Literacy Council of Northern Virginia

2022 Annual Report

Literacy is a Survival Skill
Mission

The mission of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) is to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community.

Vision

A community empowered by the ability to read, write, speak, and understand English.

Learner-Focus: Keep our learners’ best interests in mind

Innovation: Remain at the cutting edge of best practices and implement evidence-based programs that enhance learning.

Integrity: Be honest and sincere in all interactions.

Collaboration: Recognize that by working together, we can do more to achieve common goals.

Excellence: Strive to be the best at what we do.

Respect: Treat all persons with dignity and embrace and celebrate one another’s differences and cultural backgrounds.

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Greetings,

There is so much we, the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, have to be proud of this year. We are proud of the accomplishments and efforts of LCNV staff, board, volunteers, and learners. While we are proud of our learners, we hope they are equally proud of themselves. The theme for this year’s Annual Recognition Ceremony was “English Education Empowers Me”. Our Annual Recognition Ceremony booklet contains essays where students shared how learning English empowers them to transform their lives and provides the skills and confidence to grow in the community. We are moved by their dedication towards creating change for themselves and within their community.

This year we were privileged to offer both in-person and virtual English classes. We were thrilled to have our classrooms filled with many new and returning faces. Beyond providing English language education, LCNV classes encourage students to build lasting friendships, share their stories, and build their confidence. Along with their English class, students have access to free student advising, tutoring, and conversation classes. These resources and presence of advisor-type relationships allow adult learners to engage beyond the classroom and increase the likelihood of them reaching their goals.

We have recognized the growing importance of digital literacy in the modern world. Our learners come from diverse backgrounds and technological skills are new to many of them. An increase in digital literacy skills allows learners greater job opportunities, ease in communication with friends and family, and increases opportunities to engage in the community. See the article, “LCNV Takes Strides Towards Digital Literacy” on page 3 to read more about our efforts.

We continue to be thankful for the overwhelming dedication of our staff, instructors, and volunteers, but more importantly, we are so inspired by our learners, who have made it their mission to learn, grow, and succeed. Over the next year, we will continue providing our learners with affordable access to English classes, community resources, and support services to empower themselves.

With much appreciation,

[Signature]

Roopal Mehta Saran
Executive Director
Academic Programs

LCNV served 1,430 adult learners in our online and in person classes throughout Northern Virginia, including career-specific training programs and targeted skills development tailored to the students’ needs. LCNV is one of only a few non-profit organizations in Northern Virginia that complies with federal education standards as it serves the most beginning-level adult learner, those that understand English at a 6th grade level or lower.

**LCNV’s Beginning English Classes** teach the foundational skills adult English language learners need. Classes are held at least twice a week for two-hour class sessions at three academic levels.

**Our Family Learning Programs (FLP)** provide English language instruction classes for parents and caregivers, empowering them to engage in their children’s education.

**Skills-based Classes** give learners the option of focusing exclusively on the specific skills needed to expand educational and vocational competencies, including Writing Classes, English for Academic Studies, and free Conversation Classes.

Aside from these classes, LCNV offers students various Support Services to help them stay on track to accomplish their goals, including Supplemental Tutoring, Student Advising, the Facebook Learner Network, Distance Learning, and Study Hall.

**Destination Workforce®**

LCNV originally launched the Destination Workforce® program with the dream of offering adults the basic skills in English language and literacy to improve their employability and allow them to participate more fully and equitably in the workplace so they can advance towards self-sufficiency. We partner with different employers who see the value of improving their employees’ lives, reducing staff turnover, enhancing performance, and improving customer service.

Over the years, we have worked with a variety of partners, including the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton in Tysons Corner and José Andrés’ Think Food Group, tailoring each class to their brand, industry, and performance goals. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we continued our DWF® partnerships with the City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (ARPCA) as well as the Korean Community Service Center (KCSC) to provide virtual English for Work classes. We continued to offer our Intensive English and Workforce Readiness course, a 100+ hour class for beginning-level adult English language learners (ELLS) preparing to enter or advance in the American workforce. In 2021, LCNV enhanced our English for Work Online class to cover some of the basic skills needed to apply and interview for a job, such as career inventory, job searching skills, resume writing, cover letter writing, practice with online job applications and mock interviews with a coach. As part of our Destination Workforce® portfolio, these courses aim to provide the language and workplace soft skills needed to obtain entry-level employment and to participate more fully and confidently at work and in the community. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing highlighted new opportunities for this program to better support ELLs in their path towards achieving their goals. Now with virtual and in-person offerings, reduced tuition, and a laptop loaner program, we hope to improve the overall quality and accessibility of the class.

