

# Adult Education Division

# Request for Applications

## Funding Application:

**Adult Literacy Program Providers**

**Spring 2023**

**NMHED Contact:**

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**For General Inquiries:**

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**Adult Literacy Program Providers**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**2023**

**Available Funding**

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) will distribute up to $700,000 (seven hundred thousand dollars) in grants under this Request for Applications (RFA). Funding is appropriated to NMHED by the New Mexico State Legislature for an “adult literacy program” and is contingent upon the availability of funds.

### Grant Period

This is a three-year renewable grant. The first grant period will begin July 1, 2023, and end June 30, 2024. Any unexpended funds at the end of the grant period shall revert to the State of New Mexico General Fund. The opportunity for any future funding in this grant cycle is subject to legislative appropriation.

### Background and Purpose of Grant

In order to promote effective practices in the higher education institutions of New Mexico and, in turn, cultivate a globally competitive workforce through education, NMHED provides financial, academic, and policy oversight to public higher education institutions for the purpose of promoting efficiency, accountability, and student success. The Adult Education Division (AE) of NMHED oversees statewide adult education and family literacy services to New Mexicans who are aged 16 and over and who have educational functioning levels between grade 0 and grade 12.9. In this RFA, *adult r*efers to New Mexico residents who are 16 years old and older, provided they are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school.

The purpose of this RFA is to support an NMHED program that promotes adult literacy in New Mexico through direct instruction, particularly one-on-one and small group tutoring for adults with emergent literacy.

Literacy is a continuum. Literacy is also a spectrum of abilities, including the ability to identify, understand, use, and produce printed and written materials (print literacy); the ability to use digital technology to find, produce, and communicate information (digital literacy); the ability to access, interpret, use, and communicate mathematical information and ideas (numeracy); and to participate fully in one’s community and society (OECD, 2023). Literacy services may also include family literacy initiatives. NMHED embraces this inclusive definition of literacy in our approach to funding and providing support and oversight for adult literacy programs.

Eligibility Criteria

NMHED will fund programs that *currently* provide adult literacy services and can demonstrate effectiveness in provision of these services for at least two years. NMHED will not fund start-up programs.

1. Types of entity that may apply include the following:
2. A local educational agency;
3. A community-based organization or faith-based organization;
4. A volunteer literacy organization;
5. An institution of higher education;
6. A public or private nonprofit agency;
7. A library;
8. A public housing authority;
9. A nonprofit institution that is not described in 1 through 7 above which currently provides literacy services to adults;
10. A consortium or coalition of entities described in 1 through 8 above; or
11. A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.
12. Applicants must be direct service providers. **Applicants may not sub-award nor sub-contract any portion of the delivery of services to other providers.**
13. Applicants must be prepared to fund their efforts at the beginning of the grant period at their own expense until reimbursements can be requested by the applicant and paid by NMHED.
14. Applicants must propose to provide services for adult residents of New Mexico.

Grant Requirements

Awardees must:

