

# American Dream Literacy Initiative



*How* **10 YEARS OF FUNDING** *has helped*  
*libraries transform* **THOUSANDS OF LIVES**

# American Dream Literacy Initiative

Libraries are among America's most democratic institutions—places of equitable access to education, information, and lifelong learning that strengthen communities and help create a more literate and just society. Libraries are also among the first institutions immigrants turn to for help with accessing and using technology and with learning how to read, write, and speak English.

Since 2008, the American Library Association (ALA) and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation have offered grants to U.S. public libraries to expand services for adult English language learners or adults in need of basic education and workforce development.

The American Dream Literacy Initiative helps libraries augment their print and digital ESL collections, increase computer access and training, provide job training, hold English language, GED, and citizenship classes, and raise the visibility of services for immigrant populations.

This 10-year retrospective report celebrates the many ways that American Dream libraries have transformed lives, strengthened their communities, and advocated tirelessly for lifelong learning. With just a small amount of grant money, these libraries have had outsized impact on the thousands of adults who turn to them for support.

That's why ALA and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation are proud to invest in libraries and the communities they serve. Together, we can help all Americans achieve the American Dream.



More than **\$1.5 million** granted to libraries



**214 grants** to urban, suburban, and rural libraries



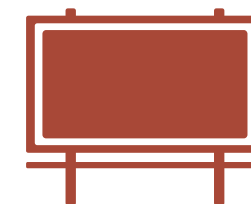
**6 rounds** Grants were disbursed in 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018



**188 libraries** in 33 states



Through the round five grants alone, nearly **15,000 students** participated in ESL classes. In rounds one through four, more than **8,000 English language learners** completed courses.



Grantees that developed partnerships

were **7 times more likely**

to have sustained their ELL services.



More than 65% of libraries reported that the grant funding **improved networking with community partners** and other libraries.

## Transforming Lives and Communities

For many new Americans, libraries provide a gateway to opportunity. Libraries are among the first institutions that immigrants turn to for help in learning how to read, write, and speak English. Since 2008, with the generous support of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, the American Library Association has provided 214 grants to 188 libraries in Dollar General communities to initiate or expand literacy services for adult English language learners.



**"Over the past decade, the American Dream initiative has shown the power of libraries to transform lives and communities."**

The most recent grant cycle awarded \$10,000 to 20 public libraries in 13 states across the country. Participating libraries use this one-time award to expand services for adult English language learners or adults in need of basic education and workforce development.

American Dream libraries exist in urban centers, suburban communities, and rural towns. They offer computer access and training, job readiness programs, and ELL, GED, and citizenship classes. The award enables them to build programs that are easily replicable while building strong partnerships and leveraging additional resources received through these collaborative efforts.

Libraries occupy a unique position in their ability to remove barriers to help immigrants adapt to a new culture and become involved in their communities. The public library provides a safe

space in a new and complex country where newcomers can gain free access to print and digital materials, use the internet, and take advantage of opportunities to learn and improve English skills.

Over the past decade, the American Dream initiative has shown the power of libraries to transform lives and communities. It has also demonstrated how libraries are a smart investment, contributing to education, employment, entrepreneurship, engagement, and empowerment.

ALA is very grateful to the Dollar General Literacy Foundation for its continued support of this successful program. Through the American Dream Literacy Initiative, libraries have improved thousands of lives of new Americans throughout the country.

**Jim Neal**  
President, American Library Association

## Investing in Literacy

Libraries play a vital role in American society. They are centers of learning and opportunity that welcome all members of the community to freely explore new possibilities, access educational programming, and enlighten the mind. For many new Americans, the wealth of digital and print information at their local library, coupled with the educational programs that are available, serve as valuable catalysts for the pursuit of their American Dream.

That's why the Dollar General Literacy Foundation is proud to invest in libraries through the American Dream Literacy Initiative. When we first started the American Dream partnership 10 years ago, it started with 44 libraries receiving \$5,000 each.

Since 2008, 188 libraries across Dollar General's market area have received more than \$1.5 million to help build innovative and effective literacy programs for adult English-language learners. With these grants, libraries have developed new courses, expanded their print and digital collections, increased access to technology, implemented new strategies for inclusion, and developed sustainable partnerships with organizations across their communities. These enhancements and expansions have resulted in increasing access and opportunities for thousands of individuals across the country.

Like libraries, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation believes that education is the great equalizer, and a strong education begins with the ability to read. Libraries and dedicated librarians play an important role in helping inspire and unleash the gift of lifelong learning. For all the individuals who have benefitted from the libraries and librarians through the American Dream Literacy Initiative, we are truly grateful.

For 25 years, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has invested in programs that help individuals learn to read, prepare for the high school equivalency test, or learn English. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than \$154 million to nonprofit organizations, schools, and libraries that have helped more than 10 million individuals advance their literacy and basic education.

