

2019-2022 Adult Literacy Library Services Projects July 2019

New York State's 23 public library systems will offer expanded access to literacy services through the New York State Adult Literacy Library Services Program. Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education Mark Schaming announced today that the State Library has approved the 2019-2022 projects, one project for each of New York's 23 public library systems. These three-year projects began July 1, 2019 and end June 30, 2022.

Education Law 273 provides statutory funding of \$200,000 annually for the Adult Literacy Library Services Program. The FY 2019/2020 State Budget provides an appropriation of \$189,183. Funding is allocated to each system based on a formula.

[See the State funds allocated annually to each library system for the 2019-2022 projects.](#)

New York State's Adult Literacy Library Services Program helps library systems and libraries offer services to improve adult literacy on the job and in the home. These projects are aimed at helping adults over age 16 who are not in school take advantage of library resources to continue their education and improve their job skills. The program's theme for 2019-2022 continues the 2016-2019 theme of Workforce Development at New York Libraries through Public Library Systems and allows public library systems to continue to meet the needs of workers who are looking for expanded training and resources to increase literacy levels as well as the skills and tools needed for successful jobs and careers.

Adult Literacy Library Services Program projects include programs for adults 16 or older who are unemployed or underemployed; unfamiliar with technology; have low job skills and/or low literacy skills with the opportunity to develop strong workforce, literacy and/or digital literacy skills. Program participants prepare for high school equivalency tests such as TASC (Test

Assessing Secondary Completion); acquire citizenship information and improve English language skills. Training and resources are offered by library systems and libraries working in partnership with a wide variety of education, workforce, literacy and other community-based and government organizations.

For more information about the program, contact [Natalie McDonough](#), in the New York State Library, Division of Library Development, 518-486-2194.

The following are brief summaries of the 2019-2022 New York State Adult Literacy Library Services Program projects.

Brooklyn Public Library “Business English”

Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) will continue to offer its popular Business English classes, which provide instruction for adults on improving their fluency and comprehension in the English language. Adults will learn about the expectations and formalities of the American workplace, prepare resumes and cover letters and practice techniques for answering interview questions. The program targets immigrant professionals and entrepreneurs, as well as high-level English- language learners who are seeking employment. The classes serve as vital educational opportunities helping immigrants gain the skills needed to thrive in the workplace, improve their economic mobility, and meet their professional goals. They are held at four BPL branches located throughout the borough and near major transit hubs and communities with large immigrant populations and are led by experienced ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instructors.

Buffalo & Erie Co Public Library “Workforce Development at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library”

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) will build on the work done in previous funding cycles by focusing on increasing community awareness of workforce-related library resources available and increasing workforce literacy among targeted audiences. B&ECPL will work with community partners, enhance workforce-related collections, and conduct workshops and events that provide instruction on job-related and employment skills; connect with aspiring entrepreneurs and support existing small businesses in Erie County, who employ over 98% of the private for-profit workforce; and provide outreach services to the growing local immigrant and refugee communities who can benefit from workforce, entrepreneurial, and citizenship resources offered by the Library.

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Lib System “Literacy for Life: Preparation for Digital Literacy and Workforce Development”

The Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) and its 36 member libraries support adult literacy through education and training in relation to workforce development, continuing education, and life-long learning. CCLS will provide free access to an online educational product *Career Skills Training: Foundational Skills Course Pack*, which provides digital access to career-aligned skills training for unemployed, under-employed, educationally disadvantaged, and other diverse and special populations aged 16 and up. Mini-grants will assist member libraries to improve access to workforce development opportunities and improve adult literacy services. CCLS will partner with literacy agencies in both counties to utilize library spaces and materials to provide training for students in need of general literacy improvement and ESL services.

