



# Our Voice

## Screening

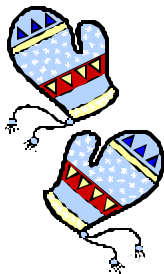
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[www.nald.ca/  
volman.htm](http://www.nald.ca/volman.htm)



Do you know Volunteer Canada's 10 safe steps to screening?

1. Determine the risk
2. Write a clear position description
3. Establish a formal recruitment process
4. Use an application form
5. Conduct interviews
6. Follow-up on references
7. Request a police records check
8. Conduct orientation and training
9. Supervise and evaluate
10. Follow up with program participants

The Ontario Screening Initiative (OSI) is an initiative of the Ontario government. The OSI has produced some excellent resources and training materials. It has four main objectives:

1. Raise awareness about screening
2. Create leadership on screening
3. Provide training and resources on screening
4. Increase access to resources on screening

You can learn more about the 10 Safe Steps or the Ontario Screening Initiative by visiting Volunteer Canada's website at [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca).

Thanks to support from the Government of Ontario, Volunteer Canada has recently produced *Rural Supplement—Safe Steps Volunteer Screening Workbook*.

This informative 20-page workbook covers such topics as:

- ⇒ Volunteering in rural Ontario
- ⇒ Why screen?
- ⇒ Safe steps volunteer screening process
- ⇒ Implementing screening in your organization
- ⇒ Recognizing challenges to screening in rural Ontario

You can either order a hard copy of this excellent resource from Volunteer Canada (a great deal at only \$5.00!) or download a PDF file from their website. Please visit: [www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/screening\\_initiatives\\_on.htm](http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/screening_initiatives_on.htm) or call Volunteer Canada at: 1-800-670-0401.

INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE

FOCUS ON  
ONTARIO WORKS

## ONTARIO WORKS

**By Judith Fowler**

**Given the significant changes affecting Ontario Works and LBS agencies, Judith Fowler of Community Literacy of Ontario conducted research and collected information for this special newsletter devoted to Ontario Works.**

**Topics covered in this bulletin include:**

- ⇒ **Summary of the Mandatory Literacy Testing and Training Initiative**
- ⇒ **Annotated listing of Ontario Works websites and online discussions**
- ⇒ **Listing of recent and ongoing LBS projects dealing with current Ontario Works issues**

## Summary of the Mandatory Literacy Testing and Training Initiative

**Key changes to Ontario Works (OW) as a result of this initiative:**

- ⇒ The screening test is integrated into the OW application process
- ⇒ The literacy screening test, literacy assessment and literacy training have been added to the employment assistance measures
- ⇒ OW offices must be approved by the Director of Ontario Works before they can implement the screening process

**Who will be required to take the literacy screening test?**

- ⇒ All OW applicants without a grade 12 or equivalent
- ⇒ Current OW participants with less than a grade 12
- ⇒ OW participants (regardless of grade level) whose reading, writing and/or math skills appear to be a barrier to employment
- ⇒ OW students who are already in a literacy program will not be required to take the literacy screening test
- ⇒ Any OW applicant or current participant who has proof of a learning disorder will not be required to take the test

### **If a person is unsuccessful on the screening test will they automatically be required to attend a literacy program?**

#### **No:**

- ⇒ The results of the test do not mean that the person will be automatically referred for literacy assessment and/or training
- ⇒ The goal for all OW participants is to get back to work as soon as possible
- ⇒ The requirement to participate in a literacy assessment and/or literacy training will be made in the context of the individual's skills, employment goals and the requirements of the local labour market
- ⇒ If a participant faces other barriers besides literacy it may be reasonable for other measures to be addressed first before participating in a literacy program

### **What will the assessment process look like?**

The assessment model(s) for each local area will be determined by the planning process with the OW office and the Literacy Service Plan groups. Proposed approaches could include the following:

- ⇒ Have a local centralized assessment provider who attempts to match participants to the most suitable literacy program
- ⇒ Provide on-site assessment in the local OW offices and then refer each participant to the appropriate program
- ⇒ Refer participants to any one of the literacy providers in the community who performs assessments

### **What are OW 's expectations of the literacy training service?**

- ⇒ There is no minimum hours per week of literacy training established
- ⇒ The number of hours will be based on the individual needs and the availability of service. Literacy training requirements will often be combined with other OW requirements
- ⇒ Although grade 12 is used as a benchmark for the literacy screening test – there is no requirement for a participant to remain in literacy training until a grade 12 level is attained



### **How will the OW office and the LBS program communicate with each other?**

As part of the approved implementation plan, OW offices are expected to have worked with their local literacy providers to establish or build on local protocols for:

- ⇒ Referral for assessment and training
- ⇒ Process to project referral rates and peak referral periods
- ⇒ Information sharing on the progress of participants
- ⇒ Agreement on the literacy training plan

#### **References:**

- 1) Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ontario Works Transition Directive 2001-03
- 2) Ministry of Community and Social Services, Q & A - Ontario Works Transition Directive 2001-03
- 3) Ministry of Community and Social Services, Fact Sheet - Ontario Works Transition Directive 2001-03

## Ontario Works Websites



- ⇒ **Government of Ontario main website**
- ⇒ <http://www.gov.on.ca>

Here you can access the various ministries including the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)

- ⇒ **Ministry of Community Social Services main website:**
- ⇒ <http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS/>

Under “*programs*” you can access Ontario Works. You can also learn about the MCSS organizational chart and business plan.

