



Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Health Literacy Grant Initiative

A statewide initiative managed by the Florida Literacy Coalition

GUIDELINES

Purpose: National costs due to low health literacy range from \$106 to \$236 billion a year in the form of longer hospital stays, emergency room visits, increased doctor visits and increased medication, according to a 2007 report from the University of Connecticut. Adults with low literacy levels often fail to engage in early detection and preventative health care. They also have significant difficulties in navigating the health care system and following their doctor's treatment plans.

In recent years, the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) began efforts to effectively impact the health literacy of adult English learners. FLC identified the need for comprehensive health literacy curricula and materials for adult ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) teachers and their students and, in 2008, developed a student book and teacher's guide centered on basic health literacy: *"Staying Healthy: An English Learner's Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living."* The *Staying Healthy* project was funded by the Florida Department of Education.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) is committed to improving the health and well-being of all Floridians and seeks to find real and meaningful solutions to some of the most critical social issues facing Florida's communities. Because a literate, educated, and informed society is key to Florida's overall success, BCBSF has made supporting family and healthy literacy programs a cornerstone of its community investments strategy.

The BCBSF Health Literacy Grant Initiative, which is now in its fourth year, is funded through a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida and managed by the Florida Literacy Coalition. The purpose of this grant is to provide training, resources, and funding to Florida adult ESOL and family literacy programs. This enables them to help students gain the information and skills needed to make informed choices regarding their health and nutrition.

Eligibility Criteria:

Organizations interested in applying must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or government-based agency that provides adult ESOL and/or family literacy instruction in Florida;
- Provide literacy services via classes, small groups, and/or one-to-one tutoring; and
- Commit to basic reporting requirements.

Entities and organizations ineligible to receive a Health Literacy grant include:

- Individuals;
- For-profit entities;
- Civic, fraternal, labor, and political organizations;
- Religious organizations, if funds will be used to educate/benefit a specific denomination or congregation or the group intends to proselytize to program participants and/or participants' family members; and
- Groups that discriminate based on age, sex, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, or marital status.

NOTE: Agencies/organizations with multiple programs/sites (i.e. library systems, school districts, community colleges, etc.) may submit up to three applications for consideration per year.

Definition of Family Literacy Programs: For grant purposes, family literacy programs should include the following four components: 1) parent literacy instruction; 2) interactive literacy activities between parents and their children; 3) training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; and 4) age-appropriate education for children.

Grant Award: A total of eighteen grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded in 2012. **Applications must be received by March 8, 2012.** Grant funds are to support adult ESOL and/or family literacy program expenses over the twelve-month period beginning May 1, 2012 and ending April 30, 2013. Appropriate administrative and travel expenses may be paid for with grant funds. Grant recipients from prior years are eligible to reapply. The ability or need to secure matching funds is not a condition of this grant.

Non-allowable Expenditures:

- Fundraising events, contributions, and donations;
- General operating expenses;
- Expenses obligated prior to or after the grant period;
- Lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state, or local legislation;
- Capital expenditures (including acquisitions, building projects, remodeling, or renovation of facilities) with the exception of unfixed equipment;
- Bad debts, contingencies, fines and penalties, interest, and other financial costs;
- Private entertainment.

Curriculum and Materials: While applicants are encouraged to incorporate the *Staying Healthy* curriculum and materials into their programs, either solely or in conjunction with other guides/materials, they are not required to do so. Should applicants choose to use the *Staying Healthy* materials, up to 80 complimentary copies of the *Staying Healthy: An English Learner's Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living* student books and three (3) corresponding teachers' guides will be provided. Organizations/programs that field-tested the *Staying Healthy* curriculum found that a minimum of 22 hours of instruction was needed to complete the curriculum. Please note that this curriculum is best suited to low intermediate ESOL learners and above. [Click here](#) to view an online copy of the *Staying Healthy* curriculum, as well as two

new curriculum resources, *Coping with Stress* and *Women's Health*, which are also freely available.

Reporting Requirements: Grantees will be asked to complete a brief mid-year progress report as well as a year-end final report on the status and accomplishments of their projects. The reports will include: 1) student pre- and post- health literacy knowledge assessment results; 2) teacher and student evaluation/feedback forms; and 3) other information relevant to the program's success, such as outcomes achieved by learners. Programs will also be asked to document and share a group project/activity that students developed during the year (see Project-Based Learning below). [Click here](#) to view the pre- and post- knowledge assessment test or visit <http://www.floridaliteracy.org>. You may also want to review an article in [Literacy News](#) (Page 1) about the program results from the first year of the initiative.

Project-based Learning: Project-based learning (PjBL) is a collaborative approach to teaching in which learners are placed in situations where they use authentic language to accomplish whatever is needed to complete the project objectives. The best projects are those that have an impact outside of the classroom so students feel they are part of an effort that will make a difference for others. [Click here](#) to learn more about Project-based Learning and to view sample adult learner classroom projects.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Applicants are highly encouraged to address/include events and opportunities for outside partners to interact with instructors and students as part of their health literacy program/proposal. Grant funds may be used for related costs.

Recognition: Applicants, as part of the application process, will be asked to demonstrate how they will recognize BCBSF for its generous support should they be awarded a Health Literacy Grant.

Notification: Grant recipients will be notified by e-mail by April 5, 2012. One representative from each awarded organization will be invited to participate in a mandatory meeting and recognition program during the 28th Annual Florida Literacy Conference on May 9, 2012 in St. Petersburg, Florida. In addition, representatives will also be invited to participate in a recommended health literacy training to be held the same day, May 9th, at the same location.

Conference Call for Prospective Applicants: A conference call will be conducted for prospective applicants on February 6, 2012 from 10:30 am to 11:30 am to provide an overview of the grant application and answer any questions. Participation is optional. Please RSVP to buiem@floridaliteracy.org

Dial-in Number: 1-800-930-8721
Access Code: 6577983

Contact: If you have questions please email Maribeth Buie at buiem@floridaliteracy.org or call (407) 246-7110, ext. 209.