



GROWING WITH PURPOSE:

**REFLECTING, LEARNING
AND TRANSFORMATION**

Impact Report 2026



Honouring Our Land & First Peoples



ECALA acknowledges the land we gather on, land that has been home for many First Peoples, our ancestors, the caregivers of Turtle Island. The land has been a traditional meeting ground, gathering place, and travelling route for centuries. This place where we live and gather is territory covered by Treaty 6, Métis Nation of Alberta District 9 and 10, and the Inuit. We are honoured to share what Creator of all things has loaned to all Nations, and humbly acknowledge that we are all related. We honour the terms of treaty in perpetuity when we declare peace and friends, as long as the sun shines, grass grows, and water flows.

ECALA is committed to working toward the equity and justice the Treaty promised and continues to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Education Calls to Action.

Growing with Purpose

Our Board Chair

The 2025–2026 year has focused on preparing for ECALA’s future. Our agency remains committed to strengthening adult foundational learning across our community, ensuring that learners, educators, and agencies are supported through responsive and impactful programming, while also improving our systems, preparing for a new Executive Director, and managing our budget responsibly.

This year, we welcomed the first funding increase in 11 years. This funding doesn’t fix the economic realities around us, but it helps support the services we fund. The achievements of those agencies are outstanding, and we are incredibly grateful for the work your teams are doing.

A key area of focus this year has been strengthening our relationships. Much of this work has involved preparing our partners for the introduction of a new Executive Director in the fall of 2026. Through continued collaboration with the Alberta Government, funded agencies, and sector partners, we have prepared for this change. These relationships are grounded in trust, transparency, and shared accountability, and we are committed to reflecting partner feedback as we identify the skills needed in ECALA’s next leader.

At the heart of all this work is impact. Everything we are doing is to ensure that ECALA continues to operate effectively, even as we undergo change. Through the programs, partnerships, and initiatives supported by ECALA, we continue to see positive change: learners building confidence, gaining skills, and finding new opportunities to participate fully in their communities. These outcomes reflect the dedication and expertise of the agencies, educators, and partners who deliver this work every day. Qualitative and quantitative impact results are included in this Report. The results demonstrate that ECALA continues to exceed and excel proposed expectations.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our outgoing Executive Director for all she has done to support a successful transition, the incredible staff team for maintaining relationships and working with our partners during this time, and the Board members, funded agencies, volunteers, and funding partners who continue to support our mission. The passion, commitment, and collaboration shown across this work are core to the services we deliver. It is truly an honour to work alongside so many dedicated individuals.

Thank you for your continued dedication to ECALA and to the communities we serve.

Connor Corsaro
Board Chair, ECALA



Reflections and Learning

Our Executive Director

Reflections

Eleven years have gone much faster than I would have imagined. Almost everything has changed during this time, except the courage and perseverance of our learners and the passion for our work to truly make a difference in learners' lives, and ultimately in ours and our community.

As this is my last report to the community, I am sharing information that will hopefully support our vision where “everyone can learn and grow.” I am so grateful to have been part of the team and to have worked with our amazing staff and learned from them. The flowers throughout the report are for each of you, to thank you and recognize your outstanding work.

Learners and Exceptional Educators

During my time with ECALA, a record **60,621** learners participated in classes, averaging 120 classes per year. Between 14,000 hours during COVID and a high of 22,000 hours per year of instructional hours pre-COVID, exceptional agency staff and volunteers were supported.

I had the opportunity to meet almost all of the staff and many of the learners. This was important to me as I saw my role as sharing their voice in meetings and raising awareness of the critical importance of literacy and learning opportunities for foundational adults in Edmonton. Their voices were heard during International Literacy Day events, stakeholder and funder meetings, on our website and in our Members Matter and Learner Lens newsletter. It was no coincidence that I chose these names for our communications, which had exceptional open rates and included relevant and timely information each month.

