

**REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**

**ON THE**

**CALIFORNIA LIBRARY LITERACY**

**AND**

**ENGLISH ACQUISITION SERVICES PROGRAM**

**OF THE**

**CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY**

2019-2020 Fiscal Year

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ON THE  
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ENGLISH ACQUISITION SERVICES PROGRAM  
OF THE  
CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY**

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**  
Gavin Newsom, Governor

**CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY**  
Greg Lucas, State Librarian  
The report covers the 2019-2020 fiscal year

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Additional copies of this report can be obtained at <http://libraryliteracy.org/>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Literacy programs in California's public libraries transform the lives of thousands of Californians and their families every year. They help adults gain basic literacy skills, achieve their learning goals, and use library services effectively. They strengthen communities and help families grow and succeed.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, adult literacy services were provided in 44 counties, 105 of the state's 184 public library jurisdictions and 910 of the state's 1,130 library locations. The state provided \$7.3 million in funding: \$4.8 million for adult literacy services and \$2.5 million for family literacy services.

Over 13,030 California adults received free tutoring. Of these, 44 percent were Latinx, 63 percent were women, and 37 percent were over 40 years of age.

In the past fiscal year, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the reach of library literacy programs, cutting off the possibility of in-person services to those most likely to be affected by the digital divide. Nonetheless, many programs responded heroically, delivering tutoring via phone and digital devices, presenting programs virtually and, sometimes, literally delivering books and resources to the homes of learner families.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year:

- 6,651 volunteer tutors and 1,141 other volunteers supported these local programs. \$13.6 million worth of volunteer hours were contributed.<sup>1</sup>
- \$19.1 million in local funds matched the state's \$7.3 million investment<sup>2</sup> and 701 community agencies partnered with a library literacy program.
- 82 percent of the learners who set at least one goal for themselves achieved their goal, including: learning the alphabet, reading a book, helping their children with homework, accessing community resources, or advancing their careers.

Since expanding services to include the families of adult learners in 2018, 67 library literacy programs now also provide family literacy and community outreach services to 2,456 families and 3,987 children.

**"I have grown in knowledge and confidence and rely less on my children for help. I can read the street signs and don't get lost as much. I can write a letter to the insurance company or landlord or even my friends! And I can read my mail."**

**Learner, Roseville Public Library**

Family literacy program staff help adults develop their confidence and skills, and learn how to select books, read to their children, and foster a love of reading. Staff members also help adults strengthen their connections and communications with educators, healthcare professionals, and family members, and navigate the systems and services that affect their households.

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<sup>1</sup> The value of volunteer time was calculated using data from Independent Sector, which draws on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. 431,820 hours x \$31.51 = \$13,606,648: <https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2020/>

<sup>2</sup> The State of California provides \$4.8 million for adult literacy services and \$2.5 million to support family literacy services.



Family Literacy Services Program  
6,481+ parents\*  
11,970 children



Adult Literacy Services Program  
13,031 adult learners

Participants are asked to set goals that are appropriate for their literacy level and will make an impact in their lives. Of those who set at least one goal:



Basic Literacy



Family Learning



82% read their child a book  
67% helped with homework  
69% wrote to teachers

Employment Opportunities



68% filled out an application  
59% wrote a resume  
45% got a new job  
67% improved job performance

Civic Engagement



72% registered to vote  
58% voted  
77% involved in community



\*Family Literacy parent couples counted as 1.

## CALIFORNIA LIBRARY LITERACY SERVICES: THE NEED

The need for library literacy programs in California is significant and ongoing:

- More than 36 million adults in the United States cannot read, write, or do basic math above a third-grade level. According to estimates released in 2020 by the National Center for Education Statistics, 28 percent of Californians have a literacy proficiency level that is at or below Level 1 – persons with “difficulties using or comprehending print materials.” Some 36 percent of Californians have a numeracy level at or below Level 1.<sup>3</sup>
- Workers age 25 and over who have less education than a high school diploma had the highest unemployment rate and lowest median weekly earnings (\$592), three times less than those with the highest level of education.<sup>4</sup>
- The 2020 recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic saw adults with less than a high school diploma suffer the highest unemployment rate, compared to those at all other education levels.<sup>5</sup>
- Up to \$232 billion in annual health care costs is linked to low adult literacy skills.
- Forty-three percent of adults with the lowest literacy levels live in poverty.
- Children whose parents have low literacy levels have a 72 percent chance of being at the lowest reading levels themselves. These children are more likely to receive poor grades, display behavioral problems, have high absentee rates, repeat school years, or drop out.<sup>6</sup>

**"Because of tutoring with the library, I was able to read the evacuation information and knew what was going on and where I needed to go."**

**--Adult learner after the devastating CZU wildfires in Northern California**

Fewer than 10 percent of the adults in need of reading help in the United States are receiving services.<sup>7</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic further affected programs by making in-person tutoring or attending classes more challenging.

