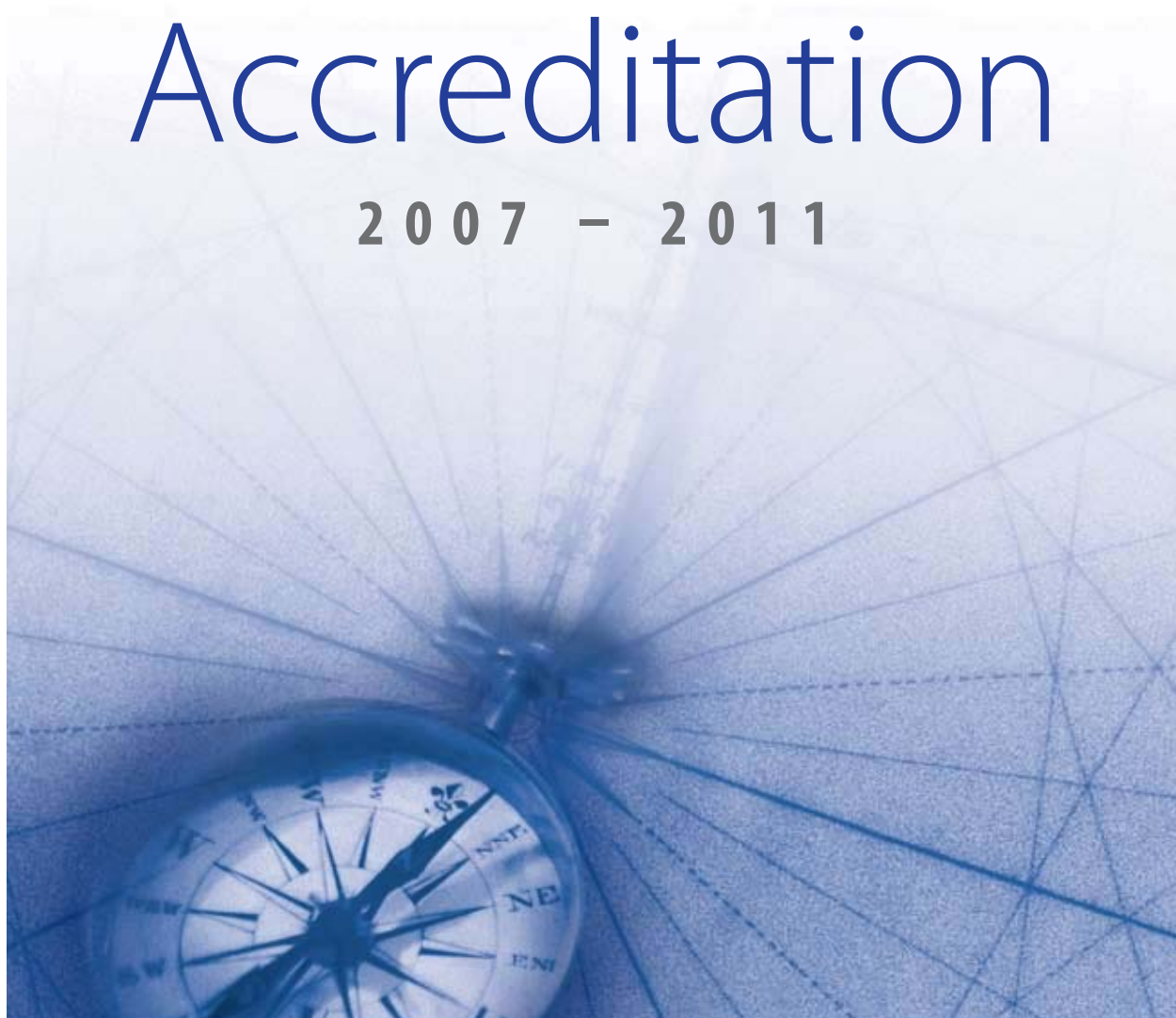


**Guide to ProLiteracy**

# Accreditation

2007 – 2011



**PROLITERACY**

Developed by ProLiteracy

# **Guide to ProLiteracy**

# Accreditation

## 2007 – 2011



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# Preface

ProLiteracy is a nonprofit international literacy organization based in Syracuse, NY, and is the largest nongovernmental organization of adult basic education and literacy programs in the world. It supports educational programs that provide one-to-one, small group, and classroom literacy, native language, and English-as-a-second-language instruction to adults.

ProLiteracy represents 1,200 community-based volunteer and adult basic education affiliates in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. ProLiteracy provides accreditation, advocacy, and technical assistance as well as program and professional development services.

ProLiteracy works with 120 grassroots partner programs in 62 developing countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to combine literacy instruction with community programs in micro enterprise, health, education, peace, human rights, and the environment. ProLiteracy uses its unique “Literacy for Social Change” methodology to provide partner programs with training, technical assistance, and targeted local grants.

ProLiteracy annually serves more than 350,000 adult learners around the world.



# Acknowledgments

Many individuals contributed their time and expertise to developing ProLiteracy's Accreditation program and we thank each one of them.

Members of the Accreditation Task Force developed the initial program in 2001-2002, working through in-person meetings, telephone calls, and e-mail to develop the Accreditation program's components. Led by co-chairs Patricia Gaul and Patricia Johnston, task force members Marita Almquist, Susan Domenighini, Anne DuPrey, Brian Fox, Mary Hohensee, and Greg Smith discussed issues before making decisions. The new system incorporates components of the accreditation systems of ProLiteracy's predecessor organizations, Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA) and the U.S. programs division of Laubach Literacy International.

Members of a new accreditation task group revised the system and standards that will guide ProLiteracy's accreditation system through 2011. The group included Jim Abbott (chair), Mary Hohensee, Dorothy Sorlie, Mimi Tanner, Marcia Tungate, and Jim Urness. Brian Fox, Chair of the Accreditation Review Committee (ARC), guided the recommendations through the ARC and final approval by the ProLiteracy Governance Council. Throughout the process, feedback from many in the field helped shape this final product.

We also acknowledge ProLiteracy staff members who supported the development of ProLiteracy Accreditation: Marty Angelone, Kaye Beall, Mark Cass, Dianne Gray-Bell, Marsha Tait, and Peter Waite.



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# Introduction to Accreditation

## Welcome

ProLiteracy applauds your interest in accreditation. It represents your commitment to provide your students and your community with the highest quality literacy services.

This *Guide to ProLiteracy Accreditation* will:

1. Give you an overview of accreditation, its purpose, benefits, and a summary of the steps.
2. Help you understand the process and the commitment required.
3. Provide you with a tool to evaluate your organization against the 16 accreditation standards.
4. Help you decide whether accreditation is right for your organization and if so, when to apply.

You will receive the *Accreditation Manual* when ProLiteracy has approved your accreditation application. It will serve as your organization's operational guide to help you prepare for the accreditation site review.

If you have any questions or concerns after reading this guide, please contact ProLiteracy by e-mail at [accreditation@proliteracy.org](mailto:accreditation@proliteracy.org) or by phone at (315) 422-9121.

## What Is Accreditation?

ProLiteracy Accreditation is the only national accreditation system available in the adult education and literacy field. It provides a recognizable stamp of quality for local literacy providers.


Accreditation is designed to help affiliates:

- evaluate strengths and weaknesses
- bring about continuous improvement of operations
- facilitate long-term sustainability
- enhance credibility in the community
- increase public recognition of the organization's services

Accreditation assures students, volunteers, employees, funders, and the community at large that the organization implements high quality services within a sound management framework.

