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Literacy Now

Winter 2025

40 Years of Wisconsin Literacy

In 2025, Wisconsin Literacy marked an important milestone: forty years of advancing literacy, strengthening communities, and opening doors for learners across our state. What began in 1985 as a small network of local programs has grown into a statewide organization that supports more than 70 member literacy agencies. Each agency is committed to helping adults, families, and workplaces build the skills they need to thrive.



Over four decades, the landscape of literacy has changed dramatically. Wisconsin Literacy has evolved alongside it. Our work now reaches far beyond reading and writing to include English language learning, digital literacy, workforce readiness, health literacy, and many other essential skills. Through all of this change, our mission has remained constant. We strive to ensure that every Wisconsin resident has access to the tools and support needed to reach their goals.

This anniversary year offered an opportunity to reflect on the people at the heart of our mission. We celebrated learners whose determination has transformed their lives, from parents who now read confidently with their children to immigrants who have secured better jobs and new citizens who participate fully in civic life. We honored the tutors, instructors, and volunteers whose dedication expands what is possible for adult learners. We also recognized the directors and staff of local literacy agencies whose leadership sustains this work in communities of every size.

Our 40th year also highlighted the power of partnership. Businesses seeking a stronger workforce, healthcare providers working to improve patient understanding, and many other community partners now look to literacy as a foundation for both opportunity and equity. Together, we are creating pathways that support families, help employers remain competitive, and strengthen communities across Wisconsin.

This milestone was not only a celebration of the past. It was also a commitment to the future. As technology continues to accelerate and workplaces shift, literacy remains essential. Wisconsin Literacy will continue to invest in innovation, advocate for adult education, and support the programs that provide life-changing instruction throughout the state.

We are deeply grateful to the donors, partners, and supporters who have walked with us during these forty years. Your belief in the power of literacy has made this work possible. As we look toward the decades ahead, we remain guided by the same conviction that inspired the creation of this organization in 1985. Literacy lifts individuals, strengthens families, and transforms communities. Thank you for being part of this enduring mission. ✨

Ways You Can Change Lives

Advocate

Use your voice to ensure all Wisconsin residents can access the learning opportunities they need by sharing the importance of adult and family literacy with leaders, employers, and policymakers.

Donate

Your generosity fuels life-changing learning by strengthening local literacy agencies, expanding digital and workforce readiness programs, improving health communication, and helping individuals and families reach their goals.



Volunteer

Volunteers make literacy possible by tutoring and mentoring adults in reading, writing, English language learning, digital skills, and workplace communication.



Wisconsin Literacy celebrates 40 years of opening doors through learning.

Across reading, writing, English, and digital skills, our network helps adults gain the tools they need to reach their goals and take part in their communities.

Your impact is visible statewide.

We've supported 14,455 learners across Wisconsin. Last year, 1,417 adults earned a GED or HSED, and 49.5% of graduates moved on to post-secondary education. Each milestone shows someone gaining confidence to grow in school, work, and life.

Your support makes this possible.


You help train agencies, strengthen instruction, and expand literacy in all its forms. Because of you, more people in Wisconsin can read, learn, work, and thrive in the digital age.


With gratitude,

Jake Gorges
Wisconsin Literacy

Your Impact

 **14,455**
learners Served

 **1,417**
learners earned high school credentials

 **49.5%**
of graduates entered post-secondary education

Thank You to our Corporate Supporters



Opening Doors Across Wisconsin



Wisconsin Literacy's programming continues to grow in both reach and impact. Through a network of member literacy agencies across the state, our work supports adult learners, families, workplaces, and community partners in ways that strengthen skills and expand opportunity.


At the foundation of this work are adult and family literacy programs. Local agencies provide instruction in reading, writing, English language learning, math, and GED or HSED preparation. Many offer tutoring and small group classes that help learners build confidence and navigate communication in daily life. Wisconsin Literacy strengthens these efforts by providing training,

technical assistance, and resources that help agencies deliver high quality instruction and respond to local needs.

Workforce and workplace literacy remain central to our mission. Member programs partner with employers to offer English classes, digital skills instruction, and job readiness training. These partnerships support employee success and help businesses meet workforce needs while improving communication and safety.

Digital literacy has grown significantly. Through statewide partnerships and Wisconsin Health Literacy, we help adults build essential technology skills. This work expanded in 2025 through Wisconsin Literacy's laptop distribution initiative. In collaboration with member agencies, laptops were shipped statewide and distributed to eligible participants. Local programs received guidance on secure storage, application review, and one-on-one setup support. Participants learned how to connect to Wi-Fi, create accounts, complete updates, and begin using their devices confidently. Instructional videos in multiple languages supported this process and helped reduce barriers to digital participation.

Health literacy is another key pillar. Through Wisconsin Health Literacy, we work with health systems, pharmacies, and community organizations to create clearer communication, improve medication labels, and deliver workshops that help individuals understand and use health information.

Across all programming areas, Wisconsin Literacy focuses on building capacity, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring that adults and families across Wisconsin have the tools they need to achieve their goals. The support of donors makes this comprehensive work possible and brings learning and opportunity to communities throughout the state. 

Give the gift of literacy
wislit.org/donate