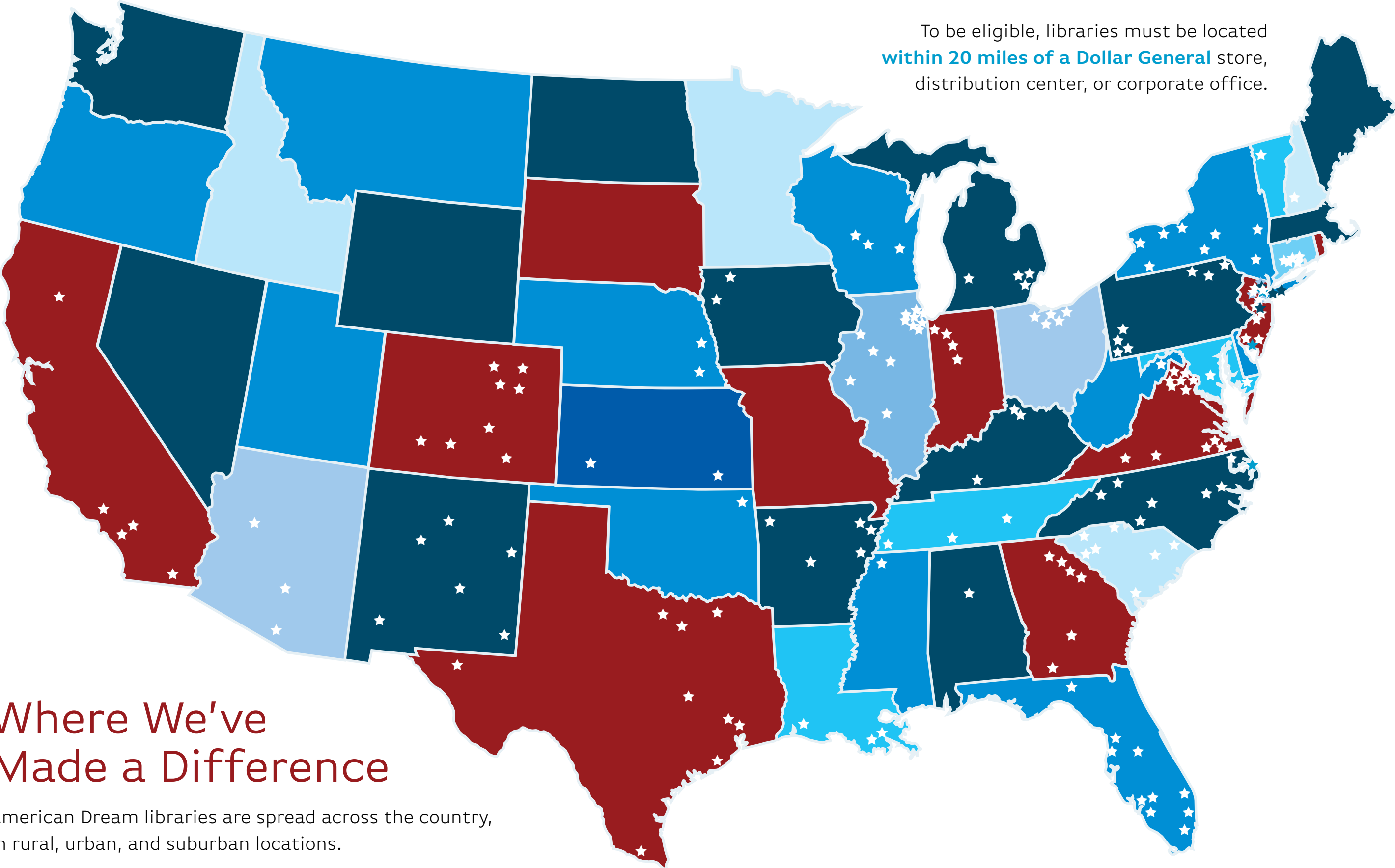
We are honored to partner with the American Library Association to strengthen communities, extend hope, and increase opportunities for others to achieve their American Dream.



**"Education is the great equalizer, and a strong education begins with the ability to read."**

**Denine Torr**  
Senior Director of Community Initiatives, Dollar General

To be eligible, libraries must be located **within 20 miles of a Dollar General** store, distribution center, or corporate office.



# Where We've Made a Difference

American Dream libraries are spread across the country, in rural, urban, and suburban locations.





A cultural celebration at the Plainsboro Public Library

# Creating a Nexus of Opportunities

LIBRARIES ARE OFTEN THE FIRST PLACE new Americans turn to for support, whether to learn English, connect with community services, or to learn about American culture while celebrating their own heritage. American Dream libraries are the new community centers for English language learners, offering not only language instruction but also camaraderie and civic engagement through clubs, events, and services.

