



Jill Takasaki Canfield, Executive Director





# Our Mission

To empower Hawaii's children and adults with **essential reading, writing, and lifelong learning skills** to strengthen themselves, families and communities, promoting educational, economic, health & digital equity.

Hawaii Literacy fills gaps in literacy services to **increase access to educational, work and other opportunities**. We work with:

- People with language barriers (English learners and low levels of literacy)
- Low-income individuals
- Immigrants
- Incarcerated individuals
- Individuals with disabilities
- Seniors (60 and above)
- Rural & Urban
- Unsheltered



# 1 in 6 Adults Struggles to Read and Write

We help address one of the most significant underlying challenges for our community, that **1 in 6 adults struggles to read and write, which impacts every aspect of their lives** and closely relates to increased poverty, negative health outcomes, government dependence, lower graduation rates, less civic engagement, houselessness– for themselves and future generations.

Hawaii Literacy has works with communities disproportionately affected by high illiteracy and poverty and helped connect people on four islands to resources they need -- whether books, a tutor, technology, digital skills training or support -- so they can empower themselves to succeed, **ending generational cycles of poverty and under-education** and helping our communities to thrive.



# Reaching Effects of Illiteracy

- 1 in 6 adults have low literacy skills and are **not able to access many work and educational opportunities**. (155,000 adults considered "functionally illiterate" in Hawai'i; US: 43M cannot read or write above a 3rd grade level (very basic reading and writing skills))
- In a survey, **public housing residents** stated that **low English skill** was the **top employment barrier**.
- Education and reading level is the **single strongest predictor of future income**, and 90% of people who do not have reading comprehension will require state assistance and are more likely to experience homelessness in their lives.
- Nationally, illiteracy costs local communities **over \$225 billion a year in low workforce capacity**.
- 70% of people with the **lowest literacy skills have no full or part-time job**, and even those who work **earn only 44%** of what a literate adult earns, a loss of over \$800,000 in a lifetime.

# Impacts Future Generations

01

The **single greatest indicator of a child's future success** is the literacy level of his or her parents.

02

50% of children from low-income communities start first grade up to **two years behind** their peers.

03

The link between socioeconomic status and the loss of reading skills contributes to a more pronounced opportunity gap over time, and **third graders who cannot read on grade level** today are **four times more likely to drop out** of high school and be on track to be our **lowest income, least skilled citizens**.



# Benefits of Improving Adult Literacy

- Bringing all adults in the USA to the equivalent of a sixth grade reading level would generate an additional **\$2.2 trillion – or 10% of GDP** – in annual income for the country.
- Every important social issue is impacted by low literacy including educational, digital, health, economic and social equity.
- **75% of incarcerated individuals** can be classified as low literate. Incarcerated individuals participating in education program are 43% less likely to recidivate than inmates who do not. (proliteracy.org). Model at Waiawa: **1-2 skill level jump in 4 months and increase level of literacy to be able to access work and educational opportunities.**
- **Less than 10% of adults in need** are receiving services so **more capacity is critical.**



# VISION: Expand Capacity

## Challenges & Opportunities

- NEED: Significant underlying challenges for our community
- **GAP IN ACCESS:** Gap in services for the **1 in 6 adults with very low literacy to increase their literacy levels so they can then access other work and educational opportunities** and other resources that are available
- **Only HI nonprofit with 1:1 tutoring for adult Native English speakers with very low literacy levels**
- Educational background of English Learners; Cross-cultural, Contextualized learning
- Funding & Capacity; Competition – Job Market
- Coordination with Resources in the Community

# Programs

## Digital Literacy (DL)

Basic computer classes for adults related to real-life skills.

Culturally informed digital skills training and access to technology and connectivity to provide our most vulnerable residents with the skills, confidence, and access they need to succeed



## English Language Learner (ELL)

English Language classes facilitated by TESOL certified instructor

1:1 Tutoring



## Adult Literacy (AL)

1:1 Tutoring with trained tutors for the 1 in 6 adults with low literacy



# Programs



## Bookmobiles

Our 3 Bookmobiles serve the Wai'anae Coast to Kalihi-Palama and Kona to provide access to books, out-of-school-time support and educational material to develop a life-long love of learning. We visit afterschool programs, affordable housing developments, transitional housing, and shelters.



## Family Literacy Libraries: Serving Keiki to Kupuna at the Towers at Kuhio Park & Mayor Wright Homes



In addition to co-curricular programs for children and youth, ELL, DL and AL and Parents Acheiving Literacy (PALs) programs are offered on-site at Family Literacy Libraries to create a one-stop shop and resource center.

In a survey, public housing residents stated that **low English skill was the top employment barriers** and the greatest challenge in finding a job.

Participating in any of the programs for adults to **increase literacy skills develops workforce readiness** and will increase job opportunities for low-income learners.

**LISC Pilot:** Expand Access to Core Literacy Services & Workforce Development Model Pathways include more capacity in adult programs, expansion of financials literacy and the integration of adult program components and alignment of workforce development pathways to living wage careers, including healthcare, technology and the trades.



**IF YOU CAN READ THIS,  
YOU CAN HELP!**

[www.HawaiiLiteracy.org](http://www.HawaiiLiteracy.org)  
[info@hawaiiliteracy.org](mailto:info@hawaiiliteracy.org)  
(808) 537-6706

Mahalo