

Blueprint to End Illiteracy in Washtenaw County

**Developed by:
Washtenaw County Literacy Coalition**

October 20, 2008

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the following members of the Literacy Coalition who contributed to the development of this Blueprint:

The Literacy Coalition

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Leah Gunn	Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners
Ronnie Peterson	Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners
Verna McDaniel	Washtenaw County Administration
Kerry Sheldon	Washtenaw County Administration
Ellen Clement	Washtenaw County Dept. of Public Health
Mary Udoji	Library Learning Resource Center, retired
Trenda Rusher	Employment Training and Community Services
Keith Peters	Washtenaw County Workforce Development Board
Jesse Bernstein	Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce
Diane Keller	Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce
Julie McFarland	McNaughton and Gunn
Joanne Pierson	University of Michigan
Freman Hendrix	Eastern Michigan University
Bill Abernethy	Washtenaw Community College
Nancy Thelen	MSU Extension
William Miller	Washtenaw Intermediate School District
Wanda Killips	Washtenaw Intermediate School District
James Hawkins	Ypsilanti Public Schools
Josie Parker	Ann Arbor District Library
Donna DeButts	Ypsilanti District Library
Pastor Phil Ferrell	Ministerial Alliance
Chris Roberts	Washtenaw Literacy
Anya Abramzon	Jewish Family Services
Sandy Williams	Family Learning Institute
Christine Fischer	Family Book Club
Natalie Davidson	Reach Out & Read
Sian Owen-Cruise	Washtenaw Success by 6
Patricia J. Horne McGee	Washtenaw County Head Start
Lori Wasson	Washtenaw County Head Start
Peg Talburt	James A. & Faith Knight Foundation
Susan McGraw	Project Consultant

We would also like to acknowledge the Coalition members for their generous in-kind contributions and our grant funders for their support of our efforts to end illiteracy:

Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
James A. & Faith Knight Foundation
Washtenaw United Way

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The Development of the Blueprint

The Development of the Blueprint

Illiteracy is a pervasive problem in Washtenaw County, affecting 12% of our residents, an estimated 27,000 adults. For over 30 years, community agencies, governmental units and public schools have worked to address this problem. Despite the individual success of participants in these programs, our system as a whole is not working. Nationally, adult literacy levels have remained virtually unchanged in the past 10 years. Locally, we have seen no evidence that the cycle of illiteracy has been broken in Washtenaw County.

The National Institute for Literacy hosted a national summit in 2006 to promote an emerging approach being developed throughout the country called “community literacy”. Community literacy focuses on bringing service providers and funders together to provide a continuum of comprehensive literacy services in a specific geographical area to address illiteracy at any point in an individual’s lifespan.

Locally, we are implementing this type of community literacy effort by forming the Washtenaw County Literacy Coalition. Led by County Administrator Bob Guenzel and approved by resolution of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners on July 18, 2007, this Coalition brings together the partners needed to make a real and lasting impact on our community. The Coalition is comprised of the following organizations:

- **Government:** Washtenaw County, Dept. of Public Health, Employment Training and Community Services
- **Education:** University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw Community College, MSU Extension, Washtenaw Intermediate School District, Ypsilanti Public Schools, Multicultural Academy
- **Libraries:** Library Learning Resource Center, Ann Arbor District Library, Ypsilanti District Library, Chelsea District Library
- **Business:** Workforce Development Board, Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce, Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce, McNaughton and Gunn
- **Community Based Organizations:** Ministerial Alliance, Washtenaw Literacy, Jewish Family Services, Family Learning Institute, Family Book Club, Reach Out & Read, Washtenaw Success by 6, Washtenaw County Head Start, 826 Michigan
- **Funders:** James A. & Faith Knight Foundation

The Mission of the Literacy Coalition:

Eliminate illiteracy in Washtenaw County.

The Washtenaw County Literacy Coalition will break the cycle of illiteracy by implementing a Blueprint which includes strategies to create a comprehensive system of literacy services to address the acquisition of literacy skills (from birth through adulthood) and the application of literacy skills (health, workforce/computer, and financial literacy).

The Development of the Blueprint (continued)

Definitions:

The Literacy Coalition implemented a one-year planning process (September 2007 to 2008) to develop the Blueprint to End Illiteracy. The Coalition identified and defined the critical components of literacy:

- **Literacy Skills Acquisition, ages 0 through Adulthood.** An individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.
- **Literacy Skills Applications:**
 - **Health Literacy:** The degree to which individuals can obtain, process, and understand the basic health information and services they need to make appropriate health decisions (an estimated 104,000 Washtenaw County residents impacted).
 - **Workplace/Computer Literacy:** The core skill that employees need to do their jobs successfully including the ability to use documents (i.e., safety instructions, assembly directions or maps), numbers (by themselves or in charts and tables), and prose writing (i.e., reports, letters and manuals).
 - **Financial Literacy:** The ability to make good financial choices by understanding basic math and how things work in the real world; knowing enough about managing money to make informed decisions and avoid being cheated, tricked or swindled.

For each component of literacy, the Coalition defined the problem, determined the scope or magnitude of the problem in the County, evaluated local and national best practices, and identified current resources to address the problem (see pages 23 to 38 for a summary of the findings for each component). The Coalition then drafted the Blueprint to End Illiteracy, identifying the short and long-range goals, strategies, and measures to be implemented. In addition, the Coalition established an ongoing operating structure based upon best practice models being used nationally.

While compiling their research, the Coalition was alarmed by the following statistics which illustrate the magnitude of the problem in Washtenaw County:

Washtenaw County Literacy Statistics:

- **Literacy Skills Acquisition:**
 - Over 12% of adults, 27,000 individuals, lack basic literacy skills.
 - High school non-completion rates:
 - Washtenaw County overall: 12%
 - The fourth-best school district: 18%
 - Rates higher in certain geographical regions of the County.
 - 60% of Washtenaw Literacy learners have a high school diploma.
 - 50% of children with illiterate parents grow up to be illiterate themselves.
 - 20% of 6-year-old children in the County are not ready for school. (Note: If a child has not learned to read by third grade, when schools stop teaching children “how to read”, that child has a dramatically reduced chance of gaining literacy skills through schooling alone.)

The Development of the Blueprint (continued)

- **Health Literacy:**
 - Approximately 104,000 adults in the County impacted.
 - 52% of patients with inadequate literacy are more likely to be hospitalized (JAMA, 1995).
 - Up to \$73 billion in excess health care costs occur annually in the U.S. due to low literacy (National Academy on an Aging Society, 1999).
- **Workplace Literacy** (source: Washtenaw Literacy & MDHS):
 - Limited English proficiency in County workforce in 2000: 4,803.
 - 34% of job applicants lacked the basic skills necessary to perform the jobs they sought in 2000.
 - 47% of the people on welfare assistance have illiteracy as a major barrier to employment.
- **Financial Literacy:**
 - Michigan ranks in the top 5 in bankruptcy filings.
 - Mortgage foreclosures in Washtenaw County have quadrupled in the last year.
 - Nationally, consumer credit set a new record of \$879 billion in January, 2007.
 - Studies show a high correlation between literacy challenges and financial struggles.

The local statistics are consistent with national data which reflects the intergenerational aspect of illiteracy and the role of literacy as a root cause contributor to individual life success and to the overall vibrancy of the entire community.