Clinton Essex Franklin Library System “Adult Literacy: Skill Building for Success”

This project will help Clinton Essex-Franklin Library System (CEFLS) and member libraries improve the quality of early learning services across this rural region through targeted training and resources. The groups to be served during each year of the project include library staff at 30 member libraries and 3 reading centers, as well as approximately 2,500 young readers aged 0-5 and their families/caregivers. CEFLS will provide resource support and offer mini-grants to member libraries to supplement local materials and programs, particularly in the busy summer months. Throughout the project period, CEFLS will also provide consultant help, staff training, templates, and other materials that will help guide collaborative early literacy efforts with area schools and community groups.

Finger Lakes Library System “Reach for the Stars: Career Success in the Finger Lakes Library System”

The Finger Lakes Library System (FLLS) will coordinate with 33 member libraries to form partnerships with five career centers and six BOCES locations in Cayuga, Cortland, Seneca, Tioga, and Tompkins counties to help patrons reach for the stars and find career success. The project will provide workforce development resources aimed at adults aged 16 years and older that are unemployed, underemployed, or TASC students in these counties. FLLS will provide the JobNow database to all patrons located in its five-county service area. This database consists of a unique suite of resources for job seekers, including access to trained career experts who provide live, one-to-one assistance. JobNow services include templates, on-demand tutorials, helpful links and tips, live interview coaching, resume lab, live career assistance, TASC prep, US Citizenship prep, and Microsoft Office help.

Four County Library System “Workforce Literacy Mini-Grants”

The Workforce Development Mini-Grant project will provide funds to Four County Library System’s member libraries to offer programs and services that will help adults with low literacy skills who are 16 years of age or older to enter or return to the workforce. Libraries will be eligible to receive \$500-\$2,000 Mini-Grants for each year of this three-year project. Mini-Grant projects will result in enhanced job readiness of community residents. Projects will be carried out by each library in partnership with at least one community partner organization engaged in offering similar adult literacy programs.

Mid York Library System “ ‘Pop-up’ ” Access to Technology & Collections”

Many of the member libraries in the Mid York Library System (MYLS) struggle to maintain the collections and technology that are necessary to help support community workforce development and job readiness needs. Each year, MYLS will work with selected member libraries to develop a collection of materials to support workforce development in their communities. Using the pop-up model developed during the previous project cycle, MYLS will also bring print collections, technology, and Internet access to areas that are underserved and partner locations. By partnering with the Literacy Coalition and other local community organizations, MYLS anticipates reaching approximately 500 people through ten “pop-up” events in three counties.

Mid-Hudson Library System “MHLS Adult Literacy Mini-Grant Program 2019 – 2022”

Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) will use mini-grants to encourage up to nine member libraries each year to create or expand adult literacy programs, build and strengthen relationships with adult literacy partners, and encourage adults to participate in library literacy programs in order to improve their workforce development and educational opportunities. This program will foster positive relationships between libraries and their partner organizations as well as advance goals shared between them. The partnerships that are created will improve the regional adult literacy support structure and make support more accessible to adult students.

Mohawk Valley Library System “Community Literacy Services”

The Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS) will work with up to three member library projects to serve adults 16 and older, living in Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady or Schoharie Counties who are in need of workforce or entrepreneurial skills, digital or financial literacy, or Basic English or English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy. Each project will work with at least one community organization and in conjunction with MVLS to accomplish the goals most needed by their communities.

Monroe County Library System “MCLS Workforce Development Mini-Literacy Project Program”

The MCLS Workforce Development Mini-Literacy Project Program will support new and existing adult literacy programs, resources, and services in order to improve career and educational opportunities for Monroe County residents. MCLS will fund up to four libraries per year for collaborative workforce development-related projects in the areas of digital literacy, financial literacy, job seeking, career & education development, adult literacy skills, and/or citizenship.

