



July 1, 2024-
June 30, 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

Literacy Volunteers of
Greater Worcester

508-754-8056

info@lvgw.org

www.lvgw.org

3 SALEM ST. SUITE 332 WORCESTER MA 01608

Literacy Volunteers
of Greater Worcester

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About Us

Since 1973, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester (LVGW) has been dedicated to providing the free English language education that helps adult learners thrive in our community.

Our work is made possible by a small team of dedicated staff, certified ESOL instructors, and a wide network of trained volunteers who provide individualized instruction in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Basic Literacy.

Over the past 52 years, we've served more than 12,500 students representing 120 countries. Today, LVGW remains committed to strengthening the Worcester area by fostering a more literate, culturally connected, and economically independent community.



MISSION

To provide social and economic empowerment through culturally compassionate English language education.

VISION

A society free of literacy and language limitations.

LVGW is an affiliate of
Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts
and ProLiteracy Worldwide

info@lvgw.org

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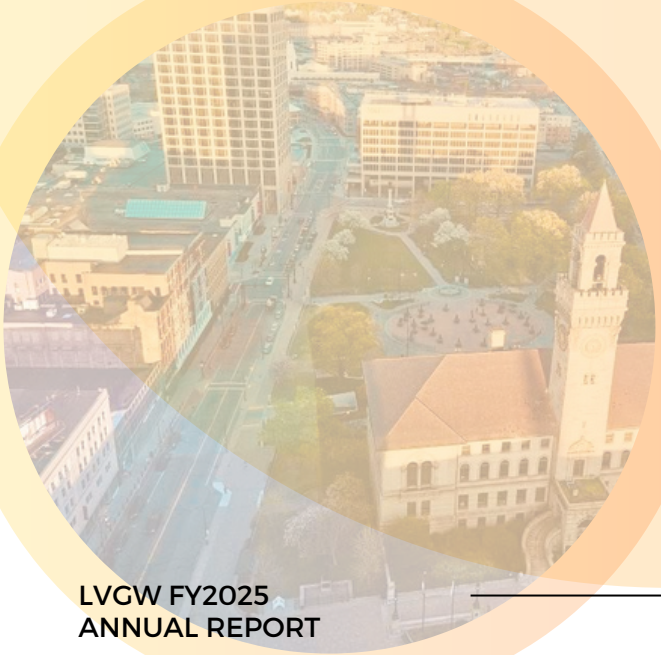
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Worcester Academy

Laila Mhirig
Cornerstone Bank

Rezarta Reso
Worcester Public Library

Madeleine Moreno
Moreno Law Office, LLC

Yahui Kong
Curia Global Inc



Executive Director's Message

Dear LVGW Community,



I am pleased to report that FY25 marks a pivotal milestone for Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester (LVGW): the successful rebuilding of our core services and operations. Since launching this effort in June 2023, we have recruited and trained mission-driven staff and volunteers to provide our streamlined ESOL classes and tutoring services in a way that is student-centered.

In response to the growing number of New Americans arriving in Greater Worcester, we launched the ESOL and Workforce Readiness Program in January 2025. This program prepares adult learners for work and further education through:

- Expanded class offerings: We doubled survival-level classes and weekly learning hours, serving 450 students over 30 courses annually—with in-person and online options.
- Updated curriculum: All levels now use Pearson's Future series, aligned with WIOA standards and focused on real-world English and career readiness.
- Stronger Community Partnerships and Support: Through partnerships with MassHire, QCC, and the Worcester Public Library, our students now have access to job readiness workshops, career advancement resources, and educational opportunities.

Tutoring expansion: We're offering volunteer-based, small-group tutoring at workplaces and community centers—carefully scaling to ensure quality and reliability.

Tutor support:
Tutors now use the English for Everyone series and receive ongoing training, including workshops on AI tools for lesson planning.

Internally, we've adopted digital systems for enrollment, data tracking, and communication; created flexible hybrid service models; and ensured all staff are trained in required student assessments. These changes have empowered our small team—just 2.5 FTE employees—to manage high-quality programming with precision and care.