Strategic Relationships and the Community

Many of the funded agency leaders knew me prior to my becoming the ECALA ED, and they had high expectations. I was often seen as leading the charge in my former ED roles to compel funders to value and better understand the work on the ground, to avoid reporting processes and policies that created competitive silos and constant staff turnover, so why stop now?

These strategic relationships, along with new ones, led to a Needs Assessment Project and the Edmonton Leadership Coalition 2.0, which now collaborates more than it competes.

Cultural Solutions and Pathways

In 2017, the Granting Councils received a small grant to begin funding Indigenous learning opportunities. I learned, along with the agencies, from the Elders and Knowledge Holders about the importance of Oral grant processes and how Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being could also be a pathway to support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Education Calls to Action. The First People's Principles of Learning began to guide our work with non-Indigenous learning opportunities alongside learner-centred practice.

Today, we continue to fund six learning opportunities focused on Indigenous History, Culture, and Ways of Knowing and Being. Supporting cultural solutions and walking down two pathways is not an easy journey, but it has been one of the most impactful learning journeys I have had.



When We Learn and Grow, Lives Transform

Focus on the Learner

My focus on the learner and challenging our staff team and Board to use this practice framework in almost everything they do required understanding the learner goals and challenges and including them in needs assessments, generative conversations, decision-making, learning material choices, and our annual funding case for support. It is no surprise that the practice continues to achieve success rates over **98%** each year. Opportunities to meet learners are what I will miss most when I depart, but their stories and journeys will stay with me forever.

Professional Development

In 2017, ECALA received a small professional development grant after the need for customized, relevant and practical training was identified for funded agency staff. I no longer had to lead this work on my own. I was able to hire an exceptional educator who led this work for 8 years. In 2021, we added an additional position, and most staff delivered workshops to share their expertise. Together, we supported almost **2,900** staff in **264** workshops.

Coaching and Mentoring

My early love of sports influenced my leadership style as a coach and a mentor. Coaching and mentoring ECALA and agency staff were a primary focus during my tenure. It helped that this is also a valued model for supporting excellence in our field by Advanced Education, so close to **1,000** hours each year of this type of one-on-one support continues.

Relevance and Responsiveness

In my leadership role in the sector, I often highlighted the potential of systemic changes needed to be responsive to the needs of adult foundational learners and educators, which would lead to increased civic participation and a thriving community. My core beliefs in community development aligned with ECALA's guiding principles, so it was easy for me to be an active participant in creating positive change within the current policy. I leave with the hope that ECALA can work in this transformative space and effect change.

