



National Coalition For Literacy

NCL Update **March 2009**

National Coalition for Literacy Launches Online Advocacy Toolkit

NCL has launched its new online Advocacy Clearinghouse and Toolkit (www.ncladvocacy.org). Developed with an aim to change the conversation about adult education in the U.S., the Toolkit provides adult education and literacy advocates with the tools and knowledge to raise awareness and speak for the needs of 30+ million Americans with limited literacy and the 11+ million who cannot communicate in English.

During this period of economic crisis, millions of adults are in search of improving their education and work skills in order to re-enter the workforce. There is no greater time than now for states and the federal government to invest in adult education, and NCL hopes to push that effort forward by providing the tools and resources to adult education advocates across the country.

Containing dozens of resources, facts, and reports provided by member organizations of the NCL, the Advocacy Clearinghouse and Toolkit is a “one-stop shop” for all advocates interested in improving adult education. This project has been generously supported by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, which invests millions of dollars each year in literacy programs that help individuals reach their full potential. For more information about the Toolkit, contact Jennifer Maloney, NCL Director, at jennifer.maloney@ncldc.net or Jackie Taylor, website developer at Jackie@jataylor.net.



Add This Button to Your Site!

Now that the Toolkit is launched, we hope you will consider linking to it from your site. If you would like to add this button to your site, copy and paste the code below into your pages, between the <body> and the </body> tags. The button will function as a link to the Toolkit.

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<a href="http://national-coalition-  
literacy.org/advocacy"target="blank"></a>
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The NCL Advocacy Clearinghouse and Toolkit (www.ncladvocacy.org) will grow as new advocacy resources are available from NCL members and other adult literacy advocacy organizations. You can also submit resources for NCL to consider including. The site will feature efforts of adult literacy advocates nationwide. Click Submit in the left hand navigation to find out how to submit resources, photos, and spotlight articles today.

NCL 2009 Literacy Leadership Awards

The National Coalition for Literacy is currently seeking nominations for its annual Literacy Leadership Awards. The NCL Literacy Leadership Awards recognize individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to improving literacy in the United States. Recipients of the award have demonstrated their commitment by supporting literacy on the state and national level. NCL members are not eligible for this award.

Nomination letters must include a one-page summary of the nominee's qualifications and contributions to the field, biographical information, and complete contact information. Please submit nominations to Sherrie Claiborne at sherrienevilsclaiborne@hotmail.com by April 30, 2009. Award recipients will be announced in early May. The 2009 Literacy Leadership Awards will be presented on Wednesday, September 16, at the James Madison Building of the Library of Congress.

The 2008 award recipients included The Honorable Rubén Hinojosa (Texas), Dr. John Comings, Better World Books, and the National Council of La Raza. The President's Award was presented to Infinity Business Group, Inc.

Next Dollar General Meeting is May 19 in Jackson, MS

Jackson, Mississippi, will be the site of the eighth meeting in the Dollar General Series on May 19. A featured speaker will be Dr. Phil Pepper, State Economist and IHL Assistant Commission for Planning and Research. Eloise Richardson, Adult Education Director from the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, is providing the local coordination. Since 2006, meetings have been held in: Nashville, TN; Phoenix, AZ; Baltimore, MD; Spartanburg, SC; Houston, TX; Columbia, MO; and Atlanta, GA. NCL has developed these regional, one-day conferences in collaboration with the Dollar General Literacy Foundation and local literacy organizations. The format includes presentations on: national policy and the importance of advocacy; representatives from the field discussing their advocacy successes; and an overview of community – business partnerships. NCL and local partners work together to identify issues, invite business partners, and recruit experts.

