

# Financial Aid Opportunities for Adult Learners Pursuing Post-Secondary Education in Ontario

The document outlines a variety of organizations that offer financial opportunities for adult learners pursuing post-secondary education in Ontario. These financial opportunities come in the form of scholarships, bursaries, grants, and/or loans. For the purposes of this document, adult learners are considered those who are not going to post-secondary education directly from an adolescent high school.

Adult learners may experience challenges with sourcing scholarship and bursary opportunities, as many of these opportunities are geared toward students going directly from an adolescent high school to post-secondary education.

This list is a starting point – we would encourage students to expand their research by using online resources, library research, telephone contact, and face-to-face networking.

## **Definitions:**

**Adult Learner:** For the purposes of this document, we define an adult learner as a person who is not pursuing post-secondary directly from an adolescent high school.

**Scholarship:** A scholarship is a financial grant provided to a person based on merit, often based on prior academic success.

**Bursaries:** Bursaries are non-repayable awards that are given to students on the basis of financial need. They are often available from post-secondary institutions.

**Grants:** Grants are non-repayable funds, often available through government, businesses, or individuals to be used toward post-secondary schooling.

**Loans:** Loans are funds to be repaid, usually with interest. These may not have to be repaid until your schooling is completed.

## **Search Words:**

As you look for funding opportunities, it may be helpful to consider various search words or phrases to narrow the choices appropriate for your particular situation:

Lifelong learner / lifelong learning

Adult learner / adult learning

Scholarships

Educational bursaries

Educational grants

Educational loans Adult

Financing your education

Educational financial assistance

Mature student

## ***FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS***

### **1. GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL AID – Loans, Grants, and Bursaries**

#### **a) OSAP: Ontario and Canada Student Loans, Scholarships and Grants**

Canada Student Loans, Grants, Bursaries and Scholarships are open to all Canadians.

If you are a Canadian citizen and Ontario resident for at least 12 months, you could be eligible for OSAP (the Ontario Student Assistance Program) and other financial aid programs.

Canadian students living outside of Ontario can also apply for financial aid through your home province or territory.

International students can apply for scholarships offered through the federal government, community agencies and colleges and universities directly.

#### **What is OSAP?**

The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) offers two kinds of money:

- grants: money you don't have to pay back
- student loans: money you need to repay

Both the Ontario government and the federal government provide this money.

Through one OSAP application, you have access to a mix of different financial aid programs, depending on your circumstances.

If you apply for OSAP, **you are automatically considered for 30% off your tuition**, too. You don't need to apply separately. Who is eligible for 30% off tuition? See the following link:

<http://www.ontario.ca/education-and-training/30-off-ontario-tuition>

You can get OSAP to attend a public or private postsecondary school located anywhere in the world, as long as it's approved for OSAP.

There are 24 OSAP aid programs – **grants, scholarships, bursaries and loans**. **OSAP considers you for all programs when you apply online as a full-time or part-time student.**

OSAP is open to Ontario residents who are a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or protected person.

When determining if you're eligible, the government considers:

- your status (e.g., married or a dependent student)
- the school you attend/will attend (a school needs to be approved for OSAP)

- program of study
- course load (full or part-time)
- study period
- academic progress
- education expenses
- you and your family's financial contribution

**b) OSAP - Child Care Bursary**

The Child Care Bursary provides financial assistance to married and sole support students who have child care costs for 3 or more children. Only direct education related child care costs are considered.

**c) OSAP - Bursary for Students with Disabilities**

The Bursary for Students with Disabilities provides financial assistance for educational-related costs associated with a permanent disability. Funding could be granted for services and equipment such as tutoring, Learning Disability Assessments, and specialized equipment, including computer hardware/software.

**d) Ontario Special Bursary Program (OSBP)**

The Ontario Special Bursary Program assists students in obtaining their first degree, diploma or training program certificate. Students must be attending on a **part-time basis**, taking less than 60% course-load (for permanently disabled students - less than 40% course-load), have low family income, no previous post-secondary attendance, and must provide documentation in support of why attending on a part-time basis only. This bursary is available to assist with the cost of tuition fees, books, babysitting and transportation costs.

**e) First Generation Bursary**

First generation bursary provides monies for postsecondary students with demonstrated financial need. A first generation student is defined as a student whose parents have not participated in postsecondary studies.

**For more specific information please visit the following OSAP websites:**

<https://osap.gov.on.ca/>

<https://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPPortal/en/A-ZListofAid/index.htm>

**f) CanLearn (Canada Student Grants):**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/grants.html>

**2. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS - FINANCIAL AID**

**Please visit this main website for a complete listing of Ontario scholarships:**

<http://scholarship-grants.org/student-scholarships/ontario-scholarships>

### **3. POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS – FINANCIAL AID**

#### **Scholarships from Individual Post-secondary Institutions**

Adult Learners can look to their chosen post-secondary institution for scholarships.

For a listing of universities in Ontario, please visit:

<http://www.ontario.ca/education-and-training/ontario-universities>

### **4. ADDITIONAL FINANCING OPTIONS**

#### **a) Student Loans/Lines of Credit:**

Student loans or lines of credit are available from most major banks and credit unions in Ontario. Interest rates and terms will vary by institution.

#### **b) Lifelong Learning Plan (using RRSP funds):**

The Lifelong Learning Plan (LLP) allows you to withdraw up to \$10,000 in a calendar year from your registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) to finance full-time training or education for you or your spouse or common-law partner. You cannot participate in the LLP to finance your children's training or education, or the training or education of your spouse's or common-law partner's children. As long as you meet the LLP conditions every year, you can withdraw amounts from your RRSPs until January of the fourth calendar year after the year you made your first LLP withdrawal. You cannot withdraw more than \$20,000 in total.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/rrsps-related-plans/lifelong-learning-plan.html>

#### **c) Build your Scholarship Profile: Finding Opportunities in your own Backyard**

(Though this source is geared to adolescents, it contains good information for others and is a solid starting point to understanding the costs and the funding opportunities to support post-secondary education.)

<https://www.schoolfinder.com/Scholarships/Index.aspx>

#### **d) How and Why to Become a Lifelong Learner**

<http://www.artofmanliness.com/2013/03/18/how-and-why-to-become-a-lifelong-learner/>