



Library Development

2009-2011 Grant Project Reports

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Brooklyn Public Library

Elizabeth Lewis; 718-230-2212

Project Name: English Conversation Groups

Project Amount: \$33,723

Brief Project Description: Brooklyn Public Library's (BPL) NYS Adult Literacy Library Services grant expanded the library's network of *English Conversation Groups*. The conversation groups included non-English speaking library users and helped them to expand their ability to read, write and communicate in English.

Needs Addressed: Brooklyn is home to one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the country. English conversation groups provide more opportunities to English-language learners to speak, read, and write English. Their primary needs are to develop a stronger grasp of both formal and informal English speech. These groups help learners develop greater flexibility and proficiency with the language.

Target Audience: The target population for this project was adult English-language learners age 18 and older -- beginner through intermediate. Participants included new immigrants working on basic skills, professionals seeking to polish their speech, and seniors and others who want to communicate more fluently with families and friends.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- CAMBA, Brooklyn College Adult Literacy Program (BCALP), and Literacy Assistance Center all helped to promote the program and BPL and contributed to training volunteers.

- The Mayor's Office of Adult Education (MOAE) – MOAE staff assisted with training volunteers, and BPL invited volunteers to observe programs that utilized "We Are New York", the television program which was developed by MOAE as an education tool.

Accomplishments for 2009-2010:

- Increased the number of *English Conversation Groups* by 33% in the first year (from approximately 12 to 16).
- Served approximately 4,000 people.
- Identified Brooklyn neighborhoods and BPL branches where conversation groups are most needed.
- Expanded ESOL collections at BPL branches that host *English Conversation Groups*.

Evaluation and Results:

- Methods: attendance sheets, volunteer and participant surveys, staff observations, public feedback, and computer logs.
- Results: At the end of the project period, results were shared with interested organizations throughout New York State.

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

- BPL plans to continue the expansion of *English Conversation Groups* after the project period.
- BPL has already applied to New York State Library's Adult Literacy Library Services Grant Program for a 2011-2013 grant to help support this effort.
- BPL will retain the Project Coordinator and has established a goal of increasing the number of conversation groups by approximately one third per year.

Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System

Julie Wever: 518-563-5190 ext 18

Project Name: Adult New Learners in the Zone

Project Amount: \$33,735

Brief Project Description: *Adult New Learners in the Zone* project funds allowed the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System (C-E-F), in collaboration with agency and library partners, to conduct and promote a series of programs that

increased the “computer literacy and comfort level” and online skills of new adult learners.

Needs Addressed: The project activities helped new adult learners through hands-on computer instruction. Project activities included GED and job training programs as part of a continued effort to collaboratively address the ongoing need for career resources and training for adult learners who are also clients of Literacy Volunteers of Clinton County.

Target Audience: The target audience is comprised of with high school or lower education who experience a high level of poverty and disability. Many members of the target audience can also be defined as “geographically isolated” as they are scattered across a three county region that is about the size of state of Connecticut.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- Champlain Valley – Teaching and Education Center (CV-TEC)
- Literacy Volunteers of Clinton County
- Plattsburgh Public Library
- C-E-F Library System member libraries

Accomplishments for 2009-2011:

- By the end of the project, approximately 12 C-E-F member libraries were positioned to provide print and online resources and services to new local adult learners.
- Fifteen tutors were trained and matched by Literacy Volunteers in spring 2011.
- These volunteers collaborated with agency partners developed targeted computer skills training sessions for a minimum of 400 adult new learners, many of whom were underemployed or unemployed.

Evaluation and Results:

- Customer satisfaction surveys were distributed post program with overwhelmingly positive responses.
- Evaluation of program attendance.

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

- C-E-F Library System and LV Clinton County are committed to a sustained collaboration to serve the region's adult learner clientele, many of whom face chronic unemployment. C-E-F and LV Clinton County will jointly explore local funding for similar initiatives and will consider a project proposal to focus on employment for English for speakers of other languages.
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Guilderland Public Library

Maria Buhl: 518-456-2400

Project Name: Team Up for Literacy: Training Volunteers to Teach Language and Life Skills to Adult Learners

Project Amount: \$27,889

Brief Project Description: Expanded the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and basic literacy tutor instruction in New York's Capital Region.

