



WE ARE

United for Literacy

**ANNUAL REPORT
2023**



EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Formerly Frontier College, United for Literacy is the national registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth, and adults through literacy. With over a century of frontline experience we know just how profoundly literacy changes everything...for people and communities. No other skill shapes the trajectory of a person's life more than the ability to read and write. Supported by volunteers, we reach out to people wherever they are and respond to their learning needs. Our services are free for learners because we believe literacy is a human right.



EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Unite with us.

35 Jackes Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
Canada
M4T 1E2
1-800-555-6523
information@unitedforliteracy.ca
unitedforliteracy.ca



Charitable Registration Number
10740 8445 RR0001



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Message from the president

We Are United for Literacy.

Last November, Frontier College changed its name to United for Literacy. This name bridges our past work and our future aspirations. It signals an ambitious new chapter in our 124-year history of creating access to literacy for people of all ages and backgrounds. Our name has changed, but our strong foundations remain the same. Collaboration continues to be the hallmark of United for Literacy. Sharing literacy and learning with people in a safe, welcoming environment can only be achieved through strong partnerships.

I am approaching my first anniversary as president and 21st year on staff. Over these years, I have witnessed—every day—how the transformative power of literacy is the pathway to social equity and prosperity for individuals and entire communities. I am happy to report that, as we near the final year of the Strategic Plan that launched in 2020, we are proud of the changes we are making today to grow our services for tomorrow. We continue to adapt to ongoing societal change and the evolving needs of the adults, youth, children, and families we serve.

Next year is the 125th anniversary of United for Literacy, and we are looking forward to celebrating with you. I'd like to thank our dedicated staff, valued partners, and extraordinary volunteers for their continued dedication and readiness to support 33,698 individuals throughout Canada. Together, we fostered self-expression, built confidence, and helped open doors to new opportunities for so many. I'd also like to thank our supporters and donors for their belief in our mission. Thank you for the hope your generosity brings. And on behalf of everyone at United for Literacy, I'd like to celebrate our learners for their courage and achievements. You are an important part of United for Literacy.

And so, as we close out an unprecedented year and look forward, United for Literacy is ready. We will innovate to break the intergenerational cycle of low literacy. We will not stop until everyone has the skills they need to succeed in school, at work, or in life in general. This is our commitment.



Mélanie Valcin

President and CEO

Message from the chair

I am proud to serve my first year as chair of the Board of Directors during a time of extraordinary transformation. With new faces on our board, a new president, and a new name, we charted new directions by providing strong governance and accountability to the organization. I am incredibly fortunate to work with my fellow board members who are skilled, dedicated, passionate, and forward-thinking.

We proudly continue to do what we set out to achieve in 1899: serve our learners! I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has chosen United for Literacy to be a part of their learning journey. I feel inspired by the excellent and effective programming our staff and volunteers employ to build literacy skills in neighbourhoods, schools, and workplaces across Canada. We're always looking for new ways to reach people where they are. In Northern Quebec, we launched a new partnership with Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre, which provides inpatient recovery services for trauma and addictions to families in Nunavik. In New Brunswick, we expanded after-school homework support in Indigenous communities. In Manitoba, we launched a new program in Winnipeg serving youth and adults seeking to obtain their General Education Diploma (GED). I personally work in Saskatchewan with a young student, connecting on a weekly basis to enhance reading and comprehension skills utilizing the online method of learning that works best for him.

Canada continues to face unprecedented challenges to literacy due to school disruptions caused by COVID-19. Additionally, increasingly complex written language demands are required to fully participate in daily life. United for Literacy staff, volunteers, donors, and partners share a singular goal: to help Canadians build their literacy and learning skills for a brighter future. Together, we work from a position of trust and experience, with a community and culture that I believe uniquely positions us to build an increasingly relevant and sustainable future for the next 125 years. Thank you on behalf of the United for Literacy Board of Directors.



Anne Parker
Board Chair

United for Literacy Board of Directors

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**Left Board in September 2022.*

We are United for Literacy.

