

# **Lifelong Learning in Publicly Funded Universities and Colleges for Seniors in Canada: The New Brunswick Experience**

## **A Literature Review**

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### **Background**

Despite a rapidly increasing population of senior citizens (persons 65 years and older), there is a dearth of seniors-focused lifelong learning opportunities in Canada's publicly funded universities and colleges, a scarcity more pronounced in New Brunswick. This is despite evidence that later-life learning enhances seniors' cognitive resilience, improves active aging, and addresses social isolation.<sup>1</sup>

Canada's population demographics mirror a common trend in OECD<sup>2</sup> countries – a transition to an older population.<sup>3</sup> Accompanying this transition are expectations of increased government commitment to the well-being of the growing number of seniors. Canada's demographic shift is more pronounced in Atlantic Provinces. While seniors make up 15% of the current national population, the figure jumps to 22% in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. Projections are that these Atlantic Provinces will see the proportion of seniors maintain a steady rise into the next decades, further surpassing the rest of Canada.<sup>4,5</sup> Though the emphasis with regard to seniors' welfare is often on providing or expanding old-age pensions, medicare, recreational services, and building close-knit social groups, this literature review examines an overlooked yet crucial area of support – lifelong learning or continuing education.

This phase of the research scopes lifelong learning programs in publicly funded universities and colleges in New Brunswick where seniors have expressed a desire for learning opportunities. The next phase which will involve field data collection using a survey and oral interviews will ascertain the extent of the demand for continuous learning opportunities and services by the province's seniors. The overarching goal is to proffer recommendations to improve access to seniors-focused lifelong learning programs in the province.

To accomplish this, the research first takes a broad view of the lifelong learning landscape in Canada to provide a nationwide glimpse of the topic before zeroing in on New Brunswick. It identifies publicly funded universities and colleges offering lifelong learning programs in the provinces and territories, the format of delivery (whether in-person, virtual or mixed), and the tuition regimes.

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<sup>1</sup> Andersen, D. (2021, May 29). The cognitive benefits of lifelong learning for seniors. *Knute Nelson*. <https://www.knutenelson.org/news-stories/lifelong-learning-benefits>

<sup>2</sup> OECD is the acronym for Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, an intergovernmental organisation comprised of 38 most advanced economies of which Canada is a member.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. (2016, September 28). Demographic change. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-229-x/2009001/demo/int1-eng.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Smellie, S. (2022, April 27). Atlantic provinces will have highest proportion of seniors over 85: Census. *CBC*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/cp-atlantic-provinces-seniors-2043-1.6432892>

<sup>5</sup> Jones, R. (2022, September 29). New Brunswick larger and younger after historic surge in population. *CBC*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/nb-larger-younger-historic-population-surge-1.6599842>

The rest of this research report is organized in the following sequence. The succeeding section provides a brief overview of lifelong learning as a concept and practice. Following that is a review of the literature on lifelong learning programs and services across Canada, particularly in the context of a growing number of seniors needing engagement and activity. The next section drills down on the experience of New Brunswick. The final section summarizes and concludes the report.

### Understanding Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning as an idea attracted global focus with UNESCO's *Learning To be*, a 1972 publication that made a strong case for a learning society. Underpinning UNESCO's push for lifelong learning was the recognition of the benefits of learning throughout the stages of life, for both the individual and society. The call, therefore, was for countries to make lifelong learning a basic principle of education policies to shift the focus from "education" to "learning" to derive greater individual and societal benefits. Since global challenges became clearer in the later period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, OECD countries and international development organizations have seemed more aware of the importance of integrating lifelong learning into educational policy frameworks.<sup>6</sup>

The observation that lifelong learning has become a catchall concept appropriated in ways that have become confusing with particular regard to "its meaning and implications for research, policy and practice", remains true.<sup>7</sup> This may explain why in the European Union, there are standardized expectations on members regarding the makeup of lifelong learning in education policymaking. These expectations are encapsulated in the European Commission's definition of lifelong learning as an "all purposeful learning activity undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective."<sup>8</sup> This definition captures the essentials of lifelong learning, particularly its intention to improve knowledge and skills. However, lifelong learning can serve purposes apart from improving knowledge and skills, especially for seniors. While acquiring knowledge and skills may be one reason to seek opportunities for learning at the later stage of life, knowledge and skills may be secondary to most seniors' need for mental engagement and activity.

To understand this, it is necessary to consider the stages of lifelong learning and what appears paramount at each stage. It is also important to state that the lifelong learning spectrum integrates formal, non-formal, and informal learning. That is to say, lifelong learning takes place in family, community, religious organizations, formal educational institutions, workplaces, etc.<sup>9</sup> The table below describes the stages and content of lifelong learning.

