



Sharing the Power of Learning

Learner Outreach and Recruitment Ideas

The Minnesota Literacy Council works in partnership with literacy programs to refer learners to Adult Basic Education classes. The following outreach ideas and resources have been gathered from many sources, mainly through input from literacy program staff.

Targeting Learners

Potential learners are:

- People who want to prepare for the GED test
- People who want to complete their high school diploma
- People with low literacy skills or people who want to learn English as a Second Language
- People who want to be tutored one-to-one
- People with low incomes
- People who want a better job
- People who want to go on to college
- People who are on public assistance
- People who want to learn more
- People who need/want to become a citizen
- People who need to improve their skills to keep their jobs or obtain a job
- Friends, relatives, acquaintances of current learner

Key Places to Recruit Learners (many of these sites are also good places to recruit volunteers)

- Other adult literacy programs
- Laundromats
- Subsidized Housing/Apartment buildings/trailer courts
- Grocery/Shopping stores: staff break rooms, bulletin boards, flyers in bags
- Travel offices
- Factory break rooms
- Human resource departments
- Buses
- Transit ticket offices
- Employment offices
- Employment agencies
- Workforce Centers
- Faith communities

- Food shelves
- Shelters
- Community/neighborhood centers
- Social services offices
- Public health offices
- Family services agencies
- Correctional facilities
- Clinics and hospitals
- Dentist offices
- Doctors' offices
- County health departments
- Medical interpreters
- WIC sites
- Day care centers
- Temporary employment agencies
- Check cashing sites
- Salvation Army
- Billboards
- Lawyers offices
- Police department/sheriff office/county jails/probation offices
- Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
- Labor unions
- Business/industries: in lunch rooms and personnel departments
- Banks: bulletin boards, back of bank statements, envelop stuffers, marquees
- K-12 schools: for children to give to parents
- High school counselors
- Television: cable access announcements
- Radio: public service announcements (PSAs)
- Through current learners and volunteers
- Libraries/book mobiles: bulletin boards, bookmarks
- Online social networking communities
- Newspapers: ethnic, community
- Community Education catalog

Recruitment through Printed Text

- Design specific recruitment brochures for community audiences
 - Business cards
 - Posters
 - Bookmarks
 - Table tents
 - Magnets
- Ads in the *You Can Help* section of the St. Paul Pioneer Press and the Star Tribune

- Encourage volunteers to distribute recruitment materials (flyers, posters, etc.) in their community and workplace
- Newspapers: culturally specific, free, neighborhood and larger papers; submit a news story, editorials, letter to the editor, calendar items or want ads
- Article in your local school district's Community Education newsletter or catalog
- Newsletters: parent newsletters, community education, and newsletters for employees
- Packets/mailing to faith communities, schools and businesses
- Flyers in community locations, businesses, etc

Learner Outreach through Media/Technology

- Postings on social networking sites
- Write a blog about your program and classes, featuring student success stories
- Regular weekly radio spots on local stations
- Post an ad on the local cable TV station calendar of events
- Local cable access station advertisement
- Create a video promoting your literacy program and post it online
- Public service announcements (PSAs) on the radio. Write PSA's and have learners read them over local radio and television.
- Post a story about your learners on a citizen journalism website

Recruitment through Public Speaking

- Hold informational meetings
- Contact career classes at schools
- Booths at community events
- Create a speaker's bureau of trained volunteers and learners
- Networking with local organizations
- Contact the Public Affairs office of your city for a list of neighborhood and community organizations
- Attend community meetings
- Hold an open house in September. Invite both potential and existing tutors and learners. September 8 is International Literacy Day.

Current Volunteers and Learners

- Tell volunteers how prospective students can contact your program to get started. Give brochures, flyers and program information to current tutors volunteers. Ask them to distribute them within their communities or share them with their contacts.
- Give brochures and flyers to current students. Ask them to pass them along to their friends or family who may be interested in taking classes.
- Incorporate the Intermediate Hotline lesson plan in your classes, available at mnliteracy.org/tools/curriculum-lesson-plans. This lesson plan can be used with ESL learners at the Intermediate level or above. In this lesson, learners navigate the Minnesota Literacy Council's Hotline database to find free ABE and ESL classes

throughout the state. The Hotline database is user-friendly and easy to navigate. You can find it at mnliteracy.org under Find Free Adult Classes.

- Organize an outreach event. Ask both volunteers and learners to partner together to distribute flyers within walking distance of your program. This allows everyone to take ownership of their involvement in the program and helps build a sense of community. Holding the event on a commemorative day, such as Martin Luther King Day or on September 11 Day of Service, may make the outreach especially meaningful for volunteers and learners.

Miscellaneous Recruitment Ideas

- “My Mom Can’t Read” – volunteers read this book to kids in school and give them a bookmark with the learning center’s phone number. Tell the kids to show this to their parents.
- Provide recruitment materials (posters, flyers, brochures) to your volunteers and students and enlist their help. Form an outreach committee and empower them to develop an outreach plan. Conduct a student forum from which you can get student outreach ideas.
- Conduct a community audit to find out “What’s out there? What’s keeping learners from coming in?” Hold a focus group of local social service organizations and businesses to understand their perspective on adult literacy and community needs.
- Collaborate with literacy centers in your area to create a flyer including a grid of names, numbers and class times of various area literacy centers in the same area.
- Develop a marketing plan to estimate costs of outreach activities.
- Develop a Literacy Action Council, a committee geared toward getting ABE awareness out into the community and to keep attitudes positive toward ABE.
- Keep your program information on the Minnesota Literacy Council’s Adult Literacy Hotline current. Over 3000 calls come into the hotline each year with many others using the online hotline at www.mnliteracy.org/hotline