Increasing a person's literacy benefits the individual, their family, and the wider community. Nationally:

- 1.5 million people with the lowest levels of literacy are incarcerated. A 1 percent increase in the high school completion rate of all men ages 20-60 would save the US as much as \$1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime.
- A mother's reading skill is the greatest determinant of her child's academic success.

<sup>3</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/skillsmap/>

<sup>4</sup> Career Outlook Data on Display. (2020, May). Learn more, earn more: Education leads to higher wages, lower unemployment : Career Outlook. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2020/data-on-dis...>

<sup>5</sup> Falk, G., Carter, J., Nicchitta, I., Nyhof, E., & Romero, P. (2020, December 7). Unemployment Rates During the COVID-19 Pandemic: In Brief. Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46554>.

<sup>6</sup> [https://proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/PL\\_AdultLitFacts\\_US\\_flyer.pdf?ver=2016-05-06-145137-067](https://proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/PL_AdultLitFacts_US_flyer.pdf?ver=2016-05-06-145137-067)

<sup>7</sup> [https://proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/PL\\_AdultLitFacts\\_US\\_flyer.pdf?ver=2016-05-06-145137-067](https://proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/PL_AdultLitFacts_US_flyer.pdf?ver=2016-05-06-145137-067)

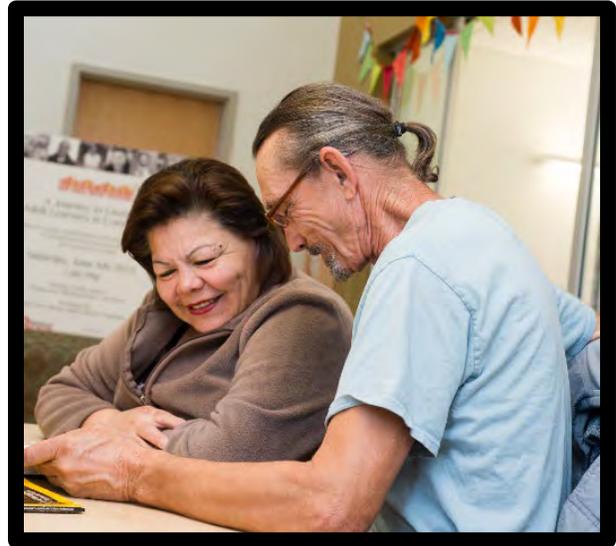
- A 1 percent increase in average literacy rates yields a 1.5 percent permanent increase in the GDP or a \$2.3 billion dollar increase.<sup>8</sup>

## HOW LIBRARIES SERVE THE NEED: THE VALUE OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY LITERACY SERVICES

California Library Literacy Services provides value for the learner, the taxpayer, the community, and the library. Library-based literacy programs are successful because they are based in trusted spaces at the heart of the community.

Located in rural, suburban, and urban sites, public libraries provide information-rich, welcoming environments where learners can flourish. Libraries provide a distinct set of resources including location, space, information, and dedicated and knowledgeable staff. Equity of access and lifelong learning are core library values.<sup>9</sup>

California’s library literacy programs address the full spectrum of skills that are now considered to represent literacy: “listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and using everyday technology to communicate information.”<sup>10</sup>



California Library Literacy Services offered the nation’s first statewide library-based literacy program. Since 1984, California’s library literacy programs have helped more than a quarter of a million learners and their families.

Californians served through this program are usually the lowest level, hardest-to-reach learners. Trained volunteers provide one-to-one or small group tutoring based on each individual’s pace and goals.

Services are provided confidentially in the welcoming and supportive library environment—crucial qualities when working with adults who don’t have the skills to attend and succeed in traditional classroom-based programs. Meaningful relationships develop from tutor-learner partnerships, and in many cases the volunteer’s experience is almost as transformative as the learner’s.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year:

- 105 library jurisdictions, comprising 910 of California’s 1,130 libraries, provided literacy services to adult learners and their families.
- 67 jurisdictions delivered family literacy programs to supplement their adult literacy tutoring programs

<sup>8</sup> Literacy for All: Adult literacy through Libraries. (ALA, 2019)

<sup>9</sup> Literacy for All: Adult literacy through Libraries. (ALA, 2019)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nala.ie/literacy>



- 13,031 adult learners received tutoring.
  - 6,481 families, including 11,970 children, received family literacy and community outreach services.
  - 10,086 parents and caregivers and 13,934 children were served through Mobile Library Literacy Services.
  - 6,651 volunteer tutors and 1,141 other volunteers supported these local programs.
  - \$13.6 million worth of volunteer hours were contributed.<sup>11</sup>
  - \$19.1 million in local funds matched the state's \$7.3 million investment.<sup>12</sup>
- 701 community agencies partnered with a library literacy program.