Granting Councils and CALP

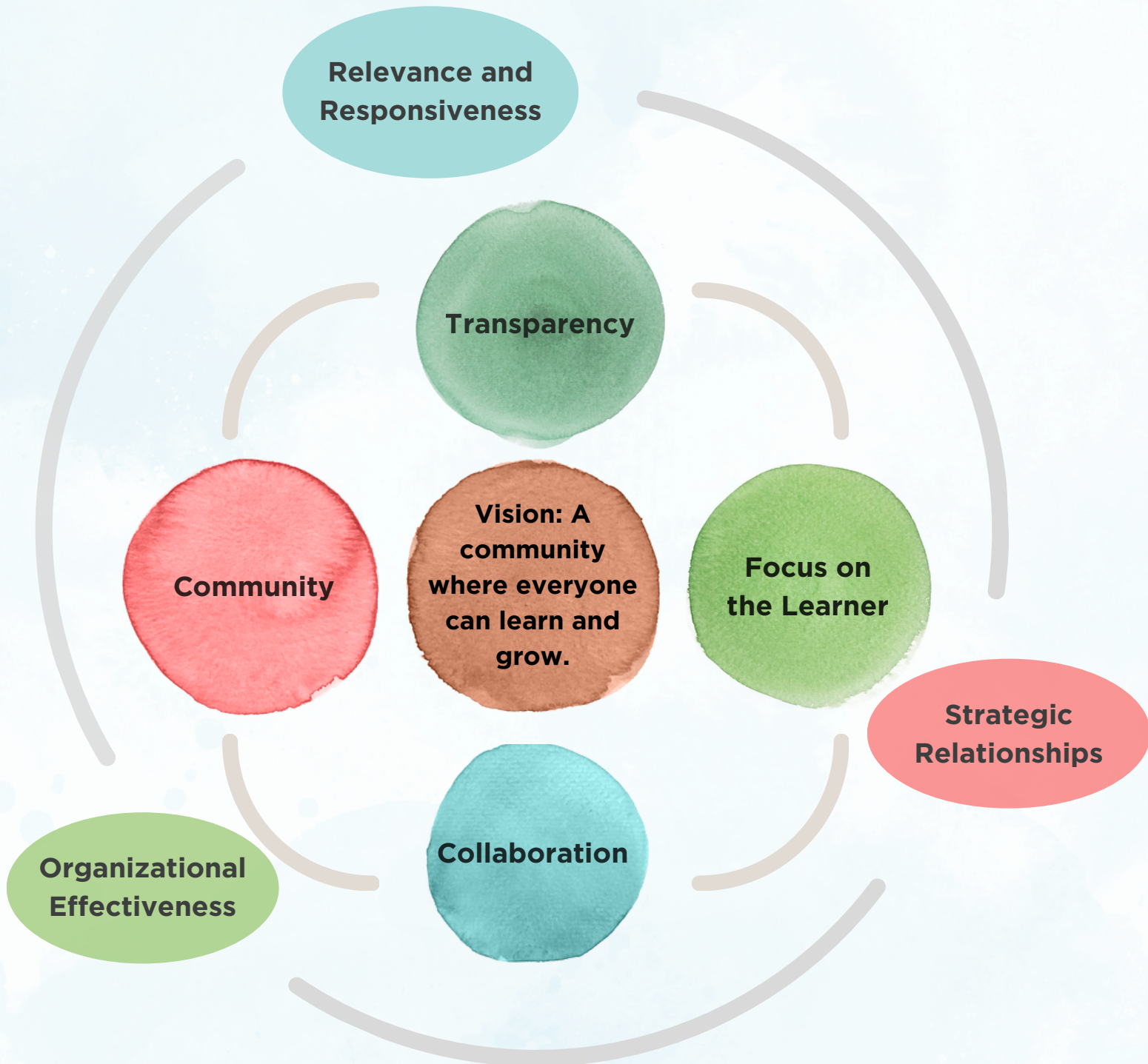
ECALA has demonstrated excellence, accountability, transparency and effectiveness in our role as a Granting Council, far beyond what Advanced Education can do on its own. Together, the three Granting Councils have tirelessly advocated for the collection of relevant impact data to continue to build a strong case for support of the CALP Grant and the Granting Council Model. ECALA hosted two Logic Model Review Conversations and contributed to a Granting Council Logic Model Report, which was informative and worth considering before any changes are made.

In our role as a Granting Council, we ensured the community was the driver of investment and responsive to emerging needs. While this work is not easy, positive relationships with all stakeholders, including Advanced Education, were key to the ongoing success of adult foundational learners.

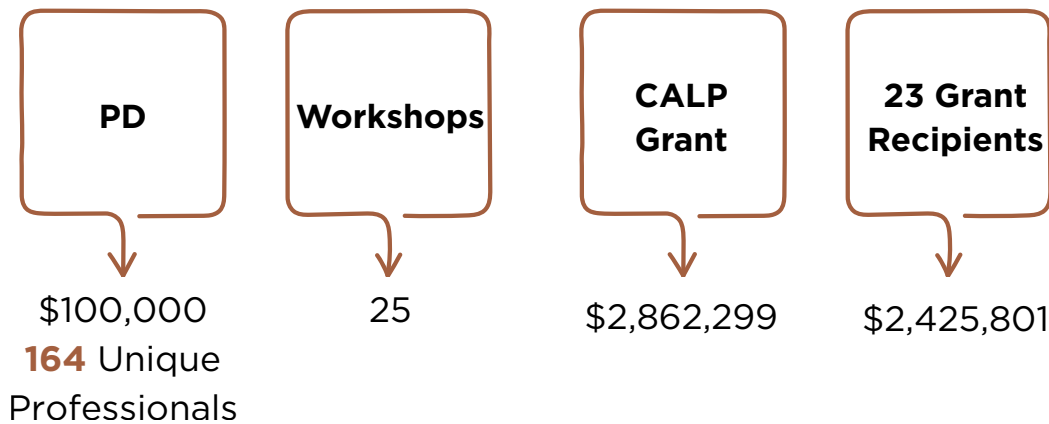
Keep up the great work, and I will be cheering you on from the sidelines.

