



**Washtenaw Literacy
Tutor Handbook**

Updated 07.25.2023



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History

Washtenaw Literacy has served Washtenaw County since 1971. The agency was begun by a small group of volunteers who shared a concern about illiteracy in Washtenaw County. From 1971 until 1985, a mail slot and two filing cabinets located at the Ann Arbor public library comprised Washtenaw Literacy’s home.

In 1985, Washtenaw Literacy acquired an Executive Director and located an office in the Ypsilanti District Library. Since that time, the staff has expanded to serve the growing numbers of learners and their tutors in Washtenaw Literacy programs.

Washtenaw Literacy is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization with a volunteer board of directors. Current financial support includes public and private grants as well as donations from individuals, families, organizations, and businesses.

Mission Statement

Believing that literacy is the foundation for a sustainable community, Washtenaw Literacy provides literacy support free of charge to adults through a network of trained tutors.

Vision

To eliminate illiteracy in Washtenaw County.

Values

Passion

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Integrity



PASSION



DIVERSITY
EQUITY
INCLUSION



INTEGRITY

In 2021-2022, over 800 adults improved their lives through Washtenaw Literacy's tutoring programs. Nearly four hundred volunteers dedicated their time to making these programs successful. Over 130 community partners supported our efforts through collaborations, partnerships, and other support.

Living our values

Literacy is a right and a cornerstone to equity. We work to accomplish our mission by holding ourselves accountable to living our values in our policies, programs and relationships.

In particular, cultural responsiveness is essential to achieving our mission. We aspire to advance equity and build a multicultural community that is inclusive. We commit to self-reflection and growth. Our core values guide this ongoing work.

Philosophy

At Washtenaw Literacy, we believe

- tutors should have an engaging, meaningful volunteer experience
- in positively impacting our community by improving the literacy skills of those around us
- in customized, research-based instruction centered on the adult learner's goals and needs.

We do not discriminate based on race, religion, income, gender, disability, or sexual preference or identity.

Agency

Washtenaw Literacy Business Office

5577 Whittaker Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Phone: (734) 337-3338

Website: <http://www.washtenawliteracy.org>

Office email: info@washtenawliteracy.org

Board of Directors

Officers

President:	Darlene Ray-Johnson
Vice President:	Angie Smith
Treasurer:	John Mesberg
Secretary:	Allison Fritsch

General Members

Gaylotta Murray, Tina Stephens, Mike McBride, and Clarence Jennings

Staff

Executive Director: Carole McCabe
(mccabe@washtenawliteracy.org)

Office Manager: Emmetta “Bunny” Jones
(info@washtenawliteracy.org)

Development Coordinator: Piper Tscherniwetz
(tscherniwetz@washtenawliteracy.org)

Program Director: Alison Austin
(austin@washtenawliteracy.org)

Program Coordinator: Lara El Khouri
(elkhouri@washtenawliteracy.org)

Program Coordinator: Zev Miklehun
(miklehun@washtenawliteracy.org)

Program Coordinator: Susan Dykstra
(dykstra@washtenawliteracy.org)

You can also contact staff at the following:

www.washtenawliteracy.org

Washtenaw Literacy
5577 Whittaker Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Phone: (734) 337-3338

Programs

Washtenaw Literacy provides free literacy tutoring to adults through a trained network of volunteer tutors. Tutors partner with adult learners to **pursue** their personal goals through customized instruction that **improves** their ability to understand, speak, read, and write basic English and do math by planning and implementing individualized, research-based and evidence-based sessions. We have 3 programs; Personal Tutoring, Community Tutoring, and Special Programs. All have in-person and virtual options.

Personal Tutoring

Clusters (groups of 2-3 learners with 1 tutor) or 1-1 pairs are assigned by staff and meet 2 hours per week for 6 months. Personal Tutors are required to attend an 8-hour training program on educational theory, research-based strategies, and lesson planning. Additionally, all Personal Tutors receive support through a peer Mentor.

For learners to qualify for a Personal Tutor, they must first attend a Learner Orientation. They must score at or below an 8th grade reading level on a standardized adult literacy test and are placed with a tutor on a “first come, first served” basis. Once placed, a tutor and learner(s) work on the learners’ self-identified goals. Tutors report progress and update goals at the end of each trimester.

Numbers and examples: We serve approximately 400 learners per year in this program. Clusters and pairs meet virtually and in person throughout the community at schools, churches and libraries at times/days that are mutually convenient. Staff time is devoted to training, assessment, placement and follow-up with clusters and pairs.

