Literacy Outreach Coordination
Final Report
2024-2025

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Executive Summary

Decoda Literacy Solutions (Decoda) is accountable to the Ministry of Housing Municipal Affairs (the Ministry) for literacy program deliverables outlined in the yearly Decoda Accountability Agreement. The information in the Literacy Outreach Coordination Final Report: 2024-2025 reflects activity in the August 2024 to July 2025 program year.

Decoda supported community literacy task groups by facilitating collaboration and coordination of literacy programs and services. Decoda also provided professional development, learning resources and leadership to BC's 98 literacy outreach coordinators (LOCs).

In 2024-2025, Decoda provided $1,857,500 in funding for literacy outreach coordination.

Task groups and LOCs leveraged these grants raising an additional $8,495,273, bringing the total funding to $11,380,273. The leveraged funds include fundraising, successful grant applications, donations, and in-kind contributions. Fundraising was up by 75% although total leveraged funds in 2025 decreased overall by 4%.

The number of new and ongoing literacy initiatives rose by 9%, and program participation increased in all program types and increased by the same rate as last year at 11%. LOCs have been planning and delivering more programs than previous years. We believe this is because of the enhancement funds.

Each literacy task group identifies and prioritizes the literacy needs within the community and creates a yearly plan with goals and actions. Family literacy programming remains the top priority in most BC communities. Program awareness is a close second. There is a continued emphasis on early years programming and targeted initiatives specific to each community.

Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funding was not continued for Decoda's Immigrant Parents as Literacy Supports. The funding cuts were significant for administrative and salary costs for Decoda. The funding cut will impact staff complements. A number of LOC and community literacy steward groups were affected by IRCC funding cuts as well. We added a qualitative question in the LOC report to assess the impact as communities refer newcomer learners to LOC literacy support. We don't know the extent of job losses and programs being discontinued in BC due to IRCC funding cuts. The data was not collected.

Two successful province-wide promotions and awareness campaigns were held. September Literacy Month's theme was *Literacy: The Ripple Effect!* It was a month-long awareness and fundraising campaign. Family Literacy Week was a week-long celebration of family literacy with the theme: "Let's Learn about Being Green, Together." Decoda and most communities use the theme created by ABC Life Literacy Canada.

Decoda began planning the literacy Conference 2026 with the theme *Literacy: Bridging the Gaps.* Throughout the year, online training sessions covered topics such as teaching, assessment, and tools for community-based literacy programs.

Community stories exemplified the longstanding relationships and partnerships formed by LOCs and community literacy task groups, demonstrating the connection between literacy and thriving communities. Several stories from the program year are included at the end of this report.

Introduction

Decoda Literacy Solutions (Decoda) is accountable to the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs (the Ministry) for literacy program deliverables outlined in the Decoda Accountability Agreement for April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025.

This report demonstrates how the deliverables from the Ministry and Decoda agreement were met in the 2024-2025 program year. The community literacy program:

- brings together individuals, organizations and agencies to collaborate and deliver community-based literacy programs and services across all groups.
- increases understanding of the importance of literacy, participation in literacy initiatives and accountability.
- reduces duplication of services.
- embeds literacy learning in a wide variety of community contexts.
- bridges non-formal learning programs and services with formal education systems.

Deliverables

This report fulfills a requirement for funds received in 2024 and distributed in early 2025. These funds will be used in communities in the 2025-2026 program delivery year (August-July).

The information in this report reflects activity in the 2024-25 program delivery year.

Program Management

Decoda supports communities across the province by helping community literacy task groups collaborate and coordinate literacy programs and services. Decoda meets with Ministry program staff regularly, maintaining a strong working relationship. Each January, Decoda submits a program budget and work plan to the Ministry for review.

Decoda's Annual Report is published on its website in early December. The report provides an overview of the organization's activities and a summary of audited financials. Decoda notifies the Ministry when the report is posted and sends a hard copy directly to Ministry staff.

Funding allocations for communities are based on BC's history of community planning. When Legacies 2010 first began community planning in 2004, all communities in the province were eligible to participate. These communities were well on their way with literacy plans and actions when the Ministry of Education introduced District Literacy Plans in 2007. Literacy Now, an arm of Legacies 2010, and the Ministry worked to bring together the community and district planning processes.

In 2021, a priority to increase funding equity led to changes in allocations, basing them on population, rather than school district. This allocation scheme improved funding access, and the feedback continues to be positive.

Population figures include all communities serviced by a task group. These figures are from the 2021 census.

The following formula is used to allocate funds:

- Populations over 20,000 – $26,500 (Vancouver is the exception. It is divided into eight task groups as originally configured with Literacy Now.)
- Populations 2000-20,000 – $16,500
- Populations 1250-2000 – $14,500
- Populations under 1250 – $11,500

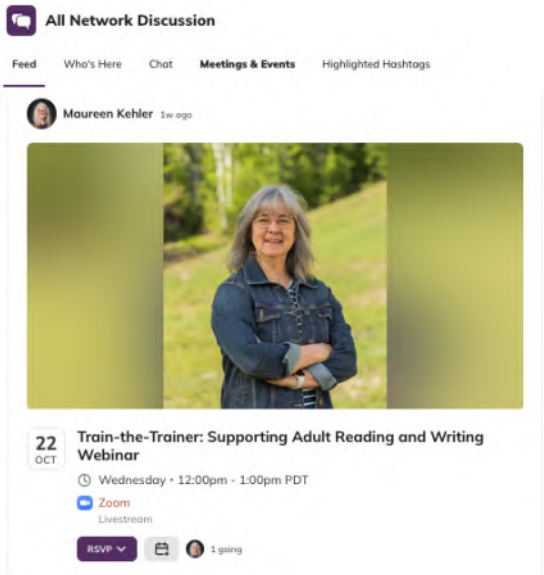
The Network

Organization and Support

Decoda's LOC program manager, Maureen Kehler, is responsible for organization and support for LOCs, with help from other Decoda staff members.