**A learner in his 50s came to our program in hopes of earning his GED and obtaining a better job. This learner would come in every week, after a 12 hour day of working, and would work on his math skills.... He ultimately passed all of his GED tests and was incredibly happy and grateful for our program. He has referred many other learners to our program and has gone on to get hired on a company that more aligns with his future goals.**

**--Lassen Library District**

Although over 13,000 adults with low literacy skills received tutoring in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, 88 of the 105 California Library Literacy Services programs still had waiting lists. There weren't enough volunteers and resources to help 1,836 Californians who came to this state's libraries eager to learn to read and write.

Public library literacy programs are an integral part of California's adult education landscape, reaching and engaging learners who are not served by other agencies. The welcoming, easy to access, people-centered and information-rich library environment helps learners to flourish and achieve their literacy goals.

Staff and volunteers in library literacy programs provide one-to-one and small group tutoring that is inclusive, learner-driven, family-oriented, and community- and volunteer-focused. Library literacy programs often recruit learners to work as program volunteers and staff or ambassadors for their libraries and their literacy programs.

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<sup>11</sup> The value of volunteer time was calculated using data from Independent Sector, which draws on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. 625,320 hours x \$29.95 = \$18,728,334: [https://independentsector.org/resource/vovt\\_details/](https://independentsector.org/resource/vovt_details/)

<sup>12</sup> The State of California provides \$4.8 million to support adult literacy services and \$2.5 million to support family literacy services.

**“In this fiscal year, 12 Amador County adult learners completed a course of study to prepare for taking the USCIS naturalization examination. 100% passed the USCIS naturalization test and became United States citizens.... many of these new citizens have since progressed on to obtain better paying jobs or are now studying to obtain a high school equivalency certificate.”**

Additional funding for core adult literacy services and new funding to support the needs of English-language learners would allow California’s library literacy programs to reach more families, support more learners, and contribute more effectively to increasing literacy levels in California.



**Learners who improve their reading become regular library patrons and literacy tutors become more invested library supporters.**

**--Director, Upland Public Library**

## EVALUATING PROGRESS: FOCUS ON THE LEARNER

California Library Literacy Services are planned, implemented, and evaluated using a learner-centered framework known as “Roles and Goals.” The framework helps staff and volunteers identify the goals that learners want to accomplish with their improved literacy skills; deliver learner-centered instruction; track, acknowledge, and celebrate progress; and evaluate the program’s impact.

Goal-setting empowers learners. It helps learners reflect on what brought them to the program, define what they want to work on, take ownership of their instruction, focus on what’s important to them, stay motivated, and build self-confidence.

Goal-setting within the framework helps learners achieve success in their major life roles as community members, workers, family members, and life-long learners.

At the core of the “Roles and Goals” framework is a belief that literacy “involves listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and using everyday technology to communicate information,”<sup>13</sup> and that literacy is “understanding, evaluating, using and engaging with written text to participate in society, to achieve one’s goals and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.”<sup>14</sup>

The goals included in the “Roles and Goals” framework range from learning the alphabet to reading a book, sending an email, searching the Internet, interviewing for a job, paying bills, accessing community services, reading a medicine label, and helping a child with homework. Together with their tutor, learners select a goal or goals from the framework or develop their own.

Eighty-two percent of the learners who set at least one goal for themselves achieved their goal, including:

- 78 percent learned the alphabet, letters and sounds
- 79 percent read a book, newspaper, or magazine
- 70 percent learned to type
- 75 percent were able to help with their children’s education by sharing a book, helping with homework, or interacting with teachers or schools

**One of our digital literacy students, who was very nervous about learning computers, since she no experience or exposure to them, gained so much confidence that she now makes sure all of her friends, family, and neighbors know about how much she learned, how much it helps her, and how they themselves should go ahead and take the program.**

**--Salinas Public Library**

**"I take care of my eight grandkids while their mom goes to school and work. I pick them up and cook dinner. Then I work the graveyard shift and go straight to tutoring afterward. Then, I sleep a little." Since she started, Erica has completed all but one part of the GED. "Most people think when they are old they cannot do it anymore. I say, it just takes determination."**

**--San Diego Public Library**

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nala.ie/literacy>

<sup>14</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016040.pdf>

- 56 percent met a job-related goal such as writing a resume, locating job opportunities on their own, and, even in a challenging pandemic environment 45 percent got a new job
- 79 percent accessed community services and resources

Adults enrolled in library literacy programs also have the opportunity to take part in supplementary programs that support their progress and are funded, in part, by the State Library using federal Library Services and Technology Act funds:

**“One of our learners was studying for his trucking exam. He successfully passed and is able to provide for his family.”**

**-- Azusa Public Library**

- The statewide **COVID Diaries** writing project and workshops help learners develop their reading and writing skills by reflecting on their experiences during the pandemic.

- The **Key to Community** project helps learners become more engaged in their communities, develop leadership and

facilitation skills, and be better prepared to participate in local, state, and national elections.



