



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF CHARLOTTESVILLE / ALBEMARLE

Tutor Handbook of Information

233 4th Street NW #220
Charlottesville, VA 22903
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Executive Director: Ellen Osborne, ellen@literacyforall.org

Program Director: Deanne Foerster, dfoerster@literacyforall.org

Program Assistant: Maureen Overstreet, moverstreet@literacyforall.org

Civics Coordinator, Trainer, Mentor: Paige Zelikow, paigez@embarqmail.com

Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

(Tutoring space is also available outside of staff hours.)



Our Vision

All adults in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County will have the literacy and English language skills needed to independently pursue their life goals, support their families, and be active in their community.

Our Mission

Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle (LVCA) promotes literacy through FREE, confidential, one-to-one reading, writing and English language tutoring.

FACT SHEET

Who we are:

Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle (LVCA) is an independent non-profit organization that offers free, confidential, individualized basic literacy and English language instruction to adults. A board of directors governs the agency and our staff. We rely upon volunteers to tutor, help in the office and help with major fund-raising projects.

When we started:

LVCA was formed in 1983 to provide supplemental tutoring for adults who were enrolled in Charlottesville City Schools' Adult Basic Education program. At that time, the organization was run entirely by volunteers.

Our funding:

We receive grants from the Virginia Department of Education, the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, the United Way, and several other private foundations, congregations, businesses and service groups. We also receive contributions from learners and tutors. Every year our volunteer board raises money through solicitation letters and community wide events such as Wordplay. All donations to LVCA are tax deductible according to IRS regulations.

Who we serve:

We serve adults ages 18 and over who have limited literacy skills. About 15% of Virginians over 25 have limited literacy skills. Many have learning disabilities and are ashamed of their inability to read. Enrolling in a literacy program takes courage. Those who do enroll are usually hard-working, ambitious men and women who want to change their circumstances, and they voluntarily choose to spend time each week doing something they find difficult. Through our volunteer tutors, we provide these adults a second chance to learn.

In addition to those native to this area, over the past 10 years, there has been a 106% increase in the number of people in our area who do not speak English well. Many of these people are immigrants or refugees from war torn or unstable countries who need to improve their English in order to find and keep good jobs, adjust to life in this country and help their children in school. Some are spouses of visiting professors or students and they have children in our public school system. Currently, approximately 80-85% of our learners are nonnative English speakers. This is the normal trend for many adult literacy organizations throughout the country.

Most of our students are between the ages of 25 and 59. They are employed, but because jobs for people with poor literacy skills pay very little, they support families on relatively small incomes. They face many poverty-related problems such as frequent job changes, underemployment, inadequate housing and health care, and require more than one job to meet basic needs.

CONFIDENTIALITY of Student and Tutor Records

Literacy Volunteers gives top priority to providing complete confidentiality for its students, tutors and volunteers. Students, tutors and volunteers are welcome to share their experiences either privately or through the media in order to encourage others to become involved and support literacy activities, as long as they do not violate the privacy of anyone else. Literacy Volunteers encourages such sharing of experiences and is most appreciative of the support it brings.

All records pertaining to students, tutors and volunteers involved with this literacy program will be confidential unless prior written or verbal consent is obtained. The written consent will include what information can be released and how this information can be used. However, once records are made public, Literacy Volunteers has no control over them. No information pertaining to a student's assessment or progress will be released or transferred to another agency while the student is being tutored or at any other time without the student's permission. General statistical information can be released anonymously.

LVCA TUTOR REQUIREMENTS

Accountable to:

- Your assigned student
- LVCA and its mission; goals and requirements are dictated by the city, county, state and Board of Directors

Qualifications:

- Must have solid reading, writing and oral communication skills
- Be well organized, good at planning and an excellent listener
- Need to be patient, friendly, encouraging, non-judgmental and committed

Requirements:

- Provide 8 hours of instruction per month (2 hours/week)
- Commit to one year of service or until student is assessed
(Assessment is done after about 80 hours of study)
- **Fill out Progress Reports each month by the 10th of the following month**
- Be respectful of student's confidentiality
- Tutor only in a public place
- Have good communication with the office about difficulties such as: if student is canceling on short notice, is not attending regularly or personal problems are impeding the learning process
- Have good communication with your student about changes in scheduling and upcoming events in our program.
- Make up missed sessions or have student make up hours on a computer learning program or with a conversation group. Subs can be arranged for absences of 3 weeks or more.
- Continue to be informed about new methods and materials by attending workshops, looking at resources recommended through the LVCA website, or asking a mentor or staff member.
- Notify the office of changes in contact information
- End the tutor/student match if I have tutored about two years with the same learner
- Notify and explain to the Program Director if either my student or I wish to stop sessions
- Return all books upon leaving the program.

