



ALBERTA WORKFORCE ESSENTIAL SKILLS

2021 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.

Vision

Everyone has the opportunity for the training and skills development required to learn, adapt, and thrive in a constantly changing world.

Mission

To create opportunities for people to develop the skills they need to remain resilient in the face of advancing technology and to successfully engage at work, home, and the community.



AWES employee Tyla Olsen conducts a site tour at Border Paving in Stony Plain.

Message from the Executive Director

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It has been an incredible year for AWES, and I am excited to share our accomplishments with you!

With six projects on the go throughout the year and continued challenges from the ongoing pandemic, AWES pushed itself to new limits and had one of the busiest years yet. Our team went above and beyond to collaborate and connect with partners, design accessible materials using digital technologies, and create seamless experiences for project participants.

We had the pleasure of working with 16 organizations in various sectors for a pilot program testing new materials, delivering online training to more than 350 career practitioners, presenting to more than 1,000 people at a variety of conferences, and collaborating with countless other partners and organizations. Being able to connect with leaders and professionals in a cross-section of industries across Canada allows AWES to expand its reach every year, providing more opportunities for people to develop the skills necessary for success at work, in the community, and in life. I am grateful to our participants, partners, and advocates.

As I look to the future, I am confident that AWES will continue to deliver important results.

Cindy Messaros

Executive Director

Project highlights

"The Guided Pathways course [was] a very valuable experience. Thank you for providing open access to it for those of us working with job seekers and language learners. The knowledge shared was extensive with important resources that gave us the vocabulary and insight to provide more insightful essential skills conversations with our clients."

– Bernadene Ryan, Instructional Specialist,
Yoja Consulting

"This is a game-changer. So many practical tools and resources to help us better serve our diverse client needs. So proud to receive my Guided Pathways certificate! Not only will it help me to earn CPD hours with HRPD Durham but will help me to apply my skills as a CDP to my work in education! Thank you so much for the opportunity to take the class! I highly recommend it!"

– Guided Pathways participant

"I've realized that incorporating the essential skills assessment into CDP practice deepens the understanding of the clients' needs and helps formulate a thoughtful strategic plan with more clarity. Using the CLB/ES comparative framework helps the client and the practitioner understand the skill levels and customize the plan more effectively [and] made it easier to discuss clients' skills gaps... I thank the Alberta Workforce Essential Skills Society for its essential skills training solutions. I am glad that I took this training..."

– Sehr Karamat, Career Development Practitioner,
Graduated from George Brown College

Guided Pathways

This training reached career practitioners in all 13 Canadian provinces and territories, as well as in Belize and St. Lucia. Between May and November, 373 career practitioners attended and completed 22 sessions of Guided Pathways and increased their ability to use essential skills and Skills for Success in practice.

373
participants

With this training, career practitioners can better support clients' employment choices and career plans. We estimate that 700,000 workers across Canada will be reached with these new practices in career development services!

Results so far show that 94% of participants find the training relevant to their work.

SURVEY DATA

■ Before training ■ After training

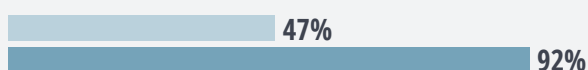
I know how to use essential skills tools and resources in my practice with clients.



I am able to assess clients' essential skills abilities and challenges accurately.



I feel well-equipped to integrate essential skills into my services and support to clients.



I feel confident integrating essential skills into my services and support to clients.



I am able to apply concrete methods to support my clients' essential skills needs.



From our focus groups

"Putting the various groups at one table, it quickly gets to the shared language and 'ah-ha' moment stage, versus industry-only conversations."

– Ewen Campbell, Keller Construction Ltd.

"It was helpful to hear from employers and to find out what gaps they are seeing. I can add new lessons to the training I give my students based on the feedback from the employers."

– Focus group participant

From our pilot

"Extremely relevant topics and excellent connection to [newcomers] real-world fears and experiences."

– Pilot participant

"I found the information to be helpful – a great addition to our lesson plans and a great option for those to catch up at home if they miss classes. The lessons were thorough, and learners left with a strong understanding of the subject matter."

– Pilot participant

Partnerships for Workplace Inclusion

Creating resources to help newcomers successfully integrate is one of our main goals. Working with the Colbourne Institute for Inclusive Leadership (CIIL), we built strong partnerships with key stakeholders in newcomer integration, including professionals from career development, language and settlement, and industry, to fill a need for level-appropriate resources on various workplace topics.

Stakeholders connected at focus groups and discussed newcomer integration, racism, discrimination, and training and hiring practices, among other topics, as well as discovered new perspectives, and learned about needs and expectations. We are inspired by the relationships that formed and look forward to seeing this community-minded approach toward newcomer supports modelled in the future.

