



First Literacy Grant Initiative

Fiscal Year 2024

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. The goal of **First Literacy Grants** is to provide funding that stimulates and supports the development, trial, and implementation of innovative and impactful Adult Basic Education resources and practices. **Grants of up to \$15,000 are open to all not-for-profit Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in Massachusetts.**

First Literacy Funding Priorities

- To fund innovative and impactful ideas that will improve educational and professional outcomes for the students of ABE programs.
- To fund ideas that may not be able to be funded through DESE or other major funding sources.
- To fund ideas that will have a lasting impact in ABE schools and programs.

Eligibility

Grants are open to all not-for-profit Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs in Massachusetts.

GRANT LEVELS

First Literacy is offering three (3) types of grants, Program Grants, Organizational Grants and Incentive Grants.

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.

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.

3. Incentive Grants

- **Second Year Grant*:** Organizations that received First Literacy funding for the first year of a project are eligible to apply for up to half of their first-year grant amount in a second year of funding.
 - Programs applying for a second-year grant must replicate the program with fidelity in year two including capturing pertinent data and reporting that to First Literacy.
 - Programs must submit a letter of intent to apply for the second-year grant along with the FY 24 grant cycle.
 - **Project Replication Grant*:** Your ABE program and another ABE program can each receive \$1,000 if:
 - You assist a second ABE program in implementing your grant idea/program. Both programs must submit a brief letter of intent to apply for this grant along with the FY 24 grant cycle.
- *Both incentive grants can be used for a program or organizational grant.*
- *You can apply for a program/organizational First Literacy Grant AND incentive grant.*
- *Any incentive grant awards will be given out in the fiscal year after the original award.*

TIMELINE/IMPORTANT DATES

- The grant period is from **July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024**.
- We're providing two information sessions via Zoom and strongly encourage the lead teacher for a proposal to attend either session. Grant writers and administrators are also welcome. Please review the RFP, application, and FAQs before attending.
 - **Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 3:00 - 4:00 PM** [Grant Seeker Information Session 1](#)
 - **Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 10:00 - 11:00 AM** [Grant Seeker Information Session 2](#)
- **May 4, 2023, 5:00 pm: Applications Due:**
Your entire application will be completed online via this form, which can also be found 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 11 - May 26, 2023: 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.
- **June 5, 2023: Awards announced**

PROPOSED PROJECT GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

- An adult education program may apply for more than one grant, but only one grant will be funded in a fiscal year (except for incentive grants).
- Teachers are encouraged to serve as project leaders.
- Proposals for projects that significantly build upon an FY2023 First Literacy Grant will also be considered, as long as the project has its own goals, activities, and evaluation protocols.

- Proposal budgets and funding requests should be based on specific program costs whose funding will be vital to the project. A [Proposed Project Budget](#) must be submitted with this application.
- Assessments and evaluations of First Literacy Grant project goals need to be project specific and clearly described in the proposal narrative. [Projected Activities, Outcomes, and Measurements](#) must be submitted with this application.
- 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](#).) Grant funds dedicated for staff need to be used for ADDITIONAL hours. 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:
 - Developing and piloting curriculum not available from other sources;
 - Providing experiential learning opportunities or project-based learning (must include a curricular component), such as partnerships with community organizations;
 - 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);
 - 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 fosters reading and journaling across all classes).

REQUIREMENTS OF GRANTEES

- Project leaders are encouraged to work with the First Literacy Program Director for technical support as their project evolves.
- We understand that original ideas might change. Any amendment to project activities, evaluation, or budget must be approved by First Literacy.
- The First Literacy Program Director will conduct site visits to assess project progress.
- Project leaders will submit an Interim Report on **January 19, 2024**. Forms will be provided by First Literacy and will reflect the scope of the grant and progress on any data to be collected.
- Project leaders will submit a Final Report no later than **June 20, 2024**, 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.
- Grantees will agree to make a brief presentation on their projects at First Literacy's Spotlight on Innovation in Adult Basic Education in **the Fall of 2024**. Project leaders must be present.
- Articles or presentations by grantees on First Literacy Grant projects are encouraged and should include references to First Literacy's support of the project.
- 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.](#)