

AEFL WEEK 2025

Awareness Toolkit



– SEPTEMBER 14–20 –

AEFL Week

Every year, the National Coalition for Literacy, on behalf of the adult literacy and basic education field, requests that Congress recognize one week as National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week. This year, that week is September 14–20.

During AEFL Week, the goal is to work side by side with stakeholders across the field in every state, territory, and district to heighten public awareness, strengthen alliances, leverage resources, and increase the number of people who understand the vital role adult education and family literacy plays in our nation's well-being and the sustainability of our communities.

ProLiteracy is using this week to raise awareness about how adult education programs help adult learners achieve goals and unlock their potential to successfully meet the demands of everyday life, advance in the workforce, earn family-sustaining wages, increase economic mobility, and set up future generations for success.

The more awareness we can bring to how powerful adult education is, the more likely it becomes that we can gain the support and funding to ensure every adult has access to quality educational resources—no matter where they live or who they are.

One of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to grab attention and raise awareness is by leveraging social media.

We created this toolkit to help you raise awareness and advocate for increased support in your communities. Our social media plan includes daily posts to help shed light on the transformative power of adult education and how to support the mission.

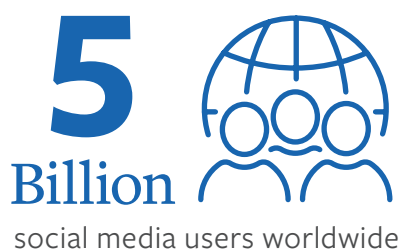
We're also including a letter-writing activity that empowers students to advocate for themselves and their literacy needs by writing to their lawmakers.



Social Media

What to Make of 3 Seconds

We can make adult literacy awareness go viral during AEFL Week through a unified social media campaign by adult literacy programs across the country. With roughly 5 billion people worldwide using social media, this is an important platform to tap into to reach new audiences and spread awareness about the impact of low literacy. Use this toolkit to create engaging posts for each day of AEFL Week to share on your organization's platforms.



The goal with any social media post is to grab attention, which is easier said than done. Let's be honest: social media is saturated with content, most of which we just scroll right past. Thought leaders tell us social media users decide to stop or scroll in just 1.7 seconds. If that person stops, you have 3 seconds to hook them and persuade them to take action before they move on.

What actions do we want people to take?

- Like and share your posts
- Visit and browse your website
- Make a donation
- Volunteer

Engage the User

So, how do we win someone over in 3 seconds? Here are some hallmarks of engaging social media posts:

- Great photos or visuals
- Short attention-grabbing videos
- Messaging that is short and to the point
- Emotional connections
- Targeted messaging
- Clear call to action

Engaging posts do not need to have every one of these characteristics, but you should build your posts using a combination of them.

The Plan

To create a unified approach to social media during AEFL Week, we can focus each day on a different aspect of adult literacy. Here's how we'll approach this on our ProLiteracy channels:

Monday: Impact of Adult Education on the Individual

Tuesday: Impact of Adult Education on the Family

Wednesday: Impact of Adult Education on Communities

Thursday: Advocate for Adult Literacy

Friday: Call for Support

On the following pages, we will outline a framework for each day, including relevant hashtags to use. We will include templates for each day that you can personalize. You can also reference the hallmarks of great social media posts from page 3 to build your own.

We will also post videos throughout the week that will illustrate the impact and power of adult literacy. We encourage you to share these videos.

Plan Ahead

Our best advice is to plan ahead. Think about what you want to highlight from your community or program, write (and edit) your posts, and design your visuals ahead of time.

Be sure that if you are featuring any students, tutors, or volunteers from your program that you have their permission. By planning ahead, your AEFL Week social media campaign will be more cohesive and have a bigger impact.

Don't forget to tag @ProLiteracy in your AEFL Week social posts!

You can access the images for each day of AEFL Week at [2025-AEFL-Week Social Media Images](#).

