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Evidence + Policy Research Group

IAHLA Learner Experience Survey: 2025-26

Submitted to:

Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA)

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Executive Summary

The 2025-26 Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) Learner Experience Survey is designed to focus on the experiences of learners at IAHLA member institutes. The survey asks learners about their academic goals, their experience with programs and their institute, skill development, well-being, satisfaction, support priorities, the barriers they face in their education, and potential improvements.

134 learners from 14 of IAHLA's 39 member institutes responded, with participation concentrated among a small number of institutes.

Learners' most common goals for attending their institute were to pursue further education or training (64%), earn a certificate, diploma, or degree (54%), and gain employment skills (51%). Approximately a third also cited contributing to their community (33%) or connecting with their culture and heritage (32%).

The experiences of participating learners were strongly positive. Nearly all respondents (98%) said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the education they received, 91% said they would choose the same program again, and 93% said they would recommend their institute to others. Learners rated their relationships with instructors especially highly (91% positive), along with feeling respected and valued (88%). Skill development was also rated strongly: 97% found their program helpful for reading and comprehension, 95% for effective communication, 93% for critical thinking, and 93% for preparing for further education.

The most common reasons learners chose their institute were feeling supported by the institute (70%) and being able to study in their community (68%). Institute support for mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being was rated positively (over 80%) by most respondents. Satisfaction with specific institute supports was highest for cultural programming (75%), strategies for success (74%), and community engagement (70%). When asked what would most help them complete their education goals, learners most often identified financial support (35%) and cultural programming (33%).

Learners also identified barriers in their education. Financial difficulties and health-related challenges were each cited by a quarter of respondents as barriers to class attendance, alongside job responsibilities, housing, and transportation (16-17%). The most frequently cited barriers to education completion were personal and family responsibilities (30%),

insufficient funding for living expenses (25%), and conflicting work schedules (23%). The most common suggestions for improvements to services and education included increased academic supports and flexibility, program options, well-being supports, cultural supports, and communication.

Overall, the findings suggest that IAHLA member institutes play an important role in providing supportive, culturally grounded, and community-based education that learners value and are likely to recommend. Continued attention to academic supports, financial assistance and other wraparound supports, and the practical barriers learners face will be important for helping learners meet their goals.

Introduction

Background and Context

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) has a long-standing commitment to understanding and improving the educational experiences of learners at member institutes. Since 2005, IAHLA has conducted annual data collection through institute and learner surveys, providing insights into learner needs, satisfaction, and outcomes across First Nations Mandated adult and post-secondary Institutes in British Columbia.

In 2024-25, IAHLA reconceptualized its data collection approach to focus specifically on the learners through the Learner Experience Survey, recognizing that understanding a broader scope of learner experiences is essential for continuous improvements to educational environments that support First Nations learners' success and well-being. The 2025-26 survey builds on this renewed foundation, marking the second year of the updated Learner Experience Survey.

Why Learner Experiences Matter

Learner satisfaction is linked to engagement, academic achievement, and retention, which are important metrics for higher education institutions. For First Nations Mandated Institutes, understanding learner experience is particularly vital as these institutions serve learners who bring diverse educational backgrounds, life circumstances, and cultural aspirations to their studies.

Learner experience encompasses multiple dimensions of learners' interactions within educational environments. This includes academic aspects such as instruction quality, faculty relationships, and skill development, as well as social and personal dimensions including peer interactions, cultural programming, support services, and overall well-being. Understanding how learners experience these various facets of their education enables institutes to identify strengths, address challenges, and allocate resources effectively to support learner success.

Survey Purpose and Objectives

The 2025-26 IAHLA Learner Experience Survey[1] is designed to help IAHLA member institutes:

- **Understand learner success and satisfaction** at IAHLA member institutes across multiple dimensions of the educational experience
- **Better fit programs and services** to learner needs and interests by identifying what matters most to learners
- **Identify where additional programs, services, or funding** may be needed to support learner success and well-being

The survey covers key areas including academic goals and engagement, educational quality and skill development, learner services and supports, well-being, satisfaction, and the challenges learners face in accessing and completing their education. This information can help inform IAHLA member institute decisions about program improvements, resource allocation, and strategic priorities.

Survey Development

To meet these objectives, the IAHLA Data Collection Working Group engaged *Directions* Evidence and Policy Research Group to develop and implement a comprehensive Learner Experience Survey for the 2024-25 academic year. The survey development process included:

- **Literature Review**: A review of existing research on learner experience and satisfaction surveys, focusing on methodological considerations such as question design, response scales, and scope of data collection in similar educational contexts.
- **Survey Scan**: Analysis of existing post-secondary learner experience and outcome surveys that are publicly available, including provincial (BC Student Outcomes Surveys, previous IAHLA learner surveys), national (Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey, Canadian University Survey Consortium, National Survey of Student Engagement, Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey), and institutional surveys (NVIT, UBC, BCIT).
- **IAHLA Input**: Feedback from the IAHLA Board of Directors Data Collection Working Group to refine a draft survey, ensuring it captured the specific priorities and contexts relevant to IAHLA member institutes.

[1] The survey instrument is presented in Appendix A: Survey, p. 35.

- **Best Practice Integration**: Incorporation of survey design principles including clear, straightforward questions; appropriate use of both closed and open-ended questions; mobile optimization; and attention to survey length to prevent respondent fatigue.

The 2024-25 survey represented a new survey instrument, designed specifically to capture contemporary learner experiences at IAHLA member institutes. While building on IAHLA's extensive history of data collection, this survey established a new foundation for understanding and tracking learner experience moving forward. The survey underwent minor revisions for 2025-26.[2]

Survey Implementation

IAHLA distributed the 2025-26 survey links to the 39 IAHLA member institutes. While IAHLA has 39 member institutes, a number of these members are not currently delivering post-secondary education or adult programming and therefore did not have learners enrolled to participate in the survey. The survey was available online from March 23 to May 11, 2026.

To encourage participation, learners who completed the survey were entered into a draw for $100 cash prizes. Institutes with a minimum of five learner respondents were also entered into a draw for a $250 cash incentive.

Results

This report is based on responses from 134 IAHLA learners (Table 1).

Table 1. Completion status (Total responses = 134)

Survey completion	Count	Percentage
Complete	114	85%
Partial	20	15%
Total	**134**	**100%**

Participating learners came from 14 of the 39 IAHLA member institutes, with responses ranging from 1 to 35 per institute. Responses were concentrated in a few institutes: 81% of

[2] A question on well-being was expanded and open-ended questions that elicited redundant responses were combined into a smaller number of questions.

responses came from five institutes, with an average of 9.6 and a median of 4 responses per institute.

To maintain individual and institutional confidentiality, this report presents the aggregated results across all participating institutes, providing insights into the collective experience of learners pursuing studies at IAHLA member institutes.

Survey reliability depends on sample size — larger samples minimize the impact of outliers and random variation, producing findings that better represent the target population. With more responses, one can be more confident that results accurately reflect the broader group's views and experiences. Because total enrollment figures by institute were not collected as part of this project, an institute-level response rate cannot be calculated; a small number of respondents from a given institute may reflect a small overall learner population or limited participation from that institute. With only 134 responses received from 14 of the 39 member institutes, however, the overall sample size is small, and results should be interpreted with caution.