As the immigrant population in the U.S. continues to rise, it is critical for us to work together as a community to help everyone have equal access to the resources they need to obtain, succeed, and advance in entry-level jobs. We are so thrilled to have had the chance to work alongside local businesses to develop their workforce by upskilling their employees and look forward to future opportunities to enhance and add to our programming and help our learners have a brighter future.
LCNV Takes Strides to Develop Digital Literacy

We have learned extensively throughout our 60 years of providing English education; there are always new ways to further improve, update, and develop our programs. This year, Literacy Council of Northern Virginia staff has made great strides to assist learners in gaining digital literacy, a skill that increases in importance as technology continues to develop. Many learners come to us in hopes to continue their education and open new doors for career and community engagement. It has become increasingly common for jobs to require employees to have digital skills. Our mission is to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community. Digital literacy empowers learners to access these educational opportunities, utilize their skills and make use of community assistance programs.

As we began offering virtual classes at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, it heightened our awareness of the vast need for digital literacy and digital devices in our community. In July of 2021, we began a laptop lending program for students enrolled in the Destination Workforce® Intensive English and Workforce Readiness program, a virtual class for beginning-level English language learners. The laptop lending program opens educational opportunities to individuals who may otherwise be unable to access these educational opportunities. In addition to allowing these individuals to learn English virtually, providing laptops to our learners assists them in becoming comfortable using digital devices and digital programs such as Zoom.

Since the addition of virtual or remote instruction at LCNV, instructors have had to become more strategic in how they integrate technology to support learning. This year we have continued to develop strategies to help our learners build their digital skills. In March of 2022, we began rolling out Northstar Digital Literacy teaching resources to enhance digital skills instruction for participants in the Destination Workforce® Intensive English and Workforce Readiness program. Northstar Digital Literacy provides resources to build the basic skills necessary for using a computer and the internet in daily life, employment, and higher education.

To aid the development of digital literacy in our programs, LCNV staff and instructors have been participating alongside 100+ educators nationwide in EdTech Maker Space projects under the direction of World Education’s CrowdED Learning initiative. The EdTech Maker Space is a collaborative, service-learning based professional development model that leads to the curation, adaptation, and/or creation of re-usable open educational resources (OERs) to support other educators and, ultimately, learners. The Marshall Reading Program is a learner- and teacher-facing leveled library and mobile app of 345 leveled readings with over 1,000 mobile-friendly accompanying activities. The mobile app provides self-directed learning to build English literacy skills while encouraging the use of digital devices to further education. The ESL Story Bank is a teacher-facing library of 36 beginning-level readings and over 200 interactive virtual classroom activities. Typing exercises were added to the ESL Story Bank, created by corporate volunteers from Accenture on behalf of LCNV to further develop the digital literacy inclusion in our programs. LCNV staff and instructors also contributed to the Digital Skills Library, a teacher-facing repository of nearly 2,000 free learning resources to help adult learners in developing the digital skills needed to achieve their personal, civic, educational, and career goals. This library managed by the EdTech Center at World Education includes resources that are mobile-friendly and are focused on the use of mobile devices, building beyond computer skills. LCNV’s participation in these projects assisted staff and instructors in understanding digital skills needs and will enrich LCNV programs.

In 2023, we are excited to continue to further the development and inclusion of digital literacy in our classes. We are seeing the impact these digital resources have on the lives of our learners and their ability to assist them in accessing employment and educational opportunities to more fully and equitably participate in the community.
LCNV Learners

LCNV Learners’ Top 10 Countries of Origin

1. Afghanistan  
2. El Salvador  
3. Honduras  
4. Guatemala  
5. Bolivia  
6. South Korea  
7. Colombia  
8. Mexico  
9. Morocco  
10. Peru

Learner Facts

- LCNV’s 1,430 learners came from 67 different countries and spoke 38 different languages.
- 80% were female and 85% of all learners were between ages 25-59.
- 45% lived below the federal poverty line ($26,500 for a family of four).
- 50% had one or more jobs.
- 2,074 dependent children had parents in LCNV’s programs.
- Top 10 native languages included Spanish, Dari/Farsi, Pashtu, Arabic, Korean, Persian, Vietnamese, Amharic, French, and Urdu.
- 20% of learners had nine years or less of education before coming to LCNV.

Learner Achievement: Over 71% of Learners Achieved Two or More Goals

LCNV’s learners achieved many significant goals this year. In addition to the goals listed below, 952 learners achieved personal goals such as voting for the first time, being more engaged in conversations, and increasing involvement in children’s education. 255 learners felt that they have been able to strengthen family relations, and 320 learners were able to improve wellness and attain healthier lifestyles.

