



Expanding Access to Adult Literacy Services Project

Background:

According to the 2013 PIAAC Survey of Adult Skills, approximately 36 million adults in the U.S. have low reading and math skills. The existing network of adult education programs serves fewer than 3 million of those in need. Low literacy skills are often intertwined with other social issues like poverty, poor health, homelessness, domestic violence, and addiction. Organizations that provide services around these issues likely have clients with low reading and math skills that could benefit from adult education services, but may not be enrolled or even aware of them.

Purpose:

The Expanding Access to Adult Literacy Services project seeks to expand access to literacy services in communities by supporting social service agencies in adding sustainable adult literacy services to their existing offerings. This approach reaches new populations who do not currently have access to adult literacy and basic education services. It develops models and resources that different types of organizations can replicate and scale in communities across the country. Where appropriate, the project also works with existing literacy programs to enhance their capacity in a community.

Project

The Expanding Access Project assists local-level partners with a two-year capacity-building development model that includes technical assistance. Year one of the project focuses on agency assessment, planning, program rollout, and evaluation. Year two of the project focuses on developing leadership, infrastructure, and partnerships.



Year One

During year one, ProLiteracy provides training and technical assistance to help agencies assess the needs of their clients and the capacity of the organization, develop a plan for the pilot project, and then implement, evaluate, and improve the pilot.

Year 1: Program Start-Up

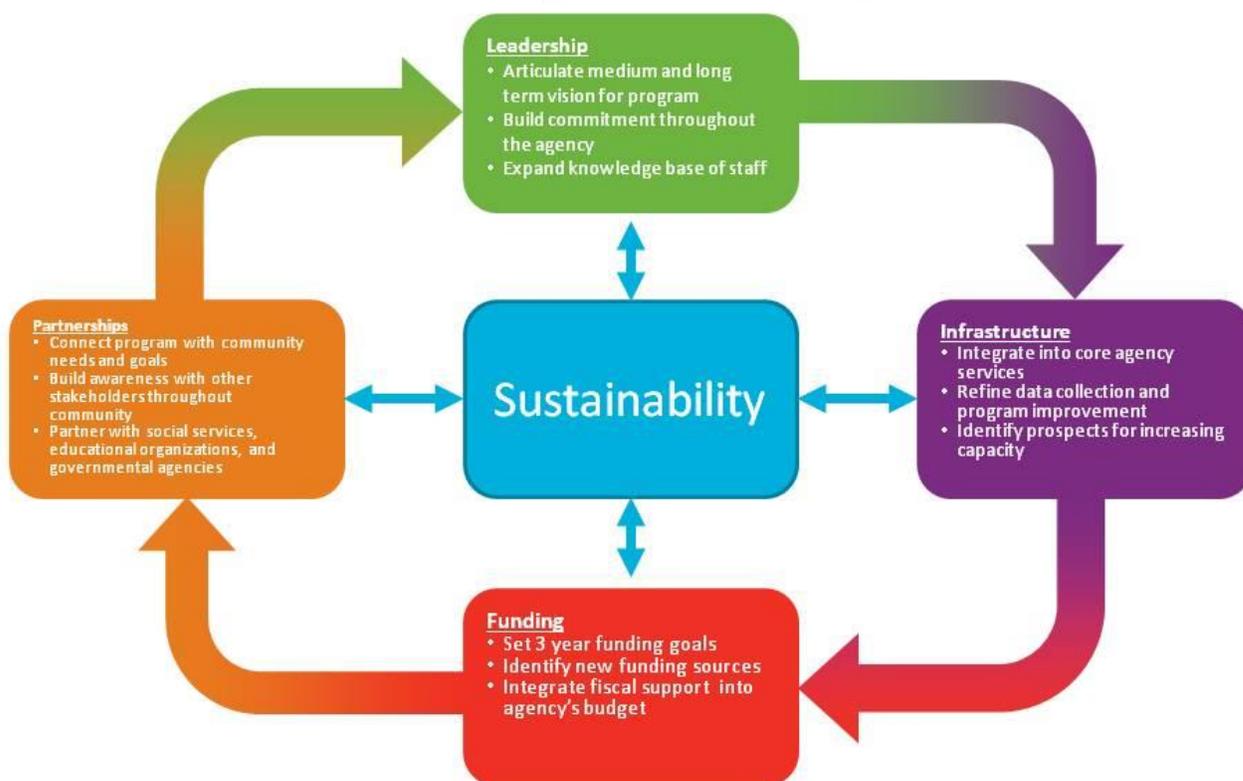




Year Two

In year two, local agencies continue to offer literacy services and make the transition from a grant-initiated literacy project to services that are integrated and sustained by the organization. ProLiteracy provides training and technical assistance to help agencies develop a long-term vision for the project, identify community partnerships, develop organizational infrastructure, and identify funding that can sustain the literacy services.

Year 2: Program Integration





Previous Projects

Beginning in 2012 with funding from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, ProLiteracy developed and piloted the model working with three agencies in El Paso, Texas, and Little Rock, Arkansas. In 2013, we assisted those pilot agencies in institutionalizing their literacy programs more fully and took the model to two new demonstration communities: Ardmore, Oklahoma, and San Antonio, Texas. In 2014, we started working with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) and three of its domestic violence shelters located in Lakeland, Fort Walton Beach, and Immokalee. In 2015-18, we continued work in Ardmore and Florida, and added Zanesville, Ohio, as an additional community.

Current Projects

Currently, we are working in three communities:

- In Ardmore, Oklahoma, we are working with a homelessness prevention organization to expand financial literacy services for its clients. We are also working with a community-based literacy program to increase capacity by offering small group instruction in addition to its one-to-one instruction as well as develop a distance learning curriculum. We are also helping the local library to enhance its ESL classes. And, finally we are working with Ardmore Literacy Leadership, a literacy coalition, on bringing awareness and collaborative efforts surrounding literacy to the forefront of the Ardmore community.
- In Florida, with support from Dollar General and the FCADV, we have been able to expand from three domestic violence shelters to 29 shelter programs state-wide. These shelters are working with survivors to develop English language and literacy skills in the context of financial empowerment and workforce development classes. These classes have a strong emphasis on literacy while equipping survivors with skills to help them successfully transition out of abuse.
- In Zanesville, Ohio, we are working with a homeless shelter on basic literacy and job readiness skills and helping learners transition to their local adult education center. We are also working with a nonprofit focused on fathers on a family literacy program called Everybody Loves Fathers Reading Every Day (F.R.E.D.).

Moving Forward

In 2018-19, ProLiteracy will continue its work with the communities of Ardmore, Oklahoma, and Zanesville, Ohio. Additionally, ProLiteracy, FCADV, and the Florida Literacy Coalition will begin year three of its state-wide expansion working with 29 shelters.

About ProLiteracy

ProLiteracy is the largest adult literacy and basic education membership organization in the nation, committed to creating a world in which all adults are literate. ProLiteracy promotes adult literacy through content development, programs, and advocacy. Our goal is to help literacy programs increase the quantity and quality of services provided. ProLiteracy has 1,000 member programs across the country and is active with partner programs in 20 developing countries.