Where relevant, this report contextualizes IAHLA survey results alongside publicly available 2023-2025 data from BC Student Outcomes, a set of four annual surveys of former students from British Columbia's public post-secondary institutions: 1. Baccalaureate graduates (21,274 respondents); 2. Diploma (18,940 respondents), Associate degree (3,868 respondents), and Certificate (11,508 respondents) students; 3. Apprenticeship students (5,061 respondents); and 4. Trades foundation and trades-related vocational students (4,947 respondents). These comparisons are provided for context only and are not direct comparisons. The BC Student Outcomes Surveys are administered to former students after program completion, ranging from shortly after completion for trades and apprenticeship programs to up to two years after graduation for baccalaureate programs, whereas the IAHLA Learner Experience Survey is administered to learners while currently enrolled. Respondents' perspectives can differ meaningfully depending on whether they are asked mid-program or with the benefit of hindsight after completion, and completion surveys by design exclude learners who did not complete their program. In addition, BC Student Outcomes data is drawn primarily from large public post-secondary institutions. These data should therefore be read as general context rather than a statistically equivalent comparison.

Percentages in this report are calculated from the raw counts in each category and then rounded to the nearest whole number for readability. Because each figure is rounded independently, the rounded percentages shown in a table or chart may not add up to

exactly 100 percent; any discrepancy of one or two points is a normal consequence of this rounding and does not reflect an error in the underlying data or calculations.

Respondent Overview

Most respondents identified as women (71%), while 23% identified as men (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents by gender (Total responses = 112)

Gender	Count	Percent
Woman	80	71%
Man	26	23%
Non-binary	1	1%
Two-spirit	1	1%
Another identity	1	1%
Prefer not to answer	3	3%
Total	**112**	**100%**

The largest respondent age group was 21–30 years (28%), followed by those aged 31–40 (21%) (Table 3). Respondents under 20 made up 12% of the sample, while those aged 41 and older comprised about 39%.

Table 3. Respondents by age (Total responses = 113)

Age	Count	Percent
Under 20	13	12%
21–30	32	28%
31–40	24	21%
41–50	24	21%
51–60	14	12%
Over 60	6	5%
Total	**113**	**100%**

Seventeen percent of respondents reported having been in care with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) (Table 4).

Table 4. Are you a former child or youth in care (CYIC) with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)? (Total responses = 110)

Former CYIC	Count	Percent
No	91	83%
Yes	19	17%
Total	**110**	**100%**

Most respondents identified as First Nations with status (88%) (Table 5). Fewer respondents identified as Métis (3%), First Nations without status (2%), or other (4%), while 3% were unsure of their identity.

Table 5. Identity of respondents (Total responses = 112)

Identity	Count	Percent
First Nations (status)	99	88%
Métis	3	3%
First Nations (non-status)	2	2%
Inuit	0	0%
Other	5	4%
Don't know	3	3%
Total	**112**	**100%**

Almost three-quarters (72%) of respondents supported between one and more than four individuals, with the most common response being two dependents (20%) (Table 6).

Table 6. How many individuals in your household rely on you for support? (Total responses = 112)

Individuals	Count	Percent
1	21	19%
2	22	20%
3	16	14%
4	10	9%
More than 4	11	10%
None	32	29%
Total	**112**	**100%**

Most respondents (79%) attended their institute without relocating from their home communities, while 18% did relocate and 4% were unsure (Table 7).

Table 7. Did you relocate from your home community to attend this institute? (Total responses = 113)

Relocation	Count	Percent
Yes	20	18%
No	89	79%
Don't know	4	4%
Total	**113**	**100%**

Goals for Attending the Institute

Learners' goals clustered into two broad areas (Table 8). The majority were oriented toward credentials and career advancement, including: pursuing further education or training (64%), earning a certificate, diploma, or degree (54%), or gaining employment skills (51%). Community, cultural, and language goals were also meaningful, with roughly a third citing community contribution (33%) or cultural connection (32%), and 16% focused on First Nations language skills.

Table 8. What are your goals for attending this institute (select up to three) (Total responses = 134)

Goals	Count	Percent
To pursue further education or training	86	64%
To earn a certificate, diploma, or degree	73	54%
To gain skills for employment or a specific career	69	51%
To contribute to my community	44	33%
To connect with my culture and heritage	43	32%
To improve my skills in a First Nations language	22	16%
Other	5	4%

Open-ended "Other" responses included the goals to start a business, passing on knowledge to future generations, and to satisfy personal interest.

Reasons for Choosing Institute

Learners chose their institutes for a mix of relational, practical, and financial reasons (Table 9). The most common factors were feeling supported (70%) and being able to study in their home community (68%), followed by program availability (58%). Cultural relevance and social connections also mattered: 40% cited a culturally relevant environment and 36% had friends or family who attended. Financial considerations influenced roughly a quarter to a third of respondents, including affordability, fee coverage, and living allowances.

Table 9. Why did you choose to attend this institute instead of another educational institution? (Select all that apply) (Total responses = 134)

Reason	Count	Percent
I feel supported here	94	70%
I can study in my community	91	68%
It offers the programs and courses I need	78	58%
The environment is culturally relevant	54	40%
My friends and/or family attended here	48	36%
It's more affordable than going somewhere else	43	32%
My program fees are covered by this institute	37	28%
I receive a living allowance to attend this institute	34	25%
Other	7	5%

Open-ended "Other" responses echoed the quantitative findings. One respondent noted that attending locally meant they could return home at the end of each day, while another found that online offerings better aligned with their family life. Emotional safety was also a factor, with a respondent reporting a greater feeling of comfort at the institute. Others pointed to practical factors, including an expanding course catalogue.

Prior Educational Attainment

Respondents were nearly evenly split on prior post-secondary experience: 47% had previously taken post-secondary education, 47% had not, and 6% were unsure (Table 10).

Table 10. Did you take any post-secondary education before enrolling at this institute? (Total responses = 131)

Prior Post-Secondary Education	Count	Percent
Yes	62	47%
No	61	47%
Don't know	8	6%
Total	**131**	**100%**

Among the 62 respondents who reported prior post-secondary experience, the most common credentials were below-Bachelor certificates, diplomas, or associate degrees (39%) and trades credentials (31%) (Table 11). Fewer had completed higher-level credentials: 11% held a Bachelor's degree and 5% a post-Bachelor certificate or diploma. No respondents reported a graduate degree. Nineteen percent indicated they had not completed any credential despite having some post-secondary experience, and 11% were unsure.

Table 11. Respondents with prior post-secondary education: What certificates, diplomas, or degrees did you complete before enrolling at this institute? (Select all that apply) (Total responses = 62)

Credential	Count	Percent
Certificate, diploma, or associate degree (other than trades) below Bachelor level	24	39%
Trades program citation, certificate, or diploma	19	31%
Bachelor's degree	7	11%
Certificate or diploma above Bachelor level	3	5%
Graduate degree(s) (includes Master's, Doctorate, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry)	0	0%
Did not complete any	12	19%
Don't know	7	11%

Among the 62 respondents with prior post-secondary experience, recency varied considerably (Table 12). The largest group had attended 1–3 years ago (26%), followed by those who had attended more than 10 years ago (24%). The remaining respondents were fairly evenly distributed across more recent (within the past year, 19%) and mid-range (4–6 years ago, 19%; 7–10 years ago, 11%) timeframes.

Table 12. Respondents with prior post-secondary education: How long ago did you attend a post-secondary program? (Total responses = 62)

Years	Count	Percent
Within the past year	12	19%
1–3 years ago	16	26%
4–6 years ago	12	19%
7–10 years ago	7	11%
More than 10 years ago	15	24%
Total	**62**	**100%**

Most respondents (71%) had not taken any preparatory courses prior to or during their studies (Table 13). Among those who had, Adult Basic Education was the most common pathway (22%), followed by Pre-Employment programs (11%).