Based on this research, the Coalition determined that successful implementation of the Blueprint requires a dramatic change in the way literacy services are delivered in the County over the next ten years. The following key challenges were identified:

Key Challenges in Addressing Illiteracy in Washtenaw County:

- Existing service providers operate in “silos”, serving only one target audience (i.e., Family Learning Institute serves third to eighth graders; Washtenaw Literacy, adults).
- There is a lack of awareness of the types of services offered by each organization.
- There are no strong, ongoing partnerships among members.
- Services are not delivered in community-based settings (i.e., churches or community centers), which are respected and trusted by residents, thereby reducing the stigma associated with literacy challenges. Other barriers to participation include transportation and childcare.
- No programs address the intergenerational aspect of illiteracy.
- There is a lack of public awareness of the importance of literacy, the impact on quality of life, and the literacy resources available in the community.

The Blueprint Goals & Strategies

The Blueprint to End Illiteracy

VISION

All Washtenaw County residents have the support they need to develop the literacy skills necessary for lifelong learning which will enhance their personal, work, family and community lives.

MISSION

To eliminate illiteracy in Washtenaw County.

All adults have the literacy support they need to be successful in supporting their children, comfortable with school and library-based activities, equipped to handle workforce expectations, and to participate in lifelong learning and college coursework.

Children come to school with the cognitive development required to flourish in school and later in college and the workforce.

Partners:

- Washtenaw County
- Public Health
- Library Learning Resource Center
- Employment Training and Community Services
- Workforce Development Board
- Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce
- Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce
- McNaughton and Gunn
- University of Michigan
- Eastern Michigan University
- Washtenaw Community College
- MSU Extension
- Washtenaw Intermediate School District
- Ypsilanti Public Schools
- Ann Arbor District Library
- Ypsilanti District Library
- Ministerial Alliance
- Washtenaw Literacy
- Jewish Family Services
- Family Learning Institute
- Family Book Club
- Reach Out & Read
- Success by 6
- Head Start

Funders:

- Washtenaw United Way
- Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
- James A. & Faith Knight Foundation

3. Build the Infrastructure of the Literacy Coalition to Support Long-Term Sustainability.

2. Expand Services to Cultivate Superior Literacy Skills for All Residents of Washtenaw County.

1. Enhance Information Sharing between Literacy Service Providers and Increase Public Awareness of Illiteracy in Washtenaw County.

GOALS

The Blueprint Goals & Strategies

To address these concerns in Washtenaw County, the Coalition developed a plan of action which includes the following goals and strategies:

1. **Enhance information sharing between literacy service providers and increase public awareness of illiteracy in Washtenaw County.**
 - a. **Service Provider Directory:** Publish and maintain a directory of literacy services in Washtenaw County to strengthen the integration of the “network” of providers and enhance the ability of the public to access services.
 - b. **Public Awareness Campaign:** Design and implement a public awareness campaign to promote “superior literacy skills” (basic literacy and workplace/PC, financial, and health literacy) and provide information on services which break the cycle of illiteracy in Washtenaw County.
 - c. **Website:** Provide local access to information, via website, which supports all of the goals of the Literacy Coalition (including ESL services).
2. **Expand services to cultivate superior literacy skills for all residents of Washtenaw County.**
 - a. **“Safety Net”:** Develop an integrated network of literacy services to enhance the safety net.
 - b. **Program Development:** Implement new/enhanced programs to be delivered by Coalition partners to break the cycle of illiteracy for basic skills development.
 - c. **Workplace/PC, Financial, and Health Literacy:** Implement strategies to enhance workplace/PC, financial, and health literacy.
 - d. **Service Delivery Capacity:** Provide resources to build the capacity of existing service providers to serve a greater number of individuals and families in the community.
 - e. **Targeted Service Delivery:** Identify the geographical areas within the County with the greatest need for literacy services and develop accessible, comprehensive literacy programs to meet those needs (birth to adult).
3. **Build the infrastructure of the Literacy Coalition to support long-term sustainability.**
 - a. **Coalition Development:** Strengthen the Coalition, build strong partnerships, and engage the private sector to attract ongoing financial support for literacy programs.
 - b. **“Literacy Hub” with a Full-time Coordinator:** Create a Washtenaw County “Literacy Hub”, a central location and point of contact for education, training, referrals, etc. and create a staff “Coordinator” role to be the link between all service providers.
 - c. **Funding:** Actively seek federal, state, and local grant funding and cultivate other sources of sustainable funding including private sector partnerships (i.e., Borders Books), collaborative fund raising, etc.
 - d. **Data Collection:** Develop and implement a system to effectively track county-wide literacy data in order to confirm the magnitude of the problem and to monitor the outcomes of programs.

The Blueprint Goals & Strategies (continued)

The Blueprint Work Plan (pages 12 to 17) details the short-term actions which will be taken to begin implementation of these goals and strategies. This Work Plan will continue to evolve over time.

The Family Literacy Project:

While the Coalition will be taking action on all three goal areas during the first year of implementation (2008 to 2009), the most significant indicator of the Coalition's commitment to this Blueprint is the implementation of a pilot program to test a new approach to literacy services delivery, the Family Literacy Project. Funded by Washtenaw United Way, this project has been designed to provide direct services to community residents, enhance public awareness, and build the Coalition's capacity to break the cycle of illiteracy by cultivating partnerships between member organizations to provide services in innovative ways. The partners involved in this project will deliver educational workshops in community-based settings to increase awareness of the importance of family literacy, provide hands-on literacy learning techniques for parents and children, recruit and train literacy volunteers to work with member agencies, and provide referrals to local resources for in-depth services and support. It is anticipated that this pilot will result in a model program that can be replicated and expanded in targeted geographical areas by cultivating ongoing, long-term partnerships with trusted community-based organizations (i.e., neighborhood centers, churches, non-profits, libraries, etc.).

The Family Literacy Project will engage numerous Coalition partners, break the "silos" between agencies, address the intergenerational aspect of illiteracy, deliver services in community-based settings that are trusted by residents, eliminate transportation and childcare barriers, increase public awareness, and provide referrals for in-depth services and support.

The Blueprint Work Plan

Goal 1: Enhance Information Sharing between Literacy Service Providers and Increase Public Awareness of Illiteracy in Washtenaw County.

Outcomes:

