Application and Funding Guidelines

2025-2027

ECALA

Alberta Government

Updated September 2024

What's New

ECALA applications are conditional until Alberta Advanced Education approves funding allocation.

During the funding year, agencies can now move funds from one category to another as long as the amount being moved is 15% or less of their total allocation.

Applications will be submitted through the Reporting Folder through ECALA's SharePoint. Agencies will receive a unique link and password to access the documents.

A. Mandate

The Government of Alberta through the Ministry of Advanced Education provides a Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) Grant to ECALA each year to support the delivery of part-time, non-formal literacy and foundational learning opportunities to adults with financial and social barriers in Edmonton.

ECALA is a granting council that distributes over 2 million dollars annually within the CALP Grant mandate to agencies through a competitive granting process. ECALA is limited to allocating a maximum of 15% of the CALP grant to any one agency. The funding year for the CALP Grant is July 1st to June 30th. The overall objective of the funding is to strengthen the ability of non-profit agencies to meet the needs of adult foundational learners in Edmonton. Foundational learning opportunities must focus on literacy and foundational learning, facilitate the development of foundational life and essential skills, and meet the needs of learners (learner centered approach/practice).

Foundational literacy, numeracy, skills for learning, basic digital skills, and English language proficiency often result in a change in participant life outcomes such as the ability to learn, improved health status, increased civic participation, better social engagement, positive economic performance, and knowledge of the justice system.

B. Eligible Agencies

Agencies interested in applying for ECALA CALP funding must use the **ECALA Online Application** process and meet the following operational requirements:

- Be a legal entity incorporated for a minimum of two years under one of the following Alberta Statutes: Societies Act, part 9 of the Companies Act, the Libraries Act, the Métis Settlements Act, or the Post-secondary Learning Act. In cases where the Service Agency is not a legal entity, a Legal Host approved by ECALA may receive the grant on behalf of the service agency.

- Returns are filed yearly with Alberta Corporate Registry and a current Proof of Filing with the Application can be provided.

- Operate as an effective service agency with sound practices in governance, and in the planning and management of learning opportunities, finances, and personnel.

- Determine bylaws, structure, and decision-making processes, develop and adhere to operational policies and procedures, including conflict of interest guidelines, and examine and vote on matters in accordance with the written policies and procedures.

- Be able to provide current copies of the agency's bylaws, and financial and personnel policies and procedures when requested.

- Hold regular Board meetings and maintain a record of minutes and financial statements documenting key decisions on personnel, learning opportunities, and funding allocations.

- Have procedures in place to keep ECALA informed of changes to the current board membership and signing authorities.

C. Eligible Learning Opportunities

Eligible learning opportunities **must be delivered in Edmonton**, whether in-person or virtually. Agencies are encouraged to deliver the learning opportunities in collaboration or in partnership with other agencies to enhance access to formal post-secondary learning or to support life-long learning goals. Agencies have the flexibility to choose modes of delivery that will best meet the needs of the learners, including less formal learning activities and tutoring. Grant recipients must provide learning opportunities in one of the categories listed in the Category Table.

Please note: Learning Opportunities should be structured to be in only one of the categories noted below. If you are applying for funding under more than one category you are required to submit one category application for each so the application can be given to the appropriate review committee.

Category Table
The CALP Policy Manual 2024 includes additional information on each category.

C.1 Literacy and Foundational Learning (LFL) Highest priority for funding	
Adult Literacy	Adult Literacy is defined as the ability of adults to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and use print and written materials associated within varying contexts. The primary intended learning objective of learning opportunities in this category should be the development of reading and writing skills up to and including a pre-GED level. • Reading includes understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs, graphs, charts and/or tables. • Writing includes communicating by arranging words, numbers and symbols on paper or a computer screen. Please note this category should not include learning opportunities for English language learners; these should be offered in the English language learning category.