Table 13. Did you ever take upgrading, access, bridging, or other preparatory courses during or prior to your studies at this institute? (Check all that apply) (Total responses = 130)

Prior Preparation	Count	Percent
No, did not take any	92	71%
Took Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses	29	22%
Took Pre-Employment program	14	11%

Most respondents (61%) had not participated in a work experience component as part of their program, while 39% had (Table 14).

Table 14. Did you participate in any paid or unpaid work experience as part of your program? (Total responses = 131)

Work Experience	Count	Percent
No	80	61%
Yes	51	39%
Total	**131**	**100%**

Plans for the Next Academic Year

The most common plan for the next academic year was to continue studying (66%), followed by paid employment (43%) (Table 15). A small proportion indicated other plans (7%) or were unsure (5%).

Among those who specified other plans, responses combined education and career goals, including continuing into a Bachelor's or Master's program, taking courses to support workplace learning, completing required hours for a licensed practical nursing program, or starting a business.

Table 15. What are your plans for the next academic year (starting September 2026)? (Check all that apply) (Total responses = 134)

Plans	Count	Percent
Continue studying	88	66%
Work at a paid job or business	57	43%
Other	9	7%
Don’t know	7	5%

Among the 88 respondents planning to continue studying, the majority (82%) planned to remain at the same institute (Table 16). Eleven percent planned to transfer to another institute and 7% were unsure where they would study.

Table 16. Where do you plan to study in the next academic year? (Total responses = 88)

Location of Study	Count	Percent
This institute	72	82%
Another institute	10	11%
Don't know	6	7%
Total	**88**	**100%**

Program and Institute Experience

Ratings across all program and experience dimensions were strongly positive, with most respondents selecting positive ("very good" or "good") responses in every category for their institute (Table 17). The highest-rated areas were relational: relationship with instructors (91% positive), feeling respected and valued (88% positive), feeling included in class discussions (85% positive), and interaction with peers (83% positive), alongside communication (84% positive) and accessible institute information (83% positive). Quality of program instruction was also rated highly (86% positive).

The two areas with strong but slightly lower positive ratings were amount of practical experience (78% positive) and engagement in non-academic events and activities (76% positive). The latter also had the highest proportion of "not applicable" responses (6%), suggesting some learners had limited access to or involvement in those activities.

Negative ratings were rare across all categories, with "poor" or "very poor" responses in the low single digits throughout.

Table 17. Please rate the following aspects of your program and experience at this institute

Aspect	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable	Don' t know	Total Responses
Feeling respected and valued	78	33	10	1	2	0	2	126
Relationship with instructors	74	40	7	3	0	0	2	126
Feeling included in class discussions or group projects	71	37	13	3	0	2	0	126
Interaction with peers	66	39	17	3	0	1	0	126
Communication with learners	64	42	16	0	1	1	2	126
Accessible institute information	68	36	18	1	1	0	2	126
Quality of program instruction	65	43	17	0	1	0	0	126
Amount of practical experience during the in-school portion of the training	57	40	21	3	0	2	2	125
Engagement in non-academic events and activities at the institute	54	41	16	5	1	7	2	126
Feeling respected and valued	62%	26%	8%	1%	2%	0%	2%	100%
Relationship with instructors	59%	32%	6%	2%	0%	0%	2%	100%
Feeling included in class discussions or group projects	56%	29%	10%	2%	0%	2%	0%	100%
Interaction with peers	52%	31%	13%	2%	0%	1%	0%	100%
Communication with learners	51%	33%	13%	0%	1%	1%	2%	100%
Accessible institute information	54%	29%	14%	1%	1%	0%	2%	100%
Quality of program instruction	52%	34%	13%	0%	1%	0%	0%	100%

Aspect	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable	Don't know	Total Responses
Amount of practical experience during the in-school portion of the training	46%	32%	17%	2%	0%	2%	2%	100%
Engagement in non-academic events and activities at the institute	43%	33%	13%	4%	1%	6%	2%	100%

The 2023–2025 BC Student Outcomes Surveys reported positive ratings of instructional quality among former public post-secondary students across six groups (Certificate, Diploma, Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Apprenticeship, and Trades Foundation) by aggregating "very good" and "good" responses with "adequate" responses. Using the same method, IAHLA respondents had a positive rating of 99% for instructional quality, while the six BC Student Outcomes groups reported a range of 91–95%.

Skill Development Outcomes

Across nearly all skill areas, respondents rated their program positively, with the large majority selecting positive responses ("helpful" or "very helpful") (Table 18). Ratings were strongest for reading and comprehension (97% positive), effective communication (95% positive), and preparing for further education (93% positive), followed closely by critical thinking (93% positive), writing (91% positive), independent learning (91% positive), self-confidence and self-esteem (91% positive), and collaboration (90% positive).

Community and employment-related outcomes were also rated positively, though slightly more variably. Becoming more active in the community was rated positively by 87% of respondents, and preparing for employment was rated positively by 84%. The employment item also had a higher share of "not applicable" responses (9%), perhaps reflecting differences in program focus or employment status.

Conversing in a First Nations language had the lowest positive rating among all skill areas (61% “helpful" or "very helpful") and the highest "not applicable" rate (23%), reflecting that not all programs include a language-learning component. Even accounting for applicability, this item also had a comparatively higher proportion of negative ratings (13% “not very helpful” or “not at all helpful”) than other skills.

Table 18. How helpful was the program at this institute in developing the following skills?

Skill	Very helpful	Helpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	Not applicable	Don't know	Total responses
Reading and comprehending material appropriate to your field of study	60	61	2	0	1	0	124
Effective communication	63	54	4	2	1	0	124
Preparing for further education	63	52	4	0	1	4	124
Analyzing and thinking critically	56	59	5	0	4	0	124
Clear and concise writing	57	55	6	1	1	3	123
Learning on your own	55	58	5	0	4	2	124
Improving your self-confidence and self-esteem	58	55	6	1	3	1	124
Working effectively with others	50	62	5	2	2	2	123
Becoming more active in your community	48	59	6	0	10	1	124
Preparing for employment	51	53	6	0	11	3	124
Conversing in your First Nations language	36	40	11	5	28	4	124
Reading and comprehending material appropriate to your field of study	48%	49%	2%	0%	1%	0%	100%
Effective communication	51%	44%	3%	2%	1%	0%	100%
Preparing for further education	51%	42%	3%	0%	1%	3%	100%
Analyzing and thinking critically	45%	48%	4%	0%	3%	0%	100%
Clear and concise writing	46%	45%	5%	1%	1%	2%	100%
Learning on your own	44%	47%	4%	0%	3%	2%	100%
Improving your self-confidence and self-esteem	47%	44%	5%	1%	2%	1%	100%
Working effectively with others	40%	50%	4%	2%	2%	2%	100%
Becoming more active in your community	39%	48%	5%	0%	8%	1%	100%
Preparing for employment	41%	43%	5%	0%	9%	2%	100%
Conversing in your First Nations language	29%	32%	9%	4%	23%	3%	100%

For context, the BC Student Outcomes Surveys asked former public-postsecondary students how helpful their program was in developing several comparable skill areas. Recalculated to align with BC's reporting method (which excludes "not applicable" and "don't know" responses from the denominator), the proportion of IAHLA respondents rating each skill "very helpful" or "helpful" is shown alongside the range reported across BC's six student groups (Table 19). Across every skill area shown, the proportion of IAHLA respondents rating their program "helpful" or "very helpful" exceeds the full range reported across BC's six student groups; however, differences between the two surveys described above make this worth noting as context rather than direct evidence of comparatively stronger outcomes.