Monday—Impact of Adult Literacy on the Individual

Kick off AEFL Week with a story about the transformative power of adult literacy and education.

Social copy

A person's current skill level does not define them or what they can achieve. Bushiri, who had spent four years in a refugee camp in Zambia after leaving war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, came to the US in 2012 unable to speak any English. With the help of adult education classes, he learned the language, achieved his GED, and recently earned his associate's degree in medical laboratory technology. Bushiri went from working three housekeeping jobs to make ends meet to starting a job in medical laboratory sciences last month. Proof that adult education works.

Hashtags: #AEFLWeek #LiteracyMatters

“I was doing three housekeeping jobs. Today, I’m in medical laboratory sciences.”

—Bushiri Salumu, student at Literacy Volunteers Charlottesville/Albemarle and 2019 Dollar General Student of the Year

Tuesday—Impact of Adult Literacy on the Family

Shed light on how improved adult literacy skills affect entire families. Adult education helps break intergenerational cycles of low literacy and poverty and creates happier, healthier families.

Social copy

Adult literacy creates stronger families. Not only because the literacy level of a parent directly impacts the literacy achievements of their children, but also because improved literacy creates stability. Higher literacy levels result in family-sustaining wages, improved health outcomes, and parents who are more engaged in their children's learning. Literate parents build future generations of more educated adults.

Hashtags: #AEFLWeek #LiteracyMatters #FamilyLiteracy

The future is bright.

Helping parents improve their education level has a direct and positive impact on their children.



Wednesday—Impact of Adult Literacy on Communities

Use adult literacy facts and statistics to make the issue relatable to how the issue affects us and our communities. People love numbers. Numbers don't lie. Numbers help people understand the scope of the issue. For example, saying that 59 million adults in the US read at or below the lowest level is shocking, but we can break it down even more. Fifty-nine million is 28% or almost **one in three US adults**. Stats like that prompt someone to look around and realize there may be people right in front of them that are unable to read. They could be anyone in our community: our neighbors, individuals at church, regulars at the local diner, etc.

Use our [Adult Literacy Fact Sheet](#) to find facts to share about the importance of adult literacy to our social well-being.

You can also share statistics that are local to your community. Use the PIAAC Skills Map to find literacy statistics for your state or county, and use those to raise awareness about the need in your own community.

Skills Map: <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/skillsmap/>

Social copy:

In our community, X% of adults struggle with basic literacy skills. Who are they? The truth is, low literacy looks like your neighbor, your waiter, your friend at church, or another parent at back-to-school night. Empowering adults with literacy and education makes communities stronger and more sustainable in every way—economically, civically, and socially.

Hashtags: #AEFLWeek #LiteracyMatters #AdultEdu #LocalLiteracy



Thursday—Advocate for Adult Literacy

Use social media to encourage your followers to contact their representatives in D.C., and let's flood Congress with calls and emails for support of adult literacy.

Use the Find Your Members function at [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) to find the contact information for your representatives to reach their offices. Make it easy for your followers by including the contact information in your post. Find your lawmakers' social handles, and tag them in your posts.

Social copy:

@<name your Rep>, members of our community struggle to read. Giving them the support they deserve would improve their ability to participate in everything from their children's education to elections to the workforce. We are asking you to support increased adult literacy and education funding for stronger communities.

Help us advocate! Contact your reps in Congress: (202) 224-3121

Hashtags: #AEFLWeek #LiteracyMatters #AdultEdu #AdultEdAdvocate

Psst...For more ways to advocate, see p. 11



Friday—Call for Support

Wrap up AEFL Week by showing the transformative power of adult literacy and asking your audience to support the cause.

One idea is to ask students to write on a whiteboard or on a blank piece of paper what improving their skills has allowed them to do. Maybe they got a job, read to their children, went grocery shopping alone, passed their high school equivalency exams, got a driver's license, used a recipe, or wrote a letter to a loved one. It can be anything because it's all important. Take photos of them demonstrating or showing off their achievements!

