



RESILIENT.

TOGETHER.

PROJECT LITERACY OF GREATER BERGEN COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2022

U.S. Adult Literacy Facts

U.S. Facts

43
Million

More than 43 million adults in the United States cannot read, write, or do basic math above a third-grade level.¹

Member Services



50% of ProLiteracy member programs put students on a waiting list due to demand exceeding program capacity.²



Less than 10% of adults in need are receiving services.²

The Cost of Low Literacy

\$2.2
Trillion

Bringing all adults to the equivalent of a sixth-grade reading level would generate an additional \$2.2 trillion in annual income for the country.³

\$106-238
Billion

It is estimated between \$106–\$238 billion in health care costs a year are linked to low adult literacy skills.⁴

English Language Learners



One-in-Five

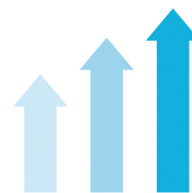
The U.S. has the world's largest immigrant population, holding one-in-five of the world's immigrants.⁶

53%
Proficient

Among immigrants only half (53%) are proficient English speakers.⁷

3X
The Earnings

Workers who have less education than a high school diploma have the lowest median weekly earnings (\$592), three times less than the highest level of education.⁵



103 MILLION

By 2065, immigrants and their descendants are projected to increase the U.S. population by 103 million people.⁸

Incarceration



75% of state incarcerated individuals did not complete high school or can be classified as low literate.¹⁰



Incarcerated individuals who participate in correctional education programs are **43% less likely to recidivate** than inmates who do not.¹¹

Family Literacy



A mother's reading skill is the greatest determinant of her children's future academic success, outweighing other factors, such as neighborhood and family income.⁹



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Dear friends and family:

What an exciting year for Project Literacy! We were able to navigate protocols for face to face meetings again! It was wonderful to see smiling faces as we reunited. During the pandemic our staff worked together to continue to help so many students move toward a better future by learning English, obtaining driver's licenses, getting high school diplomas and improving their reading. Our dedicated tutors worked online and in person to continue to work with their students.

We were very fortunate to have, and continue to have, a strategic plan in place that helped us navigate the pandemic. Many literacy programs simply had to close temporarily. Our database was accessible to the staff and our new website had just gone live when the pandemic began. Our creative staff and tutors offered online group classes, movie clubs, and short courses on topics relevant to living in the United States.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our volunteer tutors, sponsors and donors. We are so grateful for their support and know they are moved by the stories of our students' successes. Please take the time to read our Annual Report and browse our website to see how we are able to accomplish so much.

Thank you for your support during another successful year at Project Literacy.

Suzette

Suzette Corrado
President Board of Trustees

6/30/2022

*Project Literacy is a 501 (c) (3) New Jersey Corporation
Promoting Adult Literacy Since 1987*



Who We Are

In 1981, The American Library Association brought together national volunteer, private and public sector organizations to organize the Coalition for Literacy. By the fall of 1986, local, state and national programs had been planned. The largest was Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS), organized by the Public Broadcasting System and the American Broadcasting Company to support local community task forces against illiteracy. In 1987, Project PLUS Bergen County, now known as Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County was founded.

A recent report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says:

“The key to ensuring future U.S. economic growth is to bring traditionally marginalized or underemployed adults into the workforce. 14% of adults in the United States struggle with low reading, writing, and basic math skills. This includes adults that have less than a high school education, former prisoners and non-native English speakers.”

What We Do

Our mission is to provide, support and promote the expansion of adult literacy in the greater Bergen County area. The objective of the program is to provide the gift of literacy to adults who confront life in the Bergen County area without the skills to communicate effectively. If you can read this, you have that gift. You are lucky. 145,000 of our neighbors cannot.

Using trained volunteer tutors, Project Literacy offers free 1-on-1 tutoring for adults in:

- Adult Basic Literacy - Reading and writing;
- English as a Second Language (ESL);
- Mathematics for the High School Equivalency exam.

Many of our students continue their education with financial help from Project Literacy’s Carmen Pichardo Scholarship Fund.

