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## ***UP Skills for Work Prepares Workers with the Soft Skills Employers Seek***

Toronto, ON, June 27, 2017 – ABC Life Literacy Canada (ABC) is pleased to announce the *UP Skills for Work* program, designed to help learners develop core employability and workplace skills. Through the commitment and support from founding sponsor, Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life, ABC will create nine learning modules over the next three years for delivery in workshops in community, settlement, home, workplace and other learning communities across Canada.

Soft skills, like time management, teamwork and adaptability, are essential for workers at all levels, but especially for entry-level learners. A 2014 survey of major Canadian employers by the Business Council of Canada found that employers expect entry-level workers to gain hard skills and technical knowledge on the job, but they want candidates to display soft skills during the selection process. ABC is raising awareness of the importance of soft skills and creating an accessible program to respond to this need identified by employers. Through *UP Skills for Work*, learners in both the workplace and in community learning centres will be able to acquire these key skills, helping to build their confidence and comfort in the workplace.

“We’re very excited to create and launch programming that will have a direct impact on the working lives of learners by helping them develop the kinds of soft skills employers are looking for,” said Mack Rogers, Executive Director of ABC Life Literacy Canada. “This program would not have been possible without the ongoing support of Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life.”

*UP Skills for Work* is geared towards the needs of learners through nine modules: Attitude, Motivation, Presentation, Teamwork, Time Management, Adaptability, Stress Management, Accountability and Confidence. These are the nine key employability skills sought by hiring managers and support workers at all stages of their employment as identified by Futureworx, a Canadian non-profit at the forefront of developing soft-skills programming.

“Our catalyst sponsorship of *UP Skills for Work* builds on a relationship with ABC going back to 1999,” said Cathy Weaver, Senior Vice-President, Human Resources, Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life. “Together we realize literacy is central in a range of social, educational, and economic issues, from employment and retraining to poverty reduction and the challenges faced by newcomers to our country. In 2017 our support for literacy, including the soft skills workers need, is a natural extension of our corporate commitment to help more Canadians improve their financial, physical and mental well-being.”

ABC is developing *UP Skills for Work* modules in collaboration with educational experts across Canada. We believe supporting learners through employability skills development will have a measurable, lasting effect across communities and sectors, and create a stronger, more adaptable workforce for the future. The first three program modules will be available this fall.

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**About ABC Life Literacy Canada**

ABC Life Literacy Canada is a non-profit organization that inspires Canadians to increase their literacy and essential skills. We mobilize business, government and communities to support lifelong learning and achieve our goals through leadership in programs, communications and partnerships. We envision a Canada where everyone has the skills they need to live a fully engaged life. For the latest news and information on adult literacy please visit [www.abclifeliteracy.ca](http://www.abclifeliteracy.ca), follow us on Twitter or join our Facebook page.

**About Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life**

Great-West Life, together with London Life and Canada Life, offers a broad portfolio of financial and benefit plan solutions, and serves the financial security needs of more than 13 million people across Canada.

As an Imagine Caring Company, Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life donate a minimum of one per cent of average pre-tax profits to non-profit, charitable and community organizations each year.

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