New LOCs received the following introductory information:

- Welcome to the LOC role and invitation to set up an introductory phone call.
- Information about the Decoda Literacy Library.
- General priorities document and the Community Literacy Outreach Coordination Guide.
- Invitation to subscribe to *The Westcoast Reader.*
- Invitation to join the BC Literacy Network, an online forum and resource portal to host the literacy community of practice.
- Subscription to "This Week in the Field," Decoda's weekly update



Decoda staff provided ongoing mentorship and support to LOCs through face-to-face meetings, emails and phone calls, enabling them to develop effective strategies for working with their task groups and communities.

Monthly meetings were held to support the literacy field. These monthly Zoom meetings started during COVID and continue so LOCs can share information and strategies.

The *Literacy Outreach Coordination Guidebook* , Literacy Month, and Family Literacy Week resources are provided each year.

Capacity Development

Decoda supports the skill development of LOCs, literacy task groups, practitioners and organizations, providing professional development opportunities and learning resources. These efforts provide economies of scale and enhance learning in communities across BC.

Professional Development

Webinars 2024-2025

There were 625 webinar registrations, with 366 individuals attending 16 webinar sessions covering 14 topic areas.

Participants included LOCs, Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP) staff and volunteers, federally funded immigration program staff and public post-secondary adult-upgrading faculty.

Decoda hosted webinars on the following topics:

Teaching	Assessment	Tools
Using *The Westcoast Reader* (WCR) in the classroom	Canadian Adult Reading Assessment (CARA) Part 1 & 2	Plain Language: What It Is and Why We Need It
Train-the-Tutor-Trainer (3-part series)	Community Adult Literacy Benchmarks (CALB) Part 1 & 2	AI in the Classroom
Fostering Literacy: Train the Tutor Trainer		Growing Your Volunteer Base
ABC Everyday Numbers		PIACC Results
Trauma Aware Communication		BC Literacy Network on Mighty
Facilitating Collective Decision Making		
Capacity Building through Collaboration		

Decoda Literacy Conference 2026

The Conference planning started spring of 2025, to be held April 16-17. The theme of the 2026 Conference is “Literacy: Bridging the Gaps." Program topics cover a range of literacy projects, practices and community initiatives sharing the impact of literacy and the gaps we can collaborate to bridge.

Resources

Decoda provides centralized access to resources for LOCs, literacy practitioners and organizations through the Decoda Literacy Library and the Decoda website.

Popular resources:

- *Literacy Outreach Coordination Guidebook*
- *Displaced Worker Project: Case Studies*

Decoda Literacy Library

The Decoda Literacy Library provides resources and support for literacy practitioners, volunteer tutors, LOCs, Adult Basic Education instructors and community partners. Library borrowing is free for BC residents.

The library’s specialized collection covers topics such as English as an Additional Language, learning disabilities, teaching strategies, brain-based learning, community development, program management and more.

The Decoda librarian blogs to share library resources, and a newsletter with websites for literacy news and tools. The 'Read All About Lit' blog provides information, tips, tools and recommendations for literacy practitioners, literacy volunteers, teachers, early childhood educators and parents. This Week in the Field," sent to over 900 subscribers, is a resource-packed email with news and tools.

Circulation and acquisitions have both increased. Demand for library services has focused on reference work, particularly for online teaching tools, strategies and resources. In addition to library cataloguing and reference, the library technician created projects in advance of the summer 2025 hire through the Canada Summer Jobs grant including items for digitizing and blog topics in literacy.

Decoda Web Page

In this reporting period, Web statistics are down slightly. There were 96,591 sessions, a decrease of 2.2% from 2023-24. There were 71,051 website users, a decrease of 2.5%. There were 140,585 pageviews, a decrease of 3% from 2023-24.

Top 5 most popular webpages in this period (excluding the home page):

1. Blog post: COVID-19 Posters and Infographics – 6412 views
2. Blog post: Back to Basics: Cloze Procedure – 4924 views
3. Blog post: Back to Basics: Word Attack Strategies – 3951 views
4. Resources – 3296 views
5. Family Literacy Week – 2783 views

The Decoda website features stories from literacy work around the province. There were 16 impact stories published in this reporting period.

41 blogs were published during the reporting period.

- Top 5 posts were:
    - COVID-19 Posters and Infographics – 6412 views
    - Back to Basics: Cloze Procedure – 4924 views
    - Back to Basics: Word Attack Strategies – 3951 views
    - The Importance of Enunciation – 2389 views
    - 16 Inspirational Quotes from Children's Literature – 1965 views

Tools

Community Report Database

This tool is designed for BC literacy programs to store, manage their program data and create program reports. Information is stored on a secure server with Counting Opinions. Counting Opinions stores and analyzes data from a broad range of sectors, including education, economics, and health.

All community-based literacy programs must use the database to report on the literacy activities for the program year. It provides a comprehensive picture of activity, helping to measure outcomes in literacy programs across BC. It is used as a program management tool for literacy organizations as well.

Awareness and Fundraising

Decoda supports communities to increase literacy awareness in a variety of ways.

Literacy Month

September's Literacy Month campaign raises awareness about local literacy resources, the importance of literacy and literacy support in communities. The theme for the 2024 campaign was "*Literacy: The Ripple Effect."*

Throughout September 2024**:**

- British Columbians received information about the importance of literacy in their daily lives through more than 1.5 million impressions (when an ad is visible on TV, an app or website) through CBC Vancouver. CBC is the exclusive broadcast media sponsor of Literacy Month.
- Over $43,000 was raised to support literacy programs and initiatives, thanks to corporate sponsors and trivia fundraising teams.
- Literacy sock sales hit a new milestone, with over 70,000 pairs of literacy socks sold. Thanks to Blue Sky Clothing Co. sock sales raised over $19,207 for local literacy programs.
- Mayors across the province proclaimed September as Literacy Month and BC landmarks lit up in purple on International Literacy Day.

Family Literacy Week

January's Family Literacy Week is an opportunity to raise the profile of literacy and to encourage BC families to engage in literacy-rich activities. The campaign theme was "Let's Learn to be Green, Together" Decoda produces and shares digital background information and activity sheets on the Family Literacy Week page on the Decoda website.

Communities across the province engaged their municipalities to proclaim Family Literacy Week. Decoda is grateful the Ministry arranges the BC government's proclamation. Communities planned hundreds of activities using the campaign theme and the activity sheets.