Our new identity is designed to bridge our past and future.



EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Since 1899, United for Literacy (formerly Frontier College) has changed its name three times—reflecting the evolving needs of the people and communities we serve.

As part of our 5-year strategic plan, we took a close look at our brand—who we are, what we stand for, and how we deliver value across Canada. The decision to undergo a rebranding strategy was not taken lightly. As a 124-year-old organization, we recognized the risk and understood the opportunity.

As an organization committed to removing barriers to literacy, we listen closely to our community. Increasingly, we found there was a strong disconnect between what we do and what we were called: “Frontier” doesn’t reflect the diversity of where we operate today, on site and online, and we are not a College, which caused confusion for our learners, partners,

and donors. More importantly, the word literacy was not in our name. United for Literacy is about deepening and broadening our commitment to our learners, volunteers, partners, and supporters; they are at the heart of what we do.

United for Literacy clearly describes our purpose and—in plain language—communicates our values and approach. We mobilize volunteers, partners, and communities for a common cause: to ensure everyone has the skills and confidence they need to learn and achieve their goals through the power of literacy.



Whether you have been involved with us for years or are just getting to know us, I hope you will join us on this journey and that you will continue to help us drive change. I encourage you to unite with us in our renewed vision for the future. We look forward to learning and growing as an organization—with you at our side.

– Mélanie Valcin, *President and CEO*



We are United for Impact.

Student Success Programs for Children and Youth

Percentage of children and youth who improved their skills in:



92%
Reading



86%
Writing



85%
Mathematics

89% of parents observed that their child's reading skills improved after participating in the United for Literacy program.

81% of parents observed that their child's math skills improved after participating in the United for Literacy program.

82% of teachers and educators observed an improvement in students' reading after participating in the United for Literacy program.

Life Success Programs for Adults and Out-of-School Youth

Percentage of adults and out-of-school youth who improved their skills in:



99%
Reading



98%
Document Use



96%
Technology Use



95%
Writing

91% of tutors noticed that adult learners show increased confidence after attending a program at United for Literacy.

88% of tutors observed that their learners improved their reading skills after participating in the United for Literacy program.

78% of learners strongly feel that they have gained skills they need to achieve their specific life goals.

Summer Literacy Camps with Indigenous Communities

Summer Literacy Camp strengthens skills and communities:

99%



of camp counsellors said working at camp strengthened their employment skills.

99%



of parents said camps were valuable to their community.

95%



of campers felt that attending camp maintained or raised their interest in reading and learning.

United for Connection >

Highlights



Making Learning Connections in Nunavik

We are proud of everything that strong partnerships allow us to accomplish. With the support of ESUMA and the Kativik Regional Government, United for Literacy delivered 1,000 new Unikkausiit Ummatut learnings kits in Nunavik.

The customized learning kits were distributed by local service providers to residences, schools, and daycares across 14 remote communities in the territory. Program Manager Krystyna's presence in the territory meant more than 30% of the kits were placed directly in the hands of parents, which gave time for discussion about the materials and a chance to get to know each other. Each kit includes reading and activity books created and written in local Nunavik dialects, with additional supporting materials.

While visiting these fly-in Inuit communities Krystyna conducted a Nunavik-wide literacy needs-assessment, and also contributed to a research project on school perseverance, which is the first of its kind to be done in the region. She held meetings—and over 15 hours of radio broadcasts—with elected officials, service providers, community members, elders, youth, and parents. Hundreds of residents participated in discussions about literacy, the role of parents and community in fostering school perseverance, and ongoing programming needs in the community. The visit has already resulted in exciting new opportunities for program growth.



Planting the Seed of Lifelong Learning in St. Mary's First Nation

We're passionate about educational experiences that help children reach their full potential, promote healthy development, and nurture their interests and hobbies.

