



# Building Capacity in Adult Literacy Programs

*LITERACY TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022*

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# Welcome!

## ▶ **Let's see who is here!**

▶ Tutors

▶ Trainers

▶ Teachers

▶ Program  
Administrators

▶ Other?

# Volunteers in Adult Literacy

- ▶ **Raise your hand if your program implements volunteers in programming**
  - ▶ Tutoring
  - ▶ Special Events
  - ▶ Administrative
  - ▶ Testing

K-W-L

What do you “Know” about volunteers in adult literacy?

Jot down an answer or two...

K-W-L

What do you “Want to Know” about  
volunteers in adult literacy?

Jot down an answer or two...

# Value of Volunteer Hour

- ▶ 2020 data (latest available) estimates each volunteer hour worth about \$27
- ▶ If you are not using volunteers, or not using them to the highest capacity, you are leaving money on the table!

# Today's Session

## Here are some questions we'll explore today

- ▶ What encourages volunteer programming at the state level?
- ▶ What do some successful program models look like?
- ▶ Where can programs find resources to support volunteer programming?
- ▶ How can technology play a role?
- ▶ How do I envision building program capacity with volunteers in my world?

# Create your graphic organizer

To promote action from this session, we're going to stop periodically and brainstorm

Take a blank piece of paper

Create 4 quadrants

▶ Label each quadrant:

▶ Ideas for State support

▶ Program Models

▶ Possible Resources

▶ Technology



Support from  
States:  
Examples from  
New York

# Examples of support for volunteer literacy

**New York State supports volunteer literacy—maybe this will give you some ideas of what to advocate for!**

- ▶ Adult Literacy Education Funding
- ▶ NYRS Accountability
- ▶ Sharing outcomes
- ▶ Volunteers invited to state sponsored professional development
- ▶ Support and Technical Assistance Center

What can I advocate for in  
my state?

Whom should I talk to?

# Program Models That Work

# Volunteer Program Models

**We are probably all familiar with volunteers providing tutoring in one-to-one settings, but there are more ways to find and utilize volunteers in adult literacy programs**

- ▶ Volunteers in Traditional Classrooms
- ▶ Volunteers from Colleges and Universities
- ▶ Volunteers in Workplaces

# Volunteers in Traditional Classrooms

**Here is an example of a successful program model integrating volunteers into classrooms**

- ▶ Literacy Zones, Buffalo, NY
  - ▶ Literacy NY Buffalo Niagara supplies volunteers from local community to adult education classrooms
  - ▶ Intent is to provide extra support to low level learners
  - ▶ Both ESOL and Basic Literacy classrooms served

# What works?

## We've learned some lessons along the way about what works...

- ▶ Clear communication and accountability
- ▶ Well trained tutors
- ▶ Standard protocols and procedures
- ▶ Strong teacher guidance
- ▶ Matching tutor skills to student needs
- ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ Resource

# What doesn't work?

## And what doesn't...

- ▶ Tutors who are not trained effectively
- ▶ Tutors asked to teach content they are not equipped to teach
- ▶ Inflexibility on the part of tutors, teachers, or students
- ▶ Lack of resource



# Results

- ▶ “Those working with tutors seem to have a better grasp on their literacy skills which leads to a better understanding of the content”
- ▶ “The tutors attending our class make thing so much easier for me and the students. I am able to have them work with individuals who can't read English while I work with those who do, so we can deliver the same information but in different formats”
- ▶ “The volunteers we have from LNYBN are WONDERFUL! I don't know what I'd do without their help!”

# Volunteers from Colleges and Universities

**For a long time, volunteer literacy programs steered away from college-age volunteers. However, it *can* work!**

Literacy Volunteers of Chautauqua County and Literacy Volunteers of Clinton County

- ▶ Volunteers from student pool and faculty pool
- ▶ Work in small group and one-to-one settings
- ▶ Both ESOL and Basic Literacy learners served in one set up; just ESOL learners in the other

# What works?

**Here are some things that help this model to succeed:**

- ▶ Ability to train volunteers via online tutor training
- ▶ Placing volunteers in “drop in” and teacher aide roles
- ▶ Creating a “semester” timeline
- ▶ Tutors paid via work-study; tutors credited for volunteer hours
- ▶ Set up as internships

# What doesn't work?

## And some things to avoid...

- ▶ Full year interns
- ▶ Inflexibility
- ▶ Lack of 'buy-in' from all parties

# Results

- ▶ “The experience, training, and resume builder benefits the tutors, their college depts., and their future employers”
- ▶ “For the younger students the college student volunteers are great role-models”
- ▶ “The students' energy and enthusiasm is infectious and Literacy Volunteers is not the same place when they are on break!”

# Volunteers in Workplaces

**With an emphasis on employment throughout adult education, connecting volunteers and the workplace makes sense.**

Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County

- ▶ Team of volunteers plus one paid staff member
- ▶ Work with workers and members of management
- ▶ Both ESOL and Basic Literacy learners served

# What works?

**Here are some tips to help this model to succeed:**

- ▶ Communicate early and often
- ▶ Provide well-trained and supported tutors
- ▶ Create an environment of respect
- ▶ Be on time, start on time, end on time
- ▶ Keep instruction relevant
- ▶ Workplace-provided space

# What doesn't work?

## And some roadblocks...

- ▶ Lack of participation or “buy in” from any of the parties
- ▶ Inconsistency
- ▶ Poor communication



# Results

- ▶ “ The impact of the English classes has been profound for the company and the workers”
- ▶ “Several student workers have achieved enough confidence in their communication skills that they have taken on additional responsibilities”
- ▶ “The improvement...is remarkable”

What's a model that could work for me and my program? Who are some possible partners?

# Finding Resources to Support Volunteer Programming

# Resources

**Though volunteers are cost effective, they are not free. The success of any program depends upon adequate resource.**

- ▶ Local funders: Rotary Club; Community Foundation; United Way; local businesses
- ▶ Dollar General Literacy Foundation; ProLiteracy; and other grants
- ▶ Sub-contracting with WIOA/Workforce funded programs
- ▶ State Budget funding and Federal programs like AmeriCorps
- ▶ Volunteers themselves

# Resources

- ▶ <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps>
- ▶ <https://www.dgliteracy.org/grant-programs/>
- ▶ <https://www.wishyouwellfoundation.org/programs-funded>

What are some resources I  
can tap to support  
volunteers in literacy?

# Technology Can Support Volunteers

# Online Training Resources

One big capacity builder for our programs in NY State is the ability to train tutors online– and you can too!!!

- ▶ Intake to Outcomes
- ▶ [I2O link for Texas programs](#)



# Additional Resources, Thanks to Technology

**Core training is never enough– tutors need additional support and contact**

- ▶ Listservs and newsletters
- ▶ Webinars
- ▶ Social Media
- ▶ LINCS Resources
  - ▶ <https://lincs.ed.gov/>

Turn to your neighbor– what's something you do to support tutors at your program?

How can technology help  
me build my volunteer  
programming?

Wrap Up:

Find a new partner and share  
your graphic organizer notes

Using your filled graphic organizer, come up with one action step you can take right away

Accountability: Get contact information from your partner; check-in in 1 month

In conclusion...

**What have you “learned” about utilizing volunteers in adult literacy programs?**

Thank You for Participating!

**Contact me at:**

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**at any time!**