Social Media

Decoda's social media presence ensures information about literacy related issues and resources are shared broadly with both the literacy community and the public. Decoda's communications specialist is active on several platforms. With 1739 followers on Facebook, 645 on Instagram and 792 on LinkedIn. We introduced Decoda on Bluesky in March and have 62 followers.

The Decoda digital content and database specialist customised a portal where LOC and CALP providers can interact and share resources and knowledge. This hub is called the BC Literacy Network and after several years of requests from LOC coordinators was launched in the fall of 2024. The Network replaces the BC Literacy group on Facebook.

Our high school graduation rate has increased to 75% -- while this is below the provincial average, it is a significant trend for our community. Enhanced literacy programs that have been implemented in our community are showing a positive impact on improving outcomes. Over 500 students are enrolled in Indigenous Education, with 150 from Tla'amin. This is a testament to the strong and intentional Reconciliation work that literacy programming has supported in this community.
-Powell River

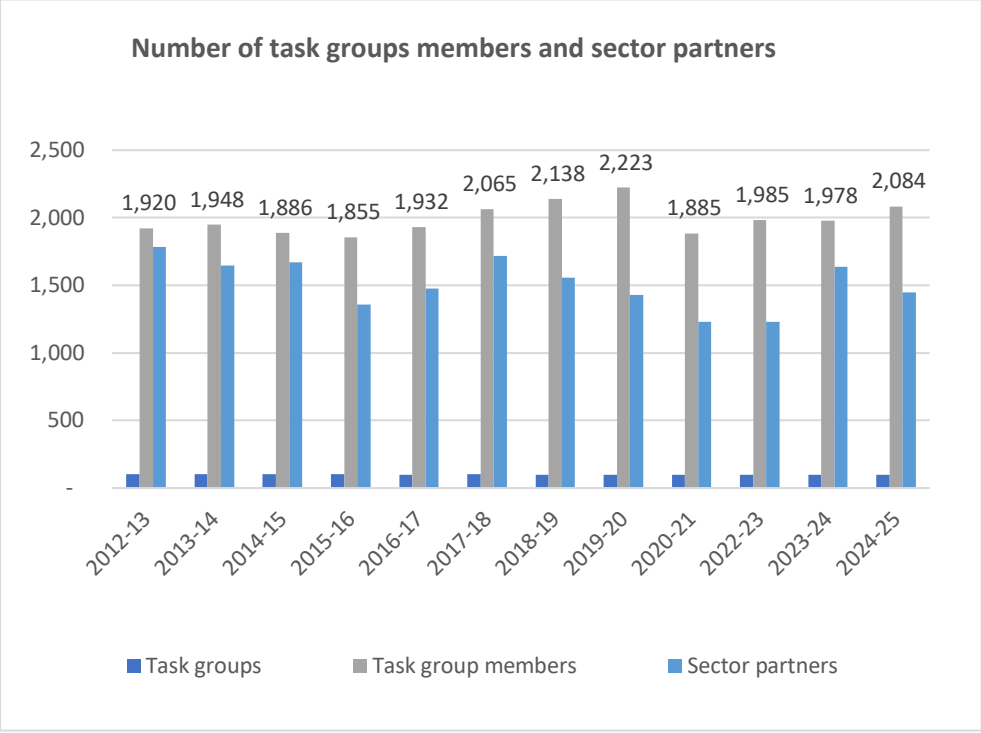
Program Evaluation

The Decoda Community Report is an online report completed annually by LOCs. This year, outreach coordinators completed their reports using Counting Opinions. However, a database has been developed by Decoda's digital database specialist for use in the 2025-2026 year. It has been beta tested by some LOCs and will be used by all starting in November 2025. The Decoda Community Report is easy to complete. It provides consistent, valuable and extensive data that can be aggregated. Trend data is collected over time (see pages 13-14 for multi-year trend).

Community Engagement

Community literacy and the literacy outreach coordinators are supported and informed by task groups. These groups may include school personnel, libraries, Chamber of Commerce, municipal or district councils, etc. The number of community members involved in planning for literacy increased by nearly 10% compared to the previous year.

The number of local organizations partnering to deliver literacy programs did not change.



Sector partners include:

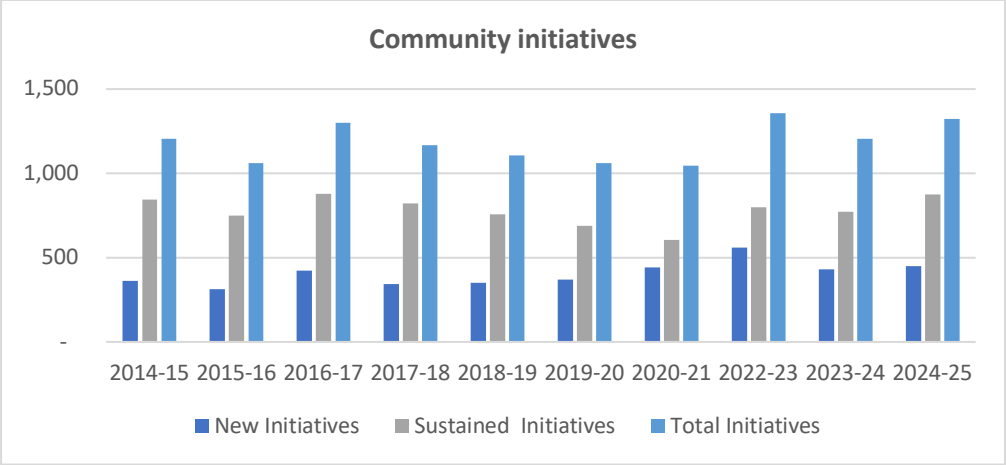
- Addiction support services
- Business associations/Chamber of Commerce
- Businesses
- Childcare organizations/Early childhood service providers
- Children and youth service providers
- College/University
- Community service non-profits
- Community clubs (Rotary)
- Disabilities associations
- Employment Services
- Faith organizations
- Halfway houses
- Health services/Regional health authority
- Indigenous community
- Justice/Correctional services/Police
- Library
- Literacy non-profits
- Mental health services
- Ministry of Children and Families
- Municipal government
- Parks and recreation
- School district
- Seniors' organizations
- Women's support services

Community Initiatives

The number of new literacy initiatives including programs, projects, events, and workshops rose slightly in 2024–25. With strong community support, we are hopeful this positive momentum will continue.

