



50

Literacy
Minnesota

YEARS • leading • learning • literacy



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Gratitude and Hope

Here at Literacy Minnesota we've reached a milestone: **50 years of leading, learning and literacy** – and we have much for which to be grateful, as well as many hopes as we look to the future.

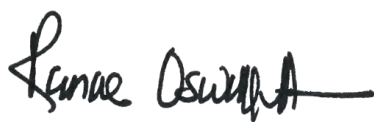
I think about the **founders and early leaders** of Literacy Minnesota who worked tirelessly to ensure that adults in Minnesota had access to educational resources. The early leaders were all volunteers, and they championed the importance of getting adult educational opportunities out in the community. We as an organization are deeply grateful for their hard work, perseverance and dedication to literacy. My hope for tomorrow's Literacy Minnesota is to re-ignite that **championing spirit**. As we steadily work to regain our learner community after the pandemic, we have an opportunity to reach a much wider range of students through **intentional and inclusive outreach efforts**.

Over time, Literacy Minnesota's statewide leadership has grown to a national presence with **learner-centered collaboration** as the key. Our own Open Door Learning Centers and other hands-on programs inform what we share through our online educator resources, remote trainings, digital literacy resources, national service expansion and advocacy. I am grateful that **educational equity, which includes digital equity**, are gaining attention and investment across the country. There is so much hope when we think about growing our collaboration moving into 2023 and beyond. I envision stretching ourselves to develop **creative partnerships** to further our mission, both locally and nationally.

Open Door adult learners speak of our centers as "family," and I am grateful for all they bring as part of our tightknit community. This year, our **family** includes new arrivals from Afghanistan and Ukraine who have left their war-torn homelands and all that is near and dear to start a new life here in Minnesota. And like all families, ours is multi-generational, and includes children who experienced significant learning losses due to the disruption caused by the pandemic; learning losses were greatest among children of color. Our preschool, parenting and Summer Reads programs are important resources for our next generation of readers, and Literacy Minnesota has incredible potential to cultivate this **multi-generational approach** so families are centered in our work.

Finally, I am grateful to each of you for your time, financial resources and shared vision for a community where life-changing learning is within everyone's reach. Thank you for the honor of serving as interim executive director these past ten months. **A special thank you** to our engaged board of directors as they leaned into their governance role in hiring Literacy Minnesota's next leader, Anton Jones, who will hit the ground running in 2023. With everyone in our literacy community working together, there is no doubt **great things** are in store for Literacy Minnesota as it heads into the future.

With gratitude and hope,



Renae Oswald-Anderson
Interim Executive Director



DEFINING DECADES

THE '70s

VOLUNTEERS SPARK A MOVEMENT

- Volunteers use Laubach's method (one-to-one literacy teaching); 19 trained tutors form the **Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC)**.
- Multi-year operating grants are secured from the F.R. Bigelow, Bremer and Bush foundations.
- **Minnesota Department of Education** funds training activities, then later the first executive director position.
- By MLC's 10th anniversary, **8,460 tutors** have been recruited and trained across the state.



THE '80s

EXPANSION

- MLC operates two Twin Cities literacy centers; four additional sites are opened with a U.S. Department of Education grant.
- English classes are introduced through a state refugee office partnership.
- MLC's **Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)** national service program begins.
- **1 million tutoring hours reached in working alongside adult learners!**



THE '90s

A TIME TO INNOVATE

- *To Open Your Mind* journal is published, precursor to the **Journeys** adult anthology.
- MLC takes on operation of the **Adult Literacy Hotline**.
- Budgetary challenges arise; three program sites close.
- Summer Reads program kicks off.



THE '00s

CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY LITERACY GROWS

- MLC partners with WordsWork! on literacy home visits.
- Minnesota Reading Corps pilot is developed; by its spin-off in 2010, 550 Reading Corps members are working with 14,600 children across the state.
- A first **preschool** opens in Minneapolis; a St. Paul preschool follows.