Nassau Library System “Workforce Development Cohorts: Cultivating Expertise at Libraries”

Nassau Library System (NLS) will target the underemployed and unemployed in Nassau County and work to provide them with necessary skills to successfully enter, return to, or

improve their satisfaction as part of the workforce. NLS will encourage staff members from any of the 54 member libraries to apply for one of three annual 'mini-scholarships' to join a cohort that will receive intensive training on 21st century workforce development issues and assessment/pedagogy skills. This trained library staff cohort will become additional sources of local expertise for adult workforce literacy. They will become confident and proficient in creating and executing soft skills jobs programs in their libraries. Each cohort member will report the outcomes and outputs of their work during quarterly meetings of the cohort, as well as at the end of the project, showing the successes and challenges of the library's project.

Nioga Library System “Workforce Development Mini-Grants”

Nioga Library System (NLS) will provide selected member libraries with funding to offer programs and services that will help adults who are unemployed or underemployed. With the assistance of NLS staff who will consult with the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO Works) and the Department of Labor, member libraries will survey residents to determine employment needs. Libraries will then purchase appropriate job-related resources or programming. To be eligible for funds, libraries must demonstrate an ability to improve the job readiness of community members and must also demonstrate a commitment with a community partner.

North Country Library System “Workforce Readiness in the North Country”

Workforce Readiness in the North Country will provide free job-preparedness resources to unemployed or under-employed individuals in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, and Oswego counties through local libraries. Individuals seeking to obtain digital literacy skills will have the opportunity to take scheduled training or be able to visit the library for one-on-one assistance. The North Country Library System will partner with The Workplace, part of the Department of Labor's Job Center Network, and contract with a trainer to provide digital literacy instruction throughout the system. Programs and classes will focus on drawing non-library users into the library to utilize the job-readiness resources and assistance available to them. The goal is to assist individuals with their job-readiness needs as well as create lifelong library users and to help promote the literacy resources available in the library.

The New York Public Library “Testing Materials for Adult Literacy Programs”

The New York Public Library (NYPL) will purchase testing materials for the library's Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs. The funding will enable NYPL to administer TABE and BEST Plus assessments in order to gauge student literacy and communication skills which contribute to workforce readiness and educational advancement. As the largest non-academic provider of free English language and literacy instruction in New York City, NYPL is in continuous need of these single-use testing materials, frequently reordered in large quantities. These field-standard tests provide students and instructors in NYPL's ABE and ESOL classes with clear understanding of improved language and literacy skills as well as readiness for careers, continuing education, and everyday life. A majority of NYPL ABE and ESOL students come from backgrounds that place them at a disadvantage in the workforce.

Onondaga County Public Library “Adult Education and Work Skills Readiness”

Onondaga County Public Library (OCPL) will provide targeted workforce development services throughout the library system by offering mini-grants for member libraries to address adult literacy and job development needs in their communities. Additionally, the Central Library in Syracuse will offer classes in soldering and basic tool skills to give job seekers relevant experience when applying for employment in local manufacturing companies, which offer the area’s best opportunities for sustainable, entry-level employment. Finally, OCPL will again offer access to the TASC Academy, a learning management system that offers adults who cannot attend regular classes the chance to progress toward a high school certificate.

Pioneer Library System “Workforce Development Mini-Grant”

Pioneer Library System (PLS) will award mini-grants to member libraries to offer programs and services that will help adults in their job readiness. Projects will be in the areas of digital literacy, financial literacy, job seeking, career & education development, adult literacy skills, and/or citizenship. Member libraries will work with a community partner and may also contract with local experts in the adult literacy and workforce development fields to provide programming and resources for their community.

Queens Borough Public Library “Increasing HSE Diploma Attainment for Careers and Post-Secondary Education and Training”

Queens Public Library will utilize *Essential Education* (“*Essential Ed*”), an online platform that provides supplemental online instruction for adult ABE high school level learners. *Essential Ed* helps these individuals increase their success rate in adult basic education classes by providing personalized learning, a richer learning experience, and increased instruction time. The program also builds a nurturing learning scaffold around adult learners to give help when it is needed and at the same time build adult literacy, independent learning, and thinking skills needed for continuing education, and the workplace. Students will be able to access *Essential Ed* for supplemental instruction material in a variety of ways and the Library expects that students will be able to achieve the 12-15 hour per week threshold needed to speed their gain in adult basic education, pre-HSE, and HSE skills and subjects.