Our students live in the general Bergen County area, and they represent over 40 countries with the following demographics:

77 students aged 18-87 - Female: 49; Male: 29
Adult literacy: 19 ESL: 55 HSE (math): 3
Hispanic: 14; White: 42; Black: 17; Asian: 4

“The American Dream is about equal opportunity for everyone who works hard. If we don’t give everyone the ability to simply read and write, then we aren’t giving everyone an equal chance to succeed.” —Barbara Bush



Tutor Training

During the period of COVID-19, tutor training was conducted via Zoom. Nonetheless, 5 training sessions were completed in this fiscal year. Each session includes 15 hours of training. We now have a room dedicated to Project Literacy that can be reserved just for our tutors and students. Tutoring can also take place in the lobby. Both spaces reflect back to our pre-pandemic days.

In general, it is an easy, flexible and comfortable way to train tutors as we can extend or shorten the class sessions. It also allowed the volunteers to remain safe and still complete the training. We have many new dedicated tutors who have recently started with us and are very much interested in return to the college.



One of the many exceptional occurrences for our tutors was the fact that a few were afraid of teaching. They attended the remote tutor training with apprehension. We noted that after a session, and seeing that

distance-learning was not a terrible thing, they grew to appreciate it. Many of them taught themselves to share screens with their students and use the whiteboard for enhancing their lessons.

Tutor training these past few months was indeed “horse of a different color,” but somehow, we made it work and it continues to work. We are not sure what the future will bring, but it will bring training options to our new tutors.

Over the past several months, both tutors and students have been anxious to return to on-site tutoring. This change occurred slowly but both students and tutors seem happier and more anxious to complete their literacy goals.





Project Literacy and Covid-19

When the Coronavirus struck in mid-March, 2020, Bergen Community College immediately closed all its buildings, including the Ciarco Learning Center in Hackensack, where our offices and activities are centered. We packed up and started volunteering from remote (home) for two years.

To continue to work towards our mission, we adopted several “Distance Learning Resources” to help our students respect social distancing to continue learning during a time of health crisis and uncertainty, including Zoom, Free Conference Call, Google Hangouts, Skype. We have discounted Zoom pricing offered to ProLiteracy affiliates so we offer free Zoom accounts to all tutors.

Nonetheless, Covid-19 eroded our numbers of both tutors and students. Two-thirds of our tutors are senior citizens, in a high priority Covid-19 demographic and are often averse to technology. Most said they would return to us when they can tutor face-to-face. Most of our students are referred to us by the college.



Fortunately, the College has always donated space and some utilities so we were not faced with continuing premises and utilities bills. All our students have an electronic device that they used to meet with their tutor or for research or simply as a dictionary. We believe the student/technology ratio is 95% and we provide donated laptops or tablets to our students in need.

We initiated an active Zoom program which allowed us to do group presentations and even reach beyond our normal foot print to include students from France, Colombia and Japan. Zoom gave us the opportunity to work in a virtual classroom environment, beyond the boundaries of Northern New Jersey. Most group sessions were run by volunteer tutors at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels and included General discussion and conversation, movie club, U.S. woman’s history, American history and citizenship.

We fully expected to see our numbers return to “normal” once the overall environment returned to normal and are happy to say that is exactly what has happened.

After Gov. Phil Murphy announced a program whereby foreign-licensed physicians living in the United States could apply for a “temporary emergency license” to practice medicine in New Jersey during the pandemic, we identified several of our students/physicians and got them licensed under the program to be able to provide in-person medical care at facilities licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health or at another location designated as an emergency health care center by the state health commissioner. Among our students, we have several physicians of different disciplines who have come to us to learn English. 10 of these physicians applied for the temporary license and at least one was on the front line for several months.



FINANCIAL RESULTS

Unqualified Audit at June 30 of Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County, performed by PKF O'Connor Davies, Woodcliff Lakes, NJ. Please visit our web site for audit reports at: www.project-literacy.org/financials.