Literacy Directory: <ul style="list-style-type: none">80% of participating service providers use Literacy Directory when making referrals, collaborating with other agencies, or planning future services.5% of total new volunteers or learners identify the Literacy Directory as referral source for their Literacy Coalition involvement.New information is posted to online Literacy Directory within 48 hours of receipt.	Web Portal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">At least one online service is in use by end of project.50% of participating providers post news and announcements on a regular basis.Web portal is used in Public Awareness Campaign to publicize events and publicity.Networking function shows daily use by web portal users by end of project.Online donation feature is functioning and donor resources are posted. Public Awareness Campaign: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognition of literacy as a critical community issue by three or more community leaders; 10% increase in volunteers and learners participating in Coalition activities.50% of resources needed for year two of implantation of Blueprint to End Illiteracy identified by end of project.					
Strategy 1: Service Provider Directory: Publish and maintain a directory of literacy services in Washtenaw County to strengthen the integration of the “network” of providers and enhance the ability of the public to access services.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder (Pending)	Potential Grant Funding
A. Asset Inventory: Conduct an asset inventory to identify all existing resources which address literacy in Washtenaw County (i.e., faith-based community, electronic resources through the libraries/internet, etc.); determine how much capacity each resource has (i.e., what types of services are provided, how many clients can be served, etc.). Determine if Access Point locations can be used to enhance literacy skills (i.e., literacy development software, referral information, etc.); train Coordinators.	X	Update	Update	TBD	AT&T?	\$2,500
B. Directory: Print and distribute a directory of literacy services in Washtenaw County. Update the asset inventory and directory on a regular basis.	X	Update	Update	TBD	AT&T?	\$5,000
Strategy 2: Public Awareness Campaign: Design and implement a public awareness campaign to promote “superior literacy skills” (basic literacy and workplace/PC, financial, and health literacy) and provide information on services which break the cycle of illiteracy in Washtenaw County.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder (Pending)	Potential Grant Funding
A. 800#/Website Address: Establish a central 800# and website address to create a central point of contact to be used in all publicity.	X			Coalition	AT&T?	\$500
B. Public Relations: Hire a public relations consultant to develop a no-cost/low-cost campaign to increase awareness of the magnitude of illiteracy in Washtenaw County and introduce the Literacy Coalition.	X			Coalition	AT&T?	\$10,000
C. Campaign: Implement no-cost/low-cost public awareness activities on an ongoing basis (i.e., Annual Book Festivals, PTA parent nights, etc.).	X	X	X	TBD	AT&T?	\$22,000
Strategy 3: Website: Provide local access to information, via website, which supports all of the goals of the Literacy Coalition (including ESL services).	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder (Pending)	Potential Grant Funding
A. Website Host: Identify an organization to host the Literacy Coalition website.	X	Update	Update	TBD		
B. Website: Create the website to provide information and promote literacy services.	X	Update	Update	TBD	AT&T?	\$10,000

Goal 2: Expand Services to Cultivate Superior Literacy Skills for All Residents of Washtenaw County

In the Family Literacy Program, participants will:

- Feel empowered to pursue literacy as a way of improving their lives, livelihood, parenting skills, and employability.
- Experience improved self-image through reduction/elimination of the shame of illiteracy and the fear of being discovered.
- Receive referrals to literacy providers in the community that can provide in-depth services to improve their literacy skills and/or the skills of their child(ren).
- Understand the importance of reading to/with their young children.
- Utilize learning techniques to enhance literacy skills.
- Read to their children at home following participation in the project.

Data will be collected to evaluate how effectively the Family Literacy pilot:

- Built strong Coalition partnerships.
- Engaged “hard to reach” learners through partnerships with community-based organizations.
- Cultivated ongoing relationships with community-based organizations to serve as sponsors of direct service programs with their members/patrons/clients.
- Identified the most appropriate community-based venues for service delivery.
- Addressed literacy challenges for adult and child participants of the workshops.
- Increased volunteer base for member organizations.
- Raised community awareness of literacy as a fundamental, root-cause contributor to individual quality of life and community vibrancy/success.

Strategy 1: “Safety Net”: Develop an integrated network of literacy services to enhance the safety net.

2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder (Pending)	Potential Grant Funding
X	Update	Update	Coalition	AT&T?	See Goal 1 above.
X			TBD	TBD	TBD
X	On-going	On-going	TBD	TBD	TBD
X	On-going	On-going	TBD	TBD	TBD

- A. **Asset Inventory, Directory, Website:** Conduct an asset inventory, publish a directory, and maintain an up-to-date website to support the integration of the literacy services network in Washtenaw County.
- B. **Assessment/Referrals:** Develop effective assessment techniques to be used by literacy service providers to determine the best approach to assist an individual or family so that providers can make the proper referral to service providers. (Avoid the “one size fits all” approach and honor that literacy “support”/ “tutoring” doesn’t match the “learning to read” need.)
- C. **Provider Training:** Provide training for employees of providers in the community (i.e., health, social service, education, etc.) with information on how to identify possible literacy challenges for clients and to make appropriate referrals.
- D. **Volunteer Training:** Train volunteers to support literacy skills acquisition in order to increase the number of clients who can be served. Provide volunteer incentives (vouchers, transportation, gas cards, bartering services, etc.).

Goal 2: Expand Services to Cultivate Superior Literacy Skills for All Residents in Washtenaw County						
Strategy 2: Program Development: Implement new/enhanced programs to be Delivered by Coalition partners to break the cycle of illiteracy for basic skills development.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder	Potential Grant Funding
A. New/Enhanced Programs/Partnerships: 1. Ages 0 to 18: Program to be developed. 2. Families: Family Literacy Project. B. ESL: Develop, supplement, and/or enhance programs to address the unique needs of families in which English is a Second Language. C. Model Programs: Research model programs being implemented throughout the County. For example: 1. The Housing Commission partnership with the UM School of Architecture to build Park Ridge Center, a 30,000 sq. ft. home-based center for families who need academic, literacy, tutoring services. 2. WCC/UM/EMU partnerships including Summer School Academy for 4 th graders, UM 7/8 th Grade Summer Science Academy, mandatory summer program for 9 th graders in danger of failing. 3. Head Start Daisy Program for children transitioning to kindergarten.	X	TBD TBD X	TBD TBD X	Coalition TBD TBD	TBD WUW TBD TBD	TBD \$41,000 TBD TBD
Strategy 3: Workplace/PC, Financial, and Health Literacy: Implement strategies to enhance workplace/PC, financial, and health literacy.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder	Potential Grant Funding
A. Consolidate Information: Research/compile information on programs offered in the County (the Program Specialist at the Ann Arbor District Library). B. Advocate for Department of Education Curriculum Changes: Advocate to the Michigan State Department of Education to get workplace/PC, health, and financial literacy included in the school curriculum for math, social studies, health, and life management. C. Business Sector: Engage the business community in providing education and support for workplace and financial literacy.	X	X X	X X	AADL TBD TBD	AADL TBD	TBD
Strategy 4: Service Delivery Capacity: Provide resources to build the capacity of existing service providers to serve a greater number of individuals and families in the community.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder	Potential Grant Funding
A. Strategize opportunities to strengthen existing agencies to serve more clients.		X	X	TBD	TBD	
Strategy 5: Targeted Service Delivery: Identify the geographical areas within the County with the greatest need for literacy services and develop accessible, comprehensive literacy programs to meet those needs (for all ages, birth through adult).	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder	Potential Grant Funding
A. Cultivate a "one-stop shop" approach which links literacy services to other types of services already being offered to individuals or families in the area.			X	TBD	TBD	TBD
B. Explore opportunities to address barriers to service delivery related to lack of transportation, childcare.			X	TBD	TBD	TBD

Goal 3: Build the Infrastructure of the Literacy Coalition to Support Long-Term Sustainability.