With the support of Hewitt Foundation and McCain Foundation, we developed two new after-school programs for elementary students at Chief Harold Sappier Memorial Elementary School in St. Mary's First Nation, Fredericton. For one hour each week, students in kindergarten to grade two who need extra reading support outside of the classroom join our tutor in The Reading Club. Built for beginner readers, story time includes easy-to-follow plots, simple vocabulary, and plenty of sight words, with the goal to plant the seed for a lifelong love of reading. At the same time, kids in grades three to five participated in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), getting hands-on learning with science experiments and building challenges. The varied skills and interests children learn here prepare them to be innovative and creative in the future.

National Forum on Literacy and Mental Health

As people in Canada face a significant increase in mental health conditions due to the pandemic, we hosted a national forum to examine the relationship between reading, writing, and mental well-being.

It's a shared relationship between the two: Literacy helps people improve and maintain their mental health, and good mental health supports literacy skill development and learning.

Hosted by The Globe and Mail Health Columnist André Picard, over 500 attendees listened to panelists **Dr. Sharon Burey**, Behavioural Pediatrician; **Olivia Ikey Duncan**, Inuit Advocate; **Andrew Johnson**, Manager, Patient and Family Education and CAMH Publications at Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; and **Jackie Garcia Navidad**, Project Manager in Mental Health at Carrefour le Moutier.



I found the panel extremely knowledgeable and engaging, with such wonderfully diverse perspectives that hit many of the points of intersectionality of the topic of learning and mental health challenges. Thank you for bringing these voices together, so we could have an opportunity to listen, learn, and then enact change in our practices.

– Forum Attendee



Highlights



Special Camp Visit from the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

United for Literacy Board Chair Anne Parker and His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, visited kids attending Summer Literacy Camp in Sturgeon Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan.

At this camp, community members and Elders play a vital role by teaching cultural traditions and language.

Across Canada, these popular camps help boost literacy skills for kids aged 5-12 while providing the fun of camp. In partnership with Indigenous communities, we offered a combination of in-person and at-home learning activities in 97 communities across Canada, including delivering 14,012 free, high-quality books and over 2,600 learning kits, that were designed by our staff with learners' specific needs in mind.

Improving Foundational Literacy Skills for Adults

We launched a new two-year project to help 5,000 adults increase their foundational literacy, numeracy, digital skills, and soft skills such as communication, collaboration, and problem solving.

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Adult Learning, Literacy, and Essential Skills Program, the project aims to reach low-skilled adults and prepare them to find and keep a job, adapt and succeed at work, participate in community-based learning programs, and enroll in training and upgrading. A new cohort of Instructor Coordinators developed programming using adult learning principles and provided tutoring in current and new program sites and online.



The last weeks have been challenging because I sought my first job. As a newcomer, I felt uncertain about my English and skills to work in this new society. During the last three weeks, the one-to-one sessions with Maha (tutor) helped me to overcome those feelings and prepare the best versions of my resume and cover letter. Maha also supported me in preparing for two interviews and I was chosen to fill both positions! Thank you so much!

—Marilyn, learner



United for Success > Awards

Fitzpatrick Award Recipient

Bestowed to an organization, corporation, agency, or family.



The employees at Manulife Financial are essential to the success of the Manulife Homework Club—United for Literacy’s longest-running corporate-partnered after-school program. This free, one-to-one tutoring program in Toronto has helped hundreds of students in Grades 7-12—who do not have access to extra support—improve their academic and interpersonal skills. Students meet weekly with Manulife employees to improve their reading, writing, math, and study skills. Informal career mentorship provided by the Manulife volunteers is a unique feature of the program that students, parents, and the tutors themselves all value. Over the years, the participating students’ families and teachers have noted changes in the way students perceive and conduct themselves, crediting the program for a great deal of student success.

In addition to volunteering, many employees make a financial donation through Helping Hands grants based on their hours of service to United for Literacy. Manulife Financial is committed to fostering healthier, more equitable communities and, through their long-standing support, they demonstrate positive change in a truly tangible way. We’re proud to be partners in literacy with Manulife Financial and look forward to building brighter futures together.

Companion Award Recipient

Bestowed to an individual.