- 524 Attained Consumer Skills
- 227 Entered/Retained Employment
- 696 Improved Employability Skills
- 696 Improved Technology Skills
- 469 Increased Involvement in the Community
LCNV in the Community

LCNV actively attended a variety of conferences and symposiums to share our experiences nationally and internationally, presenting at community fairs, public hearings, and cultural celebrations to raise public awareness of adult English education. Below are a few of the year’s highlights.

**July 2021**
- LCNV began a laptop lending program for participants in the Destination Workforce® Intensive English and Workforce Readiness program.

**August 2021**
- LCNV restarted a Destination Workforce class for non-native English-speaking employees of Alexandria Restaurant Partners; offering a unique program tailored to the goals of ARP and their employees.

**September 2021**
- LCNV held its 59th Annual Recognition Ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments of English language learners. We heard from learners on the theme: “Learning Lights My Path Forward” and were honored to recognize many of our dedicated volunteers, donors, and board members.
- We developed new Destination Workforce® curriculum, English for Community Engagement, to support neighborhood ambassadors from Fairfax County Opportunity Neighborhoods.

**October 2021**
- Thanks to a generous donor LCNV staff spent the day together in Annapolis, MD to reconnect after time away due to COVID-19.

**November 2021**
- LCNV committed to offering impromptu virtual classes at no charge when contacted by Dar-Al-Hijrah, informing us that there were 20 Afghan refugees ready for English classes. While fall classes had already begun, LCNV wanted to offer the opportunity for these refugees to start their language acquisition immediately.

**January 2022**
- LCNV’s Academic Operations and Digital Learning Manager, Nada Raja, began participating in the Serving Refugees Professional Learning Community this spring facilitated by VALRC.

**February 2022**
- Leadership Fairfax awarded LCNV the 2021 Nonprofit Leadership Award. We are proud that we continue to be recognized as a leader in the community!

**March 2022**
- LCNV’s Executive Director, Roopal Mehta Saran, was selected as one of the 2022 honorees for the Washington Business Journal’s Diversity in Business Awards as a leader in her field and the Greater Washington business community.
- LCNV’s 4th annual A Taste of Literacy was held on March 25th. This free fundraising breakfast raised critical funds to open doors of opportunity to adult English language learners. We were honored to celebrate in person with the LCNV community; we surpassed our fundraising goal of $75,000 with over $90,000 raised.
- We began rolling out Northstar Digital Literacy teaching resources to enhance digital skills instruction for participants in the Destination Workforce® Intensive English and Workforce Readiness program.

**April 2022**
- LCNV instructor, Loren Zander, was awarded the Fairfax County Volunteer Service Award in the category of Education and Literacy.
- Amy Tristan, LCNV’s Volunteer Coordinator, was invited to join Senator Tim Kaine for Coffee with Women Leaders. The group had an informal discussion on various topics from workforce to economic equity and global issues.
- LCNV teachers Banhi, Darlene, Patricia, Vaishali, and Wafa as well as staff Lisa and Soo completed the Community Resilience Initiative’s Trauma Informed Care: Course 1 presented by Virginia’s Community Colleges Student Success Center and each received certification as a Trauma Informed Individual.

**May 2022**
- LCNV added a 3rd level to our Intensive English and Workforce Readiness program.

**June 2022**
- Staff member Xavier Muñoz participated in the Teaching Skills That Matter/SkillBlox EdTech Maker Space alongside 35 other educators nationwide to refine the TSTM civics education framework, align free and open resources to adult education topics, and contribute to an Open Education Resources Evaluation Guide.
- Teachers Jackie Corkins and Vaishali Deshpande alongside staff member Xavier Muñoz and Soo Park presented “Adapting Integrated Education and Training (IET) for English language learners to virtual instruction” at the Maryland Adult Education Virtual Training Institute.

We thank our **524 volunteers for their 20,951 hours of service**; without their dedication, our achievements would not have been possible! In the past year, LCNV held **13 events to recruit and train volunteers**, including **8 LCNV 101 events** (information sessions on our mission, history, and volunteer opportunities), **3 Instructor Trainings**, and **2 BEST Plus 2.0 trainings**. Through these opportunities, we met and worked with **240 new volunteers**. Volunteers support LCNV by teaching and helping the students in the classroom, assisting with student registrations and assessments, raising awareness in the community, and playing other essential roles. Volunteers assisted in our online programming, providing substantial and creative remote support to help our students use online learning platforms.
For 60 years LCNV has maintained its fiscal viability by fostering a diverse group of supporters, focusing on cost efficiencies, and leveraging community partnerships, including the contribution of its large volunteer force.