Needs Addressed: Guilderland Public Library and Literacy New York Greater Capital Region (LNYGCR) joined together to fill the increased demand for one-on-one and small group literacy instructors.

Target Audience: The majority of students in the program were receiving instruction for English language learners but the Capital District still saw a need for some basic literacy instruction.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- 25-30 ESOL Tutors and 3 small group instructors
- Literacy New York Greater Capital Region

Accomplishments:

- 22 tutors recruited and trained in ESOL/BL were matched with students.
- Three Small Group Instructors trained.
- Two tutor support sessions held, 26 tutors attended.

Evaluation and Results:

- Tally of number of volunteers over the targeted recruitment level.
- Survey forms given to the tutors at the "Tutor Reunions" to assess the quality of instruction and on-going support.
- Administration of Basic English Skills Test (BEST) plus computerized test of students to track progress (performed by LNYGCR).

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

- The Guilderland Public Library and LNYGCR have worked together for over 12 years and both organizations intend to continue their collaboration.
 - Next cycle will see advances in “recruitment” announcements and stress the benefits of the team approach to tutoring.
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Hempstead Public Library

Irene A. Duszkievicz; 516-481-6990

Project Name: Citizenship Connection

Project Amount: \$33,735

Brief Project Description: The primary purpose of the Citizenship Connection project was to provide a complete range of multimedia citizenship education and information resources and services to meet the learning needs of the expanding immigrant population within the community.

Needs Addressed: The adoption of a new version of the U.S. citizenship exam in October 2008, coupled with the continuing growth of the community’s immigrant population, created a tremendous need for Hempstead Public Library (HPL) to maintain and expand its crucial role as a center for citizenship education and information.

Target Audience: The target audience for the project was the local immigrant population. The Hempstead Public Library and its Adult Learning Center have served this large and continually expanding segment of the population for more than two decades.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- Coordinating Agency for Spanish Americans (C.A.S.A.)
- Our Lady of Loretto Parish Social Ministry
- Hagedorn Family Resource Center
- All three agencies were consulted for planning, publicity and student recruitment and contributed to the evaluation of the project through ongoing contact.

Accomplishments:

- Several students who attended the program and successfully completed their citizenship interview/exam

returned to share their experience and answer questions from fellow students.

- A total of 164 users participated in the project

Evaluation and Results:

- Qualitative evaluation results and user satisfaction were determined through the course evaluation form.
- At the conclusion of each ten-week session a course evaluation form was distributed for student completion.

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

- If funding is available, HPL will continue the program. In the event that funding is not available, HPL will try to incorporate as much of the project as possible into the library's Adult Learners Center programming.

James Prendergast Free Library

Anne Plyler: 716-484-7135, Ext. 258

Project Name: Computer Classes Meet a Triangle of Literacy Needs

Project Amount: \$29,578

Brief Project Description: *Computer Classes Meet a Triangle of Literacy Needs* helped English-speaking adult learners, Spanish-speaking adults and guests of St. Susan Center achieve computer literacy skills and improve skills in an increasingly electronic environment.

Needs Addressed: At the start of the program, Chautauqua County's per capita personal income was 58 percent of the state average and its unemployment rate was 8 percent. Almost one-fifth of adults had less than a 9th grade education or did not graduate from high school.

Target Audience: The target audience consisted of English-speaking adult learners, Spanish-speaking adults, and guests of the local food providers.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- Erie 2-Chatautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES
- Joint Neighborhood Project
- Eastside Family YMCA

- St. Susan Center

Accomplishments:

- 117 participants registered in most of the classes offered with an average attendance of 89%.
- 83% of 117 participants demonstrated skill competencies of 80% by the end of the classes.

Evaluation and Results:

- Teacher assessment of student skills before, during, and at the end of classes.
- Teachers also collected customer satisfaction surveys.

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

- The Literacy Center works with Prendergast Library's new Public Computing Center (PCC), to provide instruction in computer skills for both the underemployed and unemployed.
- The library has applied for a new Adult Literacy Library Services grant to fund new classes for the target audiences.