Our work is made possible by generous financial support from Greater Worcester Community Foundation, United Way, and many other foundations, corporate partners and individuals.

Looking ahead, LVGW is ready to grow with the needs of our community. Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission.

With appreciation,

Pingsheng Chen
Executive Director

Meet the Team



Pingsheng Chen
Executive Director, M.Ed. in ESL, MLS



Amanda Addeo Andrews
Program Manager, MA



Iris Delgado
Senior Administrative Assistant, MLS



George Gurbanov
Administrative Assistant, BS



Karina Melendez Martinez
Administrative Assistant, MPA

ESOL TEACHERS

Alexandra Wade
Amy West
Ashley Frankian
BJ Hill
Faith Landrine
Hossam Elsayyad
Nicholas Duffy
Robert Peters
Susan Palis
Sienna Ablorh

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Lynn Foreman
Peter Jiang
Tian Wei
Tuyet Nhi Loac
Yahui Kong
Yoriko Omi

VOLUNTEER TUTORS

Che-Azlin Abdul-Rashid
Sanika Abhyankar
Abdulsalam Almadani
Amanda Addeo Andrews
Mark Andrews
Lisa Barshak
Elissa Berry
David Blood-Deschamps
Margaret Boatwright
Marcia Butzel
Mishel Caisapanta
Eric Capellari
Pingsheng Chen
Susan Crossley
James DeFillippo
Kathryn Delisle
Laura Dickhaut
Michael Dahlroth
Edward Fanjoy
Paige Firment
John Foreman
Lynn Foreman
Charlene Griffin
Fatemeh Harasani
Joy Hennig
Lisa Hughes

Tutors Cont.

Peter Jiang
Andrea Johnson
Casey Jones
Douglas Johnson
Màrtine Jn Louis
Anna Katorina
Deborah Kochevar
Cheryl Koki
Elizabeth (Lisa) Kunhardt
Faith Landrine
Dennis Lindenberg
Mary MacAdam
Susanna Meyer
Joe Meyerson
Laila Mhirig
Carla Morrisey
Rosa Mumbiela-Sierra
Joseph (Joe) Myerson
Carrie Nixon
Rachel Orange
Vy Phan
William Phillips
Kim Rodriguez
David Russell
Gina Russell
Peter Russell
Joy Schlomer
Steven Silverman
Susan Tubman
Carol Upton
Jenny Wang
Elyse Waksman
Amy West
George Wright

PURPOSE

Even in Massachusetts, a state regarded for educational excellence, the Barbara Bush Foundation has reported 17% of adults have low literacy. In Worcester County, 17% of adults lack basic literacy skills. Based on City of Worcester Census data, 15% of Worcester's population is foreign-born and 23% of households speak a language other than English.

Literacy affects quality of life: more than 40% of adults with the lowest literacy levels live in poverty, and healthcare costs linked to low adult literacy are estimated to be $232 billion per year.

Increased English language proficiency benefits our adult learners, their families and the larger Worcester community and economy. Unfortunately, many adult education programs have long waitlists, high costs or inflexible requirements that adult learners often cannot meet.

The English language education services LVGW provides are free, flexible and essential to the survival and success of the 400+ Worcester adult learners we serve each year.





Student-Centered Learning

The personal and professional backgrounds of our students are as diverse as the places they come from and the languages they speak.

LVGW has created an environment where students feel comfortable learning because their culture is considered an asset to learning, not a barrier. Exposure to other cultures and an appreciation for diversity is what helps our students thrive as citizens of Worcester and global citizens alike.

Our comprehensive educational offerings are designed to engage adult learners with real needs and interests. Students' participation in tutoring, classes or career readiness workshops, results in an increased ability to understand and be understood when communicating in English and navigating daily life in America.



Programs & Services

English for College and Workforce Readiness

For adult learners, improving English proficiency is key to achieving economic independence. LVGW's integrated approach to English language and literacy instruction helps learners build both essential life skills and job readiness. In collaboration with MassHire, Quinsigamond Community College (QCC), and the Worcester Public Library, we offer opportunities that support students in preparing for employment and pursuing higher education.

