

Literacy supports boosted for British Columbians

New funding to expand community-based literacy programs will help people of all ages learn new skills, communicate with confidence and engage fully in society.

Approximately 45% of British Columbians between 16 and 65 may have difficulty understanding newspapers, following instruction manuals, reading health information and performing other daily living tasks. Literacy programs give people a solid foundation in learning skills and opening doors to meaningful work and connections.

“As a teacher and a lifelong learner, I understand the value and the importance of literacy skills in our daily lives,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “Learning to read and write extends far beyond the classroom. Literacy can help open doors to greater opportunity and a better understanding of the world. By making this investment in community literacy, my ministry is helping people access more resources and learning opportunities where they live.”

The Province partners with Decoda Literacy Solutions, a non-profit organization, to support community-based literacy programs and initiatives by providing resources and training in more than 400 communities. In addition to ongoing annual funding, the Province has provided a one-time boost of \$1 million to Decoda Literacy Solutions to support the expansion of community programs, as well as more robust professional development for literacy outreach co-ordinators and tutors to support more learners.

“Literacy opens doors to school readiness, employment and thriving communities,” said Sandra Lee, executive director, Decoda Literacy Solutions. “We take pride in our support for literacy practitioners and tutors across B.C., and we couldn’t do that without funding from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The enhancement funds will go directly to all literacy outreach co-ordinators to expand community programs.”

Formed in 2011, Decoda Literacy Solutions has 100 literacy outreach co-ordinators, who work with local community literacy task groups. Task groups are made up of representatives from various community organizations, including libraries, family-resource programs, employment agencies, the business community, the K-12 school system and literacy organizations.

Quick Facts:

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs provides \$2.185 million in annual grants to Decoda Literacy Solutions to support the co-ordination of community literacy throughout British Columbia.

This is in addition to the \$500,000 donation to the Postmedia Raise-a-Reader campaign, which is managed by Decoda Literacy Solutions on behalf of the Province.

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills invests \$3.4 million annually to support 102 adult literacy programs in 132 communities throughout British Columbia.