Norma Noskey



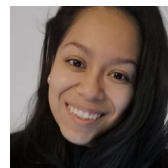
Since 2017, Norma has been instrumental in the planning and coordination of Summer Literacy Camp in her hometown of Peavine Métis Settlement in Alberta. Norma’s initiative, leadership, and dedication have created a wonderful environment for young learners to grow and succeed. Norma’s dedication to camp goes beyond her own community: In 2019, she helped United for Literacy host in-person training in Peavine that benefitted all camp staff from Alberta. Norma is the first to lend a helping hand; she created a Little Free Library with books donated by United for Literacy; she worked with United for Literacy to design the first Community Literacy Catalyst program in Peavine, delivering after-school programs for kids; and she has even worked as a camp bus driver to ensure learners get to and from camp safely. We are grateful for Norma’s commitment and unwavering support.

Joyce Matthews Award Recipient

Bestowed to a former or current volunteer.



Jacqueline Garcia-Navidad



Jackie (Jacqueline) joined United for Literacy in Montréal as a volunteer tutor in the fall of 2016 and quickly became integral to the organization. Her empathy, enthusiasm, and passion for education is infectious—just ask the learners, volunteers, and staff who have worked with her! Jackie believes in helping others and is always ready to have a conversation about equal opportunities for all. She spent three summers in Waswanipi, Québec as a Summer Literacy Camp counsellor and also worked as an intern developing community workshops and conferences, family literacy activities, and managing book distributions. She has made an impact on the lives of many learners. A friend for life, Jackie, we thank you for your commitment and support.

United to Make a Difference.



33,698
people in 191 communities across Canada participated in United for Literacy Programs.



75,477
free, new books were distributed to children and families.



We collaborated with **503** community partners to deliver quality literacy support in their neighbourhoods. Our partner organizations contributed space, staff time, snacks, and supplies.



10,297 activity kits were sent to children, youth, and families to support at-home learning.



We hosted **83** literacy workshops and conferences, attended by **3,028** parents, teachers, literacy practitioners, social service workers, and community members.

1,689

volunteers gave

37,877

hours of service to
United for Literacy.



2,680

children participated
in literacy camps in

97 Indigenous communities
last summer.



237



people were employed
through our Summer
Literacy Camps.

84%



were hired from Indigenous
host communities.

91%



of parents said their child
likes reading more after
attending camp.

88%



of campers said they
considered themselves to be
a "good reader" after camp.

United for Change >

Stories That Inspire

Driving Change and Empowerment in Iqaluit

We believe every place can be a learning place. For Instructor–Coordinator Patrick, a taxi is the perfect place to reach people. Patrick quickly established himself in Iqaluit, meeting local taxi drivers who are Inuit, First Nation, and newcomers. Recognizing their need and desire to learn English but understanding they work 12-hour shifts 6–7 days a week, he decided to ride along with them to deliver language lessons.



I teach drivers for Caribou Cabs. I have just begun teaching a woman named Selma from Ethiopia. I sit in the front seat, and, for 45 to 75 minutes, we talk. After each lesson, I evaluate my notes and provide her with handouts to help improve her grammar and vocabulary. I have also provided her with a notebook for homework and a USB of resources for her to use and enjoy. Selma returns it to me weekly so I can delete and update it so she will eventually have a library of resources.