Outcomes:

Strategy 1: Coalition Development: Strengthen the Coalition, build strong partnerships, and engage the private sector to attract ongoing financial support for literacy programs.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder (Awarded)	Potential Grant Funding
A. Blueprint to End Illiteracy: Build the capacity of non-profit literacy providers to participate in the development of the Blueprint to End Illiteracy.	10/07-10/08			Coalition	AAACF & Knight	\$18,000
B. Partnerships:						
1. "Host Agency": Washtenaw County will serve as the Coalition "host agency" for 2008 to 2009, providing in-kind support (staffing, space, supplies).	X			Wash. County;	Wash. County;	In-Kind
2. Fiduciary agents: The Ann Arbor City Library will serve as fiduciary for the United Way grant application and the Washtenaw Intermediate School District will serve as fiduciary for grants which do not require 501(c)3 status.	X	X	X	Ann Arbor Library; WISD	Ann Arbor Library, WISD	In-Kind
3. Coalition Members: Support the implementation of the Blueprint to End Illiteracy; provide in-kind services (i.e., staff salaries/benefits, meeting space, equipment/supplies).	X	X	X	Coalition	Coalition	In-Kind
Strategy 2: "Literacy Hub" with a Full-time Coordinator: Create a Washtenaw County "Literacy Hub", a central location and point of contact for education, training, referrals, etc. and create a staff "Coordinator" role to be the link between all service providers.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder (Pending)	Potential Grant Funding
A. 800#/website: Establish central 800#/website address to be used in 2008/09 to create one point of contact for information/referrals.	X			Wash. Literacy Consult.	AT&T?	See Goal 1 above.
B. Consultant: Continue to utilize the services of a Consultant/Facilitator on a contracted basis to provide organizational development support to the Coalition during 2008/09.	X				WUW Knight?	\$9,000 \$9,000
C. Organizational Design: Determine the best long-term organizational design to support the ongoing operations of the Coalition which could include having Washtenaw Literacy serve as the "lead agency" or forming a separate non-profit organization. Implement new design (2009/18).	X Design	X Implement	X Implement	Coalition		
D. Literacy Hub: Based upon the organizational design decision, create a central "Literacy Hub" and hire a "Coordinator" to staff this Literacy Hub and serve as the link between all literacy service providers.		X	X	TBD	TBD	TBD
E. Co-Location: Co-locate literacy service providers in central location.		X	X	TBD	TBD	TBD

Goal 3: Build the Infrastructure of the Literacy Coalition to Support Long-Term Sustainability.						
Strategy 3: Funding: Actively seek federal, state, and local grant funding and cultivate other sources of sustainable funding including private sector partnerships (i.e., Borders Books), collaborative fund raising, etc.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder (Pending)	Grant Funding Awarded
A. Grants:						
1. Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation: \$10,000 grant awarded for planning/capacity building (10/07 to 10/08).				Coalition		\$10,000
2. James A. & Faith Knight Foundation: \$8,000 grant awarded for planning/capacity building (10/07 to 10/08).				Coalition		\$8,000
3. AT&T: \$50,000 grant request submitted May 15, 2008.	X			Coalition	\$50,000	
4. GM grant: Grant possibility Fall 2008?	X			Coalition		
5. Washtenaw United Way: \$85,000 grant request submitted May 30, 2008; \$50,000 awarded July 31, 2008; submit annually thereafter.	X	X		Coalition		\$50,000
6. James A. & Faith Knight Foundation: \$9,000 grant application to be submitted September 2008 (2008/09).	X	X		Coalition	\$9,000	
7. Other grants: To be determined.	TBD	TBD	TBD	Coalition	TBD	
B. Other Sources of Funding: Cultivate other sources of funding.	TBD	TBD	TBD	Coalition	TBD	
Strategy 4: Data Collection: Develop and implement a system to effectively track county-wide literacy data in order to confirm the magnitude of the problem and to monitor the outcomes of programs.	2008/09	2009/13	2013/18	Responsible Party	Potential Funder (Pending)	Potential Grant Funding
A. Establish a data base to track literacy trends in Washtenaw County and monitor the progress/outcomes of literacy programs being provided by Coalition member agencies in order to comply with grant requirements (i.e., data from surveys/sampling, Washtenaw Literacy, ETCS, WCC, and others).	X	X	X	TBD	TBD	TBD

Implementing the Blueprint: Organization & Operations

Implementing the Blueprint: Organization & Operations

During the planning phase, Washtenaw County (public agency) and Washtenaw Literacy (non-profit) served as lead agencies, providing consulting services, staff support, facilities, and materials to the Coalition.

Coalition Models:

To determine the optimum organizational structure for the future, the Coalition partnered with graduate students from the Gerald R. Ford School for Public Policy at the University of Michigan to evaluate successful Literacy Coalition models in other locations. They researched the strengths and weaknesses of four different types of Coalition models which included the following:

- **Model 1, Higher Education Outreach:** Center literacy coordination efforts through a higher education institution (college or university).
- **Model 2, County Leadership:** Create a leadership position within the County.
- **Model 3, Non-Profit Expansion:**
 - Variation 1: An existing non-profit leads the coalition.
 - Variation 2: Create a sub-organization within an existing non-profit.
- **Model 4, New Non-Profit:** Create a new umbrella non-profit, which serves the same functions as an expanded organization would do.

Coalition Organizational Structure (July 2008 to June 2009):

Based upon a review of the research, the Coalition narrowed the options to two: Non-Profit Expansion (create a sub-organization within an existing non-profit) or New Non-Profit. Currently, no existing non-profits have the capacity to immediately assume leadership of the Literacy Coalition. In order to provide more time to build the capacity of the Coalition and member organizations, the Coalition agreed to an interim organizational structure for the fiscal year 2008 to 2009:

- Washtenaw County will continue to serve as the lead agency and provide staff support.
- The Ann Arbor District Library will provide a half-time (20 hours per week) program specialist to support the implementation of Coalition programs.
- The Ann Arbor District Library will serve as the fiduciary agent for the Washtenaw United Way grant, which requires 501(c)3 tax status.
- The Washtenaw Unified School District will serve as the fiduciary for any grants which do not require 501(c)3 status (i.e., Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, James A. & Faith Knight Foundation, etc.).

Implementing the Blueprint: Organization & Operations (continued)

Funding & Annual Operating Budget:

The ongoing operations of the Coalition are primarily funded through the generous support of member organizations via in-kind contributions. During the planning year, the Coalition actively solicited grant funding from several local sources to supplement this in-kind support. The Coalition was awarded funding from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (\$10,000) and the James A. and Faith Knight Foundation (\$8,000) to support the development of the Blueprint. The Washtenaw United Way awarded \$50,000 to support the implementation of the Family Literacy pilot project. In addition, the Coalition applied for funding from the AT&T Foundation to design and implement public awareness strategies. The Coalition will continue to seek ongoing funding from a variety of sources. The following budget forecast reflects anticipated income/in-kind support and expenses for the first year of operations.

Projected Annual Operating Budget, July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009	
Income & In-Kind Contributions	
Grants/Foundations:	
• Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation Oct. 07/08 \$10,000 awarded; Grant request possibility: Oct. 08/011	\$10,000
• James A. & Faith Knight Foundation Oct. 07/08 \$8,000 awarded; Grant request: September. 08/09, \$9,000 (<i>pending</i>)	\$8,000 \$9,000
• Washtenaw United Way Oct. 08/July 09 \$50,000 awarded; Reapply annually.	\$50,000
• AT&T: Grant request pending: June 08/09; requested \$50,000	
• GM: Grant request possibility: Fall 2008	
In-Kind Support:	
• Ann Arbor District Library	\$31,000
• Washtenaw County	\$31,600
• Washtenaw Intermediate School District	\$9,172
• Washtenaw Literacy	\$42,845
• Other Coalition Members	\$42,000
Total Income & In-Kind Contributions	\$233,617
Expenses	
Salaries, Benefits, Taxes:	
• 30 Member Organizations:	
○ Ann Arbor District Library (see detail, next page)	\$31,000
○ Washtenaw County (see detail, next page)	\$30,000
○ Washtenaw Intermediate School District (see detail, next page)	\$9,172
○ Washtenaw Literacy (see detail, next page)	\$52,145
○ 16 Member Organizations ((see detail, next page)	\$48,000
• The Family Literacy Project (4 partners x 15 hours/month x 8 months x \$56/hour)	\$26,880
Contractual Labor: Consultant (\$9,000 to be paid via the WUW grant; grant funding to be sought for the additional \$9,000 to continue to build the capacity of the Coalition)	\$18,000
Facility & Equipment Expenses: Rent /meeting space: Washtenaw County	\$600
Communications (Postage, shipping, printing, copies, phone, advertising, promotions):	
• Printing: Washtenaw County	\$1,000
• Printing, phone: Washtenaw Literacy	\$1,300
Travel and meeting (Mileage, meals, meetings, conferences, air/hotel, registration)	
• Washtenaw Literacy	\$500
Program supplies and expenses	
• Washtenaw Literacy educational materials	\$900
• The Family Literacy Project	\$14,120
Total Expenses	\$233,617