Assets 2022

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$105,801
Property & Equipment	\$1,530
Total Assets	\$107,331

Liabilities & Net Assets 2022

Accounts Payable	\$5,000
Refundable Advance (PPP Loan)	\$0
Total Current Liabilities	\$5,000
Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	\$96,413
With Donor Restrictions	\$8,501
Total Net Assets	\$104,914
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$109,914

Support & Revenue

Contributions	\$41,748
Other Income	\$12,842
Donated Services (1)	\$268,024
Fundraising	\$16,044
Interest Income	\$34
Total Support & Revenue	\$338,692

Expenses

Program Services	\$278,342
Support Services	\$46,739
Fundraising	\$11,937
Total Expenses	\$337,017
Net Revenue	\$1,675
Fundraising/Total Expenses	2%
Support Services/Total Expenses	15%
Program/Total Expenses	83%

1. Using a formula developed by ProLiteracy, we have calculated In-Kind Support as the monetary value of our free tutors: 1.5 hours/week x the number of tutors x 52 weeks = total number of hours x the value of volunteer time for 90 minutes.

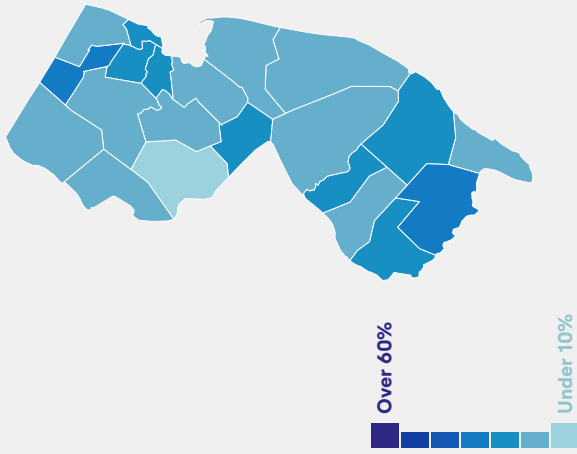
20.7%

of adults in New Jersey have low literacy

New Jersey ranks 33 out of 50 in the U.S.

2 in 7

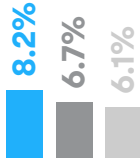
counties in New Jersey have populations where 25% or more of the residents have below basic literacy



How does low literacy affect equity and quality of life?

In counties where at least a quarter of the population have below basic literacy, we see that many health, economic, and educational outcomes fall short.

