



New Mexico Coalition for Literacy

2017 Operating Assistance Grants Guide

BACKGROUND AND GRANT OVERVIEW

The New Mexico Coalition for Literacy (NMCL) is a private, nonprofit New Mexico corporation missioned to coordinate, expand, and enhance New Mexico literacy programs so adults can read and write to achieve their goals. Specifically, the NMCL works to support services to adults who read at or below the sixth-grade level using one-to-one tutoring from professionally-trained and certified volunteers.

Operating Assistance Grants to local providers of adult literacy services are one way that the NMCL supports literacy service providers. The NMCL's application submission process is online, with applications due July 31, 2017 at 5:00 pm MDST. You may only submit one application per literacy organization for the 2017 cycle. The NMCL will award grants for a project period ending on June 30, 2018. Funding requests can range from a minimum of \$1,000 to a maximum of \$30,000. Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding. Planned key date estimates are as follows.

FY 2017-2018 Operating Assistance Grant Timetable	Anticipated Event Timing
Online application opens	June 29, 2017 at 8:00 am MDST
Deadline when application closes (<u>no late applications accepted</u>)	July 31, 2017 at 5:00 pm MDST
Preliminary award determination letters sent	By August 30, 2017
Applicant appeal deadline	Early-September, 2017
Grant Agreement sent	Mid-September, 2017
Project period ends	June 30, 2018
Year-End Report due	May, 2018

The NMCL will reject late applications with no exceptions. The NMCL encourages applicants to register for the online application once open, view the training webinar, and plan to submit at least two to three days early in case of need for assistance during the submission process. Please refrain from contacting the NMCL directly to inquire about the status of your proposal (the NMCL will contact applicants once funding decisions have been made).

IS MY ORGANIZATION ELIGIBLE?

Operating Assistance Grants are available for local literacy providers that:

- Provide literacy services to adults who read at or below the sixth-grade level (as demonstrated through standard assessment instruments);
- Offer one-to-one tutoring, exclusively or in large part, for delivering literacy services to adults;
- Use professionally trained and certified volunteer tutors, exclusively or in part, for literacy instruction; and
- Serve residents of New Mexico.

Applicants may incorporate English as a Second Language (ESL) services into supported work as long as they also offer adult reading services. Additionally, qualified applicants must:

- Be in compliance with required government filings (e.g., New Mexico Attorney General, Internal Revenue Service, and Secretary of State); AND
- Have tax exemption under code 501(c)(3) of the IRS, OR
- Have a fiscal sponsor that is tax exempt under 501(c)(3).

Programs providing Family Literacy services and Computer Literacy/Technology Instruction services, as defined in the glossary in Appendix A, are also eligible for funding support, as long as agencies also offer adult reading services.

WHAT IF MY PROGRAM IS NEW?

New and start up organizations and projects are eligible to apply. If you are interested in starting a literacy project in your community, we strongly encourage you to seek assistance from the NMCL in planning your project, prior to applying for funding. Contact the NMCL's Executive Director for additional information by writing to info@newmexicoliteracy.org.

ARE THERE FUNDING PRIORITIES?

The NMCL will prioritize grant awards to organizations meeting the greatest overall need, filling unmet adult literacy needs in a service area, and providing services most aligned with the needs of adults who read at or below the sixth-grade level. More specifically:

Eligibility Questions?

If you have any questions about your organization's eligibility or how to answer the eligibility questions in the online application, please refer to the glossary (Appendix A) and/or contact the NMCL Executive Director *prior* to applying at info@newmexicoliteracy.org.

High Priority

- Preference will be given to local literacy providers that are independent, community-based organizations located in the state of New Mexico.
- Preference will be given to literacy service in rural areas.
- Reviewers will seek to fund an overall portfolio of agencies reaching communities and areas around the state.
- Preference will be given to agencies serving special populations (e.g., Native Americans, veterans, or the homeless), currently underserved populations/areas, and/or populations of students with especially low literacy levels.
- Preference will be given to literacy organizations with less demonstrated financial support from a fiscal sponsor or parent institution/agency.

Low Priority

- Programs that are primarily child-focused or that rely heavily on classroom instruction are generally not a priority.
- The NMCL is unlikely to fund a local literacy provider already supported through significant funding from a parent/host agency or state or federal funding.
- Programs focused on serving a narrow adult sub-population *when* there are no other adult literacy agencies serving the general population in the area.

HOW MUCH IS AWARDED?

Grants will range from \$1,000 to \$30,000. The size of a grant is not dependent on the number of participants served or organization size; a small organization serving a limited number of students may receive a maximum award if demonstrating sufficient need and capacity for success. Reviewer considerations for award size include: requested amount, other funding sources, need for operational support, and need for services in the community. Grants will be awarded for a project period ending on June 30, 2018.

