

# ILLINOIS LITERACY SUMMER 2016

**Jesse White**  
Secretary of State  
& State Librarian

The State Library's Literacy Office addresses the educational needs of adult learners and families through the Adult Literacy Grant Program. Learners in this program embark on a journey of lifelong learning with the assistance of dedicated volunteer tutors, teachers and mentors in more than 150 literacy projects throughout the state. I am pleased to be able to captain a program that I truly believe makes a difference in the lives of Illinois citizens. For 30 years, this program has been providing the necessary avenues for individuals who need literacy instruction.



Although great strides have been made in addressing literacy needs over the last 30 years, statistics reveal there is much more work to do. The most important thing we can do is create awareness about the need for literacy in Illinois. Two upcoming events I encourage you to engage in are National Literacy Month in September and Family Reading Night in November. More details about these events are available in this issue of Illinois Literacy. I encourage you to celebrate the successes we have achieved together, but to also consider what more can be done.

*Jesse White*

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Secretary of State & State Librarian

## Adult Literacy Grant Program celebrates 30 years of success

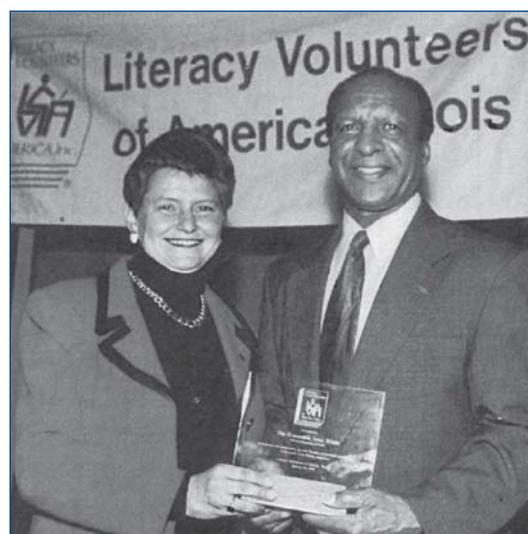
For the past 30 years, Illinois residents both young and old in need of help with reading, writing or learning the English language have been able to receive free services to assist them thanks to the Adult Literacy Grant Program offered through the Secretary of State's Literacy Office. A myriad of agencies from the far southern tip of Illinois, over to the Quad Cities and into the inner city of Chicago have been awarded grant funds and have served countless individuals.

The Secretary of State's Adult Literacy Grant Program is unique in that it provides services to individuals who may be unable to receive literacy services from other agencies or function in traditional learning environments. The program utilizes citizens who volunteer their time to tutor individuals on a one-to-one basis, promotes learning as a family unit and provides workers with an opportunity to receive instruction while at work.

"As the longest serving Secretary of State, I have had the honor of leading this grant program for the past 16 years," said Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White. "It is imperative that all Illinois citizens have access to quality literacy programs that set them on the path to lifelong learning."

### Program history

In 1984, the Illinois Literacy Council was established by then-Secretary of State Jim Edgar and held a series of hearings on adult literacy needs in Illinois. The information gathered from the hearings brought to light the need for adult literacy in the state. It was found that one in five Illinois citizens were at a literacy level that



Back in 1999, newly elected Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White receives an award from Literacy Volunteers of America – Illinois. From left: Dorothy Miaso, Literacy Volunteers of America and Secretary White.

precluded them from being able to properly function on the job and in society. It was also determined that less than 5 percent of those citizens were receiving services to improve their literacy levels.

Secretary Edgar began literacy demonstration programming using federal library funds, state adult education funds and private foundation grants with the initial funding limited to libraries and public education agencies. After the success of this initial round of grants, Secretary Edgar then requested funding from

*(Cont. on pg. 2)*

## Adult Literacy Grant Program *(Cont. from pg. 1)*

the Illinois General Assembly to establish adult volunteer literacy grant programs. In addition, the scope of those eligible to receive grants was widened to include both public and non-public entities such as community-based organizations.

In June 1985, the Illinois Literacy Act was passed with grant funding for the program beginning in fiscal year 1986. In the first year of grant funding, 67 grant awards totaling \$2 million were made to a variety of agencies. The following year, the appropriation for the program was increased to \$4 million with 84 grants awarded.

For 30 years, the Literacy Office has offered different types of literacy grants providing services for many areas of need. These include summer reading programs, domestic violence victims, and transitioning individuals from welfare to the workforce. The program has evolved into what is now the Adult Literacy Grant Program. The program supports services in the following areas:

- **Adult Volunteer Literacy** – Provides training for volunteers who tutor adults over age 17 in basic reading, math, writing or language skills.
- **Penny Severns Family Literacy** – Provides instructional services to parents and children to enhance their basic reading, math, writing or language skills, and encourages and initiates opportunities for parents and children to learn together.
- **Workplace Skills Enhancement** – Provides on-site instructional services to employees of Illinois businesses to enable them to increase their basic reading, math, writing or language skills, maintain their employment and increase their eligibility for promotion.