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<sup>6</sup> Power, C. N., & Maclean, R. (2013). Lifelong learning: Meaning, challenges, and opportunities. In, *Skills development for inclusive and sustainable growth in developing Asia-Pacific, Volume 19* (Pp. 29-42). Springer Nature. <https://files.core.ac.uk/pdf/2612/81565041.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> European Commission. (2000). *A memorandum on lifelong learning*. Luxembourg. European Commission, p. 3. [https://arhiv.acs.si/dokumenti/Memorandum\\_on\\_Lifelong\\_Learning.pdf](https://arhiv.acs.si/dokumenti/Memorandum_on_Lifelong_Learning.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Guven, M., Kayabas, B. K., Kapti, U., Goc, S., & Nana, A. B. I. (2016). Lifelong learning activities. Emllt Project. <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/c1a24ed0-dafc-4cc4-b006-62e9be16fd30/Lifelong%20Learning%20Activities.pdf>

**Table 1: The Four Stages of Lifelong Learning**

Stage	Age	Focus
1	0-5 years	Extensive learning happens, building a firm foundation for sustainable learning behaviour and inventiveness. Experts believe the highest amount of informal learning happens at this stage, as children learn by imitating parents, other older people, and their peers. Renowned psychologists, including Sigmund Freud, underscored the importance of learning at this stage, especially the potential to enhance other learning abilities required in later life.
2	6-24 years	Learning at this stage is mainly conducted in educational institutions, from elementary and secondary to tertiary educational institutions. This, however, does not exclude the involvement of religious institutions, social organizations/networks, and mass media. Learning at this stage is targeted, aiming to improve the individual's development in four important areas: physical, intellectual, social capacity, emotional and mental development.
3	25-60 years	At this stage, the individual is likely to have completed basic learning and can continue learning informally, typically while also working. Learning at this stage depends a lot on the use of instructional material, especially related to their professional work. The individual learns through experience at the workplace, from colleagues, travels, the media, etc. Given that learning at this point happens through experience and solving problems, the goal is to further develop and feed the intellect.
4	60 years and above	At this stage, the individual pursues knowledge and skills as a pastime. Learning is usually through auto-andragogy, that is, the individual as a self-tutor. Pursuing new knowledge or learning new skills provides a sense of achievement and pride that is important for self-esteem. Persons in this stage of learning may become more involved in community service as a way of giving back to society and enhancing their mental faculties.

Source: Kashinath (2013, pp. 4-5).<sup>10</sup>

It has been argued that learning at stage four can mean more than seeking knowledge or new skills just for the sake of it.<sup>11</sup> Learning at this stage can support the stimulation of the learner's cognitive capacity, promote mental wellness, and combat social isolation. For example, one study found that adults 66 years and older have resilient cognitive capacity and can outperform much younger adults in mental tasks.<sup>12</sup> A similar study has demonstrated that continuing learning can help seniors further strengthen cognitive resiliency. The study found

<sup>10</sup> Kashinath, K. S. (2013). Lifelong learning. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 9 &10, pp. 1-8. <https://www.srjis.com/pages/pdfFiles/146944471261%20Prof.%20Samadhan%20Kedare.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Andersen, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Arslan, S., Palasis, K. & Meunier, F. (2020). Electrophysiological differences in older and younger adults' anaphoric but not cataphoric pronoun processing in the absence of age-related behavioural slowdown. *Sci Rep*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-75550-3>

that seniors about 69 years of age who participated in language and music composition classes showed boosts in their working and episodic memories.<sup>13</sup>

These studies imply that the ability to learn, assimilate and utilize knowledge or skill does not necessarily diminish when an individual becomes a senior. Also, learning in later life is beneficial to the individual's cognitive resilience. Furthermore, even in the later stage of life, there can be a deep appetite for learning to keep engaged and mentally active. Therefore, when unable to find avenues for continuing learning, especially when it is desired, seniors may be at risk of depression, a major trigger for social isolation. As the proportion of seniors in the developed world increases<sup>14</sup> as does their need to stay active and engaged, continuing learning has become a veritable form of support.

Another argument is that supporting seniors' wellness, including through lifelong learning, benefits the economy, too. As life expectancy continues to improve and mortality-causing morbidities continue to decline, seniors will in the coming decades constitute a significant segment of the population with enormous spending power. Not only will well-catered-for seniors be re-absorbable into the workforce, but they will also account for a sizeable share of the consumer class, that is, everyone making daily spending of at least US\$ 11. As has been noted:

Seniors are now significant players in the economy and their role will get even bigger in the 2020s. Since older people tend to have both high incomes compared to younger cohorts (especially in OECD countries, thanks to old-age pensions) and high needs (if only on account of medical and specialized care), they are major consumers. Seniors are also growing rapidly in number...<sup>15</sup>