## Plainsboro Public Library

GRANT ROUNDS 3 AND 4

The Township of Plainsboro, New Jersey, known for the pharmaceutical corporations and advanced technology laboratories that call it home, attracts a diverse population from all corners of the globe. More than 46 percent of its residents speak a language other than English at home—and the number is growing.

Nowhere is this more evident than at the Plainsboro Public Library, located near the town's center. One of the most frequent questions at their reference desk is about English classes and materials.

"The library is a natural gathering place," says librarian Joyce Huang. "Libraries have evolved past the traditional notion of being this quiet place. They have evolved into a community centers, where you get people from all walks of life coming for all sorts of different purposes."

A two-time awardee of the American Dream grant, the library was able to build upon its existing efforts and became better equipped to serve its growing English as a second language (ESL) population, including introducing new writing courses such as "Writing in the Workplace" and "Writing English Every Day." Classes included participants whose first language was French, German, Hindi,

Mandarin, Russian, or Spanish. Many of the participants were stay-at-home mothers like Ting Zhang, a recent immigrant from China who felt isolated in the community until she saw a flyer for the writing course.

"I studied here for almost one year," she says. "I think my English has improved a lot."

The library also began offering the Plainsboro American Language Social (PALS) Club, where English language learners and volunteer native speakers came together to practice English, improve communication skills, and deepen their understanding of American culture. Each session included social time and lessons or guest programs, following by breakouts in small conversation groups.

"Volunteers get at least as much out of it as the participants do," Huang says. "It's fascinating talking to all these people from different cultures and backgrounds."

**"Libraries have evolved into community centers, where you get people from all walks of life coming for all sorts of different purposes."**



### Increased Access

**87% of libraries report the grant funding helped increase English language learner access to print and digital resources.**



# Terrebonne Parish Library System

GRANT ROUND 5



The Terrebonne Parish Library System was already offering English language programs when it received its American Dream grant in 2017, but the library wanted to find new ways to connect with the Hispanic population of their “little bayou town” in Louisiana.

The result was Conectando, an umbrella term for courses, story times, and festivals that engaged adult English language learners and celebrated the Hispanic culture of the community.

The most successful programs were Historias para Toda, a twice-monthly bilingual book discussion where participants discussed the works of Gabriel Garcia-Marquez, and Curso Basico de Inglés para Toda la Familia, where students read out loud and role-played to practice their pronunciation. The program also provided a workshop on federal citizenship and immigration services available to community members, which the library called a “monumental success.”

Conectando also provided a way for the library to connect with partner organizations. Local supermarkets, bakeries, and restaurants donated food for a Fiesta de las Americas, and the library teamed up with the Bayou Cane Adult Education Center for the monthly Tiempos de Cuentos, a Spanish story time session for all ages.

Programs were attended by both native English speakers and learners who appreciated the events as bridges to engage with each other.

“We truly have connected different cultures with this project,” reports Jessi Suire, public relations coordinator. “Being able to develop relationships and feel a sense of inclusion with the more predominant English-speaking world has greatly enhanced the self-esteem of our patrons and has also given them greater opportunities in their lives and careers.”



Programming at Terrebonne Parish Library

“Being able to develop relationships and feel a sense of inclusion with the more predominant English-speaking world **has greatly enhanced the self-esteem of our patrons** and has also given them greater opportunities in their lives and careers.”



A class at Terrebonne Parish Library

# Chandler Public Library

GRANT ROUNDS 1 AND 6

With its American Dream grant, the Chandler Public Library instituted TalkTime conversation sessions for English language learners.

The library reports: “During that hour a lot of talking and laughter can be heard coming from the room. While volunteers facilitate the conversation based on a central theme, the group listens to the stories shared, shares their own personal experiences, and learns from each other. While TalkTime is a great opportunity to practice the English language, it is also about developing friendships at your library!”

Total attendance: **1,327**

Total number of sessions offered: **211**

Home countries represented: **Afghanistan, Algeria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, China, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Iran, Japan, Korea, Madagascar, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, Taiwan, Ukraine, Venezuela, Vietnam**



## Top 6 Reasons English Language Learners Access the Library

- 1 Employment
- 2 Support children in school
- 3 Language acquisition
- 4 Computer/internet use
- 5 Education
- 6 Citizenship





Rafael Lleras (left) takes a class at the Bemis Public Library

# Providing Pathways to Success

AMERICAN DREAM GRANTS ARE PROOF that just a small investment—sometimes as little as \$5,000—can have a profound impact on many lives. While the statistics show the broad story, individual success stories abound. Libraries from across the country report helping their English language learners find success through attaining their GEDs, finding jobs, and becoming citizens.



An English class at the Bemis Public Library

## Bemis Public Library

### GRANT ROUND 5

When Rafael Lleras arrived in Littleton, Colorado from Venezuela in 2016, he struggled to understand English and communicate his ideas. Though he came to the United States to be near his son, he also wanted to find a part-time job.