New resources were developed for CLB 1–2 and 3–5 learners that will help newcomers become familiar with their workplace rights and responsibilities, diverse workplaces, inclusivity, and other essential topics for successful participation at work and in the community. Sixteen organizations from various industries piloted the resources with their students and workers this year to help shape the final series of materials being released in the spring of 2022.

Digitizing Workplace Resources

Over 450 users – and counting – accessed the Skills for Work training resource! The final version was released in the spring and both learners and instructors have been able to use the game-based platform to support learning. Skills for Work training is accessible and affordable so that everyone has the opportunity to build the skills they need to succeed in the Canadian workplace.

450
users

350
licenses

Over 350 licenses have also been purchased to integrate Skills for Work into curricula and programs.



Students complete a unit on carpentry and gain hands-on experience in the classroom.



"It was an amazing experience. There was a lot of stuff I didn't know before. We worked with multiple tools, and we got hands-on skills."

– Newcomers to the Trades student

"I would [like] to let you know that Monday will be my first day in the job, wish me luck! I'm sending this email to say that what you have done with and for us, it's not something I can forget one day. You might think that was a normal job you have done, but believe me it wasn't... It means a lot!!"

– Newcomers to the Trades student



Students with their certificates at the Newcomers to the Trades graduation.

Newcomers to the Trades

When workers have the essential skills they need for the occupations they want to work in, they are more likely to succeed. Newcomers to the Trades, a multi-jurisdictional project run in Alberta, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan, provided contextualized and hands-on training to newcomers. This approach increases participants' ability to enter a traditional apprenticeship pathway.

Students gained concrete experience in multiple trades throughout the year that helped them develop the language and essential skills they needed to begin a career.

After completing their final classes – carpentry, plumbing, and sheet metal – at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), all 11 students graduated from the program, nine challenged the Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) exam, and many have found permanent positions with their work placements from 2020. We wish them all the best as they start the next chapter of their careers!



A Border Paving employee lines up his truck to prepare for the day and stops for a quick chat with the AWES team before beginning his hauling route.

Occupational health and safety: Aggregate Hauling Equipment Training

AWES partnered with Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) to begin a new project to support English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in the trucking and aggregate hauling industry. We are revising original industry content and creating a plain language version to make it more accessible to learners. To ensure workers have the skills and strategies to complete their tasks safely, we are also adding contextualized essential skills and language building activities. The final resource will be released in April 2022.

To kick off the project and better understand industry and workers' needs, we conducted a needs assessment at the City of Edmonton's Parks and Roads Services department and completed a site tour at a Border Paving facility in Stony Plain. We would like to thank the team at Border Paving who gave us a tour and let us job shadow to get an inside perspective of the essential skills needed for a career in aggregate hauling.

Digital skills module

With our long-time partner, Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium, we set out to develop a new training module on digital literacy to support workers to develop this critical skill for workplace success. The module will target key digital skills and concepts including internet safety, digital communication, making online accounts, and device maintenance.

Student work showcase

Using their new skills, students built and donated five insulated animal shelters for Second Chance Animal Rescue Society's (SCARS) Walls for Winter Program that provides warm spaces to rural areas in the winter months! They also got to show off their creativity by designing and creating wooden signs and charcuterie boards.



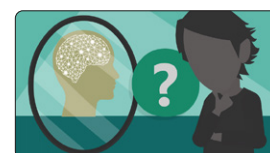
Resources

Supporting workers' skill development through the creation of resources is at the centre of the work we do.

The innovative resources we have released this year contribute to workers' success at work!

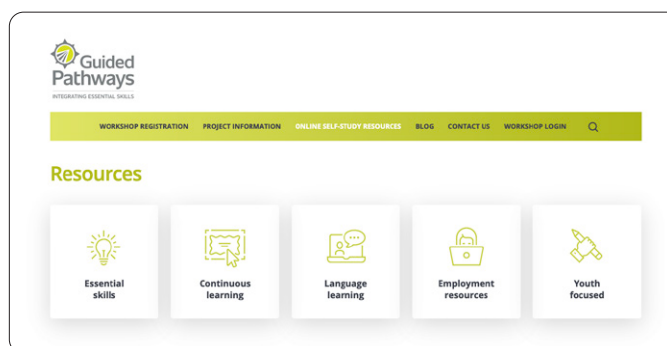
Diversity and inclusion videos

We released our first workplace essential skills [diversity and inclusion series](#) to better support newcomers' successful integration. These new videos, developed in collaboration with the Colbourne Institute for Inclusive Leadership (CIIL), address topics that are not always covered in training at work or in language classes, such as racism, workplace rights, and gender.



Guided Pathways database

An entire library of learning and training content is accessible through the new Guided Pathways resource database. There are materials for newcomers, youth learners, and job seekers at various reading levels on topics such as essential skills, career development, and language learning. All tools and resources in the collection can be used for self-guided learning or with an instructor and can be downloaded at no cost.



WHMIS videos

AWES created new videos on the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) to include current updates so that learners and workers have access to the most recent safety information. The updated videos include one video dedicated to pictograms and one on product labelling and Safety Data Sheets.





