



Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment APPLICATION FORM

Submit Application to: cddapplications@cityofmadison.com

Deadline: 12:00 pm CST (noon) on **August 19, 2022**

Official submission date and time will be based on the time stamp from the CDD Applications inbox. Late applications will not be accepted

Please limit your proposal and responses to spaces provided in this form. Responses to this RFP should be complete and comprehensive but succinct. Materials submitted in addition to this application form will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal. If you are applying for multiple program or activity areas you must fill out this application for each program or area. ***Do not attempt to unlock or alter this form.*** Font should be no less than 11 pt.

If you have any questions **related to the content of the application**, please contact: Hugh Wing – hwing@cityofmadison.com or Yolanda Shelton-Morris – yshelton-morris@cityofmadison.com

If you have any questions or concerns that are related to **technical aspects** of this document, including difficulties with text boxes or auto fill functions, please contact Jen Stoiber – jstoiber@cityofmadison.com

Legal Name of Organization:	Literacy Network, Inc.	Total Amount Requested:	\$ 100,000
Program Name:	Literacy for Employment		
Program or Activity are you Applying for:	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Employment Services (ages 14-21) <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Employment & Training <input type="checkbox"/> Wanda Fullmore Youth Internship Program <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult Employment Services (ages 18-26) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult Employment Services (18+)		
Contact Person:	Autumn Jackson	Email:	autumn@litnetwork.org
Full Address:	701 Dane St. Madison WI 53713	Telephone:	608-244-3911
501 (c) 3 Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Fiscal Agent (if applicable)	

Organizational Qualifications:

1. Describe your organization's experience implementing services relevant to the services described in the Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment RFP, including to those who are furthest from resources and opportunities and who face systemic barriers to employment.

Literacy Network has provided high-quality, free adult education services in Dane County since 1974. We offer programs for literacy skill development, English as a Second Language (ESL), digital literacy, citizenship, and GED/HSED to adults (18 years and older) in low-income households. Through one-on-one (1:1) tutoring and group instruction, participants build their basic skills, increase employability, and improve workplace communication.

About one in seven adults in Dane County have difficulty with reading, writing, and/or English language skills, creating barriers to employment. The lower an individual's literacy skills, the more likely they are to live in poverty (National Assessment of Adult Literacy). Increasing literacy and language communication skills provides an avenue for increased employability and empowerment in family and community life, and thus a pathway out of poverty.

At Literacy Network, our students' goals and needs come first; we provide individualized instruction as well as support beyond the classroom to help participants overcome barriers to participation. Workplace competencies are an important facet of Literacy Network's instruction, as many of the students we serve have employment-related goals. About 1 in 4 current enrollees aim to get a new job after building their skills, and about 1 in 3 want to improve their language or literacy skills so that they can perform better at their current job. For instance, Carlos joined a program because he wants to get a better job and find more opportunities. Rosa and Luis both want to land jobs in the professional fields they worked in in their home countries.

We help participants work toward their goals and celebrate new achievements. Yuriko had two jobs when she joined our ESL tutoring program in 2020; she started studying at Literacy Network to improve her English and communication skills at work. In 2021, Yuriko got a promotion at her factory job and became line supervisor. The accompanying pay increase was enough to allow her to leave her second job and focus on one position. A few months after becoming line supervisor and continuing to build her English skills, she was promoted again, this time to quality control, at an even higher rate of pay!

In group classes and individualized tutoring sessions, adults develop their English language, reading, writing, and digital skills and master workplace competencies. Every new participant works one-on-one with staff during intake to set their goals and identify needs. Our Student Services team provides additional wraparound supports through resource connections and participation barrier mitigation, peer persistence support, advising and mentoring. Staff help students overcome barriers so that they can focus on building their skills and achieving their goals.

Our programs and wraparound services provide unique opportunities for long-term skill development, which is crucial to economic and civic success. Additionally, as part of United Way of Dane County's HIRE initiative, Literacy Network has clearly demonstrated results providing employability skills services and collaborating with partner agencies in Dane County to support adults in preparing for and securing employment and living wages.

2. Describe how your agency builds relationships and authentically engages with individuals and households served. Specifically include information on previous strategies used to authentically engage with BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrant and/or low-income households and individuals.

Literacy Network listens to each student's story and understands that many people in our community have experienced significant educational and professional setbacks throughout their lives due to poverty, racism, sexism,

trauma, and negative experiences in public education. They are incredibly courageous in seeking out educational opportunities in the face of these challenges. Literacy Network respects both their vulnerabilities and their strengths.

About 85% of Literacy Network participants are English-language-learning immigrants or refugees, while 15% are high-level or native English speakers, often from the United States, who have goals related to literacy, digital skills, or high school equivalency. Over 90% of Literacy Network's participants are individuals of color. Nearly 70% of our participants are women. In Dane County, women earn on average \$17,000 less per year than men (per Data USA). Latina women, who represent the lowest-paid demographic in the county and in Wisconsin, make up 45% of Literacy Network's total annual participants of any gender identity. About 60% of new Literacy Network enrollees have not yet earned a high school diploma. Many learners who do have a high school diploma still struggle with literacy.

Literacy Network strives to create a warm, comfortable environment where everyone feels welcome. When we moved into our new learning center in 2016, we were proud to present a dignified space for adults to learn. Our Student Services department welcomes students and offers essential support for participants through recruitment and participant intake, persistence support, and advising services. As members of some of the same communities as our students, Student Services staff are important leaders and mentors. Two team members, including the current department manager, started their journeys with Literacy Network as language learners. Working with staff who have shared experiences has been incredibly valuable for students; Student Services has excelled in building trust among our learning community.

Our students' goals are the foundation of our services. Literacy Network relies on participant input to determine instructional topics and formats, program times, and locations. Intake includes goal-setting; students set goals then study in classes or tutoring programs with materials tailored to help them meet those goals. We work to make program experiences as culturally and individually relevant as possible, and regularly revise services, methodology, and materials based on participants' feedback.

Most of our learners are in low-income households and have a goal of obtaining meaningful, family-sustaining jobs. The United Way of Dane County estimates that 23% of area households struggle to make ends meet. We understand that poverty creates many barriers to learning and offer supports to mitigate these barriers. Student Services surveys participants regularly about needs and new barriers to personally connect them with a vetted community resource. We maintain a broad, up-to-date network of community partnerships so our learners can access the resources they need.

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to affect our learning community's employment situations. At the onset of the pandemic, 59% of Literacy Network students reported losing work, and economic recovery has been slow for participants; new jobs and promotions since 2020 have been reported at a lower rate than they were pre-pandemic. Many of our students work in hospitality, housekeeping, food service, and other customer-facing industries that were strongly affected early in the pandemic. These jobs have not bounced back as other industries have; per Working Wisconsin, that sector saw a nearly 7% job loss between February 2020 and June 2022. Literacy Network's expanded support during the height of the pandemic included connecting our learners to essential community resources. Student Anabel said, "I really appreciate that they truly want to help people... You can feel that they are really worried about your needs even during this pandemic. They have been asking everyone if we are affected [by] the pandemic, if we need something. It's not just about English classes, it's about helping people. It's about offering all the resources they have to help."

Linguistic responsiveness is also essential to our work, as our students come from backgrounds and countries all over the world, as well as diverse U.S. communities. Many of our staff are bilingual and/or bicultural, including speakers of Spanish, French, Portuguese, Mandarin, and Russian. We offer video, written, and pictorial guides to accessing Zoom instruction in English, Spanish, Hmong, Nepali, and Arabic. Registration, intake, and survey materials are in English and Spanish. All staff are trained to use Plain English, a written and spoken communication style that ensures participants can access organizational information whether they are speakers of other languages or native speakers working to improve their literacy.

Literacy Network has become a trusted resource in Madison by creating a community based on kindness, respect and interest in our learners' experiences and identities.

3. Describe your organization's experience, education and training requirements for program staff and management staff.

Program and management staff preferably have degrees in adult education, English language instruction, or a related field, or have significant relevant work experience. We seek staff who have demonstrated experience working with adults from diverse backgrounds, excellent interpersonal and intercultural communication skills, and commitment to Literacy Network's mission. Literacy Network recognizes that it benefits from diverse backgrounds and perspectives and considers candidates with other education and/or work experience who have enthusiasm and affinity for working with people to achieve their goals.

Key staff in Literacy for Employment include: the Associate Director (who has more than 10 years of experience managing program and staff at Literacy Network); Director of Program Impact (7 years at Literacy Network); Director of ABE & GED Instruction (5 years at Literacy Network); Director of ESL Group Instruction (4 years at Literacy Network); Director of ESL Tutoring (2 years at Literacy Network); three program and support services managers (who range from 6 months to 6 years at Literacy Network); and both full- and part-time ESL instructors, who average 5+ years teaching with us. Many of our staff also have previous experience, advanced degrees, and/or certificates in adult education.

We are proud to foster a work environment that promotes internal advancement. About half of our current program and management staff started at Literacy Network as interns, limited-term instructors, or volunteers. Training for new staff includes agency-wide overviews and observations, onboarding support, and program-specific sessions, as well as a staff mentorship program, which provides new staff with auxiliary support from peer colleague during the first 6 months of employment.

Literacy Network also supports professional development for staff for their growth and success and so that our agency can continually improve services. Opportunities include national and regional education conferences, local work groups, and trainings offered by partner agencies. For instance, our Student Services team was part of YWCA's Amplify Madison project in 2019, and has completed Wisconsin Literacy's Working with Vulnerable Populations training, Mental Health First Aid training, training on the Dane CORE rental assistance program, and resource training from United Way of Dane County. In 2021, our Student Services Manager received a certificate in sustainability and leadership from the Latino Academy of Workforce Development. Literacy Network also maintains a robust internal learning community with Lunch & Learns, teacher meetings, all-staff trainings, and reading groups.

Language and literacy instructors, interns, and volunteers are trained and supported by program managers. They are invited to participate in regular trainings and professional development to ensure their skills and knowledge reflect current best practices in English as a Second Language and adult literacy instruction.