As the silver economy – the segment of the economy comprised of seniors – expands with the demographic trend, countries that fail to prepare for seniors' well-being, especially their mental and physical wellness, may grapple with dire consequences. The evidence shows that in addition to the re-absorption of seniors into the workforce of most European Union member countries, lifelong learning programs are available, although largely outdated given the focus on vocational skills to equip seniors re-absorbed into the workforce to better perform in the rapidly transitioning workspace.<sup>16</sup> However, lifelong learning as an approach to getting seniors back into the workforce overlooks the essence of continuing learning in later life; it is beyond finding capable workers. Seniors need continuing learning opportunities even and

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<sup>13</sup> Leanos, S., Kürüm, E., Strickland-Hughes, C. M., Ditta, A. S., Nguyen, G., Felix, M., Yum, H., Rebok, G. W., & Wu, R. (2020). The impact of learning multiple real-world skills on cognitive abilities and functional independence in healthy older adults, *The Journals of Gerontology (Series B)*, 75(6), 1155-1169. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbz084>

<sup>14</sup> There are currently about 750 million seniors globally, and it is projected that the number will reach hit 1 billion by 2030 (see Fengler, 2021).

<sup>15</sup> Fengler, W. (2021, January 14). The silver economy is coming of age: A look at the growing spending power of seniors. *Brookings*, para. 3. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2021/01/14/the-silver-economy-is-coming-of-age-a-look-at-the-growing-spending-power-of-seniors/>

<sup>16</sup> Ogg, J. (2021). *Lifelong learning in ageing societies: Lessons from Europe*. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. <https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/lifelong-learning-ageing-societies-lessons-europe>

especially when they do not want to re-enter the workforce. Lifelong learning should be appreciated first for its utility in promoting “health and active aging.”<sup>17</sup>

Some questions arise at this point: where can seniors go for lifelong learning opportunities? What lifelong learning programs are most appropriate for seniors? What are the modalities for delivering the programs?

Religious groups,<sup>18</sup> care/retirement communities,<sup>19</sup> and non-profit organizations<sup>20</sup> provide continuous learning opportunities for seniors in varying forms. Universities and colleges, particularly publicly funded ones, seem to provide the most robust and streamlined programs in most developed countries.<sup>21</sup> These institutions of learning often offer discounted or zero-tuition degree programs in disciplines of interest; vocational and skills acquisition programs for seniors seeking skills upgrade or diversification to re-enter the workforce and stay relevant; non-degree programs to keep seniors active, mentally stimulated and socially connected. These include continuing workshops and seminars; yoga, knitting, and one-stroke painting programs; dance, story-telling and literary writing programs, etc.<sup>22</sup> Lifelong learning programs are typically in-person, perhaps in recognition of the need for and benefits of physical interactions. With the Covid-19 pandemic, some programs either became hybrid or shifted to virtual participation.<sup>23</sup> As the world makes efforts to contain the virus and reduce its fatalness, in-person learning may again be feasible.

### Canada’s Lifelong Learning Landscape

The Constitution of Canada puts education under the executive and legislative control of provincial governments, except education for First Nation and Aboriginal peoples living on reserves which falls exclusively to the national government.<sup>24</sup> Since 1967, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), comprised of all provincial ministers of education, has ensured collaborative educational planning and policymaking among the provinces. Despite the absence of a federal authority saddled with overseeing education for the country, CMEC ensures that Canada performs its educational obligations to citizens in a largely standardized way.<sup>25</sup> However, the federal government invests hugely in postsecondary education to enhance skills acquisition and literacy. This is accomplished through grants to provinces and territories, support for research and infrastructural development, and in the form of direct aid to students.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Okun, S., & Nimrod, G. (2021). Lifelong spiritual learning: Religious older adults going digital, *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture*, 10(3), 404-427. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/21659214-bja10056>

<sup>19</sup> Breeding, B. (2018, May 28). Lifelong learning: Good for seniors’ minds and bodies. *My Life Site*. <https://mylifesite.net/blog/post/lifelong-learning-good-seniors-minds-bodies/>

<sup>20</sup> For example, see AARP’s programs, <https://www.aarp.org/about-aarp/history/aarp-institute-of-lifelong-learning.html>

<sup>21</sup> Breeding, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> See Stockton University’s Education for Older Adults programs, <https://stockton.edu/aging/older-adults.html>

<sup>23</sup> Derynda, B., Siegel, J., Maurice, L., & Cook, N. (2022). Virtual lifelong learning among older adults: Usage and impact during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Cureus*, 14(4), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.24525>