There was a 7% increase in the number of physical materials distributed, (books, games, bookmarks, information pamphlets).

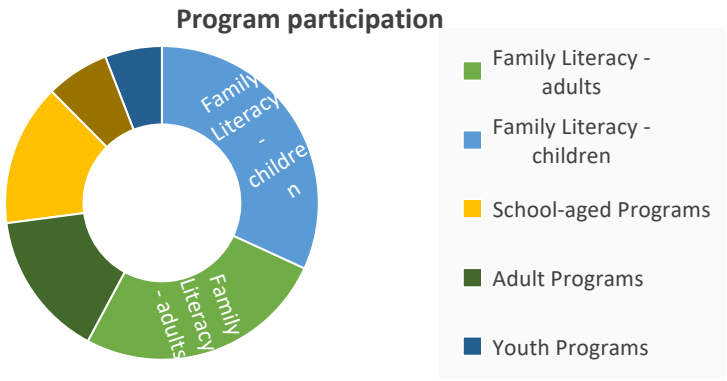
The following chart illustrates trends in the number of new, sustained and total community initiatives since 2014. These include literacy programs, events, workshops, seminars and initiatives to distribute books and materials to those in need.



Program Participation

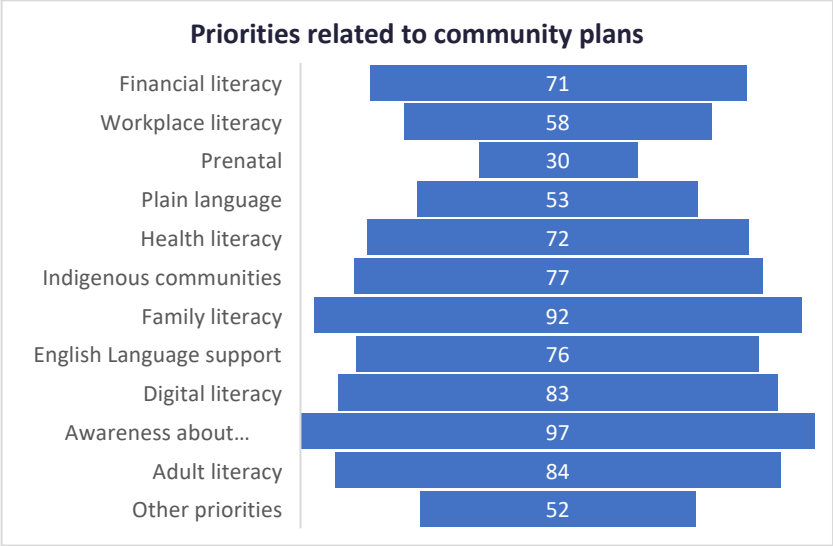
Program participation increased in 2024-25, significantly in adult programs and adults and children attending family literacy events.

Youth participation increased by 30%, and senior participation increased by 16% compared to the previous year.

