



wisconsin  
literacy



wisconsin  
health  
literacy

# *Impact Report 2019-2020*



## Friends of Wisconsin Literacy,

Literacy is **more essential now** than ever before in our organization's 35-year history to the well-being of individuals, families, workplaces and communities.

Literacy skills are necessary to navigate the global pandemic of COVID-19, understand health information, keep your job, help your children learn virtually, find new work, engage with people and businesses online, determine health risks, take prescriptions correctly, and on and on.

The pandemic taught us that we need literacy skills to strengthen the workforce, to stay healthy, to navigate health inequities as well as social and racial inequities.

Our work continues, stronger and more urgent than ever. **You have the power to impact people seeking this essential skill.** Join us as a tutor, donor or advocate at [wisconsinliteracy.org](https://www.wisconsinliteracy.org).

Sincerely,



Bill Boyle, Board Chair



Michele Erikson, Executive Director

Cover photo provided by Literacy Services of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.



## Never Give Up

“My life changed totally and forever” is how Lili Vera described the impact of two years working with her tutor, Gordon Williams (photo right). When she first arrived at the Portage County Literacy Council in Stevens Point\*, she was not able to help her three school-aged sons with their education and relied on an interpreter for doctors’ appointments.

When COVID-19 closures happened, Lili refused to quit.

She and Gordon began connecting through Zoom, email, and texting to continue her tutoring. **“Not skipping that class, even if you don’t want to, even if you want to give up. Don’t do that because you will see your progress very soon,”** said Lili smiling and encouraging others to continue learning.

**Wisconsin Literacy staff trained members how to move learners and programs online.** Through our Thursday morning coffee chat series, literacy agencies shared how to motivate low-literacy students online from guided videos on YouTube to step-by-step written instructions to help students with technology problems.

Thanks to you, 15,500 adults and families can continue their education.

\*All literacy programs mentioned in this report are Wisconsin Literacy members.



## Co-Create for a Healthier Community

Our Wisconsin Health Literacy (WHL) team worked with staff at WEA Trust, an insurance company, to revise its Explanation of Benefits (EOB) to make them easier for their customers to understand. But instead of just the two organizations working together to make changes, we invited another key group to the discussions - eight members from the community (photo).

This co-creation approach, rooted in community and partnership, builds trust amongst all participants. The initial session sought feedback from the community members. The group asked questions or gave explanations for why something could or could not be changed. A few weeks later, WEA Trust shared the new EOB with the group.

**“Working with community members opened our eyes to areas that we could improve on**—pulling us out of our day-to-day health insurance mindsets and ultimately allowing us to produce an EOB that is easier to understand and use for everyone,” shared Melody Braaten, WEA Trust.

It was a win-win. WEA Trust enacted changes from the thoughtful feedback it received and made their EOB forms more easily understandable. The community members appreciated that their voices were heard and changes made as a result.

Thanks to you, over a 1,000 community members received health literacy programming.



Previous

**WEA trust**

MEMBER INFORMATION

Member Name	Member ID	Plan Name
Address	City	State
Zip	County	Country
Phone	Work Phone	Home Phone
Cell Phone	Work Email	Home Email
Cell Email	Work Fax	Home Fax
Cell Fax	Work Address	Home Address
Cell Address	Work City	Home City
Cell State	Work State	Home State
Cell Zip	Work Zip	Home Zip
Cell Country	Work Country	Home Country
Cell County	Work County	Home County
Cell Country	Work Country	Home Country

NEW

**WEA trust**

MEMBER INFORMATION

Member Name	Member ID	Plan Name
Address	City	State
Zip	County	Country
Phone	Work Phone	Home Phone
Cell Phone	Work Email	Home Email
Cell Email	Work Fax	Home Fax
Cell Fax	Work Address	Home Address
Cell Address	Work City	Home City
Cell State	Work State	Home State
Cell Zip	Work Zip	Home Zip
Cell Country	Work Country	Home Country
Cell County	Work County	Home County
Cell Country	Work Country	Home Country

**Explanation of Benefits**  
**THIS IS NOT A BILL.**

Dear Member,

This explanation of benefits (EOB) gives you information about how all processed or individual claims are or your healthcare provider submitted. A healthcare provider could include a dollar or receipt.

