



First *Literacy Lab* Initiative

Fiscal Year 2019

Request for Proposals

First Literacy Mission and Goals

Established in 1988, the mission of First Literacy is to ensure that adults with low-literacy or limited English proficiency have high-quality educational opportunities that enable them to thrive as individuals and as family members, in their workplaces, and in their communities. We support innovative, effective adult education instruction and adult learners who persevere and strive for higher education.

Description of First Literacy Lab Initiative

The goal of the First *Literacy Lab* initiative is to provide grants to stimulate and support the development, trial, and implementation of innovative Adult Basic Education (ABE) educational resources and practices that have an impact on teaching and learning. Grants focus on fresh and novel approaches to instruction, curriculum development, and related areas. They are not intended to fund regular ABE or ESOL classes. We urge you to think in terms of specific projects that enrich your regular curriculum.

Eligibility

Grants are open to all not-for-profit* ABE programs in Massachusetts. Up to \$5,000 may be provided for the development and trial of innovative resources and practices potentially promising to ABE teaching and learning.

Priorities

This year, First Literacy is interested in two priority areas:

1. Experiential learning—that is, projects that enrich instruction beyond the handout, workbook, and computer screen. Some examples of experiential learning are:
 - Collaborations with cultural organizations or community organizations (museums, community gardening, health centers, nature centers)
 - Science inquiry projects
 - Integrating expressive arts (for example, drama/improvisation, using film, music, or visual arts to enhance learning)
 - Creative writing and memoir projects

2. Civic Participation and Citizenship:

- Projects that focus on integrating civic awareness and civic engagement (for example, a unit on voting rights and responsibilities that brings students to polls, or a field trip to the state house to meet students' representatives/senators)
- Projects that enhance paths to citizenship

We will still consider proposals outside of the priority areas. If you have an idea you would like to discuss before applying, you are welcome to reach out to Evonne Peters at 617-482-3336 x13 or epeters@firstliteracy.org.

**Not-for-profit includes community-based programs, public school adult programs, prison programs, and unions. Please contact us if you are unsure of your status.*

Additional Information

- Proposals for lesser amounts are welcome.
- All grant awards are from November 15, 2018 through June 30, 2019.
- An adult education program may apply for more than one grant, but only one grant will be funded in a fiscal year.
- Teacher(s) should serve as project leaders and serve as the contact for all phases of the grant.
- In FY 2019, proposals for projects that significantly build upon an FY 2018 *First Literacy Lab* grant will also be considered, with its own goals, activities, and evaluation protocols.
- Assessments and evaluations of *First Literacy Lab* project goals need to be project-specific and clearly described in the proposal narrative.

Requirements of Applicants and Grantees

1. The proposal review process includes a 30-minute interview between the applicant, First Literacy staff, and representatives from the First Literacy Community Advisory Council and Board of Directors. We will consider a virtual meeting for applicants who would need to travel long distances.
2. Project leaders will submit a short interim report.
3. Project leaders are encouraged to discuss the project with the Program Manager at First Literacy as it evolves. We are happy to offer support along the way.
4. We understand that original ideas might change. Any amendment to project activities, evaluation, or budget must be approved by First Literacy.
5. The Program Manager will conduct site visits to assess project progress.

6. Final reports describing project activities, final products, and project evaluation will be due no later than June 15, 2019. Reports will include electronic copies of all resources developed as part of the grant. First Literacy will upload products from the project onto its website.
7. Grantees will agree to make a brief presentation on their projects at a First Literacy event in October 2019.
8. Articles or presentations by grantees on First *Literacy Lab* projects are encouraged and should include reference to First Literacy's support of the project.

Submission Checklist

- Proposal Cover Sheet
- Proposal Narrative which includes Activities/Outcomes Chart
- List of key people
- Proposed Budget

Dates/Timeline

- **Release of Request for Proposals**
Tuesday, September 4, 2018
 - **Information Session**
Friday, September 7, 2018 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm
 - **Proposals Due:**
Tuesday, September 25, 2018
Send to Evonne Peters at epeters@firstliteracy.org by 5:00 pm. **Late or incomplete proposals will not be accepted.** Please submit documents as a combined Word or PDF file.
 - **Interviews of Applicants** (Individually scheduled and required of all applicants)
October 17- November 1, 2018
 - **Announcement of grant awards**
November 15, 2018
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Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q: Who do I contact if I have questions?