Implementing the Blueprint: Organization & Operations (continued)

In-Kind Services

Ann Arbor District Library:

- **Salaries, benefits: \$3,000/Coalition member x 1 member = \$3,000:** An estimate of \$3,000/member was created based upon the following: 1 member x 4.5 hours/month x hourly salary+benefits (\$40/hour avg. salary + 40% benefits = \$56/hour) x 12 months = \$3,000/member.
- **Salary, benefits for 20 Hours/week Program Specialist: \$26,000**
- **Salary, benefits for Grant Fiduciary Agent (Washtenaw United Way grant): \$2,000**
 - **Subtotal Washtenaw Intermediate School District In-Kind: \$31,000**

Washtenaw County:

- **Salaries, benefits: \$3,000/member x 10 members = \$30,000:** An estimate of \$3,000/member was created based upon the following: 1 member x 4.5 hours/month x hourly salary+benefits (\$40/hour avg. salary + 40% benefits = \$56/hour) x 12 months = \$3,000/member.
- **Consultant/Facilitator: \$15,000 (9/07 to 7/08 only).**
- **Printing Costs: \$1,000**
- **Meeting Space: \$600.**
 - **Subtotal Washtenaw County In-Kind: \$46,600 (7/07 to 7/08);**
 - **Subtotal Washtenaw County In-Kind: \$31,600/year (7/08 ongoing)**

Washtenaw Intermediate School District:

- **Salaries, benefits: \$3,000/member x 2 members = \$6,000:** An estimate of \$3,000/member was created based upon the following: 1 member x 4.5 hours/month x hourly salary+benefits (\$40/hour avg. salary + 40% benefits = \$56/hour) x 12 months = \$3,000/member.
- **Salary, benefits for Grant Fiduciary Agent (Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, James A. & Faith Knight Foundation, and other funders which do not require 501(c)3 status): \$3,172**
 - **Subtotal Washtenaw Intermediate School District In-Kind: \$9,172**

Washtenaw Literacy:

Washtenaw Literacy has assumed the informal role as “lead agency from the non-profit sector” in supporting the development and implementation of the Blueprint. As such, their in-kind expenses for participation are significantly higher than other member agencies. Washtenaw Literacy Expenses:

- **Salaries, benefits: \$52,145:** Executive Directory salary (.25 FTE) for collaborative meetings with the Literacy Steering Committee, 0-5 Action Group, Success by Six task force meetings; individual planning sessions with the Literacy Coalition partners, best practices research, data collection, materials preparation, and content preparation for the meetings. Administrative Assistant staff salary (.50 FTE) for development of materials, collection of information for existing resources, handling related requests for information and processing mailings etc. Program Coordinator (.50 FTE) staff salary for coordinating collaborative activities to develop new joint literacy activities to develop working relationships between the partners.
- **Travel: \$500:** Travel of project related mileage at a mileage rate of \$0.50 per mile.
- **Phone: \$300:** Calculated at 25% of actual cost.
- **Supplies: \$900:** Educational materials.
- **Printing Costs: \$1,000:** For brochures and handouts for packets and community promotion.
 - **Annual In-Kind for Washtenaw Literacy: \$54,845/year**
 - **Capacity Building Grants Received (10/07 to 10/08): \$12,000 (\$9,300 staff/\$2,700 other expenses)**
 - **Subtotal Washtenaw Literacy In-Kind (7/08 to 6/09): \$42,845**

Other Member Organizations:

- **Salaries, benefits: \$3,000/member x 16 members = \$48,000:** An estimate of \$3,000/member was created based upon the following: 1 member x 4.5 hours/month x hourly salary+benefits (\$40/hour avg. salary + 40% benefits = \$56/hour) x 12 months = \$3,000/member.
 - **Annual In-Kind for Other Member Organizations: \$48,000**
 - **Capacity Building Grants Received (10/07 to 10/08; 4 organizations): \$6,000**
 - **Subtotal In-Kind for Other Member Organizations (7/08 to 6/09): \$42,000**

Implementing the Blueprint: Organization & Operations (continued)

Conclusion

The Coalition is the strongest collaborative effort to address illiteracy ever implemented in Washtenaw County. The Blueprint to End Illiteracy will sever the destructive cycle perpetuating illiteracy and will achieve the following:

- All Washtenaw County residents will have the support they need to develop the literacy skills necessary for lifelong learning which will enhance their personal, work, family and community lives.
- All adults will have the literacy support they need to be successful in supporting their children, comfortable with school and library-based activities, equipped to handle workforce expectations, and to participate in lifelong learning and college coursework.
- Children will come to school with the cognitive development required to flourish in school and later in college and the workforce.

Comprehensive planning and collaborative programming will allow all Washtenaw County residents, regardless of age, gender, race, or any other factors, the opportunity to develop essential reading, writing and English skills, preparing them for a life of full engagement within our County. This collaboration has the flexibility of vision and the high-level support necessary to succeed.

Literacy Coalition Research

Literacy Skills Acquisition: Breaking the Cycle of Illiteracy in Washtenaw County (Ages 0 to Adult)

Literacy Skills Acquisition

National Statistics on Illiteracy:

The National Institute for Literacy provides evidence of the magnitude and impact of illiteracy nationwide:

- **Literacy is fundamental.** Without proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English, even the basics of daily life...present a daunting challenge. The data are unequivocal that literacy contributes to success in every aspect of life. Nationally, 12% of adults have very low literacy skills.
- **Literacy starts early.** Studies have shown that 50% of a child's intellectual development occurs between birth and age 4. As a result, strong parental literacy is a key success factor for children. In fact, 50% of children born to illiterate parents will grow up to be illiterate themselves. Further, if a child has not learned to read by third grade, when schools stop teaching "how to read," that child has a dramatically reduced chance of gaining literacy skills through schooling alone.
- **Literacy affects our society in disproportionate ways.** There is a strong correlation between income and education, which is a proxy measure for literacy. Children living in poor families will have heard 32 million fewer words than children living in professional families. When one considers that 31 million people (or 11.3%) nationwide live below the poverty line, and that this proportion rises dramatically for African-American, Hispanic, and female-headed households, the implications are staggering.

National Institute for Literacy,
<http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/facts/reading.facts.html>, 09/13/06.