THE '10s

INCREASING NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- **Northstar Digital Literacy** launches and is soon in use across the U.S.
- Libraries and Literacy Leadership Institute builds connections in the tri-state region of Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.
- MLC works with other VISTA sponsor sites to change national policy and permit second jobs.
- **Open Door Collective**, a national network of literacy leaders, joins MLC.

TODAY



- MLC is renamed Literacy Minnesota; a new website features an educator resources library.
- More than **6 million Northstar assessments** taken since its start; **nearly 3,000** Northstar locations exist in all 50 states and 6 other countries.
- Literacy Minnesota publishes its **English Unlocked** curriculum; educator resource downloads in all 50 states and 75 other countries.

ADULT LITERACY



OPEN DOOR LEARNING CENTER

Literacy Minnesota operates four adult learning centers in Minneapolis and Saint Paul offering free classes in English, GED prep, computer skills, college prep, career readiness, citizenship and more. After time spent learning remotely, students, volunteers and teachers excitedly returned to class, some in new facilities. Although our programs experienced a decline in enrollment, we spent the past year working to rebuild and adapt. Several creative approaches are here to stay:

- Options for in-person, remote or hybrid classes.
- Broad use of distance learning platforms.
- Computers and tech support for all students who need it.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Open Door Preschool returned to in-person learning as well. Our preschool has seen tremendous success creating a community within Open Door Arlington Hills. Parents appreciate the program and regularly refer family and friends to attend classes.

"Many parents share that their preschooler is the one who helps encourage them to come to school every day...4-year-olds can be very persistent!"

– Preschool teacher Rachel Lyness



BUILDING THE FIELD

VOLUNTEER OUTREACH

440 volunteer referrals to adult education programs across the state

ADULT LITERACY HOTLINE

16,962 website page views
Over 850 direct prospective student connections made



PARENTING PROGRAM

32 parents participated with **190** children

Primary languages:
Oromo, Somali and Swahili

TUTOR TRAINING

2,322 participants
112 webinars



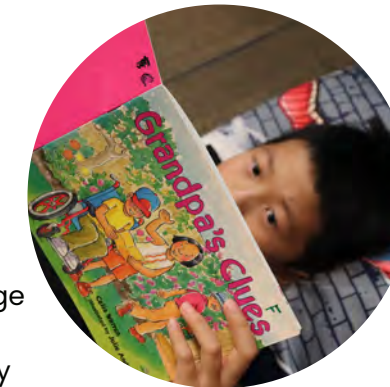
NATIONAL SERVICE

SUMMER READS

2,875 children participated

93% of children maintained or increased their reading engagement

+6.88 words per minute average change for tutored students, increasing their reading fluency



100% of Summer Reads mentors expressed that Summer Reads helped them grow personally and professionally.

NORTHSTAR DIGITAL LITERACY

MINNESOTA ROOTS

The locally-based Northstar team has been busy managing the growth of subscribing locations and creating new digital initiatives.

Highlights for 2022:

- Spanish versions of our assessments and Northstar Online Learning.
- Launched a telehealth assessment focused on digital skills needed to access crucial health services; this is the first of several planned healthcare-related modules.



DIGITAL STRATEGIES

DISTANCE LEARNING

Developed a HyFlex Community of Practice to improve remote learning instruction in Minnesota



7 Teacher Verification Model (TVM) webinars were held, certifying **162** teachers

433 Open Door distance learning students earned **7,600** proxy hours through TVM

GREATER TWIN CITIES TEQUITY SERVICES

This pilot program provided digital navigation support to local nonprofits seeking to expand their own services.

87 people participated across **50** community-based organizations

86% reported they have increased capacity to provide digital literacy skills instruction

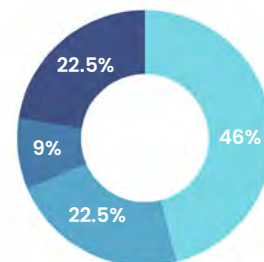
EDUCATOR RESOURCES

Our curricula and teaching tools are created by teachers, for teachers. These resources are currently being used around the world by learning sites of all scales.