* Demonstrate a programmatic emphasis on providing high-quality instructional services to adult residents of New Mexico with emergent literacy. Service modalities should emphasize small group instruction and one-on-one tutoring. These emphases are necessary because they are aligned with the intent of this funding from the New Mexico Legislature. NMHED recognizes and accepts that adult literacy programs serve learners at all stages of literacy development. Our holistic definition of literacy on page 2 of this RFA includes print and digital literacy, numeracy, and family literacy. We do not prohibit funded adult literacy programs from serving adult learners at all stages of literacy development, up to and including high school equivalency (HSE) preparation and including instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL). However, with the funds provided through this grant program, awardees must demonstrate an emphasis on serving those adult learners with emergent literacy. In past iterations of this grant program, NMHED has required that programs use nationally recognized standardized tests, such as TABE or CASAS, to ensure that learners served by these funds tested at or below a 6th-grade reading level**. While NMHED no longer requires TABE or CASAS tests** in funded adult literacy programs, awardees that do not use these tests must demonstrate through other means their emphasis on serving those with emergent literacy. These include the goals that they are required to set and track with learners and may include outcomes on appropriate, evidence-based literacy assessments of programs’ choosing. These measures are subject to audit by NMHED to verify compliance with the requirement.
* Use the Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System (LACES) database provided by NMHED to track all required learner and program data, as required by the NMHED Adult Literacy Program Data and Assessment Policy.
* Set, track, and report learning goals with all learners, in accordance with the NMHED Adult Literacy Program Data and Assessment Policy. At the time of the writing of this RFA, progress on literacy goals is the primary way that NMHED will demonstrate adult literacy outcomes through this grant program. As this grant program matures, it is possible that we will seek to measure other learner outcomes.
* Participate in NMHED-led initiatives to promote communication, quality, and efficiency in the provision of adult literacy services in New Mexico. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, a statewide email distribution list ([adultlit@nmdelt.org](mailto:adultlit@nmdelt.org)), regular virtual meetings and other potential in-person meetings, as needed; trainings on NMHED policy and procedure related to the grant; LACES training and regular program performance reviews; professional learning opportunities; and efforts to promote referrals and collaboration with other adult education programs and partners.
* Respond promptly to any and all direct communications from NMHED staff and any contractors engaged to work with and support Adult Literacy grantee programs.
* Comply with all published NMHED policies and procedures for Adult Literacy Grantees, which will be posted on *Propelnm.org*  by July 1, 2023, as well as provided through [adultlit@nmdelt.org](mailto:adultlit@nmdelt.org). Included in these policies will be rules regarding cost allowability and clear parameters on the practice of the learner co-enrollment in Adult Literacy and AEFLA-funded Adult Education programs.
* Deliver a complete Annual Report by September 1st of each year of the grant cycle using the template that NMHED will provide.

### Application Procedure

All eligible providers who wish to apply for a grant should notify NMHED at [adult.education@hed.nm.gov](mailto:adult.education@state.nm.us) by March 10, 2023 to ensure inclusion in all notifications, clarifications, and opportunities to ask questions during the application process. However, advance notification is not required in order to apply.

NMHED will conduct a pre-application conference by webinar on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. for all who have indicated an intent to apply. The purpose of the conference is to hear and respond to questions and provide clarification about the application process so that all applicants have access to the same information. The webinar will be recorded for those unable to attend. Until the application due date, applicants may submit questions in writing to [adult.education@hed.nm.gov](mailto:adult.education@state.nm.us). All questions will be answered in writing, and questions and answers will be posted on the NMHED-AE website (hed.nm.gov/students-parents/adult \_education).

The *deadline for submission is Wednesday, April 5, 2023.* You will be notified within one business day of receipt of your application. If you do not receive a notification within this timeframe, please contact NMHED to ensure your application was received. Applications must be emailed to [adult.education@hed.nm.gov](mailto:adult.education@state.nm.us) and copied to [amber.gallup@hed.nm.gov](mailto:amber.gallup@hed.nm.gov). Emailed applications must be received by 5:00 pm Mountain Time on Wednesday, April 5, 2023.

**NOTE: *Paper applications will not be accepted*. *Your application will not be considered if you do not submit by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, April 5, 2023.***

Applications will be reviewed by an impartial committee made up of members with expertise in adult education and literacy programming and operation. Determination of and notification to applicants who will be awarded a grant will be made no later than April 26, 2023.

**Evaluation Criteria**

NMHED will select awardees based on several factors, which may include the following:

* Selection Committee’s scoring and recommendations;
* Alignment of proposed applicant activities with grant purpose, requirements, and eligibility criteria, as stated above;
* Evaluation of cost-of-service relative to need, numbers served, and demonstrated effectiveness of services;
* Need for and accessibility of literacy services in the service area;
* Evaluation of historic program data provided by the applicant; and
* Evaluation of financial statements/audits provided by applicant.