**The Claims Detail section breaks down your claim.**

**The Benefit Statement section shows the amount you have left before you reach your out-of-pocket maximum.**

## Close the Digital Divide

Today's jobs require literacy and numeracy skills beyond the basic levels, with a growing demand for technical skills. **1.5 million adults** across the state are in need of advanced skills training.

The COVID-19 pandemic uncovered this need. Adult literacy students, many of whom are also low-income parents, may be willing and eager to continue learning but they lack WIFI, tablets, or laptops at home to continue online education. Some have only their cellphone to work with, small data plans, and even more limited digital skills.

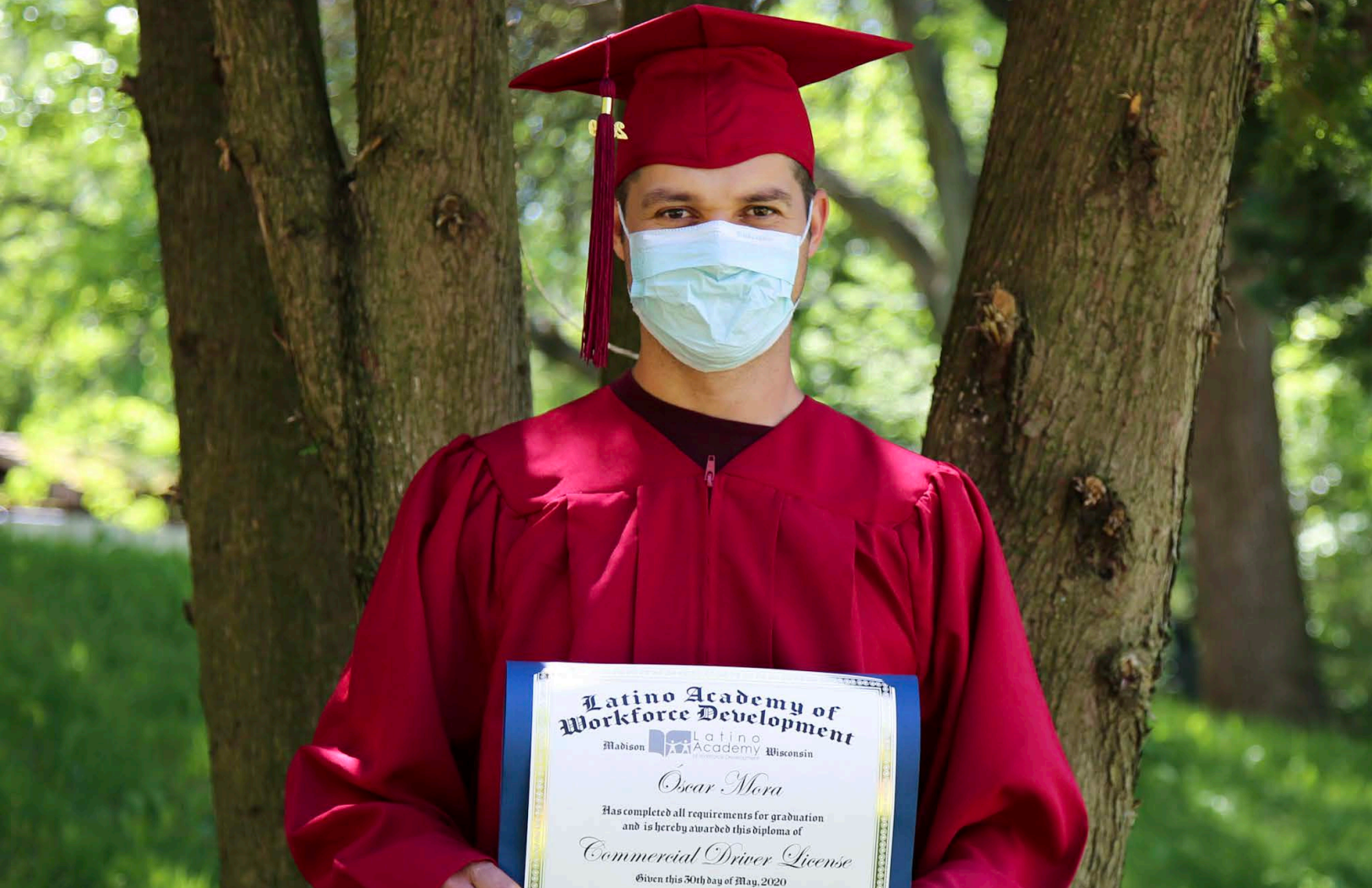
Through the Department of Children and Family funding, **we procured refurbished laptops, GED study buddies, and Zoom accounts** to help students continue studying for their high school equivalency.