## FAMILY LITERACY

Family literacy services help learners succeed in the roles they play in their families, as caregivers, parents, and advocates. Family literacy services focus on adult learners and their family members—older and younger generations alike. Families take part in programming, are connected to resources and each other, and are given materials to take home and keep.

Research has shown that **the single most significant factor influencing a child's early educational success is an introduction to reading and being read to at home prior to beginning school.**

When adults read to children and discuss story content, ask open-ended questions about story events, explain the meaning of words, and point out features of print, they promote increased language development, comprehension of story content, knowledge of story structure, and a better understanding of language—all of which lead to reading success.<sup>15</sup>

A mother's reading skill is the greatest determinant of her children's future academic success, outweighing factors such as family income and neighborhood.<sup>16</sup> Children of less-educated parents are much more likely to become low-skilled adults. U.S. adults with low levels of education who have parents with low levels of education are 10 more times likely to have low skills than those who have higher-educated parents.<sup>17</sup>

Children whose parents have low literacy levels have a 72 percent chance of being at the lowest reading levels themselves. These children are more likely to receive poor grades, display behavioral problems, have high absentee rates, repeat school years, or drop out.<sup>18</sup>

In California in 2019, 68 percent of California's fourth graders scored "below proficient" in reading.<sup>19</sup> On the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading scale,



<sup>15</sup> <https://ferstreaders.org/resources/fifty-top-literacy-statistics>

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2010, October 25). Improving mothers' literacy skills may be best way to boost children's achievement. National Institute of Health. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/impr...>

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. (2015, February). Making Skills Everyone's Business: A Call to Transform Adult Learning in the United States. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/Adul...>

<sup>18</sup> [https://proliteration.org/Portals/0/pdf/PL\\_AdultLitFacts\\_US\\_flyer.pdf?ver=2016-05-06-145137-067](https://proliteration.org/Portals/0/pdf/PL_AdultLitFacts_US_flyer.pdf?ver=2016-05-06-145137-067)

<sup>19</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2019/pdf/2020014CA4.pdf>  
<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2019/pdf/2020014CA8.pdf>

which ranges from 0 to 500, the average score of fourth-grade students in California was 216—lower than the average score of 219 for public school students in the nation. The average score of eighth-grade students in California was 259—also lower than the average score of 262 for public school students in the nation.<sup>20</sup>

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, 67 library literacy programs delivered family literacy services to:

**"My son is the one who motivated me. He had a speech delay and sensory processing difficulties. Now, he says full sentences in English and Spanish! And the activities we do in class, like painting with shaving cream and throwing scarves around, really helped him. Plus, now he'll sit down and read a book with me. Before, when I'd open a book, he'd run away."**

**-- Adult learner, San Diego Public Library**

- 2,456 families that included adults enrolled in California Library Literacy Services
- 3,987 children in those families.
- 4,025 families that included adults eligible to be enrolled in California Library Literacy Services<sup>21</sup> but who are not yet enrolled
- 7,983 children in those families.

Family literacy programs provided 45,622 books to families to help them build home libraries.

California Library Literacy Services saw a significant increase in family literacy

programming, outreach efforts, and the number of families served between the 2017-2018 fiscal year and the 2019-2020 fiscal year because of the state's additional investment in family literacy.

Family literacy programs include storytimes, games, music, and concept learning activities to help adult learners support their children's education and development. Program staff help adults develop their confidence and skills and learn how to select books, read to their children, and foster a love of reading.

Staff also help adults strengthen their connections and communications with educators, healthcare professionals, and family members, and navigate the systems and services that affect their families.

Fifty-eight library literacy programs responded to a survey about the impact on their programs of new state family literacy funding.

- 93 percent (54 programs) delivered new family literacy programming.
- 98 percent (57 programs) strengthened their capacity to deliver high-quality family literacy services.

**"I especially liked learning about using technology wisely and teaching my kids when we're out and about. I used to have TVs in the car. I took those out. Now we talk about colors, like the green of the trees, or we play I Spy. In FFL, I learned to talk with my kids during bath time, car rides, while I'm shopping at the grocery store!"**

**-- Read San Diego**

<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5116-fourth-grade-reading-achievement-levels?loc=6&loct=2#detailed/2/6/false/1729,871,573,36,867,38,18,16,14,13/1185,1186,1187,1188/11560>

<sup>20</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2017/pdf/2018039CA8.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> English-speaking adults, age 16 and older, and not concurrently enrolled in high school.

- 93 percent (54 programs) helped adults with low literacy skills to develop confidence and skills in supporting their child’s formal and informal education.
- 97 percent (56 programs) created opportunities for families to develop a culture of positive learning experiences on a more sustained basis.