In addition, NMHED may contact employees, board members, partners or business associates of applicant organizations to clarify or verify information and responses provided by applicants.

# Application Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Date** |
| Applicants notify NMHED of intention to apply. | March 10th |
| Pre-application conference for eligible providers (web-based) | March 15th |
| Application due—Eligible providers submit their applications to NMHED via email to [adult.education@hed.nm.gov](mailto:adult.education@state.nm.us) and [amber.gallup@hed.nm.gov](mailto:amber.gallup@hed.nm.gov) | April 5th |
| NMHED reviews the applications and makes the final selection of awardees. | April 6th- April 20th |
| Notification of providers who are to receive grant awards. | May 1st |

**GRANT APPLICATION PACKET**

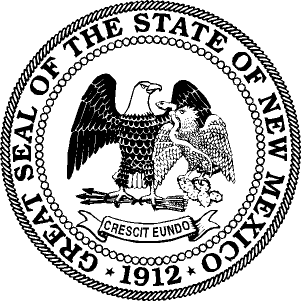
**Required Funding Application Contents**

1. Signed Cover Sheet
2. Applicant Information and Eligibility
3. Funding Application Narrative
4. New Mexico Certifications and Assurances
5. Preliminary Budget Forms
6. Program Performance Data
7. Independent Audited Financial Statements or other acceptable financial documents for two Years

**Applications must contain all seven of the above components to be considered complete and to be evaluated.**

**Your submitted application, along with a signed award letter from the Secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department, will constitute the Grant Agreement for your organization.**

**New Mexico Higher Education Department**

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# Adult Education

## 2023 Funding Application COVER SHEET

**Name of Organization**

**Tax identification number\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Address City State Zip Code**

**Chief Executive Officer of Organization –Printed Name**

**Chief Executive Officer of Organization –Signature Date**

**Contact Person Phone Number**

**E-Mail Address of Contact Person**

### APPLICANT INFORMATION and ELIGIBILITY

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| 1. **What type of eligible provider is your organization?**   Local educational agency  Community-based organization, or faith-based organization  Volunteer literacy organization  Institution of higher education  Public or private nonprofit agency  Library  Public housing authority  Nonprofit institution that is not described above which currently provides literacy services to adults  Consortium of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above  Partnership between an employer and an entity as described above |
| 1. **Do you provide direct services to students?** |
| 1. **Are you able to fund your work at the beginning of the grant period at your own expense, until you can request reimbursements and be paid by NMHED?** |
| 1. **Do you provide services for adult (age 16 and older) residents of New Mexico? If yes, how do you ensure that participants are adults and that they reside in New Mexico?** |

### FUNDING APPLICATION NARRATIVE

**Total Possible Points =500**

**Directions***:*

* Respond to each of the following prompts. Responses should be clear and concise.
* Please cite the data or research on which you base your responses, as appropriate to the prompt.
* Text boxes will expand to accommodate your narrative.

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| **1.** 50 points  Briefly describe your organization. Include the following:   * What are your organization’s primary mission and vision? * Describe your experience providing literacy education services in New Mexico. * How would this initiative improve or enhance the benefit your organization currently provides? |

**NOTE: If your organization receives funding as a result of this RFA, your responses to the prompts below will be part of your grant agreement, along with signed certifications and assurances and any requirements contained in your award letter.**

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| **2.** 200 points  Please outline the nature and scope of the adult literacy services you propose to provide using NMHED funding. Be sure to address at least the following:   * Which counties or geographical region(s) do you intend to serve? * Describe the need for and accessibility of adult literacy services in this region or regions. * Approximately how many participants do you anticipate serving each year? How did you arrive at this estimate? * How and where will services be provided (e.g., in person at your facility or facilities, remotely, or both; in small-groups, one-on-one tutoring, or other)? Describe your approach in detail. * Will the individuals providing services be volunteer or compensated? |

