



FLC Contact: Heather Surrency
(407) 246-7110
surrencyh@floridaliteracy.org

NEWS RELEASE

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Florida Blue Contact:
Toni Woods
(904) 905-3153

Florida Blue Foundation Sponsors Statewide Health Literacy Grants Program

Fourteen programs across the state of Florida have been awarded one-year, \$5,000 grants for the implementation of a health literacy program to benefit their adult education, ESOL, and family literacy students.

These mini-grants, awarded by the Florida Blue Foundation and the Florida Literacy Coalition, integrate health and nutrition information into the programs' curriculum. The focus is to help students acquire the knowledge; literacy skills; and resources required to navigate the health care system and make informed health decisions. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the health of our country, these skills continue to be essential.

More than 19,000 students from programs throughout Florida have benefited from this Initiative since 2009.

Congratulations to the following organizations:

- Atlantic Technical College, Arthur Ashe Jr. Campus
- Broward County Public Schools
- Collier County Adult Education
- El Sol Jupiter's Neighborhood Resource Center
- Flagler Technical Institute
- Language Learning Center at Maitland Presbyterian Church
- Learn to Read of St. Johns County
- Literacy Alliance of Northeast Florida

- Literacy Council of Sarasota
- Miami Dade College, Hialeah Campus
- Safe Children Coalition
- School District of DeSoto County
- School District of Osceola County
- United Food Bank of Plant City

There is a growing recognition among health care providers and adult educators around the country that limited English language and literacy skills can have a significant impact on one's health. According to the National Adult Assessment of Literacy, 14 percent 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 percent having below basic health literacy, and 2) foreign-born adults who speak English as their second language.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, it's never been more important for people to be informed about good health practices and available resources. People who lack literacy and health literacy skills are much more likely to use medications incorrectly, have at least one chronic disease, spend more time in the hospital, and are four times more likely to have poor health than people with higher health literacy skills. The potential for cost savings and improved health outcomes are significant. Adult education, literacy and family literacy programs can play an important role in helping people to acquire these skills.

"At Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation, our mission is to help people and communities achieve better health," said Susan Towler, vice president of the Florida Blue Foundation. "By partnering with the Florida Literacy Coalition and supporting the Florida Health Literacy Grant Initiative, we are making an immediate impact to help people keep themselves and their families healthy during the pandemic, while creating sustainable change throughout our communities."

The Florida Health Literacy Initiative provides training, resources, and funding to assist Florida ESOL and family literacy programs to integrate health education into their instruction. The objective is to help students develop basic literacy and English language skills while gaining information to make informed choices regarding their health and nutrition.

"The continued support of this Initiative reflects Florida Blue Foundation's strong commitment to helping adult learners, many who are new to this country, become informed health advocates for themselves and their families," said Greg Smith, executive director of the Florida Literacy Coalition. "We look forward to our continued partnership with Florida Blue and this year's grant recipients to help adult learners throughout our state achieve better health through education."

More information is available on the Florida Literacy Coalition's website at www.floridaliteracy.org.

For questions, please contact Heather Surrency at surrencyh@floridaliteracy.org.

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About the Florida Literacy Coalition

Established in 1985, the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) promotes, supports and advocates for the effective delivery of quality adult and family literacy services in the state of Florida. As a statewide umbrella literacy organization and the host of Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center, FLC provides a range of services to support more than 300 adult education, literacy and family literacy providers. Special emphasis is placed on assisting community-based literacy organizations with their training and program development needs.

About Florida Blue Foundation

[Florida Blue Foundation](#) enables healthy communities by making grants, building coalitions and rewarding best practices. More than three million people in Florida have received direct health services as a result of grants made to nonprofit organizations since our founding in 2001. Florida Blue Foundation is a trade name of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, Inc., an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.