Dollar General-NCL Mini-Grant Awardees

Dollar General-NCL offered two mini-grants @ \$5,000 to build capacity in the field and increase the impact of the Dollar General Presentation Series. The grants went to local organizations to support new or expanded advocacy and marketing efforts. These funds must be matched by a collaborating partner such as a business or community organization and may be in-kind support. Funding is to support building the infrastructure for advocacy, using technology such as discussion lists, and protocols for list moderators, and developing communication tools, such as alerts. Grantees were selected based on their proposed advocacy and marketing plan, capacity to implement the plan, demonstrated support from organization staff and leadership, and ability to engage other community partners. Eligible organizations must have attended the Dollar General meeting in Atlanta.

One of the two recipients is Literacy Action, Inc. (LAI) established in 1968 in an effort to use volunteers to teach undereducated adults the basic skills needed to survive and thrive as contributing members of the community. In November, 2007 LAI began collaborating with other adult literacy providers across the state to begin an advocacy group. Today, that group – Georgia Adult Literacy Advocates (GALA) – continues its work to develop a statewide voice on behalf of the estimated 1.36 million Georgians over the age of 18 who have less than a high school education. The project includes: garnering positive publicity and profile-raising on behalf of adult education; improving alliances across the state of Georgia; and increasing GALA's visibility and effectiveness.

The second mini-grant recipient is Middle Georgia Technical College (MGTC), one of thirty-three technical colleges in the Technical College System of Georgia. MGTC has been the fiscal agent for federal and state Adult Education funds since 1989. Their mission is to contribute to the economic, educational, and community development of the state by providing quality academic and technical education to the citizens of Middle Georgia. Based on completion of an Advocacy Self-Assessment survey and attendance at the Dollar General Presentation Series, Partnerships and Advocacy seminar, MGTC discovered the critical nature of getting involved in partnering with businesses, educating legislators, creating a strategic advocacy plan and identifying key business. As a state organization they cannot lobby; however, they can educate their students and teachers to be advocates. They are also forming partnerships with business and industry to educate them on the importance of Adult Education to the community's economic development.

From the Lumina Foundation

Levers for change: Policy approaches to improve access

For some students, the route to college is blurred because of information and affordability issues. *Strategies to Empower Low-Income and Minority Students in Gaining Admission to and Paying for College* from the [Education Commission of the States](#) recommends policy to narrow these access barriers, including simplifying college admissions and financial aid processes and creating programs to offer personalized guidance.

New college remediation evidence: Money is not the issue

Colleges must do more to support the influx of students needing remediation, concludes a study from [Strong American Schools](#). *Diploma to Nowhere* contends the issue is not lack of money, but prioritization. While more than a third of all college students require remediation, higher education spending on low-performing students represents only about 2 percent of all expenditures.

Adult learners and the applied baccalaureate

The changing face of the nation's economy means jobs that once required a high school diploma now demand a baccalaureate-level education. *The Adult Learner and the Applied Baccalaureate* from the [Office of Community College Research and Leadership](#) shows how the applied baccalaureate degree is a viable option to address workforce development and education attainment issues of adult learners and other underserved populations.

Hispanics: An emerging workforce asset

The nation's future labor force will be defined by the rapid growth of Hispanics. A more concerted effort must occur to educate documented Hispanic immigrants, says a new report from [Excelencia in Education](#). *Building Tomorrow's Workforce* shows how six innovative partnerships between community colleges and employers are educating Latino immigrants and preparing them for better jobs.

Lumina Foundation supports Business Champions

“Lumina’s “big goal”, said Jamie Merisotis, president and chief executive officer of Lumina, “is that by the year 2025, we want 60 percent of the American population to hold high-quality, two- or four-year college degrees and credentials. To accomplish this, we must make sure that every American has the opportunity to succeed in higher education. We are determined to make this happen and join forces with those that can help us.” Lumina Foundation for Education announced recently its support of The National Center for Business Champions: Advancing Post-Secondary Achievement and Workforce Skills with a \$597,000 grant. Business Champions will mobilize the voices of business leaders to stimulate new thinking, strengthen political will, and move policies to increase the number and quality of college graduates.