Table 19. How helpful was the program at this institute in developing the following skills? IAHLA Learner Experience and BC Student Outcomes data

Skill	IAHLA*	BC Student Outcomes range
Reading and comprehending material appropriate to your field of study	98%	86–94%
Analyzing and thinking critically	96%	90–92%
Learning on your own	96%	87–90%
Effective communication**	95%	76–84%
Working effectively with others	94%	78–93%
Clear and concise writing	94%	76–89%

IAHLA results are based on 118-123 valid responses per skill area (Table 18); BC Student Outcomes ranges are based on six groups, each with 3,868 to 21,274 respondents.
* Percentages in this table are calculated excluding "not applicable" and "don't know" responses, consistent with BC Student Outcomes methodology (BC Student Outcomes Program Data Viewer File Notes, Note 5), and therefore differ slightly from the percentages reported in Table 18.
**The BC Student Outcomes Surveys asked about a component skill, “speaking effectively.”

Learner Well-Being

Respondents rated their institute's support for their well-being positively (“very well” or “well”) across all three dimensions, with mental and emotional well-being (83% positive) and spiritual well-being (81% positive) rated slightly higher than physical well-being (71% positive) (Table 20). Physical well-being also had a somewhat higher proportion of negative ratings (9% "poorly" or "very poorly") and the highest "not applicable" responses (9%).

Table 20. How would you rate your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being as a learner at this institute?

Well-being	Very well	Well	Neither well nor	Poorly	Very poorly	Not applicable	Don't know	Total responses
Spiritual	59	41	10	4	1	6	3	124
Mental and emotional	55	48	7	5	2	5	2	124
Physical	42	46	13	9	2	11	1	124
Spiritual	48%	33%	8%	3%	1%	5%	2%	100%
Mental and emotional	44%	39%	6%	4%	2%	4%	2%	100%
Physical	34%	37%	10%	7%	2%	9%	1%	100%

Satisfaction with Learner Supports

Satisfaction with institute supports was generally positive, and dissatisfaction was consistently low (2-4%) across nearly every support category (Table 21). Variation in overall satisfaction percentages was driven primarily by differences in relevance and awareness, not by support quality. Items with a high proportion of "don't need this support" responses, such as disability supports (21%) and tutoring (21%), still showed low dissatisfaction rates in line with the rest of the supports.

Cultural and community-based supports had both high positive satisfaction (“very satisfied” or “satisfied”) and low "don't need this support" rates, reflecting broad relevance and strong performance: cultural activities and workshops (75% positive), strategies for success (74% positive), community engagement (70% positive), Elders' support (69% positive), advising (68% positive), technical support (69% positive), and food supports and services (65% positive).

Health and personal supports followed the same pattern of strong satisfaction among those who used them: holistic health and wellness reached 68% positive satisfaction, while disability supports (59% positive) and tutoring (54% positive) had lower combined percentages driven by their higher "don't need this support" rates rather than by dissatisfaction.

Career and financial supports were rated as moderately positive. Career planning satisfaction was at 63% positive and financial support (scholarships, awards, bursaries) at 58%, with financial support also showing a higher share of “neutral” (21%) and "don't know" (10%) responses, possibly reflecting limited awareness or uptake of available programs.

Daycare/childcare illustrates the relevance effect most clearly; over half of respondents (52%) indicated it was not applicable or they were unaware of it, but dissatisfaction among those who used it was low. Transportation is the one possible exception to the overall pattern: despite a comparatively low " don't need this support " rate (27%), it had a slightly higher dissatisfaction rate of any support (7%), suggesting it could represent an area of unmet need rather than limited relevance.

Table 21. How would you rate the following supports at this institute?

Support	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't need this support	Don't know	Total responses
Cultural activities and workshops (for example, language classes, land-based learning activities)	51	40	12	3	2	8	5	121
Strategies for success (for example, program that addresses studying, time management)	47	42	17	2	1	5	6	120
Community engagement (for example, opportunities to connect with local First Nations leaders or community members)	49	36	18	3	1	7	7	121
Elders to support learners	53	32	13	2	2	9	11	122
Advising (for example, program planning, degree requirements)	41	41	20	1	3	7	8	121
Technical support (for example, troubleshooting computers or Internet access)	47	36	19	2	1	11	5	121
Food supports and services	52	26	15	3	1	15	8	120
Holistic health and wellness supports (for example, traditional healing practices, wellness programs)	45	38	13	4	1	9	12	122
Supports for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities (for example, challenges with thinking, moving, hearing, seeing, emotions, or behavior; has difficulty learning; or has exceptional talents or abilities)	39	31	14	2	2	25	7	120
Tutoring (for example, within a program or through a learner service centre)	33	31	19	2	2	25	8	120
Career planning (for example, job search skills, opportunities to connect with businesses)	36	40	18	2	1	15	9	121
Financial support (scholarships, awards, or bursaries; not including living allowance)	37	33	25	3	1	10	12	121
Daycare or childcare	17	12	16	3	0	63	11	122
Transportation or transit to and from the institute	27	24	22	6	2	33	7	121
Cultural activities and workshops (for example, language classes, land-based learning activities)	42%	33%	10%	2%	2%	7%	4%	100%
Strategies for success (for example, program that addresses studying, time management)	39%	35%	14%	2%	1%	4%	5%	100%
Community engagement (for example, opportunities to connect with local First Nations leaders or community members)	40%	30%	15%	2%	1%	6%	6%	100%
Elders to support learners	43%	26%	11%	2%	2%	7%	9%	100%
Advising (for example, program planning, degree requirements)	34%	34%	17%	1%	2%	6%	7%	100%
Technical support (for example, troubleshooting computers or Internet access)	39%	30%	16%	2%	1%	9%	4%	100%
Food supports and services	43%	22%	13%	3%	1%	13%	7%	100%

Support	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't need this support	Don't know	Total responses
Holistic health and wellness supports (for example, traditional healing practices, wellness programs)	37%	31%	11%	3%	1%	7%	10%	100%
Supports for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities (for example, challenges with thinking, moving, hearing, seeing, emotions, or behavior; has difficulty learning; or has exceptional talents or abilities)	33%	26%	12%	2%	2%	21%	6%	100%
Tutoring (for example, within a program or through a learner service centre)	28%	26%	16%	2%	2%	21%	7%	100%
Career planning (for example, job search skills, opportunities to connect with businesses)	30%	33%	15%	2%	1%	12%	7%	100%
Financial support (scholarships, awards, or bursaries; not including living allowance)	31%	27%	21%	2%	1%	8%	10%	100%
Daycare or childcare	14%	10%	13%	2%	0%	52%	9%	100%
Transportation or transit to and from the institute	22%	20%	18%	5%	2%	27%	6%	100%

Learners' Priorities for Supports

When asked which supports would be most helpful in completing their education goals, respondents most commonly selected financial support (35%) and cultural activities and workshops (33%) (Table 22). A second tier of supports — community engagement, holistic health and wellness (25% each), and career planning (21%) — reflects a mix of academic, cultural, and wellness priorities. Less frequently prioritized were tutoring, food supports (17% each), advising (16%), strategies for success, and disability supports (15% each), followed by Elders (14%), transportation (12%) and technical support (10%).

Daycare or childcare was the least frequently selected priority (3%), consistent with the low relevance noted earlier (Table 21) for learners without childcare needs.