- ⇒ **Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities:**
- ⇒ <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/welcome.html>

Here you will find information on all programs sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. You can access the LBS program by clicking on Training and Jobs: <http://www.edu.gov.ca/eng/training/training/html>. To get a good overview of MTCU directives, check Minister Dianne Cunningham’s address to the Board of Trade.

- ⇒ **Ontario Works main site**
- ⇒ <http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS/page/services/ontworks.html>

This site provides an overview of the Ontario Works program along with Ontario Works News and Publications.

- ⇒ **Canadian Social Research Network**
- ⇒ <http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/onbkmrk.htm>

This site has key welfare links to the OW program including:

<u>Legislation:</u>	OW Act and OW regulations
<u>Policy Manual:</u>	Access to 54 OW policy directives in PDF format with a description on how to use the directives. The following directives may be of interest: #2 – Principles for the delivery of OW, #33 – Early employment measures and basic education, #39 – Information and referrals to resources and services
<u>Welfare statistics:</u>	Current and back to 1998 (caseload levels)
<u>Welfare Rates:</u>	Related legislation and details on how they determine the rates

- ⇒ **Utah Adult Education: Welfare to Work**
- ⇒ <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/adulted/welfare.htm>

This site features welfare to work links and free materials to order from the National Institute for Literacy Hotline and Clearinghouse.

- ⇒ **Community Legal Clinic (CLEO)**
- ⇒ <http://www.cleo.on.ca/english/about.htm>

CLEO is a community legal clinic that specializes in public education. Their publications are written for people with low incomes and other disadvantaged groups. They describe the law in simple and clear language. Here is a sample of some of the OW related documents you can access:

- Need Welfare? How to apply for Ontario works benefits – July 2000
- Ontario Works and having a job – March 2001
- Appeals and internal reviews – July 2001
- Internal review request form – July 2001
- Applying for benefits by phone – Feb 2001

- ⇒ **Welfare Information Network Issue Notes**, Volume 2, Number 5, "The Hard-to-Place: Understanding the population and Strategies to Serve Them"
- ⇒ <http://www.welfareinfo.org/hardto.htm>

This report highlights some of the challenges of serving "hard to place" welfare clients. It lists assessment instruments and other management strategies used to assess the extent of their needs.

## Ontario Works AlphaCom Online Discussion Groups

- ⇒ **"Ontario Works"**
- ⇒ <http://alphaplus.ca>
- ⇒ Moderated by Gay Douglas

This discussion group provides an opportunity for practitioners to exchange information, experiences and strategies related to working with OW.



- ⇒ **"Assessment and OW... Lets Talk! "**
- ⇒ <http://alphaplus.ca>
- ⇒ Moderated by Karen McGregor

This discussion group is a forum for Kingston Literacy's OW project to share their experiences with the rest of the field and to initiate discussion on the following topics:

- The assessment model
- Who's paying?
- Getting started
- What do assessors need?
- What do programs need?
- What does OW need?
- What's not working?

## Recent and Ongoing Literacy and Basic Skills Projects Dealing with Current Ontario Works Issues



### RESOURCE:

**“READ—A Basic Skills Referral Kit for Use with OW Clients”  
By the Adult Basic Education Association of Hamilton/  
Wentworth, February 2001**

### Summary:

This resource is based on a four- step referral process:

- ⇒ *Recognize* who might have low literacy skills
- ⇒ *Examine* – does the person demonstrate low skills?
- ⇒ *Advise* – how can the person improve their skills? and
- ⇒ *Document* – what information should you document and forward?

There are sample forms for information and referral, client assessment referral and release of information. In addition, several reading and writing exercises have been included which have been drawn from materials currently used in the LBS field. You will also find goal setting tools. The kit was developed based on a study of literacy needs among OW clients in Hamilton-Wentworth. A total of 149 clients and 17 OW staff were interviewed.

The kit is being piloted with OW caseworkers and the final report will be completed by January, 2002. The final kit will be more generic so anyone could use it with any type of agency. The resource will include the kit, the training package and the handouts.