Accreditation builds on a set of established professional practices, 16 standards that offer a clear set of outcomes against which all literacy organizations can assess their performance. It is a voluntary process that involves several steps taking place over a one-year time period, including:

1. Submitting the accreditation application with all required forms and documentation
2. Submitting the required checkpoint materials demonstrating that the organization is preparing for the site review
3. Undergoing the site review.
  - Previously accredited affiliates will receive an electronic/distance site review\*; however, these affiliates may request an in-person review at an additional cost of \$400. This request



must be made three months prior to the site review date and submitted along with the checkpoint materials.

- Affiliates new to the accreditation process will receive an in-person site review at no additional cost.

### **Why Accreditation?**

Accreditation is a vital component of ProLiteracy's work in helping local organizations build capacity so they may better meet the needs of current and future students. Accreditation provides a framework within which local organizations can deliver effective adult literacy services and be an essential part of their communities.

ProLiteracy believes that accreditation will help local literacy organizations to:

- Provide quality instructional services through well-managed organizations
- Adapt readily to changes in the community, the field, and the world
- Be recognized as essential to the well-being of their communities
- Establish diversified, adequate, and stable funding
- Collaborate in the community
- Plan for and evaluate organizational structure and programs, including student outcomes
- Strive for ongoing improvement
- Evaluate and monitor continued compliance with standards
- Provide opportunities for student and other stakeholder involvement
- Be responsive to ethnic, cultural, religious, and economic diversity


"Accredited" status means that ProLiteracy has determined that the organization meets all of the established standards. Accreditation is for a four-year period.

### **Benefits of Accreditation**

Accreditation and achieving the high standard of excellence accreditation represents, improves that organization's ability to meet the needs of adult learners in the community. Accreditation is an opportunity to stimulate an organization's quality improvement efforts while enhancing its public recognition and boosting the community's confidence in the operation. Accreditation also:

- Provides a structured approach to planning and evaluation based on nationally recognized standards
- Focuses an organization on the outcomes and performance measures that are key to securing funding and to communicating with community stakeholders
- Strengthens an organization's structure so there is stability and program continuity when a key staff person leaves or board members change
- Reduces liability risk as decision-makers become aware of weaknesses and problem areas
- Offers promotional opportunities to a program identified as "An Accredited Program of ProLiteracy"

*\*Affiliates will share documentation electronically, by mail, or some combination of these methods.*



Here's what one program director said about becoming an accredited program:

*"Our organization became accredited in 2000, and reaccredited in 2004. Since that time we have worked not only to maintain but also to improve the practices this important process helped us establish. Successfully renewing our status as an accredited ProLiteracy affiliate is now a board-approved policy of the Adult Literacy League that has materially strengthened all aspects of program service and organizational management. Accreditation is not only a tool for making successful program improvements, or needed corrections, but also a means by which quality and success can be affirmed. This is important to volunteers, students, board, and staff, and also noticed equally by funders and community partners. Everyone likes to support a successful organization, and accreditation is the best means available for any affiliate to establish an imprimatur of excellence."*

*-Joyce Whidden,  
Adult Literacy League, Orlando, FL*

Other accredited organizations report that accreditation also helped them to:

- Find new ways to improve services
- Motivate staff and instill loyalty and pride
- Strengthen public relations and marketing
- Develop alliances with other organizations

The bottom line—accreditation helps them deliver high-quality literacy services in their communities.


### **History of Accreditation**

ProLiteracy's accreditation system is built on successful foundations laid by Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. and Laubach Literacy Action previous systems. The task group charged with revising the system in 2006 worked diligently to streamline the process further, to move the system forward, and ensure the system appeals to a broad sector of the adult education and literacy field. ProLiteracy Governance Council approved the accreditation revisions in the fall of 2006.

### **Who May Apply?**

Any ProLiteracy group member in good standing that uses volunteers in some instructional capacity may apply for accreditation. "Good standing" means that an affiliate is up to date with membership dues; has submitted the required annual statistical report; and is in compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.





By applying for accreditation, the affiliate agrees to:

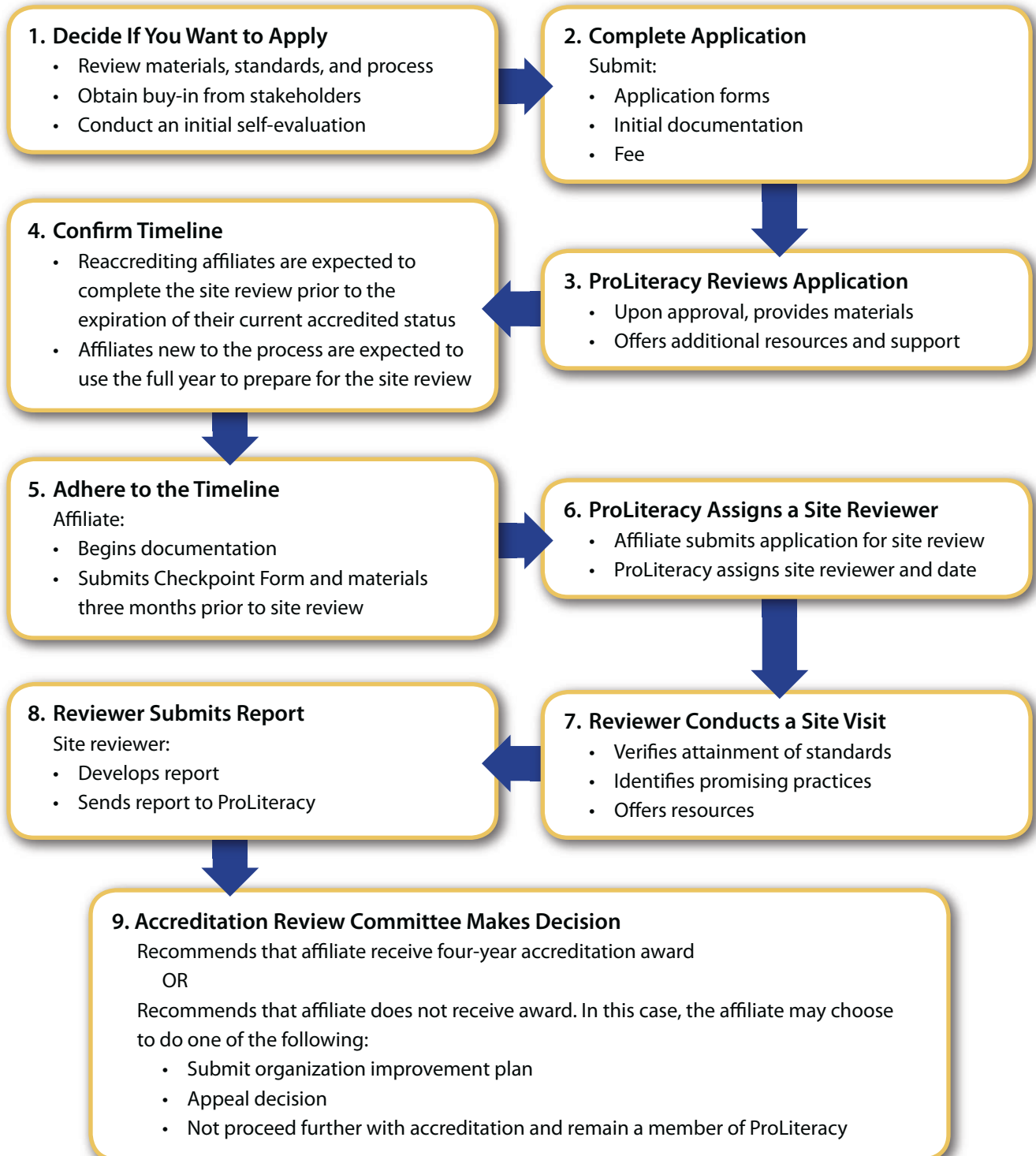
- Provide necessary documentation
- Conduct a vigorous self-evaluation
- Schedule a site visit
- Adhere to the timeline
- Pay applicable fee