Partnerships, Collaboration & Coordination

1. Describe your current and recent collaboration and partnerships with the following groups, specifying organization names, collaboration/partnership dates, and information about your shared work and accomplishments.

a. Organizations and groups that work with youth, young adults and/or adults.

Literacy Network maintains strong partnerships to create a robust support network for participants and make the most of our community's resources. To provide programs under Literacy for Employment, we formally partner with United Way of Dane County and agencies in its HIRE Initiative (more details on this partnerships are in 1b below). We also collaborate with other adult education services in Dane County, including Madison College, Omega School, and Latino Academy of Workforce Development, to ensure our participants are connected with the program that best meets their needs. We also collaborate with agencies that offer employment trainings, as detailed below, and organizations offering social services.

We have partnered for over a decade with Madison Metropolitan Area School District, and for more than 8 years with Middleton Cross Plains Area School District and Sun Prairie Area School District to provide programs meeting the needs of parents. We have also partnered with branches of the Madison Public Library for more than a decade and with Verona Public Library since 2014.

Additional current and recent program partners who provide services to youth, young adults, and adults include Centro Hispano, Jewish Social Services, New Bridge Madison, and Vera Court Community Center.

Literacy Network maintains an extensive referral network to connect participants with needed community resources; we bolstered this network with the development and implementation of regular student needs surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic. These surveys and referrals will continue and include connections to the following services, among others:

- 4-C for childcare assistance
- Joining Forces for Families for transportation assistance
- Tenant Resource Center for housing assistance
- YWCA for housing assistance
- Access Community Health for healthcare
- Public Health Madison and Dane County for WIC services
- Journey Mental Health for mental health services
- Project Recovery Line for AODA services
- Community Immigration Law Clinic for immigration legal services
- Catholic Multicultural Center for food assistance and legal services

b. Organizations that provide pre-employment/career preparation, employment services, and/or training and education.

Literacy Network has been a partner in United Way of Dane County's HIRE Initiative since 2013, working to help adults prepare for and obtain family-sustaining jobs. Our partner agencies in this initiative include Centro Hispano, JustDane, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, Urban League of Greater Madison, and YWCA. HIRE agencies provide unemployed and underemployed adults with training, coaching, and job placement. Each agency in the collaborative offers unique programs that address these goals. In addition to Literacy Network's basic literacy, English, and GED instruction, HIRE services include job trainings for specific trades or roles, workforce readiness skills trainings and individual coaching, career exploration services, job placement assistance, and job retention coaching. Participants are referred to agencies within the collaborative as appropriate to their goals and skills. United Way of Dane County's Employer Partners have committed to offering full-time positions with livable wages (at a minimum of \$16 per hour); we connect our participants to relevant Employer Partner job opportunities as applicable. United Way also offers Employer

Partners trainings on topics like implicit bias and cultural competency to ensure employers are well-equipped to help individuals succeed at work.

In addition to referrals within the HIRE Initiative, Literacy Network makes employment-related and training referrals as applicable to the Dane County Job Center for services, job fairs, and other trainings or events, and receives referrals for participants seeking to improve their literacy and language skills.

- c. Organizations and groups that focus on working with, or have a history of working with, low-income households, women, and those that are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and/or individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer + (LGBTQ+).

Many of the program partners listed in Sections 1a and 1b above primarily serve low-income households and historically-marginalized groups. For instance, all partner agencies in the HIRE collaborative focus on services for low-income households, and most serve a majority BIPOC participants. Centro Hispano and Latino Academy of Workforce Development's missions focus on serving the Latinx community; YWCA focuses on empowering women and eliminating racism. JustDane serves formerly incarcerated individuals.

Most of the area organizations we partner with also support groups represented among Literacy Network students, including undocumented individuals, single parents, women and children escaping abuse or poverty, and individuals who have faced barriers to their goals due to systemic discrimination.

2. Describe your plans to partner, collaborate, and coordinate services with organizations and groups, including names and partnership details. Please explain why and how these collaborations benefit the participants served. Organizations that identify key partnerships must provide written documentation of agreement/commitment from each listed partner.

As an ongoing partner in United Way of Dane County's HIRE Initiative, Literacy Network will continue to strengthen collaborations with United Way and with other member agencies (Centro Hispano, JustDane, Latino Academy, Urban League, and YWCA). As described in 1b above, this collaborative aims to ensure community members are well-prepared for and have access to meaningful, family-sustaining jobs. The programs proposed in this application are also supported in part by the HIRE Initiative.

Literacy Network's partnership with Madison College is central to the success of our GED/HSED program, as described in the application for that program. We also partner closely with the College to support learners in our Transitions ESL class, which focuses on academic English skills and helps learners build bridges to career opportunities and Madison College programs. Madison College staff visit the class to lead academic writing sessions and other relevant workshops.

Program Design

1. Describe the organization's program and proposed service delivery plan including recruitment and selection of participants, individual assessment process, anticipated number to be served, who will be served, duration, location, and goals.

Literacy for Employment will serve 200 adults from low-income households who aim to improve their reading, writing, computer, and English language skills to increase their employability. The instruction they receive is tailored to their individual career goals.

Research shows it takes 100-150 hours of instruction for an adult student to increase one language or literacy level; we are proud to see our students' skills – and goals! – develop over the years.

Many of the students who come to Literacy Network with employment goals already have jobs, but most often they are in low-wage positions or have multiple jobs to support themselves and their families. In 2021, 59% of Literacy Network students with workplace goals said they needed to improve their English or literacy skills to maintain their current employment. 24% specified wanting a new job, and 9% said they wanted a promotion.

Many people set new goals as they build their skills. For instance, Filiberto was working as a dishwasher and spoke no English when he started studying with a Literacy Network tutor in 2018. His goal was to learn enough English to become a waiter. After two years of weekly individualized English instruction, Filiberto was promoted to waiter. He also set a new goal to get his professional barber certificate! In 2021, he enrolled in the barber certificate program at Madison College and has started cutting hair.

Although unemployment is currently low in Madison, at 2.2%, thousands of adults are working in low-wage, low-opportunity situations, their skills and talents waiting to be unlocked. Workforce development programs must broaden their focus to include these community members. Focusing only on new job placement is too simplistic for our current reality; we also need to support workers as they seek promotions, raises, and long-term skill development while at their current jobs.

Literacy for Employment includes language and literacy instruction delivered in group class and 1:1 tutoring formats. Instruction incorporates level-appropriate workplace communication modules on topics such as understanding directions, asking for clarification, communicating with guests/clients/customers, interviewing, and writing professional emails and reports, as well as basic skill development in reading, writing, and computer instruction. Skills are developed using authentic, contextualized materials and activities including the Ventures ESL textbooks for adults, a highly regarded skill-based text series that contextualizes language and literacy instruction in workplace and life situations. Literacy Network's 1:1 ESL and Adult Basic Education (ABE) tutoring programs tailor instruction to an individual's goals for employment. For example, if Aisha wants to communicate clearly to be promoted to a supervisor role, her tutoring lessons are written to focus on those topics and include realistic practice.

Literacy Network provides individualized intake for all students, including a TABE CLAS-E oral proficiency test for adult English Language Learners and a Personalized Education/Employment Plan (PEP) for all participants. The PEP elicits information about the student's past educational experiences and helps them set goals around work (e.g. workplace & digital literacy and communication, soft skills, job training programs, resume/interview skills) and education (English language and literacy, high school completion, postsecondary education). Students are asked to purchase textbooks for their program, but scholarships are provided to cover the cost of the book whenever need is expressed.

Literacy Network moved all instruction to Zoom during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. When we returned to in-person instruction again in 2021, we maintained virtual program options. As a result of our successful integration of Zoom instruction and the positive response from participants, we will continue to offer both in-person and virtual classes in our Literacy for Employment program. To help participants access virtual classes, Literacy Network maintains a loan library of laptops and internet hotspots and has developed text message and video instructions (in Plain English, Spanish, Arabic, French, and Nepali) for participating in class sessions.

Classes are weekly (2 hours) or biweekly (1.5 hours/session; 3 hours/week). Literacy Network offers 3 semesters per year, with each semester lasting 12-14 weeks. We strongly support participants' re-enrollment in multiple semesters as most adult learners' goals are long-term; students receive persistence support and 1:1 advising throughout their participation. Research has shown that with 150 hours of instruction, adult students had a 75% probability of increasing one grade level in English Language fluency (Comings, Sum & Uvin 2000).

Students who stop attending programs get a support call from Student Services staff so that we can understand the barrier to participation and help make a connection to the appropriate resource. If the barrier is insurmountable at that moment, we normalize the fact that adults sometimes need to “stop out” of programs. Students will be welcome back when they are ready; we help them make a plan for returning to their program. Student Services maintains an extensive, vetted, up-to-date referral network to connect students with services they might need to address barriers. See our response to 1a under “Partnerships, Collaboration & Coordination” for further information on the community agencies to which we frequently refer our students.

Literacy Network will follow up on a regular basis with participants to collect updates on educational or career achievements, to update their PEPs, and to understand any new needs. We will reach at least 20% of annual participants with 6- and 12-month follow-up calls. Updates gathered in follow-up interviews will typically include employment status, wages, enrollment in training programs or higher education, and other new goals and achievements.

Literacy Network is located at 701 Dane St. within walking distance of the Madison Metro South Transfer Point, Madison College South Campus, Goodman Public Library, YWCA, Urban League of Greater Madison, Catholic Multicultural Center, and Centro Hispano. Partnering organization JustDane is Literacy Network’s tenant, which facilitates referrals for services for formerly incarcerated individuals. Our location is convenient to participants in the South Madison area, the neighborhood which has the greatest concentration of poverty in the City of Madison. It also allows Literacy Network to foster referral or programmatic collaborations with the nearby organizations mentioned above. Additionally, we will continue to offer Literacy for Employment programming at Lussier Community Center, Vera Court Neighborhood Center, and Meadowridge Library to better serve individuals in those areas.