**Our workshop with a memory care facility provided information to our families about aging and dementia awareness. Our workshops on mental health provided family with strategies and education on how to approach a troubled family member.**

**-- Azusa City Library**

### Mobile Library Literacy Services

In some communities, family literacy programs are provided to families with children ages 0-5 using specially outfitted vehicles that visit low-income housing developments, migrant camps, local day care centers, Head Start programs, and recreation centers in hard-to-reach and underserved communities. Staff and volunteers model reading behaviors for parents and caregivers, as well as lend and give away books so learning can continue in the home and help children develop positive experiences with books prior to entering school.

The state’s eight Mobile Library Literacy Services programs served 24,020 people, including 10,086 parents and caregivers and 13,934 children, and made 370 site visits to community locations during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.



## EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Library literacy services programs rely on human interaction, and face-to-face meetings between learners and tutors are central to all literacy programs. When the pandemic shut down library services across the state in March 2020, literacy programs responded by developing new means to address the needs of adult learners.

**The biggest silver lining is being able to connect and feel better when we do so. The opportunity for empathic growth as we all learn something new together – real adult learning for all – is a learning moment for staff, tutors and learners – now we really know what that struggle feels like as an adult. And finally, [there's] just the appreciation of how creative people can be when they want to find a way to work things out – even challenging things.**

**--Sonoma County Library**

Fully half of tutors and learners found a way to continue tutoring and learning. Using technology, the mail, and other means, tutors and learners remained in touch, sending reading materials and completed lessons back and forth. Some programs reported observing how adult learners mastered digital videoconferencing platforms and learned to support distance learning for their children.

Reports the Hayward Public Library: "Learners quickly adapted and altered to meeting virtually with their tutors in a variety of ways. Some learners had their children show them how to set up digital meetings with their tutors. Many pairs are meeting via Zoom or FaceTime. Some pairs text each other throughout the week. Others read books together over the phone. Some email back and forth or use Google docs. Our literacy pairs have been creative with meeting virtually and truly have made the best out of the challenging time we are living in."

Some tutoring volunteers have found additional ways to help, working with local organizations to distribute thousands of bags of foods to families and creating take-home family literacy packs. In Redwood City, volunteers from the incarcerated learner program have created tote bags for groceries and supplies, and incarcerated learners have created crafts to support family literacy programs.

Approximately one-fourth of tutors and learners went "on pause" until in-person tutoring could resume, and the remainder stopped working on the program or lost contact. Some learners and tutors found that the stay-at-home orders and

**We have been able to add additional programs, such as work ready programming...and a family literacy class. Small group virtual instruction... has allowed us to gain new learners in our program. Not only have we been able to provide services to our learners, but we've also been able to provide an outlet and connection for our learners during a lonely and difficult time. The literacy department has been at the forefront of our library system in creating, implementing and facilitating virtual programming.**

**--Riverside County Library**

health precautions precluded them from continuing, or led to other life changes, including needing to move from a community, adapt to job loss and financial challenges, and support their children's at-home schooling.

Yet, as some libraries reported, silver linings enriched literacy programs during the pandemic-related library closures and social distancing restrictions.

As Carlsbad City Library states, “remote learning has allowed tutoring pairs to continue instruction during periods of extended vacation, child care issues, and mobility challenges.” Santa Clara City Library reports, “The positive outcome is that learners, tutors, and staff have learned or strengthened digital literacy skills. Even post pandemic, we believe there is opportunity that some tutors and learners will prefer to meet virtually, as they have the flexibility to meet from home, and are not faced with transportation/childcare constraints. Given the additional time volunteers had during the pandemic, they were able to create 21 new titles for beginning literacy levels.”

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY INTENSIVE SERVICES**

English Language and Literacy Intensive Services was created by the state and at one time had a dedicated state funding stream. The program currently remains an “option” that local literacy programs can invest in using both state and local dollars.

English Language and Literacy Intensive programs complement the education children receive at school and include a variety of fun, library-based experiences such as educational games, field trips, storytimes, homework help and other activities. The programs also:

- Connect parents with English as a Second Language programs to support their own acquisition of English;
- Help parents become actively involved in the formal and informal education of their children;
- Introduce children and their parents to a variety of children’s literature; and
- Help acquaint families – many of whom are new to the U.S. – with the public library and other local resources.

Nine libraries have elected to use their California Library Literacy Services funds to work with schools to boost the literacy skills and test scores of California schoolchildren who strive to improve their English. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, these programs served 1,551 children and 1,145 parents and caregivers with supportive literacy services that focus on learning and the joy of reading and provide families with an important connection to their children’s development and education.

### **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE SERVICES**

Libraries consistently report demand for English as a Second Language services but California Library Literacy Services funding is restricted to English-speaking adult learners and **cannot** be spent on English as a Second Language tutoring.

However, libraries acknowledge the demand for these services in their communities and local libraries report to the State Library the number of English Language learners they serve using local funds.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, 47 libraries who participate in the California Library Literacy Services program used local funds to provide English as a Second Language

programs for 5,068 adults whose first languages include Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Hmong.