### **Help Provided by ProLiteracy**

Upon approval of the accreditation application, ProLiteracy will provide the tools necessary for successful completion of the accreditation process. These include:

- The *Accreditation Manual*
- Access to a variety of accreditation resources including sample policies, plans, activities, and other materials that have been successfully used by local organizations. Affiliates will be able to adapt these resources to fit their organization and community. These are located in ProLiteracy's online Information Center. It is searchable by keywords and topics.
- Internet resources that may help attain standards
- Rapid turnaround and dissemination of promising practices
- Opportunities to learn about accreditation at conferences and regional events
- Technical assistance and support from state and regional partners
- The ProLiteracyConnect listserv

# The Accreditation Process: Overview





# Steps to Accreditation

Accreditation is a sequential process designed to facilitate organizational improvement and accountability through meeting of standards. There are nine steps in this process. This guide offers a general explanation. There is a comprehensive discussion of these steps in the *Accreditation Manual*, which you will receive upon approval of your accreditation application.

## 1. Decide If You Want to Apply

Determine whether or not to proceed with accreditation. Among the factors to consider are the results of the preliminary self-evaluation. The tool for this self-study is in Appendix A. In determining if your organization should apply, consider the following:

- ProLiteracy does not expect organizations to demonstrate compliance with all standards at this stage. Instead, the initial self-study can be used to determine if accreditation is feasible given the initial responses to the evaluation. Organizations will have several months to attain the standards.
- Buy-in from the organization's stakeholders such as the board of directors, advisory group, sponsor agency, staff, students, or funders is crucial. Stakeholders should discuss why the organization is undertaking accreditation and should agree with the decision. Seeking accreditation is more than a one-person job. If the decision is made to go forward, stakeholders can then decide who should be involved and how to design the process to ensure that it is valuable to the organization.
- The organization should weigh the costs and benefits. Determine if the benefit of accreditation outweighs the financial expenses and costs in human hours that will be required to comply with nationally recognized standards.

## 2. Complete Application

Accreditation begins with submission of the application materials in Appendix B. Before sending the application to ProLiteracy, it is important to review the standards and conduct the initial self-evaluation to ensure readiness to begin the process. This self-study gives a good idea of where strengths and weaknesses are in relation to standards.

The application packet includes:

- An Accreditation Cover Sheet
- An Affiliate Fact Sheet
- A Documentation Checklist showing the supporting documentation required by ProLiteracy with submission of the application. This will provide ProLiteracy with a profile of the organization to help the reviewer, staff, and the Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) understand the organization and its practices.
- An Initial Self-evaluation Summary. This form records the results of the preliminary self-assessment. ProLiteracy will use the self-evaluation to:

- Determine if an affiliate is ready to begin the accreditation process
- Help develop a plan for obtaining accreditation
- Identify general trends to help shape development of national accreditation-related resources and technical assistance

Submit these documents with the \$400 application fee to ProLiteracy. Affiliates may submit an application at any time. Once an organization is accredited, the accreditation is good for four years. Approximately 12 months before accreditation expires, the organization will receive a reminder to re-apply.

**Submit the initial application forms, documentation, and fee as well as any subsequent materials or forms to:**  
**ProLiteracy Accreditation**  
**1320 Jamesville Avenue**  
**Syracuse, NY 13210**

An organization may submit the required documentation as part of the original application packet, or documentation or messages may be submitted electronically by e-mail to: [accreditation@proliteracy.org](mailto:accreditation@proliteracy.org). Be sure to include the program's name, address, and phone number in the e-mail.

### **3. ProLiteracy Reviews Application**

ProLiteracy staff will review submissions for completeness and accuracy. If staff require clarification of any documentation, the organization will be contacted. Staff may accept or deny applications. Applications will be denied if:

- The affiliate is no longer in good standing
- Staff feel there are so many obstacles that the affiliate may be best served if it delays accreditation.

If an affiliate disagrees with this decision, a letter delineating concerns should be sent to ProLiteracy within 30 days of receipt of the decision. If the affiliate and staff are unable to resolve the problem, it will be forwarded to the Accreditation Review Committee for a decision.

Once the application is approved, the organization will have access to additional materials, resources, and support. These include the Accreditation Manual, tools and resources in ProLiteracy's online Information Center, technical assistance, and the ProLiteracyConnect listserv.



#### **4. Confirm the Timeline**

Currently accredited affiliates seeking reaccreditation are expected to complete the site review prior to the expiration of their current accredited status.

Affiliates new to the process are expected to use the full year to prepare for the site review.

Either may speed up the process and host the site review earlier by simply notifying ProLiteracy of the month the organization wants the review held.

#### **5. Adhere to the Timeline**

The Checkpoint Form and required materials must be submitted three months prior to the anticipated site review. Doing so will break accreditation into manageable components.

#### **6. ProLiteracy Assigns a Site Reviewer**

Along with the checkpoint, the affiliate submits the Application for Site Review (contained in the *Accreditation Manual*).

- For those affiliates new to accreditation, the review will be conducted onsite.
- For previously accredited affiliates, a distance/electronic site review will be conducted. These affiliates have the option to request an onsite review for an additional fee of \$400.

Proliteracy will assign an impartial site reviewer who will contact the affiliate to schedule a specific date, become familiar with the organization, and discuss the agenda of the site review day.

#### **7. Reviewer Conducts a Site Review**

During the review, the reviewer will validate that an organization has met the standards. The reviewer will also:


- Work with the organization to identify any promising practices that may be shared with other ProLiteracy affiliates
- Serve as a resource or sounding board

#### **8. Reviewer Submits a Report**

The assigned reviewer develops and submits a final report for ProLiteracy within two weeks of the site review. The organization will receive a copy of this report from ProLiteracy after the Accreditation Review Committee's decision.

#### **9. Accreditation Review Committee Makes a Decision**

The Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) will receive the reviewer's report and related documentation along with a staff recommendation. Members determine if the affiliate will be accredited. This panel is an impartial group of individuals with extensive knowledge of literacy programs and/or nonprofit management.



If the decision is not to accredit, staff and/or ProLiteracy representatives can work with that affiliate to develop a mutually agreed upon Program Improvement Plan. Upon receiving documentation that the organization has implemented this plan, the ARC will conduct a subsequent review of the materials and may then accredit the organization. This must happen within one year of the site visit.

The organization may also appeal the initial decision or can choose to discontinue pursuit of accreditation. The organization can remain a member of ProLiteracy if the decision is made to not pursue accreditation.



# Accreditation Standards

There are 16 standards reflecting recognized competencies of effective adult literacy organizations. Standards are organized into three sections:

- Organizational Management
- Student-centered Services
- Tutor/Instructor Services

To achieve accreditation, an affiliate must meet all 16 standards.

The standards may be attained in a variety of ways. They are intentionally flexible in order to be relevant to the many different models of delivering literacy services. ProLiteracy recognizes that some providers are independent operations with several employees, a large board of directors, and hundreds of volunteers. Others are a part of another organization's broader program. And, some are small community-based programs staffed by volunteers.