Digital literacy is also an essential employability skill; participants in the Literacy for Employment programs will complete at least one digital literacy competency each semester (e.g. filling out online job applications or forms, composing or replying to an email, or determining the reliability of an online source). Literacy Network maintains a computer lab and 12 laptops for student use. We also have a loan library of laptops for participants to check out each semester. We provide ongoing support to students in virtual programs as they learn to utilize technology and access their classes.

Literacy for Employment programming at Literacy Network will serve 200 individuals per year, with the following annual outcomes:

- 160 participants (80%) will master a communication or literacy workplace competency.
- 160 participants (80%) will maintain employment or improve employment through a new job, raise, promotion, or increased responsibilities.
- 30 participants (15%) will earn promotions and/or raises at their jobs.
- 20 participants (10%) will obtain new jobs.

10 full-time staff consisting of instructors, program managers, and Student Services staff will:

1. Hire, train and support qualified full-time and part-time language and literacy instructors
2. Hire, train and support 42 tutoring program interns
3. Recruit, train and support over 200 volunteer tutors; regularly update volunteer and intern trainings according to research-based best practices
4. Develop targeted curriculum to support participants’ workplace goals

5. Provide quality culturally-responsive instruction in 1:1 tutoring and group class formats
 6. Provide individualized enrollment, advising, and persistence support to all Literacy for Employment participants
2. Describe the outreach/marketing methods the organization intends to employ to generate participation in the program and to reach the targeted populations considered priority for this funding.

Most Literacy Network students learn about us through word-of-mouth, a testament to the trust we've built with our students and their communities and the strong programs we deliver. Other new participants are referred via our cultivated relationships with Madison College and other organizations, including United Way HIRE Initiative partners (Centro Hispano, Urban League, Latino Academy, Just Dane, and YWCA), local libraries, and area schools. Occasionally, we promote our programs on La Movida radio and other news outlets. Literacy Network is also active on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (the most-used social media outlets among our learning community, according to our student surveys).

In 2022, we conducted an organization-wide survey which included asking students "How can we tell more people about Literacy Network?" Most replied "Social media!" We also know from adult education research that videos, especially those featuring student testimonials and personal stories, are particularly effective for outreach among the populations we serve. Over the past several years, we have developed numerous media featuring Literacy Network students sharing their own stories. We will continue featuring our student's stories to support recruitment and offer encouragement to people who might be inspired to sign up for class after hearing another adult speak about their fears, hopes, and eventual success!

3. Describe how your program includes input or suggestions from target population served in your program design and operation.

Literacy Network's programs rely on participant input to determine instructional topics and formats, program times, and locations. At intake, students set goals and identify their educational priorities to develop a Personalized Education/Employment Plan (PEP). Curricula are developed to reflect these priorities. Students in our 1:1 ESL and ABE tutoring programs receive lessons and activities that are tailor-made for their goals. For instance, if a student tells us she needs to understand requests from guests at her hotel job, her tutoring sessions will focus on developing listening comprehension skills through contextualized practice and authentic examples.

Literacy Network also surveys students in each program at the end of each semester. Program survey questions elicit information about the quality of the instruction, its relevance to the students' goals, the degree to which the learning atmosphere was welcoming and inclusive, and any additional suggestions students or tutors may have for improving our programs.

This survey data is compiled and reviewed at least three times a year by program managers, who use it to guide program improvements. Positive comments we see over and over in student surveys include, "My tutor is very patient and explains things well," and "I like that the classes are based on what I asked for." We see that it is extremely important to our students to have a welcoming, well-trained instructor, and lessons that are individualized to their needs. In response, we have built robust supports for teachers, interns, and tutors to ensure that is what our participants experience when they come to class. In our most recent annual student survey, 100% of participants said they liked their teacher or tutor!

Theory of Change & Logic Model

1. Describe how your proposed services are based on evidence of success, and how you will meet performance outcomes while maintaining quality services customized to each participant's needs. Please include the following in your response:
 - a. Past service outcomes and other accomplishments that validate your approach.
 - b. Best practices and proven resources for youth, young adults, and/or adults you will utilize.
 - c. How you will incorporate past experience with performance tracking and reaching outcomes, including challenges overcome.

Literacy Network has many years of demonstrated success providing language and literacy services to adults and helping them meet their employment goals, in partnership with the City of Madison and other supporting entities.

Since 2011, the City of Madison has supported Literacy Network's Essential Literacy program. For the last 5 years, we have set a goal in that program of the number of participants who will maintain, gain, or improve employment, and we have exceeded that goal each year. Our other City-supported programs, including Community English (formerly Family Literacy) and our GED/HSED Program, have also typically exceeded year-end goals. In Community English, our 5-year average shows 103% of our target goal of participants who completed program competencies. In the GED/HSED program, Literacy Network has met or exceeded performance targets every year for the number of people who earn a GED or HSED and for the percent of participants who master a knowledge competency relevant to their goal.

Even with the unexpected interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to adjust 2020 year-end targets, Literacy Network maintained high competency completion and engagement rates across our City-supported programs; we quickly pivoted to virtual programs at the start of the pandemic and supported our learners in continuing their studies through a mode that worked best for them.

Literacy Network's Literacy for Employment program addresses both short- and long-term goals. Long-term support is essential to developing the basic skills needed to succeed in work, family, and community life. Over the last 6 years, we have focused efforts on building wraparound support systems for our participants through our Student Services department, increasing student retention during normal years and helping retain students during the pandemic.

Employment-related competencies and goals are central to Literacy Network's programs. Pre-pandemic, an average of 16% of participants per year reported getting new jobs, and an average of over 28% reported getting promotions, raises, or increased responsibility at their current jobs. Most participants in these programs have maintained their employment each year, improving their literacy and communication skills to perform their jobs better.

As noted under Organizational Qualifications (question 2), new jobs and promotion since 2020 have been reported at a lower rate than they were pre-pandemic. In 2020 and 2021, an average of 10% of learners per year reported getting a new job and 13% reported promotions. We were heartened to see our students continue to make progress toward their goals even throughout these challenging years, and we will continue to bolster our services and strengthen our instruction to support participants toward their employment goals. We are pleased to see that in the first semester of 2022, the number of participants who got a new job increased 61% when compared to the same semester in 2021!

Literacy Network designs educational programming in accordance with best practices for adult language and literacy acquisition. Adult learners build their language and literacy and develop workplace skills in a culturally-competent learning environment. Our programs support ongoing enrollment and offer unique opportunities for long-term skill development, which is the most crucial element in adult basic education for increasing family income. A landmark

2015 study from Portland State University showed that adults who participate in 100 or more hours of educational programming increase their incomes over a decade by an average of nearly \$10,000 more than those who do not participate or participate fewer hours.

Research also shows that language learning is most effective when participants inform their own goals and objectives (Laiveniece 2016). At Literacy Network, goal-setting is an essential first step in our programs and in creating and updating Personal Education/Employment Plans (PEPs). Each class or tutoring session is uniquely tailored according to participants' goals, needs, levels, and feedback.

In 2018, researchers from CUNY advocated for a 'whole person' approach to adult education which helps "acknowledge students' life experiences and prior knowledge." Our tutors and instructors demonstrate patience, kindness, and supportive attitudes, and Literacy Network supports volunteers and staff in training in best practices and cultural competency. The importance of well-trained and culturally-competent tutors and instructors is essential when considering that "the classroom should be an emotionally safe and sympathetic space for learning where adults students feel encouraged by the instructor and by each other" (Carlson McCall, Padron & Andrews 2018). Respect and dignity are key values at Literacy Network.

Wraparound supports are a crucial component of Literacy Network's services, as personalized support is key to success in adult education. The American Council on Education has recognized that support services for adult learners help increase persistence and program completion, and the U.S. Department of Education has argued that such support systems are crucial for adults to move through basic skills programs and eventually into college or vocational training.

Literacy Network staff are skilled at tracking participant performance and program targets and delivering complete and accurate service reports. We regularly revise and improve our systems to track participant data and assess program success. This includes, for instance, regular check-ins with learners and updates each semester to Personal Education/Employment Plans (PEPs) to track promotions, job gains, workplace achievements, and other successes.

In the past, Literacy Network had the challenge of managing multiple systems to track program and participant data. We recently implemented a new secure cloud-based data management system to streamline our gathering, tracking, and reporting of outcomes. This system, implemented in 2021, has allowed us to track participant data and program outcomes more precisely. It also allows us to check program progress more easily throughout the year to help us ensure that we are on track to meet targets.

Regular check-ins with program staff on progress offer another level of oversight to ensure that programs are meeting the needs of participants and on track to serve learners in the best way possible.

If Literacy Network needs to update program targets due to unforeseen circumstances, as we did in 2020 with unexpected pandemic-related challenges, we will keep a clear line of communication with City Community Development Division staff.

2. Please describe current and past success in engaging community members and service recipients in developing and improving services.

Literacy Network engages community and service recipient feedback via 1) PEP interviews, 2) end-of-semester surveys, 3) annual student surveys, and 4) deep engagement with dozens of partner agencies, grantors, employer partners, and peers in our field.

Two examples of how we have successfully engaged with community members and service recipients, in which their input led directly to major long-term service initiatives, are 1) the development of our HIRE Education Employment programs as part of United Way of Dane County's HIRE initiative, and 2) our increased investment in our Student Services department over the last 6 years, in response to the needs expressed by students and community members.

Literacy Network has supported adults in reaching their employment goals for more than four decades; often this has meant adapting services in response to economic and market trends. This was especially important in the wake of the 2008 recession, when work was scarce and many jobs required increasing levels of education to meet the needs of an evolving economy.

In 2013, Literacy Network joined the United Way of Dane County's HIRE Initiative, a coalition of non-profit agencies and area employers dedicated to helping community members prepare for and obtain better-paying jobs. Our near decade-long collaboration has allowed us to view the problems of un- and under-employment from many angles, and to identify changing needs and growth opportunities. HIRE agencies also participate in the HIRE Employer Council, where we hear about industry and hiring needs from area employers and communicate to them the challenges faced by un- and under-employed community members.