Strategic Direction

2023 - 2026



Financial and PD Impact



Financial Impact and Timely Investment

ECALA received an additional \$100,070 and added \$ 6,000 from operations to support seven agencies in increasing the number of English Language classes. **Eighteen** learning opportunities were added, totalling **1011 additional instructional hours**. As a result, an additional **356** learners were removed from waitlists and joined a class. Some of their stories are included in this Report.

PD Collaborations

ECALA's ongoing collaboration as one of four CALP PD partners led to the sharing of emerging needs and innovative practices during regular meetings. Much of what we learned together resulted in training that was relevant and practical to the entire CALP system.

ECALA staff also continue to support the Annual Literacy and Learning Symposium by delivering timely and participatory sessions with exceptional impact.

Skills for Success

To effectively manage a CALP grant and deliver high-quality classes, unique skills are essential. Participants reported that **99%** acquired new knowledge and that the PD was of high quality.

The PD sessions most often requested delved into the ethical use of AI in the classroom and by agency staff in their report writing and data analysis. The PD series on Classroom Management and Wellness was repeated in response to agency requests. This year, the highest participation was in Community Conversations, Logic Model Conversations, Writing Annual Reports and Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation.

Relevant and Practical PD

ECALA staff continue to play a vital role in delivering workshops and sharing their expertise in creating relevant and practical sessions. Participation increased by **33%** this year, even as agency resources are stretched thin. Funded agencies prioritized PD, which led to increased participation and higher retention among agency staff.



Professional Development

Indicators of Success

“The workshop was very engaging, flexible and **the facilitators delivered the session in a friendly and professional manner.**”

- Person-Centred Programs Session

“I tend to be a little hesitant regarding new technology, however this session was very eye opening. **I am excited to try ChatGPT and other AI resources to aid with lesson planning.**”

- Lessons Using ChatGPT Session

“It was helpful to learn and practice at the same time rather than just listening. **It was a very engaging workshop!**”

- Lessons Using ChatGPT Session

“The PD was short but sweet — full of valuable and practical content that I can use in class for a multi-level class.”

- Multi-Level Classes & Literacy Learners Session

“I like the 6 P’s because I can use it to create all my lesson plans and I believe it will improve the quality of the sessions with my learner.”

- The 6Ps of Lesson Planning Session

“Learning that there are ways to teach a multi-level class without preparing different lessons. **I can prepare one topic and adjust the difficulty so all students are able to participate.**”

- Diverse, Multi-Level Classroom Session

“This 1-hour session packed in realistic strategies that were easy to implement. **The online format was well delivered and the visuals on the screen were pleasant to look at and offered to the point information.**”

- Nervous System Balancing Session

Educators reported

99%

Quality PD

99%

Acquired relevant knowledge & skills

375

Educators trained

33

Hours of PD
Delivered

“Focusing on an individual’s unique needs, preferences, and values, treating them with dignity and respect, and involving them as a partner in their own care or support.”

- Person-Centred Programs Session



Learner Snapshot

Learners Registered

8,672



27,543

Instructional & Tutoring Hours

The aggregated percentages
These are based on **7,974**
learners evaluated.



