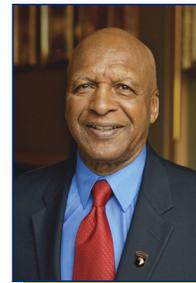


Jesse White  
Secretary of State  
& State Librarian

In this issue of Illinois Literacy, I am pleased to announce that literacy programs throughout the state were awarded more than \$4.7 million dollars for Fiscal Year 2019 to provide needed services to the state’s most vulnerable residents. This issue also features articles about the success of Illinois literacy programs in Fiscal Year 2018. It is important to assess the impact that Adult Literacy programs have on the lives of individuals, families and workers. The number of individuals we are serving and the changes participants are experiencing are truly extraordinary. We continue to be proud of the work that was accomplished in 2018 and look forward to even more progress in 2019.



Literacy practitioners in Illinois collaborate in the form of councils and coalitions to improve their knowledge, share ideas and advance the field of adult literacy. These groups play a vital role in providing low-cost training and advocating on behalf of Adult Literacy programs in the community. I encourage those involved in adult literacy to join an established organization or look into forming a regional group in their area.

Best wishes for continued success in 2019.

*Jesse White*

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

## Secretary White awards more than \$4.7 million to literacy projects

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White recently awarded \$4,717,205 to 96 literacy projects in Illinois for Fiscal Year 2019, which began on July 1. These projects use 275 different service locations in Cook County, including the city of Chicago, and 734 service locations throughout the rest of the state. This is a 15 percent increase in the number of service locations available to program participants from those utilized in Fiscal Year 2018. More than 12,600 adult learners are projected to be served in 80 Illinois counties. Additionally, 881 children from 711 families will participate in the Penny Severns Family Literacy Grant program. The descriptions of the awards are as follows:

### Adult Volunteer Literacy

\$3,555,330 awarded to 65 projects to provide training to over 6,200 volunteers who tutor adults over the age of 17 who read, write, compute or comprehend below the ninth-grade level or score below SPL 7 for non-native English speakers.

### Penny Severns Family Literacy

\$1,064,580 awarded to 24 projects that provide parents and children – both individually and together – instructional services to enhance their basic read-



A mother and daughter participate in family literacy activities at Aquinas Literacy Center in Chicago.

ing, math, writing or language skills. Grants are awarded to partnerships that include an adult literacy provider, a public library and a child-at-risk organization.

### Workplace Skills Enhancement

\$97,295 awarded to seven businesses that offer employees onsite instructional services to enhance their basic reading, math, writing or language skills; maintain their employment; and increase their eligibility for promotion. Grants are matched dollar-for-dollar by the participating business.

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## Fiscal Year 2018 Literacy Program statistics and success stories

Fiscal Year 2018 final reports submitted by programs funded through the Secretary of State Illinois State Library Literacy Office revealed the following statistics. Success stories from each program follow.

### Adult Volunteer Literacy

- 11,035 adult learners served
- Average age of adult learner was 41
- 62 percent of adult learners were studying English as a Second Language (ESL)
- 5,355 volunteer tutors provided services to adult learners
- Average age of volunteer tutor was 48
- Volunteer tutors provided 345,355 hours of tutoring instruction, which equates to \$9,220,343 of service, according to the charitable community group Independent Sector.

**Success Story:** *Project READ, Richland Community College, Decatur*

After serving 16 years in prison, a man walked into Project READ looking for assistance in improving his math skills to gain sustainable employment. He was able to perform basic math functions, and while in prison, he earned his high school equivalency certificate. After being released from prison, he realized that he would need to learn more complex math to obtain higher paying employment. He was quickly matched with a volunteer tutor and scheduled tutoring sessions around his many part-time jobs. In just over two months, he mastered decimals, percentages, ratios, integers, and basic algebra and gained almost five-grade-level equivalents in math. He was offered a temporary job at Caterpillar and became a full-time employee within two months. Doing the homework assigned by his tutor increased his math, organization and time management skills. Mastering the challenges of higher-level math and testing strategies has increased his confidence. Having a job that allows him to be self-sufficient and independent has been instrumental in turning his life around. He is proud that he has become an outstanding role model for his seven children and 10 grandchildren.

### Penny Severns Family Literacy

- 609 adult learners served
- 87 percent of the adults were female
- 82 percent of adult learners were studying ESL
- Average age of adult learner was 33
- 347 participants obtained a library card
- 778 children served
- Average age of children served was 4

**Success Story:** *Asian Human Services, Chicago*

A newly immigrated family from Guatemala first enrolled in the Asian Human Services (AHS) family literacy program in August of 2016. At that time, only the father was working. As with most immigrants, their English skills were minimal, as was their schooling. Neither adult had finished secondary schooling

and struggled to assimilate to a new country. The family consisted of two elementary school-age sons and a preschool-age daughter. The sons were enrolled in school and worked very hard on their academics, but struggled to keep up. The parents immediately sought assistance for their children because they were ill-equipped to help.