## Components of Each Standard

Each standard has three elements:

- The standard itself.
- A brief explanation conveying the intent of the standard.
- Several key components of the standard which provide evaluation criteria for demonstrating compliance with the standard.

## How to Approach Each Standard

For any standard:

1. An organization may elect to use the key components, one by one, to demonstrate the attainment of a standard. The key components serve as the road map for future documentation of compliance with the standard.

**OR**

2. An organization may elect not to use the key components. Instead, after carefully reading the explanation of the standard, that organization can devise its own means of demonstrating compliance. If an organization selects this alternative route for meeting a standard, written documentation is still necessary.

# What Are the Standards?

## Organizational Management

- |   |                               |  |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Organizational Planning       | The organization uses planning processes that articulate its mission and set the direction for the organization. |
| 2 | Employee Management           | The organization has a system to recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate employees.                              |
| 3 | Volunteer Management          | The organization has a system to recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate key volunteers.                         |
| 4 | Governing Body Responsibility | The organization has a governing body that forwards the mission of the organization.                             |
| 5 | Community Linkages            | The organization identifies, establishes, and maintains community linkages.                                      |
| 6 | Fiscal Management             | The organization practices sound fiscal management.  |




### Student-centered Services

- |    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| 7  | Student Recruitment | The organization implements its plan for recruitment of its identified student population(s).   |
| 8  | Student Intake      | The organization has a student-centered intake process that considers individual student needs, interests, goals, and competencies.               |
| 9  | Instruction         | The organization provides for quality instruction that incorporates current adult learning theory and proven methodologies.                       |
| 10 | Student Progress    | The organization follows a student-centered system that documents student progress in meeting individual educational needs, interests, and goals. |
| 11 | Student Support     | The organization has a process in place to provide student support.   |
| 12 | Student Involvement | The organization provides opportunities for students to serve the organization.   |

### Tutor/Instructor Services

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 13 | Tutor/Instructor Recruitment             | The organization has a plan for the recruitment of tutors/instructors.   |
| 14 | Tutor/Instructor Intake                  | The organization has a process for intake of tutors/instructors.   |
| 15 | Tutor/Instructor Support and Supervision | The organization supports and supervises tutors/instructors.   |
| 16 | Training System                          | The organization has a system to provide quality training and ongoing professional development to all instructional personnel. |

The header for the Appendices section features a large, abstract graphic. It consists of a light yellow background with a network of thin, intersecting lines radiating from a central point, creating a sunburst or web-like effect. Below this graphic is a solid dark blue horizontal bar.

# Appendices

**A. SELF-EVALUATION TOOL**

**B. APPLICATION FORMS**

**C. GLOSSARY OF TERMS**



## Appendix A

### S E L F - E V A L U A T I O N   T O O L

- Why Self-evaluation?
- How to Approach Each Standard
- Ways to Use this Tool
- Standards 1–16

Note: The “Self-evaluation Tool” is for use by affiliates as they decide if they are ready to begin the process of seeking ProLiteracy Accreditation. Affiliates should NOT send this tool to ProLiteracy. However, the ***Initial Self-evaluation Summary*** (see Appendix B11-12) should be returned to ProLiteracy by affiliates applying for accreditation.



# Why Self-evaluation

ProLiteracy developed this “Self-evaluation Tool” as a vehicle to help affiliates assess levels of compliance with the 16 accreditation standards. Another purpose is to generate the information needed to determine if an organization wants to pursue accreditation and, if so, when the time is right for formal application. It will also serve as a guide for what documentation and other evidence will need to be gathered if an organization chooses to seek accreditation.

## **Why Self-evaluation?**

ProLiteracy believes that a self-study conducted by an affiliate is an important first step in obtaining accreditation. The self-evaluation process will help affiliates to gain new perspectives about their activities and provide an opportunity to think about what else they are doing now, why they are doing it, and what they must do. It will help identify areas where they excel, areas that need little action, and those that require improvement. The goal is to convert knowledge gained through self-study into action. Self-assessment is also a way to continue a dialogue with stakeholders. This means engaging the organization’s board or advisory group, sponsoring agency, employees, volunteers, and/or students in organizational self-assessment. Individuals who have been involved in a similar process know that the quality of the process can be as important as the discoveries themselves. Organizations should give careful thought to who should be involved.

## **How to Approach Each Standard**

Each standard has three elements:

1. The standard itself.
2. Explanation. This will give a more complete understanding of the standard.
3. Key components. These are evaluation criteria for demonstrating compliance with the standard.

Affiliates may elect to use the key components, one by one, as they evaluate their attainment of a standard. The key components then serve as a road map for assessment. Alternatively, affiliates may elect not to use these key components. Instead, after carefully reading the explanation of the standard, they can devise their own means of demonstrating compliance.



## Ways to Use this Tool

ProLiteracy has identified several ways to use this tool.

Begin the self-study with a quick review of all of the standards.

- ☐ What does the organization do well? It may even want to build on these strengths.
- ☐ What is adequate?
- ☐ What needs improvement?
- ☐ What needs to be documented?

Review each standard. Based on the preliminary self-assessment, determine if the organization:

1. Surpasses the standard.
2. Meets the standard.
3. Does not meet the standard, but can do so with minimal to moderate work.
4. Does not meet the standard. To do so will require extensive work.

Affiliates should use this information to complete the Initial Self-evaluation Summary (Appendix B) and determine whether or not to proceed with accreditation. If the decision is to move forward, the affiliate should submit this form as part of the application for accreditation. The organization should use the information gathered to create a plan to obtain accreditation.

## Standard 1

Organizational Planning	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization uses planning processes that articulate its mission and set the direction for the organization.</i></p>	
<p>The organization creates a strategic plan that has a multi-year time frame, is externally focused, looks at elements beyond the organization's control, and is developed by the leadership (chief executive and board). The building blocks for the strategic plan are potential customers, existing services in the community, opportunities and threats (external environment), stakeholders, and strengths and weaknesses (internal environment). The governing body approves the resulting plan.</p> <p>The organization also develops an operational (annual) plan that has a one-year time frame and is consistent with the strategic plan. It is internally focused, looks at elements within the organization's control, and is created by staff, including the chief executive. The building blocks for the operational plan are the organization's structure, policies and procedures, financial status, and program evaluation. A product of the operational plan is an action plan that has measurable goals and objectives.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization uses an <b>analysis of aggregate data</b> on student literacy gains, barriers to instruction, and other programmatic information for planning.</li> <li>2. The organization <b>assesses community needs</b> and <b>solicits input from diverse constituencies</b>, including students and volunteers, for strategic and operational planning.</li> <li>3. The needs assessment and consideration of <b>program capacity</b> are used as the <b>basis for planning</b>.</li> <li>4. An <b>operational plan</b> is approved by a governing body and delineates the mission, goals, resources, and timelines for at least the following elements: <b>program services, community relations, public awareness, and resource development</b>.</li> <li>5. The organization <b>implements the operational plan</b> through activities for the various elements of the plan: program services, community relations, public awareness, and resource development.</li> </ol>	



Organizational Planning	Comments/ Actions Needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. The organization tracks progress toward the attainment of the operational plan's goals.</li><li>7. The organization <b>evaluates</b> its operational plan (e.g., annual report).</li><li>8. The governing body <b>approves a strategic plan</b> for the organization.</li></ul>	