“I was looking for ESL classes near my home,” he says, when he came across the classes at Bemis Public Library. Throughout 2017, he participated in each ESL class the library offered.

“I have been learning English grammar and pronunciation, about the American way of life, including idioms and commonly used phrases,” he says.

These classes were offered in part thanks to the American Dream grant, which allowed the Bemis Public library to expand its ESL programming. Before the grant, they struggled to recruit students. Now the library must cap enrollment in its courses.

For Rafael, the courses have changed his life. His English improved so much that he began volunteering at the library, teaching the Spanish language citizenship class. By fall 2017, he had landed a part-time job at the Denver YMCA. He still teaches and attends class every week.

“I hope in the future to continue learning English, teaching citizenship, and working in YMCA with children in the after-school programs, and see my grandchildren grow up,” he says, “because family is the best reason to live.”





Francisco and Ingrid Maldonado

## Bentonville Public Library

GRANT ROUNDS 2 AND 3

American Dream libraries offer more than just education—they offer a clear path to citizenship that gives new Americans a chance to succeed and thrive in their new home.

Originally from Guatemala, Francisco and Ingrid Maldonado moved to Benton County, Arkansas in 2006 and began to prepare to become U.S. citizens.

They found a resource in Bentonville Public Library, which used its American Dream grant to expand its literacy courses and purchase library resources to help new Americans prepare for the citizenship test.

In May 2010, 30 participants from 14 countries took part in a U.S. Naturalization ceremony at the library. Many participants used library resources to help prepare for the test.

**"We are excited to vote! This is our American dream."**

"The naturalization ceremony at Bentonville Library was amazing," the Maldonados say. "It was the realization of our dream and the beginning of another dream—to continue our education and improve ourselves. We are excited to vote! This is our American dream. We are a part of the land of opportunity. We are citizens of the greatest nation on earth."



Participants in the citizenship ceremony, including Oluwaleke Kehinde Ajayi (right, with his family)

## Schaumburg Township District Library

GRANT ROUNDS 2 AND 3

Schaumburg, Illinois, in the suburbs of Chicago, attracts workers from around the world to its global corporations. As a result, the Schaumburg Township District Library found that citizenship training was very much in demand.

In recognition of the library's five-year-long commitment to citizenship education, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services invited the library to host its third naturalization ceremony on September 20, 2013.

One of those receiving citizenship was Oluwaleke Kehinde Ajayi, who immigrated from Nigeria in 2002 to attend college. He received his pharmacy degree from Southern Illinois University and decided to pursue citizenship to open doors in his life. Today he is a pharmacist at the University of Illinois Chicago and says his citizenship has helped him advance in his career.

"As a citizen, you get to be a part of the American dream," he says. "It's better for me and for my family. I always wanted to be an American citizen."

The library continues to offer free, 12-week citizenship classes and hosts two naturalization ceremonies each year.

**GRANT FACT**



**Classes In Demand**

**More than 60% of the grantees offered classes, and more than 8,000 English language learners completed or graduated from courses.**





Conversation Club volunteer Becky Eckburg (right) teaches on an iPad

## Curating a 21st-century Collection

AS LIFELONG LEARNING CENTERS, libraries often provide patrons with their first interactions with software and technology. Over the past 10 years, American Dream libraries have used grant money to not only bolster their ESL books and materials but to also invest in language software programs, computers, laptops, and iPads for their students. Greater access to digital literacy, technology, and resources helps English language learners become a part of the community and train for the workforce.

## Louisville Free Public Library

### GRANT ROUND 4

For the Louisville Free Public Library, investing in the education of the thousands of new refugees who arrived in the metropolitan area each year is a top priority. To help new Americans and international students become more self-sufficient in school, work, and life, the library created English Conversation Clubs, which provide one-on-one assistance and help foster ties to the community.

With its American Dream grant, the library was able to purchase iPads and software to help students study for citizenship and GED exams, improve their pronunciation, and learn English idioms and grammar.

Fuqian Yuan, an immigrant from China and Conversation Club member, said the club and the iPads have helped him immensely.

"I have learned English for over eight years in China. However, my speaking and listening was terrible," he

"There were lots of 'aha' moments after the translating apps helped us!"

says. "When I first came to the club, I just wanted to see how it was going and I was not sure whether I could get what I needed. But now I can tell you that the club is working great. The iPads are also very helpful

to me with pronunciation apps. I have met a lot of nice and good people and am learning how to understand Americans better."

For Becky Eckburg, a Conversation Club volunteer, the iPad apps provided a quick reference and assistance during her tutoring sessions.

"There were times when I would struggle to explain a certain word, or a student did not know the English translation of a cultural word and had difficulty explaining it," she says. "At these times it was so useful to quickly type in the word we wanted translated, and there were lots of 'aha' moments after the translating apps helped us!"