### How to access the resource:

- ⇒ Contact AlphaPlus Centre to borrow the first edition of the READ resource – quote call # 374.1264 P138.3
- ⇒ Contact your regional literacy network in February to review a copy of the final resource
- ⇒ Order your own copy for \$10.00 by contacting:  
Adult Basic Education Association of Hamilton/Wentworth  
(t) 905-527-2222 / ( f) 905-527-2166 / e-mail: [abeall@sympatico.ca](mailto:abeall@sympatico.ca)

**RESOURCE:****“What Works—Recruitment and Retention of Ontario Works Clients in LBS Programs— Phase One and Two”**

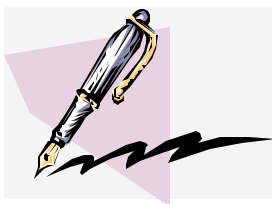
**By Dee Goforth and Mary Jonik for the College Sector Committee, June 2000 and August 2002**

**Summary:**

- ⇒ In Phase 1, a profile of the Ontario Works College LBS student was developed along with three strategies for recruitment and retention of OW clients in the LBS college sector.
- ⇒ In Phase 2 the strategies were field tested, refined and analyzed. The Phase 2 report includes an information piece on the background to each of the strategies and a list of relevant print and web resources that participating practitioners found useful.

**How to access the resource:**

- ⇒ Contact AlphaPlus Centre to borrow the resource
- ⇒ Quote call #374.18269G-57 for Phase 1 and call #374.18269G57 for Phase 2

**RESOURCE:****“Working With Ontario Works—Forging Relationships Between Regional Literacy Networks and Local OW Centres”**

**By Literacy Link Niagara, 2001**

**Summary:**

- ⇒ The report describes the development of the relationship between Literacy Link Niagara and Ontario Works.
- ⇒ It also outlines the referral and assessment process. A toolbox of assessments was used rather than a standardized approach.
- ⇒ To date, the network continues to operate their fee for service assessment/placement project with OW. In the appendix you will find a literacy screening tool along with an evaluation form in English and French that was designed for OW Case Managers.
- ⇒ The final screening tool that is being used by OW is based on this project.
- ⇒ The network continues to develop in-service materials, tools and protocols.

**How to access the resource:**

- ⇒ Contact Gay Douglas at Literacy Link Niagara
- ⇒ Tel: 905 937-8887 / e-mail: [literacy@mergetel.com](mailto:literacy@mergetel.com)

**RESOURCE:**

**“Supporting Ontario Works Participants in LBS Programs”  
By Project Read Literacy Network (currently in development)**

**Summary:**

- ⇒ This project began in early October 2001 and it is expected to finish in July 2002.
- ⇒ The project consultants will be testing strategies to recruit and retain OW participants within literacy programs from all sectors in their network region.
- ⇒ They will publish a report of the results including strategies and tools developed and used. This report will be distributed to all regional networks. Much of their work will be based on the previous research done in the college sector.

**How to access the resource:**

- ⇒ The final report should be available in early July 2002
- ⇒ Contact Anne Ramsay at Project READ—[projread@golden.net](mailto:projread@golden.net) / 519- 836-7164

**RESOURCE:**

**“Taking the First Step—A Referral and Assessment Process”  
By Project Read Literacy Network, 2000**

**Summary:**

- ⇒ *Taking the First Step* was developed by Project READ and used to conduct full assessments with OW clients.
- ⇒ The report features assessment activities for all LBS levels and in all domains.
- ⇒ The assessment with OW clients takes approximately one hour with an additional hour to complete the assessment report.
- ⇒ The assessment takes a “snap shot” of the skills an OW client has at the moment and suggests the most appropriate literacy agency placement for that individual according to his/her long term goal, present needs and skill levels.
- ⇒ Project READ continues to conduct assessments on a fee-for-service basis with the Region of Waterloo.

**How to access this resource:**

- ⇒ Contact your local Regional Literacy Network for a copy
- ⇒ Or contact the AlphaPlus Centre to borrow the resource (call # 374.1264 R594.2)

**RESOURCE:**

**“Initial Screening Assessment and Ontario Works: Phase 1 & 2”**  
**By Karen McGregor for Kingston Literacy, July 2000 and October 2001**

**Summary:**

- ⇒ The purpose of the project was to identify how programs and Ontario Works could work together to develop tools and protocols in order to deliver smooth literacy services, and to develop a model which outlines how initial screening could be implemented.
- ⇒ The Phase 1 report outlines what steps were taken to build the relationship with OW and a description of the assessment process.
- ⇒ In Phase 2 you will find a refined assessment and participant follow-up process. Included are various tools such as protocols, forms, promotional materials and workshops.
- ⇒ Phase 3 will provide a tool kit based on the materials and processes that have been developed over the past two years along with workshops for LBS programs and OW case managers. The materials will be available by March 2002.
- ⇒ The Assessor training is being offered during March and April 2002 .
- ⇒ Programs should contact Karen if they are interested in accessing the training.