Table 22. What supports would be most helpful to you in completing your education goal(s)? (Select up to three) (Total responses = 117)

Support	Count	Percent
Financial support (scholarships, awards, or bursaries; not including living allowance)	41	35%
Cultural activities and workshops (for example, language classes, land-based learning activities)	39	33%
Community engagement (for example, opportunities to connect with local First Nations leaders or community members)	29	25%
Holistic health and wellness supports (for example, traditional healing practices, wellness programs)	29	25%
Career planning (for example, job search skills, opportunities to connect with businesses)	24	21%
Tutoring (for example, within a program or through a learner service centre)	20	17%
Food supports and services	20	17%
Advising (for example, program planning, degree requirements)	19	16%
Strategies for success (for example, program that addresses studying, time management)	18	15%
Supports for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities (for example, challenges with thinking, moving, hearing, seeing, emotions, or behavior; has difficulty learning; or has exceptional talents or abilities)	18	15%
Elders to support learners	16	14%
Transportation or transit to and from the institute	14	12%
Technical support (for example, troubleshooting computers or Internet access)	12	10%
Daycare or childcare	4	3%
Other	6	5%

Improving services

Open-ended responses on how services and supports could be improved (69 comments, coded thematically, often into multiple categories) showed that the largest single group (17 comments) indicated no improvements were needed, describing current services as helpful or well-run (Table 23).

Among substantive suggestions, academic and program supports were the most frequently raised theme (13 comments), including requests for more tutoring, instructor feedback, stronger advising, and clearer pathways between adult education and further study. Mental health and trauma-informed support was also prominent (10 comments), with respondents asking for access to counselling, mental health check-ins, and instructors with deeper understanding of intergenerational trauma and grief. Communication emerged as a third major theme (9 comments); learners wanted clearer, more direct updates and better advance notice of available supports and events.

Cultural, Elder, and language-based supports were raised in 8 comments, requesting more Elder involvement and time for language and culturally grounded learning. Smaller numbers of comments touched on financial support and cost-of-living pressures (5), career and practicum preparation (5), and respectful, culturally safe classroom climates (5). The remaining themes of online/hybrid access, disability supports, facilities, and food services were each raised in fewer than five comments.

Table 23. How could the services and supports provided by your institute be improved? Written responses (Total responses = 69)

Theme	Number of comments	Examples
Positive/no improvement needed	17	Respondents said services were good, excellent, helpful, well-run, or that they would not change anything
Academic/program supports, advising, tutoring, instruction	13	More tutoring, instructor feedback, advising, extra teacher support, clearer links to future education, longer courses, bridging/upgrading pathways
Mental health, counselling, trauma-informed support, safe spaces	10	More counselling, mental health breaks/debriefing, trauma-informed instructors, understanding grief/loss, safer learning environments
Communication, awareness, calendars, information-sharing	9	Clearer communication, better verbal updates, calendars/agendas for events, clearer information about supports, improved online audio/recordings
Cultural, Elder, language, and land/community-based supports	8	More Elder support, cultural programming, language learning, drumming, culturally grounded education

Theme	Number of comments	Examples
Financial support, funding, and cost-of-living barriers	5	More emergency financial aid, program funding, financial/cultural support, recognition of cost-of-living pressures
Career, practicum, and work-transition supports	5	More job search support, practicum placement help, hotel/practicum preparation, preparation for college/work
Respectful and inclusive learning climate	5	More mindfulness among learners, less stereotyping, safer environments, more understanding of Indigenous learners' experiences
Online, hybrid, and technology-related access	4	More support for online learners, optional online classrooms, better microphones/audio, recorded language word lists
Disability and diverse ability supports	2	More support for learners with disabilities, testing, tutoring, flexibility, safe and supportive learning environments
Facilities/infrastructure	2	Need for a larger/modern education centre or dedicated education building
Food supports	2	Suggestions about coffee/fruit and improved food service
Unsure/no opinion/not applicable/unclear	12	Respondents were unsure, gave no opinion, wrote not applicable, or provided a very general response

Satisfaction with Education Received

Satisfaction with the education received while enrolled in a program was very high: 98% of IAHLA respondents reported being "very satisfied" or "satisfied," with only 2% "dissatisfied" and no "very dissatisfied" responses (Table 24). For context, educational satisfaction among public post-secondary students across six groups (Certificate, Diploma, Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Apprenticeship, and Trades Foundation), after program completion, ranged from 89% to 93% in the 2023–2025 BC Student Outcomes Surveys.

Table 24. How satisfied are you with the education you received from your program at this institute (Total responses = 116)

Satisfaction	Count	Percent
Very Satisfied	62	53%
Satisfied	52	45%
Dissatisfied	2	2%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Don't know	0	0%
Total	**116**	**100%**

IAHLA respondents were strongly positive when describing reasons for their satisfaction (Table 25). Satisfaction was most often attributed to supportive instructors, staff, and Elders (42 comments) and to safe, welcoming, respectful learning environments (21 comments). A further 25 comments described general satisfaction with no major concerns. Academic growth and confidence (21 comments), community-based and local access (17), and cultural relevance and Indigenous knowledge (15) were also frequently cited as reasons for satisfaction.

A smaller number of comments raised concerns about communication, advising, or organization (8 comments), the need for stronger academic preparation (6), or discrimination, trauma, and safety (6), indicating that while satisfaction was high overall, some respondents identified areas where their institute could better support learners.

Table 25. Please explain the reasons for your level of satisfaction with this institute. Written responses (Total responses = 94)

Theme	Number of comments	Examples
Supportive instructors, staff, Elders, and one-on-one help	42	Helpful teachers, approachable staff, Elders, office/admissions/library support, individual guidance, feeling supported
Positive overall experience / no major concerns	25	General satisfaction, no concerns, nothing they would change
Safe, welcoming, comfortable, respectful learning environment	21	Feeling at home, feeling welcomed, no judgement, respectful environment, privacy, belonging
Academic growth, confidence, skills, and learning success	21	Improved confidence, completing courses, better grades, learning new skills, gaining knowledge, feeling capable
Community-based/local access and proximity to home	17	Studying close to home, staying with family/community, local delivery, reduced travel, rural access
Cultural relevance, Indigenous knowledge, language, and community connection	15	Indigenous knowledge, language learning, cultural medicines, cultural activities, learning with community members
Program quality, course content, and materials	14	Good classes, useful course material, strong instruction, helpful tools/equipment, fieldwork
Flexibility, online access, scheduling, and working while studying	10	Online learning, evening classes, after-hours support, ability to work while studying, schedule concerns
Career, employment, credentials, and future pathways	9	Career development, credentials, business growth, work readiness, pathways to further education

Theme	Number of comments	Examples
Peer/cohort experience	9	Good classmates, cohort support, learning with peers, but also some concerns about disruptive or disengaged learners
Communication, advising, administration, and organization	8	Need for clearer communication, advising problems, staffing gaps, changing schedules, knowing who to contact
Financial support and affordability	7	Funding, living allowance, gift cards, food/lunch support, ability to afford continuing education
Need for stronger academic preparation/bridging	6	More time for English, writing, math, transition from diploma to degree, preparation for college-level work
Concerns about discrimination, trauma, safety, or respectful treatment	6	Discrimination, harsh instructor behaviour, trauma-informed support, stereotyping, emotional safety
Facilities, equipment, food, transportation, and practical supports	6	Cafeteria, dorms, gym, childcare, bus access, transportation barriers, classroom resources
Unclear / don't know / not applicable	7	Don't know, not applicable, unable to name indicators, or unclear comments

Most respondents (91%) said they would choose the same program again, while 9% said they would not (Table 26).

Table 26. Given your experiences in your program, would you select the same program again? (Total responses = 115)

Select same program	Count	Percent
Yes	105	91%
No	10	9%
Total	**115**	**100%**

Most respondents indicated they would be likely to recommend their institute to others (93% "Likely" or "Very likely" to recommend) (Table 27).