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| **3.** 40 points  Describe how your organization plans with collaborate or coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the communities you plan to serve. |
| **4.**  40 points  Describe your organization’s strategies to identify and engage individuals and communities in need of adult literacy services. |
| **5.** 70 points  As described earlier in this RFA, this grant will fund educational services to New Mexico adults who have low or emergent literacy. While applicants may serve individuals at any stage of literacy development, we require that emphasis be placed on serving adults with low or emergent literacy. In this way, we align with the intent of the funding.  Given the need for this emphasis, how will you assess student literacy levels? Describe your plan with as much detail as possible. Remember that you are not *required* to use a large, standardized test (such as TABE or CASAS), since these tests can be intimidating to students and may lack sensitivity to changes in literacy at the lowest educational functioning levels. However, you should have evidence-based ways to assess student literacy levels and ensure that the majority of the students you serve with NMHED funds have low or emergent literacy. Describe your approach. |
| **6.** 50 points  Describe how you ensure that the services you provide are of high quality.   * Describe how the instructors/tutors have been or will be trained and what access they have to high quality professional learning opportunities. * How do you evaluate the benefit of your services to the local community? * Describe your approach to curriculum and instruction. Cite theory, method, and/or relevant research that serve as foundations of your organization’s work. Discuss your choice of curriculum, instructional designs and approaches, and/or program management decisions. |

**7.** 50 points

Describe the limitations, barriers, or unique circumstances that your organization will face in providing these services.

* How do your region’s characteristics, demographics, location, etc. impact your ability to provide services?
* What economic, administrative, and logistical needs and challenges should NMHED understand if we wish to support your success?
* Please explain any other unique circumstances that will help us better understand your program.

**Note:** If you are *also* an Adult Education program funded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) or if you work very closely with one, you must answer the question below. If neither of these circumstances apply to your program, do not answer the question below:

**8.**

Funds awarded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and funds awarded under NMHED’s Adult Literacy Program have different purposes. Adult Literacy funds are not simply supplementary to AEFLA funds; they exist to help adults with emerging literacy meet their own literacy- and numeracy-related goals. Describe how you would carefully differentiate between your uses of these two distinct funding sources, honoring the intent of each.

* How would you make decisions about when and how to co-enroll learners in both programs?
* How will you ensure that intermingling of these two funding sources will not occur?

**3. NEW MEXICO CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES**

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| **Applicant/Agency:** |  |
|  |  |
| **Address:** |  |
|  |  |
| **Contact Information:** |  |

**For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024**

It is agreed that adult literacy services will be provided subject to New Mexico state laws and regulations and to the grant agreement comprising the contents of this application, the award letter from the Secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department, and the following terms:

1. **Student Eligibility**

Funding under this grant is to be expended only for individuals-

* 1. Who are 16 years of age and older;
  2. Who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under New Mexico State Law
  3. Who
     1. lack sufficient mastery of the basic literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills to enable the individuals to function effectively in society;
     2. are unable to speak, read, or write the English language well.

1. **Reporting Requirements**
   1. Grant recipients are required to use the LACES database provided by NMHED to track all required learner and program data.
   2. Set, track, and report learning goals with all learners, in accordance with the NMHED Adult Literacy Program Data and Assessment Policy. [Please note: Standardized testing with a National Reporting System (NRS)-approved test will no longer be required. We encourage the use of evidence-based literacy assessment(s) of your choosing to assess student literacy levels and assist in tracking student progress.]
   3. Maintain the following student-level data, at a minimum:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Data Element** | **Comments** |
| **1** | Number enrolled | Those enrolled in groups or tutoring sessions during the program year and who have had at least one hour of instruction under this program. Tracked in LACES. |
| **2** | Number of hours of instruction | From attendance records recorded in LACES.  Includes tutoring time and time on task if using a technology platform  Disaggregated by student |
| **3** | Instructional content | Adult Literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, ESL, or family literacy. Described in LACES. |
| **3** | Number of literacy goals set and met | Measured by tracking in LACES. |
| **4** | Referrals to other programs (if applicable) | Referral to Adult Education, One-Stop Center, or another program. This helps us demonstrate that state-funded programs are working together to serve New Mexicans.  Tracked in LACES. |
| **5** | Student demographic and contact information | According to a student intake form developed by HED and available at the beginning of the grant.  Tracked in LACES. |