Ramapo-Catskill Library System “RCLS Literacy Mini-Grant Program”

This project will facilitate the partnership between the Ramapo Catskill Library System (RCLS), member libraries, local nonprofits, and service organizations to provide a series of programs and a selection of services that will enhance current or develop new citizen information services, financial education, job assistance, and educational training. The project will also focus on the improvement of literacy skills by facilitating TASC classes, basic math, and writing sessions or enhance digital skills by providing software usage classes, coding, and data education sessions. Member libraries will apply to participate in the project via a mini-grant application process. The target group will be ethnic minorities, persons with physical, visual, or intellectual/developmental disabilities, veterans (served and returned to civilian life) and seniors (defined as 55+).

Southern Adirondack Library System “Better Readers & Libraries Mean Business”

The Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) will create the *Better Readers* program to support and encourage adult literacy programming in SALS 34 member libraries, as well as continuing successful workforce development initiatives begun in the prior funding cycle, *Libraries Mean Business*. The *Better Readers* program will provide adult literacy materials, training for staff and volunteers to create robust adult literacy programming and will also provide technology to member libraries that have active adult literacy programs. The *Libraries Mean Business* program will continue to provide funds to member libraries to offer Notary Public training for staff, as well as build the SALS e-book collection to support small businesses and entrepreneurs. SALS will collaborate with the Saratoga Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) and WSHWE (Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex) BOCES to meet the needs of adult learners in our region, and with SUNY Adirondack to provide training for the Notary Public exam.

Southern Tier Library System “Libraries in Support of Farmers”

Libraries in Support of Farmers is a workforce development and adult literacy initiative geared towards farmers in the Southern Tier who seek education and training services in order to enhance skills for developing and sustaining essential family farm practices. The Southern Tier Library System will focus on strengthening collections and programs within its member libraries and on developing key community partnerships that will benefit libraries, family farms and local communities.

Suffolk Cooperative Library System “Expanded Literacy Instruction for New English Learners”

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System’s *Expanded Literacy Instruction for New English Learners* project will provide funds to the Patchogue-Medford Library, the library system’s Central Library, to expand on the adult literacy and citizenship preparation services currently offered to Suffolk County residents in the Library’s downtown Patchogue location. This collaborative project enables the Library to also provide adult education programs for new English learners, including ESOL classes, citizenship preparation classes and basic computer class at the Eagle Elementary School in Medford.

Upper Hudson Library System “Libraries Mean Business: Public Libraries as One-stops for Workforce Development in the Community”

Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS) will continue to provide services to job seekers at member libraries in Albany and Rensselaer Counties through the new project, “Let’s Get to Work! Public Libraries as One-stops for workforce development in the community.” UHLS will continue to offer its popular digital literacy and career development classes, which provide instruction for adults on improving their career and overall educational opportunities. The “Let’s Get to Work...” program will also include funds to member libraries to offer Notary Public training for staff. UHLS will collaborate with Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC) to provide training for the Notary Public exam and continue its partnerships with local agencies that provide services to job-seekers.

Westchester Library System “Read Better - Library-based Literacy Tutoring for Adults”

Westchester Library System (WLS) will continue to evolve *Read Better*, a program that provides library-based tutoring for low-literate adults. *Read Better* trains and makes available tutors that can meet one-to-one with adults at a public library convenient to both the student and tutor. As many adults are also interested in obtaining their HSE and/or employment and have identified improved reading skills as an area of need, the program operates in conjunction with WLS' high school equivalency information service. Students are guided in obtaining a library card, are provided with personalized assistance in connecting to library services and in becoming more familiar with both print and digital resources. Opportunities to deepen skills and establish a tutor learning community are key to program success and effectiveness. WLS will host both an annual new volunteer training and two annual Tutor Updates to review resources and teaching strategies and to foster community.