



ALBERTA WORKFORCE ESSENTIAL SKILLS

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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The Alberta Workforce Essential Skills Society (AWES) is a non-profit organization focused on training, research, and curriculum development.

AWES specializes in developing customized essential skills training solutions for organizations, employers, and practitioners.

Mission

To lead innovative workplace skills training initiatives across Canada so that everyone has the opportunity to be productive and successful.

Vision

A global culture of workplace skills development where everyone has access to training opportunities and is empowered to fully engage in all aspects of their lives.

Message from the Executive Director

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It's been another year of immense growth, innovation, and unprecedented successes, and I am pleased to share our 2022 Annual Report with you to showcase our achievements.

Even more than in previous years, AWES balanced multiple projects, addressed various stakeholder challenges and needs, and managed competing timelines. Growth can be a challenge at the best of times, never mind with a team working

remotely from multiple provinces across the country. Yet, AWES consistently exceeded expectations, fulfilled deliverables, and found new opportunities to expand, a testament to the passion, creativity, and determination of our team.

In 2022, we delivered professional development to over 450 career development practitioners, launched two new research projects, began a pilot to test new assessments for social-emotional skills, presented to thousands of people at a variety of conferences, and had our first-ever strategic planning retreat to include our team alongside the board of directors.

As I look back on 2022, I can't help but pause and think about how far AWES has come. Just fifteen years ago, we were a small organization managing one project at a time. Now, AWES has a team of nine permanent staff, three semi-permanent contractors, and a healthy mix of private fee-for-service and government-funded projects. With a consistent stream of projects at the local, provincial, and national levels, AWES has cemented its place as a national leader in the sector.

A special thanks goes out to our stakeholder communities for supporting AWES. Each time you use our materials, share a post on social media, register in one of our programs, or spread the word about our organization, you directly contribute to our success. But even more importantly, you help us reach a wider network of people who benefit at work, in the community, and in life by being able to access skills training.

I am energized and excited by all the opportunities ahead of AWES in the years to come.

Cindy Messaros
Executive Director

Project highlights

From our participants

"Thank you [AWES] for this training. As a CDP it helps me understand more about how essential skills are needed for work, learning, and life. It equipped me with tools to assess my clients' needs to help them evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace changes."

"...I took the Guided Pathways [course] last month and the combination of at-your-own own-pace course readings/videos/activities, weekly live webinar, and bi-weekly live group activities made it an overall excellent learning experience."

As part of the Guided Pathways project, AWES, in partnership with Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) conducted a national survey with practitioners in Canada's English Language Learning (ELL) sector.

The data will help shape recommendations for an ELL version of Guided Pathways.

Hundreds of CDPs across Canada complete training

Over 450 career development practitioners across Canada completed the Guided Pathways course in 2022, bringing the total number of participants to 839 and counting. With their new skills, they will be able to provide their clients with more tailored support to help them reach their career goals.

29
sessions

459
participants

We are continuously updating the content within the Guided Pathways course to reflect new developments in the Skills for Success model, ensuring career development practitioners have the most relevant and up-to-date tools and resources to integrate into their practice.

A major addition to the Guided Pathways project is the Social-Emotional Skills Assessment pilot. Career development practitioners who successfully complete Guided Pathways have the opportunity to join an exclusive pilot launched in partnership with RAD Science Solution, a research and assessment design organization. Participants gain practical experience assessing clients' social-emotional skills and providing them with additional information that will help them toward their employment goals.

Guided Pathways is now in its final year and sessions will run through September 2023.



After taking the course:

92% of participants stated they will be able to use what they learned in the course when they are at work.

100% of participants stated they learned at least two to three new skills that will help them work safely in aggregate hauling.

100% of participants feel confident that they can complete a hazard assessment.

96% of participants feel confident that they can plan a route.

83% of participants can identify hazards on a worksite and while driving on the road.

