

## **AEBG: YR3 2017-2018: Request for Proposal**

SB Public Library: Supporting Basic Reading and Literacy Instruction:  
Opening Pathways to Success

### **Are you an existing 2015/16 or 2016/17 AEBG funding participant?**

Yes

### **Program Name**

SB Public Library: Supporting Basic Reading and Literacy Instruction:  
Opening Pathways to Success

### **Primary Contact Name**

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### **Applicable Program Area**

Adult Education (ABE, ASE, Basic Skills), English as a Second Language/Literacy, Adults with Disabilities

### **1. Executive Summary**

This proposal builds on the successful AEBG award, One in Five: The Santa Barbara Dyslexia Initiative, by expanding existing AEBG programs to address the unmet needs of adults who fail to enroll or thrive in adult education and career transition programs.

There are two cohorts to be served through this proposal. The first is adults 18 and over (English speakers and English-language learners) with low reading or writing skills; these adults will be tutored by volunteers and teachers who will receive training in research-tested approaches to reading, helping adult learners make successful transitions to college and careers. The second includes community members who will be trained to develop the knowledge and skills to successfully work with adults and their children who struggle with reading. The two parts of the project will build support for adult learners through expanding training and providing supplies for tutors who provide basic reading and ESL instruction. By including all adults in need of services, collaborating with community nonprofits and advocates, and coordinating approaches with existing career and college pathways, the project addresses the specific and remediable needs of adults with low literacy and/or invisible learning disabilities and those who parent children who are struggling readers.

### **2. Integration**

This project expands the previous data-driven training in approaches to reading remediation, augmenting with instruction in structured word inquiry and reading fluency and comprehension techniques, to serve the 20-40% of population at below basic and basic reading levels (NAALS). The project uses research-tested direct instruction as well as technology to assist adults in their roles as learners and parents. The Santa Barbara Public Library's Adult Literacy Program will work with partners at SBCC and also include community partners such as Dyslexia Santa Barbara, a proposed pilot project for children and parents being developed by the library with Santa Barbara Unified School District and the Santa Barbara Education Foundation, and other community-based organizations. This project enables all learners to have access to one-to-one tutoring, helping adult learners make successful transitions to educational opportunities and the workforce.

Oftentimes, the barrier to adult education progress may be a lack of reading skills, as identified by the Workforce Investment Board Strategic Plan as one of the areas that occupations require:

- Problem identification
- Reading Comprehension
- Content Skills such as speaking to actively convey information
- Active Listening
- Communicating effectively in writing

These obstacles to success occur in English-language learners and native English speakers alike. Research tells us how to help adult learners make successful transitions. For example, those students who qualify for Adult Basic Education, but are not ready for the GED (in English or Spanish) or Adult High School, especially need support for transitions to continuing education and careers. There are many points of entry, and the Library's Adult Literacy Program provides assistance to adults along the continuum of services, whether they are afraid of seeking more education and training because of lack of skills (including basic literacy in English or Spanish), or have hit a plateau in their growth because they need to remediate reading skills. In addition, adult learners often struggle to help their own children learn basic skills. At the Santa Barbara Public Library's Homework Help program for K-6 students, about 20% of children fail to make significant progress, and volunteers as well as parents are not always equipped to help these children. The project brings parents and children together in improving reading skills.

The most important piece of the project is support of one-to-one instruction that promotes successful transitions to education and career pathways. The project will provide ongoing volunteer and instructor education, offered free of charge to volunteer tutors in the library's adult literacy and homework help programs; local adult education, elementary, and secondary teachers and teachers' aides; parents of children in grades K-12; undergraduate and graduate students in teacher training programs; and any interested community members. The training program will consist of a minimum of eight live workshops. These workshops will focus on evidence-based, multisensory, direct, explicit, structured, and sequential approaches to reading instruction. The proposal also expands community education efforts through monthly Dyslexia Dialogues, focusing on the needs of learners with reading problems and their families, at the Central Library. Topics will include assistive technology, social aspects of learning differences, awareness and more. A final aspect is the purchase of books and materials for use by instructors and learners.