Over the course of the year, the parents, school teachers and AHS staff worked together to support the children with their academic needs. As the year progressed, their grades steadily improved, and they began to make appropriate progress. Both parents actively participated in Parent and Children Together (PACT) activities, parenting classes and library services. When AHS hosted events, the mother was the first to volunteer to help. All three children enrolled in the after-school program and are now honor roll students. Both parents are gainfully employed. Their success is a testament to their hard work and serves as an example of what the power of education can do for an entire family.

### Workplace Skills Enhancement

- 176 employees received instruction
- 51 percent of employees instructed were female
- Average age of employee was 41
- 95 percent of employees studied ESL

**Success Story:** *Sterling Lumber Company, Phoenix, Illinois; South Suburban College, Business & Career Institute*

Sterling Lumber Company is a family-owned business that for 65 years has produced industrial lumber, crane mats, crates and pallets. The company's products are used for major infrastructure projects across North America and the world that provide temporary site access to protect sensitive terrain from damage. The plant in Phoenix employs over 200 local residents who provide in-house manufacturing of the product line, which eliminates costly outsourcing. Partnering with South Suburban College's Business and Career Institute, the company has provided English-language instruction to employees who are non-native English speakers since 2014 and has benefited greatly through this partnership. Workers communicate better in English and rely less on interpreters.

Recently, a truck picking up lumber inside the factory caught fire in its engine compartment and soon became engulfed in flames. Working together, workers were able to extinguish the fire before it spread throughout the building. Company management fully credit the employees' ability to communicate with each other as the reason the company was able to avert a potential disaster. Management is also impressed that workers continue to be enthusiastic about attending these classes and believes the promotion of some students to line leads is a direct result of the classes. Providing English instruction for its employees has created a higher skilled, cohesive workforce that allows promotion from within the company.

## Correctional Facilities

Offering literacy tutoring in correctional facilities opens the door to many educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals. For some, it offers an opportunity to provide training to their fellow inmates. To participate in the program, participants must score below the ninth-grade level in reading, writing and math or have very poor English skills.

- Nine literacy programs provided adult basic education or English as a Second Language instruction in local correctional facilities; six programs provided literacy instruction at state facilities; and one program worked with one federal facility
- 257 adult learners qualified and became students
- 98 inmates whose skills exceeded high school levels became peer tutors
- 87 citizens from local communities tutored in correctional facilities

## Adult Literacy, Public Library Partnerships

Public libraries throughout Illinois played an important role in educating adult learners. Literacy programs rely on libraries for a full array of library services, and many libraries are providing services to more than one literacy program. In Fiscal Year 2018, libraries and literacy programs worked together to achieve the following results:

- 50 adult literacy programs assisted 2,329 adult learners in obtaining library cards
- 89 libraries provided overhead support for Illinois State Library funded literacy projects
- 178 libraries offered special collections for adult learners
- 377 libraries provided tutoring space for literacy volunteers to work with adult learners
- 321 libraries provided recruitment and referral of adult learners to literacy programs around the state

# Literacy coalitions and councils play a vital role in Illinois



Literacy coalition members from throughout Chicago gather in November for a grant writing workshop.

Since the implementation of the Secretary of State's Adult Literacy Grant Program, literacy coalitions and councils have played a pivotal role in providing literacy agencies the ability to enhance services. The purpose of these groups is to provide an opportunity for literacy practitioners to network, share ideas and best practices, discuss relevant issues, participate in inter-agency training and serve as advocates for adult literacy. The rich history of these groups

can be traced back as far as the early 1990s when literacy providers and the Secretary of State's Literacy Office saw the need for a collaborative network of adult literacy provider agencies that could provide support amongst each other. These groups began to take form throughout the state and especially within the city of Chicago.

Over the years, these groups have evolved and weathered tough financial times, declining membership and continued their mission to work toward better serving adult learners. The recent state budget impasse was particularly difficult for social service providers and had a major impact on agencies that provided adult literacy services. Many agencies were forced to cease operations or greatly reduce services. A byproduct of the impasse was the loss of experienced staff within these agencies.

With the restoration of literacy funding in the recent state budget, the coalitions and councils have rekindled their mission and are working to rebuild membership. A plethora of new staff at literacy providers is proving to be a challenge for many agencies.

"Literacy coalitions and councils play an important role in adult literacy by providing support to agencies and individuals that are beginning or continuing their career in adult literacy," says Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White. "I would encourage all literacy practitioners, whether experienced or new to the field, to seek out membership in one of these groups or to explore forming one in their area. The benefit of sharing ideas and resources is immeasurable."

