New Mexico Coalition for Literacy

2018 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 trained volunteers.

Operating Assistance Grants to local providers of adult literacy services are one way that the NMCL achieves its mission. The NMCL's application submission process is online, with applications due August 17, 2018 at 5:00 pm MDST. You may only submit one application per literacy organization for the 2018 cycle. The NMCL will award grants for a project period ending on June 30, 2019. 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.

2018-2019 Operating Assistance Grant Timetable	Anticipated Event Timing
Online application opens	July 19, 2018 at 8:00 am MDST
Deadline when application closes (no late applications accepted)	August 17, 2018 at 5:00 pm MDST
Preliminary award determination letters sent	August 31, 2018
Applicant appeal deadline	September 14, 2018
Grant Agreement sent	Late September, 2018
Mid-year data due	February 28, 2019
Project period ends	June 30, 2019
Year-End Report due	July 10, 2019

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 assistance is needed 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). If you have any inquiries about the application or process, please allow the NMCL a minimum two business days to respond; last minute inquiries may or may not be accommodated, depending upon resources.

IS MY ORGANIZATION ELIGIBLE?

Operating Assistance Grants are available for local literacy providers that:

- Provide literacy services to <u>adults</u> who read <u>at or below the sixth-grade level</u> (as demonstrated through standard assessment instruments);

- Offer <u>one-to-one tutoring</u>, exclusively or in large part, for delivering literacy services to adults;

- Use <u>volunteer tutors</u> with NMCL-provided or NMCL-approved tutor training, exclusively or in part, to provide literacy services;* and

- Serve <u>residents of New Mexico</u>.

* All volunteer tutors must have 1) tutor training offered by the NMCL (offered at no cost); <u>or</u> 2) ProLiteracy training that is approved by the NMCL; <u>or</u> 3) an exception on file with the NMCL for not having met one of these options prior to applying.

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

- Be in current compliance with required government filings (e.g., New Mexico Attorney General, Internal Revenue Service, and Secretary of State); <u>AND</u>

- Have tax exemption under code 501(c)(3) of the IRS, <u>OR</u>

- Have a fiscal sponsor that is tax exempt under code 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 if they 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, <u>we strongly encourage you to seek assistance from the NMCL in planning your project, prior to applying for funding</u>. Contact the NMCL's Executive Director for additional information by writing to info@newmexicoliteracy.org.

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.

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:

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.

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.

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, 2019.

WHAT FUNDS USES ARE ALLOWABLE/UNALLOWABLE?

Allowable Uses of Funds:

- Administrative salaries for employees involved with funded literacy services;

- Payroll taxes, fringe, and benefits up to 25% of requested allowable salaries;

- Purchased professional services that are not specific to literacy programming or training, such as bookkeeping services, graphic design services, janitorial services, 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/;

- Student assessments and materials that are non-instructional in nature;

- Partial or full fiscal sponsor fee (approved percentage level is 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, workshops, and trips to other in-state literacy programs; and

- Overhead costs that support program services, such as rent, telecommunications, and utilities.

Unallowable Uses of Funds:

- Teacher salaries;

- Instructional materials eligible or covered by the NMCL's materials grants;

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.

- 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) above 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 cost for funded programs (for instance, the NMCL offers free tutor and board training);

- Stipends or in-service fees to trainers or consultants for tutor or board of directors training unless approved by NMCL in advance (requests must be made in writing via email to training@newmexicoliteracy.org at least thirty (30) days before the event or consultant engagement for consideration for reimbursement); 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 at a value of at least 100% of the actual awarded funds over the fiscal year. Match must be cash or in-kind goods and/or services, with a minimum of 25% cash match. Your agency may use volunteer time as in-kind match for up to 75% of the match.

In addition, the NMCL will require your program to document and report all of the cash and in-kind match sources received for the fiscal year so that the State of New Mexico can accurately capture the full worth of the statewide adult literacy program.

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 Mac 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 August 17, 2018 by 5:00 pm MDT. 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 late-July).

- Email info@newmexicoliteracy.org for access to the eligibility quiz. Include your literacy agency name, point of contact, title, 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, 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 it. 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.

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.

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, 2019 (see sidebar regarding crafting quality program objectives).