Community Tutoring

Community Tutoring does not require learners to attend orientation prior to tutoring thereby offering immediate help and ease of access to tutoring. Since different and/or new learners may attend each session, tutors must be flexible and accommodate the comings and goings of learners in their session.

We recommend training for these tutors who also receive ongoing, on-site support from a designated coordinator. Tutors report progress and update goals at the end of each trimester.

Numbers and examples: Offered 5 days a week, at a variety of sites. Most sites serve 6-25 learners. Staff time is focused on providing support to the tutors and coordinators.

Special Programs

Special Programs are unique and often short-term tutoring opportunities typically supported by grants or other funding for particular learner populations. Tutors are encouraged to attend training and will be required to attend an orientation for their chosen program.

Numbers and examples: **Prep 100** is a Special Program in partnership with Washtenaw Community College for Pre-GED learners. Prep 100 is 3 times a week and serves about 35 learners a year. **Jail** tutoring is offered inside the County Jail twice a week. We serve about 100 learners a year in this location. **New Pages** is a new program funded by the Prosecutors' Office to improve literacy among those who were formerly incarcerated. It focuses on employment and digital literacy. Staff time is focused on coordinating these sites and providing support to the tutors.

Virtual Tutoring as a placement option

To further decrease learning barriers for adults and increase digital literacy, all of our programs have virtual tutoring options. Virtual Tutors have the option to attend a 4.5-hour training on the application of technology in tutoring. Additionally, all Virtual Tutors receive technical support as needed.

Tutor Eligibility Policy *(revised January 2023)*

To be eligible to be a literacy tutor, candidates must:

1. Be 18 years of age or older by the time of service (per staff documentation, 16-17 year olds require Program Director's approval)
2. Be willing to tutor at an approved site in Washtenaw County (per staff documentation)
3. Register for and attend an ABCs of Washtenaw Literacy session (per registration and attendance documentation)
4. Be able to meet time commitment of chosen service; 2 hours per week for a minimum of 6 months for Personal Tutors, 90 minutes per week for Community Tutoring (per staff documentation)
5. Be able to get to and from the approved tutoring site without assistance from the program or learner (per signed agreement to Tutor Guidelines on file)



6. Attend training sessions required for chosen service (per attendance documentation)
7. Demonstrate the ability to create a positive, effective environment in partnership with an adult learner (per trainer and staff observations and documentation)
8. Demonstrate behavior appropriate to working with adult learners (per trainer and staff observations and documentation)
9. Agree to adhere to all agency policies set forth in the Tutor Handbook (per signed agreement to Tutor Guidelines on file)
10. Notify the learner and/or Coordinator, when possible, in advance of absence or tardiness (per learners and Coordinator feedback)
11. Abide by the agency's confidentiality policy and expectations of mutual respect (per learner and Coordinator observations)
12. Notify staff of changes of address, phone, availability, or placement status (per database updates and signs agreement to Tutor Guidelines on file)

Learner Eligibility Policy *(revised January 2023)*

To be eligible for literacy tutoring, candidates must:

1. Be 16 years of age or older by the time of service (per Coordinators' documentation, 16-18-year old require approval by Program Director)
2. Live*, work, volunteer or attend school in Washtenaw County (per staff or Coordinators' documentation). If a learner moves, they can continue with their tutor virtually.
3. Be willing to attend tutoring at an approved site in Washtenaw County (per staff or Coordinators' documentation)
4. Complete intake required for chosen service (per staff or Coordinators' documentation)
5. Be able to meet time commitment of chosen service; 2 hours per week for a minimum of 6 months for Personal Tutoring and 90 minutes per week for Community Tutoring (per tutor reporting)
6. Demonstrate behavior appropriate to a productive learning environment (per staff, Coordinator and/or Tutors' observations and documentation)
7. Be able to get to and from the approved tutoring site without assistance from the program or tutor (per tutor reporting)
8. Score/function at or below 8th grade in reading, writing, math or level 4 for ESL at intake (per staff or Coordinators' documentation)
9. Arrive at tutoring sessions at the mutually agreed upon schedule (per tutor reporting)
10. Notify tutor, when possible, in advance of absence or tardiness (per tutor reporting)

*Live — We define “live” very inclusively. If a person sleeps and spends money in our community, then they are living here, even if temporarily. We do not discriminate based on VISA status or permanent residency.