Many of our partner agencies specialize in supporting one or more of the many groups represented among Literacy Network students. Our partners' expertise has been essential in expanding our understanding of the diverse challenges faced by adults struggling with low literacy. Many of the individuals we serve as a coalition face overlapping barriers; we regularly refer participants to our partner agencies and work together to identify broader income and employment trends in Dane County, Wisconsin, and the U.S. Agencies also participate in the HIRE Employer Council, where we hear about industry and hiring needs from area employers and communicate to them the challenges faced by un- and under-employed community members.

With Dane County unemployment currently at a low 2.2%, the HIRE coalition has identified the need to expand our focus to help workers achieve promotions, raises, skill-building, and other career-building activities within their current jobs. Through years of partnership with area employers, we have seen that career support for disadvantaged workers cannot stop with job placement. Literacy Network student intake data supports this: as mentioned earlier, 59% of the adults who came to Literacy Network in 2021 identified wanting to build the skills to maintain and succeed in their current job.

Poverty-related barriers are the most common impediment to participant progress: transportation is expensive and unreliable; childcare continues to increase in cost; poverty-associated health problems can make it hard to get to class or work or to focus well. Literacy Network has continuously increased our Student Services support to help participants remove these barriers by connecting them to the right resource at the right time, and by encouraging them via re-engagement calls and texts to re-join their program when circumstances allow.

The relentless stress of poverty was more evident than ever at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the economic repercussions and job losses disproportionately affected communities we serve. In response to this crisis, Literacy Network invested even more deeply in Student Services support to our participants. We conducted weekly student need surveys and provided 1:1 follow-up to the hundreds of requests that poured in for food, household supplies, income assistance, rent assistance, and access to health and COVID-19 safety information in Plain English.

We continue to conduct student needs surveys every semester, along with program-specific and annual agency-wide student surveys.

3. Please describe your plan to meaningfully involve service recipients, including past, present and potential recipients, in ongoing design, flexing and improvement of proposed youth, young adult, and/or adult employment services. Literacy Network will continue to elicit participant feedback through PEPs and surveys. We also plan to develop a Student Advisory Board in 2023 to help inform the overall direction of our agency.

Every participant at Literacy Network is interviewed about their goals, needs, past educational experiences, learning styles, and availability as part of the intake process. Instruction is tailored to the individual and collective participant needs expressed in these interviews (data is collected and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively). Literacy Network also conducts regular end-of-semester student surveys and adjusts programming based on student responses. For more detailed information on the PEP and end-of-semester survey, see our response to Program Design Question #3.

As mentioned above, our Student Services department began conducting regular student need surveys during the pandemic when many of our participants lost work and struggled to support their families. We expanded our support to connect participants with food, vaccine information, household supplies, rent assistance programs, and more. We have conducted nearly a dozen organization-wide rounds of these surveys since 2020, each time reaching hundreds of participants. Data from these surveys led to the development of a robust, well-vetted, and updated database of resources to assist with the most common participant needs and to assess the success rate of each referral.

Literacy Network also conducts an annual organization-wide student survey. The annual student survey goes beyond the program experience to ask students how they feel about marketing, development, leadership, board, and student representation at the organization. In 2022, 51% of participants said they want to have input into Literacy Network processes and decision-making via student surveys and votes; additionally, over 30 individuals expressed interest in participating in a paid Student Advisory Board. In response to this interest, Literacy Network plans to form a Student Advisory Board; students, who will be compensated for their time, will have the opportunity to advise the organization on issues related to every area of the organization: programming, development, marketing, board, and organizational management.

Budget - Complete the Budget Worksheet, including all costs for which you request funding through this RFP. All costs included must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable among the stated cost categories.



Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment APPLICATION FORM

Submit Application to: cddapplications@cityofmadison.com

Deadline: 12:00 pm CST (noon) on **August 19, 2022**

Official submission date and time will be based on the time stamp from the CDD Applications inbox. Late applications will not be accepted

Please limit your proposal and responses to spaces provided in this form. Responses to this RFP should be complete and comprehensive but succinct. Materials submitted in addition to this application form will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal. If you are applying for multiple program or activity areas you must fill out this application for each program or area. ***Do not attempt to unlock or alter this form.*** Font should be no less than 11 pt.

If you have any questions **related to the content of the application**, please contact: Hugh Wing – hwing@cityofmadison.com or Yolanda Shelton-Morris – yshelton-morris@cityofmadison.com

If you have any questions or concerns that are related to **technical aspects** of this document, including difficulties with text boxes or auto fill functions, please contact Jen Stoiber – jstoiber@cityofmadison.com

Legal Name of Organization:	Literacy Network, Inc.	Total Amount Requested:	\$ 30,000
Program Name:	GED/HSED		
Program or Activity are you Applying for:	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Employment Services (ages 14-21) <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Employment & Training <input type="checkbox"/> Wanda Fullmore Youth Internship Program <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult Employment Services (ages 18-26) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult Employment Services (18+)		
Contact Person:	Autumn Jackson	Email:	autumn@litnetwork.org
Full Address:	701 Dane St. Madison WI 53713	Telephone:	608-244-3911
501 (c) 3 Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Fiscal Agent (if applicable)	

Organizational Qualifications:

1. Describe your organization's experience implementing services relevant to the services described in the Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment RFP, including to those who are furthest from resources and opportunities and who face systemic barriers to employment.

Literacy Network has provided high quality, free adult education services in Dane County since 1974. We offer programs for literacy skill development, English as a Second Language (ESL), digital literacy, citizenship, and GED/HSED to adults (18 years and older) in low-income households.

For the last 5 years, Literacy Network has offered a personalized, one-on-one (1:1) GED/HSED tutoring program to support adults as they prepare for GED/HSED tests or take HSED subject classes. We have been proud to help 88 participants earn their GED or HSED.

A high school equivalency certificate creates pathways to new opportunities for adults. As Melisa, a GED/HSED Program graduate, put it: "Doors have opened drastically for me; I feel like I can do anything!" The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than 70% of jobs nationwide require a high school diploma or further education. According to Working Wisconsin, the median hourly wage for a Wisconsin resident without a high school diploma is \$11.56, compared to \$17.27 for an individual with a high school diploma and \$27.82 for someone with a bachelor's degree. Attaining a high school equivalency certificate such as a GED or HSED is a clear path to increasing individual incomes and moving families out of poverty. Additionally, a GED or HSED is a step toward other credentials and education; the National Center for Education Statistics estimates that nearly 50% of GED recipients continue with higher education and have a 90% persistence rate in those programs.

Hanane first came to Literacy Network in 2020 to improve her reading and writing skills and eventually earn a high school diploma. She began taking HSED classes at Madison College in fall 2020, and met 1:1 with a Literacy Network tutor for support. Hanane and her tutor met for nearly a year, during which time she also started taking CNA classes. In late 2021, Hanane completed her HSED and received her diploma! By the end of the year, she also became a certified nursing assistant and landed her dream job.

Melisa, who earned her GED with Literacy Network's support in 2018, tried multiple times to get her GED before finding Literacy Network. She successfully earned her diploma after working with a tutor in our program; Melisa identified the individualized support as a key to success, as well as our kind and encouraging staff: "I didn't feel judged when I was walking through the door." She recently shared updates on the evolution of her goals since earning her GED: "When I left Literacy Network, I immediately applied for college." Melisa is on track to graduate from Madison College's Respiratory Therapy degree program in 2023!

Literacy Network supports adult learners by providing high quality instruction and a welcoming, dignified atmosphere, whether tutoring happens in person or online. Many of our students share that past school experiences have left them feeling uncomfortable in traditional group classes; our 1:1 tutoring option provides a comfortable setting for them to build the confidence and skills needed to reach their goals.

Literacy Network also provides all participants with critical wraparound services including resource connections, persistence support, and advising. Our staff assist students in identifying and resolving barriers to participation such as housing, job instability, childcare needs, and health challenges so that they are able to focus on their studies.

2. Describe how your agency builds relationships and authentically engages with individuals and households served. Specifically include information on previous strategies used to authentically engage with BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrant and/or low-income households and individuals.

Literacy Network listens to each student's story and understands that many people in our community have experienced significant educational and professional setbacks throughout their lives due to poverty, racism, xenophobia, sexism, trauma, and negative experiences in public education. They are incredibly courageous in seeking out educational opportunities in the face of these challenges. Literacy Network respect both their vulnerabilities and their strength.

More than 95% of Literacy Network total annual participants are in households with low income. Over 90% are BIPOC, and nearly 70% are women. About 85% of Literacy Network total annual participants are immigrants, while 15% are high-level or native English speakers.

Our Student Services team welcomes students into our building, which was designed as a comfortable and dignified space for adults to learn, and provides essential support for all Literacy Network participants. We understand that poverty creates many barriers to learning, and offer supports to mitigate these barriers through connections to community resources. Student Services and program staff survey participants regularly about their needs and assist in removing barriers so the student can continue coming to class.

Cultural and linguistic responsiveness are central to our work, as our students come from backgrounds and countries all over the world, as well as diverse U.S. communities. Many of our staff are bilingual and/or bicultural, and all staff are trained to use Plain English, a written and spoken communication style that ensures participants can access organizational information whether they are speakers of other languages or native speakers working to improve their literacy.

Participants' goals and needs are the foundation of our services. Literacy Network's programs rely on participant input to determine instructional topics and formats, program times, and locations. The program intake includes a Personal Education/Employment Plan (PEP) with goal-setting and discussions on hopes and challenges. We strive to make program experiences as culturally and individually relevant as possible, and regularly revise services, methodology, and materials based on participants' feedback. Students who don't fare well in large institutional settings or who rely on caring relationships to coax out their confidence find their needs met at Literacy Network.

1:1 tutoring is an important option for community members interested in earning a GED or HSED, as adults in this program have often had difficult or traumatic experiences with traditional educational formats. Countless students have told us having their own tutor was what made the difference for them to finally succeed. Wraparound services specific to the GED/HSED program include online pre-test registration assistance, advising, free GED Test and Ready vouchers to remove financial barriers to testing, and weekly check-in texts to encourage persistence and offer encouragement. We have built a program that is supportive, engaging, and tailored to participants' needs.