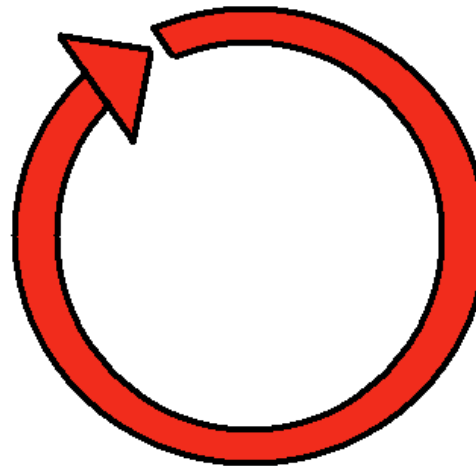
Other national statistics include the following:

- The educational careers of 25% to 40% of American children are imperiled because they don't read well enough, quickly enough, or easily enough. Committee on Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children of the National Research Council, 1998.
- "Dropout Nation" by *Time* Magazine: 1 of 3 high school students will not graduate; African-American and Latino students: 50% do not graduate.
- "Reading Next: A Vision for Action & Research in Middle and High School Literacy":
 - 8 million struggling readers in grades 4-12 nationwide.
 - Almost 70% of students entering ninth grade and 60% of twelfth grade students read below grade level.
 - Approximately 53% of high school graduates enroll in remedial courses in post-secondary education.
 - Between 1996 and 2006, the average literacy required for all American occupations is projected to rise by 14%.
- "U.S. Adult Literacy Programs -- Making a Difference": 90 million adults in the country have "extremely limited" or "limited" reading and quantitative skills.

The Cycle of Illiteracy in Washtenaw County

**Adults: Parents
and Ongoing
Employment**

**Early Childhood:
Birth through Six**



**Young Adults:
College and Job
Seeking**

**School Aged
Children: K - 12**

In the diagram above, the Washtenaw County Literacy Coalition illustrated the concept that effective literacy skills acquisition requires breaking the cycle of illiteracy which starts at birth and continues through adulthood. The charts that follow highlight the magnitude of the problem (the lack of literacy skills acquisition) in Washtenaw County, national best practices, and local assets and resources available to address the problem.

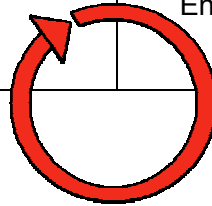
Literacy Skills Acquisition: The Problem in Washtenaw County Today

Early Childhood (Birth to Age 6):

- 20% of our 6-year-old children are not school ready.
- Many families use a language other than English in the home.
- MSRP and Head Start Programs find many families with literacy issues.

School Age (K-12):

- About 20 % of students in the county are not achieving at grade level. Ten to 15% are a result of an instructional mismatch. Five to 10% of students have a true learning disability.
- Some students are coming to school without the life and book experiences that allow them to be ready to learn to read.
- Poverty.
- Parents are nonreaders.
- Some students need extended opportunities to build background to support their literacy learning.
- Schools are not prepared to support the growing number of English Language Learner students entering each building.



Young Adults / Adults / Families:

- County-wide drop out rates and relationship to literacy.
- High School seniors not satisfied with their reading level.
- Compass Testing data.
- Inadequate reading skills in 2 year and 4 year college programs.
- 12% of the population, over 27,000 people, are at the lowest literacy level.
- Root Causes of Illiteracy:
 - Non-completers of the educational process.
 - System failure: 60% of Washtenaw Literacy learners have a high school diploma.
 - Immigration: Lack of English skills.

Literacy Skills Acquisition: Best Practices and Assets/Resources Available

Early Childhood (Birth to age 6):

- **Best Practices:**
 - Brain development research: Essential processes of the first five years include the physical development of the brain and the attitudes which are adopted regarding literacy and written materials.
 - School readiness research: Necessary pre-literacy steps include academic kindergarten expectations and ESL family research.
 - Family based literacy interventions: Examples and research results.
 - Head Start and MSRP approaches.
- **Assets/Resources:**
 - Library Programs: Not aimed at literacy; reading focused.
 - Healthy Families: Parent focused, but will work on literacy.
 - First Steps in each school district: Considering literacy.
 - Family Book Club: Relation based, book centered interaction.
 - Reach Out and Read: Designed to get books to young children.
 - Carla Fund: Designed to get books to young children.

School Age (K-12):

- **Best Practices:**
 - Support the work done in the 0 to 6 age group within the County (Success by Six, FSW).
 - Collaborate between universities and school districts to support students who need extra experiences and practice in literacy.
 - Enhance Intermediate School District (ISD) and district collaboration around best practice professional development in literacy for all teachers.
 - National Center for Family Literacy.
 - Early College Alliance.
 - Family Learning Institute.

Young Adults / Adults / Families:

- **Best Practices:**
 - Individualized learning model.
 - Strategies to overcome learning disabilities.
 - Flexibility in the learning process to accommodate adult responsibilities.
- **Assets/Resources:**
 - Adult Education: GED programs, for example.
 - WCC interventions including Remedial, English Department, ESL
 - Libraries and life long learning programs.
 - Washtenaw Literacy.
 - Library Learning and Resource Center (LLRC) programs for non-native speakers.

Literacy Coalition Research

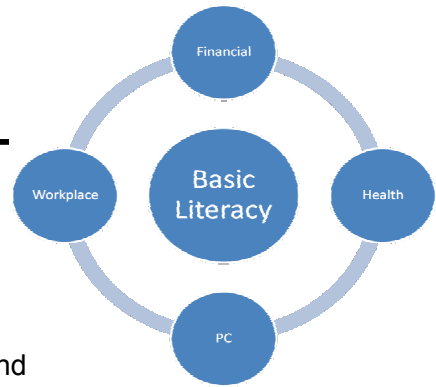
Enhancing Health, Workplace/Computer, and Financial Literacy in Washtenaw County

Literacy Skills Applications: Health Literacy

What is it?

The degree to which individuals can obtain, process, and understand the basic health information and services they need to make appropriate health decisions.

Health literacy goes beyond factors related to the individual and depends upon the skills, preferences and expectations of health information and care providers including doctors, nurses, administrators, home health workers, the media, and many others.



Nearly half of American adults—90 million people—have difficulty understanding and acting upon health information. Examples include the ability to understand:

- Instructions on prescription drug bottles
- Appointment slips
- Medical education brochures
- Test results
- Relative risks and benefits of a procedure
- Doctor's directions and consent forms
- Medicare and billing forms
- Consumer privacy notices
- Preventive health care guidance

Size of the Problem in Washtenaw County:

- 27,000 lack basic literacy skills in Washtenaw County
- Using US estimate of 90 million with health literacy problems in the US population, that translates to almost 104,000 in Washtenaw County with health literacy issues

Root Causes of the Problem in Washtenaw County:

- Population groups who are more likely to have health literacy challenges include:
 - Elderly (some estimates as high as 81% of patients 60 and older, JAMA Dec 6, 1995)
 - Racial/ethnic minority
 - Immigrant (study showed double the rate of low health literacy for Spanish speaking vs. English; American Family Physician, August 1, 2005)
 - 49,002 or 15.2% of County residents speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)
 - Low income (1/2 of persons with Medicare and Medicaid read below 5th grade level)
 - People with disabilities including chronic mental and or physical health conditions (48% of patients with hypertension or diabetes in a study had inadequate functional health literacy)
 - People whose parents had low literacy
- The culture of medicine uses a very specialized language which makes health literacy more difficult even for people with basic literacy skills

Literacy Skills Applications: Health Literacy (continued)

Why is health literacy important?

