



## TESTIMONY

### JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEES OF THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

#### 2014-15 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

My name is Janice Cuddahee. I am the Executive Director of Literacy New York. Literacy New York is a network of 35 community based organizations providing adult literacy services in Long Island and Upstate New York. I would thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am accompanied by Lisa Cardilli, Executive Director of Literacy NY serving Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties.

To begin, I would like to thank members of the Legislature for your continued support of adult literacy education especially that of Assembly woman Nolan who since being appointed Chair of the Committee on Education has made adult literacy a priority each year.

Literacy is critical to building strong communities. Without literacy, adults must follow others, wait for answers, and hope for opportunities. Literacy leads. Literacy leads us to employment, independence and opportunities that without literacy are not known. Literacy is the foundation of education. When an adult reads, his or her children read. When families read, our communities are active and stronger. Literacy leads us to achieve, and our commitment is to building literate communities.

*In 2014, Literacy New York is proud to celebrate 40 years of developing the organizational and program capacity of a network of community and agency-based affiliates on Long Island and across upstate New York. LNY advocates and supports the cause of adult literacy at the local, state, and federal level and exists because there is a need to foster and strengthen literate communities throughout New York State, as we strive to achieve our vision-- Every New Yorker is Literate.*

The 2014-15 Executive budget appropriates \$5.3 million for the Adult Literacy Education Program (ALE). While the Executive budget does not continue the investment made by the Legislature last year, it does secure base funding for this modest program. ALE funding provides the necessary resources for adult literacy providers to assist adults in advancing their literacy skills. LNY supports the continuation of funding for the Adult Literacy Education program and encourages the Legislature to invest an additional \$1 million to support programs throughout the State.

As you know, New York has replaced the GED® with the Test Assessing Secondary Completion™ (TASC™) for awarding a high school equivalency diploma. Over the next few years, the new equivalency exam will become aligned with the Common Core. It is necessary for the adult education community to be trained on the new examination and the Common Core to ensure that adult education programs are ready to prepare students to successfully complete the examinations. For 40 years, LNY has trained tutors and educators of adults. LNY has long understood that investing in evidenced based professional development around content and andragogy is essential for the success of adult learners. LNY supports the Board of Regent's recommendation of \$5 million for the support of professional development of adult tutors and educators.

As a volunteer and community based network of 35 affiliates providing educational services to thousands of adult learners in 54 counties of NYS, recruiting, training, and supporting volunteer tutors and affiliate staff has been a critical issue facing our organization. With traditional, face-to-face training, affiliates offer multi-week workshops when training tutors -- one or more 3 hour workshops per week, for a series of weeks. This model allows the majority of affiliates to offer tutor training just 3 to 4 times per year. Potential volunteers must wait until a scheduled training date to participate -- many will opt for other volunteer opportunities in their communities rather than wait. Sometimes the volunteer participant numbers are not enough to warrant running the workshops due to staffing and other costs, and valuable potential tutors are lost. Currently, onsite tutor training workshops do not meet the enormous need for more literacy volunteer tutors in NYS. In addition, program staff requires training to support these volunteer tutors, and the quality and availability of program staff training is not consistent across the state as currently delivered.



### ***2014-15 Budget Recommendations***

Literacy New York supports funding for the Adult Literacy Education Program and encourages the Legislature to invest an additional \$1 million for the support of programs.

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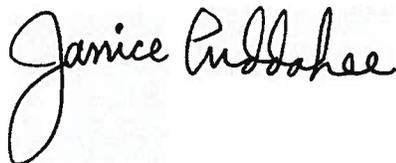
Literacy New York recommends a modest investment of \$100,000 to support Intake to Outcomes (I2O) an online platform built to enhance training and support of volunteers and students.

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Literacy New York supports the Board of Regents' recommendation for \$5 million for the support of professional development for educators of adults.

To address these challenges, LNY has begun development of an online platform, *Intake to Outcomes* (I2O). From learner and volunteer, intake to successful program outcomes, the I2O system will equip volunteer literacy programs to train and support volunteers, assess and target instruction to learners, and manage tutor and learner program data. The first phase of the system includes research-based volunteer tutor training with core content delivered in a distance delivery format. The online tutor training workshops will offer rolling admission and give volunteers the flexibility to cover training material on their own time, with the online support of literacy staff. The training will be interactive, incorporating video demonstration, and will include all the content and more than the onsite workshops. Web delivery allows for consistency and quality control of training content and materials. In addition, I2O Online Training reduces material and training costs. With an investment in I2O, we are sharing services, reducing costs, and increasing access to evidence based training. We know that a student who has time with a well-trained, well-supported tutor will succeed. We need to increase the opportunity for adult learners to have that access. LNY hopes the Legislature will consider supporting this initiative. We believe \$100,000 will enable us to launch Intake to Outcomes and provide 54 counties in New York State increased access to quality training and support, ultimately leading to enhanced student outcomes.

Chances are good that there is a Literacy New York affiliate in the community you represent. We encourage you to visit an affiliate in your neighborhood. There is nothing more rewarding than hearing the stories of what literacy has led a person to achieve. We are grateful for the opportunity to continue to provide services through the Adult Literacy Education Program (ALE) and look forward to partnering with you on new ideas for increasing access to adult literacy and education services. Thank you for this opportunity as well.



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## **Alphabetical List of Affiliates**

LV Broome & Tioga Co.  
LVA Buffalo & Erie Co.  
Literacy Volunteers of Cattaraugus County  
LV Cayuga Co.  
LV Chautauqua Co.  
LVA Chemung & Schuyler Co.  
LVA Chenango Co.  
LVA Clinton Co.  
LV Orange Co.  
LVA Essex/Franklin Counties  
Literacy Genesee & Orleans Co.  
LNY Greater Capital Region (Albany, Schenectady, Warren, Washington&Saratoga Co.)  
Literacy Connections (Dutchess, Columbia & Greene Co)  
LVA Livingston Co.  
LVA MidYork (Oneida, Herkimer & Madison)  
Literacy Nassau  
LVA Niagara Co.  
Literacy of Northern New York (Jefferson, Lewis, & St. Lawrence)  
LV Ontario & Yates Counties  
LV Oswego Co.  
LV Otsego Co. & Delaware Co.  
LVA Rensselaer Co.  
Literacy Volunteers of Rochester  
LNY Fulton , Montgomery & Schoharie Co.  
LV Seneca Co.  
LVA Steuben Co.  
Southern Tier Travelling Teacher  
Literacy Suffolk Co.  
LV Sullivan Co.  
LV Greater Syracuse  
LV of the Tarrytowns  
LV Tompkins Co.  
Ulster Literacy Association, Inc.  
LV Wayne Co.  
LV Westchester and Rockland County, Inc.  
Literacy West, (Allegany&Wyoming Counties)