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## THE MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON LITERACY RECOGNIZED BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Philadelphia, PA (March 2, 2015) – The Mayor's Commission on Literacy's [myPLACE™](#) system, the Commission's new education initiative, was featured as an Innovation in Action model in a major report from the U.S. Department of Education, [Making Skills Everyone's Business: A Call to Transform Adult Education in the United States](#). The report was published on February 24, 2015.

At the beginning of his Administration, Mayor Michael A. Nutter charged the Mayor's Commission on Literacy to develop initiatives that help adults functioning below basic education levels to qualify for family-sustaining jobs and post-secondary training and education.

"myPLACE establishes Philadelphia as a leader in using technology to achieve greater workforce development," said Mayor Nutter. "We know these efforts will reduce unemployment and poverty rates, fuel job and economic growth, and decrease dependency on government programs by improving basic work-readiness skills among low-literate adults."

Three myPLACE (Philadelphia Literacy and Adult Career Education) campuses were established in early 2014 at high-performing literacy agencies: **myPLACE @ [Community Learning Center](#)** in West Philadelphia, **myPLACE @ Congreso de Latinos Unidos** in North Philadelphia, and **myPLACE @ District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund** in Center City. The campuses combine face-to-face adult basic education, GED® preparation, and English as a Second Language courses with online course work for low-literate adults striving to improve their digital and work-ready skills.

Commission Executive Director Dr. Judith Rényi said, "We are thrilled that myPLACE has been cited as an important innovation that accelerates adult learning. Now that the system has been nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, we hope that other cities, counties, and systems across the country will want to create a myPLACE campus at 'their place'."

The U.S. Department of Education report cites a recent international study that found 36 million adults in the U.S. function far below the levels needed for entry-level employment. The Department's Office of Career and Technical Adult Education (OCTAE) outlines seven national strategies for increasing the skill level of adults in America, highlighting programs and initiatives that are leading the field in adult education to close the gap. The OCTAE report states, "The Mayor's Commission for Literacy in Philadelphia is expanding digital learning opportunities through its myPLACE online classes and three new myPLACE campuses....The city hopes that the myPLACE online classes will greatly expand access to foundation skills instruction and that myPLACE campuses will provide the assessments and ongoing support learners need to succeed in online formats."

myPLACE uses the power of technology to accelerate adult learning in a centralized, citywide system. Three myPLACE campuses offer registration, assessment, enrollment, and case management support. In addition, 23 literacy organizations partner with the Commission to deliver face-to-face classes in adult basic

education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED® preparation. All individuals who can read at the 4th-grade or higher levels are enrolled in their first online course, *Introduction to Adult Learning and Careers*, in which learners plan their careers, create a professional résumé, and acquire adult study and digital skills.

*myPLACE* Online offers the nation's first completely online, cohort-based classes in reading, writing and math for low-literate adults. *myPLACE* learners improve their computer and work-readiness skills while learning basic education. The workforce-contextualized and accelerated courses have increased the number of publicly-funded class "seats" in Philadelphia by 39%, with costs decreasing further as enrollments increase.

Philadelphia is estimated to have as many as 550,000 adults, or nearly one in two, operating at levels too low for entry-level employment. *myPLACE* is designed to be low-cost, high-quality, and replicable to maximize education opportunities for large populations that would otherwise remain unemployed. Through *myPLACE*, literacy providers are able to access a database of all seats available at the three *myPLACE* Campuses and 23 partner organizations. The program is slated to begin inside the Philadelphia Prison System and is being reviewed by state prisons as well. Scarce resources are leveraged by ensuring seats are filled with learners at the appropriate level for each particular course, reducing multi-level classes that are inefficient for both the teacher and the learner.

### **About The Mayor's Commission on Literacy**

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy has worked to equip all adults in Philadelphia with the education they need for work, family, and civic engagement since 1983. Mayor Michael A. Nutter appointed a new 16-member Commission in 2010. Leslie Stiles is the Chair, and Loraine Ballard Morrill is the Vice-Chair. The Mayor has charged The Commission to work on behalf of over 80 literacy and workforce development programs to help the estimated 550,000 adults in the city functioning below basic adult education levels qualify for family-sustaining jobs and post-secondary training and education. For more information about The Commission and its programs, visit [philaliteracy.org](http://philaliteracy.org).

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