### Program impact

Since the Adult Literacy Grant Program inception:

- An average of 31,000 Illinois residents have been served each year.
- An average of 10,000 Illinois residents have volunteered their time to tutor each year.
- Over 234 different entities have participated in the Adult Volunteer Literacy.
- Over 430 different entities have participated in the Penny Severns Family Literacy.
- 669 different Illinois businesses have participated in Workplace Skills Enhancement and have contributed over \$11.5 million to match state funds.

### Current literacy needs in Illinois

Thirty years of literacy grants have had an effect on thousands of low-literate individuals, but the need continues. The most recent census information collected by the American Community Survey indicates that of the 12.6 million Illinois residents, an estimated 2.1 million (16.6 percent) need adult literacy and/or English language instruction. The survey also shows that 2.7 million (22.5 percent) residents over age 5 speak a language other than English. Of those, 1.1 million (40.7 percent) report that they speak English less than very well. These numbers only reflect some of the Illinois residents who could benefit from English language instruction.



Sister Jane Beckman, a volunteer tutor at the Dominican Literacy Center in Aurora, works with adult learner Leila Radmard.

The survey further finds that of the 8.5 million Illinois residents over age 25, about 471,000 (5.5 percent) have less than a ninth-grade education. Additionally, 590,000 (6.9 percent) residents have between a ninth- and 12th-grade education. Combined the numbers indicate that over 1 million (12.4 percent) residents over 25 years of age do not have a high school diploma. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.)

### Organizations involved in the Adult Literacy Grant Program

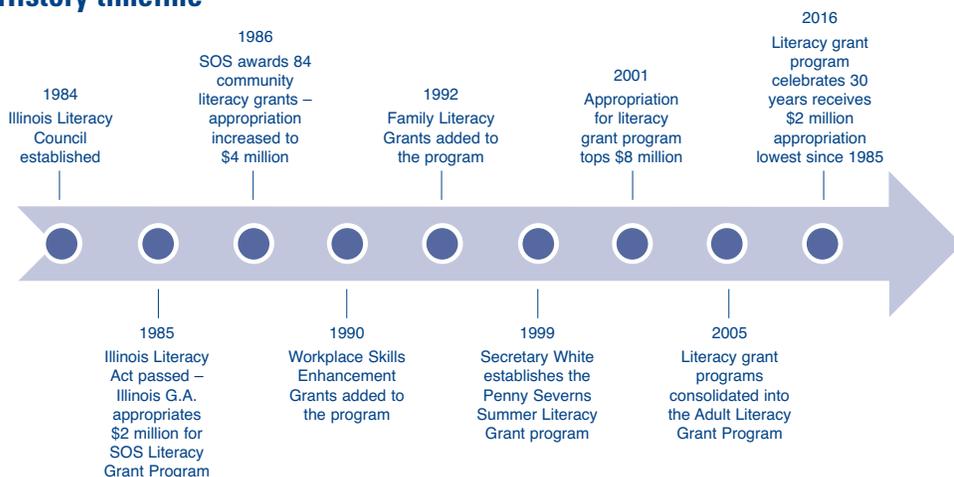
The following organizations received Secretary of State funding in 1986 and are still involved in the literacy effort in 2016:

- Albany Park Community Center, Chicago
- Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago
- Universidad Popular, Chicago
- Prairie State College, Chicago Heights
- Gail Borden Library, Elgin
- Joliet Junior College
- Kankakee Community College
- Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills
- Triton College, River Grove
- Waubensee Community College, Aurora
- Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon
- Highland Community College, Freeport
- Black Hawk College, Moline
- McLean Regional Office of Education, Normal
- Danville Area Community College
- C.E.F.S., Effingham
- Lake Land College, Mattoon
- Spoon River College, Canton
- YWCA, Pekin
- Common Place, Peoria
- John Wood Community College, Quincy
- Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield
- Kaskaskia College, Centralia
- Regional Office of Education Randolph County, Chester
- John A. Logan College, Carterville
- Regional Office of Education Peoria County, Peoria



Albany Park Community Center (APCC), one of the original literacy grant organizations, presents Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White with an award for public service. From left: Casey Smagala, director of Development/APCC; Rodney Walker, executive director/APCC; Secretary White; Jin Lee, director of Government Relations/APCC; and Dennis G. Hammer, president-Sauganash, North Shore Community Bank/APCC board member.

## History timeline



## Celebrate National Literacy Month

September is National Literacy Month. Celebrate this important month by becoming a volunteer tutor or helping an adult in need of services find a literacy program. For information on becoming a volunteer tutor for a literacy program near you or a literacy program for services, contact the Adult Learning Hotline at 800-321-9511 or online at [www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline/index.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline/index.html).