6,095 individual downloads from our educator resources library

Who is using our resources?

- Paid teacher
- Volunteer teacher
- Program staff
- Other



ENGLISH UNLOCKED

In May 2022, Literacy Minnesota launched a four-level, English learning curriculum and five *Phonics Workbooks* that are informed by learner voice and designed to support adult English language learners and their instructors. This curriculum is **College and Career Readiness Standards aligned**, covering topics such as daily activities, health problems, celebrations, medicine labels and much more.

English Unlocked is being used by programs in 18 states and two countries with continued growth expected into 2023!

TUTOR TRAINING CONTINUED

37% of participants were from outside Minnesota

OPEN DOOR COLLECTIVE

The **Open Door Collective (ODC)** is a national Literacy Minnesota program focused on reducing poverty in the U.S. by building partnerships between adult foundational skills programs and organizations supporting social and economic justice.

162 national members

Evidence-Based Adult Education System (E-BAES), a task force of ODC, published a paper: *From rapid emergency response to scaling and sustaining innovation: Adult foundational education in the time of COVID-19.*

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

8 Minnesota sites | **10** national sites

2022 marks the first year of a national Digital Literacy cohort!

93 volunteers recruited and managed

2,700 children and **4,064** adult learners engaged

99 partnerships developed

\$51,201 total value of funds and in-kind resources generated

100% of sites are more effective and able to increase their reach as a result of VISTA resources.



AmeriCorps

NORTHSTAR'S NATIONAL REACH

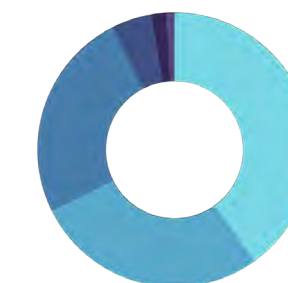
Northstar officially reached locations in all 50 states!

There was a dramatic increase in statewide partnerships in workforce centers, adult education programs and libraries.

Digital literacy learners earned **226,912** Northstar certificates in 2022

Nearly 3,000 Northstar locations around the globe

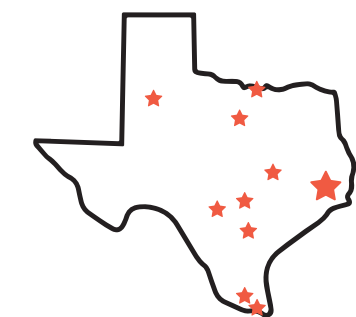
Breakdown of Northstar sites



- Libraries
- Adult education
- Nonprofits
- Workforce centers
- Businesses
- K-12

TEXAS LIBRARIES

Literacy Minnesota worked with **Texas State Libraries** to support program participants through a community of practice around digital navigation.



10 participating libraries in locations ranging from small rural areas to large urban communities

Program focus areas:

- Provided digital navigation training and support to libraries building their own programs.
- Trained libraries on how to incorporate Northstar into programs.
- Worked one-to-one with program leaders.

OUR VISION

We believe literacy has the power to advance equity and justice, and we envision a world where life-changing learning is within everyone's reach.

OUR MISSION

To share the power of learning through education, community building and advocacy.

50 years ago,

Literacy Minnesota started as a small group of individuals with a drive to share the power of learning.

50 years later,

our organization has expanded its leadership across the United States and beyond, creating an international community of individuals who champion the education field.

We continually challenge ourselves to live out our core values of

- lifelong learning,
- equity & justice,
- leadership & innovation
- and individual dignity.

Literacy Minnesota's resolve strengthens with every new year, and so do our incredible local and national program initiatives that define our work.



GET TO KNOW OUR PROGRAMS

What they are

What people are saying

WORDS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

You've read about our initiatives – now hear what people are saying!