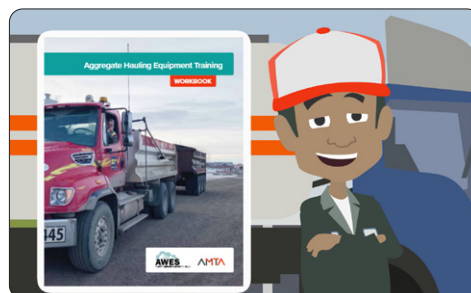


New training for the trucking and hauling industry

Technical content in training material can be very dense with difficult concepts and advanced vocabulary. It is typically not written with considerations for those who do not speak English as their first language or for those who experience literacy challenges. This can make it hard for workers to understand and apply the material and to perform tasks safely and efficiently on the job, which can lead to serious accidents and injuries. Working with the Alberta Motor Transport Association, we redesigned and launched the Aggregate Hauling Equipment Training course to support newcomers and career seekers looking to enter the trucking and hauling industry.

Incorporating clear language and design principles with integrated language and essential skills development activities contextualized to the trucking industry, the new course minimizes barriers to make training content more accessible. Participants who complete the course get training on how to complete routine tasks like inspecting equipment, planning routes, and completing reports; identify and control hazards and safety concerns; and apply strategies to prevent injury and keep themselves and others safe on the job.

To date, nearly 40 workers across Alberta have taken the course to improve their skills and received a certificate of completion! Congratulations!



A provincial survey conducted by AWES revealed that only about 50% of instructors incorporate essential skills, and less than 40% incorporate Skills for Success in their lessons, even though 82% of their learners identify employment as their primary goal.



Integrating Skills for Success into Alberta's ESL programming

Due to changing workplace demands, language instructors are now increasingly expected to include content on topics not typically covered in an ESL classroom, especially as it relates to learners' employment goals. To better support language instructors and their students, we proposed a professional development course to teach ESL instructors how to integrate Skills for Success into their teaching and practice.

The new pilot course continues the work we have been pioneering in the sector since our 2013 project, Driving Investment, and will be the first of its kind in Canada. It will address how to integrate Skills for Success methodology into curriculum development and language instruction to help instructors contextualize content to the multiple demands they face in the classroom related to employment and Alberta Human Rights legislation, including topics on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Instructors will learn strategies for using authentic workplace documents, communication tasks, and difficult workplace scenarios in lessons to reduce their preparation time and increase the transfer of learning in students.

By incorporating Skills for Success into ESL programs, instructors will be able to address learners' needs related to workplace tasks and successfully contextualize language learning to occupational tasks and students' specific employment goals to ensure they develop the skills required to thrive in the workplace.

The new pilot course will be open to instructors across Alberta. Watch for the launch in the fall of 2023 and for the opportunity to sign up.

93
ESL practitioners surveyed

48
ESL practitioners interviewed in focus groups

Lightbulb moment: I get it

A student working through AWES' curriculum on adaptability realized how what she was learning related to her own struggles when it comes to completing tasks. After completing this unit, she was able to create a meaningful action plan and has been implementing her new skills.

Women First: Building Skills for Success

To reduce unique barriers to employment that women may face, we were invited to partner on a project headed by Pathways to Possibilities to develop, test, and evaluate pre-employment and skills development supports, including literacy and Skills for Success training, and wrap-around supports.

The program will be delivered to 160 women at six pilot sites in five provinces and will serve racialized women, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, women from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and women who are distant from the workforce. The program will help determine which resources work well for different groups of women and why, and it will increase accessibility to workplace skills training designed specifically for women.

AWES is the lead curriculum development partner for the project and has been tasked with developing nine digital microlessons as well as 30 hours of core curriculum focusing on adaptability and collaboration – two of the new skills in the Skills for Success model. Stay tuned for more about this exciting project!

New research in Alberta's ESL sector

ESL programs help newcomers integrate into the workforce and their communities and are essential to the success of Alberta's newcomers.

In partnership with SRDC, we have conducted in-depth research into the landscape of ESL programming in Alberta to gather data on the feasibility and benefits of a unified ESL curriculum.

Stakeholders from the ESL sector shared their challenges with not having a unified curriculum, their understanding and use of Skills for Success and its place within language instruction, different programs and approaches to program delivery, and perspectives on the idea of a unified ESL curriculum that incorporates Skills for Success methodology.

