relates to:

- home, family and community (e.g. follow medication instructions, manage family expenses or fill out a census form.)
- preparation for a variety of community certifications and courses (e.g. driver's license, First Aid certificate or basic computer course at the local library.)
- active involvement as a member of the community, whether online or in a neighborhood (e.g. vote, join a community centre, volunteer or fund raise.)

Role of LBS Service Providers

LBS service providers equip the learner with the requisite literacy and basic skills to achieve independence goals in the home and community. LBS service providers need to take into account the learner's current needs and address them when discussing and developing indicators for success. If possible, LBS service providers help the learner identify how they will obtain the required language proficiency or required supports such as note takers, assistive devices, etc.

Key Questions:

1. What will the independence transition look like for the learner?
2. What will the tasks associated with the achievements look like?

What are the learner's options for independence?**Independence**

An independence goal is a unique element of LBS programming. Learners with an independence goal may need additional services and supports.

Key Questions:

1. What are the programming options (weekends, evenings and online) available in the community that would meet the learner's needs in terms of language, scheduling and proximity?
2. Are other agencies better suited to help the learner prepare to achieve the goal?

Are there any additional requirements?**Independence**

Learners who have selected the independence goal path should also be referred to other service providers (e.g. child care or community living agency) which can support them further in achieving the goal.

For some learning objectives in this goal path, a learner may need certain levels of communication and language proficiency. In some cases, learners may need other resources to achieve the goal (e.g. access to a computer).

Role of LBS Provider

Assist the learner in identifying whether there are additional requirements for the goal and provide referrals for any applicable supports and/or services.

Key Questions:

1. Does the learner have accessibility requirements that may influence available options?
2. Does the learner need accessibility or disability supports? If so which agencies or service providers should you contact?

What are the costs and required supports? Are government supports available?

Entry into LBS programming is free to all adult Ontarians. However, given the unique nature of the independence goal there may be some associated costs (e.g. costs associated with obtaining a driver's license). The questions below will help LBS service providers guide learners in identifying the costs and processes associated with their goal(s).

Role of LBS Service Providers

LBS service providers should provide the learners with the necessary supports, tools and information so that they are able to contact the appropriate agencies to determine the costs and supports that are applicable to their prospective independence goal(s).

Key Questions:

1. What are the financial resources the learner will require to achieve the goal?
2. Are there any additional costs associated with the independence goal?
3. Is the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) or any other government agency covering the cost of any of the wrap-around supports?
4. If not, does the learner have the resources to cover these cost(s)?

Key Resources

What assessment tools and learner resources are used for independence?

The *OALCF Selected Assessment Tools* provides a sampling of assessments and resources available to practitioners and assessors. To review the *OALCF Selected Assessment Tools* please visit http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Selected_Assessment_Tools_Mar_11.pdf

To find an appropriate collection of learning materials, please visit the *OALCF Resources* page of the OALCF website at <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/tools-and-resources.html>.

For additional information, please visit the Community Literacy of Ontario's (CLO) website at <http://www.nald.ca/clo/>, and Laubach Literacy Ontario's website at <http://www.laubach-on.ca/>.

How do I know what information, referrals and supports a learner needs?

Learner goal attainment is closely linked to the quality of supports they receive. Supports contribute to learners' persistence in LBS programming and can be organized under five types: financial/material, academic, health, employment and social skills.

Role of LBS Service Providers

Service coordination requires LBS service providers to refer their learners to the necessary programs and supports available in the community. It is the responsibility of the LBS service providers to provide learners with the appropriate information and referrals.

Key Questions:

1. Has the learner already accessed supports?
2. What supports does the learner need? (e.g. child care, transportation, learning disability assessment or physical accommodation.)
3. What additional supports are needed? (e.g. income support, transportation, childcare, mental health, addiction and substance counseling or food and nutrition.)
4. Does the LBS service provider have the necessary information/tools to determine which supports and/or referrals the learner needs?
5. What other community programs or agencies could possibly help the learner achieve this independence goal?
6. What forms of government supports or programs could help the learner achieve this independence goal?
7. Are there any other issues or potential areas of concern which may need to be assessed and/or addressed by another agency?

Independence Key Development Skills

Learners need to develop all six OALCF competencies (*Find and Use Information, Communicate Ideas and Information, Understand and Use Numbers, Use Digital Technology, Manage Learning and Engage with Others*) to achieve their goals. The Key Development Skills below list the specific skills a learner needs to develop an independence goal. These skills were drawn from goal path-specific research and development projects conducted in Ontario.

To review the six competencies in the OALCF please visit <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/tools-and-resources.html>.

**Self-Management Key
Development Skills****Self-Governing Skills:**

- sets goals
- makes decisions
- takes responsibility
- motivates self
- identifies self – knows and understands abilities and limitations

Advocates on Behalf of Self:

- acts self-confidently
- know rights
- uses strategies to build and maintain self-esteem
- understands own learning style
- understands the value of learning
- assesses and reflects upon self
- identifies/recognizes transferable skills

Working with Others:

- understands and follows situational etiquette
 - respects others' views
 - uses appropriate body language
 - negotiates
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- resolves conflict
 - participates in teamwork
 - communicates effectively
 - expresses feelings and opinions

Organizational Skills:

- manages time
 - sets priorities
 - plans ahead/is prepared
 - exercises thinking skills
 - solves problems
 - understands and uses strategies
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Academic Key Development Skills**Reading:**

- uses various decoding skills (e.g. alphabet recognition, phonics, knowledge of word parts, recognition of sight words, etc.)
- uses punctuation, pictures/illustrations, context cues and personal experience to understand text
- follows simple written instructions
- Is able to scan a short text to find a key piece of information
- reads and demonstrates an understanding of a short text using basic reading strategies, personal experience, simple forms and conventions
- retells a story in the correct sequence
- makes simple inferences and predictions
- distinguishes between fact, fiction and opinion

Document Use:

- reads and completes forms with detailed personal information
- reads and writes lists, sentences and short paragraphs
- reads short documents and answers simple comprehension questions
- reads and understands simple instructions
- uses and understands simple visual materials to support written text
- understands and uses common writing mechanics (e.g. capitals for pronouns, apostrophes in contractions, commas for lists, common abbreviations, etc.)
- interprets simple signs and symbols that are found every day or are related to specific goals

Numeracy:

- reads and writes numbers found everyday, numerically and in words
- estimates costs for making simple purchases
- uses basic math operations to solve simple real life problems
- measures length, perimeter, area, capacity, time and temperature using common standard units
- describes the relationships between units of measure
- interprets data on graphs and tables and expresses understanding
- uses a calculator

Additional Key Development Skills

Soft Skills, Thinking Skills, People Skills:

- uses critical thinking skills
- makes wise decisions
- has strategies to solve a wide range of problems
- makes arrangements to meet needs (e.g. child care, transportation etc.)
- prioritizes, organizes and manages tasks

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- copes with change
 - makes positive social connections
 - shows respect for others
 - offers and receives constructive criticism
 - uses positive strategies for handling stress

Community Notes

LBS service providers can use this section to enter community related information for the independence goal including contact information, specific program entrance requirements, costs, program registration dates, etc.