With additional state funding, public libraries could apply their successful outcome-based, one-to-one tutoring model to offer English as a Second Language services. Such funding would help increase the number of California adults who receive English as a Second Language literacy support to enhance their work skills, lifelong learning, family roles, and community participation.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING**

Reflecting the libraries in which they are based, California Library Literacy Services are collaborative programs that are embedded in their communities.

**Literacy outreach services make the library known to the community and the literacy program brings many valuable partnerships for the library.**

**-- Butte County Library**

Library directors report that their literacy programs bring new families to the library, strengthen community relations, and help libraries address community needs and align with community aspirations.

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, library literacy programs partnered with 701 community agencies to deliver literacy services. Partnering agencies

included adult schools and community colleges, Head Starts and other early learning organizations, homeless shelters and housing authorities, jails and juvenile justice departments, faith-based organizations, local businesses, and non-profit organizations.

Library literacy programs and their partners shared space, provided resources and instruction to one another's communities, and provided supportive referrals to one another's services.

Statewide, libraries are partners with California's network of adult education providers because of the role library literacy services play in helping adults develop the reading and writing skills they need to benefit from adult and community college education or reach other personal employment, community or family goals. However, different jurisdictions report varying levels of communication and cooperation with their local adult education providers.

**Literacy Services' ability to engage with nontraditional library users, meeting people where they are and connecting them to additional resources, continues to create opportunities to impact the rest of the library in meaningful ways.**

**-- Director, Fresno Public Library**

Within the library literacy community, program coordinators participate in regional networks in which they share training opportunities and exchange effective practices and ideas.

Literacy coordinators also collaborate with local library staff to provide programming that supports and enhances the work of the library literacy program. For example:

- **Career Online High School:** Enables adult students to earn high school diplomas through the library while gaining real-world career skills.

- **Early Learning for Families:** Enhances library staff skills in serving young children ages 0-5, their families and their caregivers.
- **Harwood Public Innovation for California's Public Libraries:** Supports librarians in deepening their impact and increasing their relevance in the communities they serve.
- **Lunch at the Library:** Provides summer meals and enrichment programs for children in communities where at least 50 percent of children and teens are eligible to receive free or reduced-price school lunches.
- **Summer @ Your Library:** Helps libraries provide high-quality summer reading programs for the whole family.



## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

### California Reading Readiness Council

Creating a California Reading Readiness Council charged with increasing reading skills among all Californians would better coordinate statewide – and national – efforts to create stronger readers.

Such a council would marshal existing reading and literacy resources more strategically and could be tasked with developing an action plan that, over the next decade, cuts the number of non-readers and low-literacy Californians in half.

Membership in the council should include the adult education community, specifically through existing Adult Education coalitions, which include representatives from community colleges, school districts and county offices of education as providers of adult basic and secondary education and English as a Second Language services. Other key partners are relevant state agencies such as the Department of Education, the California Community College Chancellor's Office, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Department of Social Services, the Employment Development Department, and the State Library.

Other representation could come from literacy and early learning related organizations, such as First 5, ProLiteracy, First Book, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Reach Out and Read, United Way, and community-based organizations that serve local literacy needs. Members should also include volunteer agencies and literacy and reading-related foundations, such as AmeriCorps, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Dollar General Literacy Foundation as well as community colleges, public libraries and universities.

### Funds for English as a Second Language Services

Over the past four decades, immigration to California has profoundly changed the state. In 2019, 27 percent of California's population was foreign-born, more than twice the rate in the rest of the country. About half of all children in the state have at least one parent who is an immigrant, and 44 percent of Californians speak a language other than English at home. More than half of immigrants have become naturalized citizens.<sup>22</sup>

Data from the U.S. Census and ***Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)***, finds "immigrants are over-represented among low-skilled adults in the United States—accounting for 33 percent of adults with low literacy skills and 24 percent of those with low numeracy skills while comprising only 15 percent of the overall U.S. adult working-age population."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Quick Facts California," United States Census Bureau, July 1, 2019, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CA/PST045219>.

"CSII Quick Facts," USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute, accessed April 9, 2021, <https://dornsife.usc.edu/csii/quick-facts/>

<sup>23</sup> Batalova, Jeanne and Fix, Michael, "Through and Immigration Lens: PIAAC Assessment of the Competencies of Adults in the United States", Migration Policy Institute, February 2015, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/through-immigrant-lens-piaac-assessment-competencies-adults-united-states>

In California, the foreign-born population is much less likely to have graduated from high school. Seventy-one percent of the adults without a high school diploma in California are immigrants; 31 percent born outside the U.S. lack a diploma but for native residents the rate is 7 percent. Many immigrants have far less schooling, with only a few years or even no formal education at all.<sup>24</sup> Californians without high school diplomas have a higher poverty rate (19.3 percent); however, educational attainment closes wage gaps between immigrants and American-born residents.<sup>25</sup>

Of California's immigrants, most are of working age and almost two-thirds arrived before 2000, 21 percent between 2000 and 2009, and 14 percent since 2010. Yet the length of residence in California does not significantly affect how well adults speak English: of those who arrived before 2000, 51.5 percent speak English "less than well," a rate comparable to more recent arrivals. About one quarter of households are considered "limited English-speaking," meaning that there may be no adult in a household who can comfortably carry out daily business in English.