Funding Approach

With grants intended as operational support, income may be used flexibly during the grant term to meet agency needs, as long as certain restrictions and reporting requirements are met.

WHAT FUNDS USES ARE ALLOWABLE/UNALLOWABLE?

Allowable Use of Funds:

- Administrative salaries for employees involved with funded literacy services;
- Payroll taxes, fringe, and benefits up to 25% of requested allowable salaries;
- Purchased services including costs of consultants, professionals, printing services, graphic design services, and public relations, etc.;
- Supplies and materials such as office supplies, software, computer equipment, etc. that are not eligible or covered by the NMCL's materials grants, which are available year-round and can be found at <https://newmexicoliteracy.org/grants-available-from-the-new-mexico-coalition-for-literacy/>
- Partial or full fiscal sponsor fee (approved percentage level may be accepted, at the discretion of the NMCL);
- In-state travel expenses, including costs to attend conferences (such as the NMCL's Annual Meeting), in-service trainings, and trips to other in-state literacy programs; and
- Overhead costs that support program services, such as rent, telecommunications, and utilities.

Unallowable Use of Funds:

- Teacher salaries;
- Salaries/wages/stipends paid to a member of an organization's board of directors for serving as an instructor or trainer;
- Salary expenses (payroll taxes, fringe, and benefits) in excess of 25% of requested salaries;
- Costs already covered through federal and/or state government funding for adult literacy (monies provided by these government grants and the funds and student count must be kept separate from your support from the NMCL);
- Costs for professional and volunteer development and training in areas that are already offered by the NMCL at no

Materials Grants

The NMCL offers \$500.00 Materials Grants (two grants per program per year allowed, as funding permits) to literacy programs in New Mexico. For funding of this type of expense, literacy organizations should request support through a material grant, not expense it in an operational support grant.

cost for funded programs (for instance, the NMCL offers nationally certified tutor training); and

- Service provision for communities and residents outside of New Mexico (if your program also serves other states, your agency must use funds from the NMCL for in-state work).

ARE MATCHING FUNDS REQUIRED?

Yes. Awardees must match an Operating Assistance Grant from the NMCL dollar-for-dollar, meeting a contribution of 100% for actual awarded funds over the fiscal year. Match can be cash or in-kind goods and/or services. Your agency may use volunteer time as in-kind match.

HOW DO ORGANIZATIONS APPLY?

Eligible literacy organizations are allowed to submit one Operating Assistance Grant application for the current cycle. Fiscal agents may be associated with more than one applying literacy organization.

The NMCL uses an online application process that is accessible for Macintosh and PC computers.

If you experience technological limitations or other access problems that may prevent you from using an online application successfully, please contact the NMCL Executive Director as soon as possible to discuss assistance and options (info@newmexicoliteracy.org).

All applications must be received by July 31, 2017 by 5:00 pm MDST. The NMCL will reject late applications. There will be no exceptions. Steps for applying are as follows:

- Email info@newmexicoliteracy.org to view the recorded proposal web training (available early to mid-July).
- Email info@newmexicoliteracy.org for access to the eligibility quiz. Include your literacy agency name and Executive Director phone and email address. The NMCL will then email a link (URL) to the eligibility quiz.
- Follow the link, register as a user, and complete the organization eligibility quiz. If your organization qualifies, you will be guided to a menu where you can access the application. Note that the NMCL will make final determinations on whether an agency and program meet the eligibility requirements. Within the application,

Question Display

To prevent applicants from having to address questions that are not relevant to their program, the online application responds to certain answers with additional questions or information requests. This means that the application questions you see in the online form prior to making any entries are likely not comprehensive of the questions you will need to answer. A sample copy of the application with the larger set of questions is attached as Appendix B. Always review the online application as well to ensure understanding of the scope of questions you will be required to complete.

complete the contact registration for the contact person, who should be the person administering the grant (one registered user per organization).

- Complete all application information sections (see following section). Note: the system regularly saves your work and users can return to a saved application to complete. There is also a Save Draft button at the bottom of each application form page.
- Upload required documents (see following section).
- Complete application pre-submission assurances and click "Next." This will then display your full application.
- Click "Complete" to submit. If you have any entry errors (e.g., letters in a numeral only response area) the system will then highlight those to fix. Address any errors the system finds in your application and select "Complete" again. You may then print a copy of your application (strongly recommended).
- Following submission of the validated application, you will receive a confirmation email. Check your registered email for this message to confirm submission.

Note that the application is responsive to answers for certain questions in order to reduce the amount of work for applicants. For example, programs that are new will not need to complete data about prior year literacy activities.

Therefore, an application may not show all questions you will be required to complete prior to beginning work. Please allow adequate time to work through all areas.

WHAT IS REQUIRED IN AN APPLICATION?