A: Evonne Peters, Program Manager, may be reached at epeters@firstliteracy.org or 617-482-3336 x13.

2. Q: How many proposals may I submit?

*A: Each program may submit any number of proposals. First Literacy will only fund **one** proposal per program.*

3. Q: How should I submit my proposal?

A: Proposals will only be accepted via email. Send the grant proposal as a single Word or PDF file to Evonne Peters at epeters@firstliteracy.org. We will be printing out and circulating the proposals to readers in hard copies.

4. Why do I need to come in for an interview, and who will interview me?

A: Interviews give you a chance to tell us a little more about your ideas and how you plan to carry them out. It also gives you a chance to ask us questions. We envision the interview as a conversation. You will meet with First Literacy staff, a member of the First Literacy Community Advisory Council, and a member of our Board of Directors.

5. Q: I live in western Massachusetts. Will I have to drive to Boston for a 30-minute interview?

A: For applicants who live well beyond the Greater Boston area, we can arrange for a virtual meeting. We prefer face-to-face, but we understand the challenge of long-distance travel.

6. Q: If we are awarded a grant, how are we paid?

A: First Literacy pays you half of the award by January 15, 2019. Your final report and final submission of grant materials are due June 15, 2019. We will pay your second installment by June 30, 2019 if we have received the final report and materials. We reserve the right to withhold final payment if the project gets abandoned before any significant work has been completed.

7. Q: What am I expected to do as part of the *Literacy Lab* sharing presentation?

A: The lead teacher (and any collaborators, if you like) will present their project to ABE colleagues for 30-45 minutes at an event in October 2019. We will support you in designing your presentation.

8. Q: What kind of support may I expect from First Literacy?

A: Our intention is to help you implement a strong project. We are available to support you with any reasonable requests, such as finding resources, solving problems, adjusting to unexpected changes, etc.

9. Q: What kind of monitoring can I expect from First Literacy?

A: Evonne Peters, Program Manager, will schedule a site visit with you to look at the project in action, to check in about how things are progressing, and to see what support you might need.

10. Q: What kind of reporting will I be required to complete?

*A: You will need to fill out a short interim report and a final report that includes student demographic data, outcomes, and any final products. **Please note: We send all correspondence about the grant to each person who is part of the project.***

11. Q: Why do you need the demographics of our students?

A: When we apply for grants, we are often asked about the demographics of students who benefit from our services. Please note that we ask for demographics about your PROGRAM. When you fill out your interim report and know who your students are for FY 19, we will also ask about the demographics of the students in the PROJECT.

12. Q: I plan to submit a proposal to a conference based on my First Literacy Lab grant project, but I won't know if I am accepted at the time of my grant submission. How should I handle this in the budget?

A: Use a provisional amount depending on whether your conference is in New England or out of state. Contact First Literacy when you are accepted. If you are not accepted, we can make a budget modification and you can use those funds in another way.

13. Q: What happens if things don't work out the way we projected in our original proposal?

A: If you need to make a change, and your original goals are still on track, it's probably fine. But you do need to contact First Literacy with your request, so we know about the changes and can approve them. This is particularly important if you are making budget change requests.

14. Q: Can you tell me more about the activities/outcomes chart?

A: The purpose of this chart is to think ahead about how you plan to implement your project. For example, in the first few weeks, you might want to do a pre-survey of some kind. In weeks that follow, you will need to plan for certain tasks that will bring you closer to reaching your overall goal. We view this chart as a planning tool for you to think through the project step by step and to show us how you plan to proceed.

15. Q: Why do you give us a limited number of pages to write about our idea?

A: The Literacy Lab grants are small. We are looking for focused projects with clear goals and processes. The more focused you are, the clearer you will be about what you want to achieve.