Student success highlight

When Mohammed began the Newcomers to the Trades program, many workplace concepts were new and unfamiliar to him.

He worked through 300 hours of AWES' contextualized essential skills training and completed a four-month work placement, through which he learned about workplace culture, gained new essential skills, and improved his language skills.

Mohammed also learned a lot about important workplace behaviours and was able to improve his punctuality.



"Most of the time I am not good at coming on time... I learned from you, not only about the language but a lot about behaviour."

- Mohammed

Online impact and reach

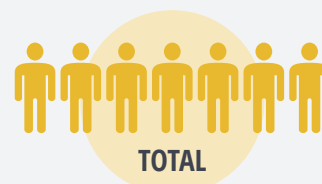
"I have used [your] video with my Literacy 3/4 class and it was very well received. This is a great resource. Thank you."

- Literacy Centre of Expertise

Followers and subscribers



548



1,331

2021 impressions



70,527



27,091



67,548



485,630

TOTAL
650,796

2021 website hits

awes.ca and guidedpathways.ca



Visitors
13,030



Pageviews
47,050

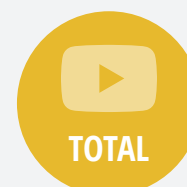


Resource downloads
2,869

YouTube video views



72,045



171,097

Organizational highlights



Janine Bucklaschuk



Tamara Jorgic

Team growth

Two new members joined our team in November: Janine Bucklaschuk, Essential Skills and Literacy Specialist, and Tamara Jorgic, Project Manager and Essential Skills and Literacy Specialist.

Janine has over five years of experience in training and development and essential skills. She has worked with various employers from different sectors to create effective workplace training materials. Janine brings her passion for learning, resource building, and collaboration to this role, and looks forward to helping businesses improve their workforce performance.

Tamara is an educator with years of experience in the fields of adult and workplace education, curriculum development, literacy, and ESL. She takes pride in helping people develop their skills to succeed in work and life.

We would also like to congratulate Tyla Olsen, Essential Skills and Literacy Specialist, and wish her all the best on her maternity leave and new journey as a mother! We look forward to welcoming a new AWES member and are counting the days until she returns.

Presentations and conferences

There were over 1,000 participants in attendance at the five conferences we presented at throughout the year, and we had the second most visited booth at the annual Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) conference with more than 200 visitors. Thank you to all who joined our presentations.

1000
participants

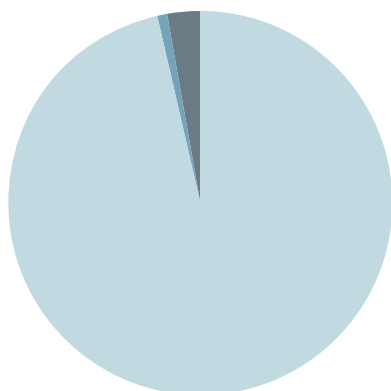
200
visitors

Financial statements

The following charts summarize our revenues and expenses.

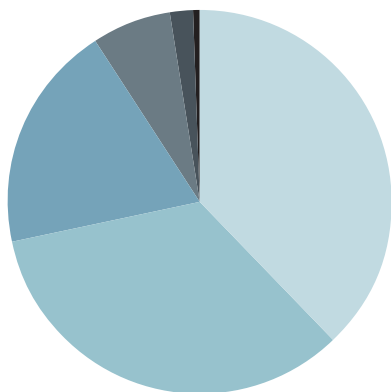
Numbers reflect AWES' fiscal year: April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021.

Revenue



Government contracts	1,357,305
Other contracts	10,801
Other revenue:	
Goods and services tax rebates	16,433
Interest income	5,283
Miscellaneous	16,301
Total	1,406,123

Expenses



Newcomer to the Trades Project	518,722
Guided Pathways Project	463,024
Digitizing Workplace Resources Project	260,123
Building System Integration (BSI) Project	91,536
Operations	25,541
Fees for service	6,329
Total	1,365,275

Partners and collaborators

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

Action for Healthy Communities (AHC)
 A&H Steel Ltd.
 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)
 Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA)
 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)
 Hansa Language Centre
 Hinton Employment and Learning Place
 Jasper Employment & Education Centre
 Johns Manville Canada
 Keller Construction Ltd.
 Kneehill Adult Learning Society (KALS)
 Monarch Innovative Design for Learning
 Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative
 New Brunswick Career Development Association (NBCDA)
 NorQuest College
 Northern Alberta Institute for Technology (NAIT)
 RAD Science Solutions
 SkillPlan
 Siwin Foods
 Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC)
 Solomon College
 Taber & District Community Adult Learning Association
 Trajectory IQ Software (TIQ)
 United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW)

GOVERNMENT

Government of Alberta

- Alberta Settlement, integration and language projects grants

Government of Canada

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



admin@awes.ca
 awes.ca