Numeracy	Numeracy is defined as the ability to use, apply, interpret, and communicate mathematical information and ideas. The primary intended learning objective of learning opportunities in this category should be using numbers and thinking in quantitative terms to complete tasks, up to and including a pre-GED level.
Skills for Learning (replaced Foundational Life Skills)	The Skills for Learning category is defined as learning opportunities that support the development of the fundamental skills and habits of learning that support adult foundational learners to build confidence, develop an identity as a learner, advocate for themselves, and engage in foundational and other learning. While it may involve practicing a range of foundational skills, the primary intended learning objective of learning opportunities in the skills for learning category is to help learners build skills and habits needed to set and achieve their learning goals, be successful in further learning, and increase confidence in their ability to be a more self-directed, independent learner. These skills and habits include: • Recognizing oneself as a learner, • Taking risks in learning, • Actively engaging in the act of learning, • Developing learning strategies, • Building collaboration skills in learning, and • Strengthening communication skills in learning.
Basic Digital Skills	Basic Digital Skills are defined as the ability of individuals to understand and use digital systems, tools, applications, and networks in order to access and manage information and thrive in learning, the workplace, and daily life. The primary intended learning objective of this category is the application and understanding of key concepts across a range of contexts, situations, and digital platforms including hardware, software, navigation, settings, safety, and connectivity.
English Language Learning	English language learning is defined as the study and practice of the English language by individuals whose first language is other than English and who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English. The primary intended learning objective in this category should be to help learners gain proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. Please see the CALP Policy Manual 2024 p. 13, for descriptions of English Language Learners and English Language Literacy Learners.

C.2 Community Capacity Building (CCB) Supplemental Programming (Maximum 15% of ECALA Allocations)	
Community Capacity Building (CCB)	Community capacity building is offered primarily as an opportunity to bridge learners into literacy and foundational learning. Staff, contracted instructors/facilitators, and/or tutors should make a concerted effort to identify any foundational learning skill gaps of learners participating and encourage their transition to literacy and foundational learning. Individuals involved in the delivery of community capacity building should regularly inform learners, during each learning opportunity, of available literacy and foundational learning programming. Please see CALP Policy Manual 2024, p. 13, for examples of CCB programming.

C.3 Modes of Delivery (refer to CALP Policy Manual 2024 p. 14)

Modes of delivery are the ways in which learning opportunities may be delivered in order to achieve specific learning objectives. Agencies may deliver learning opportunities through one or more of the following modes of delivery:

Tutoring is generally a volunteer-based practice in which a tutor facilitates an adult's learning through specialized, additional, or basic instruction, either individually or in a small group. The practice of tutoring is learner-centred and learner-driven and is a two-way learning experience based on mutual respect from which the tutor and the adult learner(s) benefit.

Courses are instructor-led educational experiences that focus on addressing participants' learning goals through relevant, structured curriculum. The content of each individual session builds on the content of each previous session to ensure learners make steady progress towards the learning goals of the course. Therefore, it is important that learners attend each session. Course instructors measure learner skill development by assessing the extent to which learners meet the goals of the course.

Family Literacy Programs prioritize the delivery of intentional activities that build adults' skills and promote the values and benefits of literacy for the entire family. Family literacy programs provide adult learners with opportunities to increase their own literacy and foundational skills that also strengthen daily literacy activities for all family members.

Learning Activities are instructor-led and scheduled with set times for learners to improve their skills or knowledge on a particular topic through a participatory or hands-on approach. Unlike courses, learning activities generally do not involve a highly structured curriculum. Therefore, the content of individual sessions may or may not build on the content of previous sessions, learner success does not require attending every session. Instead, each session is designed to respond to the specific needs of learners in the room, allowing learners to build on the skills they bring with them.

C.4 Application Requirements

Agencies must include sufficient information in their application so reviewers can determine a good understanding of the alignment of the request with the CALP Policy Manual and a reasonable allocation.

Application forms are found in ECALA Reporting folders sent to the applying agency, or by expressing interest to grants@ecala.org. The following forms must be completed:

1. Agency Application
2. Category Application(s) - fill out each category (See section C.1 of these guidelines for more information on categories) in which you are applying for funds. Only fill out necessary information. Appendix A includes learning opportunity details, and Appendix B is for tutoring only.
3. Financial Template – Fill out one page in the workbook for each category. The overall request will automatically populate.
4. Staff Table – Fill out with all staff or educators who will work with ECALA programs.
5. Declaration & Authorization – To be signed by board chair or treasurer and agency staff with signing authority. May be uploaded as PDF document.
6. Other attachments as required: Board list, audited financial statements, proof of filing with Alberta registries, etc.