Other options are to take a video of a student talking about what they have been able to achieve since improving their skills. Or write a longer story for your blog about a student's success and share it.

Encourage your followers to help more adults in their community transform their lives with a call to volunteer or donate to your program.

Social copy:

Adult literacy transforms lives. Every adult has the right to fully participate in the world around them. Help more adults like Hannah reach new heights through literacy: “Set goals, but not limits.” Donate today: <https://www.proliteracy.org/donate/>

Hashtags: #AEFLWeek #LiteracyMatters #AdultEdu



Pro Tips

- Use current resources and statistics, including those produced by ProLiteracy.
- Be consistent in the use and meaning of terms and language.
- Remember your audience. Avoid jargon, and provide examples that help explain to the general public what you mean by “low literacy.”
- Be informed about federal policy and state trends. What is happening in Washington, D.C., and in your state capital? Commit to taking timely and persistent action over the long term.
- Use hashtags to help further your reach and to connect with others.
- Don’t share only text-based updates. Sharing photos and videos is an excellent way to increase engagement.
- Ask questions on social media and invite people to respond. Make sure to acknowledge users when they respond to you.
- Make sure your social media profiles are on-brand and the look and messages are consistent with your website and other materials.



Advocacy

Letter-Writing Activity

Facilitate a letter-writing campaign for students to write to their elected officials. AEFL Week is the perfect time for students to introduce themselves and let officials know who they are and why adult literacy and education programs matter to them and their families.

By sharing their own stories, local elected officials can gain a better sense of just how impactful programs are and, ideally, help destigmatize perceptions about who adult learners are.

This type of activity can be used in any adult education setting, although a letter-writing campaign among those with lower literacy will require more support and guidance.

The Basic Activity

1. **Decide in advance what type of elected official you'd like to target with your letter-writing campaign.** For instance, would it be city or county officials? a state congressperson? someone else? You can also decide in advance if you'd like students to handwrite letters or type them. Although typing is more common, there is still a personal touch with handwritten letters.
2. **Ask students if they know who any of their local elected officials are.** Talk about the various levels of local elected officials, starting at a city level and continuing up to the national level with members of Congress. Even though you may have a specific person in mind already, it's good to get students thinking about the different layers of government. Ask why it might be important for elected officials to know about your adult education program. Facilitate a discussion, but make sure to point out that government often funds these programs.
3. **Let students know that they will write letters to briefly share a story about their adult education experience and why it's important to support adult literacy programs.** Let them know that they will write a draft of their letter before finalizing it.
4. **Provide a template for students to follow for their letter (see page 12).** Point out different elements it should or could contain.
5. **Provide time for students to write their letter draft.** Remind them that they don't have to share anything that they think is too personal.
6. **Have students share their draft letter with you and/or a fellow classmate for feedback.** This feedback can help improve any content, grammar, or spelling issues. However, the letters don't have to be perfect. The goal is authenticity.
7. **Give students time to revise their letters.** Make sure that they sign them as well.
8. **When finished, have letter copies ready to send.** If it's by email, then it's as quick as emailing the official. If it's by mail, students can help address envelopes.
9. **Let students know about any replies or feedback received from the legislator's office.** If desired, you can send letters to more than one candidate.

Programs can also follow this same format to have staff members write letters as well. They can share their passion and experience to advocate for their program/students and perhaps even invite the local elected official to the class or program.

Letter Template

Sample Letter Template

[Your name]

[Your address]

[Your city], [state] [zip code]

[Today's date]

[Representative's name]

[Rep.'s address]

[Rep.'s city], [state] [zip code]

Dear [Title] [Rep.'s last name]:

In the body of your letter, you should:

- Introduce yourself,
- Explain why you are taking adult education classes,
- Show how the class or school helps you,
- Describe your plans for the future,
- Thank the representative for his or her service.

Please support funding for adult education.

Sincerely,

[Your signature]

[Type or print your name]