Learner Confidentiality Policy *(revised January 2023)*

Confidentiality and trust are paramount in our work with adult learners. Confidentiality is the preservation of personal and privileged information and is a basic component of learner care and organizational ethics. Respecting the privacy of our learners is a basic agency value.

Everyone in Washtenaw Literacy must respect the confidentiality of all learners. Everyone includes the board, staff, learners, tutors, and all other volunteers. Confidential information may only be disclosed by authorized staff members. Authorization must be given in writing by the learner.

Tutors are cautioned to demonstrate professionalism, good judgment, and care to avoid inadvertent disclosure of learner information. Disclosure could damage your relationship with the learner and make it difficult to help them.

At all times, guard against disclosure and consistently refer learners, their family, their friends, and others back to staff for *any* requested information about a learner. Even when talking with your friends and family, never give identifiable details or share confidential information.

We strive to create a safe place for all who participate in our programs. To this end, we will also protect your confidentiality with the same rigor and concern.

Volunteer Grievance Policy *(revised January 2023)*

Any volunteer who has a complaint regarding some aspect of the program or the conduct of its staff or other individuals involved in the program should bring the problem to the attention of their staff supervisor.

Washtenaw Literacy prohibits retaliation against anyone for having raised such a complaint in good faith or having cooperated with an investigation of a complaint.

Complaints will be investigated and handled as promptly and as confidentially as possible in the manner described below.

The allegations of the complaint and the identity of the persons involved shall remain confidential to the extent possible and appropriate. The outcome of the investigation will be shared with the complainant as quickly as possible.

If the complainant believes the matter was not handled in a satisfactory manner, she or he should bring the matter to the Executive Director. If the situation is still not resolved to the volunteer's satisfaction, the volunteer may bring the matter to any Board member or email board@washtenawliteracy.org.

Staff

We maintain an open-door policy and encourage you to contact staff when you have a question or concern. We are here to ensure a positive, engaging experience for everyone involved in our program. See page 5 for contact information.

Website www.washtenawliteracy.org *(New website coming 2023!)*

Washtenaw Literacy's website is a great source of information for tutors and learners as well as the public. It also includes a calendar of events, listing the time, date, and location of all agency happenings.

For current and prospective tutors and learners, technical support from staff is available through an appointment on our website to ensure success with technology and applications in virtual tutoring. Please check availability on our website.

Prospective volunteers can learn basic information about the organization as well as the time and location of upcoming orientations, which is the first step in becoming a volunteer for Washtenaw Literacy. Learners can also discover how to sign up for a tutor or locate a group that they might attend.

For current tutors, the website is a wealth of information on upcoming trainings and other events of interest. One especially useful feature of the website is a link to our Pinterest tutor resource page where you will find an extensive list of tutoring ideas and materials. The website also offers a form where you can "ask a Mentor" a question,

share an idea or suggest a workshop topic. There is also a password protected page for tutors that includes reporting documents and more.

To access the Tutor password protected page, click login. Username is tutor. Password is 1320. Many resources can be found here!

Hello Tutors Listserv

On the first of every month, Washtenaw Literacy sends a tutor e-newsletter with agency info, tutor needs, upcoming events and announcements. Unless otherwise directed, all tutors automatically receive these emails. If you are not currently receiving Hello Tutors and wish to be added to the distribution, please email info@washtenawliteracy.org.

Mentor Team

The Mentors are experienced tutors who support other tutors and assist Washtenaw Literacy staff in a variety of ways. Mentor support falls into several broad areas: providing one-on-one support to new tutors; developing tutoring materials such as lesson plans for use by other tutors; planning and coordinating various training opportunities for Washtenaw Literacy tutors. Mentors can also be reached by emailing them through the “Ask a Mentor” link on our website.

Lending Resources

Washtenaw Literacy maintains a small collection of books that tutors can borrow for use in their sessions. The resources are kept at the main office inside the Ypsilanti District Library (5577 Whittaker Road).

Please call ahead to reserve items and arrange for pick up. If you have questions or to schedule a pick up, call 734-337-3338 or email info@washtenawliteracy.org. Additionally, most public libraries have an adult literacy collection. Washtenaw Literacy tutors receive free borrowing privileges from the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti District Libraries (see Libraries section on page 12).

Tutors are not expected to purchase materials for their learners.

Workshops

Throughout the year, Washtenaw Literacy staff and Mentors offer workshops for tutors as part of their ongoing training and development. **February Forum** is virtual and held mid-Feb each year. **Power Tutoring** is in the fall and is open to all adult literacy agencies in Michigan. **Tutor Tune-Up** is provided during early summer. Additional individual workshops may also be offered throughout the year as needed.