### **3. Justification**

Literacy challenges may be invisible, but they are highly frustrating to adults struggling with reading and writing skills. As Section 2 points out, lack of reading skills is a major barrier to career success, and many adults have literacy skills measured as below basic/basic, rather than proficient or advanced. The American Federation of Teachers says 20% of children have significant problems learning to read, and 20% more do not read fluently enough to enjoy or engage in independent reading. Reading failure rates for Latino children and English language learners are much higher. At least 25% of American adults lack the basic literacy skills required in a typical job, and rates for the incarcerated are higher. Up to one in five children and adults have dyslexia, a neurobiological difference that affects phonological learning, reading comprehension and the vocabulary and knowledge growth that accompany and underpin advanced reading.

Appropriate education for those with reading challenges starts to change learners' brain function as they learn strategies and build knowledge. Instructors, however, must learn and meet standards for multisensory, structured, and scaffolded direct instruction, and learn how to expand instruction to include vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension as they help adult learners master the basic skills needed for workforce preparation and transitions to higher and occupational/technical education.

Specific outcomes include:

Ongoing in-service training for a minimum of 30 adults in appropriate basic reading instruction techniques. Those to be trained include Homework Help volunteers, who can bring scientific reading instruction to local children and families, as well as adult literacy tutors. Tutors will also meet outcomes measures after continuing education (75% of participants feel more confident in teaching reading; 90% develop improved knowledge of reading instruction), measured by survey.

For adult learners and families, the project goal is to instruct and show reading gains for 20 parent/child pairs and at least 20 individual adults (whether they are enrolled or unable to enroll in ESL and Adult Basic Education). Trained volunteer tutors will continue to serve new learners at no additional costs in subsequent years. Learning outcomes include mastering each step of the designated program before advancing to the next level. Standards for mastery will derive from the specific structured language approach, and students will also demonstrate progress using standard reading tests.

Another outcome from presentation of public talks and information sessions will be that at least 75% of audience members increase their knowledge of learning disabilities, ESL instruction, and/or reading and basic skills instruction.

#### **4. Outreach & Marketing**

Proper outreach and marketing are crucial to the success of this project, as print media may not reach the adult learners in need of services. The project will benefit from taking advantage of the Library's well-established social media and public relations presence. Community advocates, such as The Dyslexia Project, have established excellent working relationships with the school district, pediatricians, early childhood educators, education and social justice non-profits, the media, and other organizations to create the network needed to raise community awareness. These organizations will help create a marketing plan for the success of the program.

#### **5. Alignment**

The project aligns three major goals for 2016-17: serving adult basic education needs; serving immigrant needs; and serving the needs of adults with disabilities, helping each group move toward success in career and education pathways. The goal is provide excellence in adult education to promote the goals of adult learners. This goal will be achieved through student support, programming, professional development, and collection and analysis of data to drive future decision-making.

#### **Total Budget Requested**

\$13,900

#### **1000/2000/3000**

\$400

#### **1000/2000/3000 Detail**

\$400 for SBCC noncredit instructors' time for outreach to library tutors

#### **4000**

\$8,500

#### **4000 Detail**

\$7000 for books and materials (New Readers Press, Alta Publishing, Grassroots Press, Fisher-Hill, and others)

\$1,500 for media and community outreach

**5000**

5000

**5000 Detail**

\$4,000 Additional training for project staff and volunteers

\$1,000 Travel costs for training

**6000**

0

**6000 Detail**

0

**Total Number of Adults Students Served**

350

**Target Number of New Adult Students Served for 2017-18**

40

**Do you currently receive other NON-AEBG funding that supports the proposed activity? If yes, please describe how additional funding expands or supports that activity.**

Yes, the program receives additional funding from the California State Library and City of Santa Barbara. These funds support basic operational costs, and additional AEBG funding provides support for the measure of excellence and builds capacity to improve program services for adult learners.

**What is your sustainability plan for this activity when funding is no longer available?**

The project relies on a basic structure of adult literacy tutoring that has operated for 30 years, but in providing increased support for training, the project increases capacity for volunteers and staff. The AEBG seed funds enable the program to improve instruction, serve additional adult learners, and replicate the new continuing education training in years to come.