Current literacy coalitions and councils in Illinois and their contact information:

### Chicago

- Citywide Literacy Coalition 312-690-4253
- Northside Literacy Coalition 312-659-1520
- Southside Literacy Coalition 312-259-3023
- Westside Literacy Coalition 773-261-3309
- Hispanic Literacy Coalition 312-747-2354

### Downstate

- Metro East Literacy Council 618-468-4153

If you would like more information on current literacy coalitions and councils or would like guidance in establishing a group in your area, please contact the Secretary of State Illinois State Library's Literacy Office at 800-665-5576, extension #3.



## Illinois Adult Learning Hotline – Referring adult learners in Illinois

This year Krinna Shah left her native country of India to join her husband who had previously moved to the United States. Upon her arrival, she was lacking confidence in her English ability, despite studying English in India. She began to search for assistance and discovered the Illinois Adult Learning Hotline.



Krinna Shah pictured during a tutoring session at Midwest Asian American Center.

The Illinois Adult Learning Hotline is operated by the Adult Learning Resource Center (ALRC) in Arlington Heights with funding provided in part by the Illinois State Library Literacy Office's Adult Literacy Grant Program. The hotline provides referrals to potential adult learners, as well as volunteer tutors, local adult education and literacy programs throughout the state. Krinna was given information on three possible literacy agencies that could meet her specific needs. The agencies were each sent a referral report to follow up with her as a potential adult learner.

Midwest Asian American Center was one of the agencies that received the referral report. Vandana Dalal, the agency director, soon contacted Krinna to offer assistance. During their initial conversation, Krinna explained that she could read and write in English and could understand what people were saying to her, but needed practice speaking and engaging in English conversations. Vandana was soon able to put Krinna at ease because she was able to communicate with her in her native language of Gujarati. Krinna was matched with a tutor, and the pair began meeting on Sunday mornings for English tutoring.

Vandana encouraged Krinna to visit the Schaumburg Public Library, where she obtained a library card and began to take advantage of library services. She attended a number of programs at the library that included classes on digital literacy, resume writing and job searching. She soon found employment as a human resources manager at a local information technology consulting and staffing company. With the help of the Midwest Asian American Center, Krinna has improved her speaking ability and her confidence to use English at work. She plans to continue on with her tutoring sessions.

If you would like to know more about the Illinois Adult Learning Hotline, you can visit the website at [www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/hotline.html) or contact Laura Sherwood at [lsherwood@cntrmail.org](mailto:lsherwood@cntrmail.org) or 224-366-8622. If you know of an adult learner who needs to improve his/her English ability, prepare for citizenship or work toward a high school equivalency certificate, you can call 800-321-9511. Operators are available Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and are fluent in Spanish, Polish and English.

## ON THE HORIZON

January 23-25 – Annual Illinois Comprehensive Literacy & Reading Recovery Conference, Chicago, IL, <https://www.nl.edu/readingrecoveryconference/>

February 21-24 – Learning Disabilities Association Annual International Conference, Ft. Worth, TX, <https://ldaamerica.org/events/annual-conference/>

March 6-8 – Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association Conference, Springfield, IL, <https://www.iacea.net/2019-conference.html>

March 12-15 – International TESOL Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA, <http://www.tesol.org/convention-2019>

March 23 – On The Road to Literacy Conference, Chicago, IL, <http://www.lvillinois.org/home.aspx>

March 27-29 – Illinois Head Start Annual Conference, East Peoria, IL, <http://ilheadstart.org/2019-annual-training-conference-parent-institute/>

March 31-April 3 – Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE), New Orleans, LA, <https://www.coabe.org/conference-2019/>

April 3-6 – National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, San Diego, CA, <https://www.nctm.org/Conferences-and-Professional-Development/Annual-Meeting-and-Exposition/>

April 7-13 – National Library Week, <http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek>

April 7-13 – National Volunteer Week, <https://www2.pointsoflight.org/nvw>

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://lvmorris.org/tutor-resources/>

The Literacy Volunteers of Morris County, NJ, have compiled a listing of volunteer tutor resources for English as a Second Language, reading and writing. There is also a link to videos of tutoring sessions, which demonstrate techniques and strategies.

<http://www.midlandneedtoread.org/tutors/tutor-resources/>

The Need to Read adult literacy program in Midland, TX, provides tutor resources such as phonics, spelling, reading and writing, along with a list of online learning resources.

<http://www.tacomacommunityhouse.org/literacy-now-online-resources/>

Community House Literacy Now! in Tacoma, WA, has assembled a list of online resources for volunteer tutors. The list includes online training sites, sources for reading materials, pictures, cultural resources, health literacy, financial literacy and many other helpful assets.

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

**Jesse White, Secretary of State and State Librarian  
Greg McCormick, Director, Illinois State Library**

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**Produced by the Communications Department.**

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois. January 2019 — 1 — LDL 18