Tutor Socials

Mentors host tutor socials twice a year, usually in the spring and fall. These get-togethers are a wonderful way to meet and socialize with other tutors while enjoying light refreshments.

Libraries

All Washtenaw Literacy tutors are eligible for a library card at the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti District Libraries regardless of residence. Call Washtenaw Literacy's main office or email info@washtenawliteracy.org for more information.

Fundraising

You may be wondering why fundraising is listed under "Support". It is only through the fundraising efforts of our staff, Board and volunteers that we are able to offer training, staff support, Mentors, workshops, newsletters, the Community Literacy Resource Center, etc. Please know that our fundraising efforts support you and our learners and consider lending a hand through a financial gift, your planning efforts, or by attending one of the following annual events.

Literacy Luncheon - Held in the spring, this annual, free, one-hour luncheon provides insights and offers Washtenaw Literacy's solution to the problem of adult illiteracy in our community. A soft-sell request for donations is made at the end of the luncheon. Multi-year pledges are encouraged.

Fall Fundraiser - Held in October, this annual auction raises approximately 15% of Washtenaw Literacy’s annual budget. Strolling dinner and beer/wine are included in the ticket price. Single time pledges are also taken.

Calendar

This is a broad-stroke view of the agency’s annual calendar. For specific dates and other details, see our website or talk with staff. All dates are subject to change.

Every month includes ABCs of Washtenaw Literacy orientation sessions, Board and committee meetings, learner assessments, staff meetings, event planning meetings and more.

<u>WINTER TRIMESTER</u>	<u>SPRING/SUMMER</u>	<u>FALL TRIMESTER</u>
<u>January</u> Virtual Tutor Training STARS Newsletter*	<u>May</u> Virtual Tutor Training Literacy Luncheon	<u>September</u> Virtual Tutor Training Tutor Social
<u>February</u> Core Tutor Training February Forum	<u>June</u> Core Tutor Training STARS Newsletter*	<u>October</u> Core Tutor Training Fall Fundraiser STARS Newsletter*
<u>March</u> Virtual Tutor Training Open Tutor Training	<u>July</u> Virtual Tutor Training Celebration of Learning*	<u>November</u> Virtual Tutor Training Power Tutoring
<u>April</u> Tutor Social Updates due	<u>August</u> Tutor Tune-Up Updates due	<u>December</u> Updates due

*Calendar items not previously described:

- *STARS Newsletter*: Twice a year, Washtenaw Literacy publishes a newsletter written for and by our learners. Original submissions of learner work can be sent to austin@washtenawliteracy.org or mailed to our office. There is no minimum or maximum length and all genres are welcomed.
- *Celebration of Learning*: In July, the agency recognizes the commitment of our volunteers and accomplishments of our learners with a potluck dinner followed by a short program which includes a synopsis of programming and learner awards. All learners, tutors, and families are encouraged to attend!

Terms

People:

Volunteer

People who provide support to Washtenaw Literacy through the gift of their time and talents. Volunteers can be tutors, office helpers, Board members, etc.

Tutor

Tutors are volunteers, 18 years old or older, who are enthusiastic about helping adult learners, enabling Washtenaw Literacy to serve many and keep those services free.

Learner

Learners are adults, 16 years old or older, who live, work, volunteer or attend school in Washtenaw County and seek help to improve their ability to read, write, do basic math, or speak English.

Mentor

Mentors are experienced tutors with Washtenaw Literacy who have been selected by staff to serve in the mentor role. As a peer support to tutors, mentors, among other things, provide guidance, coordinate workshops, etc.



Site Coordinator or Community Tutoring Coordinator

Coordinators are volunteers who oversee the Community Tutoring sessions offered by Washtenaw Literacy. They ensure that there are enough tutors at each session, and that each learner is made to feel welcome, etc.

Master Tutor

Master tutors are Washtenaw Literacy tutors who have completed all of the professional development requirements to achieve Washtenaw Literacy's Master Tutor Certification.

Program Coordinator

Program Coordinators are Washtenaw Literacy paid staff members who coordinate the services offered by the agency. Their responsibilities include training volunteer tutors, managing tutoring relationships, developing new programs to better serve learners, and interacting with partner organizations.