English Classes

LVGW offers 10-week ESOL classes in Spring, Summer, and Fall. Our three levels of English classes including Survival, Beginner, and Intermediate are taught by experienced ESOL teachers in person and online. We use Pearson's *Future* textbook which provides everything English language learners need to use English in the workplace in one integrated program using the latest digital tools and time-tested print resources.

Personalized English Tutoring

LVGW's team of trained ESOL and Basic Literacy tutors provide 1-on-1 and small group language and literacy instruction. In addition to training tutors, we also test all students using standardized assessment. The primary focus of the tutoring relationship is increasing English proficiency. However, our skilled tutors adapt lessons to the unique needs and interests of their adult learners including job preparedness, civics/citizenship and navigating American life and culture.

FY25 Highlights

- **LVGW's team is growing:**
  - 1 new office member
  - 1 new ESOL teacher Nick Duffy
  - 5 new Board members
  - 20 new volunteer tutors

- **Our educational programming remains essential:**
  - 451 adult learners served:
    - 350 students took our free ESOL classes
    - 101 students received free ESOL/literacy tutoring

- **LVGW's volunteers remain invaluable:**
  - 20 new tutors completed our 18-hour training
  - 58 volunteers tutored 101 students
  - Volunteers provided 3,971 hours of free tutoring

- **Our students are thriving:**
  - 6 earned their GED
  - 19 became US citizens
  - 38 earned a driver's license
  - 64 students got a job

- **LVGW is meeting a community need:**
  - We launched small group tutoring at You Inc.'s Worcester Family Resource Center and Catholic Charities' workforce readiness for senior citizens program.

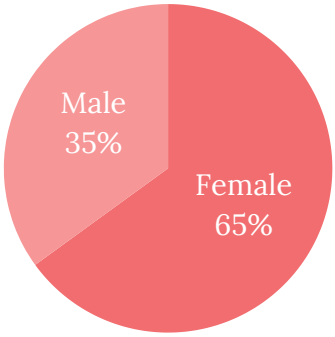
- **We are attracting community support:**
  - Holy Cross students designed our tutor retention program & launched our Instagram
  - MassHire, QCC, WPL, and All One Credit Union provided workshops and resources
  - GWCF, United Way, and many local foundations, corporate partners, and individual donors provided funding

Students of LVGW

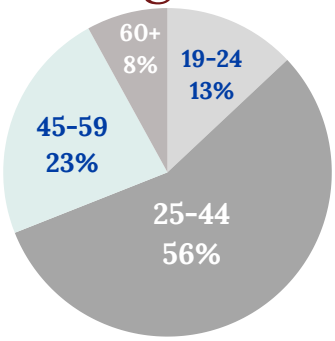
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In FY25, LVGW served 451 students