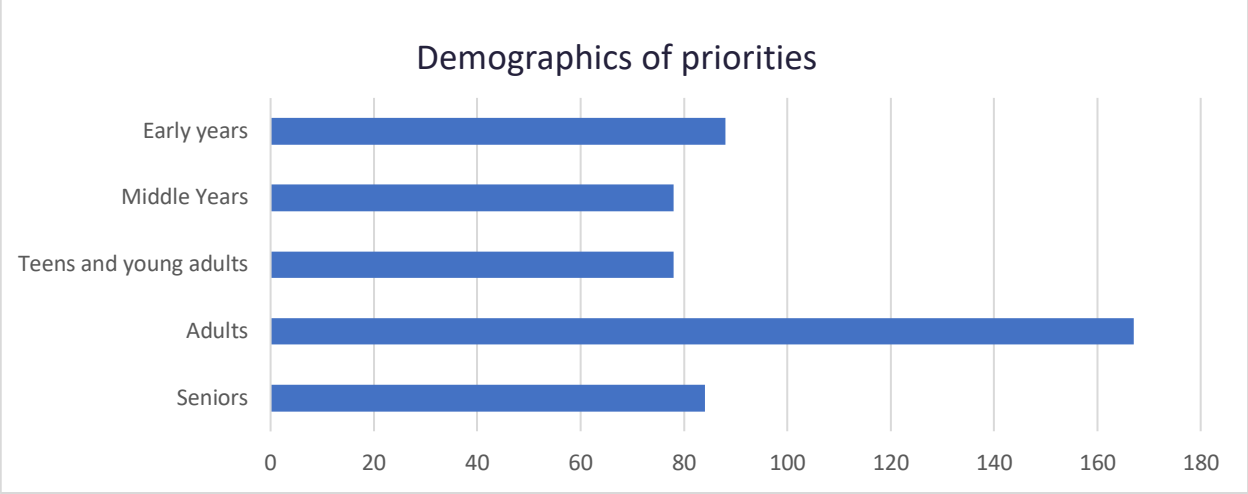


Community Priorities

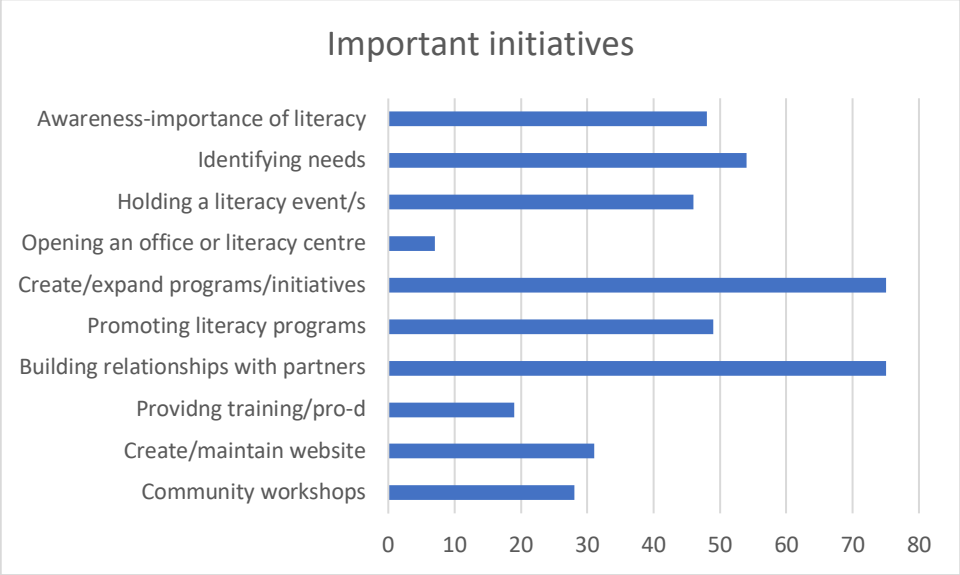
The following charts show the percentage of communities focused on specific strategies and demographic groups as identified in their literacy plans for 2024-25 program year. The numbers in the first chart are not significantly different than previous years.



This year, the demographic groups identified as priority areas changed. Typically, the groups have been relatively close with early years as the clear priority. In the 2024-25 program year, communities reported emphasis on adults.

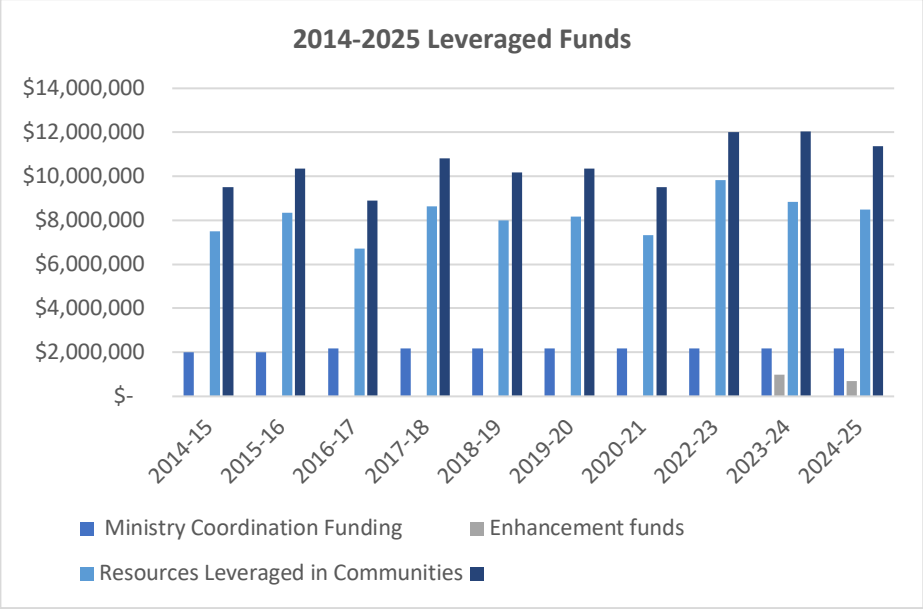


The chart below shows the number of communities that identified each of the items listed as one of the three most important initiatives or actions that took place in the 2024-25 program year. Building relationships and creating or expanding initiatives ranked higher again, this year.



Leveraged funds

In 2024-25, Decoda provided community literacy task groups with $1,857,500 for literacy outreach coordination and $700,000 in enhancement funds. Task groups and LOCs leveraged this amount to $11, 380,273 raising $8,495,273 in their communities. Trend data in the chart shows the total funds used for literacy initiatives in communities, with a breakdown of funds provided by the Ministry and Decoda and the amount leveraged within communities.



Enhancement Funds were used for:

- Additional LOC hours 62%
- Wage increases 32%
- Additional programs 39%
- Enhanced or expanded programs 57%
- Resources and materials 55%
- Other 18%

“Other” included:

- Part time, temporary employment for an extra staff member
- Coverage of RAR shortfall funding
- To work with Nuu Chah Nulth Language keepers to review Dual Language Literacy Plan
- Presentation event to local potential funders
- Rental costs
- Website and operational costs

LOC Trend Data: Funds, Community Engagement and Participation

Program Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023	2023-24	2023-24
Ministry Coordination Funding	$2,185,000	$2,185,000	$2,185,000	$2,185,000	$2,185,000	$2,185,000	$2,185,000
Enhancement funds						$1,000,000	$700,000
Resources Leveraged in Communities	**$8,636,380**	**$7,984,014**	**$8,161,533**	**$7,317,753**	**$7,945,693**	**$8,223,061**	**$8,495,273**
Totals	$10,821,380	$10,169,014	$10,346,533	$9,502,753	$10,130 ,693	$11,408,061	$11,380,273
Community Task Groups	101	100	100	100	99	98	98
Task Group Members	2,065	2,138	2,223	1,885	1,948	1,978	2084
Program Partners	1,716	1,559	1,428	1,228	1,222	1,636	1636
New Initiatives	345	349	370	441	425	431	448
Sustained Initiatives	823	758	690	605	663	774	873
Total Initiatives	1,168	1,107	1,060	1,046	1,088	1,205	1321
Materials Distributed	245,886	173,323	174,047	117,898	153,487	209,143	210,664
Participation in Programs							
Family Literacy - adults	21,176	26,702	21,110	16,058	18,987	30,534	33,891
Family Literacy - children	32,134	34,731	32,370	31,094	27,607	38,565	41554
School-aged Programs	23,645	29,252	26,550	16,179	10,972	16,809	19,115
Adult Programs	16,882	16,619	12,578	13,357	11,548	17,043	18,703
Youth Programs	2,833	3,424	3,720	3,927	6,732	5,208	7,676
Seniors Programs	4,544	5,047	5,638	5,534	5,808	6,445	8,531
Events (all ages)	64,482	65,753	42,582	40,723	47,904	71,269	79,029
Workshops and seminars	9,053	7,826	8,747	8,515	7,447	10,818	11,202
Totals	**174,749**	**189,354**	**153,295**	**135,387**	**137,005**	**196,691**	**219,701**

