



NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

CDEACF

1. What are your commitments with regard to adult literacy and skills development?

NDP Response: Literacy and basic skills are central to the enjoyment of health, job opportunities and community participation. Under the Conservative government, adult literacy and learning just hasn't been a priority. The Conservatives repeatedly allowed funding for literacy and essential skills to lapse, leaving funds for vital programming simply unspent: this happened to 31% of the total budget of the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program in 2013-14.

An NDP government will make adult literacy and skills development a priority, ensuring that the funds devoted to these important programs get spent and working with stakeholders to ensure that Canadians have access to the skills training and literacy programs they need.

2. Will you commit to play a strong and positive leadership role in promoting literacy, according to federal jurisdiction? If so, how will this leadership be put into effect?

NDP Response: The NDP recognizes how important literacy is for many facets of life, including economic and social participation. That's why an NDP government will play a strong and positive leadership role in promoting literacy. We will ensure that funding dedicated to literacy and essential skills is actually spent, and we will work with stakeholders to identify priorities and best practices, and scale-up the most promising approaches across the country.

3. Will your party commit to adopt measures that comply with constitutional obligations regarding the linguistic rights of Francophone Canadians who live in a minority context? If so, please provide concrete illustrations of this commitment.

NDP Response: The NDP is fully committed to complying with the Constitution and to protecting the linguistic rights of Canadians. For Canadians to be able to exercise those rights, the federal government needs to ensure that the proper resources are there. The NDP has called on the government to increase its support for the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages which includes funds for access to education in the minority language.

The NDP was strongly opposed to the abolition of the Court Challenge Program. This program provided essential resources to ensure the protection and enhancement of minority

language rights. We also voiced our concerns with the Languages Rights Support Program, as it seems to respond only in part to communities' needs.

In terms of Official Languages, the NDP has long track record of proposing concrete actions to protect and promote Canada's official languages. We tabled a bill – which was adopted – to make all officers of Parliament bilingual when they are appointed. We also tabled bills on multiple occasions to ensure Supreme Court of Canada judges are bilingual. Unlike the Conservatives, whose actions have moved us backwards, and the Liberals, who have not been proactive, the NDP has been proposing initiatives to support and strengthen our official languages.

4. Are you willing to fund a stable infrastructure that will allow for the fulfillment of multiple functions such as information, innovation, research and sharing of expertise in the field of literacy and skills development?

NDP Response: Under the guise of directing money to where it was needed most, the Conservatives cut funding for literacy organizations. They argued that resources were being wasted on administration and research, but the reality is that the Conservatives simply allowed a large portion of literacy funding to lapse instead of redirecting it towards new projects.

The NDP recognizes that effective literacy programs require a wide range of activities, including research, information sharing, innovating, and scaling up best practices. We also recognize the reality that organizations have overhead costs, and that without funding for administration many essential tasks can simply not be done. That's why an NDP government will reverse the Conservatives short-sighted approach to funding and will work with the sector to ensure that core funding is available for the full range of programs necessary.

5. Do you agree to integrate literacy and essential skills development into sectoral policies, where these aspects are relevant, such as, for example, employment policies, policies related to Aboriginal people, health, the environment, culture, and the promotion of official languages?

NDP Response: Certain populations struggle more with literacy and basic skills than others. Literacy levels and training are certainly of great concern among Indigenous peoples, for instance. That's why an NDP government supports policies to increase literacy and basic skills among Indigenous peoples, including support for education and ASETS. We will also ensure that literacy and essential skills are considered in other sectors as required.

6. Do you support the inclusion of literacy and skills development funding in the Employment Insurance Fund and the Canada Job Grant?

NDP Response: The NDP supports the inclusion of literacy and essential skills development in the Labour Market Development Agreements signed with the provinces and the federal funding provided to the provinces in support of these agreements. The NDP's commitment to expand access to EI benefits will also ensure that more Canadians are eligible for skills training paid for through the EI Account.

7. Will you implement Canada's commitments to UNESCO and on the international stage in the fields of literacy and adult education (UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action (2015), Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (2015), Bélem Framework for Action (2009) and Hamburg Declaration on Adult Education (1997))?

NDP Response: Yes. The NDP believes that it's time we stopped being a laggard on the international stage and started living up to our international commitments, including our commitments on adult education.