



Why Adult Literacy in Philly is Getting Much Deserved Attention

By Mo Manklang | July 8, 2015

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy was recognized for its efforts and awarded a \$10,000 grant.

In 2011, Mayor Michael Nutter charged the [Commission on Literacy](#) to help the estimated 550,000 adults in the city who were functioning below basic adult education levels. Right now, over 80 percent of job seekers that are tested in PA CareerLink® employment centers are at 5th-8th grade levels of reading, writing and math.

In addition, an estimated 200,000 people with criminal records live in the city, with even more returning from correctional institutions testing even lower than average citizens on reading, writing, and math, most often at 0 to 3rd grade levels. As many as 65 percent of working adults lack the crucial and basic technology skills expected in nearly all jobs, and 43 percent of Philadelphians lack access to the Internet at home.

Addressing adult literacy is a huge part of creating a Philadelphia where its residents can viably work. The Mayor's Commission on Literacy serves adult, out-of-school Philadelphians, age 16 and up, whose literacy skills are too low to pass employment or college entrance tests.

"We can directly enroll adult learners in classes at more than 30 literacy organizations and reduce enrollment wait times. In addition, the Commission's online courses are helping thousands of individuals acquire the basic work ready skills required of our 21st century, technology-based economy," Nutter said.

Mayor recognized for efforts

Recently, [Nutter](#) received the Literacy Leadership Award from the National Coalition for Literacy in recognition of the Commission's efforts.

Jeff Carter, president of the National Coalition for Literacy said, "The diversity of this year's awardees are a good representation of the different kinds of leadership you see involved in adult education across the U.S. It's going to take all of us-political leaders, journalists, educators, and others-to build a greater understanding of the adverse impact that low skills has on families across the country and on our economy overall."

Dollar General funding for myPLACESM

To further these efforts, The Mayor's Commission on Literacy was separately awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to support its myPLACESM Online program. myPLACESM Online offers the a completely online, cohort-based classes in reading, writing and math for low literate; this program is the first of its kind in the nation.

"It is exciting to see the impact grants from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation make throughout the country, especially as we cross the \$100 million threshold in overall donations and the difference it has made to nearly six million people," said Rick Dreiling, Dollar General's Chairman and CEO.

Image via the [City of Philadelphia](#) / Kait Privera

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