Required document uploads are as follows:

- Agency tax documentation. **For 501(c)(3) agencies that file a 990 or 990EZ**, the most recent return must be uploaded. **For agencies filing a 990-N (postcard)**, upload the postcard return **plus** year-end profit and loss statement or actual expenditures 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. **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 year budget for applicant organization (or budget for literacy programming for agencies with multiple program services). Please ensure the budget includes the proper year in the header or title.

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.

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

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

- Increasing one-to-one tutoring in literacy services;
- Increasing basic literacy student services;
- Increasing student literacy level gains; 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 the timeframe for achievement.

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 NMCL determines entity eligibility and that an application meets material criteria for consideration. The NMCL reads and scores compliant applications using a scoring rubric (Appendix B). In making award and award amount determinations, the NMCL considers review scores along with portfolio funding priorities (e.g., aim to fund projects in communities statewide). The NMCL 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 NMCL decisions, the NMCL sends notification to applicants. The NMCL has an appeal policy and process with a protest submission period of fourteen (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 NMCL will not consider grant appeals on the basis of a late submission or for incomplete applications that fail to meet mandatory material requirements. Following the appeal process, the NMCL and funded agencies complete grant agreements.

The grant term ends June 30, 2019. The NMCL will make payments to grantees on a reimbursement basis for expenses incurred (monthly reimbursement requests are required and shall be submitted on forms provided by the NMCL). Therefore, organizations must be able to pay initial expenses of a project prior to receiving grant funds and must be prepared to submit monthly reimbursement requests.

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 (reporting requirements to be provided to awardees upon receipt of grant agreements). 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.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF GRANTEES?

Please see the Draft Contract on the NMCL's website for full terms and expectations of recipients of the NMCL's Operating Assistance Grants. Grant contractors must:

- Report on project progress, services, student demographics, and outcomes to the NMCL on a mid-year and year-end basis (see NMCL Reporting Pack at https://newmexicoliteracy.org/grants-available-from-the-new-mexico-coalition-for-literacy/);

- Maintain current program data in the Literacy, Adult, and Community Education (LACES) database or provide the NMCL with data for inclusion in LACES in the specified format, by the required deadlines.

- Provide an orientation to students prior to placing them based on the results of intake tests;

- Participate in an assessment of students' satisfaction, which shall include students' reports about whether they are meeting their immediate, short-term goals for enrollment;

- Record, maintain, and report programmatic data, including registration data; attendance data; instructional hours; test data, including pre- and post-test scores; student goals; student demographic data; and student impact data;

- Provide reimbursement claim forms to the NMCL no less than monthly;

- Provide the NMCL with a fiscal matching report of the amounts and sources of the Contractor's matching in-kind and cash funds acquired to meet the 100% match requirement, with at least 25% of the match being cash. Funded programs must also report all cash and in-kind goods and services received to show the total worth of the literacy program.

Adult
A person who is eighteen years of age or older.

Basic Literacy Services
Instruction in reading and writing the English language, delivered by volunteer tutors to native and non-native English-speaking adults who enter the program reading at or below the sixth-grade level.

Computer Literacy/Technology Education
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 life.

Literacy Levels
Literacy levels must be determined using a standard assessment instrument to be administered at pre- and post-test intervals set by the manufacturer and/or the NMCL. Literacy levels are defined by the manufacturer. Contractors must report literacy level outcomes to the NMCL for both pre- and post-test.

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.

Student
For the purposes of the NMCL Operating Assistance Grants program, a student or literacy/numeracy program participant is defined as an individual who participated in the selected year for greater than zero hours of instruction in one of the following programs: Basic Literacy Native-English Speaking Student; Basic Literacy Non-Native English-Speaking Student; and ESL-Student.

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 its students in the same manner.

Tutors
Volunteer instructors who provide literacy and/or ESL services and are trained via ProLiteracy and/or NMCL tutor training.

Workplace/Workforce Literacy
Tutoring in the workplace or tutoring in job literacy skills and literacy as it pertains to the workplace.

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 prior fiscal year 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 toward 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 (0 or 10 points) for literacy organizations with no financial support from a fiscal sponsor or parent institution/agency.	10	
Preference points (0 or 10) for organization not receiving State and/or Federal funds for adult education.	20	