Fuqian Yuan



# Cresskill Public Library

## GRANT ROUND 5

When the Cresskill Public Library received their American Dream grant, they had one goal: building on their collection of 245 ESL study materials and more than 2,000 Korean language books.

Located in Cresskill, New Jersey, where Korean Americans make up 18 percent of the population, the library used a portion of the grant to purchase additional ESL materials and Korean language books and DVDs.

But the library also wanted to invest in new technology to help the 1,400 English language learners that they served. Enter the SMART Board: an interactive display that allows teachers to project their lesson plans, highlight English phrases for discussion, and change words to better show their meanings. The library used their grant money to purchase the technology and found a new way to connect with their students.

Teachers, program presenters, and coding instructors also used the digital whiteboard to show PowerPoint presentations, present films, and display pages in books for story time.

The library also invested in a subscription to Lynda.com, which offers online courses to help patrons build new skills for personal and career growth. Users have taken training courses in areas such as computer programming and how to be more productive.

"It provides so many users with a wealth of valuable training tutorials that benefit so many," the library reports. "It further enhances our library services and follows our mission of providing lifelong learning for all residents."



"The SMART Board has been extremely useful in enhancing the ESL learning experience."



# El Paso Public Library

## GRANT ROUND 2

El Paso Public Library's bookmobile makes regular stops in neighborhoods throughout its city of 800,000, where 28 percent of the population lives below the poverty level and one in three adults is functionally illiterate. The library offers classes for adult learners at all branch locations, but lack of transportation makes it difficult for some patrons to attend.

The American Dream grant made it possible for the bookmobile to purchase three laptops for conducting job searches, filling out job applications and computer training.

El Paso resident Georgina Gaytan first used a computer on El Paso's bookmobile. Her daughter Paulina has since introduced her to search engines, email, and basic computer skills.

"My daughter and I can't afford a computer right now, so we are taking advantage of this wonderful program," Gaytan says.



Georgina Gaytan and her daughter

# Sterling Municipal Library

## Baytown, Texas

### GRANT ROUND 1

Literacy **computer usage doubled** from 384 hours to 770 hours

Number of users **increased 43 percent** to 522 users

Usage of Rosetta Stone software increased from **252 hours to 426 hours**







"Together we can do more than we can do on our own."

A class at the Sioux Center Public Library

# Building Sustainable Partnerships

FOR AMERICAN DREAM LIBRARIES, receiving the grant is often a bridge to building partnerships with organizations across their communities. By partnering, sharing resources, and amplifying each other's efforts, their literacy programs and classes reach farther and last longer than they would alone. These partnerships are built on a solid base of volunteers, whose valued, tireless work helps libraries and their patrons flourish.

## Sioux Center Public Library

GRANT ROUNDS 3 AND 4

Over the past 20 years, Sioux Center, Iowa has welcomed an influx of immigrants from Central and South America who are drawn to the region's agricultural opportunities.

But the small, rural town of 7,500 wasn't equipped to teach ESL courses. The library referred community members to classes at Northwest Iowa Community College, but the college was 30 miles away, with no public transit option, and while residents were interested they often did not complete the registration process.

Librarian Ruth Mahaffy, who speaks Spanish, worked with the college to simplify the registration process, increasing enrollment and convincing the college of the need for satellite courses. The college agreed, and together they partnered to offer ESL courses at Sioux Center Public Library several times a week. The college provides the instructor, while the library provides the space, and, thanks to the American Dream grant, the materials for the courses.

Mahaffy also garnered enough interest in the Spanish GED to convince the college to teach those courses at the library, as well. "It has been really exciting seeing people succeed and get their diplomas and find jobs," she

says. "I can go to the bakery in town and see one of our ESL students there working at the cashier and assisting everyone in English."

The classes and partnership have been so successful that several former students have even gone on to get their associate's degrees through Northwest Iowa Community College.

"Our missions are, at the heart, the same," Mahaffy says. "Together we can do more than we can do on our own. We both want to help people increase their literacy and fulfill their dreams. If we can work together and build off each other's strengths to fill those gaps, and utilize resources and the funding we have, it can be really powerful."



A class at the Sioux Center Public Library



**More than 65% of libraries reported that the grant funding improved networking with community partners and other libraries.**

# Blount County Public Library

## GRANT ROUND 6

The librarians at Blount County Public Library in Maryville, Tennessee knew they faced a gap in serving the Spanish-speaking members of the community. Local ESL courses were often inaccessible to community members, and the library didn't have any Spanish speakers on staff.

During an outreach event at the local Alcoa City Schools, Ari Baker, instructional librarian, learned that the school system was offering ESL classes for parents of their students. It seemed like an ideal situation: parents could learn English to help their children at school in a safe, comfortable environment.

