



# Fact Sheet

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**MISSION STATEMENT:** Literacy Volunteers of Illinois (LVI) is a statewide organization committed to developing and supporting volunteer literacy programs that help families, adults, and out-of-school teens increase their literacy skills.

**HISTORY:** LVI was founded in 1979 as an independent, self-supporting, tax-exempt organization to serve as a technical assistance and training agency for volunteer literacy programs affiliated with the then-Literacy Volunteers of America. LVI has been a leader in the national service movement and has through five different federal and state AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps\*VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) programs placed over 800 national service members in some 150 adult, family literacy, and Head Start programs throughout the state. Past national service programs sponsored by LVI include the VISTA Literacy Corps, Project UPLIFT (Urging Partnerships in Literacy Initiatives for Families and Teens), Project I-CARE (Involving Communities in America Reads Endeavors), and Project HEART (Hines Employees As Reading Tutors).

## CURRENT PROGRAMS:

**Resource & Referral Center:** The center connects individuals interested in becoming volunteer tutors with literacy programs in their communities and provides training to tutors and staff in adult literacy programs.

**Volunteer Outreach for Community Action in Literacy (VOCAL):** The VOCAL program has 30 AmeriCorps members working in adult and family literacy programs throughout the state. While engaging in volunteer recruitment and retention activities and providing teaching, tutoring, and administrative services, VOCAL members learn teamwork, responsibility, communication, and other essential skills. VOCAL members also participate in regular training sessions sponsored by LVI that enhance their ability to serve their students and prepare them for future careers focused in the field of adult literacy.

**Jump Start:** LVI began its work in correctional education by helping to develop volunteer programs in adult correctional centers. From these efforts sprung the Jump Start program, an intergenerational tutoring and mentoring effort that targets retirees, especially retired teachers, and AmeriCorps members to serve as volunteer tutors and mentors to incarcerated youth. The Jump Start program serves five Illinois Youth Centers, and more volunteers are needed.

**Advocacy and Special Events:** To raise public awareness about adult literacy and generate new resources for literacy programs, LVI participates in several coalitions, commissions, and advisory councils at the local, state, and national levels. LVI also sponsors various events throughout the year to raise both awareness of and funds for adult literacy programs.

## STUDENT AND TUTOR PROFILES:

Literacy *students* are adults and teens who seek confidential, individualized reading help where they can set the learning pace and their own goals. The basic literacy students who seek help through LVI generally read below the fifth-grade level; many of the English as a Second Language students served are recent immigrants. The goal of LVI is to motivate adults enrolled in our programs to develop habits of lifelong learning and move beyond attaining minimal literacy and conversational English skills.

Literacy *tutors* are men and women who enjoy reading, are trained in learner-centered tutoring methods, and can devote time weekly to tutoring a student. To find out more about being a literacy volunteer, call (312) 857-1582 or visit our website at [www.lvillinois.org](http://www.lvillinois.org).