"These days, every employee needs basic computer skills to perform even most entry-level jobs. Northstar Digital Literacy helps job seekers demonstrate to employers that they have mastered basic skills."

– Dan Strittmater, Presbyterian Homes and Services on Northstar Digital Literacy

"My year of service with VISTA helped me grow both personally and professionally. The emphasis on sustainability has given me a larger perspective on different ways to support an organization or community. My previous experience had been focused on direct service. Now I see more clearly how both direct and indirect service can build and strengthen our communities."

– Lucinda, a Literacy Leader at Promise Neighborhood of Central Minnesota

"I recently took two of the core training courses the organization offers and was astounded by what I learned and the impact it has to multiply an individual's impact for educating our adult learners. The more I learn about the organization, the more I'm thrilled by the cause and look for ways to contribute and assist."

– Peter Kataras, Tutor Training participant

"Before taking [the parenting class], I didn't understand how to ask a question when I met my child's teacher in a parent teacher conference. Now, I know what to ask. When I see my child's report, I understand what it means, and I can help my kid."

– Nouria A., a parent at Northside parenting class

"Our level 2 class this year plans to use *Phonics Workbooks* 3 & 4 along with the Beginning Literacy Curriculum to give students a well-rounded learning experience of phonics and practical conversation about American culture. I am very impressed with the time and commitment from Literacy Minnesota to really find out what topics are important to English language learners and to create units that are applicable in their day-to-day life. Students feel successful right away as these topics can be put into action as soon as they leave the classroom."

– Dawn Skinner, Director at ELLA Center on *English Unlocked*

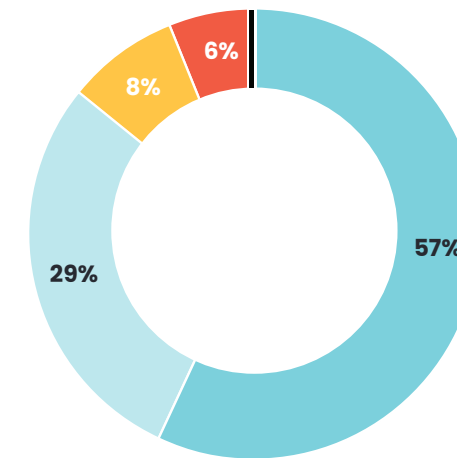
"Summer Reads made a huge difference for our organization. [Literacy Minnesota Summer Reads mentor] Ceil assisted our Reading Program Coordinator with donating hundreds of books to another local library that was very empty. It was great to get [the library] some extra books for their youth to read."

– Erin A., Summer Reads site supervisor

2021-2022 FINANCIALS

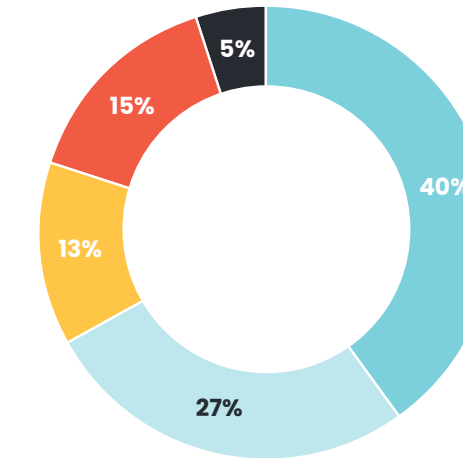
Financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



WHERE DID OUR SUPPORT COME FROM?

Government Grants	\$3,348,510
Program Service Fees/Other	\$1,711,509
Contributions/Special Events	\$491,488
Corporate and Foundation Grants	\$342,402
In-Kind Contributions	\$1,867
Total Support and Revenue	\$5,895,776



HOW DID WE SPEND OUR MONEY?