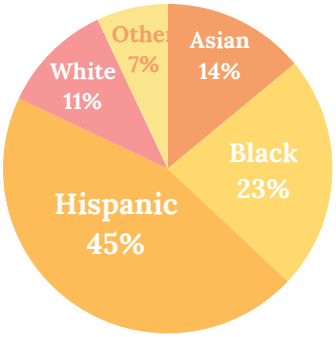
Gender



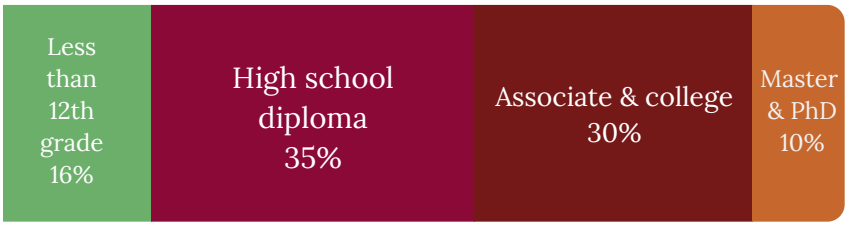
Age



Race

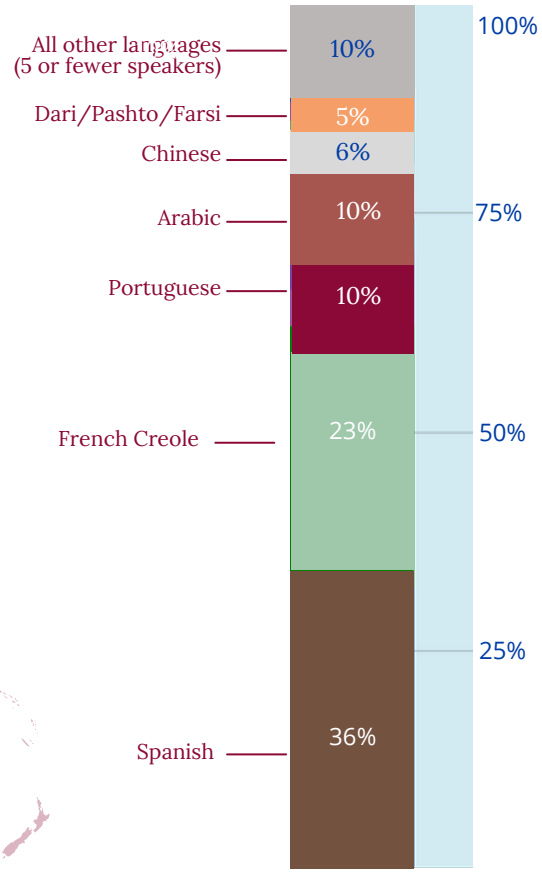


Education Level



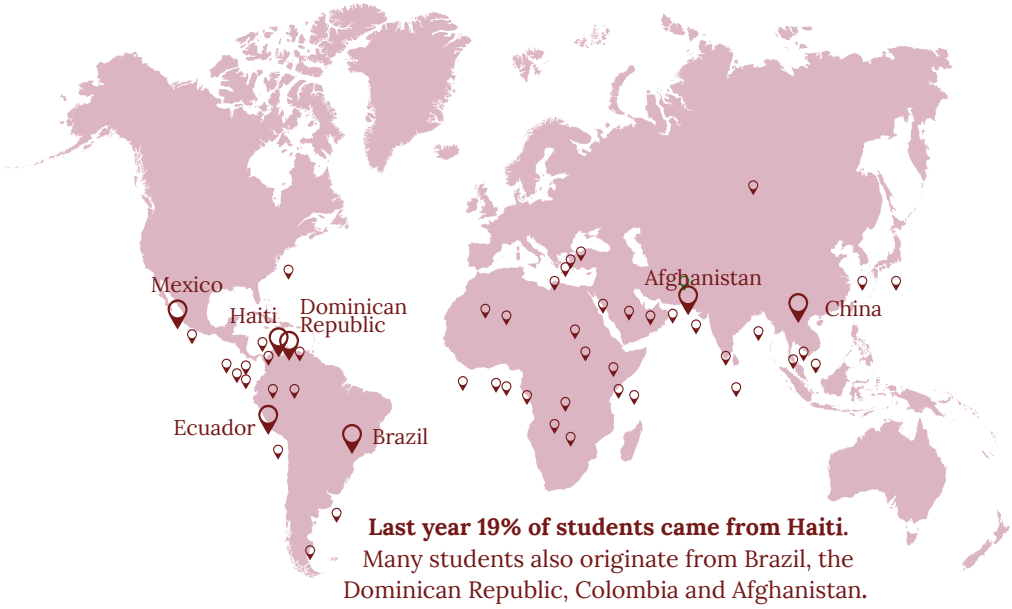
Language

38 languages spoken



Country of Origin

Our students are from 59 countries.



Last year 19% of students came from Haiti.
Many students also originate from Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Afghanistan.

Volunteer Tutoring

Students in this program get the unique support they need from our trained volunteers.

20 NEW Tutors Trained!

All **volunteers complete 18 hours of training** prior to tutoring. An additional 44 individuals participated in one of our monthly information sessions.