The New York Public Library

Susan Gitman: 212-340-0952

Project Name: In Plain Language: ESOL Health Literacy Curriculum Project

Project Amount: \$29,740

Brief Project Description: The *In Plain Language: ESOL Health Literacy Curriculum* project provided high-need communities which have limited English language proficiency with training to effectively navigate the complicated healthcare system in New York City.

Needs Addressed: With New York City's large foreign-born community, approximately 1.6 million adult New Yorkers speak English "less than well". These immigrants require basic English literacy skills in order to access healthcare services, participate more actively in the management of their own health and that of their children, and pursue educational and cultural opportunities in health related fields.

Target Audience: The project served immigrant adults residing in the Grand Concourse Library and Seward Park

Library communities in the Bronx and Lower East Side.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- Riverside Language Program provided language classes to ESOL students.
- Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center conducted tours of the hospital less than a block away from Grand Concourse Library.
- Gouverneur Healthcare Services prepared presentations for students at Seward Park Library on six different health topics.

Accomplishments:

- Registration was held on a single night during which the class reached its capacity, indicating the community's high interest in this type of instruction.
- Over the course of the academic year, student contact totaled 1,960 hours.

Evaluation and Results: At the Grand Concourse Library, an average of 54 percent of students gained at least one level of Education ESOL Functioning Levels (levels have been set by the federal government and represent National Reporting Standards).

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans: Components of "In Plain Language: ESOL Health Literacy Curriculum Project" may be incorporated into the Library's adult literacy program, which provides deep learning experiences for adult literacy and ESOL students.

Oneida Library

Carolyn Gerakopoulos: 315-363-3050

Project Name: Learning for Work

Project Amount: \$33,529

Brief Project Description: The purpose of *Learning for Work* was to instruct adult-literacy students in the workforce-preparedness competencies that they need to get employment, retain or improve employment, or pursue post-secondary education or training.

Needs Addressed: Madison County's economy remains stagnant as losses in the area's farming and manufacturing jobs

result in an unemployment rate of 7.7%. By comparison, in 2007 the rate was 4.5%. Residents of Madison County have a per capita income of \$19,105, which is less than statewide average. Some 4,375 adults 18 years and older, or 17.1% of the total population, live below the federal poverty level.

Target Audience: The target audience for the *Learning for Work* project were those adults 16 years and older who are currently using or likely to use Madison County Reads Ahead (MCRA) as well as adults who wanted to improve their workforce preparedness skills.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- Canastota Public Library, Cazenovia Public Library, Caz Cares, Hamilton Public Library, Morrisville Public Library, Oneida Public Library and Sullivan Free Library.
- Community Action Partnership of Madison County
- Madison County Literacy Coalition.
- Madison County Employment and Training.

Accomplishments:

- 32 tutors were trained in curricula designed to incorporate "real life" situations into tutorials involving verbal communication.
- 104 students, including continuing learners, were instructed in the work-preparedness curricula.
- 32 students completed eight hours of computer instruction.

Evaluation and Results:

- 2010-2011 learners student achievement outcomes are as follows:
 - 10 entered employment
 - 8 retained employment
 - 6 improved employability skills
 - 12 received GED
 - 4 entered other education
 - 1 obtained citizenship papers
 - 4 increased involvement in community activities
 - 6 increased involvement in children's educational activities
 - 2 obtained driver's licenses

- 32 received 8 hours of computer instruction
- 1 qualified for Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Test (ASVAB)

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

- Madison County Reads Ahead (MCRA), a program of the Oneida Public Library, will continue this program and continue to use its new tracking system. MCRA will continue by sponsorship of the public libraries involved, fund-raising and other grants.
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Onondaga County Public Library

Amy Thorna: 315-435-1835

Project Name: Meet Me at the Library

Project Amount: \$23,803

Brief Project Description: *Meet Me at the Library* was developed to reach out to local refugee populations and provide internships for refugees with intermediate level English skills who have been unable to find employment.

Needs Addressed: New refugees often don't use public libraries because they do not understand libraries or because they feel intimidated by the institutional atmosphere. This grant project aimed to help new immigrants feel more comfortable using the library.