Minnesota Programs	\$3,731,976
Serving Minnesotans	\$2,221,565
Supporting Organizations	\$1,510,411
National Programs	\$718,559
Administration	\$842,177
Fundraising	\$259,899
Total Expenses	\$5,552,611

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,201,445
Endowment	\$857,098
Accounts/grants receivable	\$683,548
Board designated operating reserve	\$500,000
Board designated special purpose reserve	\$200,000
Other current assets	\$172,587
Long-term assets	\$24,697

TOTAL ASSETS \$3,639,375

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Board designated permanent endowment	\$785,737
Unrestricted net assets	\$683,638
Accrued expenses and other	\$680,389
Restricted net assets	\$636,523
Board designated operating reserve	\$500,000
Board designated special purpose reserve	\$200,000
Accounts payable	\$153,088

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$3,639,375

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS!

See our 2022 donor list and full audited financials online at literacymn.org/annual-reports-financials.



YEARS • leading • learning • literacy



700 Raymond Avenue, Suite 180 | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55114

literacymn.org

FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

OUR STAFF

Ebyan Abdulle
Cai Anderson
Therese Badenoch
Elizabeth Bennett
Charles Borom
Meghan Boyle
Jason Brazier
Dani Brown
Lloyd Brown
Nikki Carson
Jesse Chang
Yixiu Chen
Kirsten Collins
Heather Cook
Debbie Cushman
Annelisa Donlan
Andrea Echelberger
Marian Eichinger
Kiana Erickson
Andy Francis
Susan Godon
Leah Hauge
Ted Hewes
Jessica Horning
Nick Houlson
Emily Jahn
Jessica Jones
Azul Kmiecik
Sheri Lear
Stevie Lewis
Beatriz Luciano-Rozie
Rachel Lyness

Morgyn Martins
Christian McCleary
Joseph Miller
Barb Murphy
Isaac Muscanto
Eric Nesheim
Tu Nguyen
Vicki Otis
Laurie Patton
Meghan Paul-Cook
Kasey Payette
Carmen Peota
Sophie Phan
Khalaun Phillips
Rob Podlasek
Jessica Ponthan
Christian Preston
Ellie Purdy
Lindsey Pust
Kelly Rynda
Mya Shaftel
Theresa Sladek
Patrick Smith
Abrianna Thao
Manee Thao
Elizabeth Vargas
Michelle Vidovic
Susan Wetenkamp-Brandt
Mariah Wika
Burgen Young
Courtney Zaato

OUR AMERICORPS MEMBERS

Hiba Al Hasnawi	Kerry Lowell	Matthew Pine
Kari Allen	Rose Maney	Eva Stromgren
Mena Duarte	Autumn Moore	Nicholas Strunk
Emily Fox-Penner	Vishnu Nambodiripad	

Photo credits: Thank you to Meghan Paul-Cook, Brady Willette and Heather Cook.
Thanks, also, to Goodwill of Delaware and Delaware County for one of the cover photos.

OUR BOARD

BOARD CHAIR (beginning July 2022)

Ravi Krishnan
Somalogic

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

James Afdahl
Community Representative

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Harold Hegg
Ameriprise Financial

FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIR

Jenny Holte
University of St. Thomas

Jose Arrieta

Parce Media

DEI GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Caitlin Bayermann
Slalom

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

Caroline Casey
Independent Consultant

Nicole Flaherty Cropper

Faegre Drinker

Karin Goettsch

Global Collaboration Insights

Mohamed Mohamed

Representative, Adult Learners
Target

Caroline Ortiz

COPAL MN

MARKETING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Michael Opperman
Barn Owl

Andrew Peterson

Achieve Twin Cities

Jackie Prince

Literacy Trainer (retired)

Katie Schoeneck

Thrivent

Rita Shibko

Amplifon

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR

Bruce Singer

Singer Group

Abdullahi Siyad

Trader Joe's

Karine Watne

The Toro Company

Theresa Weimerskirch

Cargill

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

Tim Wendt

Securian