–Patrick, Instructor–Coordinator

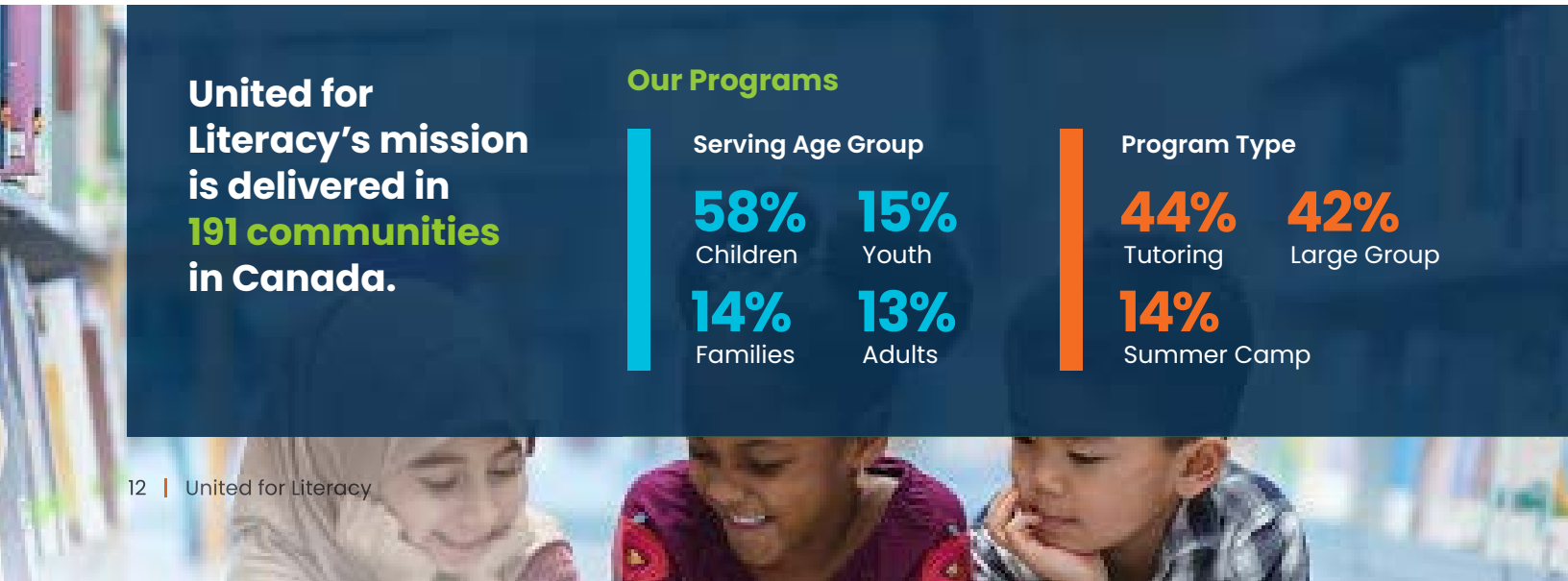
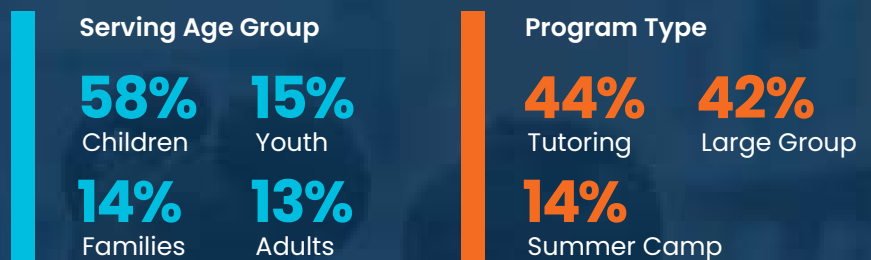


Many of the drivers say they have benefitted from interacting with Patrick. Newcomer participants explain how he makes learning fun, how much they have learned about Canadian culture, and how they have gained confidence in speaking to people whose first language is English.

This work is made possible with funding from the Government of Canada’s Skills for Success program.

United for Literacy’s mission is delivered in **191 communities** in Canada.

Our Programs



Specialized Student Support in Winnipeg

Students in Grades 7-12 at Marymount School in Winnipeg have exceptional learning needs and require specialized education. In partnership with the school's Pathways Learning Centre, the Truth and Reconciliation program United for Literacy runs at the school addresses ongoing issues and events present in Indigenous communities; focuses on traditional knowledge and skills; and promotes truth and reconciliation through literacy activities.

We'd like to tell you about Drew. Throughout the first half of the program, Drew became increasingly interested in the discussions and activities. He often expressed his interest and enjoyment. School staff told us how much Drew has grown socially, academically, and emotionally since the beginning of the program in September 2022. "You would've seen a completely different student last year. Drew didn't actively participate or care about coming in and having to engage with learning like this.