## Standard 2

Employee Management	Comments/ Actions Needed
<i>The organization has a system to recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate employees.</i>	
The employee management system includes recruitment, written personnel policies, written job descriptions, performance reviews, compensation guidelines, and staff development. The governing body evaluates the system regularly, including compensation, and ensures that all legal and reporting requirements are met.	
<p><i>Show evidence that:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>The organization has personnel policies</b> or a policy manual that is shared with all employees and that the governing authority has approved and reviews on a regular basis.</li> <li>2. The organization <b>clarifies its expectations of staff</b> through such mechanisms as interviews, written job descriptions, and regular written performance reviews.</li> <li>3. The organization <b>complies with federal, state, and local labor laws.</b></li> <li>4. The organization supports staff through <b>professional development activities</b>, including money budgeted for staff development and opportunities for employees to provide input into their personal training plans.</li> </ol>	



### Standard 3

Volunteer Management	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization has a system to recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate key non-instructional volunteers.</i></p>	
<p>The organization has a management system for individuals who serve in volunteer roles other than as tutors/instructors or trainers. The system is appropriate to their roles and contains such items as policies and procedures, job descriptions, ongoing training, and evaluation of their performance (e.g., assessors, coordinators, office, intake, resource librarian, newsletter editor, etc.).</p> <p>It is expected that all volunteers will receive appropriate levels of support, information, and recognition.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization <b>uses volunteers</b> to meet specific needs and expand its resources.</li> <li>2. The organization <b>informs stakeholders of volunteer opportunities</b>, as well as how it recruits in the local community.</li> <li>3. The organization has a process for the <b>initial screening, or ientation, and training</b> of volunteers and provides items such as job descriptions for key volunteers and procedures sheets for other volunteers.</li> <li>4. The organization <b>recognizes volunteer efforts</b>.</li> <li>5. Key volunteers are <b>supervised, offered ongoing training, and evaluated</b>.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 4

Governing Body* Responsibility	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization has a governing body* that forwards the mission of the organization.</i></p>	
<p>The governing body ensures the stability of the organization through leadership, guidance, and oversight related to policies and organizational direction. It ensures that legal and fiscal responsibilities are met. The governing body raises public awareness and works to ensure that the literacy program has adequate resources to forward its mission. An advisory group meets its responsibilities as defined by its agreement with the "parent organization."</p> <p>The organization's governing body meets regularly. It also establishes and implements a system for ongoing recruitment and development of its membership.</p> <p>Membership reflects the diversity of stakeholders in the community (diversity defined in a broad sense to include geographical, ethnic/racial, and/or experiential representation.)</p> <hr/> <p><i>* The term "governing body" is used to represent a wide range of organizational designs and includes an elected board of directors for independent 501(c)(3) organizations and elected or appointed advisory groups for government or agency-based literacy programs. These governing bodies are understood to exist to support the literacy program.</i></p> <p><i>For government or agency-based programs, it is understood that there is another formal governing body that has fiscal and legal responsibilities.</i></p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The process for governing body <b>selection and recruitment considers diversity and community representation.</b></li> <li>2. The recruitment process includes <b>clear expectations</b> for governing body members.</li> <li>3. The organization has a system for the ongoing development of the governing body members including orientation processes, continuing board education, and evaluation procedures.</li> </ol>	



Governing Body* Responsibility	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p>4. The governing body regularly reviews and, when necessary, updates the bylaws and/or organizational documents (e.g., memorandum of understanding with the “parent organization”).</p> <p>5. The governing body <b>assesses and manages risk</b> for the organization.</p> <p>6. The organization has a written <b>conflict of interest policy</b> applicable to governing body and staff members.</p> <p>7. Governing body members <b>support the organization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>financially</b> (through personal contributions and resource development efforts) and</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> through <b>public awareness</b> efforts/activities</li></ul>	

## Standard 5

Community Linkages	Comments/ Actions Needed
<i>The organization identifies, establishes, and maintains community linkages.</i>	
The organization establishes linkages to further its own mission, to serve the needs of program participants, and to contribute to the well-being of the community.	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization is aware of its community's resources and develops and maintains links with other agencies and organizations in the community.</li> <li>2. The organization is integrated into the community's range of adult education and literacy services.</li> <li>3. The organization actively advocates for support of literacy services to the media, government, business, general community, etc.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 6

Fiscal Management	Comments/ Actions Needed
<i>The organization practices sound fiscal management.</i>	
The organization has policies and procedures for oversight and management of its financial resources.	
<p><i>Show evidence that:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>budget</b> is approved by the governing body and <b>supports the organization's operational plan.</b></li> <li>2. The governing body <b>regularly reviews revenues and expenses</b> in comparison to budget figures. Budgets and operational plans are adjusted when necessary.</li> <li>3. The organization's <b>internal accounting system</b> ensures that financial transactions are consistently recorded in a timely fashion.</li> <li>4. The organization has policies and procedures for <b>safeguarding against theft and fiscal mismanagement.</b></li> <li>5. The organization has <b>investment policies</b> that are approved by the governing body.</li> <li>6. The governing body ensures <b>compliance with applicable local, state, and federal reporting regulations.</b></li> </ol>	

## Standard 7

Student Recruitment	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization implements its plan for recruitment of its identified student population(s).</i></p>	
<p>Student recruitment is based on the needs of the community, the organization's mission and eligibility statements, and the capacity of the organization to serve students.</p> <p>Note: If an organization has a waiting list of students, it is not expected to actively seek more. However, documentation is required for the other facets of this standard (i.e., that the students recruited are in line with the mission, eligibility statement, community needs, plans, etc.).</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization <b>assesses community needs</b> to guide planning for student recruitment. Existing data from other agencies/ organizations may be used.</li> <li>2. The <b>organization's plan</b> for student recruitment is being implemented. It is also expected that the organization's plans include items that address the waiting list(s).</li> <li>3. The organization <b>evaluates the effectiveness of its plan and recruitment strategies</b> including student feedback and data.</li> <li>4. The organization uses recruitment/marketing materials and/or methods that are <b>culturally sensitive, reflect the student population</b>, and are written at <b>appropriate language levels</b> (e.g., materials in native languages, images and descriptions of students are appropriate, etc.)</li> </ol>	

## Standard 8

Student Intake	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization has a student-centered intake process that considers individual student needs, interests, goals, and competencies.</i></p>	
<p>The student intake process includes a plan, strategies, and activities that ensure that each student's needs and abilities are understood. Instructional plans are written and based on those needs and abilities. The student intake process helps students understand their rights and responsibilities.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization has <b>criteria or an eligibility statement</b> for potential students, and a process for determining whether the services offered by the organization match the students' needs and expectations.</li> <li>2. The organization implements procedures to <b>recruit, train, and evaluate assessors</b>.</li> <li>3. The organization implements an <b>intake process</b> to assess students' literacy levels, strengths, weaknesses, interests, goals, and learning styles (as appropriate). The process may include screening for learning differences and disabilities.</li> <li>4. The organization implements a system to <b>refer students</b> to more appropriate education or training programs, when necessary.</li> <li>5. The organization <b>informs students</b> of their rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>6. The organization <b>matches students</b> with tutors/instructors individually or in groups, using information on student and tutor/instructor availability, literacy skills, interests, goals, and barriers.</li> <li>7. The organization <b>provides tutors/instructors with comprehensive information</b> about students' goals, intake assessments, and instructional recommendations.</li> <li>8. The organization <b>evaluates</b> the student intake and matching processes, including student and tutor/instructor feedback.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 9