Target Audience: The primary participants were eleven refugees who each worked in the library for eight weeks. The secondary participants were the staff that attended the programs given by the interns, the students who attended the library tour given by the interns, and the students who were given one-on-one introductions to the library over the internship period.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- Literacy Volunteers
- Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Agency
- Refugee Assistance Program

Accomplishments:

- Computer classes provided assistance with resume development, job search training and catalog training.

- The interns had a wide range of abilities, from college education to no formal schooling at all. Project focus was:
 - coming to work each day on time and scheduling appointments at times other than scheduled work times
 - participating in group activities
 - asking questions when confused
 - communicating with other staff
 - working independently
 - contribute ideas and accept the ideas of others

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

- Onondaga County Public Library plans, with two project partners, to offer an internship opportunity to at least one student per year. The internship will be designed to fit with staff schedules. We will not be able to offer English and computer class, but will carry on the goals of having library staff reflect the community and provide professional job experience for new refugees.

Pioneer Library System

Ellen Reynolds: 585-394-8260

Project Name: Wyoming Connect for Literacy

Project Amount: \$26,911

Brief Project Description: The purpose of the *Wyoming Connects for Literacy* grant was to provide computer assisted instruction and adult basic literacy programs for learners and tutors.

Needs Addressed: At a 2009 Job Seekers class held at the Warsaw Public Library, one quarter of the participants shared with the instructor that they could not read the workshop manuals provided due to low literacy skills. To address this need, the project added classes in developing skills to complete online job applications, locate jobs online, and construct a resume.

Target Audience: The target audience remained adults with low-literacy levels who need computer literacy and workplace computer skills. Potential literacy volunteers were another target audience.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- Pioneer Library System
- Literacy West NY (LWNY)
- Arcade Free Library, Warsaw Public Library, Stevens Memorial Community Library, and Eagle Free Library

Accomplishments:

- Twelve computer training classes were held in Warsaw and Arcade by LWNY. The two hour classes were held over a six week period and covered Basic Computer Skills, Word, Email, and Internet Navigation. Classes ranged in attendance numbers from eight to one with an average of 3.25 per session.
- LWNY trained twelve new tutors and gave refresher training to eight more, which is a significant number of volunteers for this agency.

Evaluation and Results:

- The classes went very well and the participants found them to be helpful. They reported having learned from the experience and felt more comfortable using computers after taking the classes. All participants found the libraries comfortable and convenient and would be interested in taking more classes at the libraries.

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

- While PLS and LWNY have now established a working relationship, future collaboration will require funding for trainers to continue teaching computer classes in the libraries.

Queens Borough Public Library

Susan Dalmas; 718-480-4222

Project Name: Library Literacy Zone Computer Literacy Program

Project Amount: \$33,735

Brief Project Description: The purpose of the *Library Literacy Zone Computer Literacy* program was to implement computer literacy classes as part of the Literacy Zone project at the Long Island City Library branch. These classes were geared towards adult learners with low English language proficiency at the beginning and intermediate level and to English speakers whose reading level is below the 5th grade level.

Needs Addressed: Long Island City is a high needs community, where nearly 38% of the population has less than a high school diploma or GED; 57% of residents are immigrants. Long Island City is one of 8 neighborhoods identified in the western Queens section of the County as having the greatest educational, financial and health needs in the area.

Target Audience: The computer literacy classes were targeted to adult immigrants who were learning English at the beginning and intermediate levels and to English speakers with a reading level below 5th grade who also needed to acquire or improve their basic computer skills.

Staffing/Volunteers/Partners Role:

- Workforce One Center
- East River Development Alliance (ERDA)
- Ravenswood and Queensbridge Residents Tenants' Association

Accomplishments:

- This fiscal year eight computer classes were offered, 128 adult learners participated.
- Upon course completion, graduates were able to do a job search online, write a resume using a standard format, use the internet for general information, write a cover letter, fill out a job application online, create an email account and actively use it, use the library database and *Learning Express*, search for educational instructions and become independent learners through the use of computers.

Evaluation and Results:

- A pre-survey and post survey were administered to all participants who completed the course to determine the growth of student's skill before and after the program.

Changes/Recommendations/Continuation Plans:

The Queens Library is now in partnership with the federal Broadband Technology Online Program (BTOP) to provide additional computer classes integrated with job readiness workshops. The library plans to introduce classes on social media and skills required for entry- level jobs if funding is available.