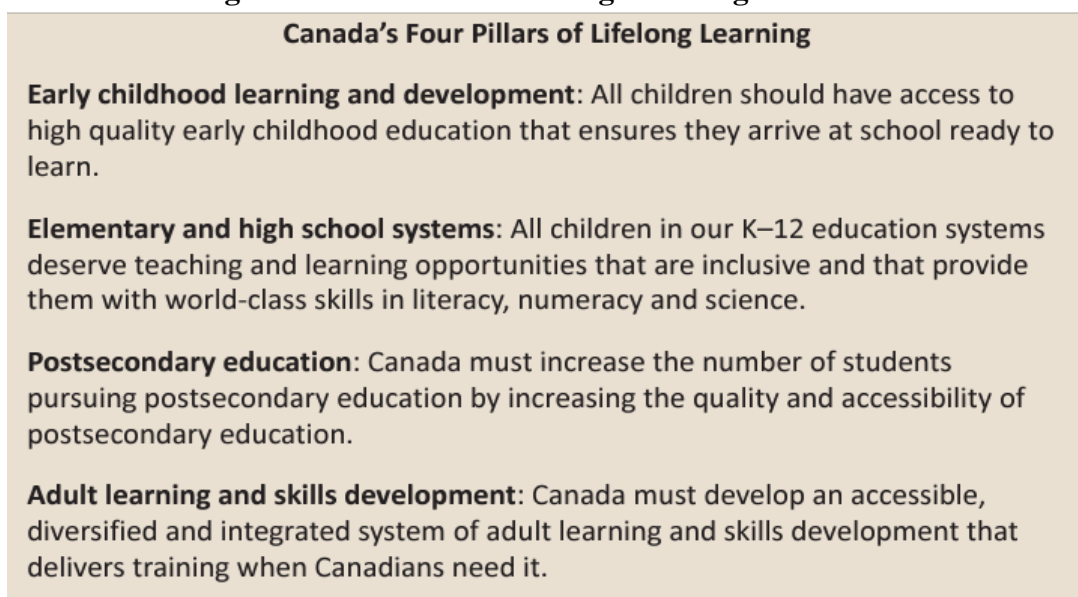
<sup>24</sup> See the Constitution Act, 1867.

<sup>25</sup> Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). (2012). *Adult learning and education*. [https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/283/GRALE\\_EN.pdf](https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/283/GRALE_EN.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*.

Canada's commitment to UNESCO's Belem Framework for Action on adult literacy and adult education which CMEC continues to promote axiomatically suggests obligations to lifelong learning. However, it is uncertain to what extent adult education is considered beyond helping older adults become literate and acquire skills to participate in the labour force, but instead, as necessary support to seniors to stay mentally stimulated and engaged. For example, in its report on Canada's performance in response to UNESCO's Global Report on Adult Learning and Education to commemorate the end of the United Nations Literacy Decade, CMEC's conceptualization of lifelong learning came short of emphasizing its importance in enhancing seniors' cognitive resilience. As shown below, the focus is instead on training leading to skills development with an eye on workforce participation.<sup>27,28</sup>

**Fig. 1: Articulation of Lifelong Learning in Canada**



Source: CMEC (2012, p. 13)

This pro-skills, pro-workforce view of lifelong learning further reflects in two government measures – Lifelong Learning Plan, and the Canada Training Benefit initiatives.

The introduction of the Lifelong Learning Plan is to encourage persons with a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) to start or enhance their education or that of their spouse or common-law partner as long as they are not older than 71 years. It does not support a child's education. This initiative permits a tax-free withdrawal of up to \$20,000 over four years (and no more than \$10,000 a year) from the RRSP to pursue a qualifying full-time education program at a designated institution. This initiative has a ten-year repayment plan.<sup>29</sup> A careful examination of the Lifelong Learning Plan indicates its design to enable working and older people to pursue opportunities to improve their qualifications and skills and enhance their

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Government of Canada. (2014). *Action for seniors report*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/seniors-action-report.html>

<sup>29</sup> Banerjee, P. (2010, September 28). Why no one uses the Lifelong Learning Plan. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/personal-finance/why-no-one-uses-the-lifelong-learning-plan/article4327279/>

employability and earning potential. By disqualifying people older than 71 and non-qualifying programs, the initiative does not cater to or intend to cater to the non-credit and non-skill learning needs of seniors.

The federal government launched the Canada Training Benefit in 2020 to support workers' retraining through lifelong education. This initiative has two key components. The first is a tax credit (Canada Tax Training) for work-related skills enhancement training. The second is an employment insurance benefit (Employment Insurance Training Support Benefit) to provide paid leave for workers pursuing training. The first component provides employees aged 25 to 64 with a \$250 annual tax credit, up to a lifetime limit of no more than \$5,000. The funds are held in an account managed by the Canada Revenue Agency and go toward supporting the tuition for the skills training. The second component covers a maximum of four weeks of employment insurance benefits calculated at 55% of the trainee's insurable earnings each week.<sup>30</sup> Like the Lifelong Learning Plan, the Canada Training Benefit initiative understands lifelong learning only in the context of improving employee skills for better job performance. It has no considerations for seniors' needs beyond skills acquisition or enhancement.