Funds raised in communities: 2012-2024

Year	Local Grants	In-kind	$Contributions	Fundraising	Donations	Total
2012	$3,331,602	$1,961,740	$411,727	$223,009		$5,928,078
	56%	33%	7%	4%		100%
2013	$3,827,917	$2,427,881	$530,982	$310,286		$7,097,066
	54%	34%	7%	4%		100%
2014	$3,896,694	$2,990,313	$982,031	$304,523		$8,173,560
	48%	37%	12%	4%		100%
2015	$3,351,474	$3,246,829	$413,487	$494,529		$7,506,318
	45%	43%	6%	7%		100%
2016	$4,599,979	$2,576,889	$625,164	$463,051	$83,986	$8,349,069
	55%	31%	7%	6%	1%	100%
2017	$3,050,591	$2,656,882	$347,226	$459,882	$193,246	$6,707,826
	45%	40%	5%	7%	3%	100%
2018	$4,017,370	$3,732,387	$307,228	$421,241	$158,154	$8,636,380
	47%	43%	4%	5%	2%	100%
2019	$3,846,980	$3,229,988	$359,062	$334,919	$213,065	$7,984,014
	48%	40%	4%	4%	3%	100%
2020	$4,457,304	$2,924,621	$262,917	$303,837	$212,854	$8,161,533
	55%	36%	3%	4%	3%	100%
2021	$4,285,421	$2,267,811	$271,152	$187,036	$306,333	$7,317,753
	59%	31%	4%	3%	4%	100%
2022	$4,422,739	$2,479,194	$441,244	$360,087	$242,429	$7,945,693
	56%	31%	6%	4%	3%	100%
2023	$4,701,007	$2,919,554	$547,591	$364,928	$320,034	$8,853,113
	53%	33%	6%	4%	4%	100%
2024	$4,528,196	$2,280,528	$5,693,39	$815,138	$302,072	$8,495,273
	53%	27%	6.5%	10%	3.5%	100%

Stories

The following stories show the depth and breadth of the literacy programs, partnerships, and collaborations. The literacy task groups continue to be community-focused and learner-centered.

1. **100 Mile House**

Highlighting our Indigenous outreach CALP program, this past year we helped nine long-term learners - more than half of whom had less than high school completion for education. Learner goals included employment training/readiness, technology upgrading and other life skills development. Many learners returned over the year for additional support.

More than 250 learners accessed drop-in RL services over the year, which included 20 Elders' cafes, 16 sessions at the Indigenous friendship centre and 14 workshops on a wide range of topics.

In our PAL program, we served 24 long-term learners, averaging 12 contact hours each, for help with education upgrading, life skills development, high school diploma equivalency completion and employment training, with many success stories. One such learner success was the completion of three Grade 11/12 level courses on the road to receiving their Dogwood certificate, after an initial intake assessment of level 1 reading and writing skills.

Recently, Tsqescen band has developed a new program for youth transitioning out of care, and our Indigenous Literacy Outreach worker was approached about providing on-site financial literacy / adult literacy support services.

2. **Bamfield**

Empowered through capacity building opportunities provided by the Bamfield Community School Association (BCSA), youth took the initiative to participate in and lead workshops on foraging, linocut printmaking, ceramics, music, archery, cooking, painting, and drawing. Several youth have been working as contractors for the BCSA to support After School Programming and act as mentors and supports for younger youth and children who look up to them. We engaged Adaps Youth and Family Services based in Port Alberni to host a Peer Support Training for our youth, training them with self-care, safety planning, and peer support skills that have also led to employment opportunities with the BCSA.

3. **Chilliwack**

A learner referred to us by a Community Living organization began working with his volunteer tutor in spring 2023. As a low-level reader at the time, they started with foundational skills. After two years of consistent effort, the tutor reports that the learner has experienced numerous "aha" moments and made significant progress. Despite the challenges of dyslexia, he thrives in the community, balancing a part-time job and caregiving for his mother. He gained confidence while studying for his driver's knowledge test and successfully completed a First Aid course following a family emergency. In numeracy, he bridged key learning gaps, mastered workplace math, and created a reference guide for use on the job. Most recently, he reviewed an email from his employer about new extended health benefits with his tutor, who helped him identify and understand key information using the read-aloud feature on his laptop. While full literacy is still a long way off, the tutor follows the learner's lead, and each lesson brings small successes -- he always leaves feeling happier and more empowered.

4. **Clearwater**

We had several young adults attend financial literacy workshops and they all reported that they felt more confident making financial decisions, were motivated to learn more and that they had a better understanding of where to look for help. They all felt strongly about the value of being able to talk about money and stress in a safe space. They were able to talk openly and share tips with each other which also instilled a sense of confidence and connection. One participant shared that they had been financially abused by a previous partner and that learning these skills were so important to them to feel strong and independent. In fact, all participants experienced a deeper understanding of how emotional triggers affect financial decisions and developed strategies for keeping their well-being in check.

5. **Comox Valley**

Over the past year, an increasing number of referrals from WorkBC have involved seniors seeking to re-enter employment. In many cases, they were referred in order to support them with basic digital literacy in the hopes that this would secure them part-time office work. Careful consideration of the reality of employability in our community as well as a recognition of the preexisting skill sets that many of these elders possessed, led our staff and tutors to design a program to support the development of digital marketing skills for the purposes of earning income through preexisting hobbies. This has included Etsy shops for quilters, Facebook marketplace training for backyard gardeners, and even Abebooks accounts for collectors to market their less valued titles.

Most strikingly, we were able to support an elder who had purchased a bicycle with an addition on the front to carry his wife (with limited mobility) on community outings. He enjoyed the exercise and we encouraged him to market this activity as a service for the community. We supported him in learning to design a logo (Canva), open and manage a Facebook page and take Interac etransfers as a form of payment. The Love Buggy Scootours was born. Today, he takes elders and adults with special needs on rides throughout the community for $10.00 per hour, receives bookings from family members of seniors in care homes from across the country and has comfortably supplemented his income during the summer and fall months.