"This great program was already happening, but it lacked resources," Baker says. "It was an opportunity to create a partnership to make the library a viable option for this community to access."

With its American Dream grant, the library extended its reach into the community and became a partner in the course. The library purchased textbooks for the class and provided funding for childcare, which freed up volunteers to take on one-on-one language tutoring. The library also instituted



A class offered by the school and the Blount County Public Library

Spanish-speaking computer courses and created a summertime book club. "The book club is a networking and fellowship time, and having that be around books and learning and language acquisition is really cool," Baker says. The partnership has proven to be an efficient way for both organizations to amplify their efforts and meet the needs of the community. "Without partnerships, we wouldn't be able to do it all," Baker says. "Extending the capacity of a library's service in the community is a key benefit."

"Extending the capacity of a library's service in the community is a key benefit."

# St. Petersburg Library System

## GRANT ROUND 3

To get the most out of its American Dream grant, the St. Petersburg Library System built a robust cohort of volunteers.

- ✦ **Two MLS librarians**, including a Spanish/French speaker, coordinated the system-wide ESL program.
- ✦ **Two core program volunteers contributed 657 hours** to developing and administering the program.
- ✦ Of the **67 volunteer tutors trained**, many were current or retired teachers and professionals who had prior literacy tutoring experience.
- ✦ An **ESL Tutoring Room** was created at the Main Library from unused library space and equipped with access to all resources and supplies needed for tutor and student meetings.
- ✦ **Volunteers developed original lesson plans** and handouts and stocked them for participants' use.
- ✦ A **quarterly tutor newsletter** was created to share program information, tips, and strategies.
- ✦ **Two program roundtable events** were held for tutors and students to share ideas and success stories.

**GRANT FACT**  
  
**Partnerships = Sustainability**

Grantees that developed partnerships were **seven times more likely** to have developed sustainable English language learner services.

## Guilderland Public Library

Guilderland, NY

### GRANT ROUND 1

**Literacy volunteers trained 24 tutors**, who worked with 35 students both one-on-one and in small groups. Literacy volunteers also successfully designed and tested a new "pilot program" to provide instruction to ESL tutors.





# What American Dream Libraries are Saying

Library staff and patrons weigh in on how the American Dream Literacy Initiative has helped them and their communities.



**"English is one of the hardest, if not the hardest, languages to learn. You write it one way and say it and read it a different way. My tutor has helped me a lot. Now I understand things that I couldn't understand before."**

—Tatiana Siano,  
English language learner from Russia,  
Citrus County Library System

**"I am a 54-year-old lady who never dreamed that I would learn how to use the computer."**

—Celia Almanza,  
English language learner,  
Moline Public Library

**"Watching our program grow and seeing so many new people come to the library has definitely been our greatest accomplishment. Having resources available to people who truly need them is the cornerstone of librarianship and is embedded in our mission and the work we do."**

—Head of Circulation and Technical Services,  
Maplewood Memorial Library



**"The most special thing for me is that when I go to church, I can figure out what is going on, sing some of the songs, and interact with my community."**

—Susanna Torres, class member,  
Lafourche Parish Library



**"There are a few native Chinese engineering professionals who have identified the library as a place where they can find resources to learn easy pronunciation, grammar rules, and American idioms. The library enables these very talented, bright, non-English speakers to further their potential in the United States."**

—Francesca Frucci,  
Information Services Specialist,  
Martin Library

**"These non-traditional students are so eager to learn and are extremely appreciative of the opportunity this class affords them. The library is now a place where they meet to learn, share, and feel respected in their community. It has been a privilege to be a part of this process."**

—Jaye Lahlou, Adult Services Librarian,  
Fairfax County Public Library

# Best Practices

American Dream libraries have identified several best practices that help them create strategic, sustainable programming to best meet the literacy needs of their communities.

## 1 Partner with other organizations

Sustainable programming is achieved through engagement with other organizations to create mutually beneficial programming. A multi-year impact study found that grantees who developed partnerships were seven times more likely to have developed sustainable English language learner services.

Says one librarian, "We can take funding and limited resources and really multiply them. We are helping each other and not duplicating efforts."



## 2 Develop an organizational infrastructure

Successful libraries effectively scheduled programs, provided facilities for programming, and developed an organizational infrastructure to meet the needs of the English language learner community.

Says one librarian, "If undertaking this process anew, I would designate a day each month in my calendar to work on reviewing the progress made and to clarify goals, make adjustments, make decisions regarding spending of funds, and so on."

