

# Iowa Literacy Connection

*It is everyone's business!*

ilc.coabe.org

March 2023



Dear ILC Members,

We are in our second year as a state association affiliated with COABE, and hard at work planning the summer conference which will be held June 28-30, 2023. It is going to be exciting and will focus on collaboration, education,

and inspiration. There will be great keynotes and sessions and an exhibit room that will be overflowing with innovation and opportunity.

Our Executive Committee has determined the dues for the Iowa Literacy Council. We are modeling the dues structure after COABE to give your programs the most efficient and practical way to pay for staff. Each paid member will include membership in both the Iowa Literacy Council and COABE. You will soon have access to the COABE journal as well.

Please see the [Dues Structure article](#) in this newsletter for more information.

See you all in June at the conference,

Helene Fein  
Executive Director, Iowa Literacy Council

## Exciting News

The Iowa Literacy Council has partnered with ProLiteracy. Your membership will now include ILC, COABE and ProLiteracy! Check out all the great benefits you will get with the [ProLiteracy membership](#).



Dear Iowa Literacy Council Members and Friends,

We are looking forward to a productive partnership with all of you involved in adult education in Iowa and more.

We know a strong partnership with you leads to more adults achieving literacy levels to help them continue their upward mobility in life, a move that impacts the entire family!

As partners, the Iowa Literacy Council shares the responsibility for student success and want you to know that we will do our very best to partner, support and be your voice not only in Iowa but nationally.

Please consider becoming a member of the Council, the benefits of membership expand to **COABE** (Coalition on Adult Basic Education) including updates, new resources and professional development, see more information on our membership page.

I would also like to personally invite you to join us at our Summer Conference, which will be held June 28 – 30, 2023. We will have great sessions, collaboration, new initiatives, and we will also showcase the programs and people making a difference with our adult learners in our state. More information coming soon.

THANK YOU for everything you and your teams do for adult education and success in our state, I am very proud to work with you and being part of our volunteer board of directors, know that your work is changing lives and families every day!

I look forward to seeing you at the Summer Conference!

Juan M. Garcia  
President – Iowa Literacy Council



## **2023 Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Conference**

June 28-30, 2023

We are hard at work planning the upcoming summer Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Conference and wanted to give up a sneak-peak at just a few of the great sessions we will have.

On Wednesday, June 28 we will hold our preconference sessions. Susan Ryan from T&H Financial Coaching, LLC will present a train-the-trainer workshop on helping students manage money, and how we can help students budget, save money, and pay off debt. We are also excited to have Erin Vobornik, Student Leaders Coordinator for COABE join us and do a Students as Leaders workshop.

The main conference will be held June 29-30. We are excited to have Dr. Ahmed Agyeman, Director of the Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families as a keynote speaker. And as a special treat, the KUD Sevdah dance troupe from Bosnia will entertain us.

Watch for more information regarding the 2023 Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Conference coming soon!

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## **Immigrant Integration and Adult Education**



Public adult education programs are the primary source of governmental investment in the skills of adult immigrants in the United States, providing low-cost or no-cost English language instruction to adult learners outside the traditional K-12 and higher education systems. Every year, these programs serve about 700,000 students in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. This is just a fraction of the population that could benefit from English language training according to a 2017 report from the U.S. Department of

Education. Demand for ESOL services exceeds supply at programs across the country.

A [report](#) authored by Heller and Slugaard Mumma of Harvard University looked at the role that adult education plays in the ability of immigrants to integrate successfully. Their report focused on the effects that English language training made on voting behavior and employer-reported earnings.

They found that attending ESOL classes more than doubles rates of voter registration and increases annual earnings by \$2,400 (56%). They estimated that the increased tax revenue from earnings gains fully pays for program costs over time, generating a 6% annual return for taxpayers. The results demonstrate the social value of post-migration investments in the human capital of adult immigrants.

## My Beginning ESL Class



This photo is extremely special to me. After a long career administrating ESL programs on the K-12 and adult levels, I am teaching ESL at DMACC.

I was very nervous on my first day. I had spent a lot of time becoming familiar with Burlington English and looking for supplementary resources to keep my students engaged and enthused. MY own daughter, a K-5 ESL teacher by day and virtual ESL teacher of adults in the evening, was my biggest

supporter. She kept telling me that if anyone could do it, I could, but I didn't match her optimism. I was terrified that I would not be able to help my students. Would I be able to help them learn the basics? What about the CASAS test? Would my instruction help them to succeed and pass the test? Of course, I knew about the CASAS test as the State Director but had never looked at the tests and levels from an instructor point of view. So many thoughts and feelings running through my head as I prepared to teach the course.

After my first week, I was loving the teaching, my students, and the daily feeling of having a purpose that went far beyond anything I have ever done in my career. I wished that I had taught ESL to adults years ago because I looked forward to every class with renewed energy and optimism.