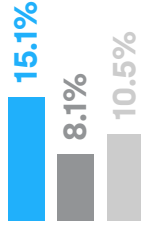
Unemployment



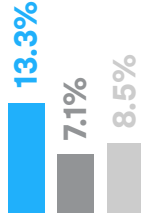
Median Income



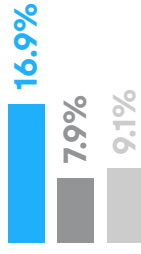
Adults Without a High School Degree



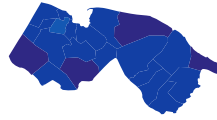
No Access to Healthcare



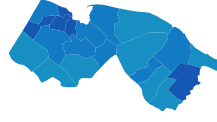
Residents Below the Poverty Line



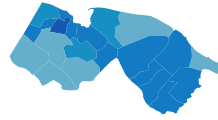
Demographics



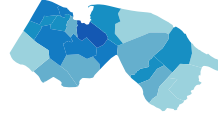
White



Hispanic/Latinx



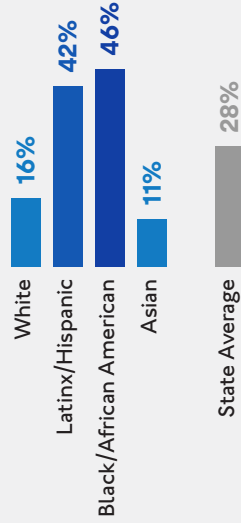
Black



Asian

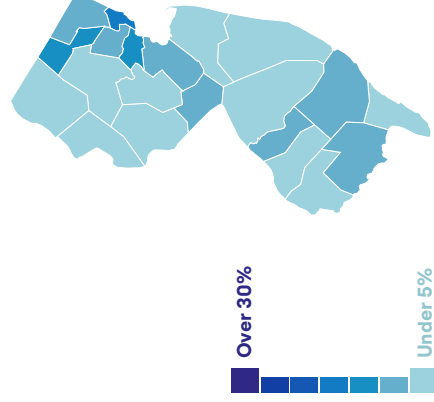


The percent of 4th graders with below basic reading by race



Households Where Limited English is Spoken

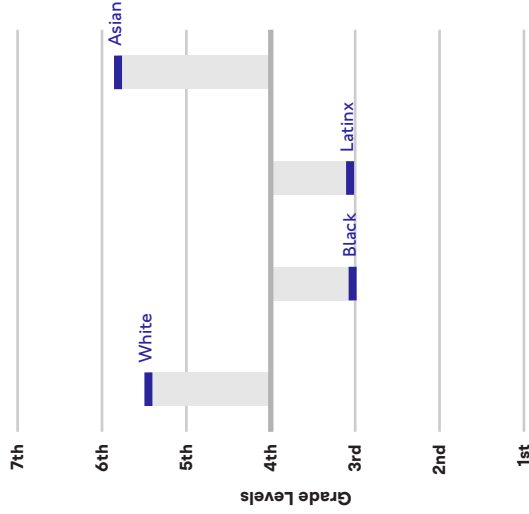
The percentage of households where no adult speaks English "very well."



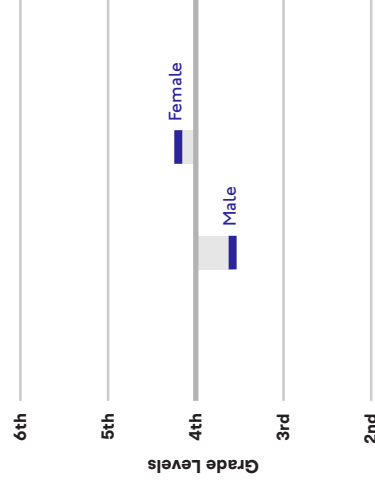
4th Grade Reading Levels

While literacy can be high or low in a given metro area, when we look at 4th grade testing, we can see that the performance in English/Language Arts is not consistent across race and gender.

English/Language Arts Test Performance by Race



English/Language Arts Test Performance by Gender



Below basic literacy is defined as scoring level I or below on the PIAAC International Adult Literacy Survey, 4th grade reading scores come from the NAEP reading assessment. 4th grade ELA test performance data comes from edopportunity.org. Self-Reported health comes from the Community Health Status Indicators. All other data comes from the American Community Survey. PIAAC data is not available by city. Visit map.barbarabush.org for county-level PIAAC data.

Unemployment

6.1%

630,402 adults living in New York are unemployed.

Single Mother Households

14.6%

1,046,759 households in New York are single mother households.

Residents Below the Poverty Line

11.9%

1,827,737 residents are living below the poverty line in New York.

Didn't Receive a High School Diploma

13.7%

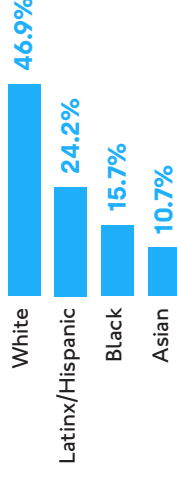
1,899,312 adults living in New York did not receive a high school diploma.

Receives Public Assistance

24.4%

1,053,394 residents receive public assistance in New York.

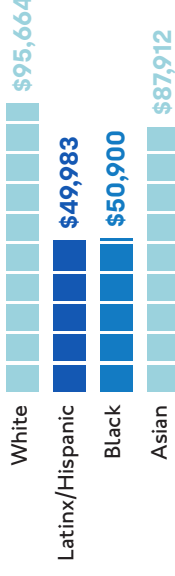
Racial Distribution



Median Household Income

\$75,086

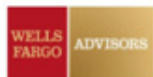
Income by Race



Data for the New York-Newark-Jersey City Metro Area



Our Sponsors





DONATE

Free elementary and secondary English language education is available to the entire American population, yet there is a gap for Americans who did not fully benefit from the system, along with foreign-born adults, new to this country. Project Literacy fills that gap for those who want it by providing, supporting and promoting adult literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning as we shift from learning to read to reading to learn.

Please support our efforts with a donation.

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Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit NJ corporation.
Established 1987.

PROJECT LITERACY OF GREATER BERGEN COUNTY

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