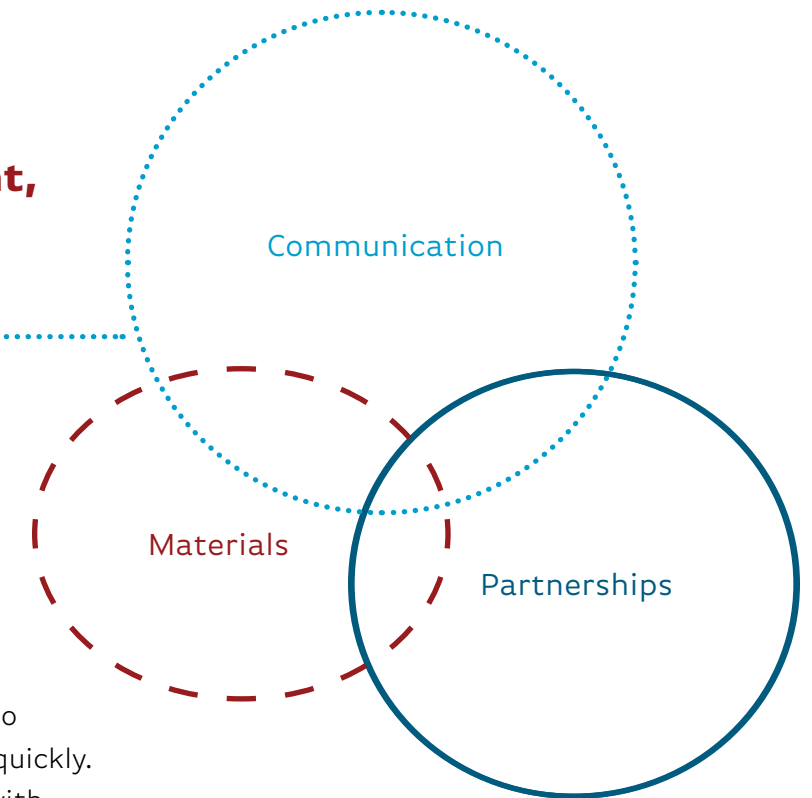
## 3 Find ways to reach your target market

More than 68 percent of libraries indicate that there is a population of English language learners in their community that are not currently accessing services but could potentially benefit from programming. Libraries found success reaching these potential students through traditional advertising, social media, and communicating with key organizations in the community.

## How to achieve relevant, sustainable English language services

## 4 Build a strong volunteer base

Successful libraries continually recruited new volunteers, created volunteer training programs, and developed standardized curriculum to help bring new volunteers on board quickly. To find volunteers, they connected with other local organizations (like literacy councils) who often had trained volunteers ready to teach or tutor.



## 5 Be flexible and assess to continually adapt to market needs

Libraries will often provide programming at one time during the day, only to find out that time doesn't work for their target population. The most successful libraries continually assessed their programming to ensure it met the community's needs.

"Adult students have very busy lives, and many times attendance fluctuates," reports one librarian. "However, many students wish to continue to improve their English. We are taking steps to offer ESL small group classes at various times during the week."



## Strategies Needed to Reach English Language Learners



# American Dream Libraries

Over the last decade, **188 libraries** across the nation have received American Dream grants.



## Alabama

Pinson Public Library



## Arizona

Chandler Public Library  
Pima County Public Library  
Prescott Public Library



## Arkansas

Bentonville Public Library  
Faulkner/Van Buren Regional Library  
Jackson County Library  
Mississippi County Library System (Osceola)  
Mississippi County Library System (Blytheville)



## California

A. K. Smiley Public Library  
Azusa City Library  
Camarena Memorial Library  
Riverside County Library  
Sacramento Public Library Authority



## Colorado

Bemis Public Library  
Douglas County Library

High Plains Library District  
Lafayette Public Library  
Montrose Regional Library District  
Pueblo City-County Library District  
Upper San Juan Library District  
Weld Library District



## Connecticut

Bridgeport Public Library  
Danbury Public Library  
Hamden Public Library  
New Haven Free Library  
The Ferguson Library



## Florida

Boynton Beach City Library  
Citrus County Library System  
DeSoto County Library  
Hialeah Public Libraries  
Lee County Library System  
North Miami Beach Library  
North Port Library  
Osceola Library System  
St. Petersburg Public Library  
Wilderness Coast Public Libraries (North Port)



## Georgia

Athens Regional Library System  
Athens-Clarke County Library  
Commerce Public Library (Piedmont Regional)  
Ocmulgee Regional Library

Pinewoods Library and Community Learning Center  
Roddenbery Memorial Library



## Illinois

Acorn Public Library  
Beardstown Houston Memorial Library  
Berwyn Public Library  
Bloomington Public Library  
Cahokia Public Library District  
Eisenhower Public Library District  
Gail Borden Public Library District  
Harrisburg District Library  
Homer Township Public Library District  
Kewanee Public Library District  
Melrose Park Public Library  
Mississippi Valley Library District  
Moline Public Library  
Plainfield Public Library  
Schaumburg Township District Library  
Summit Public Library District  
Town and Country Public Library District  
Wauconda Area Public Library  
Waukegan Public Library  
Wood Dale Public Library (DuPage)  
Zion-Benton Public Library District