3,971 hours

58 Tutors

101 Students



In FY25: 55 volunteer tutors provided nearly 4,000 hours of free English literacy instruction to 100+ students.

These matches featured:

17 new tutors

5 returning tutors

32 new students

Tutored Students

& their achievements

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender:

- 65% women
- 36% men

Race:

- 47% Latino
- 30% Asian
- 13% Black/African American
- 9% White

Age:

- 35% ages 30-40
- 24% ages 40-50
- 12% ages 50-60
- 9% ages 60+
- 5% ages 20-30

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 11 students have enrolled in classes
- 8 students earned their driver's license
- 5 students became US citizens
- 4 students received formal workforce training
- 3 students got a new job
- 2 students got their first job in the U.S
- 2 students earned their GED
- 2 students completed a certificate program
- 1 student received a college degree

Average number of instructional hours per student

39

96%

Students who completed *initial* standardized assessment

68%

Demonstrated improvement based on *annual* testing





Tutor Testimonials

A passion for making a difference

"Juan has completed a certificate in property maintenance and management through MassHire. **He and his family are actively involved in the community.**"

***"Bin recently received his GED**...He plans on attending HVAC school so that he can earn more money."*

"I am so happy to share that **Luisa got accepted into the MBA program** at Fitchburg University. This is a testament to her hard work."

"When I asked [my student] to tell me HIS thoughts about his progress, he smiled from ear to ear. He said that when he is called upon impromptu at church services to read a verse from the Bible, he has much more confidence that he will be able to read it, if not perfectly, well enough to be proud, not embarrassed."

"**My student can advocate for herself** in the local court system. She still requires support for dealing with forms and notices, but can speak for herself even in English, her third language."

"My student now has a **simple resume and job interviewing skills** so he can find a full-time job instead of part-time."



Free English Classes

Each year LVGW provides 3 levels of free English courses in person and online. Our 10-week semesters are taught by qualified instructors three times per year.

Top reported reasons for studying English

1. Communicate with native speakers including:
   - medical professionals
   - coworkers
   - schoolteachers
2. Obtain employment/better employment

Student Success Stories

- 62 reported getting a job
  - An additional 23 reported being promoted at work
- 41 reported entering additional workforce training or educational programs
- 30 reported getting their driver's license
- 14 reported becoming US citizens
- 5 reported earning their GED/HiSet

End-of-semester survey participants:

192

Students who reported improved English proficiency:

93%



ESOL Student Testimonials

Adult learners adapting to life in the U.S.

"My new life in America is truly a blessing from God. **There are more opportunities** to take care of my family and pursue my career goals."

"*My husband and I, **we are happy to live here in Worcester, MA**. Although, the weather and the culture are different from Venezuela we feel good and adapting every day more.*"

"I learned a lot and I am very grateful for this incredible program that is free of charge but of great value...**English is essential in my career as a software engineer, no matter where I am in the country.** And it will also make my life here in the US much easier, so I won't need an interpreter all the time, or not understand something someone says to me."

I've also made some new friends who have been welcoming and have helped me adjust to life here. I've also had the chance to try some delicious American food, like barbecue ribs and apple pie

"Learning English with LVGW has been a great experience. Lessons are engaging, and the teacher are supportive, helping me build confidence in speaking and writing. **I've improved my skills and feel more comfortable in everyday situations**."

"My favorite place in Worcester is the library. I can borrow books for free and take them home to read.**"**

"The English class was very helpful for me. I got feedback about my resume and practice how to answer job interview questions."

"*I went hiking in Wachusett State Reservation with my husband and his coworkers. **I tried Dunkin Donuts many times** and I love it!*"

Community & Culture:

Beyond the Classroom

LVGW Annual Meeting, December 2024







LVGW lnternational Potluck Party, December 2024







Community & Culture:

Beyond the Classroom



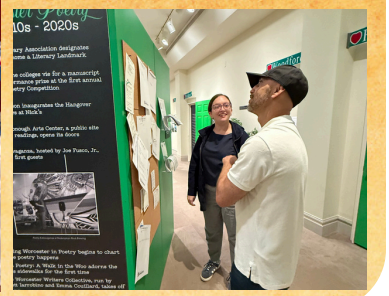












LVGW Field Trip to the Museum of Worcester, June 2025

Thanks to the MOW for hosting our museum tour. And thank you again to students and their families, teachers, tutors, Board members, and staff for joining us!



