



Adult Literacy Program:

Hawaii Literacy trains volunteer tutors to teach *basic reading and writing skills* to *English-speaking adults* in the community. We offer a free, two-hour Orientation which is open to anyone interested in the problems of illiteracy and Hawaii Literacy's program. Following the Orientation there is a 16-hour tutor-training workshop, divided into four 4-hour sessions. The tutor trainee will receive a reference book and handouts at the training. The training is free .

The Orientation, designed for everyone interested in tutoring, includes a brief introduction to Hawaii Literacy, the causes and problems that low-literacy skills may create, and the nature of our training programs; we also discuss what is expected of Hawaii Literacy-trained volunteer tutors. The Orientation provides an opportunity to ask questions about literacy and about our program. **The Orientation is REQUIRED if you plan to take the Tutor Training.**

The "students" of the Adult Literacy program are all adults. They come from various educational backgrounds – some dropped out of school in kindergarten, some graduated from high school, and everything in between! Many of them speak English as their first language; some have learned English as a foreign language, but we require that they have good verbal communication skills because we are not teaching the English language – we are teaching reading and writing.

During the workshop, participants learn nationally-recognized tutoring methods and how to use the materials that will be employed during tutoring. Various situations and problems that may arise during tutoring are discussed. Upon completion of the training, the participant becomes a nationally certified volunteer literacy tutor. (S/he becomes a member of Hawaii Literacy for one year and also a member, for 6 months, of the national literacy organization, ProLiteracy.) Following the 3rd day of the training, tutors are matched with an individual who has indicated an interest in improving his/her basic reading/writing skills. (In most cases, the student has already been orientated to the organization and a general assessment of his/her skills has been made; this information is shared with the tutor.) The tutor and student meet for approximately three weeks before the tutor returns for the fourth day of training. At that time, we share tutoring experiences with each other, discuss additional teaching techniques which can be used, and receive certification.

The student and tutor together decide when and where they will meet. It is recommended that they meet together twice a week for an hour to an hour-and-a-half; a public meeting place – such as a library, a church, a community center, or a park – is suggested. However, any time and any place that are convenient and mutually acceptable to the student and the tutor are usually fine with us.

Tutoring can be a structured affair using workbooks, or it can be less structured – depending on the needs and wants of both the tutor and the learner. (Most times the best approach [and our recommended approach] is a combination of the two!) In the training, we discuss a series of books that provides structure and guidance when working with the student; we also demonstrate numerous approaches, tools, and methods that can be used successfully. The training prepares you to tutor an adult employing "what works" and "what is needed" for that particular individual. One of our trained tutors, voicing skepticism at first about the books and the techniques, said "[The program] really works!"

The student and tutor meet together for as long as it is satisfactory to both. There is no average time that a tutor works with a particular student, because many factors must be considered:

1. Our students vary greatly in their skills upon entering the program. Their educational backgrounds vary widely also.
2. The students have different goals – and different reasons for wanting literacy assistance.
3. The students have different levels of motivation.
4. The time a student and tutor can commit to studying/tutoring also varies widely.

During the time an individual is tutoring, Hawaii Literacy staff members are always available for technical assistance. There are workshops (“In-Service Workshops”) for trained tutors. Active tutors will receive our newsletter with tutoring tips from staff and experienced tutors.

At the end of each month we ask that each tutor fill out a brief form (postage-paid postcard form) telling us how many hours were spent in tutoring, preparation, and any additional volunteer hours during that month and commenting on the progress that their student has made. This information is used for reports to our donors and sponsors.

Hawaii Literacy is a private, non-profit agency of Aloha United Way. We receive funding from Aloha United Way, as well as from trusts, foundations and corporations. We also receive individual donations and community-organization donations.