Jon Gilgenbach, Executive Director from the Adult Learning Center, tells his students, **“This is how it is for everybody working right now. You are preparing yourselves for the modern work world.”**

The work is just beginning. Together, we're closing the digital divide and improving job skills.

*Photo provided by Latino Academy of Workforce Development in Madison.*





**Latino Academy of  
Workforce Development**

Madison  Latino Academy Wisconsin  
of Workforce Development

*Oscar Mora*

Has completed all requirements for graduation  
and is hereby awarded this diploma of

*Commercial Driver License*

Given this 30th day of May, 2020

## Vote and Be Counted

To vote and complete the U.S. Census, adults must have a clear understanding of the process and how to participate. Wisconsin Literacy recognized the critical importance of voting and being counted in the Census. **We engaged our member agencies in how to share in this civic responsibility with their adult learners.**

During the year, Wisconsin Literacy hosted a webinar with staff from the U.S. Census and the League of Women Voters. We also educated members and supporters on how to advocate for literacy.

We advocated for literacy as a cause deserving of support to both state and federal legislators. We asked the Governor's office for COVID relief funds as we helped local agencies with new virtual learning platforms and technology resources to keep connected to their tutors and students.

With the complications of the pandemic, civic engagement is not so straight forward, particularly if you are a new reader. We shared easy to read information and instructions for adults in our coalition on how to vote and complete the Census.

As one of our supporters shared with us, "For a free people to stay free, the citizens must be informed. **Being able to read is critical to being free.**"

*Photo provided by Fox Valley Literacy in Appleton.*



## *Thank You to Donors, Grant Funders and Sponsors (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)*

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Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin  
Endowment  
Wisconsin Department of Children and  
Families  
Wisconsin Technical College System

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Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
– Minority Health Program

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Many anonymous donors.

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Green Clock

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### *In Memory of*

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*We apologize for any error in our records that caused us to miss a donor or list a donor incorrectly. Please let us know if we did.*



## *Health Literacy Partners*

*Thanks to these organizations who have partnered with us to provide health literacy services.*

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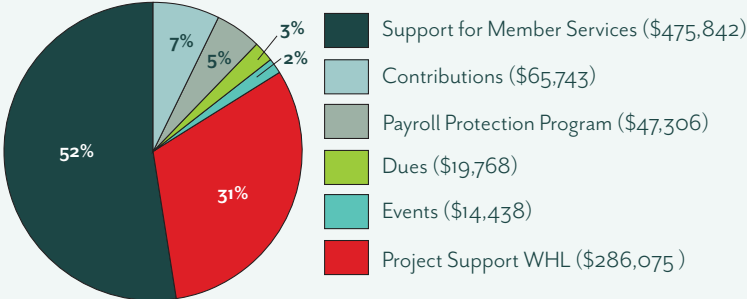
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Security Health Plan  
Wisconsin Hospital Association  
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University of Georgia College of Pharmacy  
University of Wisconsin/Madison Department of Family Medicine and Community Health  
University of Wisconsin/Madison School of Pharmacy



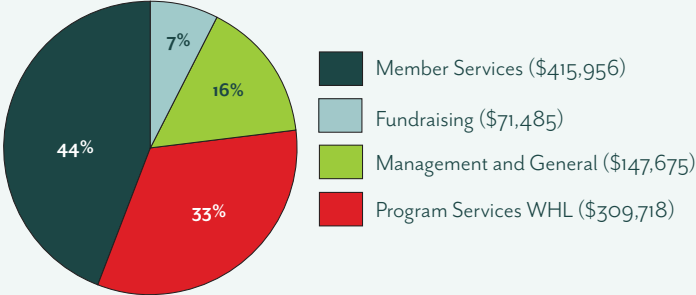
Melody Braaten, Manager of Legal Services and a health literacy partner at WEA Trust.

# Financial Highlights

Revenue \$909,172



Expenses \$944,834



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### *Our Mission*

Changing lives by strengthening literacy statewide.

### *Our Vision*

All people in Wisconsin have the literacy skills to reach their full potential.

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### *Contact Us*

(608) 257-1655

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