This year he is very interested in everything that United for Literacy offers and looks forward to having you come in every week", explained Daphne Pogue, a staff member at Marymount.



Having United for Literacy provide this program has been such a great aid to every one of our students' learning, and we really like that you're bringing in cultural and social teachings and activities in addition to the literacy activities, because it's not only helping with their English and writing skills but also their social studies work. The engagement level you get from the students is fantastic, especially with Drew. Like Daphne said, you would've seen a completely different kid last year, and within the last few months having United for Literacy come in every week, there has been such a significant increase in Drew's engagement and attitude, it's been great.

—Alex, Program Coordinator,
Pathways Learning Centre



Tutoring includes:

- Direct One-to-One or Small Group Instruction and Support
- After-school Literacy and Numeracy Programs
- Reading Circles



Large Group includes:

- Training and Workshops
- Presentation and Speeches
- Awareness Events
- Family Learning Activities
- Reading Tents
- Conferences



Summer Camp includes:

- Literacy Programming and Materials for Children Aged 5-12

Our Supporters

Thank you to our outstanding supporters for giving the gift of literacy.



We would like to thank our community partners for providing space, staff, snacks, and supplies. We also wish to thank those donors who have chosen to remain anonymous. Although we have made every effort to ensure that donors have been correctly acknowledged, if we have erred, please accept our apologies and report the error or omission to 1-800-555-6523 ext. 3324.

\$500,000+

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Peter Roberts
Robert Robson
Dorothy Rogers
Felicity Ronaghan
Janice Rubin
Rick Rumney
Michael Ruxton
Casey Sabawi
Elizabeth Taylor
Christine Thomlinson
Sarah Thompson
Martin Tremblay
Brigitte Tremorin
Mélanie Valcin
Natalie Wilson
Mei Wa Wong
Michele Wright
Haoshi Yu