- May affect health outcomes and ability of health care system to provide effective, high-quality health care.
- Over 300 studies have shown that health information cannot be understood by most in the intended audience
- People with low health literacy:
 - Are less able to understand health information
 - Receive less preventive health care
 - Use expensive health services such as emergency department care more frequently

What is the cost of low literacy?

Patients use proportionally more resources:

- Medicaid, lowest reading skills had expenses 6 times higher than others in the group
 - 52% of patients with inadequate literacy are more likely to be hospitalized (JAMA, 1995)
 - Up to \$73 billion in excess health care costs annually due to low literacy (National Academy on an Aging Society, 1999)
 - Medicaid Managed Care beneficiaries did not understand the specifics of managed care
 - Low income patients (JAMA, 1995):
 - 26% could not read appointment slips
 - 47% could not understand written medication directions
 - 60% could not understand the standard consent form
 - 42% did not know what “taking medicine on an empty stomach” meant
 - 49% could not understand whether they were eligible for free care
 - Low health literacy costs Medicaid as much as \$10 billion annually
- Source: US Programs Division of Pro Literacy, March 2003 Report

What can be done about low health literacy?

- All the sectors that contribute to the problem must be involved in improving Health Literacy:
 - Government
 - Schools
 - Health Care System
- Health Literacy Standards
- New Measures and Research Needed
- Educators should incorporate health-related tasks, materials and examples into lesson plans
- Professional schools and continuing education programs in the health fields should incorporate health literacy into their curricula and competencies
- Health care systems should develop and support demonstrations and programs to establish effective approaches to reduce the negative effects of limited health literacy.

Literacy Skills Applications: Health Literacy (continued)

Local and/or national best practices:

- Physicians use “ask me three” or “teach back” to check for understanding
- Literacy promotion in healthcare settings--beginning with pediatric visits
- Educational materials designed for non-English speaking populations (translation services and interpretation services offered at local health systems):
www.med.umich.edu/multicultural

Promising or recommended strategies:

- Written materials at 4th grade level
- Improve usability of forms and instructions—“plain English”
- Involve patients in developing materials
- Simplify information on the internet
- Develop cultural competency practices
- Limit number of messages, use plain language and focus on action
- Supplement instructions with visuals
- Create “shame free” environments where patients can seek help without feeling stigmatized
- Utilize train-the-trainer model with staff to build capacity in serving low income clients

Current Washtenaw County resources/assets/services:

- MSU Extension/Community Supports and Treatment Services diabetes education
- Often disease specific (e.g. diabetes) vs. general health literacy for prevention/wellness
- UM: cultural and linguistic competency--
<http://www.med.umich.edu/multicultural/index.html>; interpretation and translation--
<http://www.med.umich.edu/interpreter/>
- St. Joes and other local hospitals: communication services--
<http://www.sjmercyhealth.org/body.cfm?id=81>
- Need for a more thorough assessment of community resources

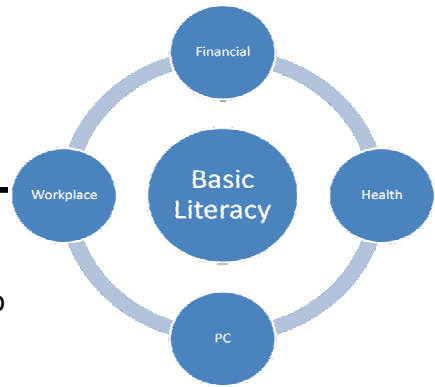
Greatest concern?

- Cost of care associated with low literacy is huge
- Multiple points of interface in the health care system need to be part of the solution
- Competing demands on health care providers

Work group’s recommendations:

- General: Incorporate health content in all basic literacy classes/services
- General: Plain writing and clear verbal communication standards should be adopted by health care providers
- Improve the usability of health information:
 - <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/healthinfo.htm>
- Improve the usability of health services:
 - <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/services.htm>
- Build knowledge for health decision making:
 - <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/decision.htm>
- Advocate for health literacy in your organization:
 - <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/advocate.htm>

Literacy Skills Applications: Workplace/Computer Literacy



What is it?

Workplace Literacy is the core skill that employees need to do their jobs successfully. It includes such skills sets as:

- Literacy Skills
 - Understanding and ability to use ‘documents’ such as safety instructions, assembly directions or map
 - Understanding and ability to use ‘numbers’ by themselves or in charts and tables
 - Understanding and ability to use ‘prose writing’ such as reports, letters and manuals
- Other Essential Skills
 - Ability to listen to understand, learn and apply information and analyze
 - Ability to communicate by using English in the workplace
 - Capacity to think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems, and make decisions
 - Ability to use computers and other technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively
- New Attitudes
 - Willingness and ability to learn for life
 - Positive attitude toward change
- Working with Others
 - Ability to build and work in teams
 - Understanding and willingness to work within the culture of the group

*Workplace Literacy Central,
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/workplaceliteracy/about-skills.asp>

Scope and Magnitude of the Workplace/Computer Literacy Issue in Washtenaw County:

- Limited English Proficiency in Washtenaw County workforce in 2000- 4,803
- 12% of Washtenaw County adults, over 27,000 men and women, have very low literacy levels, lacking the skills necessary for simple tasks such as filling out a form, reading directions or understanding workplace communications.
- 43% of people with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty
- 34% of job applicants lacked the basic skills necessary to perform the jobs they sought in 2000.
- 47% of the people on welfare assistance have illiteracy as a major barrier to employment
- 50% of all children born to illiterate parents grow up to be illiterate adults
Source: Washtenaw Literacy & MDHS
- Welfare registrants total: 6,503
 - By age: 16-19 (594), 20-21 (681), 22-44 (3,917), 45-54 (1,058), 55-64 (253)
 - By race: White (2,842), Black (3,454), N.A. (10), Other (116), Hispanic (81)
Source: MDHS, FIP
- Poverty Totals: 29,985
 - Males (13,647), Females (16,338)
Source: 2000 census

Literacy Skills Applications: Workplace/Computer Literacy (continued)

Hidden workforce potential in Washtenaw County:

- 49,377 not-employed (young, laid-off, students, mixed occupations, well educated)
- 21,627 under-employed (middle-aged, very well educated), management
- 16,800 graduating college students
- 39,000 out-commuting residents
- 27,000 -29,000 illiterate adults

What Employers Want in Washtenaw County:

	(1=Poor; 5=Excellent)	
Basic Skills of Job Applicants	Average Score	Median Score
Team and cooperative skills	3.9	4.0
Overall basic skills of all applicants	4.0	4.0
Verbal communication/comprehension	3.9	4.0
Reading comprehension	3.9	4.0
Math	3.8	4.0
Thinking and judgment/problem solving	3.9	4.0
Written communication	3.7	4.0
Work ethic	4.0	4.0
Productivity	4.2	4.0
Productivity compared to that of company's other sites	4.2	4.0
Willingness to work overtime	3.9	4.0
Punctuality	3.6	3.0
Overall employer/employee relations	4.3	4.0

Labor Quality, Table 37: Employer ratings on labor-quality measures (preliminary results: 6.8% response rate), Source: WDG Employer Survey, Fall 2007.

