

ENGAGING PARTNERS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

In Your Information Literacy Initiatives

As library and museum professionals, you are trusted educators in your communities and have a deep understanding of community needs and priorities. However, we recognize that you may be challenged with limited staff and volunteers. **Engaging partners in your community who can serve as trainers in information literacy can free up valuable time for you and your staff.**

This tip sheet is intended to show you how to identify and involve local program partners in your information literacy initiatives and provide sample organizations and resources for financial, health, and digital literacy training. Follow these steps to identify partners that could be beneficial to your information literacy program efforts.

- 1. Determine your needs:** The first place to start is understanding the needs of your library or museum. Ask yourself what you want and need from a partnership. Once you've determined your needs, you can analyze what programs or initiatives will best be enhanced by a strategic partnership.
 - What information literacy activities could be done more effectively or be enhanced with a partner?
 - What are your challenges in achieving your goals and objectives, and where could a partner fill a gap?
- 2. Identify strategic partners:** Identifying the right partner(s) is essential. Begin with making a list of possible partners. Is there an advocate for your library or museum who can introduce you to the partner? Don't be afraid to think outside the box and list partners that are unexpected. Learn as much as you can about the potential partner and get familiar with what they do and how they do it.
 - What agencies, organizations, or individuals have a prominent role in the community and similar values and messages to your program?
 - Have they been involved in supporting similar programs or initiatives in the past?
 - What is their capacity, and do they have resources to contribute?
 - Does the partner understand and support your program?
- 3. Conduct initial outreach:** Initial outreach to your potential partner(s) should begin with a brief introduction to your library or museum, as well as your information literacy program initiatives, goals, and objectives. Align the mission, culture, and perspective of your library or museum to the potential partner and explain why you are reaching out to them now. You are getting to know them, and they are getting to know you.
 - Do you know the best person to reach out to? What is their role and how can you reach them?
 - Do you or any of your staff have a contact or connection with the partner?

At its most basic level, a partnership is an agreement between **two or more people or organizations that can have more success by working together.**

As you are thinking about your needs, look for partners that have **something to gain from an alliance** with your program, as well as the **ability to enhance and strengthen the training offered to your community.**

- Do you have a clear understanding of the specific audience(s) the partner works with and is your program compatible?
- 4. Make a clear and specific “ask”:** Make it easy for the potential partner and have a task-oriented outline of what you are hoping to receive from the partnership. The “ask” should give options for how the partner can collaborate with your library or museum on specific programs or initiatives.
 - Is it clear to the potential partner what the benefits are for them?
 - What needs does the partner have? How could your program potentially address those needs and benefit the partner?
 - Does the potential partner understand what you want them to do?
 - 5. Follow up and come to an agreement:** After making the “ask,” follow up with the partner to come to an agreement. This should be a mutually beneficial agreement. Listen to what the partner wants in return and make sure they know the benefits of joining your library or museum. Write up an agreement that specifies exactly what you can expect from each other. Include details such as timeline, goals, and measurements of success. The agreement should also include what is in it for the partner.
 - How will they benefit from your agreement?
 - What are the expectations of the partnership?
 - What is the partner getting in return? Perhaps you could offer to have them provide information on their program during the training, provide a free booth at an upcoming event or your next fair, or share information about their program through your library or museum communication channels.
 - What will the partnership look like in 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, and a year from the day you begin?
 - 6. Nurture the partnership:** Building trust between partners requires time. Keeping the lines of communication open and demonstrating impact will increase confidence that you achieved what you said you would do. Express gratitude to your partner and include them in significant and exciting accomplishments.
 - Are there successes you can share with your partner?
 - Did you receive positive feedback from community members and other stakeholders about the partner’s contributions to your information literacy programming?
 - Can you engage with your partner again in the future?

Check out the following sample resources for ideas about potential partners to support information literacy training in your community. You may wish to consult these organizations or any others that might meet your needs.

Please note that by navigating to any of the below links you will be leaving the www.InformationLiteracy.gov website. Neither the Information Literacy Taskforce nor the Institute of Museum and Library Services endorse the organizations or views represented by these sites and take no responsibility for, and exercise no control over, the accuracy, accessibility, copyright, trademark, or privacy compliance of the material contained on these sites. The destination site’s privacy policy will govern while accessing that specific site. To learn more about how we protect your privacy, please visit <https://informationliteracy.gov/page/privacy-and-terms-use>.