ELLA Poderosa Summit April 2025



MCAE NetWork May 2025

Celebrating Success at LVGW

Iris Delgado, ELLA Leadership Award



Tori Buerschaper, WBJ 40 under 40



Amanda Andrews, Employee of the Year



Sienna Ablorh, MBA Graduate



19 New Citizens!!



Jorge M., Student of the Year



Funding & Support

We are so grateful to the corporations, foundations, and individuals who continue to support our mission of providing English language literacy skills to the Greater Worcester community.

Thank you for your generosity!



Individual Donor Spotlight

"By giving money to LVGW I know it will be well used and I get to enjoy the feeling of supporting an organization that benefits so many." **~ Peter Russell**

Since retiring from a 40-year career in business, Peter has been keeping busy with family, travel and volunteering. For the last year he has been tutoring two English language learners. Peter enjoys "Spending time with them and soaking in their positive energy, resilience and their great sense of humor."

In addition to spending 100+ hours of his time tutoring this year, Peter also made a very generous donation to LVGW. When asked about it he said:

"LVGW does more than deliver ESL instruction. LVGW helps people succeed personally and professionally. Many bigger not-for-profits command attention, have large fund raising resources and are focused on building endowment. LVGW doesn't have this luxury. You are a super efficient, well administered organization with a committed, energetic leadership team executing on your mission day in and day out."

Funding & Support

Government & Foundations

ALBERT W. RICE FOUNDATION

ALDEN TRUST

ALFRED J. GIFFORD CHARITABLE TRUST

BERNATCHEZ FAMILY FOUNDATION

DEPT. OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDU.

ELLSWORTH FOUNDATION

F.H. DANIELS

FLETCHER FOUNDATION

FULLER FOUNDATION

GREATER WORCESTER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

HOCHE SCOFIELD

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ROCKWELL FOUNDATION

STODDARD TRUST

THE HART FOUNDATION

THE SCHWARTZ CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

PROLITERACY (OPPORTUNITY FUND)

UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

WYMAN-GORDON FOUNDATION

Funding & Support

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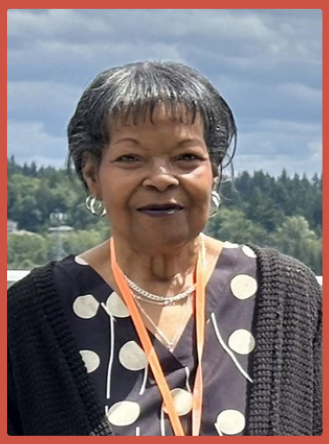
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We are a 501c3 Charitable Nonprofit Organization
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Make check payable to:
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3 Salem Square, Suite 332, Worcester, MA 01608

Donate Online:
lvgw.org/donors/donate-now/

Teacher, Tutor, Friend











In Memory of Faith Landrine

On May 31, 2025 we said goodbye to a pillar of the LVGW community.

In addition to volunteering her time as a tutor, Faith has long been considered one of the founders of LVGW's ESOL class program.

At last Fall's annual meeting, Faith was recognized for 15 years of service.

1951-2025

"Working with Faith was a special experience, she was always kind, patient, and supportive to both her students and to me.

We got to know each other more over time, and her warm and caring attitude made our friendship stronger. She loved to cook, share stories, laugh, and play games. I'm especially grateful we celebrated her last birthday together, she looked so happy that day, and we made unforgettable memories.

Faith was one of my first real friends in the U.S. She was generous, thoughtful, and truly dedicated to her students. Many wanted to be in her class again because of how much they loved and respected her. She was a truly amazing woman, and I feel lucky to have known her. I will always carry her memory with me and never forget the kindness she shared."

Fatemeh Harasani
student & volunteer