Trying something new at my age was daunting but proved to be one of the best moves I have ever made. I encourage all of you, especially those who administer programs, to teach. Engage the students and learn about their resilience and challenges they have faced. Offer humor and encouragement in any way you can. I guarantee that you will reap rewards that you can't imagine.

*Helene Fein, proud ESL Instructor*



Adult Learners are invited to attend this national conference. You may register and attend virtually at: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4999253>

You will need to have your adult education teacher's name, email address or phone number, plus the program or organization at which you took or are taking your instruction.



# Closing the Digital Skill Divide

A recent study found that 92% of jobs analyzed require some type of digital skill set. Research conducted by the National Skills Coalition in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta found one-third of workers do not have the foundational digital skills necessary to enter and be successful in jobs today. This has created what is being called the Digital Divide.

*Digital skills are defined as the ability to find, evaluate, use, share, and create content using digital services such as computers and smartphone.*

The study report entitled *Closing the Digital Skill Divide* looked at the demand for digital skills in the US labor market. It showed that there is a strong demand for digital skills across every industry (not just in the tech sector), and in almost every occupation, including front-line and entry level positions.

Due to historic underinvestment and structural inequities in providing digital education, the report found that the digital skill divide disproportionately impacts low-income workers, persons of color, and people living in rural areas.

The report found that public investments in closing this digital skill divide can generate measurable economic payoff for businesses, workers, and the broader economy.

The findings come at a key moment as states plan to implement the historic \$2.75 billion Digital Equity Act, part of the bi-partisan infrastructure law. The program provides funding to advance digital equity among populations most impacted by the digital divide.



The findings suggest that states that target resources toward digital skill building could generate measurable monetary benefits for the worker, the economy and for businesses:

- **Workers** that qualify for jobs that require even *one* digital skill can earn an average of 23 percent more than in a job requiring no digital skills. Moving from a job requiring no digital skills to one requiring at least three can increase pay by an average of 45%.
- **For the economy**, these increased earnings could generate more state and federal tax revenue. Depending on the household size and composition, this could range from \$1,363 to \$2,879 in additional tax revenue per household per year.
- **For businesses**, turnover costs (estimated at \$25,000 when a worker quits within the first year to over \$78,000 after five years) can be averted or delayed by ensuring that workers have upskilling opportunities.

View the Closing the Digital Skills Divide webinar: <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/webinars/closing-the-digital-skill-divide-the-payoff-for-workers-business-and-the-economy/>



## Iowa Literacy Council Dues Structure

The Iowa Literacy Council has adopted a new dues structure to benefit members while assuring the viability of the state association.

We are adopting the COABE membership structure since we are a state association affiliated with COABE. There are many benefits to being a member of COABE which can be viewed at <https://coabe.org/membership>. Iowa Literacy Council membership benefits include reduced conference registration, connections to professional development, etc. We are negotiating to also receive the COABE Journal.

MEMBERSHIP TYPE (ALL INCLUDE COABE AND ILC)	COST
Individual Membership	\$45
Adult Learner	Free
Small Organization (up to 5 people)	\$150
Small Organization (up to 10 people)	\$300
Medium Organization (up to 25 people)	\$700
Large Organization (26+people)	\$1,200

The \$150 per person registration fee for the Summer 2023 Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Council Conference will include membership in both COABE and the Iowa Literacy Council.

## Let Your Voice Be Heard



On March 14, 2023, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) will begin a **55-stop public meeting roadshow** to discuss broadband and digital equity issues in Iowa. They are eager to hear from citizens about what individuals and communities need most in negotiating issues in the digital space.

Attendees will hear a short presentation on digital services followed by a discussion with the audience on the barriers and potential solutions for full participation in the digital aspects of society. All meetings will start at **6 pm** at the designated locations and are anticipated to last about 90 minutes.

This link will take you to the OCIO website for Digital Equity and will show a map with geolocated dots that you can click on to pull up the date and location for the meetings:  
<https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband/digital-equity>. A full table of the meetings, sorted by date, is located midway down the page after the body of the press release.



## ProLiteracy Membership Benefits

### Tutor Training – Basic Literacy and ESL

Programs can provide their tutors with comprehensive training using the downloadable face-to-face workshop materials and/or the online course. The face-to-face materials include PowerPoint slides, handout masters, and trainer notes while the online course allows tutors to complete training anywhere there is an internet connection. The training is hosted on Education Network and is completely free to members. See Education Network in the Professional Development section for account information.