The research process for this project includes surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews and will continue through the early fall of 2023.

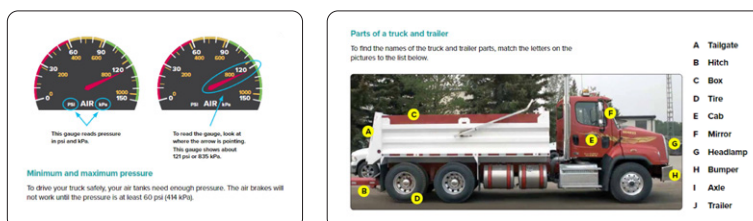


Resources

Aggregate Hauling Equipment Training

Our new workbook for aggregate hauling features authentic documents, skill-building activities, realistic scenarios, and routine aggregate hauling tasks, such as planning routes, inspecting equipment, and identifying and controlling hazards and safety concerns.

The workbook and accompanying videos and activities are excellent resources to use with learners and clients working towards a career in trucking and hauling. They can be used in classroom lessons or as a self-guided course to help job seekers gain the language and essential skills they need to be safe, efficient, and successful in the industry.



Digital skills mini courses

Strong digital skills are essential for workplace success. With our long-time partner, Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium, we released two new resources to support learners' digital skills development.

Learners will learn about using and maintaining digital devices, internet safety, online accounts, and digital communication to build their digital literacy skills. The first course explores tools and apps, accessing the internet, and keeping devices secure and up to date. The second teaches learners strategies for browsing the internet and navigating web pages safely, including how to access and manage an online account, and how to use the basic features and functions of email and virtual meeting platforms.

The courses are self-paced and self-grading, with realistic and interactive activities. The courses can be easily incorporated into lessons or assigned to learners to complete on their own to further their learning outside the classroom.

The mini courses are currently available for successful Guided Pathways participants to use with their clients and will be available to the public in late 2023.



Online impact and reach

Followers and subscribers



782



2,113

↑ 59%

Impressions

including paid advertisements



120,466

↑ 70%



344,602

↑ 1172%



156,190

↑ 131%



700,070

↑ 44%



1,321,328

↑ 103%

Website hits

awes.ca and guidedpathways.ca

Visitors



16,150

↑ 24%

Pageviews



74,272

↑ 58%

Resource downloads



3,981

↑ 39%

YouTube video views



129,463

↑ 80%



300,065

Shares



3,434

↑ 29%

Likes



1,721

↑ 70%

Organizational highlights

Presentations and conferences

Skills for Success Day webinar

To celebrate National Skills for Success Day, we hosted a webinar on how to integrate Skills for Success concepts and authentic materials into programming. The webinar was a huge success! Keep an eye out for future offerings.

Conferences

Over 1,000 people attended our presentations or visited our booths across the six conferences and events we had the privilege of participating in this year. Thank you to all who took part. We appreciate each opportunity to showcase AWES and network and connect with experts and innovators in a variety of fields. If you're interested in having AWES present at an event, please reach out to us.

1000
attendees





Leila Samahnejad



Alice Villanueva



Arpine Petrosyan



Randy Kolowrocki

Team growth

Our team continues to grow with four new employees joining us this year.

We welcomed two new Essential Skills and ESL Specialists, Alice Villanueva and Arpine Petrosyan, as well as our first Project Coordinator, Leila Samahnejad. We want to congratulate Leila and wish her all the best on her maternity leave! During her leave, we welcomed Randy Kolowrocki as acting Project Coordinator.

A little about our new team members

Leila has over 15 years of experience in different roles in postsecondary educational settings and non-profit organizations including language instruction, curriculum development, management, and evaluation. She holds an MA degree in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) and a BA in English Language and Literature. She has an empowering mindset and believes in inclusion and lifelong learning!