Online entry sections are as follows:

- User/representative contact information;
- Information on your organization (and fiscal sponsor, if applicable);
- Applicant financial information;
- Literacy service details for the prior fiscal year; and
- Request and projected service information for fiscal year ending June 30, 2018 (see sidebar regarding crafting quality program objectives).

S.M.A.R.T. Outcome-Based Objectives

New This Year: Align at least two of the required three objectives to clearly support the NMCL goals:

- Using one-to-one tutoring in literacy services;
- Providing basic literacy student services;
- Increasing student literacy levels; and
- Improving student outcomes (e.g., job placement/advancement, advancing education, and getting off public assistance).

Strong objectives should be SMART:

- **Specific:** Objective makes clear who the target population is and what will be accomplished.
- **Measurable:** The objective is quantifiable, can be measured by the agency, and states target change expected.
- **Achievable:** The objective can realistically be accomplished (during the proposed time frame, with available resources, and using agency methods).
- **Relevant:** The objective helps address the NMCL aims for adult literacy and success.
- **Time-Bound:** Objective is clear about when timeframe for achievement.

Required document uploads are as follows:

- Agency tax documentation. For 501(c)(3) agencies that file a 990 or 990EZ, the upload is the most recent return. **New This Year: For agencies filing a 990-N (postcard), the requirement is the postcard return plus year-end financials or actual budget for the same year.** For those with fiscal agents, the proper upload is the sponsoring agency's most recent 990 or 990EZ;
- Current Board of Directors/Trustees roster. **New This Year: You must download and use the provided Excel file to complete all requested board member information. This file can be downloaded from the application File Upload section or at <https://newmexicoliteracy.org/grants-available-from-the-new-mexico-coalition-for-literacy/>.** If your literacy organization does not have a governing board and is instead using a fiscal sponsor, complete the Board Roster for the sponsoring agency's governing board; and
- Current budget for applicant organization (or budget for literacy programming for agencies with multiple program services).

New this Year: Unlike prior years, applicants are not asked to upload personnel qualifications documentation like resumes. Please be sure to answer staffing-related application questions thoroughly.

Acceptable file formats are Adobe PDF, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel. The NMCL recommends using PDF. Individual file sizes are limited to a maximum of 300 MB.

HOW ARE GRANTEES SELECTED?

The NMCL is committed to supporting local literacy providers that have a strong impact within their communities; however, due to the volume of funding requests, not every request that meets eligibility and application guidelines will receive funding. The review committee determines entity eligibility and that an application meets material criteria for consideration. The committee reads and scores compliant applications, using a scoring rubric (Appendix B). In making award and award amount determinations, the review committee considers review scores along with portfolio funding priorities (e.g., aim to fund projects in communities statewide). The committee considers overall balance of a program in relation to local service area needs, clarity of the plan for service delivery, qualifications of key personnel, likelihood of the service's continuation beyond the contract period, and the effectiveness of the proposed self-evaluation of the project. Also considered is past performance and reporting compliance on prior NMCL grants, as applicable.

WHAT HAPPENS IF OUR PROPOSAL IS/IS NOT FUNDED?

Following committee decisions, the NMCL sends notification to applicants. The NMCL has an appeal policy and process with a protest submission period of 14 days following initial award notification. The policy can be viewed at <https://newmexicoliteracy.org/grants-available-from-the-new-mexico-coalition-for-literacy/>. Note that the committee will not consider grant appeals on the basis of a late

submission or for incomplete applications not meeting material requirements. Following the appeal process, the NMCL and funded agencies complete grant agreements and revised goals as applicable.

The grant term ends June 30, 2018. The NMCL will make payments to grantees on a reimbursement basis for expenses incurred (on a basis no more frequently than monthly and no less frequently than quarterly, as determined by recipient reimbursement request submissions). Therefore, organizations must be able to pay initial expenses of a project prior to receiving grant funds.

The NMCL typically awards funds directly to the service provider; however, for those organizations using a qualified fiscal sponsor, the NMCL will make payments to that 501(c)(3) fiscal agent.

Funded applicants are required to track and report on services, with a Year-End Report (to be provided to awardees). Requirements of these reports may include, but are not limited to descriptions of progress, challenges, activities, assistance, changes from plan, and other aspects of delivery as well as detailed counts of tutor and student demographics, literacy/ESL participation, student literacy and other outcomes, and engagement length and retention data.

APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adult

A person who is eighteen years of age or older.

Basic Literacy Services

In-person instruction by volunteer tutors for both native and non-native English-speaking adults who are learning to read and write English who read at or below the sixth grade level.

Computer Literacy/Technology Education

In-person or remote instruction by volunteer tutors in the subjects of computer and technology usage. This is distinct from instructional technology used to teach Reading, ESL, or Family Literacy.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Teaching English to students who self-report their status as non-native speakers of English, with instruction emphasizing speaking, listening, and understanding English, rather than reading and writing English.