**How to access the resource:**

- ⇒ E-mail Kingston Literacy at [kinglit@kos.net](mailto:kinglit@kos.net) and ask for a copy of the reports

**RESOURCE:**

**“Literacy Tool Kit for Ontario Works Caseworkers”**  
**By Literacy North Halton, Spring 2001**

**Summary:**

- ⇒ The tool kit originally was aimed at OW Case Managers but can be adapted for any other social service type agency.
- ⇒ The kit has a 5 step process for OW workers to follow to assist their client.
- ⇒ Each step addresses key questions that are critical in a referral process.
  - Step 1: Who can't read and why it matters
  - Step 2: How can I tell someone needs help
  - Step 3: What help is available
  - Step 4: What is the best program for my client
  - Step 5: How do I make a referral
- ⇒ The kit also includes an easy to use referral flow chart and a sample literacy screening tool and evaluation form.

**How to access the resource:**

- ⇒ The report is available by e-file from the Peel/Halton/Dufferin Adult Learning Network by emailing [phdaln@interlog.com](mailto:phdaln@interlog.com). Or you can access a hardcopy by sending \$6.00 to: Literacy North Halton, P.O. Box 218, Georgetown, ON, L7G 4Y5

## National Volunteer Week April 21-27, 2002

**Experience matters—and this year's National Volunteer Week is highlighting how many Canadians, whether they're 15 or 55, are turning to volunteering as a way to gain—and give—the benefit of experience. For more information and promotional resources please contact Volunteer Canada at [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca).**



**RESOURCE:**  
**“Onsite Referrals”**  
**By The Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy, Fall 2001**

### Summary:

- ⇒ This project piloted on-site LBS referrals by an education counselor working out of several Ontario Works Resource Centres in the Etobicoke/City of York area in the City of Toronto.
- ⇒ It ran from January to September 2002.
- ⇒ Outreach to other agencies about LBS programs was also part of the project.

### How to access the resource:

- ⇒ You can access an electronic copy of the report by sending a request to: [admin@mtml.ca](mailto:admin@mtml.ca) or by calling (416) 961-4013



**RESOURCE:**  
**“Ontario Works Progress Report”**  
**By The Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy, Fall 2001**

### Summary:

- ⇒ The OW project report form was developed with Ontario Works.
- ⇒ Programs are asked to submit quarterly reports on all of their OW learners.
- ⇒ The report is quite brief. OW only wants to know if the client is attending the LBS program and if they are making progress.
- ⇒ The form also includes a section in which to identify any new needs the client has.

### How to access the resource:

- ⇒ Contact Mary Wiggin at the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy, at 613-233-3232 or by email at [abc.line@sympatico.ca](mailto:abc.line@sympatico.ca)

**RESOURCE:**

**“FOCUS: Finding, Organizing, Challenging, Understanding Self”  
Ontario Works, Job Connect and Learning Centres from Bruce  
County, 2001-2002**

**Summary:**

- ⇒ FOCUS is a very unique 5-week program that was developed in partnership with OW, Job Connect and local Adult Learning Centres in the Bruce County area.
- ⇒ Each organization contributed resources to develop the FOCUS program (which is targeted for the “hard to serve” OW participant).
- ⇒ FOCUS brings together Ontario Works clients. Drawing on their individual resources and knowledge and with additional supports from the session facilitators, the participants have the opportunity to develop and improve many life long learning attitudes, values and skills.
- ⇒ It is understood that the clients are encouraged to find the shortest route to sustainable employment.
- ⇒ The program is offered 4 days a week in a small group format. There are two staff members. One member facilitates the program and one plays a supportive role to the participants. The use of two staff people enables remedial and one-to-one bridging to occur.
- ⇒ The materials in the modules are presented to address levels 2 and 3 of the learning outcomes.
- ⇒ Adult Learning Centre staff met with Ontario Works staff to develop the course outline.
- ⇒ The training priorities for “hard to serve” OW clients included:
  - Emotions, change, stress
  - Time management and organization
  - Self identification, self marketing, skills awareness, self esteem
  - Appearance, presentation, personal hygiene
  - Money, budgeting, accessing debt counseling
  - Goals, planning and achieving, motivation
  - Knowledge of and utilization of community supports
  - Effective communication, conflict management
  - Personal and group issues that arise before, during and after the training workshops
- ⇒ The main outcome of the program is for each participant to have developed a learning plan with action items for them to address. There is follow up with the participants after a 2 to 3-month period to see how they have addressed their action plans. To date, results show that most of the participants have found employment.

**How to access this resource:**

- ⇒ If you have any further questions about the program you can contact Tim Nicholls Harrison at: [learning@e-owensound.com](mailto:learning@e-owensound.com) or call 519-376-6628



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