Financial Literacy

Understanding financial knowledge helps individuals better allocate resources, make savvy decisions, and have better behaviors and outcomes.

- **FDIC Money Smart Program** includes an instructor-led curriculum and online resources.
- **MyMoney.gov** provides tools and resources for financial education and includes a directory of local resources.
- **Credit Abuse Resistance Education (CARE)** provides financial education. Presenters bring experience in financial services, personal-finance education, and other financial matters.
- **The Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center (GFLEC)** offers materials an educator needs to implement a personal finance course, as well as a video training series.

- **[American Financial Services Association Education Foundation \(AFSAEF\)](#)** provides educators with a resource to create customized web-based personal finance courses. The MoneySKILL curriculum is geared toward middle school, high school, and college students and focuses on a broad range of money management fundamentals. It's free to all users and is offered in English and Spanish and contains audio dictation options.
- **[United Way](#)** local chapters often partner with organizations to provide financial education workshops. This includes **[MyFreeTaxes](#)**, which helps people file their federal and state taxes for free.
- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) provide financial services to underserved communities and often offer financial education programs. The Opportunity Finance Network offers a local CDFI finder **[here](#)**.
- Many banks have community outreach programs that include financial literacy workshops. Examples include Wells Fargo, Chase, Bank of America, and local credit unions.

Health Literacy

Proficiency in health education helps individuals protect and promote their health, adopt healthy behaviors, and increase their wellbeing.

- **[National Network of Libraries of Medicine \(NNLM\)](#)** offers training for health professionals and the public. Many public libraries are already part of this network.
- **[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)** provides resources and tools for health literacy and often collaborates with local health departments.
- **[Health.gov](#)** offers the MyHealthfinder tool, which contains consumer-customized information on a variety of topics.
- **[Health Literacy Online](#)** from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides guidance on creating health materials.
- **[Institute for Healthcare Advancement \(IHA\)](#)** Health Literacy Solutions Center offers training and resources for health literacy improvement.
- **[National Alliance for Hispanic Health](#)** offers resources on a variety of health topics, as well as a **[helpline](#)** that provides free and confidential health information in Spanish and English to help callers navigate the health system.
- **[Federally Qualified Health Centers \(FQHCs\)](#)**, along with many hospitals and other health care providers, often offer local health education programs and resources to their patients, including workshops on health literacy.
- Public health departments often have health education programs that include workshops on health literacy and accessing health care services.

Digital Literacy

Digital capabilities help individuals navigate technology, including protecting themselves from online threats, understanding computer basics, and using digital devices.

- **[Digital Promise](#)** offers a resource guide on digital literacy for adult learners.
- **[DigitalLearn.org](#)** is a project of the Public Library Association and offers free digital literacy courses and resources.
- **[EveryoneOn](#)** works to connect individuals to affordable internet service and offers resources for digital literacy training.
- **[The Goodwill Community Foundation](#)** offers free online tutorials on technology, including computer basics and internet safety.
- **[Netliteracy.org](#)** provides resources, tools, and case studies from around the world for improving digital literacy skills.
- **[Microsoft](#)** offers various digital literacy programs and resources, including workshops through their retail stores and online training.
- **[Comcast](#)** offers low-cost internet access and resources for digital literacy training.

When you're ready to engage potential partners, use the email template below to start the outreach.

Subject line: Opportunity to Partner with **Name of Local Museum/Library** on Information Literacy

Name of Local Museum/Library is teaming up with the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the nation's primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums, to improve information literacy in our community. By empowering our community members to develop strong financial, health, and digital literacy skills, we're encouraging lifelong learning in these areas, among others.

As part of the Initiative, we are offering training to community members on a variety of information literacy topics, including **Topic, Topic, and Topic**. Given your experience and expertise, we would like to invite you to partner with us on **Name of Topic/Training**. Working together, we can better educate community members about information literacy and provide resources to strengthen their knowledge in these different subject areas.

What does involvement mean for you?

We are eager to engage you in the development of programmatic plans, including strategies to reach our audiences with information literacy tools and training. As a partner, you are an important channel in helping us close the information literacy gaps in our community. We would like to ask you to **lead/support** a training on **Name of Topic/Training**. To affirm your partnership and set up a call to discuss the partnership in further detail, please contact me at **Insert Way to Contact**. We would be pleased to share details such as timeline, goals, measurements of success, and how we can make the partnership mutually beneficial to you and your work.

Learn more at **[Local Website]** and find more resources at www.InformationLiteracy.gov.