Agencies must also use the application forms provided and attachments to demonstrate that their learning opportunities:

- Reflect the results of the agency's needs assessment.
- Do not unnecessarily replicate locally available learning opportunities and courses currently funded in Edmonton.
- Integrate literacy and Essential Skills development into learning opportunities in areas of high interest to adults.
- Are accessible, safe, and welcoming for adult foundational learners.
- Use a learner-centred approach.
- Have trained staff and volunteers who understand why a learner might go to them for learning and support, and how they might approach setting goals and creating a learning plan with that learner.
- Recognize that working with adults is different than working with children: Adults have a wealth of life experiences as well as immediate needs and goals.
- Incorporate recognized adult learning principles including the enhancement of learner confidence and self-advocacy skills.
- Use appropriate learner assessment tools and understand why and when to use them.
- Provide pathways for learners to transition successfully from and to related programs or next steps (i.e., to employment or to further learning).
- Are non-credit, part-time, and not more than 20 hours per week.

- Leverage collaborations and partnerships with other organizations in Edmonton to deliver the learning opportunities.
- Are delivered by a qualified (experience and education) instructor, tutor, or volunteer who has completed all required training or will complete training within the funding year
- Will be delivered between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2027, by an agency located within Edmonton's city limits.

D. Eligible Learners

CALP funds Foundational Learning. Foundational learning is "learning opportunities that support the development of adult literacy, numeracy, skills for learning, basic digital skills, and/or proficiency in the English language. Foundational learning opportunities help individuals to pursue further learning, have satisfying and meaningful employment, and fully participate in society. While the CALP Policy Manual does not identify or mandate a specific "cut-off level" for foundational learning, in general terms, it can be thought of as up to and including approximately Grade 9 levels in the formal kindergarten to grade 12 system, or, in the case of adult literacy and numeracy, up to and including Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) level 2." (CALP Policy Manual 2024, pg. 26)

Eligible learners include:
- Adults 18 years of age and older who reside in Edmonton. Youth may be served on an exception basis only, where community need is identified, a more appropriate youth-serving organization is not available, and the grant recipient has taken the necessary precautions (e.g., security clearances, consent from legal guardian).

- Priority must be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. They could be a refugee or immigrant at any stage of adjustment into Canadian society, or a temporary resident, whether a visitor to Canada, an international student, or a temporary foreign worker.

E. Successful Applicants

E.1 Grant Requirements

Grant Recipients (successful applicants) must:

- Develop and submit interim and annual reports, including financial statements and outcome and evaluation data, using ECALA forms and adhere to the CALP Policy Manual 2024.
- Submit audited financial statements approved by the decision-making body (including a statement listing the CALP Grant income and expenses) that reflect the fiscal year of the agency as stated in the agency's bylaws.
- Identify all other funding sources and dollar amounts, In-kind (non-cash) in the application, that contribute to the successful delivery of the learning opportunities.
- Keep an electronic copy of the submitted application package to use for review during the funding year. Relevant sections of the documents should be shared with staff responsible for the delivery of the learning opportunities and used to complete Interim and Annual Reports. Grant Recipients

should refer to the documents monthly and complete sections of the Interim and Annual Reports during the year to ensure they collect all the mandatory information.

- Ensure funding allocated is accounted for separately from other funds received and track all income and expenses, including in-kind contributions. Use funding for expenses outlined in the Application Package or Interim Report and non-capital purchases only.

- Ensure the learning opportunities, supports and services are provided in a cost-effective manner to maximize the use of public funds and are provided in collaboration with other related service organizations in the community.

- Ensure criteria and processes are in place to reduce social and economic barriers facing learners.

- Facilitate opportunities for ECALA staff to observe a class or tutor session and interview learners, facilitators, and agency staff.

- Keep ECALA informed of changes to the current board membership and current liability insurance, bylaws, procedures, or policy changes. ECALA may, at any time during the funding year, request copies of current documents.

- Contact ECALA to request approval for changes to the learning opportunities and discuss any challenges in delivering the learning opportunities as they arise.

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable individuals have a valid police information check, criminal record check, vulnerable sector check, or other such security screening protocol on file.

- Comply with Alberta's Personal Information Protection Act, Digital Privacy Act and Workers' Compensation Act, if applicable.

- Acknowledge that learning opportunities were made possible by funding from the Government of Alberta and ECALA on all materials that are printed, produced, or created, such as reports, advertising, signage, brochures, websites, and videos. Download the ECALA logo from our website.

- Make available when requested annual records pertaining to the learning opportunities including staff qualifications, promotional and instructional materials, registration, attendance, evaluation, and financial tracking.

- Keep annual records for an additional 5 years in the event of a records audit.