Family Literacy Services

Activities that invest sufficient hours and last a sufficient duration to make sustainable improvements in a family's reading capacity that are measurable through a Standardized Assessment Instrument, integrating all of the following activities:

- Simultaneous instruction to parents and their children in literacy;
- Training parents how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children;
- Parent literacy training designed to lead to a given family's economic self-sufficiency; and

- Age-appropriate education for school-age and pre-school-age children to prepare them for success in school and other life experiences.

Literacy Service Area

The geographic area for which a local literacy organization will offer adult literacy education in reading and writing, if selected for funding.

Local Adult Literacy Providers

Community based organizations offering literacy services to adults living in New Mexico, all or most of whom read at or below the sixth grade level in English.

One-to-One Tutoring

Literacy, numeracy, and/or ESL instruction provided by volunteers who tutor adults on an individual basis.

Rural Area

The review committee uses federally defined criteria in confirming whether an applicant location and service area are rural.

Standard Assessment Instrument

A test that a given literacy provider administers to all of its students in the same manner.

Tutors: Certified volunteer instructors who provide literacy and/or ESL services.

Workplace/Workforce Literacy

Tutoring in the workplace or tutoring in job literacy skills and literacy as it pertains to the workplace.

APPENDIX B – SCORING RUBRIC

Material Criteria	
Application submitted on time	Pass/Fail
Meets eligibility criteria	Pass/Fail
Confirmed applicant or fiscal sponsor registration as 501(c)(3)	Pass/Fail
Confirmed state filing up-to-date (submissions or proper extensions)	Pass/Fail
Required questions answered, authorization completed	Pass/Fail
All required attachments provided	Pass/Fail

Scored Criteria (250 points possible)	Points Available	
	Item Points	Area Points
Community Need		40
Degree of demonstrated need for adult basic literacy services in the literacy service area, as compared to county, state, and national levels.	10	
Degree to which adult basic literacy service needs are not being met in the service area by non-applicant agencies (full points if there are no other agencies besides the applicant serving the area).	10	
Preference points for service to a rural area (0 or 10 points)	10	
Preference points for serving special populations (e.g., Native Americans, veterans, or the homeless), underserved populations/areas (e.g., starting a new program in unserved area), and/or populations of students with especially low literacy levels.	10	
Program Design and Ability to Meet Community Need		60
Degree to which agency mission, vision, and proposed services align with the NMCL emphases on one-to-one tutoring, adult literacy, work with adults who have lower literacy levels, and use of trained volunteer tutors.	10	
Soundness and sufficiency of program design for providing adult basic literacy services that meet community needs.	10	
If program is new, the soundness of start-up planning. If existing, past ability of program to meet community need.	10	
Feasibility and adequacy of the student and tutor recruitment plan (and past performance if prior grantee).	10	
The degree to which student and tutor populations are/will be reflective of the needs and demographics of the community (including balance of literacy and ESL).	10	
Degree of community support for the literacy project as shown by partnerships with other agencies, interagency coordination, and referral sources.	10	

Scored Criteria (250 points possible)	Points Available	
	Item Points	Area Points
Program Quality		30
Strength of rationale for adult literacy service approach (evidence basis, best practices) in relation to community and student needs.	10	
Appropriateness and robustness of student persistence strategies in relation to community setting and need.	10	
Strength of tutor and staff training, development, and retention efforts in relation to agency size and resources.	10	
Performance and Evaluation		40
Degree to which objectives are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-based) and support the NMCL's goals. If prior grantee, half of score is to be based on past ability to meet FY 2015-2016 stated goals.	20	
Adequacy of the number and range of learning levels/gains measurement tools, including use of one or more Standard Assessment Instruments.	10	
Adequacy of the number and range of program evaluation and planning tools. Demonstrated track record and commitment towards quality assessment and improvement.	10	
Agency Characteristics, Experience, and Capability		30
Level of experience and qualification of personnel engaged in the project. If prior grantee, consider prior demonstrated capability of personnel; if new programming, consider the applicability of experience managing similar services.	10	
Ability of described infrastructure and organizational capacity (including board or advisory committee) to support literacy programming. For prior grantees, adequacy of efforts and results to address Grant Committee concerns/recommendations (if applicable).	10	
Preference points for local literacy providers that are independent and community-based organizations.	10	
Financial Information		50
Ability of requested funding amount and planned use of funds to support applicant aim of sustaining, expanding, or starting services.	10	
Adequacy and availability of in-kind and or cash funds sufficient to meet match requirements.	10	
Preference points (10 points or none) for literacy organizations with no financial support from a fiscal sponsor or parent institution/agency.	10	
Preference points (10 points or none) for organization not receiving State and/or Federal funds for adult education.	20	