It is also vital to note that adult learning and skills development (the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of Canada's lifelong learning as shown in Fig. 1), is articulated to mean "all adult education and learning that takes place outside of the formal tertiary education system" (p. 13). What this connotes is that Canada's efforts to promote lifelong learning may not take into account learning activities to be provided or already being provided by universities and colleges or their capacity to provide such opportunities. The consequence is that while public resources may be channelled toward promoting adult learning, learning opportunities are expected to be delivered by entities other than postsecondary institutions.

This notwithstanding, publicly funded universities and colleges across Canada provide diverse learning programs for older adults. The table that follows considers these institutions by province and territory, the nature of the lifelong learning programs they offer, and what needs the programs serve: is it to enhance skills acquisition, improve seniors' wellness, or both?

**Table 2: Provinces**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Name of Institution</b>	<b>Program/Format</b>	<b>Tuition Plan</b>
<b>Alberta</b>	<b>Olds College of Agriculture and Technology<sup>31</sup></b>	<b>Continuing Education Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program focuses mainly on agriculture and is skills and career-focused.</li> <li>• A combination of in-person short courses, distance learning, evening classes and online programs to</li> </ul>	Individual tuition-based.

<sup>30</sup> Tamburly, S. (2021, June 3). Federal program aims to support lifelong learning, but analysts call for changes. *Public Policy Forum*. <https://ppforum.ca/articles/bnw-canada-training-benefit/>

<sup>31</sup> See Olds College program. <https://www.oldscollege.ca/programs/continuing-education/index.html>

		enhance old professional skills and acquire new ones.	
	<b>Northern Lakes College<sup>32</sup></b>	<b>Adult Basic Education Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy and career skills-focused training for adults of all ages.</li> <li>• Hybrid teaching/training method (in-person on-campus; remote – work, home, etc.).</li> </ul>	Individual student tuition plan. Sponsorship of tuition and learner resource costs is available for deserving persons.
	<b>Alberta University of the Arts (AUArts)<sup>33</sup></b>	<b>Continuing Education Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-improvement, professional development, and life-long learning program. Courses include jewelry, glassblowing, fibre arts, etc.</li> <li>• Hybrid teaching methods.</li> </ul>	11-week, 40 hours courses priced from \$355 to \$585.
<b>British Columbia<sup>34</sup></b>	<b>Simon Fraser University (SFU)<sup>35</sup></b>	<b>Continuing Studies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-credit offerings to promote healthy living for seniors and address social isolation. Over 55 different programs yearly. Lessons fall under opera studies, history, sociology, political science, archeology, global affairs, etc.</li> <li>• In-class learning at SFU's Harbour Centre campus.</li> <li>• Online participation is also available.</li> </ul>	\$180 for a 6-week course but a discount is negotiable.

<sup>32</sup> See Northern Lakes College program. <https://www.northernlakescollege.ca/programs-courses/academic-upgrading/adult-basic-education>

<sup>33</sup> See AUArts program. <https://www.auarts.ca/continuing-education/personal-interest>

<sup>34</sup> The government of British Columbia recognizes the cognitive resilience benefits of carefully-tailored later stage learning and supports post-secondary institutions to deliver lifelong learning programs for seniors. See <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/health-safety/active-aging/education-and-lifelong-learning>

<sup>35</sup> See SFU's program <https://www.sfu.ca/continuing-studies/programs/liberal-arts-and-55plus-program.html>



	<b>University of British Columbia (UBC)</b> <sup>36</sup>	<b>Access Studies Student Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General interest, non-degree lifelong learning programs for persons 65 years and older. Courses are strictly for BC citizens or permanent residents who have not earned a first degree.</li> <li>• The mode of program delivery is unclear.</li> </ul>	No tuition is required but seniors may pay \$100 to \$150 for course materials.
<b>Manitoba</b>	<b>University of Manitoba (UM)</b> <sup>37,38</sup>	<b>Seniors' Alumni Learning for Life Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special programs for persons 60 years and above who are alumni or friends of the university.</li> <li>• Courses allow seniors to explore new ideas and speak with professors.</li> <li>• The method of program delivery is not clear.</li> </ul> <b>Extended Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A partnership with the University of Manitoba, the University of Alberta, the Edmonton Lifelong Learning Association (ELLA), and the University of Regina to provide non-credit learning opportunities for seniors.</li> <li>• The courses are delivered online.</li> </ul>	Tuition plan not indicated.  The cost is affordable, basically covering learning materials.
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	<b>Memorial University</b>	<b>Lifelong Learning Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No information is available as the program is currently on hold and under review.</li> </ul>	Not available.
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	<b>Acadia University</b> <sup>39</sup>	<b>Lifelong Learning Program (Course Auditing)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-credit courses for persons 50-plus. Courses are</li> </ul>	No information.