Instruction	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization provides quality instruction that incorporates current adult learning theory and proven methodologies.</i></p>	
<p>The organization employs instructional approaches that build on students' strengths, interests, goals, and life experiences. The use of current adult learning theory and proven methodologies contributes to effective instruction.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Instruction is <b>student-centered</b> and <b>outcome-oriented</b>.</li> <li>2. Instruction is <b>culturally sensitive</b>.</li> <li>3. Instruction encompasses a <b>variety of methods, materials, and techniques</b>, possibly including assistive technology.</li> <li>4. Tutors/instructors and students <b>collaborate in the instructional process</b>. Examples:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. mutually determine goals</li> <li>b. negotiate what happens in the lesson</li> <li>c. both students and tutors/instructors conduct selfassessments of the instruction</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. The organization promotes and supports the use of <b>written lesson plans and evaluation</b>.</li> <li>6. The tutor/instructor and student <b>collaboratively evaluate</b> the instructional process.</li> <li>7. The organization <b>monitors instruction</b> and provides examples of how it does so.</li> <li>8. The organization <b>evaluates instructional services</b> as a whole (objective and subjective data). The evaluation influences changes in the organization's instruction and programming.</li> </ol>	



## Standard 10

Student Progress	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization follows a student-centered system that documents student progress in meeting individual educational needs, interests, and goals.</i></p>	
<p>Information from the intake process is the base from which the organization measures students' progress toward goals and higher literacy levels. Using ongoing formal and informal assessment, the organization stays abreast of the skills, needs, and progress of students. The system also serves the students by helping them recognize their own progress, reevaluate stated needs and goals, and be responsible for their own learning.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization uses a <b>variety of formal and informal assessment tools and methods.</b></li> <li>2. The organization <b>evaluates, tracks, and documents</b> each student's literacy gains, goal attainment, and instructional hours and generates aggregate reports.</li> <li>3. The organization <b>shares information</b> regarding individual student progress <b>with the student and tutor/instructor</b>, and uses this information to inform instructional guidance and recommendations.</li> <li>4. The organization <b>uses aggregate data</b> to guide instructional design and make curriculum choices.</li> <li>5. The organization <b>evaluates the system</b> for documenting progress and changes it when necessary.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 11

Student Support	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization has a process in place to provide student support.</i></p>	
<p>The organization recognizes that instruction takes place in the context of other adult responsibilities. A process is in place for identifying needs and barriers to instruction and for addressing them in order to encourage students to remain in the instructional program. The organization monitors retention to inform instructional and support service activities.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization provides students with information <b>about services</b> in addition to instruction (e.g., community resource manual, support group).</li> <li>2. There is <b>direct communication</b> between the students and the organization that addresses instructional and support service activities.</li> <li>3. <b>The organization provides opportunities for support and learning experiences</b> for students that go beyond primary instruction.</li> <li>4. The organization has a process for <b>facilitating transitions</b> to other educational or training opportunities and/or returning to the program.</li> <li>5. The organization uses data on <b>retention rates, barriers to instruction/learning, and student progress</b> to identify methods <b>for program improvement</b>.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 12

Student Involvement	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization provides opportunities for students to serve the organization.</i></p>	
<p>The organization recognizes that student involvement is beneficial to providing effective and appropriate services. The organization creates, implements, and evaluates processes by which students are provided opportunities to participate in the organization.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization identifies meaningful ways that students <b>can become involved.</b></li> <li>2. The organization <b>communicates opportunities</b> for involvement directly to students.</li> <li>3. <b>The organization provides training and ongoing support for students</b> that is appropriate to their involvement.</li> <li>4. The organization involves students and others in <b>evaluating the effectiveness and the benefits</b> of providing student involvement opportunities.</li> <li>5. The organization <b>uses data from the evaluations</b> above to identify methods for program improvement.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 13

Tutor/Instructor Recruitment	Comments/ Actions Needed
<i>The organization has a plan for the recruitment of tutors/instructors.</i>	
The organization recruits potential tutors on the basis of its needs and its capacity to train, match, and support them.	
<p><i>Show evidence that:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization implements a <b>plan and specific strategies for tutor/instructor recruitment.</b></li> <li>2. The organization <b>evaluates the effectiveness of its plan and recruitment strategies.</b></li> <li>3. The organization uses recruitment materials and methods that are <b>culturally sensitive and appropriate</b> to the audience(s) being recruited.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 14

Tutor/Instructor Intake	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization has a process for intake of tutors/instructors.</i></p>	
<p>The organization's intake process includes orientation and matching. The organization has a process to determine a tutor/instructor's interests, strengths, and weaknesses prior to matching. The tutor/instructor intake process also helps tutors/instructors understand the relationship between themselves and the organization and the organization's expectations for the match.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The intake process ensures that potential <b>tutors/instructors are screened</b> for appropriateness and that they receive the information they need to make the decision whether or not to take the training and accept a match.</li> <li>2. The organization <b>informs tutors</b> of their rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>3. The organization has an <b>orientation process</b>, including a criteria/eligibility statement for tutors/instructors, job descriptions, and general information about the program.</li> <li>4. The organization has a process for <b>matching</b> tutors/instructors with students. The organization <b>matches tutors</b> with individual students or student groups using information on student and tutor/instructor availability, appropriate tutor training, interests, goals, and barriers.</li> <li>5. The organization <b>evaluates</b> the tutor intake and matching processes, including student and tutor/instructor feedback.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 15

Tutor/Instructor Support and Supervision	Comments/ Actions Needed
<i>The organization has a process for intake of tutors/instructors.</i>	
<p>The organization supports and supervises tutors/instructors. The organization provides the resources, training, and materials to support tutors/instructors. There is a system for the monitoring and evaluation of matches to enhance instruction.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization has a system for <b>supporting tutors/instructors</b>, including, but not limited to, regular contact, resource materials, ongoing training and development opportunities, and the setting of instructional goals.</li> <li>2. The organization uses data on <b>tutor/instructor retention rates</b> to identify actions <b>for program improvement</b>.</li> <li>3. The organization uses a <b>variety of activities for the recognition</b> of tutors/instructors.</li> <li>4. The organization has a process for <b>rematching</b> students with tutors/instructors.</li> <li>5. Volunteer tutor/instructor <b>records are maintained</b> and current.</li> </ol>	

## Standard 16

Training System	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>The organization supports and supervises tutors/instructors.</i></p> <p>The organization has a system to provide quality training and ongoing professional development to all instructional personnel. Well-trained instructional personnel are critical to the organization's ability to provide quality instruction.</p> <p>Instructional personnel include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutors – Trained volunteers who provide instruction one-to-one, in small groups, and/or assisting a paid instructor.</li> <li>• Trainers – Volunteers or paid persons who prepare and deliver training to tutors.</li> <li>• Instructors – Paid teachers who deliver instruction in classroom settings.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Documentation related to instructors should be addressed under the Employee Management standard and include the recruitment, support, ongoing development, and evaluation of instructors.</p>	
<p><b>Show evidence that:</b></p> <p><b>For the Organization</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The organization has a <b>training plan</b> to meet the assessed needs of its trainers and tutors. The plan includes the training of trainers, initial tutor training, and ongoing professional development of trainers and tutors. Training is appropriate to the instructional role(s).</li> <li>2. The organization evaluates the training plan and makes adjustments as needed.</li> </ol> <p><b>For Trainers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The organization ensures the capacity and quality of its trainers (e.g., staff provide training, or an outside organization provides training, or a volunteer trainer corps is developed and supported).</li> <li>4. Training for trainers addresses the <b>competencies/skills and content knowledge</b> necessary for trainers to prepare tutors/instructors to teach.</li> </ol>	