LVCA STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Students Will:

- Be tested for speaking / listening **OR** reading / writing level
- Study weekly on a computer learning program for 1 hour per week until matched with a tutor. Getting a tutor usually takes about 4 weeks.
- Tell the office if you need to cancel a computer session. Three missed sessions will cancel your computer time and affects you getting a tutor.
- Have a commitment to study with a tutor for about one year or until you are retested
- Meet an average of **8 hours per month** (two hours per week) with a tutor
- Meet at our office or any public place
- Have good communication with the office and tutor about changes in scheduling or contact information
- Arrive **on time** for scheduled tutoring and computer sessions
- Be **retested** after about 80 hours of instruction

My signature indicates that the program requirements have been explained to me and I understand that if I am unable to meet these requirements, I can be withdrawn from the program.

Signature of Student: _____

Phone Number: _____

Program Director: Deanne Foerster
Phone Number: (434) 977- 3838
Email address: dfoerster@literacyforall.org

Computer Learning Program time:_____

TIPS FOR THE TUTOR

- **Review, review, review and repeat, repeat, repeat regularly**
- **BE PATIENT** – give the learner a chance to say the information.
- Take time at the beginning of each session to check in about the learner’s day/week in order to create rapport and develop trust; don’t necessarily go right into a lesson every time.
- Don’t talk so much! Listen and ask clarification questions. Share your stories but don’t lecture or counsel. **It’s best not to talk (or do work for them) for more than 25% of the sessions.**
- Give encouragement like: “Nice going. That’s right. Now you’ve got it.” As well as assurances that you are listening.
- Use expressions like: “That’s tricky. That’s hard. Almost. Try again.” Rather than “wrong.”
- Speak slower, more softly and simply, especially for low level ESL learners.
- Be culturally sensitive. Space between you and the learner, as well as formality, can be very important to some learners. As well as respecting differences.
- Have appropriate materials. Refer to the tutoring guidelines or the office about level appropriate materials. If there are too many mistakes, the material may be too hard. If they are speeding through it, it is too easy. Strive for 80% success.
- Have a plan and structure set up for your sessions, but also be flexible to do something else the learner might bring in that needs to be attended to.
- Remind the student that learning is a long process and takes commitment. Keep their goals in mind to help with motivation.
- Turn personal problems into a learning experience to discuss and/or write about while focusing on creating possible solutions for them to act on. Don’t fix their problems for them. Use office referral information.
- Set realistic goals for every month and review goals met – ex: read two chapters and understand the spelling, meaning and usage of 15 new words. Have oral or written review (or quiz) to show this goal was met satisfactorily.
- Give homework practice that would be manageable given the learner’s other responsibilities with home and work. But **do** give homework and plan that it will be done in order to help with progress and retention of information.
- Feelings of satisfaction, success, setback and frustration are part of the process. Take it in stride and seek out alternative ways of getting support and suggestions by talking to our LVCA mentors, other tutors or LVCA staff when needed.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ADULT LEARNER

BL - Basic Literacy

ESL - English as a Second Language

Adults Generally:

- Are embarrassed by their illiteracy (BL)
- Are embarrassed and frustrated by their inability to speak and understand English well (ESL)
- View themselves as responsible, self-directed and independent
- Don't appreciate being treated like children
- Learn best in informal settings
- Prefer to make their own decisions
- Are motivated by personal goals, so want realistic methods and lessons. Use their knowledge and experience about life, work, people, music, sports, business, politics and many other things to be a basis for conversation, reading comprehension and writing.
- Are sensitive to criticism and need encouragement to build self-assurance
- Are experienced in various ways and have diverse abilities
- Have uneven skill development
- Feel threatened by formal tests

Useful Tutor Information

Getting Started: LVCA will provide lesson plan suggestions and one free book to use with your student. (Additional books are available for a donation of \$20 from the student.) Tutoring space is available seven days a week, before, during, or after office hours on a first come, first served basis. If you need access to the office outside of normal hours, please ask us for a key.