Alice is a training professional with extensive experience in curriculum development, instructional design, and facilitation. She holds a degree in Psychology and a certificate in Essential Skills Profiling and has worked with various private and not-for-profit organizations for over 20 years. Alice is enthusiastic about continuing to develop curriculum that integrates Skills for Success to help individuals improve their performance on the job.

Arpine is an enthusiastic educator with over five years of experience developing contextualized training for workplaces and individuals distant from the workforce. She has collaborated with employers from multiple sectors to increase job retention and satisfaction through coaching and job-specific training. Arpine believes that meaningful and sustainable employment makes a significant difference at individual and societal levels, and she is very excited to work at AWES to create such opportunities.

Randy comes to AWES with experience in the financial tech industry. He enjoys being able to apply his background and experience in customer service to his role as Project Coordinator. Randy is thrilled for the opportunity to work alongside educators and career development practitioners to help create a better learning experience for adult learners.



The AWES board and a few team members at the 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Team building

With a fully remote team across Canada, it's not often we have the opportunity to come together.

This year, we were lucky enough to host multiple in-person events with both our team and our board.

In June we held an in-person AGM, and in October we were able to meet again for three days of strategic planning and goal setting.



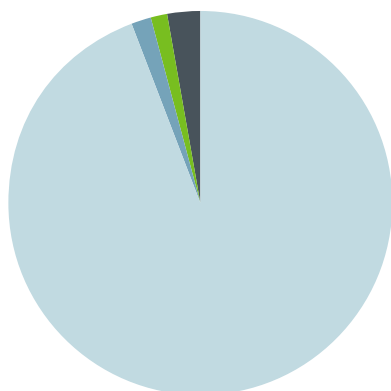
The AWES team at the strategic planning retreat.

Financial statements

The following charts summarize our revenues and expenses.

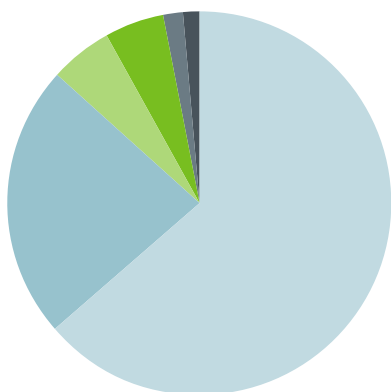
Numbers reflect AWES' fiscal year: April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022.

Revenue



Government contracts	1,139,428
Fee for service	18,520
Other contracts	17,679
Other revenue:	
Goods and services tax rebates	4,060
Interest income	1,242
Miscellaneous	25,766
Total	1,206,695

Expenses



Guided Pathways Project	754,770
Building System Integration (BSI) Project	274,664
Operations	61,292
Newcomer to the Trades Project	60,739
Other contracts	17,696
Other expenses:	
Fee for service	11,999
SILP research	4,236
SILP Skills for Success (Innovating ESL)	118
Digitizing Workplace Resources Project	+158
Total	1,185,356

Partners and collaborators

A special thank you to all our partners, supporters, and funders, past and present. It is your collaboration that makes our success possible!

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
 Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA)
 Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA)
 Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL)
 ASSIST
 Being Human Services
 Border Paving Stony Plain
 Bow Valley College
 Bow Valley Immigration Partnership
 Bow Valley Learning Council
 Bredin Centre for Learning
 Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)
 Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA)
 Calgary Learns
 Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)
 Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB)
 Centre for Newcomers
 CERIC
 DataAngel
 DynaLife
 Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN)
 Edson Learning
 Energy Safety Canada
 Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC)
 Grande Prairie Council for Lifelong Learning (GPCLL)
 Hinton Employment and Learning Place
 Jasper Employment & Education Centre
 Kneehill Adult Learning Society (KALS)
 Monarch Innovative Design for Learning
 New Brunswick Career Development Association (NBCDA)
 NorQuest College
 Pathways to Possibilities
 RAD Science Solution
 SkillPlan
 Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC)
 Solomon College
 Taber & District Community Adult Learning Association
 United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW)

GOVERNMENT

Government of Alberta

- Alberta Settlement, Integration, and Language Projects

Government of Canada

- Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program (ALLESPP)
- Office of Skills for Success (OSS)



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