"One day I made a decision and told myself to get up right now and move, because there is no tomorrow. The decisions of today make my tomorrow and tomorrow will make my future. Don’t wait for another day, because life is too short and every second of time is worth more than a diamond.”

- MASOOMA, LCNV LEARNER

"Learning English helps me communicate with people who speak English, like my doctors and neighbors. If there is an emergency, I can ask for help in English. In addition, if a person approaches me and asks me for help in English, I can help them. Also, knowing English gives me more opportunities when looking for jobs that require English fluency.”

- SOBEIDA, LCNV LEARNER
Our Team

Staff

Jean Ku, President
Senior Vice President, Marketing Interfolio

Michael Rees Gavin, Vice President
Management Consulting, Managing Director, Accenture Federal Services

Seema Jain, Secretary
Deputy Executive Director,
Virginia Career Works- Northern

Nathan Teleraja, Treasurer
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Global Consultant on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion,
Aranza Communications

Paul Byrne
IT Consulting (retired)

Janet Zoe Barsy
Supervisory Attorney-Advisor, Office of the Assistant General Counsel for International and National Security Programs, U.S. Department of Energy (Ret.)

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CEO, MarginEdge and Wasabi

Our Team

Staff

Roopal Mehta Saran, Executive Director
Rubab Marjood Afzal, Director of Partnerships and Community Engagement
Heba Sleem, Associate Director of Academic Operations
Jordan Alexander, Student Services Coordinator
Jeff DiMeglio, Finance and Operations Manager
Joshua Gilmore, Development Coordinator
Thieze James, IT Database Administrator
Ashley King, Admissions Manager and Registrar
Michael Maher, Senior Director of Advancement
Xavier Munoz, Associate Director of Teaching and Learning
Sahra Nadiir, Financial and Operations Manager
Eiman Nimer, Intensive Program and Site Operations Coordinator

Soo Park, Instructional Design Manager
Juan Perez, Student Services Coordinator
Nada Raja, Academic Program Assistant
Melissa Rea, Associate Director of Academic Operations and Student Support
George Reyes, IT Database Administrator
Marizol Rojas, Office Administrator & Student Liaison
Amy Tristan, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator
Lisa Vaughn, Development Manager
Caroline Walsh, Communications Coordinator

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Kyle Grieser
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Adam Grimm
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Nisha Kumar
Attorney, Office of the Assistant General Counsel for General Law, Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Department of Energy

Carisa Pineda
Management Specialist, Arlington County Child Advocacy Center

Margery Leveen Sher
Author/Speaker, self-employed

Tiffany L. Taber
Chief Speechwriter and Managing Writer, U.S. Department of Education

Lead Teachers

Ludette Agura
Nadin Al-Attar
Savannah Alshaikhi
Yuri Alvarenga
Banhi Bhattacharya, Ph.D.
Kobi Carter
Stan Citron
Jackie Corkins

Vaishali Deshpande
Darlene Fahrenkrug
Amante Fajardo
Nancy Flores
Adrienne Grossman
Laura Hayden
Susan Jacob
Cassandra Kramer

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Elizabeth Quillin
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Mirna Soils
Lisa Trangsrud
Maria Velez
Dr. Lisa Vermette
Allison Widmann
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Seila Weiss
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Cum Laude ($100 - $249)

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Nersi Boussina
Dr. Jill Birdwhistell
Elizabeth Biffl
Banhi Bhatcha
These donors have given in excess of $50,000 to LCNV and continue to support LCNV’s mission.

**Scholar ($25,000-$49,000)**
ACT for Alexandria

**Valedictorian ($10,000–$24,999)**
Howard and Patsy Norton | Erica Roque

**Salutatorian ($5,000–$9,999)**
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**Dean’s List ($1,000–$4,999)**

**Summa Cum Laude ($500 - $999)**

The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia deeply appreciates the support of countless individuals and organizations. Recognized here are donations received during Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022). Due to space limitations, only organizational and individual donations of $100 or more are listed. To make a donation or to inform of any corrections please call 703-237-0866.
COMING SOON
New name.
Same mission.

Over the past 60 years, the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) has served adult learners seeking to speak, read, and write in English. We are proud of LCNV’s legacy and the positive effect we’ve had on the community. However, our organization is growing, and we recognize our name has its limitations. After a year of conducting extensive market research and engaging nearly 350 stakeholders, we determined that an organizational rebrand could help us better meet our goals and inform people about the transformative impact of what we do.

English Empowerment Center
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