Root Causes of Workplace Illiteracy:

- Poverty
- Absence of caregiver
- Lack of sufficient academic skills (reading below the 8th grade, math, computer; attended inadequate school systems)
- Lack of skill development and/or opportunity
- Undiagnosed learning disability
- Change of work environment/old skills don't fit in new age
- Lack of opportunity for professional development
- Stigma, embarrassment, and fear
- Non-English speaking homes

Best Practices:

- Local (computer/employability/family literacy):
 - 27 Award winning Access Points deployed throughout County
 - Washtenaw Literacy Volunteers
 - Michigan Works
 - Jewish Family Services
 - Libraries

Literacy Skills Applications: Workplace/Computer Literacy (continued)

- National:
 - U. S. Dept. of Labor, State and Local workforce development,
<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/AWNNews.cfm>
 - Institute for Work and the Economy – The integration of immigrants in the workplace, <http://www.promising-practices.org/>
- International:
 - United Kingdom: TECs
 - Canadian Workplace Literacy Case Studies,
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/best-practices/case-studies.htm>

Current Assets/Resources:

- Michigan Works!
- Washtenaw County Administration, County Departments
- Business
- Libraries
- Washtenaw Literacy
- Community Education
- Colleges and Universities
- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Michigan Small Business & Technical And Development Center
- All Members of Literacy Coalition

Gaps in Service Delivery:

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of funding and resources
- Lack of ESL classes
- Lack of understanding/meeting workplace needs
- Lack of identification of the under prepared talent pool

Greatest Concerns:

- Job growth is not in low-end scale
- Employer needs are changing rapidly
- The number of people needing assistance is huge and is growing
- Those competing for jobs with the illiterate compounds the issue
 - 58.4% of unemployed County residents desire full-time employment
 - 39.8% of County residents unemployed interested in working have at least a bachelors degree, the highest rate ever seen by WDG in similar studies across the country
- Lack of positive attitude toward change
 - Lack of willingness and ability to learn for life
 - Getting the unskilled skilled
- Lack of community awareness of problem

Literacy Skills Applications: Workplace/Computer Literacy (continued)

Recommendations:

- Increase connectivity between programs
- Continue to build capacity of the Access Points
- Expand employer involvement
- Expand advanced/soft skills training (JOBFIT)
- Continually create public awareness and sustainable community engagement
- Use the Literacy Coalition as a public-private partnership tool
- Engage the private sector in innovative ways as vivid resource; Private Sector Input/Engagement:
 - Keith Peters: I Can Do It, Inc, Former CEO, Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Julie McFarland: from McNaughton-Gunn

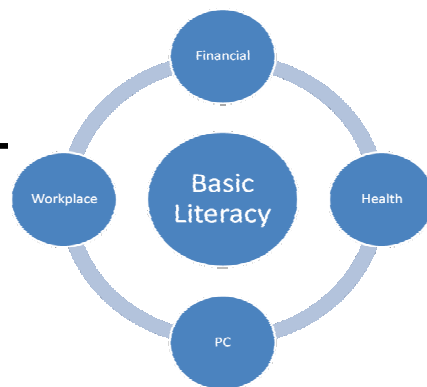
Summary Recommendations:

- Continually create public awareness and sustainable community engagement
- Develop a sustainable common access point for literacy applications education and services
- Build capacity through public and private partnerships

Literacy Skills Applications: Financial Literacy

Definition:

- The ability to make good financial choices by understanding basic math and how things work in the real world; and...
- Knowing enough about managing money to make informed decisions and avoid being cheated, tricked or swindled



Financial Success:

- Balance a checkbook
- Understand all of the employee benefits available at your company
- Avoid becoming a victim of fraud
- Budget and manage income
- The ability to save and invest
- Understanding credit reports and scores

Making the Case for Financial Literacy:

- Michigan ranks in the top 5 in bankruptcy filings
- Mortgage foreclosures in Washtenaw County have quadrupled in the last year
- Nationally, consumer credit set a new record of \$879 billion dollars in January, 2007 growing at 1.1%
- At the end of January, 2007 Americans were in \$2,411.4 billion in debt, excluding home mortgages
- American consumers received nearly 8 billion direct mail credit card solicitations in 2007.

Does Financial Literacy Matter?

- It truly matters to our community if people experience financial failure. Financial failure can result in loss of assets, loss of control, harassment and a level of tension and unhappiness that has negative impact on families
- There are 27,000 people in our community who struggle with literacy. Studies show a high correlation with financial struggles among those same individuals.

Root Causes:

- Families are reluctant to discuss money
- Cyclical poverty and lack of basic literacy skills particularly in math
- Financial education or personal economics is generally not required in the public education sector
- Public policies sometime foster poor public financial decision making (ex: Proposal A, Fed income tax deduction on interest)

Best Practices:

- **Savings:**
 - www.MyMoney.Gov or toll free 1-888-My Money
 - Take the test! www.MyMoney.Gov
 - Cooperative Extension "Financial Security Later In Life." www.MyMoney.Gov
 - Public Service Announcement Campaign (PSA's)
 - Education Savings Accounts (Coverdell)
 - Health Savings Accounts
 - IRA's, 457's , 401 (a) (k), etc.

Literacy Skills Applications: Financial Literacy (continued)

Consumer Protection & Tax Payers Rights:

- FTC Education Program to reduce identity theft – National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW)
- Project Biz Opp Flop to protect consumers from “Be Your Own Boss” scams
- Earned Income Tax Credit program for low-income Americans (Washtenaw County Asset Building Coalition)
- Low-Income Taxpayer Clinics

Gaps:

- Awareness as to how serious the problem is in our community
- Personal financial literacy is not a required part of the K-12 curriculum
- Getting those who need financial literacy to come forward
- There is no common access point to financial literacy education and services locally

Promising or Recommended Strategies:

- Each school district explores the feasibility of requiring personal financial literacy as part of the core curriculum.
- Provide awareness and access to unbiased and factual information.
- Develop a sustainable common access point linking available personal financial literacy education and services for Washtenaw residents.

Creating the Cycle of Literacy in Washtenaw County

Summary of Literacy Coalition Recommendations Based upon Best Practice Research

Literacy Skills Acquisition:

- A County-Wide Coalition
- An umbrella organization that can direct effort and programs toward the key areas where an impact can be made
- An infrastructure, with staff, to support integration and collaboration
- A coordinated plan for long-term sustained development of literacy programs and facilities to support literacy learners throughout life
- Awareness campaign to increase community understanding and support for literacy learners
- Increased capacity to provide necessary literacy services to learners of all ages, countywide

Health Literacy:

- General: Incorporate health content in all basic literacy classes/services.
- General: Plain writing and clear verbal communication standards should be adopted by health care providers.
- Improve the usability of health information:
 - <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/healthinfo.htm>
- Improve the usability of health services:
 - <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/services.htm>
- Build knowledge for health decision making:
 - <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/decision.htm>
- Advocate for health literacy in your organization:
 - <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/advocate.htm>

Workplace/Computer Literacy:

- Increase connectivity between programs
- Continue to build capacity of the Access Points
- Expand employer involvement
- Expand advanced/soft skills training (JOBFIT)
- Continually create public awareness and sustainable community engagement
- Use the Literacy Coalition as a public-private partnership tool
- Engage the private sector in innovative ways as a resource.

Financial Literacy:

- Encourage each school district to explore the feasibility of requiring personal financial literacy as part of the core curriculum
- Provide awareness and access to unbiased and factual information
- Develop a sustainable common access point linking available personal financial literacy education and services for Washtenaw residents

Summary Recommendations:

- Continually create public awareness and sustainable community engagement
- Develop a sustainable common access point for literacy applications education and services
- Build capacity through public and private partnerships