



Florida Health Literacy Initiative
A statewide Initiative managed by the Florida Literacy Coalition and
sponsored by the Florida Blue Foundation

2026 GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Purpose: Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 14% of Americans cannot comprehend basic health information. The study indicates that health illiteracy is especially prevalent among: 1) adults who did not complete high school, with 49% having below basic health literacy, and 2) Hispanic adults, who have lower health literacy than any other ethnic/racial group, with 41% having below basic health literacy.

Adults with low literacy levels often fail to engage in early detection and preventive health care. They also have significant difficulties navigating the health care system and following their doctors' treatment plans. Florida consistently ranks in the bottom 50% of states in the annual [America's Health Rankings](#) study. The state's greatest health challenges include a high rate of uninsured residents, non-prescription drug use, low vaccination rates, and high prevalence of cancer and kidney disease.

In 2008, responding to the need for comprehensive health literacy curricula for adult ESOL teachers and their students, FLC partnered with the Florida Department of Education to develop a student book and teacher's guide centered on basic health literacy - *Staying Healthy: An English Learner's Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living*. Since then, several additional resources have been developed including *Staying Healthy for Beginners*, *Coping with Stress*, *Women's Health and Health Careers Guide*.

The Florida Health Literacy Initiative is funded through a grant from the Florida Blue Foundation and managed by the Florida Literacy Coalition. The program provides training, resources, and funding to help Florida adult ESOL and family literacy programs integrate health education into their instruction. This national award-winning Initiative has collaborated with community providers to serve more than 20,000 students statewide, enabling these individuals to gain information and skills to make informed choices regarding their health and nutrition.

Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation are committed to improving the health and well-being of all Floridians and seek to find real and meaningful solutions to some of the most critical social issues facing Florida's communities. Because a literate, educated, and informed society is key to our state's overall success, Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation have made supporting family and healthy literacy programs a cornerstone of its community investments strategy.

Eligibility Criteria:

Organizations interested in applying must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization or government-based agency (such as school districts and state/community colleges) that provides adult ESOL and/or family literacy instruction in Florida; Florida Health Initiative Grant Proposal Guidelines
- Provide literacy services via classes, small groups, and/or one-to-one tutoring; and
- Commit to basic reporting requirements.

Entities and organizations ineligible to receive a Health Literacy grant include:

- Individuals;
- For-profit entities;
- Civic, fraternal, labor, and political organizations;
- Religious organizations, if funds will be used to educate/benefit a specific denomination or congregation or the group intends to proselytize to program participants and/or participants' family members; and
- Groups that discriminate based on age, sex, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, or marital status.

NOTE: Agencies/organizations with multiple programs/sites (i.e. library systems, school districts, community colleges) may submit up to three applications for consideration per year.

Definition of Family Literacy Programs: For grant purposes, family literacy programs should include the following four components: 1) parent literacy instruction; 2) interactive literacy activities between parents and their children; 3) training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; and 4) age-appropriate education for children.

Grant Award: We plan to award approximately fourteen grants of up to \$5,000. **Applications must be received by March 16, 2026.** Grant funds are used to support adult ESOL and/or family literacy program expenses over the twelve-month period beginning May 1, 2025 and ending April 30, 2026. Appropriate administrative and travel expenses may be paid for with grant funds. Grant recipients from prior years are eligible to reapply. The ability or need to secure matching funds is not required for this grant.

Non-allowable Expenditures:

- Fundraising events, contributions, and donations;

- General operating expenses;
- Expenses obligated prior to or after the grant period;
- Lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state, or local legislation;
- Capital expenditures (including acquisitions, building projects, remodeling, or renovation of facilities) with the exception of unfixed equipment;
- Bad debts, contingencies, fines and penalties, interest, and other financial costs;
- Total equipment purchases of more than \$1,000; and
- Private entertainment.

Curriculum and Materials: While applicants are encouraged to incorporate the *Staying Healthy* curriculum and materials into their programs, either solely or in conjunction with other guides/materials, they are not required to do so. Should applicants choose to use the *Staying Healthy* materials, up to 80 complimentary copies of the *Staying Healthy: An English Learner's Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living* or *Staying Healthy for Beginners* student book will be provided. Teacher's guides are freely available to download online. Organizations/programs that field-tested the *Staying Healthy* curriculum found that a minimum of 22 hours of instruction was typically needed to complete the curriculum.

Please note that neither curriculum is well suited for low beginning level students. [Click here](#) to view online copies of each curriculum.

Reporting Requirements: Grantees will be asked to complete a brief mid-year progress report as well as a year-end final report on the status and accomplishments of their projects. The reports will include: 1) student pre- and post- health literacy knowledge assessments; 2) number of students served, 3) teacher and student evaluation/feedback forms; and 4) other information detailing the project's accomplishments. Programs will also be asked to document and share a group project/activity that students developed during the year (see Project-Based Learning below). [Click here](#) to view the pre- and post- health literacy assessment.

Project-based Learning: Project-based learning (PBL) is a dynamic classroom approach in which students actively explore real world problems and issues. PBL activities engage and empower students to utilize the information they learned in the classroom and apply it in a larger context. It can also be effective method to help students develop literacy, English language and critical thinking skills. [Click here](#) to learn more about project-based learning and to view sample adult learner classroom projects.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Applicants are highly encouraged to address/include events and opportunities for outside partners to interact with instructors and students as part of their health literacy program/proposal. Grant funds may be used for related costs.

Recognition: Applicants, as part of the application process, will be asked to demonstrate how they will recognize the Florida Blue Foundation for its generous support, should they be awarded a grant.

Submission: Applications should be submitted electronically at <https://form.iotform.com/223335228778160>

Please submit the proposal narrative and budget together as one document. The supporting documents may be submitted as one large document or uploaded separately.

Notification: Grant recipients will be notified via e-mail in April. One representative from each awarded organization will be invited to participate in a mandatory meeting and recognition program during the 42nd Annual Florida Literacy Conference on May 6th, 2026, at the Mission Resort, Howey-in-the-Hills. There will be no cost to attend on May 6th and a discounted registration rate of \$260 will be available for the full Conference. Grant recipients may budget for up to \$475 in the grant to cover travel and/or registration costs.

For more information about the guidelines or if you have difficulty submitting the application, please contact Greg Smith at smithg@floridaliteracy.org