### New Readers Press

- ✓ Up to 25% off instructional materials published by New Readers Press. Provide your member number or NRP account email when ordering. For ordering options (online, phone, etc.), visit [newreaderspress.com/how-to-order](http://newreaderspress.com/how-to-order).
- ✓ \$100 New Readers Press gift certificate awarded after member adds the ProLiteracy logo to its website or the ProLiteracy name/web address ([www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org)) to its Facebook account in the About section. Send an email to [membership@proliteracy.org](mailto:membership@proliteracy.org) with a link to the acknowledgement to claim the certificate. [one-time only offer]

### News for You Online

Ideal for the classroom, this weekly online news publication features easy-to-read news stories about current events, people, and places. Instructional support materials include audio, vocabulary, online exercises, and a teacher's guide. Members receive:

- Free one-year subscription upon joining [one-time only offer]
- 50% off annual subscription renewal after first free year

### Notebook

Adult educators will find this instructional resource is full of invaluable teaching strategies and techniques, suggested lesson plans, and activities covering a wide variety of topics. Notebook is sent to members in print and digital formats three times a year, around the 15th of the month in September, January, and May.

### Network News

Members receive our monthly e-newsletter with information about funding opportunities, resources for adult educators, and professional development tools.

### National Book Fund

The National Book Fund annually awards grants from \$500 to \$5,000 to literacy programs in the form of books and materials from New Readers Press. The 20% administration fee is waived for members. The application period opens in February every year. Members need to supply their member numbers on the online form to receive the exemption.

### Learn & Share Webinars

Exclusive webinars for ProLiteracy members on topics like writing grant proposals, finding pro-bono support, using News for You Online in the classroom, and more. These webinars are announced to members via emails and Network News.

### Voices

This colorful and informative publication highlights donor, industry information, member organizations, and student stories. Members receive Voices twice a year.

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## **Advocacy**

ProLiteracy works tirelessly to advocate for public policies and legislation that benefits adult education, literacy, and ESL programs.

## **Legislative Email Alerts**

When it's time to act, ProLiteracy alerts our members via email about developments concerning the federal budget and spending allocations, the Census, and any other issues that impact adult literacy.

## **Member Toolkit**

Available only to member organizations, this toolkit has the information you need to improve your organization's email marketing, social media presence, fundraising, and more. You can find the toolkit in Member Central on Education Network. See Education Network in the Professional Development section for account information.

## **Custom Education Network Landing Page & Forum**

Programs can request a custom URL that will make it easier for staff and volunteers to access Education Network. Volunteers and staff with Education Network accounts will automatically be enrolled in your organization's member forum where you can share resources exclusively with them. To sign up, please complete a short form at [www.proliteracyednet.org/clpform](http://www.proliteracyednet.org/clpform). You will be asked to supply pertinent information and a logo.

## **ProLiteracy Website Listing**

ProLiteracy recognizes and identifies your program as a member on our website so others can learn about the good work you do. Visit [www.proliteracy.org/Organizational-Members](http://www.proliteracy.org/Organizational-Members) to view your listing.

## **ProLiteracy Membership Icon**

A special ProLiteracy member icon will automatically be placed next to your program's listing in the National Literacy Directory. To make sure you're listed in the directory or to update your information, visit [www.NLD.org](http://www.NLD.org).

## **Directors & Officers Liability Insurance**

Discounted policies are provided by Chubb Limited. To discuss options and/or purchase, contact Hillary Heintz at Brown & Brown Empire State by phone 800-426-1120 ext. 285 or email [mhheintz@bbempirestate.com](mailto:mhheintz@bbempirestate.com)

## **Annual Statistical Report**

Each year ProLiteracy publishes our Annual Statistical Report, an infographic-style report that identifies national trends using our member data. Members use this information to support fundraising and awareness efforts. Organizational Members are required to complete and submit a brief Annual Member Survey.

## **Education Network ([www.proliteracy.org/ednet](http://www.proliteracy.org/ednet))**

Education Network is a comprehensive collection of online courses and resources for adult literacy and ESL instructors, program staff, trainers, and adult learners. Members have access to Member Central—a repository of resources exclusively for members—and receive significant discounts on materials with a fee. Create an account at [www.proliteracyednet.org/member\\_account](http://www.proliteracyednet.org/member_account) and enter your member number for immediate access to exclusive resources.

## **ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Education**

ProLiteracy's signature training event, the biennial Conference on Adult Education brings together tutors, teachers, managers, directors, board members, students, funders, and others for professional development and networking. Members receive a discounted registration fee and are eligible for awards and recognition for their work. Visit [www.proliteracy.org/Conference](http://www.proliteracy.org/Conference) to learn more.



## We want YOU on our Team!

Not currently a member of the Iowa Literacy Council? We would love to have you as part of our growing team of educators, students, and administrators.

What are the benefits of being a member of the Iowa Literacy Council?

- Educational Tools
- Access to legislators
- National awards
- Adult educator resources
- COABE conference discount
- Professional development
- Journal access
- And much more

What are you waiting for? Hop over to the Iowa Literacy Council [website](#) to join today!

The Iowa Literacy Connection is a publication of the Iowa Literacy Council which was established to help coordinate literacy programs statewide. The ILC administers funds to support advocacy and resources that enable Iowans to access literacy building opportunities.

## Connect with us!