E.2 Reporting Requirements

All grant recipients **must** notify ECALA of any changes to the proposed learning opportunities. In addition, Grant Recipients agree to submit the following reports using ECALA forms or format on or before their deadlines:

- Documents listed in conditions outlined in the agency allocation letter. (i.e., Calendar of learning opportunities, revised financial templates, etc.)
- Complete Annual Update
- Complete Annual Report
- Complete Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation Table

E.3 Evaluation Requirements

The [Granting Council Data Collection Guide](#) is also available for your reference when completing your grant Application Package and Annual Report. Workshops and small group coaching and mentoring are also available to support the collection of OME (Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation) data.

Several data collection videos and resources are available on the [ECALA Resources website](#) to provide additional guidance on learning opportunity evaluation expectations. **Agencies who are not able to provide evaluation data on all learning opportunities may risk future or ongoing grants.**

Agencies must allow ECALA to observe a class and interview learners and instructors during learning opportunity visits. The information from the visit is used to provide any coaching and mentoring support required, professional development opportunities, clarification of funding expectations, ECALA Impact Reports, Strategic Directions and Advanced Education reports. Observing a class also provides an opportunity for adult foundational learners to share information directly with ECALA on their further learning needs or positive outcomes due to their participation in the learning opportunity.

E.4 Professional Development Requirements

Grant recipients are expected to support staff, volunteers (those who work with learners as well as board members) and contracted instructors/facilitators/tutors to access professional development.

All staff involved in the oversight and delivery of literacy and foundational learning programming must complete the Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning (IAFL) training within the grant term. New staff are encouraged to take the training in their first year of employment.

Additional professional development requirements exist for individuals involved in the delivery of family literacy programs (see [CALP Policy Manual 2024,](#) p. 16).

Grant recipients are expected to respond to surveys from Advanced Education and ECALA PD surveys. Government and ECALA use survey data to evaluate the impact of professional development investments and make improvements to enhance quality and effectiveness.

F. Grant Timeline and Payment Schedule

- September 13, 2025: Application documents released
- December 13, 2024: Application Deadline
- Mid to late June 2025: Notification of funding decisions
- Mid-Late July 2025: Allocation of **60% annual advance** available by request
- Mid-January 2026: Allocation of **30% interim payment** available by request
- February 2026: Annual Update Due
- Friday, July 4, 2026: Annual Report Due and **remaining 10% allocation** available if all reporting requirements are met
- February 2027: Annual Update Due
- July 2027: Final Annual Report Due

G. Application Scoring Matrix

All applications will be evaluated by an Application Review Committee (ARC). The ARC will be comprised of experts in the eligible funding category. Points for applications will be as follows:

1. Agency Application	6 Points

- Have adequate policies/procedures for creating safe and welcoming spaces (3A)
- Provides a strong strategic direction document or have a mission, history, strategic practices, and programs that support the proposed learning opportunities (3C)
- Demonstrates a supportive and effective professional development plan for staff (3D)
- Demonstrates a process for assessing community and learner needs (4A)
- Discusses the processes in place to connect learners to other community supports. (4B)
- Demonstrates understanding of Adult Foundational Learners and commitment to reducing barriers (4C), identifying eligible learners, and strong learner-centred practice through a system of supports and procedures (4D)

2. Category Application - Learning Opportunity Details	6 Points

- Provides course descriptions that are concise, informative, and written for adult foundational learners (Appendix A, C)
- Provides Primary Intended Learning Objective for the learning opportunity (Appendix A, D)
- Includes a comprehensive draft learning opportunity timeline/plan or extensive details about learning opportunity/opportunities, including knowledge of adult learning principles, and literacy focus (Appendix A, D)
- Demonstrates lessons learned or anticipated challenges and clear plan to overcome based on lessons learned (Appendix A, E)

3. Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation Plan (Agency Application #6)	4 Points

- Describes their Evaluation Plan explaining how they track and measure progress towards meeting the 2020 CALP indicators in the CALP Logic Model and the ECALA Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation (OME) Table (Agency Application, 5A)
- Lists the tools proposed to collect the OME data (Agency Application, 5A)

4. Financial Templates	4 points

- Filled in the 2025-2027 Financial Template Workbook (Excel format)
- Budget accurately reflects the proposed objectives and planned activities
- Calculations were provided as rationale
- Provided extra details as necessary (Category Application, 2B)

	Total= 20 points

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