* 1. Annual Reports will be submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department, Director of Adult Education Division. Annual Reports are due September 1, 2024. NMHED will provide a template before August 1, 2024.
  2. Monthly Expenditure Reports/Requests for Reimbursement are due by the 10th working day following the close of business each month and no later than the 15th day of each month. Reports will be submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department, Adult Education Division Finance Officer.
  3. Program data must be kept current to the month at a minimum.
  4. Monthly attendance reports must be kept at local programs for audit purposes.
  5. Monthly time sheets and pay records (including Time and Effort Reports) will be maintained on each employee at the local level.

1. **Student Fees**
2. No tuition may be charged for activities funded under this grant.
3. All instructional materials are to be provided at no cost to the student.
4. NMHED AE expects that Adult Literacy programs are providing services to New Mexicans free of charge. Any program that collects a registration or program fee must disclose this to NMHED AE during the application process and at any time during the grant cycle the program initiates a fee.
5. Any fees and expenditures that are approved by NMHED AE must be reported on a monthly basis. Program income should be used only for Adult Literacy activities.
6. **Other Requirements**
   1. Demonstrate a programmatic emphasis on providing high-quality instructional services to adult residents of New Mexico with emergent literacy.
   2. Participate in NMHED-led initiatives to promote communication, quality, and efficiency in the provision of adult literacy services in New Mexico.
   3. Respond promptly to any and all direct communications from NMHED staff and contractors engaged to work with Adult Literacy Grantees.
   4. Comply with all published NMHED policies and procedures for Adult Literacy Grantees.

***The person or persons whose signature(s) appear(s) below is/are authorized to sign this application, and to commit the applicant to all of its provisions.***

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|  |  |  | | | | |
| Date |  | Signature of Chief Executive Officer and Title | | | | |
|  | | | | | | |
| Name of Organization, Applicant or Recipient | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | |
| Street Address | | | | | | |
|  | | |  |  |  |  |
| City | | |  | State |  | Zip Code |

1. **PRELMINARY BUDGET FORMS**

Complete and include the separate budget forms. While these forms are preliminary, since funding amounts have not yet been determined and are subject to availability of funds, they help NMHED assess applicants’ funding requests and their intentions for the use of funding relative to the number of learners typically served. Applications that do not include budget forms will be considered incomplete and will be disqualified. Programs selected for an award will be required to submit a revised budget that reflects the actual award for Program Year 2023-3024.

1. **PROGRAM PERFORMANCE DATA**

Include demographic and/or performance data from at least the past two program years in order to demonstrate your experience providing services such as those required under this grant. Present your program’s performance data in a table or in another way that clearly and concisely shows your performance outcomes as you have been measuring them. We are particularly interested in your enrollment, retention, and effectiveness in providing services. Enrollment demographic data should include total number of students served in each program year and average number of hours per student. If you have questions about how to convey program performance in your application, do not hesitate to contact the Adult Education Division of the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED AE). Applications that do not include performance data will not be considered complete and will be disqualified.

1. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS/INDEPENDENT AUDITS**

Include independent audited financial statements for years spanning July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022.  If audited financial statements are not available, acceptable financial documents include bank statements for the fiscal year and a list of outstanding payables at fiscal year-end, and a bank listing of all deposits and disbursements for each fiscal year. Applications that do not include financial statements as described above will not be considered complete and will be disqualified. If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact NMHED AE.

**Reference**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2023). *Adult literacy*. <https://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/adultliteracy.htm>