Tutoring relationships in our programs often bring together individuals from disparate socioeconomic and cultural groups into relationships of trust and mutual understanding, creating a diverse and accepting atmosphere. Through these relationships, in addition to individualized attention and instruction, learners gain access to the resources and career networks enjoyed by many of the volunteers. Volunteers deepen their understanding of the realities faced by BIPOC, immigrant, and low-income residents of our community, better equipping them to disrupt inequalities in their own spheres of influence.

3. Describe your organization's experience, education and training requirements for program staff and management staff.

Program and management staff have degrees in education or a related field, and/or have significant work experience in adult education. Our Director of ABE & GED Instruction has over 35 years of experience working in adult education and GED programs, and our Transitions Program Manager has 6 years of experience in adult education. All staff have demonstrated experience working with adults from diverse backgrounds, excellent interpersonal and intercultural communication skills, and commitment to Literacy Network's mission. Literacy Network recognizes that it benefits from having staff with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When hiring, we consider candidates with transferrable educational, work, and/or lived experience who demonstrate an enthusiasm and affinity for working with people to achieve their goals.

We are proud to foster a work environment that promotes internal advancement; more than half of current program staff started at Literacy Network as interns, limited-term instructors, or volunteers. Training for new staff includes onboarding support, agency-wide and program-specific sessions, and a staff mentorship program, which provides new staff with auxiliary support from peer colleague during the first 6 months of employment.

Literacy Network also supports professional development for staff so that staff can grow and succeed to continually improve our services. Development opportunities include national and regional education conferences, local work groups, and trainings offered by partner agencies. Literacy Network also maintains a robust internal learning community with Lunch & Learns, teacher meetings, all-staff trainings, and reading groups.

It is essential that our students work with a welcoming, well-trained tutor who delivers lessons that are individualized to their needs; we have built robust trainings and support systems to ensure tutors are well-prepared. We seek volunteer tutors who are reliable, professional, patient, and kind. The Program Director and program staff provide initial and ongoing training, support and direction to volunteer tutors. Volunteers are trained in cultural competence as well as instructional techniques and are encouraged to be aware of and address their own assumptions about adults with low literacy before beginning tutoring.

Partnerships, Collaboration & Coordination

1. Describe your current and recent collaboration and partnerships with the following groups, specifying organization names, collaboration/partnership dates, and information about your shared work and accomplishments.

- a. Organizations and groups that work with youth, young adults and/or adults.

Literacy Network develops and maintains strong partnerships to create a robust support network for participants and make the most of our community's resources. To deliver our GED/HSED programming, we formally partner with 1) the Madison College School of Academic Advancement and 2) our partner agencies in the HIRE Initiative facilitated by United Way of Dane County (more details on these partnerships in 1b below).

We also connect students who want to complete the GED in Spanish with our partners at the Latino Academy of Workforce Development.

In addition to these primary partnerships, Literacy Network refers to and collaborates with other agencies that offer employment trainings, as detailed below, and organizations offering social services.

We have partnered for over a decade with Madison Metropolitan Area School District, and for 8 years or more with Middleton Cross Plains Area School District and Sun Prairie Area School District, to provide

programs meeting the needs of parents in each district. We have also partnered with branches of the Madison Public Library for more than a decade and with Verona Public Library since 2014.

Additional current and recent program partners who provide services to youth, young adults, and adults include Centro Hispano, Jewish Social Services, New Bridge Madison, and Vera Court Community Center.

Literacy Network also maintains an extensive referral network to connect participants with needed community resources; we bolstered this with the development and implementation of regular needs surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Student Services department keeps an up-to-date list of community agencies and makes appropriate referrals to social service providers such as Access Community Health, the Community Immigration Law Clinic, Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, Rape Crisis Center, Porchlight, Journey Mental Health, Reach Dane, YWCA, Catholic Multicultural Center, Centro Hispano, Lutheran Social Services, Jewish Social Services, and many others.

- b. Organizations that provide pre-employment/career preparation, employment services, and/or training and education.

Literacy Network partners closely with Madison College's School of Academic Advancement to support participants in the GED/HSED program. Students working toward a GED or HSED at Madison College have the opportunity to receive personalized tutoring assistance from Literacy Network; an agreement between our agency and the College, as well as disclosures signed by students in the program, allow us to share participant information and collaborate closely to offer strong support services. Throughout the semester, Literacy Network staff communicate with Madison College advisors, instructors, and administrative staff regarding program effectiveness and individual students' needs.

Literacy Network also develops and maintains partnerships to create a strong employability support network for participants. We have been part of United Way's HIRE Initiative since 2013, working to help adults prepare for and attain family-sustaining jobs. The GED/HSED program has been included in HIRE since 2017. HIRE brings together Dane County's most diverse, experienced, and respected community-based adult education and workforce development agencies, as well as agencies providing work-support resources. Our partner agencies in the HIRE Initiative include Centro Hispano, JustDane, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, Urban League of Greater Madison, and YWCA. The Director of ABE & GED Instruction also has an extensive network of community contacts to connect our students with many services, including the Dane County Job Center and FoodShare Employment & Training (FSET).

Literacy Network will continue to build partnerships with adult employment and training partners to refer Literacy Network participants to trainings that align with their employment goals, and to accept referrals of participants who want to get a high school equivalency diploma.

- c. Organizations and groups that focus on working with, or have a history of working with, low-income households, women, and those that are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and/or individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer + (LGBTQ+).

Many of the program partners listed in Sections 1a and 1b above primarily serve low-income households and historically-marginalized groups. For instance, all partner agencies in the HIRE collaborative focus on services for low-income households, and most serve a majority BIPOC participants. Centro Hispano and Latino Academy of Workforce Development's missions focus on serving the Latinx community; YWCA focuses on empowering women and eliminating racism. JustDane serves formerly incarcerated individuals.

Most of the area organizations we partner with also support groups represented among Literacy Network students, including undocumented individuals, single parents, women and children escaping abuse or poverty, and individuals who have faced barriers to their goals due to systemic discrimination.

2. Describe your plans to partner, collaborate, and coordinate services with organizations and groups, including names and partnership details. Please explain why and how these collaborations benefit the participants served. Organizations that identify key partnerships must provide written documentation of agreement/commitment from each listed partner.

Our partnership with Madison College is central to the success of our GED/HSED program.

Literacy Network offers in-class tutoring at Madison College to support students in the 5.09 HSED program, a series of courses offered in Wisconsin as an alternative to the GED. Tutors trained and supported by Literacy Network work 1:1 with students in the College's HSED classes to provide individualized assistance. Students who need additional support with their 5.09 class are paired with a Literacy Network tutor for 1:1 instruction outside of their HSED class. The College also refers GED students to Literacy Network when 1:1 support is needed, and we help community members access GED testing at the College (creating an account, accessing the online testing portal, etc.).

GED/HSED students sign a Madison College disclosure at enrollment which gives permission for Literacy Network staff to communicate with the Madison College School of Academic Advancement and the Testing Center regarding initial pre-test scores and progress toward GED/HSED completion. Each semester, the Director of ABE & GED Instruction receives progress reports from the College for GED/HSED students to ensure that students are on track to reach their GED/HSED goal. The Director of ABE & GED Instruction and other program staff meet quarterly with the School of Academic Advancement's Program Administrator to assess the effectiveness of our tutors, the ongoing needs of the student population we jointly support, and any necessary programmatic changes.

Program Design

1. Describe the organization's program and proposed service delivery plan including recruitment and selection of participants, individual assessment process, anticipated number to be served, who will be served, duration, location, and goals.

Literacy Network's GED/HSED Program provides weekly 1:1 tutoring sessions to adults with high school completion goals. Each year, we will support at least 50 students working toward a GED or HSED; at least 15 people per year will earn their high school equivalency diplomas.

Recent census data shows that approximately 4% of Dane County residents do not have their high school diploma; overall, Dane County's outcomes for high school completion are among the best in the state. However, there is a marked disparity in outcomes for BIPOC residents: 10% of Black residents in Dane County do not have a high school diploma, and 22% of Hispanic/Latino residents do not have a high school diploma.

Literacy Network's program supports GED and 5.09 HSED students. The GED is comprised of a series of 5 online subject-area tests. According to GED Testing Service, it takes an average of 3 to 8 months to complete a GED. GED students are likely to have at least a 9th grade reading level and some comfort with online test-taking. The 5.09 HSED is offered in Wisconsin as an alternative to the GED; it is a competency-based path to high school completion. It is a good choice for those who struggle with timed exams due to language and literacy barriers or learning differences, as well as those who enter the high school completion path with lower initial reading and/or digital skills. Students who wish to pursue an HSED take subject-area classes at Madison College and complete additional Health and Employability requirements. An HSED may take several semesters to complete, as participants often take one subject at a time.

Our GED/HSED program primarily serves adults in low-income households. At least half of 2021 participants were parents to school-age children, and 13% were single mothers. In 2020 and 2021, 65% of GED/HSED program participants were women, and 84% were people of color. Nearly 10% of 2021 participants disclosed having a

disability. In 2021, 29% of Literacy Network's GED/HSED Program participants had formal education below 9th grade, while 71% had some high school experience. Most of our students have a path of semesters or years ahead of them to make up for missed K-12 years. More than 70% of the Literacy Network students studying to complete their GED or HSED also work to support themselves and their families and must schedule around employment and family commitments to attend 2 hours of class or tutoring per week.

Adults who come to Literacy Network interested in our GED/HSED program, or who are referred by Madison College, first meet with program staff for an intake appointment. At intake, staff interview each student about their goals, challenges, previous education experiences, and availability for tutoring. Literacy Network partners with Madison College to test incoming students using the TABE assessment. If students test below an appropriate level to begin studying for their GED or HSED, they will be referred to other Literacy Network programming to build their basic skills first.

