



*Literacy Volunteers  
Chautauqua County  
21 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Dunkirk, NY 14048*

## **Do you have what it takes to be a Literacy Volunteer???**

Are you at least 18 years old, have a high school diploma or GED, and are able to commit to at least 2 hours a week for one year? If so, then we can provide you with the skills needed to become a Literacy Volunteer! Intergenerational illiteracy, in which an entire family or large portions of it may be functionally illiterate, is a particular focus for us. Studies have shown that the single greatest predictor of a child's ability to read is their parent's ability to read. We break this cycle of illiteracy in Chautauqua County by bringing literacy to children and their parents and grandparents. We achieve this by:

1. Recruiting and training dedicated volunteers.
2. Developing partnerships with other agencies.
3. Adapting programs to address emerging community needs.

As a Literacy Volunteer, your role is one-to-one tutoring with a Literacy Volunteers of Chautauqua County learner in a public location for at least two (2) hours per week. We do ask our volunteers for a commitment of at least one (1) year to ensure consistent instruction for our students. Tutors are welcome and encouraged to meet with their learner for longer than the minimum 2 hours per week, and are welcome to continue beyond one year with their student. If they choose, tutors are welcome to teach multiple learners and teach more than one category of learners.

**We provide free service to two major categories of learners, and training for volunteers in each program:**

**1. English Language Learner (ELL) adults:** These learners, ages 18 and up, are non-native English speakers. Our ELL population represents many different countries including Puerto Rico, China, and Cuba. Depending on your student, literacy needs can vary from basic reading and writing, to cultural issues, and to the pronunciation, intonation and rhythm of the language.

**2. Basic Literacy (BL) adults:** These learners, ages 18 and up, are typically native English speakers, who are in need of improving their reading levels. It is impossible to overstate that basic reading learners are highly diverse in their abilities, goals and needs. Some are reviewing material in order to enter into a GED program, while others may not know the alphabet. To give you an idea, a person with a 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level can understand a simple sentence and sign their name, but they cannot comprehend nutritional labels, a job application, legal text, or locate an intersection on a map. Our learners sometimes have a specific life goal such as finding, retaining, or improving employment, studying for a driver's license, helping a child to read, or reading labels on prescription medicine.

## Benefits of Being a Tutor:

- Make a real difference in a person's life
- Explore a new career possibility
- Upgrade your job skills and gain experience
- Meet new people and discover hidden potential
- Receive cutting-edge literacy techniques training

## Requirements of Becoming a Literacy Volunteer:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Be proficient in reading, writing, listening and speaking of the English language.
- Submit a complete application for review by the LVCC staff
- Attend all initial workshop training sessions, totaling 12 hours of training.
- Meet your learner in a public place. We encourage tutors to meet at our 21 East Bookstore. Other possibilities include local libraries, coffee shops, college campuses, parks, churches, and community centers. In-home tutoring is **NEVER ALLOWED** for the safety of tutors and learners.
- Commit to one year of tutoring with our program. Generally, this commitment can be flexible when tutoring adults. Sticking with a learner for this amount of time is necessary in order for them to learn the skills they need – consistency is key. Once matched, a learner gets used to a tutor and their style of teaching. Switching learners between tutors can be detrimental to their learning. If you plan to travel for more than one month's time, please inform us when applying. Depending on the situation we may be able to accommodate but the learner is required to log 8 hours per month with a tutor. We encourage tutors to keep close, consistent contact with their learner to ensure a high quality experience.
- Be matched with a learner who has completed the LVCC intake process, including an interview and assessment at LVCC with a staff member/trained assessor. If you already have a student you intend to tutor, LVCC staff/assessor must interview the learner before tutoring begins so that we can measure and monitor his/her progress.

## Steps to becoming a Literacy Volunteer:

The first step to becoming a Literacy Volunteer is to understand just what type of volunteer opportunity this is. Our program is very different than other volunteer programs out there. It takes commitment, dedication, communication and consistency. It is not a volunteer opportunity where you show up for a day, do your part, and go home. It is an ongoing commitment that takes time and thought. Prior to applying to become a Literacy Volunteer, please review the requirements of becoming a tutor to ensure this is something you truly are interested in. If these requirements are feasible your next step would be submit a Literacy Volunteer Application. Please make sure this is filled out *completely*. After the application is reviewed by our staff, you will be notified if you have been accepted as a tutor or not. If accepted your next step will be to begin your tutor training workshops.

## Tutor Training Workshops

Training consists of four separate workshops, 3-hours each, for a total of 12 hours of initial training. The workshops consist of the following:

- Orientation
- Basic Literacy (BL) 1 or English Language Learners (ELL) 1
- BL 2 or ELL 2
- Successful Tutoring

**1. Orientation:** The first step to volunteering is attending the first training module, Orientation. During your Orientation module, you will learn about LVCC, how tutoring works, the differences between Basic Literacy tutoring and English Language Learning tutoring, how adults learn, and how you will be involved.

**2. BL1 and 2/ELL 1 and 2:** At the end of Orientation you will be asked to select a program to tutor in, either Basic Literacy (BL) or English Language Learning (ELL). You will then be given a schedule with the dates of the modules you need to take. For example, if you wish to become a BL tutor, you would take BL 1 and then BL 2. If you wish to become an ELL tutor, you would take ELL 1 and then ELL 2.

**3. Successful Tutoring:** Your final required module is Successful Tutoring. During this module, all tutors (BL and ELL) learn about goal setting, lesson planning, available resources and reporting requirements.

Once your training is completed, a staff member will contact you with your learner's information. Once you have your learner's information you will be expected to call the learner, within a reasonable time period, to set up your first meeting and to continue meeting on a consistent basis, at least 2 hours per week, for one year.

## In order to remain a tutor, a candidate must:

- Attend scheduled sessions regularly. Arrive on time and notify your learner in advance of planned absence or expectations of being late.
- Be prepared for the tutoring sessions with a tentative lesson plan and appropriate materials.
- Be focused on the learner's goals and responsive to the learner's requests regarding preference of instructional materials, learning strategies and the tutoring environment.
- Submit a simple report to the LVCC office on a monthly basis reflecting the dates/times you met with your student.
- Ensure your student is tested by June 30 each year.
- Communicate with LVCC staff on a regular basis

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Lawrence at 716-366-4438 or [amy.lawrence@literacybuffalo.org](mailto:amy.lawrence@literacybuffalo.org).