95%

**Increased
confidence**

Learner Identity

98%

**Used skills from class
in everyday lives**

9%

Identify as First
Nations,
Metis, or Inuit
(Indigenous)

70%

Identify as
Female



96%

**Made progress in
meeting their goals**

89%



Identify as Permanent or
Temporary Resident, or
Refugee Status

99%

**Felt relevant to
their needs/goals**

Learner Ages

98%

**Reduced barriers to
access learning**

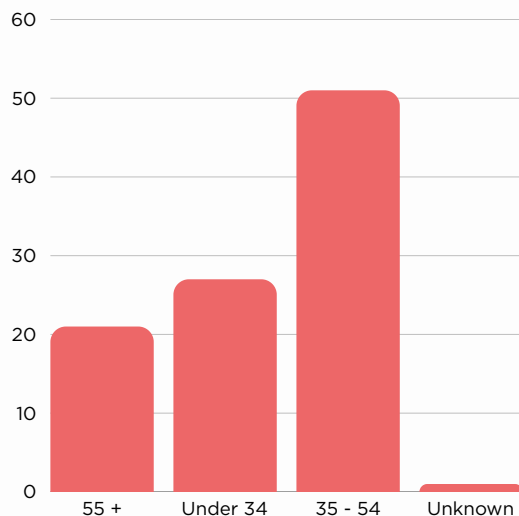
99%

**Felt welcoming space
was created**

106

Unique Agencies

Agencies referring learners to
grant recipients



*Calculated based on 4,746 unique learners as
of September 8, 2026



Stories from the Learners

A learner joined the Saturday ELL program because it allowed her husband to care for their young daughter. Back home, she had been a mathematics teacher, and her primary goal in Canada was to return to the education sector.

Supported by the welcoming classroom environment, she practiced her English, built a supportive network of friends, and worked closely with the instructor to customize her resume and cover letter. Supported by peer encouragement and intensive interview prep, she successfully passed her job interview and was hired as an Educational Assistant (EA).

She celebrated her success by sharing traditional treats and her story of determination with her classmates.

-Teacher with Indo-Canadian Women's Association

I am walking away with such a healing. I had a dream months ago of being here with my grandmothers telling me I need to come and I chickened out last time.

But came and the aunties and community here moved me to tears and I feel grateful to have been given the opportunity to have this experience and not having the barrier of paying to access this.

I feel so healed and grateful and will be back to finish my moccasins.

-Learner from Dickinsfield Amity House

During the course, the digital literacy teacher guided Khadija through fundamental computer skills, linking them directly to her everyday life and goals. She learned how to type using the English keyboard and practiced extensively to master using the mouse and typing words. The breakthrough came when the teacher showed her how to Google makeup schools to find a practical training course. Khadija took this new knowledge, searched for schools online at home, and shared her choices with her teacher for advice.

After two years, Khadija's life has completely changed. She successfully improved her English and now navigates the internet in English with ease. She applied to a makeup school and is currently studying to earn her certificate. The computer transformed from an intimidating machine into her primary tool for independence, allowing her to integrate into her community and advocate for her family.

Khadija called on June 6th to confirm that she has successfully obtained her makeup artistry certificate. She subsequently shared copies of both her professional makeup artist's certificate and her personalized business card. .

-Teacher with Canadian Arab Friendship Association





Agency Grant Recipients

2025-2026



- Action for Healthy Communities of Edmonton
- Alberta Immigrant Women and Children Centre
- ASSIST Community Services Centre
- Ben Calf Robe Society
- Canadian Arab Friendship Association of Edmonton
- Centre for Family Literacy Society of Alberta
- Connect Society for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta
- Creating Hope Society
- Cultural Connections Institute - The Learning Exchange
- Dickinsfield Amity House
- Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation
- Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
- Edmonton Newcomer Centre
- Indo-Canadian Women's Association of Edmonton
- Language and Culture Education Society of Alberta
- Multicultural Family Resource Society
- Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre
- Project Adult Literacy Society
- The Candora Society of Edmonton
- The Learning Centre Literacy Association
- The Red Road Healing Society
- United Cultures of Canada Association

Funding Partners

2025-2026



Changing lives of adult foundational learners requires funding.
Thank you for supporting our investment in Edmonton-based programs.

Email: info@ecala.org
Website: www.ecala.org