In the GED/HSED Program, learners meet 1:1 with trained volunteers in weekly sessions to work on personalized lessons. Many of our students share that past school experiences have left them feeling uncomfortable in group classes; 1:1 tutoring provides a better setting for them to build the confidence and skills needed to reach their goals. To accommodate students' work and home lives, students and tutors schedule their own meeting day, time, and place.

Tutoring pairs may meet virtually, at Literacy Network, at Madison College, or at area libraries, depending on their comfort, transportation, and scheduling needs. Virtual meetings became an option due to the COVID-19 pandemic; as this approach has been highly successful for many participants and has eliminated barriers such as transportation and childcare for some people, we will maintain virtual meeting options for the foreseeable future.

Tutoring sessions are overseen by the Program Director, who writes weekly individualized lesson plans and provides materials for each pair. Lesson plans are tailored to participants' skill levels, goals, and learning styles. Using vetted GED/HSED publications, online resources, and realia, the lesson plan covers multiple objectives in each 2-hour session. Literacy Network also provides free test vouchers for the official practice and GED tests. When practice test scores indicate readiness, our staff facilitate registration for a test date at the Madison College Test Center or via online proctored testing.

Literacy Network staff conduct weekly reminder calls to 1:1 tutoring participants. The Program Director will contact students who miss more than three classes to discuss their personal situation and help address scheduling, transportation, health, or childcare barriers. If a student needs to "stop out" of the program due to external circumstances, the Director will reach out to re-engage the student in programming in a future semester.

Literacy Network also offers in-class tutoring at Madison College to support students in the 5.09 HSED program. Tutors trained by Literacy Network are placed in the 5.09 HSED classes for all subjects; during class, tutors help students who need additional assistance with the material or need to make up missed work. In-class 5.09 tutors are supported by Literacy Network's Transitions Program Manager. Students in the classes sign disclosures which give the Director of ABE & GED Instruction and the Transitions Program Manager permission to consult with Madison College staff regarding students' needs. Many students in the 5.09 HSED classes also choose to meet weekly with a 1:1 tutor at Literacy Network.

We know that learning takes time, especially for busy adults with multiple responsibilities, and we support our learners in their educational journeys for as long as they need. Many of our students stay with us for multiple

semesters and we are glad to support their persistence as they move closer to their goals. In 2020 and 2021, just over 30% of participants each year earned their GED or HSED. During the three-year period between 2019-2021, 60% of Literacy Network's GED/HSED program participants completed their high school credentials – they just needed time! The national rate of GED completion is 59.9%; national average completion rates are lower for Black (45%) and Latino/a (53%) students. 72% of Literacy Network participants are Black or Latino/a; the 60% completion rate among Literacy Network GED/HSED participants is higher than the average national completion rates for both groups.

Literacy Network will follow up with participants who complete or exit programming to collect updates on their new educational or career achievements and goals and gather information on their new needs. We will aim to reach 20% of those served annually for 6- and 12-month follow-up calls. Updates may include employment status, wages, enrollment in training programs or higher education, and other new goals and achievements. Because such follow-up calls are a new component of the program, we will assess the data gathered in these calls and after the first year, will share our assessment of results (including what percentage of participants we reached, and what information we were able to collect). Additionally, we will reach out to participants who have exited or “stopped out” of the program without completing for follow-up and/or to re-enroll in programs.

2. Describe the outreach/marketing methods the organization intends to employ to generate participation in the program and to reach the targeted populations considered priority for this funding.

Literacy Network will provide information about its programs through flyers posted in community locations, information on its website, and intentional outreach to partnering community organizations. Madison College is a central referral partner. The Director of ABE & GED Instruction collaborates with organizations throughout Dane County to refer our participants to their services and to receive referrals for the GED/HSED program; the Director has connections with staff in the Dane County Job Center, FSET, the UW Health System, the Beacon day program, and other community agencies. We will also partner with the following organizations for referrals through intentionally cultivated relationships: JustDane, Urban League of Greater Madison, YWCA, and Oakhill Correctional Facility.

Beyond these targeted recruitment strategies, we strive to make our programs the best they can be for each learner; as a result, our students regularly recommend friends and family to our programs. Word-of-mouth is regularly at the top of the list when we ask participants how they heard about us.

3. Describe how your program includes input or suggestions from target population served in your program design and operation.

The GED/HSED program responds directly to our participants' goals and needs; we rely on participant input to determine instructional topics and formats, program times, and locations. At intake, students set goals and identify their educational priorities to develop a Personalized Education/Employment Plan (PEP); lessons delivered in tutoring sessions are individualized to their needs.

Tutors and students provide weekly feedback on their progress through a detailed Tutoring Feedback Form, which helps inform the direction of the next lesson and allows students to share successes and challenges. As mentioned above, Student Services and the program director follow up on any newly identified barriers to help connect participants to community resources and support systems.

Additionally, participants complete surveys each semester to provide feedback on their experience in the program, the quality of instruction, its relevance to their goals, the learning atmosphere, and so on. We strive to ensure that the program feels welcoming and inclusive for all. Tutors are also given the opportunity to provide feedback and

suggestions. Survey data is reviewed each semester by the Director of ABE & GED Instruction and is used to guide program improvements.

Theory of Change & Logic Model

1. Describe how your proposed services are based on evidence of success, and how you will meet performance outcomes while maintaining quality services customized to each participant's needs. Please include the following in your response:
 - a. Past service outcomes and other accomplishments that validate your approach.
 - b. Best practices and proven resources for youth, young adults, and/or adults you will utilize.
 - c. How you will incorporate past experience with performance tracking and reaching outcomes, including challenges overcome.

Literacy Network has many years of demonstrated success in providing language and literacy services to adults and helping them meet their high school completion goals, in partnership with the City of Madison and other supporting entities. Since the start of our GED/HSED Program in 2017, we have helped 88 adults earn their high school equivalency credentials.

Literacy Network's GED/HSED Program has been supported by the City of Madison since 2018. We have met or exceeded our performance targets for this grant every year, including the number of people earning a GED or HSED and the percentage of participants mastering a knowledge competency relevant to their high school completion goals. Even with the unexpected interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to adjust 2020 year-end targets, Literacy Network maintained high completion and competency mastery rates in the program. We quickly pivoted to virtual tutoring at the start of the pandemic and supported our learners in continuing their studies through a mode that worked best for them.

Interest in the GED/HSED program has increased over the years, as it has for all Literacy Network programs, and as of 2022 is back on track after the dip caused by the onset of the pandemic. As individuals and agencies adjust to the "new normal" of post-pandemic services, we anticipate seeing continued programmatic growth. Our updated and increased targets proposed in this application reflect that anticipated growth; we have increased our target number to be served by 11% over previous years, and have increased our annual target number of GED/HSED completions by 50% over previous years.

Our programs offer unique opportunities for long-term skill development, which is the most crucial element in adult basic education for increasing family income. A landmark 2015 study from Portland State University showed that adults who participate in 100 or more hours of educational programming increase their incomes over a decade by an average of nearly \$10,000/year over those who do not participate or participate fewer hours.

Literacy Network designs programming in accordance with best practices for adult education. Research shows that adult education is most effective when participants inform their own goals and objectives, a practice central to Literacy Network's programs through the intake interviews and Personal Education/Employment Plans (PEPs). In 2018, researchers from CUNY advocated for a 'whole person' approach to "acknowledge students' life experiences and prior knowledge." Our tutors and instructors demonstrate patience, kindness, and supportive attitudes, and Literacy Network trains volunteers and staff in best practices and cultural competency. Well-trained and culturally-competent volunteer tutors are essential given that "the classroom should be an emotionally safe and sympathetic space for learning where adults students feel encouraged by the instructor and by each other" (Carlson McCall, Padron, Andrews p. 37).

Individualized tutoring lessons plans respond directly to student needs, levels, and goals, and include activities which focus on GED Testing Service's High Impact Indicators, skills crucial in all GED content areas and in line with College and Career Readiness standards (such as determining main idea or analyzing transitional words).

To support our student-centered approach, we train volunteer tutors using the research-based "just-in-time" tutor training model. Research shows that tutors benefit from ongoing individualized training and support once matched with the student they will tutor (Belzer 2006). Literacy Network tutors participate in an initial training and are provided weekly lesson plans created in response to student needs and notes and observations from their actual tutoring sessions. This approach ensures that tutors consistently use techniques and curriculum materials most effective for that student. Tutors also attend regular in-service trainings and receive support and coaching from the Director of ABE & GED Instruction or the Transitions Program Manager.

Finally, wraparound supports (such as resource connections, persistence support, and advising) are a crucial component of Literacy Network's services, as personalized support is key to success in adult education. The American Council on Education has recognized that support services for adult learners help increase persistence and program completion, and the U.S. Department of Education has argued that such support systems are crucial for adults to move through basic skills programs and eventually into college or vocational training. Our wraparound services help adults in the GED/HSED program overcome participation barriers and continue in education toward their goals.

Literacy Network staff are skilled at tracking participant performance and program targets and delivering complete and accurate service reports. We regularly revise and improve our systems to track participant data and assess program success. This includes, for instance, regular check-ins with students and updates to PEPs multiple times per year to note and track promotions, job gains, workplace achievements, and other successes.

In the past, Literacy Network had to manage multiple systems to track this data. Recently, we overcame that challenge by implementing a new cloud-based data management system to streamline our gathering, tracking, and reporting of outcomes. This system, implemented in 2021, has allowed us to more precisely track participant data and program outcomes. It also allows us to more easily monitor program progress throughout the year to help us ensure that we are on track to meet targets.

Additionally, regular check-ins among program staff ensure that programs are meeting the needs of participants and on track to serve learners in the best way possible.

If Literacy Network ever needs to update program targets due to unforeseen circumstances, as we did in 2020 with unexpected pandemic-related challenges, we will keep a clear line of communication with Community Development Division staff.

2. Please describe current and past success in engaging community members and service recipients in developing and improving services.

Literacy Network engages community and service recipient feedback through Personalized Education/Employment Plan (PEP) interviews, end-of-semester surveys, annual student surveys, and deep engagement with dozens of partner agencies, grantors, and peers in our field.