Training System (continued)	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><i>Show evidence that:</i></p> <p><b>For Tutor Training</b></p> <p>5. Tutor training is based on ProLiteracy guidelines.</p> <p>6. The affiliate ensures the training includes the following:</p> <p><b>I. Effective preparation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) base training content on achievement-based objectives</li> <li>b) align training to the educational level of the students served by the affiliate, instructional materials and methods used, as well as the issues that need to be addressed in tutor training</li> <li>c) address the learning needs of prospective tutors</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Establish an appropriate learning environment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) assure a comfortable and safe physical environment (logistics and “housekeeping” issues)</li> <li>b) use warm-up activities related to content to engage participants in learning</li> <li>c) provide a safe learning environment for participants</li> <li>d) demonstrate consistent flexibility, patience, and respect for participants</li> <li>e) demonstrate professional presentation/platform skills</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Use learning activities that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) employ a variety of teaching techniques, including lecture, demonstration, role-play, pairs and small groups, and the use of multimedia aids</li> <li>b) honor different learning styles in the training design</li> <li>c) give clear instructions</li> <li>d) define the purpose of the exercises in relation to the content</li> <li>e) facilitate exchange among participants</li> <li>f) provide ample opportunity for review, practice, and reflection of newly learned material</li> <li>g) provide for application and reinforcement of previously learned skills</li> </ul>	





Training System (continued)	Comments/ Actions Needed
<p><b>IV. Management of the group process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) intervene when problem behavior occurs</li><li>b) demonstrate knowledge of the stages of group development and how the stages affect the learning environment</li><li>c) monitor time for activities</li><li>d) adjust scheduling, content, and process based on group background, experience, and feedback</li><li>e) attend to the needs of diverse participants</li></ul> <p><b>V. Evaluate training outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) assess participants' changes in skills, knowledge, and attitudes in relation to the training objectives</li><li>b) adjust training based on evaluations</li><li>c) develop follow-up instruction based on identified participant needs</li></ul>	



## Appendix B

### A P P L I C A T I O N F O R M S



## About Submission of these Forms

ProLiteracy offers the option of submitting the following forms and applicable supporting documentation by mail, fax, or e-mail. Use mail or fax to submit any form that requires a signature.

**Submit written materials to:  
ProLiteracy Accreditation  
1320 Jamesville Avenue  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
Fax: (315) 422-6369**

**Additionally, use [accreditation@proliteracy.org](mailto:accreditation@proliteracy.org) for  
all e-mail messages related to accreditation.**

Be sure to include the name, address, and telephone number of the affiliate in the e-mail message.



## APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION Cover Sheet

**Submit to:** ProLiteracy Accreditation  
1320 Jamesville Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210  
Fax: 315-422-6369  
E-mail: [accreditation@proliteracy.org](mailto:accreditation@proliteracy.org)

---

Name of Affiliate: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliate ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

By submission of this application, we wish to inform ProLiteracy of our intent to formally enter accreditation.

We are submitting:

1. An affiliate fact sheet
2. A documentation checklist and required documentation
3. An initial self-evaluation summary
4. A check for \$400 made out to ProLiteracy

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Executive Director or Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Executive Director or Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Chair of Board of Directors or Advisory Group

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
If agency-based, name of head of agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of head of agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION Affiliate Fact Sheet

**Submit to:** ProLiteracy Accreditation

1320 Jamesville Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210

Fax: 315-422-6369

E-mail: [accreditation@proliteracy.org](mailto:accreditation@proliteracy.org)

Name of Affiliate: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City

State

Zip Code

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Web Site (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person for Accreditation Process: \_\_\_\_\_

Position within Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Geographic Area Served: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students Served Last Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Staff: Full-time employees: \_\_\_\_\_ Part-time employees: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative volunteers: \_\_\_\_\_

We are: (check which is applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_ An independent 501(c)(3) organization \_\_\_\_\_ Part of a larger agency

Agency type (library, correctional institution, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Agency name: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION Documentation Checklist

**Submit to:** ProLiteracy Accreditation

1320 Jamesville Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210

Fax: 315-422-6369

E-mail: [accreditation@proliteracy.org](mailto:accreditation@proliteracy.org)

---

Name of Affiliate: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please submit the following documentation with the application. Check the appropriate boxes.**

**If community-based organization:**

- ☐ Bylaws
- ☐ Articles of incorporation (if applicable)

**OR**

**If agency-based organization:**

- ☐ Memorandum of understanding and/or organizational chart showing integration of literacy program in sponsor agency
- ☐ Operating rules for advisory board of the literacy program

**FOR ALL ORGANIZATIONS:**

- ☐ Clearly articulated mission statement that shows commitment to providing literacy instruction to adults
- ☐ Documentation showing core values that include:
  - Use of volunteers to provide instruction
  - Free instructional services
  - Student-centered philosophy
  - Focus on serving students with low literacy and/or limited English-language skills
- ☐ Annual report(s) that includes:
  - Summary of program activities
  - End-of-year financial statement
- ☐ Proof of tax-exempt status for the organization or the sponsor agency
- ☐ Proof that 990 or other tax form is current and filed (if applicable)
- ☐ Full financial audit or desk review audit (if applicable)
- ☐ Planning documents such as operational (annual) and strategic plan

See next page

- ☐ Contribution acknowledgment procedures that meet IRS guidelines
- ☐ Non-discrimination policy
- ☐ Safety policies and procedures for students, volunteers, and employees
- ☐ Most recent annual statistical report submitted to ProLiteracy
- ☐ Policies and procedures for confidentiality
- ☐ Proof of charitable registration (if applicable)
- ☐ Copy of financial and legal reports filed with state government (if applicable)
- ☐ Latest brochure and/or newsletter



# APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION

## Initial Self-evaluation Summary

**Submit to:** ProLiteracy Accreditation  
1320 Jamesville Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210  
Fax: 315-422-6369  
E-mail: [accreditation@proliteracy.org](mailto:accreditation@proliteracy.org)

Name of Affiliate: \_\_\_\_\_

Review each standard. Based on the preliminary self-assessment, determine if:


1. The organization surpasses the standard.
2. The organization meets the standard.
3. The organization does not meet the standard, but can do so with minimal to moderate work.
4. The organization does not meet the standard. To do so will require extensive work.

Place the appropriate number (1 to 4) in the Response column next to each standard.

Organizational Management	Response
<b>Standard 1    Organizational Planning</b> The organization uses planning processes that articulate its mission and set the direction for the organization.	
<b>Standard 2    Employee Management</b> The organization has a system to recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate employees.	
<b>Standard 3    Volunteer Management</b> The organization has a system to recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate key non-instructional volunteers.	
<b>Standard 4    Governing Body Responsibility</b> The organization has a governing body that forwards the mission of the organization.	
<b>Standard 5    Community Linkages</b> The organization identifies, establishes, and maintains community linkages.	



Organizational Management	Response
<b>Standard 6 Fiscal Management</b> The organization practices sound fiscal management. Student-centered Services	
Student-centered Services	Response
<b>Standard 7 Student Recruitment</b> The organization implements its plan for recruitment of its identified student population(s).	
<b>Standard 8 Student Intake</b> The organization has a student-centered intake process that considers individual student needs, interests, goals, and competencies.	
<b>Standard 10 Student Progress</b> The organization follows a student-centered system that documents student progress in meeting individual educational needs, interests, and goals.	
<b>Standard 11 Student Support</b> The organization has a process in place to provide student support.	
<b>Standard 12 Student Involvement</b> The organization provides opportunities for students to serve the organization.	
Tutor-Instructor Services	Response
<b>Standard 13 Tutor/Instructor Recruitment</b> The organization has a plan for the recruitment of tutors/instructors.	
<b>Standard 14 Tutor/Instructor Intake</b> The organization has a process for intake of tutors/instructors.	
<b>Standard 15 Tutor Support and Supervision</b> The organization supports and supervises tutors/instructors.	
<b>Standard 16 Training System</b> The organization has a system to provide quality training and ongoing professional development to all instructional personnel.	