## “Night of 1000 Stars”



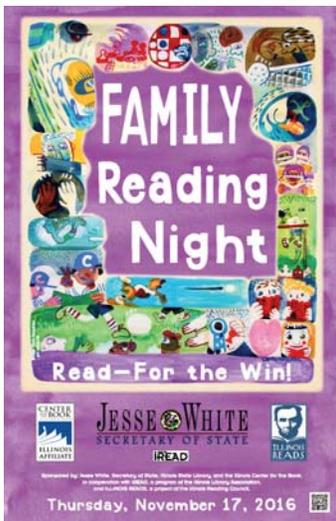
Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White (left) addresses the audience during the “Night of 1000 Stars” event and is joined by Chamala Jordan (right), chair of the South Side Literacy Coalition.

The South Side Literacy Coalition (SSLC) hosted its 19th annual “Night of 1000 Stars” in April at the Delta Literacy Project in Chicago. The evening got underway after SSLC Chair Chamala Jordan welcomed everyone and introduced the emcee, Monica Harris, a student at UIC Family Start Learning Center. Acknowledgments included recognition of all active members of SSLC, with special thanks to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for donating the event space and to Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition for donating the meal and printing the ad book. Joining the festivities were longtime supporter Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White, State Rep. Elgie Sims, Jr. and Alderman Roderick Sawyer. All three distinguished gentlemen addressed attendees with uplifting messages of hope, encouragement and their unwavering support of adult and family literacy.

This year’s theme was “Literacy in a Changing World.” Adult students shined as they shared their stories, poems and writings. The SSLC was founded in 1992 and promotes quality adult educational services to the residents of south side communities in Chicago. Collectively, the member organizations serve over 3,500 adults and their families each year with the help of more than 300 volunteers.

“I applaud the South Side Literacy Coalition for their ongoing support of literacy programs,” said Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White. “Throughout the years attending this event, I am pleased to have witnessed many adult learners take the necessary steps to better themselves.”





## Family Reading Night 2016

Before you know it fall will be here and it will be time again for Family Reading Night (FRN), so it's not too early to begin planning and preparing. FRN is an annual statewide event held the third Thursday in November to encourage families to spend quality time reading together. The event is sponsored by the Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White and the Illinois Center for the Book. This year's event will be November 17, 2016, with the theme "Read – For the Win!"

"It is important for families to spend time reading together," says Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White. "A parent is a child's very first teacher. This night provides parents with an opportunity to read with their children and spend quality time together as a family."

Each year, posters and bookmarks are made available for libraries, schools, youth and literacy organizations to promote their FRN programs. Unfortunately, due to the state budget impasse, the Illinois State Library will be unable to print the posters and bookmarks but have made them available for download from the Secretary of State's website –at <http://illinoiscenterforthebook.org/frn.html>.

## ON THE HORIZON

### September – National Literacy Month

**September 26-October 1** – National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week, <http://national-coalition-literacy.org/adult-education-and-family-literacy-week/>

**September 28-29** - Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support, Forum For Excellence, Bloomington-Normal, IL, <http://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/pd/forum-for-excellence/>

### October – Domestic Violence Awareness Month

**October 17-19** – Families Learning Summit, Detroit, MI, <http://www.familieslearning.org/our-capabilities/summit.html>

**October 18-20** – Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, Rosemont, IL [www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org)

**October 26-29** – International Dyslexia Association Reading Literacy & Learning Conference, Orlando, FL, <https://dyslexiaida.org/2016-annual-conference/>

**November 8-11** – American Association for Adult and Continuing Educators, Albuquerque, NM, [www.aaace.org](http://www.aaace.org)

**November 17-20** – National Council of Teachers of English, Atlanta, GA, <http://www.ncte.org/annual>

**November 30-December 3** – Literacy Research Association Conference, Nashville, TN, <http://www.literacyresearchassociation.org/>

More literacy event information is available at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/literacy/home.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/literacy/home.html) (click Calendar of Literacy Events).

# WWW



<http://myapp-rtest1.rhcloud.com/literacy/>

This collection of Adult Literacy Tutor Training videos was produced by San José Public Library's Partners in Reading and Santa Clara City Library's Read Santa Clara. These videos feature tutor/learner pairs demonstrating evidence-based reading strategies in clear, easy-to-replicate segments.

[www.Coursera.org](http://www.Coursera.org)

This resource allows anyone to take free courses online. These courses are made available from a variety of universities. Participants can take classes on a wide variety of topics including grammar, parenting, problem solving skills, etc.

[www.pcc.edu/resources/tutoring/volunteer/resources-for-tutors.html](http://www.pcc.edu/resources/tutoring/volunteer/resources-for-tutors.html)

A collection of resources for ESL tutors, courtesy of Portland Community College in Portland, Oregon. Listening, pronunciation, vocabulary and reading skills are among the topics covered.

*Illinois Literacy* is a publication of the Secretary of State, Illinois State Library Literacy Office.

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Produced by the Communications Department.

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