First Literacy Grant Initiative

Fiscal Year 2023

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 and adult learners who persevere and strive for higher education.

Eligibility

Grants are open to all not-for-profit* adult basic education (ABE) programs in Massachusetts. Up to $15,000 may be provided for the development and trial of innovative resources and practices that benefit teaching and learning.

Grants

First Literacy is offering two (2) different types of grants in FY23, along with monetary incentives for new programs and program replication.

GRANT LEVELS:

First Literacy is offering two types of grants, Program Grants and Organizational Grants, along with monetary incentives for new programs and program replication.

1. Program Grants: Program grants provide funding for the development, trial, and implementation of innovative and impactful ABE or ESOL teaching and learning resources and practices that are project-based, fresh approaches to instruction, curriculum and staff development, and related areas.

- **New Programs:** Programs that **have not received** a First Literacy Grant in the past ten years are eligible to apply for **up to $7,500** in the first year of the proposed project.
- **Returning Programs:** Programs that **have received** a First Literacy Grant in the past ten years are eligible to apply for **up to $5,000** in the first year of the proposed project.
- **Second Year Bonus:** Organizations that received First Literacy funding for the first year of a project are eligible to apply for **up to $2,500** for their second year of funding.
  - Programs applying for a second-year bonus must replicate the program with fidelity in year two including capturing pertinent data.

- o The program must submit a letter of intent to apply for the second-year bonus by September 15, 2023, and a brief final report by June 15, 2024 (both forms provided by First Literacy).
- **Project Replication Bonus:** ABE and ESOL programs that replicate a current First Literacy funded project can apply for a **$1,000** replication bonus.
  - o These $1,000 bonus awards are given to the project facilitator and the external partner (must be a nonprofit ABE or ESOL program) in the fiscal year AFTER the original award.
  - o Both programs must submit a brief letter of intent by June 10, 2023 to apply for this bonus, and a brief final report by June 15, 2024 (both forms provided by First Literacy).

2. Organizational Grants: These grants provide funding for innovative ideas for larger-scale, organization-wide curricula, systems, training, and/or teacher improvement. **Grants of up to $15,000** are available and priority is given to projects with a robust data reporting plan.

- **Second Year Bonus:** Organizations that received First Literacy funding for the first year of an **organizational project** are eligible to apply for **up to $7,500** for their second year of funding.
  - o Programs applying for a second-year bonus must replicate the program with fidelity in year two including capturing pertinent data.
  - o The program must submit a letter of intent to apply for the second-year bonus by September 15, 2023, and a brief final report by June 15, 2024 (both forms provided by First Literacy).

TIMELINE/IMPORTANT DATES:

March 23, 2022 3:00pm-4:00pm: **Grant Seeker Information Session 1**
March 30, 2022 10:00am-11:00am: **Grant Seeker Information Session 2**

May 12, 2022, 5:00 pm: Applications Due:
Your entire application will be completed online via the **link on our website**. You will be required to save your budget and project outcomes chart as PDF's and upload to your application. Links to these two documents are included in the project guidelines and requirements below. Late, incomplete or emailed applications will not be accepted.

May 17 – June 10, 2022: **Finalist Interviews:**
A 30-minute interview between the applicant, First Literacy staff, and representatives from the First Literacy Community Advisory Council and Board of Directors will be individually scheduled and required of all finalists. Interviews for FY23 may still be virtual.

June 21, 2022: Awards announced
The grant period is from **July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023**.

PROPOSED PROJECT GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS:

1. An adult education program may apply for more than one grant, but only one grant will be funded in a fiscal year.
2. Teachers are encouraged to serve as project leaders.
3. Proposals for projects that significantly build upon an FY2022 First Literacy Grant will also be considered, as long as the project has its own goals, activities, and evaluation protocols.
4. Proposal budgets and funding requests should be based on specific program costs whose funding will be vital to the project. **Proposed Project Budget** must be submitted with this application.
5. Assessments and evaluations of First Literacy Grant project goals need to be project specific and clearly described in the proposal narrative. **Projected Activites, Outcomes, and Measurements** must be submitted with this application.
6. First Literacy Grant funds cannot be used to offset costs for core classes, but there are many acceptable uses for grant funds. (View **past First Literacy Grant Funded Projects**.) We encourage programs to be creative, to think about the unmet needs of their students, as well as any gaps in current programming, and to consider projects that develop resources or materials that can be used by your program in future years and/or shared with other programs, such as:
   o Developing and piloting curriculum not available from other sources;
   o Providing experiential learning opportunities or project-based learning (must include a curricular component), such as partnerships with community organizations;
   o Offering an innovative, short-term class that fills an unmet student need (for example, family literacy, a post-HSE math or writing class, digital literacy);
   o Implementing a program-wide special project or initiative (for example, a civics and leadership initiative, a program-wide poetry project, and a "one-book" project that fostered reading and journaling across all classes).

REQUIREMENTS OF GRANTEES:

1. Project leaders are encouraged to work with the First Literacy Program Director for technical support as their project evolves.
2. We understand that original ideas might change. Any amendment to project activities, evaluation, or budget must be approved by First Literacy.
3. The First Literacy Program Director will conduct site visits to assess project progress.
4. Project leaders will submit an Interim Report in **January 2023**. Forms will be provided by First Literacy and will reflect the scope of the grant and progress on any data to be collected.
5. Project leaders will submit a Final Report no later than **June 18, 2023** describing project activities, final products, project evaluation and student participant data. Reports will include electronic copies of all resources developed as part of the grant, co-branded

with the First Literacy logo. These will be uploaded to the searchable **Resources for Educators** on First Literacy's website and made available to the field.

6. Grantees will agree to make a brief presentation on their projects at a First Literacy's Spotlight on Innovation in Adult Basic Education in **October 2023**. Project leaders must be present.

7. Articles or presentations by grantees on First Literacy Grant projects are encouraged and should include reference to First Literacy's support of the project.

8. Grantees must acknowledge First Literacy funding on their website and tag First Literacy in posts on social media (if active) that acknowledge funding.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Find answers to FAQs.