Our increased investment in our Student Services department over the last 6 years is a key example of our engagement and improvement. We have expanded this department and our support services in response to the needs expressed by students and community members.

Poverty-related barriers are the most common impediment to participant progress: transportation is expensive or unreliable; childcare continues to increase in cost; poverty-associated health problems can make it hard to get to class or work or to focus well. Since 2016, Literacy Network has steadily built and increased our Student Services support to help participants remove these barriers by connecting them to community resources when they are most needed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the struggles faced by low-income households. At pandemic onset, approximately 60% of Literacy Network students lost work. Most were employed in hospitality or manufacturing industries that shut down in response to the outbreak. Our learners were laid off or forced to expose themselves to risk in 'essential' jobs. Nationwide, women of color and mothers were most likely to leave the labor force due to pandemic-related difficulties, including employment loss and caring for children at home (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis); we saw this trend reflected among our learning community.

In response, Literacy Network expanded Student Services support, conducting weekly needs surveys and providing 1:1 follow-up to the hundreds of requests that poured in for food, household supplies, income assistance, rent assistance, and access to health and accessible COVID-19 safety information.

We will continue to conduct student needs surveys every semester, along with program-specific and annual agency-wide student surveys. We have conducted nearly a dozen organization-wide rounds of these surveys since 2020, each time reaching hundreds of participants to provide resources. We have tracked each request and related follow-up; this data led to our developing a robust, well-vetted and current database of resources based on the most common participant needs and the success rate of each referral.

3. Please describe your plan to meaningfully involve service recipients, including past, present and potential recipients, in ongoing design, flexing and improvement of proposed youth, young adult, and/or adult employment services. All 1:1 GED/HSED Program participants are interviewed about their goals, needs, past educational experiences, learning styles, and availability at intake, as part of the process to create a Personalized Education/Employment Plan (PEP) for every student. Instruction is tailored to the individual and collective participant needs expressed in these interviews (data is collected and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively). Literacy Network also conducts regular end-of-semester student surveys and adjusts programming based on student responses.

In addition to PEPs, end-of-semester surveys, and student need surveys, Literacy Network conducts an annual organization-wide student survey. The annual student survey goes beyond the program experience to ask students how they feel about marketing, development, leadership, board, and student representation at the organization. In 2022, 51% of participants said they want to have input into Literacy Network processes and decision making via student surveys and votes; over 30 people expressed interest in participating in a Student Advisory Board.

In response to this interest, Literacy Network plans to form a Student Advisory Board comprised of students who will be paid for their time to advise the organization on issues related to every area of the organization: programming, development, marketing, board, and organizational management.

Budget - Complete the Budget Worksheet, including all costs for which you request funding through this RFP. All costs included must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable among the stated cost categories.

YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT EMPLOYMENT BUDGET APPLICATION FORM

AGENCY AND PROGRAM REVENUES

Legal Name of Organization:	Literacy Network
Total Amount Requested:	130,000
Contact Name and Email for Budget Info:	Autumn Jackson, Grants Manager autumn@litnetwork.org

****Instructions: Complete this workbook in tab order, so the numbers will autofill correctly. Only fill in the yellow cells.**
Only use whole numbers, if using formulas or amounts with cents, convert to whole number before submitting to CDD.

Please fill out all expected revenues for the programs you are requesting funding for in this application.
 All programs not requesting funding in this application, should be combined and entered under NON APP PGMS (last column)

REVENUE SOURCE	AGENCY 2023	PROGRAM A	PROGRAM B	PROGRAM C	PROGRAM D	PROGRAM E	NON APP PGMS
DANE CO HUMAN SVCS	0	0	0				
UNITED WAY DANE CO	141,777	99,777	42,000				
CITY CDD-This Application	130,000	100,000	30,000				
OTHER GOVT*	110,999	110,999	0				
FUNDRAISING DONATIONS**	407,234	378,622	28,612				
USER FEES	0	0	0				
TOTAL REVENUE	790,010	689,398	100,612	0	0	0	0

*OTHER GOVERNMENT: Includes all Federal and State funds, as well as funds from other counties, other Dane County Departments, and all other Dane County cities, villages, and townships.

**FUNDRAISING: Includes funds received from foundations, corporations, churches, and individuals, as well as those raised from fundraising events.

YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT EMPLOYMENT BUDGET APPLICATION FORM
AGENCY AND PROGRAM REVENUES

Enter all expenses for the programs in this application under the PGM A-D columns. Enter the amount you would like the City to pay for with this funding under the CITY SHARE column next to the PGM column. Enter all other programs in your agency under NON APP PGMS (last column).

****Use whole numbers only, please.**

ACCOUNT CATEGORY	AGENCY 2023	TTL CITY REQUEST	PGM A	CITY SHARE	PGM B	CITY SHARE	PGM C	CITY SHARE	PGM D	CITY SHARE	PGM E	CITY SHARE	NON APP PGMS
A. PERSONNEL													
Salary	538,761	107,000	470,230	82,000	68,531	25,000							
Taxes/Benefits	96,977	19,260	84,641	14,760	12,336	4,500							
Subtotal A.	635,738	126,260	554,871	96,760	80,867	29,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B. OTHER OPERATING													
Insurance	8,409	0	7,424		985								
Professional Fees/Audit	33,984	0	30,002		3,982								
Postage/Office & Program	2,003	740	1,690	740	313								
Supplies/Printing/Photocopy	10,870	2,000	9,173	1,500	1,697	500							
Equipment/Furnishings/Depr.	2,823	0	2,382		441								
Telephone	7,080	0	5,975		1,105								
Training/Conferences	7,213	1,000	6,368	1,000	845								
Food/Household Supplies	0	0	0		0								
Travel	0	0	0		0								
Vehicle Costs/Depreciation	0	0	0		0								
Other	0	0	0		0								
Subtotal B.	72,382	3,740	63,014	3,240	9,368	500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C. SPACE													
Rent/Utilities/Maintenance	35,287	0	31,153		4,134								
Mortgage Principal/Interest	0	0	0		0								
Depreciation/Taxes	46,603	0	40,360		6,243								
Subtotal C.	81,890	0	71,513	0	10,377	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D. SPECIAL COSTS													
Assistance to Individuals	0	0											
Participiant Wages	0	0											
Participant Taxes/Benefits	0	0											
Other	0	0											
Subtotal D.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL (A.-D.)	790,010	130,000	689,398	100,000	100,612	30,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT EMPLOYMENT BUDGET APPLICATION FORM
AGENCY AND PROGRAM REVENUES

Literacy Network

****List all staff positions related to programs requestong funding in this application, and the amount of time they will spend in each program.**

Title of Staff Position*	2023 Program A FTE**	2023 Program B FTE**	2023 Program C FTE**	2023 Program D FTE**	2023 Program E FTE**	2023 Total FTE	2023 Annualized Salary	2023 Payroll Taxes and Fringe Benefits	2023 Total Amount	2023 Hourly Wage***	2023 Amount Requested from the City of Madison
Associate Director	0.15	0.10				0.25	82,467	14,844	97,311	43.45	8,050
Director of Program Impact	0.30	0.05				0.35	63,000	11,340	74,340	33.19	8,600
Director of ABE & GED Instruction	0.30	0.20				0.50	55,440	9,979	65,419	29.21	10,880
Director of ESL Group Instruction	0.30	0.00				0.30	55,244	9,944	65,188	29.11	6,500
Director of ESL Tutoring	1.00	0.00				1.00	55,244	9,944	65,188	29.11	21,600
Transitions Program Manager	0.00	0.20				0.20	50,241	9,043	59,284	26.47	3,950
Student Services Manager	0.60	0.10				0.70	47,192	8,495	55,687	24.86	12,900
Volunteer Manager	0.70	0.30				1.00	46,037	8,287	54,324	24.26	18,000
Essentials Program Manager (part-time)	0.50	0.00				0.50	21,922	3,946	25,868	23.10	8,600
Student Services Coordinators (full and p	0.80	0.05				0.85	36,062	6,491	42,553	19.00	11,560
ESL Instructors (full and part-time positio	2.00	0.00				2.00	39,858	7,174	47,032	21.00	15,620
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
						0.00			0	0.00	0
TOTAL:	6.65					7.65	552,707	99,487	652,194	302.76	126,260

*List each staff position separately. Indicate number of weeks to be employed if less than full year in parentheses after their title.