Although some newer immigrants tend to have more education, these long-term residents are crucial members of the California workforce, homeowners, voters, parents and grandparents. Many are in need of effective instruction that meets their personal goals and supports their persistence in the difficult journey to mastering English and pursuing educational goals such as an adult high school diploma and a college education.

Demand for ESL services outstrips supply. Funding for ESL services varies, depending on the economy and public policies, but it has been insufficient for many years. The demand for services has not diminished, but the opportunities for learning have decreased for many years, fluctuating according to available funding. Adult schools and community colleges reduced class offerings in the 2007-2009 recession, and some have never rebounded.

Formal class offerings also struggle with retaining students. All English language learners differ, whether by educational background, motivation, availability, or family and work circumstances, and educators may severely underestimate the time and effort required to master English.<sup>26</sup>

However many are served, that number, compared with the number of Californians who speak English "less than well," addresses only a fraction of the need.

Before the Great Recession, about 550,000 English language learners were enrolled in ESL classes in California public institutions.<sup>27</sup> Changes in funding formulas and other

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<sup>24</sup> In the 2010 U.S. Census, over 5% of the U.S. population reported eight years or less of school, with a total of 3% having six years or less of school. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2010/demo/educational-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html>

"Place of Birth by Educational Attainment in the United States," United States Census Bureau, accessed April 9, 2021, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=education%20and%20place%20of%20birth&g=0400000US06&y=2019&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B06009&hidePreview=true>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/12/19/problems-accelerated-learning-esl-opinion>

<sup>27</sup> Arturo Gonzalez, California's Commitment to Adult English Learners: Caught Between Funding and Need," Public Policy Institute of California, 2007, [https://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/rb/RB\\_407AGRB.pdf](https://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/rb/RB_407AGRB.pdf)

factors led to a remarkable decrease in enrollment to 96,000 ESL learners in the 2012-2013 fiscal year, a decline of more than 80 percent.

Although numbers rebounded -- 257,049 students in the 2018-2019 fiscal year --, ESL programs in adult schools and community colleges today are serving less than half of what they did 15 years ago.<sup>28</sup>



Regardless of the number, Public Policy Institute of California's 2007 conclusion stands: "the level of provision of ESL courses in any given year falls short of the need."

As noted earlier in this report, local library literacy programs routinely receive requests for English as a Second Language tutoring that they don't have the capacity to offer. Providers of English as a Second Language courses in classroom settings, like community colleges and adult education systems, also can't meet demand.

### **Improved Measurement of Outcomes**

Purchasing or developing a single reporting software for use by all California Library Literacy Services programs to track data and manage volunteers would provide a more comprehensive -- and accurate -- display of outcomes.

For local literacy programs, staff time would be freed to work with learners, prepare tutors, develop community partners and conduct outreach. Literacy coordinators would be equipped with not just comprehensive data from their own programs but comparative data from other jurisdictions, an aid in local decision-making and a tool in gauging program impact.

Similarly, state oversight becomes more efficient because of consistent data that can be easily aggregated, used to assess program results, and allow more precise targeting of needs and identification of programs that need the most support.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.calpassplus.org/Launchboard/Adult-Education-Pipeline.aspx>, accessed April 13, 2021.

**APPENDIX A: Financial Awards**

**2019-20 Fiscal Year – California Library Literacy Services Awards**

<b>Library Literacy Program</b>	<b>Adult Literacy</b>	<b>Family Literacy</b>	<b>ELLI</b>	<b>MLLS</b>	<b>Grant Total</b>
A.K. Smiley Public Library	X	X			\$74,096
Alameda County Library	X	X			\$182,767
Alameda Free Library	X				\$36,058
Altadena Library District	X				\$18,360
Amador County Library	X				\$31,063
Azusa City Library	X	X			\$43,000
Beaumont Library District	X				\$23,335
Benicia Public Library	X				\$21,663
Berkeley Public Library	X	X			\$92,252
Beverly Hills Public Library	X				\$30,547
Brawley Public Library	X	X		X	\$50,385
Burbank Public Library	X				\$27,155
Butte County Library	X	X		X	\$82,981
Calaveras County Library	X				\$27,095
Camarena Memorial Public Library	X				\$24,635
Camarillo Public Library	X				\$27,832
Carlsbad City Library	X	X			\$64,207
Chula Vista Public Library	X	X			\$78,447
City of Commerce Public Library	X	X	X		\$55,223
Colton Public Library*	X	X	X		\$58,728
Colusa County Library	X	X		X	\$23,328
Contra Costa County Library	X	X			\$94,937
Corona Public Library	X	X			\$74,204
Covina Public Library	X	X			\$57,940
Del Norte Public Library	X				\$21,216
Downey City Library	X				\$38,799
Escondido Public Library	X	X			\$87,461
Fresno County Public Library	X	X			\$128,719
Glendale Public Library	X				\$58,140
Glendora Library & Cultural Center	X				\$25,037
Hayward Public Library	X	X			\$101,317
Hemet Public Library*	X				\$18,360