LVCA Communications: We primarily use email to communicate with you about your individual match, as well as provide you with important information about tutoring with our program such as, workshops, website links, gatherings or other upcoming events, etc. Check out **www.literacyforall.org** for additional information and tutor resources.

Progress Reports: In order for us to continue receiving funding that allows us to offer our services for free, we must get information on learners' progress monthly. **Reports are due to LVCA by the 10th of each month** and are available in our office or by visiting www.literacyforall.org/tutorreports.

Tutor Library: We offer an assortment of books to aid in your tutoring efforts and are continually updating our selections. Books are available to check out for a one-month period or as indicated on the book. If you use techniques or resources that have helped you, please let us know. The following is a sampling of our collection:

Picture Dictionaries
Primary Phonics booklets
Citizenship Books
Health Literacy materials
Pronunciation guides

Fundamentals of English Grammar
Developing Basic Writing Skills
Workplace Learning
Reading and Comprehension series
Pre-GED and GED materials

Useful Websites to Consider:

For ESL (English as a Second Language) Tutors:

<http://www.manythings.org/>

<http://a4esl.org/>

www.valrc.org/content/esol/esol_resources.html

For Basic Literacy Tutors:

www.readinghorizons.com/method/index.aspx

<http://candohelperpage.com/> (useful in learning basic phonics)

www.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/bridges/materials/materials.html (info pertaining to learning disabilities)

Computer Software Programs for Learners to Use Independently

- Rosetta Stone Levels 1, 2, 3 – English speaking, listening, reading and writing
- Start-to-Finish books – reading and comprehension for readers at 2nd through 5th grade levels. Learn about history, famous people and events, mysteries and science.
- Simon Sounds It Out - phonics and spelling
- Easy ESOL – Interactive media learning the basics of English and community living
- Wordmaker – spelling and word development
- Diascriptive Reading, levels 1 and 2 – informational reading, understanding details, main ideas, sequencing, fact/opinion, inference, vocabulary. (Grades 1.5-9)
- Pronunciation Power
- Mavis Beacon – keyboard practice

TESTING:

BEST Plus - speaking and listening test for nonnative English speakers

BEST Literacy – reading and writing test for nonnative English speakers

TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) – reading test for native English speakers

Other Places for Adult Learners to Study English and GED Preparation in Our Community

Adult Learning Center, Charlottesville Adult Education - 24 hours/month

Albemarle County Adult Education – 20 hours/month

International Rescue Committee (low level survival English classes for refugees) – about 24 hours/month

UVA International Center (intermediate and advanced only) – about 6 hours/month

University of Virginia employee classes for English and GED – about 12 hours/month

Maintaining Motivation

Everyone has a bad day now and then, but if your student seems to be getting genuinely discouraged, try to tune in to the problem and look for a solution:

- Try more praise.
- Try easier work for a while.
- Try fewer corrections.
- Keep a positive attitude yourself.
- Add humor.
- Suggest that the student either try a computer learning program or take a class in the community.
- Look for inspirational models, perhaps another student who has succeeded or a story about a person who has overcome hardships.
- Have a candid talk with the student. Ask for the source of the discouragement. Talk together about how to correct it.
- If the student is experiencing problems at home or work, use the problem for conversation (ESL), for an Experience Story, or for cathartic writing. Look for reading material related to the problem.
- Have a portfolio of writings or test/quizzes that demonstrate progress.
- Photocopy a fill in the blank exercise done previously and see how well they can do it again orally or in writing.
- Ask other tutors, your mentor or the Program Director for suggestions.
- Try some different strategies or a different book.
- Take a fun day. Play some word games or go on a field trip.
- Bring in a treat.
- Help the student start a list of accomplishments.
- Give the student a certificate.