Table 27. How likely are you to recommend this institute to others? (Total responses = 116)

Likelihood	Count	Percent
Very likely	83	72%
Likely	24	21%
Neutral	7	6%
Unlikely	1	1%
Very unlikely	1	1%
Don't know	0	0%
Total	**116**	**100%**

Respondents' explanations for why they would or would not recommend their institute were also strongly positive (Table 27), consistent with the high proportion who said they would be likely or very likely to recommend it. The most common reason was the support provided by instructors, staff, Elders, advisors, and mentors (31 comments). A further 24 comments gave broad, positive endorsements of the institute overall. Community-based access and staying close to home (14 comments), cultural relevance and Indigenous-centred education (14), a safe and welcoming learning environment (13), and academic growth, confidence, and educational pathways (13) were also frequently cited.

A smaller number of comments were conditional (7) or raised concerns about communication, scheduling, or staffing (5) and safety, trauma, or discrimination (4); very few comments indicated the respondent would not recommend the institute (2).

Table 28. Please explain why you would or would not recommend [IAHLA member institute name] to others. Written responses (Total responses = 88)

Theme	Number of comments	Examples
Supportive instructors, staff, Elders, advisors, and mentors	31	Helpful teachers, caring staff, Elders, guidance, encouragement, and student support
Positive overall recommendation / strong endorsement	24	Respondents said they would recommend the institute, described it as great, helpful, or a good school
Community-based access and staying close to home	14	Ability to study in community, remain connected to home, avoid moving away, learn with community members
Cultural relevance, Indigenous lens, language, and decolonized curriculum	14	Indigenous-centred learning, cultural programming, language learning, two-eyed seeing, Indigenous values
Safe, welcoming, caring, and comfortable learning environment	13	Sense of belonging, family/community atmosphere, safe and caring environment, comfort
Academic growth, confidence, education pathways, and personal development	13	Gaining confidence, completing upgrading, continuing to higher education, improving grades, planning next steps
Small class size and peer/community learning	8	Smaller classes, cohort connection, peer support, intimate learning environment
Affordability, funding, and practical supports	8	Affordable tuition, living allowance, food, transportation, dorms, daycare, library, accessible supports
Program/course quality and selection	8	Good course selection, accredited programs, business/social work/upgrading programs, useful learning
Career, employment, and future opportunity	5	Career pathways, workforce preparation, opportunities to build skills and return to community work

Theme	Number of comments	Examples
Conditional or mixed recommendation	7	Would recommend depending on the learner, available courses, readiness, cultural fit, or program expectations
Concerns about communication, scheduling, staffing, or course depth	5	Communication issues, staffing/scheduling problems, surface-level courses, changing course availability
Concerns about safety, trauma, discrimination, or inclusion	4	Need for safer environments, inclusion concerns, cultural fit, trauma-related concerns
Would not recommend / negative response	2	Respondents said they would not recommend or were dissatisfied
Not applicable / unclear	3	Not applicable or unclear responses

Improving education

Learners were asked to identify how their education could be improved (Table 29).
The largest group of comments (18) indicated no change was needed. Among substantive suggestions, respondents most often wanted more program and career-related options (14 comments), followed by improvements to instruction, feedback, and assessment (12) and to academic supports and check-ins (10). Cultural and trauma-informed teaching (9), communication and organization (8), and scheduling flexibility (8) were also recurring themes. A smaller number of comments (7) raised concerns about trauma-informed practice, discrimination, confidentiality, respectful treatment, or emotional safety, suggesting that while most learners experienced their institute positively, some would benefit from stronger attention to cultural safety, instructor awareness of intergenerational trauma, and respectful learning environments.

Table 29. How could the education or training in your program be improved? Written responses (Total responses = 81)

Theme	Number of comments	Examples
No improvement needed / generally satisfied	18	Respondents said the program was good, professional, well taught, or that nothing needed to change
More programs, course options, credentials, and career-related training	14	More program variety, more certificate/diploma/degree pathways, more employment-related training in areas such as management, office work, early childhood education, land management, public speaking, and other career-focused fields, more opportunities beyond trades
Instruction, feedback, assessment, and course delivery	12	More feedback, clearer rubrics, faster return of marks, better marking consistency, covering the syllabus, course updates

Theme	Number of comments	Examples
Student supports, check-ins, academic preparation, and learning assistance	10	More check-ins, extra support, writing/math help, computer skills, support for learners with different learning needs
Cultural, Indigenous, Elder, language, and trauma-informed teaching	9	More Indigenous/local instructors, cultural/language content, Elders/knowledge keepers, trauma-informed approaches
Communication, organization, administration, and policy clarity	8	Clearer communication, better organization, consistent systems, clearer reading/materials information, policy alignment
Flexibility, scheduling, online access, and time to complete work	8	More flexible schedules, evening/after-work options, online delivery, more time for dense course content
Respect, confidentiality, kindness, and emotional safety	7	Respectful treatment, confidentiality, kindness, trauma awareness, better understanding of First Nations learners' experiences
Cohort size, student selection, and class composition	6	Smaller cohorts, large class concerns, more learners, learner selection/fit, separating learners by computer skill level
Facilities, technology, transportation, and infrastructure	4	Larger education building, better microphones, transportation barriers, software/technology issues
Funding and financial continuity	2	Continued funding for programs and concerns about funding cuts
Unsure / unclear / no opinion / N/A	11	Don't know, not sure, not applicable, no opinion, or unclear responses

Barriers to class attendance and education completion

Attendance is shaped by a range of financial, health, employment, housing, transportation, family, cultural, and social factors (Table 30). The most commonly reported barriers to attendance were financial difficulties and health-related challenges (physical or mental health), each cited by 25% of respondents. Work, housing, transportation, and family or childcare responsibilities were also frequently reported (14–18%), followed by cultural responsibilities (11%) and feeling socially isolated or unwelcome (6%).

Forty respondents selected "I have not faced any challenges", while the remaining 74 respondents (65%) identified at least one barrier to attendance, underscoring the importance of wraparound supports that address both academic participation and the broader life circumstances affecting learners' ability to attend consistently.

Table 30. Have any of the following situations prevented you from attending classes at this institute? (Select all that apply) (Total responses = 114)

Barrier	Count	Percent
Financial difficulties	28	25%
Health-related challenges (physical or mental health)	28	25%
Job responsibilities	20	18%
Housing challenges	19	17%
Transportation challenges	18	16%
Family or childcare responsibilities	16	14%
Cultural responsibilities	12	11%
Feeling socially isolated or unwelcome	7	6%
Insufficient technology or internet access	4	4%
Other - please specify	9	8%
I have not faced any challenges that have prevented me from attending classes	40	35%

Respondents who selected "Other" most often described illness (4 comments). Other responses referenced limited remote attendance options while travelling or working, living away from community, and miscommunication about class logistics.

Education completion is shaped by a mix of personal, financial, and informational factors (Table 31). When asked about barriers to completion, the most common response was that respondents had experienced no barriers (37%). Among those who did report barriers, personal and family responsibilities such as childcare or eldercare were most common (30%), followed by insufficient funding for living expenses (25%) and conflicting work schedules with class times (23%). Smaller proportions cited lack of awareness about available funding (15%) and geographic or transportation challenges (12%).

Table 31. What are the main barriers you have experienced in completing your education at this institute? (Select up to three) (Total responses = 113)

Barrier	Count	Percent
Personal and family responsibilities (for example, childcare, eldercare)	34	30%
Insufficient funding for living expenses (for example, rent, food, transportation)	28	25%
Conflicting work schedules with class times	26	23%
Lack of awareness or information about available funding sources	17	15%
Geographic or transportation challenges	14	12%
Other - please specify	15	13%
No barriers experienced	42	37%

Respondents who selected "Other" most often described health, mental health, or disability-related barriers (5 comments). Other comments referenced delays or gaps in

funding access (2), conflicts between school and work schedules (2), travel for community or cultural commitments (2), and one comment referenced experiences of discrimination.