Financials

Summarized Statement of Operations

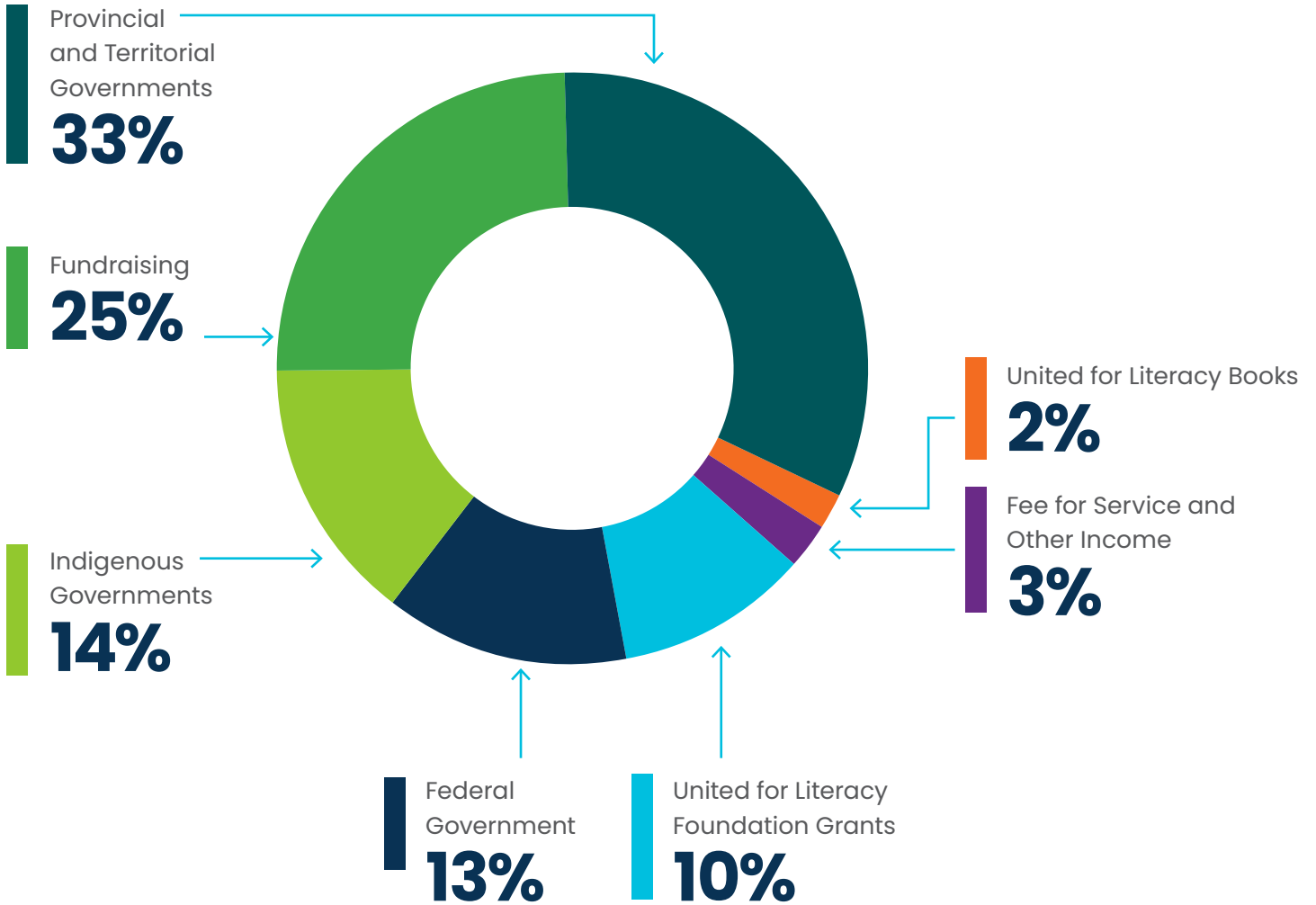
	2023	2022
Governments	7,556,867	5,928,166
Fundraising	3,080,612	2,971,636
United for Literacy Foundation Grants	1,288,153	1,201,026
United for Literacy Books	214,897	67,841
Fee for Service and Other Income	341,838	375,255
Total Operating Revenue	12,482,367	10,543,924
Salaries and Benefits	8,902,037	7,935,307
Program Materials and Delivery Costs	1,078,711	1,099,427
Operational Costs	1,233,827	967,086
Travel	467,867	136,032
Fundraising and Communications	490,986	218,636
Cost of Sales	157,859	44,571
Amorization and Interest on Capital Leases	151,080	142,865
Total Operating Expenses	12,482,367	10,543,924
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	–	–

Summarized Statement of Financial Position

	2023	2022
Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	8,305,315	6,792,179
Accounts Receivable	847,731	826,960
Inventory and Prepaid Expenses	300,259	213,115
Capital Assets	619,130	552,420
	10,072,435	8,384,674
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	923,779	639,699
Deferred Contributions	8,316,051	6,896,537
Other Obligations	48,321	64,154
Net Assets	784,284	784,284
	10,072,435	8,384,674

Full audited financial statements and notes are available at unitedforliteracy.ca

Revenue Sources



We are United for Literacy >

Your Partner in Learning

We are proud to be the literacy partner
of choice across Canada since 1899.





EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Literacy is...

...transformational

It changes lives, families, and communities. It feeds growth, unleashes potential, and empowers people with the capability and confidence they need to realize their goals.

...urgent

Everyone can learn. But not everyone can access the help they need. Canada's literacy divide widens daily because so many people and communities lack adequate literacy support.

...dynamic

Society demands increasingly sophisticated understanding of written language to fully participate in daily life.

...vital

to Canada's long-term success. Solving systemic literacy challenges is key to advancing social equity and prosperity across our country.

...achievable

Bridging the literacy gap is something we can do. It's our most effective, achievable tool for change. Results are demonstrable at personal and systemic levels.

Literacy changes everything.



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