Programming:

Programs

1. Personal Tutoring

- a. One-on-one:** Staff assigns one-on-one tutor-learner pairs after the learner has attended orientation and the tutor has completed Core Tutor Training. The tutor and learner determine the time and location of their weekly meetings and commit to working together approximately 2 hours/week for at least six months.
- b. Clusters:** Staff assigns clusters (which consist of one tutor working with two to four learners) which follow all requirements above for one-on-one. Learners in a cluster are at similar levels and have similar goals.

2. Community Tutoring

Community tutoring schedules and locations are set by Washtenaw Literacy. Learners may attend one or more 90-minute sessions each week and are oriented on-site by the Coordinator. Multiple tutors will be available during each session to work with learners one-on-one or in small groups depending on needs and resources available. Tutors are encouraged but not required to participate in Core Tutor Training.



3. Special Programs

Special programs are time-limited options to particular learner groups. These are often funded collaborations. They include opportunities like Prep 100, the County Jail, or New Pages.

Basic Literacy (BL)

Basic Literacy refers to a learner who needs basic reading, writing or math skills. These learners often do not have independent learning strategies and generally were not successful in school. They can be American or Foreign-born.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL refers to those learners whose primary skill deficit is speaking and listening (also referred to as English Language Learners).

Basic Skills

Basic skills are the educational foundation in literacy and numeracy that are necessary to succeed in daily life.

Learner Orientation

1. Personal Tutoring

Orientation is the initial meeting between staff and a potential learner to explain our program, determine literacy level, discuss goals, and collect pertinent data. A Washtenaw Literacy staff member will use an appropriate testing protocol to assess each learner prior to their being assigned a tutor.

2. Open Tutoring

Orientation is the brief initial meeting between a Coordinator and a potential learner to explain our program, determine literacy level, discuss goals, and collect pertinent data as needed prior to placement.

Virtual Tutoring

Virtual Tutoring is a placement option for all tutors and learners.

Events:

ABCs of Washtenaw Literacy

One-hour information session held at minimum monthly to engage potential donors and volunteers in Washtenaw Literacy. Registration is online.



Core Tutor Training

8-hour volunteer tutor training recommended for all, required for Personal Tutors. Includes research-based best-practices for success with low-literate adults. Hands-on practice using case studies prepare tutors for their work.

Celebration of Learning

Annual potluck awards banquet where tutors and learners are recognized.

February Forum

Annual half-day professional development opportunity held in mid-February.

Fall Fundraiser

Annual gala auction held in the fall at Washtenaw Community College.

Power Tutoring

Annual free, day-long series of workshops for tutors. Held at WCC on a Saturday in late October/early November. Tutors are invited from across Michigan.

Literacy Luncheon

One-hour luncheon presenting the mission of WL and asking for monetary support.

Tutor Socials

Casual get-togethers for tutors held in spring and fall each year. Organized by the Mentors and typically held at the Gladwin Barn.

Tutor Tune Up

Half-day workshops held annually at NEW Center in June.

Virtual Tutor Training

4.5 hour training for those who will be tutoring virtually (not in-person)

Assorted Terms:

Free

Washtenaw Literacy tutoring services are available at no charge to all eligible adult learners.

Goals

A goal is identified by the learner and may change depending on the learner's life events. Learners will set goals at their orientation and review those goals regularly with their tutor.

Literacy

Literacy is reading, writing, speaking, and comprehending English at or above the ninth-grade level as defined by the State of Michigan and Federal Level 4.

1. Digital Literacy

Digital Literacy is having basic computer skills including, but not limited to, accessing the internet, and sending email.

2. Numeracy

Numeracy is competency in math at or above the ninth grade level as defined by the State of Michigan.

Progress

Any movement toward a learner's specific goal(s) is considered progress. As goals are tailored to each learner, progress will be seen at different times and in different outcomes for each learner. Progress may be as small as meeting with their tutor regularly or as large as getting a new job. Each learner will have many successes before "graduating" from Washtenaw Literacy.

Shame

Shame is a powerful emotion felt by many Washtenaw Literacy learners due to their inability to succeed at everyday tasks, and their fear of others discovering their shortcomings. It causes learners to avoid situations and lack persistence in their daily life for fear of failure and embarrassment.

Acronyms

AADL – Ann Arbor District Library

BL – Basic Literacy (reading, writing and math skills)

CTT – Core Tutor Training

ESL – English as a second language (speaking and listening skills)

GED – General Education Diploma

TOEFL – Test of English Fluency Level

VTT - Virtual Tutor Training

WCC – Washtenaw Community College

WL – Washtenaw Literacy

YDL – Ypsilanti District Library