## Indiana

Crown Point Community Library  
Frankfort Community Public Library  
Lebanon Public Library  
Monticello-Union Township Public Library



## Iowa

Sibley Public Library  
Sioux Center Public Library



## Kansas

Dodge City Public Library  
Independence Public Library



## Kentucky

Boone County Public Library  
Carroll County Public Library  
Gallatin County Public Library  
Lexington Public Library  
Louisville Free Public Library  
Russell County Public Library



## Louisiana

Calcasieu Parish Public Library  
Lafourche Parish Public Library  
Terrebonne Parish Library System



## Maryland

Prince George's County Memorial Library System  
Wicomico Public Library



## Michigan

Hamtramck Public Library  
Kent District Library  
Leanna Hicks Inkster Public Library  
Southfield Public Library



## Mississippi

First Regional Library



## Nebraska

Bennett Martin Public Library (Lincoln City)  
Hooper Public Library



## New Hampshire

Keene Public Library



## New Jersey

Atlantic County Library System  
Cresskill Public Library  
East Brunswick Public Library  
Keyport Public Library  
Leonia Public Library  
Livingston Public Library  
Lodi Memorial Library  
Maplewood Memorial Library  
New Brunswick Free Public Library  
North Bergen Free Public Library  
Passaic Public Library  
Paterson Free Public Library  
Piscataway Public Library  
Plainfield Public Library  
Plainsboro Public Library  
Princeton Public Library  
Rockaway Township Library  
Salem County Bookmobile Library  
South Brunswick Public Library  
South Orange Public Library  
Vineland Public Library  
West Orange Public Library  
Westwood Public Library



## New Mexico

Clovis-Carver Public Library  
Hobbs Public Library  
Moriarty Community Library  
Ruidoso Public Library  
Silver City Public Library  
Town of Bernalillo Martha Liebert Public Library



## New York

Brooklyn Public Library  
Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
David A. Howe Public Library  
Guilderland Public Library  
Highland Branch Library (Rochester Public Library)  
Onondaga County Public Library  
Poughkeepsie Public Library District  
Queens Borough Public Library  
Rochester Public Library  
Southeast Steuben County Library



## North Carolina

Burke County Public Library  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library  
Kill Devil Hills Library  
Martin Memorial Library  
Northwestern Regional Library  
Pasquotank-Camden Library  
Public Library of Johnston County & Smithfield  
Randolph County Public Library



## Ohio

Morley Library  
Perry Public Library  
Westlake Porter Public Library  
Wood County District Public Library



## Oklahoma

Tulsa City County Library



## Pennsylvania

Eva K. Bowlby Public Library  
James V. Brown Library  
Lebanon County Library District  
Martin Library  
Mt. Lebanon Public Library

Osterhout Free Library  
Sayre Public Library  
Wayne Library Alliance  
Whitehall Public Library



### South Carolina

Abbeville County Library System  
Dillon County Library  
Dorchester County Library  
Greenville County Library System  
Greenwood County Library  
Sumter County Library  
York County Library



### Tennessee

Blount County Public Library  
Memphis Public Library and Information Center  
Shelbyville-Bedford County Public Library



### Texas

Arlington Public Library  
El Paso Public Library  
Harris County Public Library  
Houston Public Library  
Irving Public Library  
Little Elm Public Library  
McAllen Public Library System  
Smithville Public Library  
Sterling Municipal Library



### Vermont

Fletcher Free Library



### Virginia

Alexandria Library  
Bedford Public Library System  
Campbell County Public Library System

Fairfax County Public Library  
Greenbrier Library of the Chesapeake Public Library System  
Loudon County Public Library  
Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library  
Newport News Public Library  
Norfolk Public Library  
Samuels Public Library  
Suffolk Public Library  
Thomas Jefferson Library (Fairfax County)



### West Virginia

Martinsburg-Berkley County Public Libraries



### Wisconsin

Madison Public Library  
Milwaukee Public Library  
Portage County Public Library



The **DOLLAR GENERAL LITERACY FOUNDATION**, founded in 1993, has awarded more than \$146 million in grants to literacy organizations that have helped more than 9 million individuals learn to read, prepare for the high school equivalency, or learn English. Grant programs are available to qualifying organizations in the 44 states where Dollar General stores are located.



The **AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (ALA)** is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all. For more information, visit [ala.org](http://ala.org).

## Country/region of origin

Percentage of grantee libraries that serve English language learners from these areas



*Statistics in this report were taken from evaluations done for each grant round and from a multi-year evaluation conducted by D Loer Consulting. The multi-year evaluation analyzed eight years of data. An online longitudinal survey for grantees was developed and administered, with a target of 50 responses. Far exceeding that goal, more than 90 libraries responded. The survey was followed up with phone interviews with 12 randomly selected respondents.*





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