## Appendix C

### G L O S S A R Y   O F   T E R M S



# Glossary of Terms

**Administrative Staff** – Employees and volunteers who implement day-to-day activities.

**Adult Basic Education (ABE)** – Educational services for adults with limited literacy skills, usually within a formal classroom setting.

**Advisory Group** – A group elected/approved by the sponsor organization of an agency-based literacy program, or by the program itself, to steer literacy efforts. This body provides guidance and expertise, increases the capacity of the program, and advocates for the program and its mission to both the sponsor agency and the community at large.

**Assessor** – Individual(s) with the responsibility of evaluating students' literacy skills, needs, interests, and goals to determine their appropriateness for the organization, to facilitate placement/matching, to guide instruction, and/or to measure progress.

**Assistive Technology** – Tools or devices that may help:

1. Organizations to provide more effective instruction to adults with learning disabilities or differences
2. Students accomplish activities of daily living. These tools range from the simple (tape recorder, magnifying glass) to the complex (speech recognition systems).

**Audit** – Inspection of financial records to verify their completeness and accuracy. This process of internal control and is conducted by an independent reviewer or accounting firm.


**Basic Skills** – Broad range of competencies needed to function effectively at home, in the community, and at work. Includes reading, writing, math, problem solving, and oral communications.

**Board of Directors** – The legal governing body of a community-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

**Board/Advisory Group Evaluation** – An annual assessment of how well the board or advisory group did its work, as well as an evaluation or self-assessment of individual members.

**Budget** – Part of an annual plan, which includes projected expenses and income to achieve the plan's goals.

**Bylaws** – Specify the board's rules of internal operation. Usual components include mission, membership, officers, committees, terms of office, etc.



**Community Relations Plan** – A written plan with goals, activities, and timelines that details how an organization will establish links with key markets in its community.

**Computer-assisted Instruction** – The use of technology to develop or reinforce skills. May also be called technology-based instruction.

**Conflict of Interest** – This arises whenever the personal or professional interests of members of boards/advisory groups and staff are potentially at odds with the best interest of the organization. Prohibiting conflict of interest is one of the most important governance policies. It requires individuals to disclose existing and potential professional and personal conflicts before discussion, voting on these matters at meetings, or entering into agreements with an outside individual or agency.

**Employee** – Paid staff.

**ESOL (ESL)** – English for Speakers of Other Languages (English as a Second Language); instructional services to improve the skills of adults with limited English proficiency.

**Form 990** – A tax return required by the IRS for nonprofits with \$25,000 or more of annual revenue.

**Governing Body** – A broad term intended to be inclusive of a board of directors, advisory board, governing council, etc.


**Information and Referral** – A system to ensure that students and instructors receive appropriate support services offered by other agencies. An organization can refer students directly or provide information so students can make the contacts themselves.

**Internal Controls** – Policies and procedures implemented to safeguard the finances of an organization. They facilitate standardization of financial procedures and minimize the likelihood of mistakes or fraud.

**Instructor** – Paid teacher

**Investment Policy** – Created by the governing body to direct where to invest cash that may not be currently needed by an organization for day-to-day operations.

**Key Volunteers** – Individuals who are in primary administrative or instructional positions. They extend the capacity of literacy organizations to do their work.



**Learning Disability (LD)** – A general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span.

**Memorandum of Understanding** – A written agreement that details the relationship of the literacy program and the sponsor agency (or between any two agencies), specifically the roles and responsibilities of each.

**Mission Statement** – Describes the purpose of an organization. By doing so, it establishes clear boundaries on services.

**Needs Assessment** – May be internal or external. Externally, this is an evaluation of community needs through resources such as demographic and Census data, surveys conducted by other agencies or by the organization itself, interviews, and meetings. Internally, it is an assessment of organizational strengths and weaknesses through surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, meetings, etc.

**Operating Expenses** – Costs of doing business. These are related to program, management, and fundraising.

**Operational Plan** – An annual plan that details goals, objectives, and primary activities. Attainment of these goals will bring an organization closer to achievement of the goals in its strategic plan.


**Orientation** – A formal or informal process that provides students, volunteers, and employees an overview of the agency and an outline of their roles and responsibilities. This provides an opportunity for questions and allows these individuals to ascertain if an organization is a good fit for them.

**Outcomes** – Data to measure the success or impact of activities. Examples: Thirty percent of students obtained jobs, 85 percent of prospective tutors completed initial training, five new agencies are referring students.

**Output** – Data to measure the extent of activities. Examples: One hundred students tutored, brochures delivered to 40 agencies.

**Performance Appraisal** – Process of assessing, summarizing, and improving the work performance of an employee.

**Policy** – A written statement developed and approved by a governing body to guide and determine decisions and actions. Promotes consistency in operations.



**Pre-service Training** – Initial training of tutors and instructors.

**Program Services Plan** – A written plan with goals, activities, and timelines that addresses the implementation of programmatic components; student intake and support services; and tutor/instructor intake, training, and support services.

**Promising Practices** – Activities, policies, and procedures that have made a difference in an affiliate.

**Public Awareness Plan** – A written plan with goals, activities, and timelines that delineates community awareness efforts by an organization. The goal is to highlight the importance of literacy and the organization's efforts in this arena.

**Resource Development Plan** – A written plan with goals, activities, and timelines that details how an organization will bring in funding to financially support its services. May be a combination of contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, government support, events, fees for services, etc.

**Retention Rates** – The length of time that students and volunteers remain with an organization. Example: The retention rate for basic literacy students is 7.5 months. A goal is to reduce student and volunteer turnover in order to increase retention rates.

**Revenue** – Money coming into an organization.


**Risk Management** – Includes activities to reduce the probability and magnitude of losses and to finance recovery from these losses. By attempting to identify and then manage threats that could severely impact services or image, boards help ensure financial stability, individual safety, and service quality.

**Sponsor Organization** – The agency that establishes and supports a literacy organization as part of its overall services. Examples include libraries, community colleges, and correctional institutions.

**Staff Development Plan** – A written plan to guide an organization's efforts to enhance the skills of both paid and volunteer staff.

**Statement of Purpose** – The rules of operation of an advisory group. It may include membership, terms of office, committees, etc.

**Strategic Plan** – Maps the direction of an organization for a period beyond the annual/operational plan. It is a roadmap for growth and change based on "stepping back" from ongoing work to assess community needs and assets, demographic changes, organizational capacity and interests, etc.



**Strategies** – How an organization will accomplish its goals. Strategies build on what an organization does well and allow for innovation. May also be called activities.

**Student/Learner** – A person receiving literacy services.

**Student-centered Instruction** – Educational services directly related to a student's needs, interests, and goals. Students are equal partners in the learning process.

**Student Intake** – Initial interview, orientation, assessment, and matching of a student.

**Student Involvement** – Participation of students as volunteers who contribute in a meaningful way to organizational success beyond involvement in instructional sessions.

**Support Services** – Practices to keep individuals involved in a literacy organization.

**Tutor** – A person who is trained, matched, and working with a student(s) toward his or her personal literacy goals, usually a volunteer.

**Vision** – Part of a long-range planning process. A compelling description of how an organization will operate at some point in the future.



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