Coalition Events Coming Up

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| May 7: | Membership Meeting, Washington, DC |
| May 19: | Dollar General Presentation Series, Jackson, MS |
| Sept. 16: | Literacy Leadership Awards |
| Sept. 17: | Membership Meeting, Washington, DC |
| Dec. 2: | Policy Forum, Washington, DC |
| Dec. 3: | Membership Meeting, Washington, DC |

Upcoming Adult Literacy Events

Mar. 25 -29:	TESOL Convention, Uncharted Mountains, Forging New Pathways, Denver, CO
Mar. 27 -31:	CEA Leadership Forum, Annapolis, MD
Apr. 7:	ALA and NIFL, Virtual Library Literacy Summit
Apr. 18-22:	COABE, Annual Conference, Louisville, KY
May 3-7:	IRA Annual Convention North Central, Minneapolis, MN
July 9-15:	ALA, Annual Conference, Chicago, IL
July 19-22:	CEA, Annual Conference, Madison, WI
Nov. 1-6:	AAACE, Annual Conference, Cleveland, OH

If you would like to list your event or meeting here, please send information to Jennifer Maloney at Jennifer.maloney@ncldc.net by the 5th of the month.

Public Policy Corner

Just in time to start preparing funding bills for fiscal year 2010, Congress has enacted the Omnibus spending bill for 2009. It provides level funding for both adult education programs and Even Start. To date, President Obama has forwarded to Congress only a basic outline of his proposed budget for the next fiscal year. The full budget is expected to be released sometime around April 20.

On March 16, I had an opportunity to meet with staff on the both the House and Senate Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies. Mark Laisch, who works with Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), the Chairman of the Subcommittee, once again encouraged us to cultivate advocates for adult education programs in the U.S. Senate. As you may recall, he is also interested in the lack of a research center for adult education and was glad to receive the major issues document prepared by the Coalition on this topic. Following the meeting with Mark, I met with Bettilou Taylor, who works for Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), the ranking Republican on the Subcommittee. In both instances, Subcommittee staff was made aware of our request for \$750 million in funding for adult education programs and our disappointment that adult education was not provided additional funding through the stimulus bill.

Following the meeting with Senate staff, I met with Cheryl Smith and Charmaine Mercer, who work for Congressman David Obey (D-WI), the Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies. I shared our request for \$750 million for adult education for the next fiscal year and for an increase in funding for Even Start. They both suggested we meet with Subcommittee Members or their staff to educate them about the importance of adult education.

During both the House and Senate meetings, staff wanted to discuss the recent change in calculating allocations for individual states. The change in allocations was due to

a change in the formula that the Department of Education uses based on updated census estimates.

On the WIA front, it appears both the House and Senate authorizing Committees are looking to have a WIA reauthorization bill in by August, or early fall. We can only hope that this time we will end up with a final bill we can all support.

Several members of the Coalition did meet with Moira Lenehan with Congressman Rubén Hinojosa on February 24 to review our proposal for amending Title II of the Workforce Investment Act.

We also requested that a separate hearing be held on the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. To date, two hearings have been held on WIA with a primary focus on Title I. The second hearing, “New Innovations and Best Practices Under the Workforce Investment Act” was held on February 26 by the House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness. The hearing examined innovative strategies for improving job training and education for America’s workers. Cheryl Keenan, director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Department of Education and Kevin Smith, executive director, New York Literacy, Inc., Buffalo, NY, addressed issues related to adult education. Additional information on the hearing can be found on the Committee’s website, where you can review individual testimony presented that day. <http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/2009/02/new-innovations-and-best-pract-1.shtml>

During the hearing, it became obvious that several Members had an interest in adult education, asking questions about ESL programs and about financial literacy. We will follow up with those Members with the hope of developing new advocates for our programs.

We are hopeful that a separate hearing on adult education would allow for a witness to discuss the Coalition’s proposal and for Members of Congress to hear from students, some of our best advocates.

Amazing to think it is only March and so much has already happened in Congress. We can look forward to a very busy year.

Lynn Selmsler

Visit the National Coalition for Literacy’s website for more information.

<http://www.national-coalition-literacy.org/>