<sup>36</sup> See UBC program <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/courses/non-degree-studies/non-degree-studies-access-studies>

<sup>37</sup> See UM alumni program <https://news.umanitoba.ca/seniors-embrace-lifelong-learning-through-unique-program/>

<sup>38</sup> See UM Extended Education program <https://umanitoba.ca/extended-education/programs-and-courses/adult-education-design-and-instruction/learning-opportunities-older-adults>

<sup>39</sup> See Acadia University program <https://all.acadiau.ca/course-audits.html>

		<p>intensive and lecture-based but do not requires tests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-person only at the Wolfville campus.</li> <li>• Participation is based on special requests.</li> </ul>	
<b>Ontario</b>	<b>McMaster University</b> (Institute for Research on Aging) <sup>40</sup>	<p><b>Older Adults and Lifelong Learners Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A line-up of degree and non-degree (non-credit courses) for persons 55 years and older.</li> <li>• The McMaster Learning for 55+ program provides online non-credit courses.</li> <li>• Courses cover health and wellness; business and innovation; arts and literature; and science and technology.</li> </ul>	\$75 for a 3-week course (one-hour per day).
	<b>Carlton University</b> <sup>41</sup>	<p><b>Lifelong Learning Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-age-restricted, non-credit programs. Adults of all ages can participate.</li> <li>• The program’s goal is to attend to the learning needs of adults.</li> <li>• The program utilizes workshops, seminars, etc., and covers a wide range of topics.</li> <li>• The delivery method is in-person and virtual.</li> </ul>	\$160 average cost for a series of lectures delivered on selected days over at least two months.
	<b>University of Toronto</b> <sup>42</sup>	<p><b>Later Life Learning Toronto Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A three-lecture series specifically for seniors.</li> <li>• The lectures are delivered online and in-person.</li> <li>• Each lecture series covers particular topics in arts, science, history, political science, sociology, etc.</li> </ul>	Prices range from \$50 to \$70 per lecture series.
<b>Prince Edward</b>	<b>Seniors College Prince Edward Island</b> <sup>43</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The institution’s activities all focus on providing</li> </ul>	No cost is indicated. The

<sup>40</sup> See McMaster University program <https://mira.mcmaster.ca/education/education-and-life-long-learning-opportunities/older-adults-and-life-long-learners>

<sup>41</sup> See Carlton University program <https://carleton.ca/lifelong/classes/>

<sup>42</sup> See University of Toronto program <https://illtoronto.org/page/Winter2023Courses>

<sup>43</sup> See Seniors College programs [https://www.seniorscollege.ca/about\\_courses.aspx](https://www.seniorscollege.ca/about_courses.aspx)

<b>Island</b>	- A not-for-profit organization affiliated with the University of Prince Edward Island.	learning opportunities and other forms of support for persons 50 years and older. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overarching goal is to support seniors' wellness and active aging.</li> <li>• Each class runs for a minimum of 2 hours and each course can be as long as 10 weeks.</li> </ul>	offerings appear to be at no cost to seniors.
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	<b>University of Saskatchewan</b> (in partnership with the <b>College of Arts &amp; Science</b> ) <sup>44</sup>	<b>Saskatoon Seniors Continued Learning (SSCL)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-credit, non-degree courses for persons aged 55 and above.</li> <li>• The offerings include political science, science, history, religious studies, and arts.</li> <li>• The program adopts a hybrid delivery method.</li> <li>• Each course runs for 2 hours weekly and takes 8 weeks to complete.</li> </ul>	\$55 standard fee for the majority of courses.
	<b>University of Regina</b> (in collaboration with the <b>Seniors' University Group</b> ) <sup>45</sup>	<b>Lifelong Learning Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-credit courses for persons 50 years and older.</li> <li>• Persons under 50 years can join but at a higher membership fee.</li> <li>• Courses are on a broad range of subjects in the humanities, science, social sciences, etc.</li> </ul>	The annual membership fee is \$30. Once registered, the courses are at no extra cost.
<b>Quebec</b>	<b>Concordia University</b> <sup>46</sup>	<b>Senior Non-credit Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors-focused courses with no credit requirements. Seniors are allowed to audit courses at reduced tuition.</li> <li>• To qualify, an individual must be no younger than 55 years.</li> </ul>	\$27.50 term payment and \$2 per class.