<b>Library Literacy Program</b>	<b>Adult Literacy</b>	<b>Family Literacy</b>	<b>ELLI</b>	<b>MLLS</b>	<b>Grant Total</b>
Humboldt County Library	X	X			\$57,662
Huntington Beach Public Library	X		X		\$57,728
Imperial County Free Library	X				\$26,124
Imperial Public Library	X	X			\$36,000
Lake County Library	X	X			\$54,004
Lassen Library District	X	X			\$83,000
Lincoln Public Library	X	X			\$31,563
Livermore Public Library	X				\$39,422
Lodi Public Library	X	X			\$77,888
Lompoc Public Library	X	X			\$54,924
Los Angeles Public Library	X	X			\$237,333
Mariposa Public Library	X	X			\$28,180
Merced County Library	X	X			\$85,901
Monrovia Public Library	X	X			\$77,191
Monterey County Free Library	X	X		X	\$76,495
Monterey Park (Bruggemeyer) Library	X		X		\$35,564
Napa County Library	X	X			\$94,519
National City Public Library	X				\$46,880
Nevada County Library	X	X			\$45,398
Newport Beach Public Library	X				\$41,874
Oakland Public Library	X				\$64,200
Oceanside Public Library	X	X			\$45,524
Orange County Public Library	X	X			\$151,245
Orange Public Library	X				\$41,820
Placentia Library District	X				\$30,097
Placer County Library	X	X			\$58,699
Pleasanton Public Library	X				\$38,334
Plumas County Library	X	X	X		\$58,514
Porterville Public Library	X		X		\$24,522
Rancho Cucamonga Public Library	X				\$23,083
Redwood City Public Library	X	X	X		\$236,730
Richmond Public Library	X	X			\$147,271
Riverside County Library *	X	X			\$64,800
Riverside Public Library	X	X			\$56,679

Library Literacy Program	Adult Literacy	Family Literacy	ELLI	MLLS	Grant Total
Roseville Public Library	X				\$30,370
Sacramento Public Library	X				\$55,720
Salinas Public Library	X	X			\$149,950
San Benito County Free Library	X	X			\$43,900
San Bernardino County Library	X		X		\$102,305
San Bernardino Public Library	X	X			\$85,651
San Diego County Library	X				\$48,506
San Diego Public Library	X	X			\$168,896
San Francisco Public Library	X				\$59,872
San Jose Public Library	X	X			\$160,672
San Leandro Community Library	X	X			\$109,500
San Luis Obispo City-County Library	X	X			\$120,110
San Mateo County Libraries	X	X			\$84,461
San Mateo Public Library	X	X			\$88,660
Santa Barbara Public Library	X				\$42,860
Santa Clara City Library	X	X			\$73,072
Santa Clara County Library	X	X			\$103,791
Santa Fe Springs City Library	X		X		\$30,342
Santa Maria Public Library	X	X			\$73,445
Santa Monica Public Library	X	X			\$64,520
Santa Paul (Blanchard)Public Library	X	X			\$59,417
Shasta Public Libraries	X	X			\$66,658
Siskiyou County Free Library*	X	X			\$48,000
Solano County Library	X	X			\$99,274
Sonoma County Library	X	X			\$76,380
South San Francisco Public Library	X	X	X	X	\$89,535
Stanislaus County Library	X	X			\$297,569
Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library	X			X	\$29,678
Sutter County Library	X	X			\$87,867
Tulare County Free Library	X	X			\$99,395
Tuolumne County Library	X	X			\$48,971
Upland Public Library	X				\$27,474
Ventura County Library	X	X			\$74,736

<b>Library Literacy Program</b>	<b>Adult Literacy</b>	<b>Family Literacy</b>	<b>ELLI</b>	<b>MLLS</b>	<b>Grant Total</b>
Watsonville Public Library	X	X			\$56,477
Willows Public Library**	X	X			\$60,062
Woodland Public Library	X				\$52,688
Yolo County Library	X	X			\$62,777
Continuing Grants Total:					\$7,167,854

**New Libraries**

**Libraries in the 1<sup>st</sup> year**

<b>Library Literacy Program</b>	<b>Adult Literacy</b>	<b>Family Literacy</b>	<b>ELLI</b>	<b>MLLS</b>	<b>Grant Total</b>
Long Beach Public Library	X	X			\$117,625
Los Angeles County Library	X				\$34,521
New Libraries Total					\$152,146