6. **Cowichan**

With a small local grant, we will be putting together a small magazine that is filled with stories, poems, photography, and art by the residents and staff at Cedar Branches. The deadline for submissions is in a few days and the staff has noticed a buzz in the air as many of the women are spending time in the common areas working on their projects. One of the women submitted her story but then decided to retract it because she thought her daughter might not like it being published. She then reflected a moment and said, “No. It’s MY story. I want to leave it in.” When the magazine is printed, it will be available for free throughout the community. The women will have a sense of accomplishment and worth; the community will learn more about their lives, hopefully reducing the stigma attached to them as unhoused individuals. This is a great example of the ripple effect and how a group of marginalized women who have no voice in the community have a chance to reach out and tell their stories. Anyone who reads the magazine will be impacted by their stories and art and it is anticipated that this will bring a new level of understanding and compassion into our community.

7. **Dawson Creek**

We help people get credentials by providing literacy supports, transportation, and childcare. For one family, we were able to help mom get the support she required for her high needs son, so that she could attend a work

skills training program and progress to upgrading at the college. She is also in the process of improving her living situation. This could not have happened without the support she received for her literacy needs, every step of the way.

8. **Downtown Eastside**

Geraldine is 72 years old and lives in a shelter. She is desperate to find safe and secure housing. She visits a tech cafe on a regular basis to search for housing online and in the process has become a confident computer-user (starting from scratch).

9. **Elk Valley**

A Speech and Language Pathologist from School District 5 connected with CBAL regarding being able to better support more families with late speaking toddlers. She explained that there seems to be more late speaking toddlers than ever in our community. CBAL and SD5 collaborated to run a program especially for these families called Say & Play. We each provided a facilitator to ensure that there was enough direct connection with the family and the Speech and Language Pathologist and all the families still felt engaged and important. We sent each family home with an item related to each session's activity to continue the learning at home. Not only did this help those families involved directly with the program, it also provided fantastic insight and valuable lessons for the CBAL facilitator to take to other Early Years programming to help even more families.

10. **Fort Nelson**

Valentina is a Ukrainian refugee who arrived in Fort Nelson after fleeing the war in her home country. She came to Canada with her adult daughter, leaving behind everything familiar in hopes of finding safety and stability. While she is grateful to be here, her early days in Fort Nelson were filled with profound isolation. She spoke almost no English, had no social network, and was unfamiliar with the systems and services around her. Her daughter lives part time in Calgary, leaving Valentina home alone most days, unable to communicate or confidently navigate her new life. Valentina now attends our centre every day. She participates in one-on-one English language tutoring and group literacy programs designed to support newcomers. The centre has become her anchor-providing routine, connection, and dignity in a life that was once marked by fear and disconnection. Although we are no longer funded to support refugees due to the IRCC funding cuts, our staff were ethically unable to enforce this, and who could blame them. Through consistent support and patience, Valentina's English has improved remarkably. She can now introduce herself, ask for what she needs, and hold simple conversations, small but powerful steps that have transformed her confidence and independence. Her story illustrates the profound impact of literacy not just as a skill, but as a bridge to belonging. In rural, remote communities like Fort Nelson, where formal settlement supports are limited or non-existent, our literacy-based programming fills a critical gap. For Valentina and others like her, we are not just a place to learn English, we are a place to feel seen, supported, and connected. Her presence reminds us daily why this work matters.

11. **Fort St. James**

J.J. is a young mother of three who has been courageously working through her recovery journey. She began by attending a family food preparation class, where she gained practical skills and connected with other parents in a supportive environment. Inspired by this experience, J.J. joined a traditional wellness class that deepened her connection to culture and healing. Motivated to keep moving forward, she enrolled in the Best Driver program to build her confidence and independence and has passed her "L". This summer, J.J. is working closely with the LOC

in ABE/ELL sessions, steadily improving her skills. Looking ahead, she's excited to enroll in the fall to finish her adult Dogwood diploma, paving the way for new opportunities for herself and her family.

12. **Hornby Island**

It has been noted that literacy initiatives and their impacts are inextricably tied to/impacted by income inequality and food insecurity. This year, as Hornby Island Education Society (HIES) worked to improve the food situation on Hornby Island by making a more formal arrangement with another larger food bank. Through community input and problem solving, it became clear that sharing food became the gateway to people seeking literacy opportunities.

13. **Kimberley**

This year we had high school students become our tech tutors (at the library) and reading buddies (at the youth centre). Their volunteer hours were added up and the MLA wrote letters of reference after 25 hours. Rotary pitched in offering a RYLA leadership scholarship, and the schools made it possible by getting permission forms and staffing along with CBAL in both venues. Kootenay Computer donated 10 laptops. The library and youth centre staff were amazing support and offered the teens other tasks if working with seniors wasn't their superpower. There were 7 community partners, 2 sites, 30 students, 30 families, 6 staff and 8-10 seniors!

14. **Kitsilano Neighbourhood House**

Many children in our early-years childcare and community resource programs received early literacy screenings. This proactive support has not only empowered families with valuable insights, but has also strengthened the capacity of our childcare educators, equipping them with practical tools to better recognize and respond to diverse learning approaches at an early stage. For the families in our community this program is more than a screening, it’s a step toward understanding. Learning differences are often misunderstood or missed entirely in early childhood. By providing accessible, strengths-based support, we have been able to support families in navigating early intervention and feel more confident as their children transition through early literacy development and beyond.

15. **Nanaimo**

Our LOC connected with the Executive Director of Claytree Society, a not-for-profit in Nanaimo that supports adults with diverse needs and developmental challenges.We collaborated on a set of workshops for Claytree clients in the area of financial literacy, very basic numeracy, and how to read and interpret common correspondence and forms related to banks. The series of workshops served approximately 12 people at a time. From how to read and follow instructions on an ATM, to basic counting, to reading and filling out common forms, participants left with greater confidence to manage money, read bank statements, count change, make budgets, and understand basic bank correspondence.