**Full Time Equivalent (1.00, .75, .60, .25, etc.) 2,080 hours = 1.00 FTE

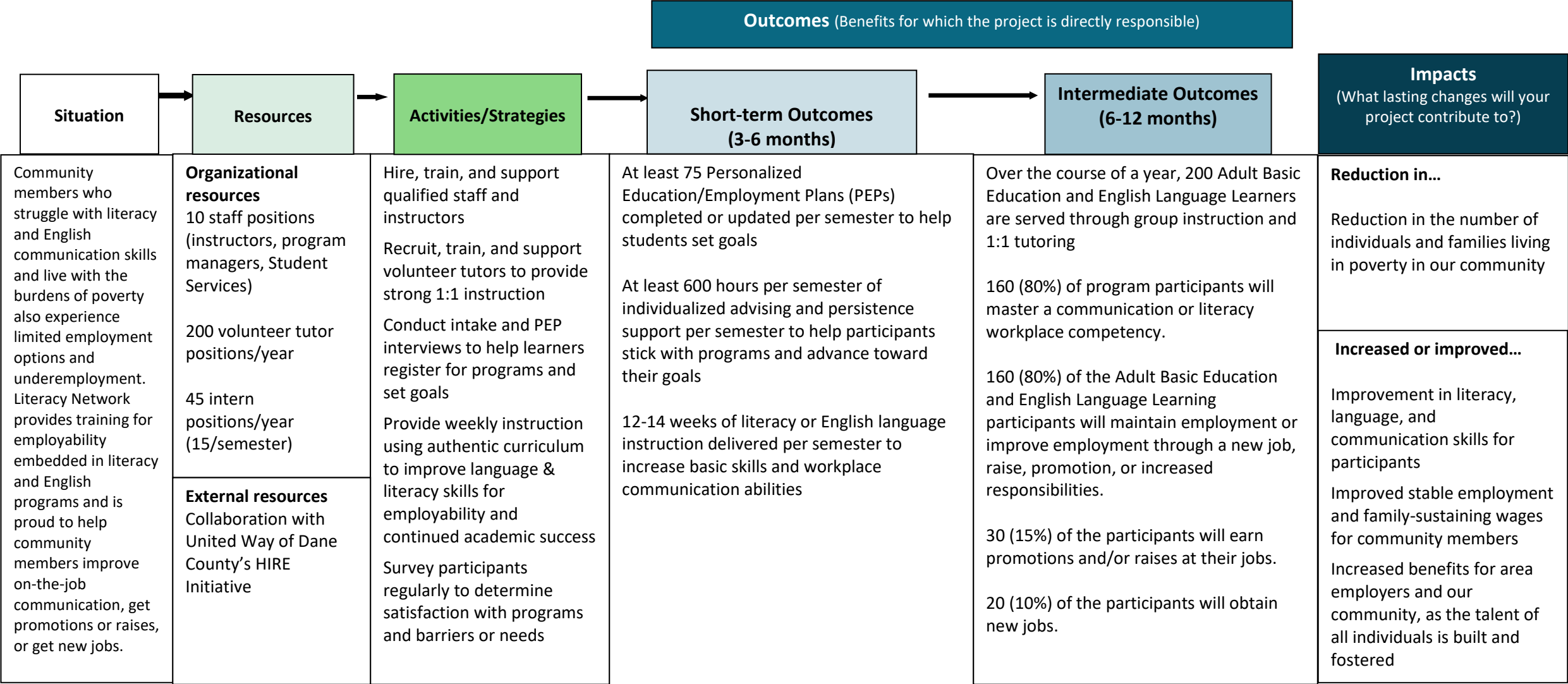
YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT EMPLOYMENT BUDGET APPLICATION FORM
AGENCY AND PROGRAM REVENUES

Please name each program you are requesting funding for next to each funding request.

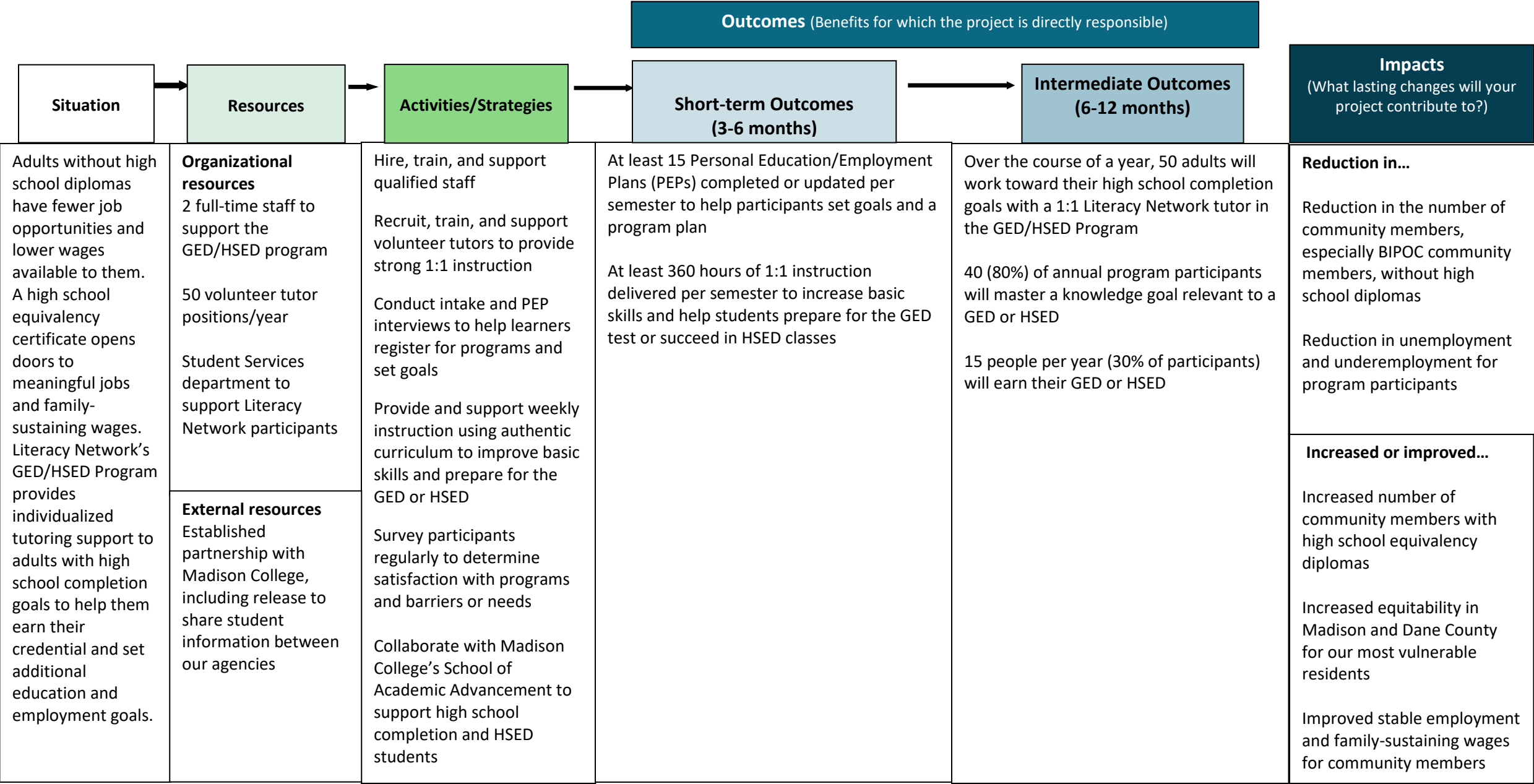
**Only use whole numbers, if using formulas or amounts with cents, convert to whole number before submitting to CDD.

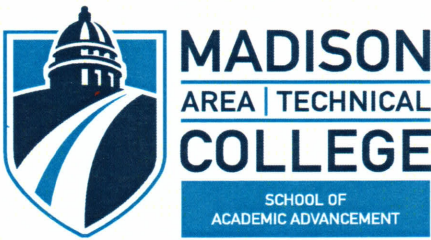
Pgm Letter	Program Name	Program Expenses	2023 City Request
A	Literacy for Employment	PERSONNEL	96,760
		OTHER OPERATING	3,240
		SPACE	0
		SPECIAL COSTS	0
		TOTAL	100,000
B	GED/HSED	PERSONNEL	29,500
		OTHER OPERATING	500
		SPACE	0
		SPECIAL COSTS	0
		TOTAL	30,000
C		PERSONNEL	0
		OTHER OPERATING	0
		SPACE	0
		SPECIAL COSTS	0
		TOTAL	0
D		PERSONNEL	0
		OTHER OPERATING	0
		SPACE	0
		SPECIAL COSTS	0
		TOTAL	0
E		PERSONNEL	0
		OTHER OPERATING	0
		SPACE	0
		SPECIAL COSTS	0
		TOTAL	0
TOTAL FOR ALL PROGRAMS			130,000

Appendix B: Logic Model



Appendix B: Logic Model





August 10, 2022

City of Madison
Community Development Division
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Letter of Commitment for Literacy Network's Application for Adult Employment Services

Dear City of Madison Community Development Division:

I am pleased to provide this letter affirming Madison College's commitment to our partnership with Literacy Network. Madison College and Literacy Network have bolstered services by collaborating on various projects and programs over the years, and have worked with leadership and faculty in the School of Academic Advancement since 2017 to support GED and HSED students.

Our collaboration in support of adults studying to earn a high school equivalency diploma has provided these students with important additional study opportunities and essential personalized assistance. Literacy Network's GED/HSED Program provides 1:1 tutoring to students in the School of Academic Advancement's High School Completion Program and HSED classes to build basic skills, reinforce key topics, and help with specific challenging assignments.

The GED/HSED tutoring services that Literacy Network provides are essential to the success of GED and HSED students, and we are pleased to continue our partnership in support of those students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Leslie M. Petty
Dean, School of Academic Advancement
lpetty1@madisoncollege.edu
608-258-2448

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TASC

Jane F. "Ginger" Zimmerman
Murphy Desmond S.C.

Agency Representatives

Lisa Peyton-Caire
The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness

Scott Strong
RISE Wisconsin

August 18, 2022

City of Madison
Community Development Division
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Letter of Support for Literacy Network's Application for Adult Employment Services

Dear City of Madison Community Development Division:

It is my pleasure to offer this letter of support for Literacy Network's application for funding from the City of Madison. Literacy Network is a current and active partner in United Way of Dane County's HIRE Initiative since the beginning of the collaboration in 2013, which includes partnership between United Way of Dane County, JustDane, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, Literacy Network, Urban League of Greater Madison, and YWCA Madison.

In partnership with local Employers, the HIRE Initiative aims to get individuals and families on pathways out of poverty and to remove barriers for individuals on their pathways to careers with family sustaining wages. The programs in this collaboration focus on helping adults prepare for and find steady employment and on breaking down barriers (individual and systemic) to getting and keeping family-sustaining jobs. Literacy Network provides a key service in pre-employment and on the job training, by assisting individuals with education needs like GED, HSED or pre-GED language or other skills education programming. The HIRE Initiative also includes HIRE Employer Partners who are committed to providing family-sustaining wages and fulfilling full-time jobs to truly empower our HIRE participants and graduates.

Literacy Network staff are very collaborative in working together with others providing GED and pre-GED programming on a more systemic approach to helping individuals meet their goals in Dane County. Literacy Network staff also provide leadership to the collaborative, helping co-facilitate the collective meetings.

Literacy Network's English, basic literacy, and GED programs are integral programs in the community and the HIRE Initiative, and the United Way of Dane County is pleased to continue our partnership with Literacy Network and support their application for funding.

Sincerely,



Renee Moe
President & CEO