



## **Literacy Action Corps of Columbia**

### ***Mission:***

Literacy Action Corps assists functionally illiterate English and non-English speaking adults in developing marketable skills like reading, writing, math, and verbal communication. Its mission is to provide opportunities for all to become more self-reliant and productive members of the community.

### ***Program Scope:***

Literacy Action Corps recruits adult students and volunteer tutors from the Columbia area. Tutors teach students on a one-to-one basis at times and locations agreed upon by the tutors and students, often at libraries or churches.

### ***Sources of Support:***

Literacy Action Corps of Columbia is supported through donations from service organizations, local businesses, foundation grants, and individuals who wish to contribute either services or money. We participate in the CoMoGives campaign. Our tutors contribute thousands of volunteer hours annually.

### ***Affiliation with ProLiteracy:***

Literacy Action Corps of Columbia, Missouri, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1968. It is affiliated nationally with ProLiteracy, formerly Laubach Literacy Action, and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Founded in 1955, ProLiteracy is a nonprofit educational corporation dedicated to training volunteers to help adults improve their lives and their communities by learning reading, writing, mathematics and the English language. ProLiteracy sponsors literacy programs in 20 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Within the United States, it has 1,000 local literacy programs.

### ***Volunteer Advantage:***

The use of volunteers offers a number of advantages, including lower cost of services; more flexibility in class scheduling and private tutoring; more personalized, less-threatening environments for instruction; more opportunities for mentoring; individualized instruction; flexible pacing, and a greater range of services for those individuals who require non-traditional education.

### ***Outcomes:***

All services are provided by unpaid volunteers. Our volunteer network provides literacy education at minimal to no expense to the students. LAC currently has ~80 active tutor-student pairs.

### ***Reasons to Help More People Receive the Tutoring They Need***

Literacy Statistics compiled by ProLiteracy from various sources:

- About 36 million adults in the US cannot read, write or do basic math above a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level. Less than 10% of them are receiving literacy services.
- Around 2 million immigrants arrive in the US each year; 50% of them lack high school education and proficient English language skills.
- Adults with lower literacy levels are less likely to be employed full-time, and more likely to be out of the workforce. They generally earn lower incomes, and women with lower literacy are more likely to receive public assistance. 43% of adults with the lowest literacy levels live in poverty.
- Parents with lower literacy levels are less likely to read to their children, talk with them about what they learned in school, and help them with their homework.
- There is not enough space in programs to serve everyone who wants to learn English. Many cities have waiting lists of months to years, and some rural areas have no available classes.

### ***Volunteer Opportunities with Literacy Action Corps of Columbia***

***\*Adult Literacy Tutoring*** -- The two components of this program are Basic Literacy and English Language Learners (ELL). Basic Literacy tutors work with English-speaking low-literacy adults, and help students prepare for the HISET (GED) exam. ELL tutors teach non-English speaking adults who may or may not be literate in their own language. Many of our ELL students are international students or their spouses. ***Tutors teach students on a one-to-one basis at times and locations agreed upon by the tutors and students, often at libraries, churches, and other locations.***

***\*Tutor Training*** -- Our twice-yearly tutor training workshops are taught by volunteer trainers who come from a variety of backgrounds. New trainers (after tutor training) can begin to teach workshops with the help of experienced trainers and are eventually eligible for national certification as Tutor Trainers. We currently have a strong need for new Tutor Trainers.

***\*Other Volunteers*** -- We can always use help with fundraising, publicity, our newsletter, our Volunteer Appreciation Night, or snacks for volunteer tutors during training. Just ask us!

***\*Referrals*** -- The most important and overlooked need for literacy programs! It is often difficult for adults to ask for help with reading or English skills. ***If you know someone who could benefit from individual tutoring, tactfully encourage the person to contact our program.*** Tutoring will be kept confidential.

***EACH ONE, TEACH ONE***