16. **New Westminster**

On May 7th, participants had the opportunity to talk about something that affects them all: renting a home in British Columbia. The handout for the day was titled "Talking to Your Landlord." The session began with a vocabulary matching game and a fill-in-the-blank activity. These helped participants get familiar with terms they might have already seen in rental agreements or heard in conversation. But the real learning happened when people started sharing their own experiences and challenges with renting in BC. A discussion followed about the housing crisis, high rental prices, and how baffling and disheartening it is to be asked for local references they

simply don't have yet. It was a clear example of the systemic barriers newcomers face in Canada. For many, it was the first time they realized they weren't alone. The group learned what landlords are responsible for, what tenants are allowed to ask for, and when it's time to call the BC Residential Tenancy Branch. They didn't just learn the words, they learned what those words really mean, and how to use them to stand up for themselves. As they practiced asking for repairs, following up on problems, and having difficult conversations, their confidence grew. For many, it was the first time they felt like they had the tools to speak up and to access services like the BC Residential Tenancy Branch

17. **North Vancouver**

The mural project at the Eslha7an Learning Centre has been an opportunity for adult learners to develop their skills in project management, technology, and interpersonal communication. Each of these areas involve important literacy skills that are essential for future careers and future steps in education. Eslha7an students are made up of Indigenous adult learners who either have not completed their high school diploma, or who are looking to upgrade their high school English or math credits, so that they can be admitted into college or university. Most of these learners have been neglected or marginalized within formal schooling systems, and as a result have lower confidence in their own skills, as well as lower confidence in navigating systems to gain these needed skills. As such, it is important to make space for the development of soft skills. The mural project has allowed students to identify their strengths, develop new skills, and collaborate with others. The project has supported the development of soft skills in these students, which in turn has supported them in navigating professional and academic spaces. Two of the participants in the mural project graduated this June, and the mural project will be an important piece of their learning journey, as they continue on to further their education and pursue careers.

18. **Powell River**

Our high school graduation rate has increased to 75% -- while this is below the provincial average, it is a significant trend for our community. Enhanced literacy programs that have been implemented in our community are showing a positive impact on improving outcomes. Over 500 students are enrolled in Indigenous Education, with 150 from Tla'amin. This is a testament to the strong and intentional Reconciliation work that literacy programming has supported in this community.

19. **Prince Rupert**

We initiated a project to expose youth and young adults to the trades in partnership with Women in Trades, BC Construction Foundations and the Port of Prince Rupert. Youth and young adults had the chance to learn about various trades, learn how to measure and read instructions, collaborate and were able to gain some hands on experience with electrical, carpentry, cement, automotive, plumbing, drywalling and painting. The biggest impact of this project was that some of the participants were youth who were currently or formerly experiencing homelessness. The hope is that they have gained the confidence and curiosity to explore trades in the future, potentially allowing them to transition from a period of homelessness to one day becoming home builders.

20. **Quesnel**

Recently, Literacy Quesnel Society (LQS) supported an engineer from India working in Quesnel who needed help passing the Canadian Engineering Certification exam. Although he had extensive industry experience and education, challenges with English reading made it difficult to complete the exam within the time limit. After working together to improve his reading skills, he successfully passed the exam and expressed deep gratitude.

Wanting to give back, he connected an LQS staff member with leaders at a local Sikh temple. The staff member was invited to speak at the Vaisakhi celebration, where they shared a brief overview of LQS programs and later connected with community members over a meal. Since that event, LQS has received new invitations to engage with the Sikh community, leading to several self-referrals. This growing trust and rapport are especially meaningful, as members of this community can be more hesitant to access literacy services. It marks an important step in building inclusive, community-driven support.

21. Squamish

One of the most meaningful collaborations this year has been the growing partnership between the Literacy Outreach Committee (LOC) and the Squamish Nation. This relationship has supported three unique initiatives:

- The Ayas Men Early Years and Family Program,
- A Workplace Literacy Initiative
- A community-led Art and Storytelling Project.

These programs reflect our shared goal of supporting culturally grounded, intergenerational learning rooted in the community's strengths and stories.

We have three representatives from the Squamish Nation at the local LOC table each bringing expertise from adult workplace-based literacy, family programming, and early years education. Their participation has enriched our understanding of literacy in the Squamish Valley and sparked new conversations about developing future community-based literacy programs.

While still in early discussions, these conversations are inspiring the design of more culturally relevant programming that responds to local First nation community needs. This collaboration exemplifies the LOC's guiding principles of community-led work, inclusion, and cultural literacy. It affirms that in addition to reading and writing, literacy is also about tradition, storytelling, identity and relationship building. The trust and dialogue established through this partnership are shaping a more inclusive and responsive approach to literacy in Squamish rooted in relationships, mutual learning, and cultural relevance.

22. Williams Lake

A grandmother talked about her grandson who attended our Just-in-Time Tutoring service and how that had been a game changer for him in that it built his confidence and strategies that he used to land his first job. She credits the program for his success.

The Captain from the Salvation Army talked about the importance of the financial literacy work we do from his site. He also talked about the PAL program and how it has supported several of his clients get their driver's license which has opened opportunities to them.

The Operations Manager of Thompson Rivers University spoke of the importance of hosting our middle and secondary school tutoring program at their site. They see this as an important program in supporting more vulnerable students to become future TRU students

Conclusion

In 2024–25, program attendance rose steadily. Fundraising in communities increased. Decoda's webinars continue to be popular. The strong demand for training reflects both the growth of community-based literacy programs and the continued transition among staff. Looking ahead, the Decoda team is energized by plans for the Decoda Literacy Conference in April 2026, which will bring together inspiring speakers, engaging sessions, and meaningful dialogue.

Both provincial literacy campaigns, Family Literacy Week and Literacy Month continue to build momentum, raising public awareness and highlighting the importance of strong literacy skills for individuals and communities alike.

While funding challenges persist and programs, practitioners, and organizations continue to operate at full capacity, the enhanced funding in the past two program years has provided a much-needed boost. The network continues to experience turnover among Literacy Outreach Coordinators (LOCs); however, the positive response to Enhancement funding shows that the voices of LOC staff are being heard.

Despite uncertain times there remains a strong sense of collaboration, commitment, and optimism across the province. The shared resolve of literacy practitioners and their communities and the direction and support of the Ministry advances literacy and this purposeful work.