Featured Sessions

Thursday, 2:15 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.

When Does a Merger or Collaboration Make Sense for Your Program?
Ballroom A
As funding for adult education becomes more competitive and public and private funders continue to emphasize collective impact, literacy programs are being forced to consider alternative structures and service delivery options. Oftentimes, mergers, acquisitions, or strategic partnerships are necessary to effectively deliver service. In this featured session, panelists will discuss how they have successfully collaborated or merged with other organizations to continue to serve adults in their communities. Panelists will share the challenges and best practices from their experiences.

Moderator: Peter Waite, ProLiteracy
Panelists: Lisa Lee, Literacy West NY
Jessica Tomkins, Literacy New Jersey
Ginger Duiven, Literacy Services of Wisconsin
Betty Stauffer, Literacy Connects

How and Why to Advocate for Your Program
Ballroom B
Raising awareness with stakeholders about adult literacy at the local, state, and national levels is vital for fundraising, policy change, and volunteer and student recruitment. Join local programs as they share their successful advocacy efforts. Also, learn from national staff about the legislation and priorities today that intersect with adult education and that must be part of any advocacy efforts or messages. National staff will also share tools that can help support your program’s advocacy efforts.

Moderator: Deborah Kennedy, National Coalition for Literacy
Panelists: Eric Nesheim, Minnesota Literacy Council
Michele Diecuch, ProLiteracy
Don Finn, COABE
The Future of Tutor Training

Ballroom C

Having a force of well-trained tutors has always been essential to providing literacy services to adults in our communities. However, the increasing demand for services, changing demographics of volunteers, and accessibility to technology are all coming together to change how literacy programs train their volunteers. In this featured session, panelists will discuss:

- Trends in the training sector, such as incremental and just-in-time training, gamification and badging, and user-generated content
- Expectations of younger generations, such as control over learning, social interaction via technology, and the ability to share knowledge and follow others
- Access to technology to address changing needs, including the use of existing online training content, user-generated content, and the use of forums and social media to connect learners

Moderator: Todd Evans, ProLiteracy
Panelists: Jim Batz, Cornerstone
Joy Reyes, Columbus Literacy Council
Michael Matos, Literacy Works in Chicago
Gracie Freeman, Intercambio
Victor Castellanos, Monrovia Public Library
Kara Krawiec, Seeds of Literacy

Friday, 8:00 A.M. – 9:15 A.M.

Increasing Importance of Communicating Outcomes and Performance Measures

Ballroom A

Collecting data about your program serves two purposes. It helps your organization more effectively deliver services to students, and it shows funders that your program is worth their investment. In this featured session, program representatives will discuss how they have made data collection and analysis an integral part of how they make decisions and speak with funders. Funders will discuss why data is important to them, what kind of data they value, and how it drives their funding decisions.

Moderator: Todd Evans, ProLiteracy
Panelists: Shauna Brown, Project Read
Melanie Moore, Literacy Coalition of Central Texas
Kim Karesh, Nashville Adult Literacy Council
Peter Waite, ProLiteracy
Jeff Burkhart, Literacy Network of Dane County
Positioning your Organization to Take Advantage of Technology

Ballroom B

Adult basic skills programs and learners now have a growing number of digital tools and learning resources available to them—from online courses to bite-sized learning apps. Programs are not always positioned to integrate digital instruction due to instructors’ lack of knowledge, skills, or comfort levels with technology; a lack of funding for hardware, software or training; or learners’ fears about using technology. This featured session will help administrators and instructors learn how technology is beginning to shape and benefit adult basic skills education. It will provide strategies to use technology to build the skills of learners—through a blended learning approach (i.e. integrating face-to-face and online learning), through student self-study online options, or a combination of these.

Moderator: David J. Rosen, Newsome Associates, ProLiteracy Board Member
Panelists: Vinod Lobo, Learning Upgrade
Valerie Hardie, READ/San Diego
Jen Vanek, World Education
Penny Pearson, Outreach Technical Assistance Network

How Does the 2020 Census Impact Adult Education?

Ballroom C

In this session, panelists will discuss why the Census is important for adult learners to complete. Information will include changes to the 2020 Census and how the Census results impact federal and state funding allocations—especially as they relate to adult education and learner enrollment. In addition, expert panelists will share information to help adult literacy program administrators and instructors provide up-to-date and factual information for learners and how they can be counted. Misinformation and fear among adult learners can prevent participation in the Census, which can lead to an undercount and a negative impact on adult literacy services and funding.

Moderator: Michele Diecuch, ProLiteracy
Panelists: Silja Kallenbach, World Education
Deborah Kennedy, National Coalition for Literacy
Kristin Lahurd, American Library Association
Providing ESL Services in a Changing Immigrant Environment

Marina 6

In this featured session, explore how programs cope with providing ESL services in the current immigration environment. Panelists will explore many issues, including:

- Recruiting students who are fearful of accessing community services
- Combating incorrect information and disinformation
- Providing a learning space where students feel safe and valued
- Providing students with facts about legislative initiatives and legal advice
- Serving and reporting data on various types of immigrants and refugees
- Dealing with trauma when a learner encounters ICE or other public immigration agency
- Changing attitudes about immigrants in your community

Moderator: Rob Podlasek, Minnesota Literacy Council

Panelists: Jose Cruz, Literacy Council of San Diego
           Erik Jacobsen, Montclair State University
           Federico Salas-Iasnardi, FSI Diversity and Education
           Tesa Leon, Washington Literacy Center