<sup>44</sup> See SSCL program <https://artsandscience.usask.ca/noncredit/sscl.php>

<sup>45</sup> See Regina University program <https://sk.211.ca/services/lifelong-learning-centre-2/centre-for-continuing-education-lifelong-learning-centre-seniors-university-group/>

<sup>46</sup> See Concordia University program <https://www.concordia.ca/lifelong-learning/seniors.html>

	<b>Dawson College</b> <sup>47</sup>	<b>Continuing Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The courses are not age-restricted (open to all adults).</li> <li>• Students can enroll for credit or to audit courses and the offerings include language, arts, computer &amp; technology, professional &amp; personal development, photography, etc.</li> <li>• The courses aim to equip students with skills for labour force participation.</li> </ul>	Prices range from \$343 to \$1,029 for 15 to 50 hours of training.
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**Table 3: Territories**

<b>Territory</b>	<b>Name of Organization/Type</b>	<b>Program/Format</b>	<b>Tuition Plan</b>
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	<b>Aurora College (University)</b> <sup>48</sup>	<b>Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALBE is not a clear-cut seniors-focused lifelong learning program. Its focus is to enhance adult basic education and promote skills for labour force participation.</li> <li>• The program is not age restricted.</li> <li>• The delivery mode is in-person at the institution's multiple centres across the territory.</li> </ul>	Available upon registration.
<b>Yukon</b>	<b>University of Yukon</b> <sup>49</sup>	<b>Continuing Education and Training</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit and non-credit pieces of training in diverse fields and skill areas.</li> <li>• The program is open to adults of all ages and is delivered online and in-person.</li> <li>• The courses are delivered in partnership with other institutions: Fireweed</li> </ul>	Available upon registration.

<sup>47</sup> See Dawson College programs <https://www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/ctd/>

<sup>48</sup> See Aurora College program <https://www.auroracollege.nt.ca/future-students/explore-programs/academic-upgrading/adult-literacy-and-basic-education-albe/>

<sup>49</sup> See Yukon University program <https://www.yukonu.ca/news/201109/continuing-education-provides-improved-access-adult-learning>

		Market Homestead Series, Red Cross, and SharePoint Training.	
<b>Nunavut</b>	<b>Arctic College<sup>50</sup></b>	<b>Adult Basic Education</b> • Strictly a literacy program for persons 18 years and above.	Not indicated.

### **Lifelong Learning in New Brunswick**

A look at the literature and information available on the web provides no pointers to a discernable lifelong learning policy targeting seniors in the province of New Brunswick. As noted in the introductory section, New Brunswick, like other Atlantic Provinces, is home to a huge and growing proportion of senior citizens compared to the rest of Canada. The province is not only expected to see its pension and healthcare expenditure continue to increase into the coming years but also the demand for measures to promote active and healthy aging. Besides increased medicare needs, seniors in the province will also require support to stay mentally stimulated. One way to meet this need is through carefully crafted later-life learning opportunities. Anecdotal revelations suggest a sizeable appetite among New Brunswick’s seniors for learning opportunities to help them maintain cognitive resilience and overcome social isolation.

Despite the steadily increasing population of persons older than 65, there appear to be no identifiable lifelong learning programs in the province’s universities and colleges – public or privately funded – for seniors. What seems to be the only available program at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) is designed for adults of all ages. Another program offered by the Saint John Kings Adult Learning Inc. (which is a private concern) is, as the name suggests, focused on adult literacy. Both programs are described below.

#### **UNB College of Extended Learning’s “Leisure Learning Program”<sup>51</sup>**

This is a non-credit series of courses and workshops that adult students can participate in for leisure. It is a no-pressure learning opportunity that offers over 70 courses per term and these include “watercolour painting, Mexican cooking workshops, and a rich variety of language and cultural courses to photography, pottery, and woodworking classes.” The classes are held in the evenings and weekends during the Fall, Winter and Summer learning periods, and are available online and in-person.

The program is not age-restricted, allowing adults of all ages to enroll. The courses are not designed with seniors in mind but could provide a useful learning opportunity for seniors. The enrollment cost is available upon registration.

#### **Saint John Kings Adult Learning Inc.’s “Community Adult Learning Program (CALP)”<sup>52</sup>**

<sup>50</sup> See Nunavut Arctic College program <https://www.arcticcollege.com/education>

<sup>51</sup> See UNB program <https://www.unb.ca/cel/enrichment/leisure-learning/index.html>

<sup>52</sup> See CALP <https://sjkingsadultlearning.ca/index.html>

CALP is one among many programs offered by this private concern to promote literacy in New Brunswick. While other programs target kids and teenagers, CALP has an adult focus. The program offers free literacy and GED preparation classes for persons 18 years and older on a continuous entry basis. It also provides digital literacy and academic upgrading support. All classes are delivered in English and French and are accessible in more than 100 communities across the province. The program allows learners to learn at their pace and choose whether to take morning, afternoon or all-day classes at designated locations.