Conclusions

Overall, the survey findings show that respondents had highly positive experiences at IAHLA member institutes. Learners most often chose their institute because they felt supported, could study in their own community, and had access to programs that met their educational goals. Many respondents also valued culturally relevant learning environments, connections to First Nations knowledge and language, and the opportunity to remain close to family and community while pursuing education.

The results suggest that these institutes are supporting a diverse group of learners, including both learners with previous post-secondary experience and those entering post-secondary education for the first time. Respondents reported strong outcomes across many areas, including academic skill development, confidence, preparation for further education, communication, critical thinking, and community engagement. Satisfaction with education received was especially high, with nearly all respondents indicating that they were satisfied or very satisfied. Most respondents also said they would choose the same program again and would recommend their institute to others.

At the same time, the findings point to areas where additional support could strengthen learner success. Respondents identified financial pressures, health-related challenges, work responsibilities, housing, transportation, family or childcare responsibilities, and cultural responsibilities as barriers that can affect attendance and completion. Open-ended responses also suggested improvements such as clearer communication, stronger advising, more flexible scheduling, expanded program and career pathways, additional academic preparation, and continued attention to trauma-informed and culturally safe learning environments.

Taken together, the findings suggest that IAHLA member institutes play an important role in providing accessible, supportive, culturally relevant education for First Nations learners. The strong levels of satisfaction and recommendation indicate that learners value these learning environments deeply. Continued investment in wraparound supports, financial assistance, flexible delivery, community-based programming, and culturally grounded teaching will be important for helping learners persist, complete their goals, and pursue further education, employment, and community contribution.

Appendix A: Survey

IAHLA Learner Experience Survey 2026

Welcome! This survey is for learners enrolled in Indigenous-controlled adult and post-secondary educational institutes that are members of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA). Your feedback is important. Both IAHLA and your institute want to learn more about your experiences as a learner.

What is IAHLA? The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) is an independent non-profit society that supports and represents First Nations mandated adult education and post-secondary institutes in British Columbia.

Is my school an IAHLA member institute? If your school is listed here, you are eligible to complete this survey.

Prize Draw. Upon completing the survey, you may choose to enter into a **draw for one of fifteen $100 prizes**.

How long will it take? The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Why is this survey being conducted? The survey will help your institute / school / learning centre to:

- Understand learner success and satisfaction.
- Better tailor programs and services to meet learner needs and interests.
- Identify additional programs, services, or funding that may be needed.

The results will also help IAHLA understand the collective needs of our member institutes and their learners.

Your responses will be kept anonymous, and your participation is completely voluntary. Please do not provide any identifying information.

Questions? To learn more about the survey, please see our FAQ page.

FAQs

What is the purpose of this survey?

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), with support from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), is gathering information about learner experiences and available supports through the IAHLA Learner Experience Survey.

Is my institute an IAHLA member?

Below is a list of IAHLA member institutes:

- Ahousaht Education Authority
- Chemainus Native College
- Cowichan Tribes - Quw'utsun Syuw'entst Lelum
- En'owkin Centre
- Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Education Society
- Gitwangak Education Society
- Heiltsuk College
- K'ak'ot'lats'i School
- Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations
- Kitamaat Valley Education Society
- Kwadacha Dune Tiiy
- Kyah Wiget Education Society
- Lip'alhayc Learning Centre (Nuxalk College)
- Muskoti Learning Centre - Saulteau First Nations
- Native Education College
- Neskonlith Education Department
- Nexw7áýstwaý Training and Trades Centre
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
- Ntamtqen Snmamayatn Adult Education
- NTC Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NETP)
- Penelakut Island Learning Centre
- Penticton Indian Band Adult Education
- Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Centre
- Seabird College
- Shíshálh Nation
- Snuneymuxw First Nation / House of Learning
- St'át'imc Education Institute
- Stein Valley Nlakapamux School
- Stó:lō Nation
- St'uxwtews Education Centre
- Ted Williams Memorial Learning Centre
- Tl'azt'en Adult Learning Centre
- Ts'zil Learning Centre
- Tŝilhqot'in National Government
- Tsay Keh Dene Learning Centre
- Wabsuwilaks'm Gitselasu Adult School
- Wahmeesh Learning Center
- Wilp Wilx̱o'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute
- W̱SÁNEĆ College

Who can respond to the survey?

All learners currently enrolled in an IAHLA member institute are invited to participate.

What kinds of questions will be asked?

The survey asks about your experiences and available supports at your IAHLA member institute. It also includes demographic questions to help the institute understand the characteristics of the learners responding.

Do I have to answer every question?

No, the only required question is the name of the IAHLA member institute you are attending. You can skip any other questions by leaving them blank and moving to the next question.

How are the data reported?

Data will be reported in aggregate form to IAHLA and your institute, ensuring no individuals are identified. Demographic information is only reported at the IAHLA sector level, not at the institute level.

Can I answer on my tablet or smartphone?

Yes, the survey is compatible with tablets and smartphones.

Do I have to complete the survey all at once?

No, you can select "Save and continue later" at the top right of each survey page. You'll enter your email to receive a link to continue later. The email will come from Survey: IAHLA Learner Experience Survey (noreply@alchemer.com). If it's not in your inbox, check your junk folder. We don't store your email or keep a copy of the sent email.

How are my responses kept anonymous if you collect my contact information for a prize draw or to continue the survey later?

Your survey responses are stored separately from any contact information provided for the prize draw, and we do not retain the email used to continue the survey later. We will not link your responses to your contact information. All information is confidential and anonymous. We do not collect IP addresses or geolocation data.

How was the survey developed?

The survey was developed based on direction from the IAHLA Board of Directors. Some questions are drawn from the BC Student Outcomes Surveys to collect comparable data on learner experiences.

More questions or technical difficulties?

The survey is being conducted by Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group on behalf of IAHLA. For questions or technical difficulties, contact [*researcher name and email*] at Directions. All communication will be kept confidential.

Collection notice

Directions is conducting this survey using Alchemer software, which provides the necessary security and privacy measures to protect your information. The survey does not collect personal information as defined under B.C. PIPA. Please avoid entering any details that could identify yourself or others in your responses. Some questions request demographic information to help understand the characteristics of respondents; these questions are optional and will not be used to identify individual learners.

The information collected will help identify opportunities for improvement at IAHLA member institutes and inform ongoing work to advance First Nations post-secondary education in British Columbia. Survey responses will remain anonymous, and no administrative decisions about individuals will be made based on this survey.

After completing the survey, you may enter a prize draw. If you choose to participate, you will need to provide your name, email, and mailing address so FNESC can send the prize to winners. This contact information is stored separately from survey responses, and it cannot be linked to your survey answers.