Except for seniors seeking literacy, this program has no lifelong learning benefits given its focus.

### Summary and Conclusion

Gleanable from the literature is that, despite Canada's continuing demographic transition to a rapidly aging population, there are limited lifelong learning opportunities deliberately designed to enhance seniors' cognitive resilience, particularly in publicly funded institutions of higher learning across the provinces and territories. The majority of such programs focus on skills or knowledge acquisition training for labour force participation, indicating the economic rather than social service intents of lifelong learning policy with regard to later life learning. Adult learners, including seniors seeking to participate in the programs, will mostly take credits for qualification or certification in a skill area. Other programs essentially focus on adult literacy. Where the programs are non-credit or certification-based, they tend to be typical academic offerings. While many seniors may not be averse to learning opportunities with an academic design, lifelong learning for seniors is most effective when designed taking into consideration the high level of awareness and experiences seniors bring.<sup>53</sup>

In New Brunswick, the proportion of persons 65 years and older is on track to grow even further ahead of the rest of the country. However, it is hard to find lifelong learning programs designed for seniors. It should be noted that this initial finding may not paint a complete picture of the lifelong learning landscape in the province. The tentative conclusion is based on the absence of information on such programs in New Brunswick after the application of the same information-gathering method applied to other provinces.

Another important point to note is that the supposition upon which this phase of the research took off was that publicly funded universities and colleges may be better placed to deliver lifelong learning opportunities for seniors in New Brunswick. As the literature has shown, in most provinces, non-profits may have developed better and more effective lifelong learning programs for seniors. Non-profits offer cheap to no-cost learning opportunities carefully designed for seniors' needs. Some particularly noteworthy examples are the ELLA (in Alberta) and CRM (in Manitoba) models described in the appendix below. In considering options to provide learning opportunities for seniors in New Brunswick, it may be beneficial to also draw from these examples of seniors getting the right kind of learning opportunities in the right kind of environment.

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<sup>53</sup> See principles of adult learning & instructional systems design. <https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/downloads/freebies/172/pr%20pre-course%20reading%20assignment.pdf>

## Appendix: Private Lifelong Learning Programs

Province	Name of Organization/Type	Program/Format	Tuition Plan
Alberta	<b>Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association (ELLA)<sup>54</sup></b> - A volunteer-run organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-credit courses in the humanities, sciences, arts, and wellness-leisure for adults 50 years and above. The courses are designed to enable seniors to learn new skills, update old ones, stretch their intellect, and stimulate and enhance their mental and physical well-being.</li> <li>• The courses run for three months and are virtual. Learners connect online as a group in a classroom using a shared widescreen.</li> </ul>	Enrollment is membership-based and each three-month course costs between \$50 and \$85.
Manitoba	<b>Creative Retirement Manitoba (CRM)<sup>55</sup></b> - A non-profit.	<b>Lifelong Learning for Seniors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning opportunities specifically designed for seniors in a broad range of areas, including climate change, creative retirement, mastering cooking, mythology, music and wellness, etc.</li> <li>• Lectures are online and in-person.</li> </ul>	Programs are at no cost to seniors.
Nova Scotia	<b>Seniors' College Association of Nova Scotia (SCANS)<sup>56</sup></b> - A volunteer-based, not-for-profit organization.	<b>Lifelong Learning for Age 50+</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-credit general academic courses. The courses are designed to keep seniors engaged and active.</li> <li>• No tests or assignments and the learning sessions take place in multiple locations across Halifax.</li> <li>• Membership is by registration.</li> </ul>	No tuition for members.

<sup>54</sup> See ELLA programs <https://my-ella.com/course-offerings/>

<sup>55</sup> See CRM programs <https://www.creativeretirementmanitoba.ca/justlooking>

<sup>56</sup> See the SCANS programs <https://www.thescans.org/>

<p><b>Nunavut</b></p>	<p><b>Government of Nunavut<sup>57</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Adult Learning and Training Supports (ALTS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a territorial government-led program to increase human capacity for improved labour performance.</li> <li>• The program caters to the needs of adults 18 years and above.</li> <li>• The program covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apprentice technical training.</li> <li>- Workplace training.</li> <li>- Pre-trades training.</li> <li>- Nunavut Arctic College Foundations program.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Beneficiaries can get funding from the government so long as they are Canadian citizens or permanent residents residing in the territory.</li> <li>• The program aims at certifying/qualifying participants.</li> </ul>	<p>Up to \$18,000 for a year of training. The territorial government can fund trainees in need to the tune of \$300 to \$400 weekly among other kinds of support.</p>
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<sup>57</sup> See Nunavut’s ALTS program <https://www.gov.nu.ca/programs-services/adult-learning-and-training-supports-alt>