Survey Questions

1. **In which IAHLA member institute are you currently enrolled?** *[dropdown menu of IAHLA member institutes] [required question]*

Academic Goals

2. **What are your goals for attending [*IAHLA member institute name*]?** (Select up to three)
   [ ] To gain skills for employment or a specific career
   [ ] To pursue further education or training
   [ ] To connect with my culture and heritage
   [ ] To earn a certificate, diploma, or degree
   [ ] To improve my skills in a First Nations language
   [ ] To contribute to my community
   [ ] Other - please specify: _____

3. **Why did you choose to attend *[IAHLA member institute name]* instead of another educational institution?** (Select all that apply)
   [ ] I can study in my community
   [ ] It offers the programs and courses I need
   [ ] The environment is culturally relevant
   [ ] I feel supported here
   [ ] My friends and/or family attended here
   [ ] It's more affordable than going somewhere else
   [ ] I receive a living allowance to attend [IAHLA member institute name]
   [ ] My program fees are covered by [IAHLA member institute name]
   [ ] Other - please specify: _____

Educational History

4. **Did you take any post-secondary education before enrolling at *[IAHLA member institute name]*?**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Don't know *[exclusive option]*

5. (if Yes to previous question) **What certificates, diplomas, or degrees did you complete before enrolling at [*IAHLA member institute name*]?** (select all that apply)
   ☐ Trades program citation, certificate, or diploma

- ☐ Certificate, diploma, or associate degree (other than trades) below Bachelor level
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Certificate or diploma above Bachelor level
- ☐ Graduate degree(s) (includes Master's, Doctorate, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry)
- ☐ Did not complete any
- ☐ Don't know

6. (If Yes to post-secondary education question) **How long ago did you attend a post-secondary program?**
   - ☐ Within the past year
   - ☐ 1–3 years ago
   - ☐ 4–6 years ago
   - ☐ 7–10 years ago
   - ☐ More than 10 years ago

7. **Did you ever take upgrading, access, bridging, or other preparatory courses during or prior to your studies at *[IAHLA member institute name]*?**
   - ☐ No, did not take any
   - ☐ Took Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses
   - ☐ Took Pre-Employment program

8. **Did you participate in any paid or unpaid work experience as part of your program?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

Future Plans

9. **What are your plans for the next academic year (starting September 2026)** (Check all that apply)
   - ☐ Continue studying
   - ☐ Work at a paid job or business
   - ☐ Other - Please specify: _____*
   - ☐ Don't know

10. (if selected "Continue studying" in question above)
Where do you plan to study in the next academic year?
   - ☐ [IAHLA member institute name]
   - ☐ Another institution – Please specify: _____*
   - ☐ Don't know

Education Evaluation and Engagement

11. **Please rate the following aspects of your program and experience at [*IAHLA member institute name*].**

	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable	Don't know
Quality of program instruction							
Amount of practical experience during the in-school portion of the training							
Relationship with instructors							
Accessible institute information							
Communication with learners							
Feeling respected and valued							
Feeling included in class discussions or group projects							
Interaction with peers							
Engagement in non-academic events and activities at the institute							

12. **How helpful was the program at [*IAHLA member institute name*] in developing the following skills?**

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	Not applicable	Don't know
Clear and concise writing						
Effective communication						
Reading and comprehending material appropriate to your field of study						
Working effectively with others						
Analyzing and thinking critically						
Learning on your own						
Improving your self-confidence and self-esteem						
Becoming more active in your community						
Conversing in your First Nations language						
Preparing for further education						
Preparing for employment						

Well-being and Supports

13. **How well does [*IAHLA member institute name*] support your well-being in the following areas?**

	Very well	Well	Neither well nor poorly	Poorly	Very poorly	Not applicable	Don't know
Physical							
Mental and emotional							
Spiritual							

14. **How would you rate the following supports at [*IAHLA member institute name*]?**

Support	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't need this support	Don't know
Elders to support learners							
Cultural activities and workshops (for example, language classes, land-based learning activities)							
Community engagement (for example, opportunities to connect with local First Nations leaders or community members)							
Holistic health and wellness supports (for example, traditional healing practices, wellness programs)							
Supports for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities (for example, challenges with thinking, moving, hearing, seeing, emotions, or behavior; has difficulty learning; or has exceptional talents or abilities)							
Advising (for example, program planning, degree requirements)							
Tutoring (for example, within a program or through a learner service centre)							
Career planning (for example, job search skills, opportunities to connect with businesses)							
Strategies for success (for example, program that addresses studying, time management)							
Financial support (scholarships, awards, or bursaries; not including living allowance)							

Support	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't need this support	Don't know
Technical support (for example, troubleshooting computers or Internet access)							
Daycare or childcare							
Food supports and services							
Transportation or transit to and from the institute							
Other: _____							

15. **What supports would be most helpful to you in ***completing*** your education goal(s)?** *(select up to three)*
    [Present the same options as in the previous question, allow to select up to three]

16. **How could the services and supports provided by [*IAHLA member institute name*] be improved?**

Overall Satisfaction

17. **How satisfied are you with the education you received from your program at [*IAHLA member institute name]*?**
    - ☐ Very Satisfied
    - ☐ Satisfied
    - ☐ Dissatisfied
    - ☐ Very Dissatisfied
    - ☐ Don't know

18. **Please explain the reasons for your level of satisfaction with *[IAHLA member institute name]*. We are interested in hearing more about what has and has not been working well for you.**

19. **How could the education or training in your program be improved?**

20. **Given your experiences in your program, would you select the same program again?**
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

21. **How likely are you to recommend *[IAHLA member institute name]* to others?**

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Don't know

22. **Please explain why you would or would not recommend [IAHLA member institute name] to others.**

Challenges

23. **Have any of the following situations prevented you from attending classes at *[IAHLA member institute name]*?** (Select all that apply)

Financial difficulties	
Job responsibilities	
Family or childcare responsibilities	
Housing challenges	
Cultural responsibilities	
Feeling socially isolated or unwelcome	
Insufficient technology or internet access	
Transportation challenges	
Health-related challenges (physical or mental health)	
Other (Please specify): _____*	
I have not faced any challenges that have prevented me from attending classes *[exclusive option]*	

24. **What are the main barriers you have experienced in completing your education at [IAHLA member institute name]?** (Select up to three)

- ☐ Insufficient funding for living expenses (for example, rent, food, transportation)
- ☐ Conflicting work schedules with class times
- ☐ Personal and family responsibilities (for example, childcare, eldercare)
- ☐ Lack of awareness or information about available funding sources
- ☐ Geographic or transportation challenges
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____
- ☐ No barriers experienced *(exclusive option)*

25. **If you have non-academic responsibilities that impact your experience (for example, family, work, health, or community obligations), how does [*IAHLA member institute name]* accommodate these responsibilities?**

Additional Comments and Suggestions

26. **Do you have any further comments to add about your educational experience or your program?**

Demographics and Personal Profile (Optional)

The following optional questions aim to gather information about the characteristics of learners who have participated in this survey. The results will be aggregated across the IAHLA sector and will not be reported at the individual school level.

27. **What gender do you identify with?**
    - ☐ Man
    - ☐ Non-binary
    - ☐ Woman
    - ☐ Two-spirit
    - ☐ Another identity (Please specify) _____
    - ☐ Prefer not to answer

28. **What is your age?**
    - ☐ Under 20
    - ☐ 21–30
    - ☐ 31–40
    - ☐ 41–50
    - ☐ 51–60
    - ☐ Over 60

29. **Are you a former child or youth in care with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)?**
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

30. **Do you identify yourself as:**
    - ☐ First Nations (status)
    - ☐ First Nations (non-status)
    - ☐ Métis

- ☐ Inuit
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____
- ☐ Don't know

31. **How many individuals in your household rely on you for support?**
    - ☐ None
    - ☐ 1
    - ☐ 2
    - ☐ 3
    - ☐ 4
    - ☐ More than 4

32. **Did you relocate from your home community to attend [IAHLA member institute]?**
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No
    - ☐ Don't know

Thank you for completing the survey!

If you enter the prize draw, your contact information will not be connected to your survey responses. Survey responses are stored separately from the name, email, and mailing address provided for the prize draw.

IAHLA Learner Experience Survey: Prize Draw

To enter the prize draw for one of fifteen $100 prizes, submit your contact information. Prizes will be drawn after the survey closes, and contact details will be deleted after prizes are distributed.

Your contact information will not be connected to your survey responses.

Contact Information
First Name:
Last Name:
Street Address:
City:
Province/Territory:
Postal Code:
Email Address: