

**Alaska Literacy Program**  
**Pickett the Executive Director**

Thank you for your time. I am Lori Pickett the Executive Director of Alaska Literacy Program and I'm joined today by Jim Anderson our Board Treasurer who is closely working with us on this project. I appreciate your consideration for additional critical funding to allow us to continue to provide essential service in a safe and accessible facility.

The mission of the Alaska Literacy Program is to *change lives through literacy*. Since 1974, ALP has been providing literacy services to Anchorage residents and individuals throughout the state. We moved to our current site in 1986. Over the years we have continued to grow currently supporting eight classrooms and one computer literacy lab on site.

ALP provides year-round programs for adults and families. While COVID-19 has presented challenges to our service delivery we are continuing to provide all of our services remotely and one-on-one.

At ALP we work to strengthen the community by providing individuals and families with the skills necessary to become culturally competent, self-reliant member of our community.

ALP concentrates on those most in need: beginning learners in reading and English, primarily serving low-income immigrants and refugees through several programs.

ALP's Volunteer Program recruits, trains, certifies, and supports volunteer teachers who work in a classroom setting teaching reading, writing and speaking English to adults. Citizenship classes and our Health Education classes may also be taught by a combination of volunteers and staff.

Our Integrated English Training Program incorporates the teaching of English while focusing on specific job and career pathways often taught in a team with a content expert alongside an ELL instructor. Examples of these classes include CPR/BLS and pre CAN classes.

Family Literacy supports the education of families with young children including a pre-school that runs concurrently to adult English classes allowing for families to attend together.

ALP's Peer Leader Navigator initiative identifies multicultural, multilingual community leaders to train as navigators within their peer community. These Peer Leader Navigators (PLNs) are primarily from the refugee and immigrant community in Anchorage. They undergo a year long training to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to provide information on access to health care, mental health care and disaster preparedness for Anchorage community members.

After the pandemic hit, the Municipality of Anchorage partnered with us to ensure that limited English proficiency was not a barrier to residents in need of relief. PLNs are working on a daily bases to helping keep families housed and fed undergoing intense training with the municipality and other community partners to provide food, access to rental and mortgage assistance, and information about childcare, healthcare, and other critical services in this time of crisis. We are continuing to work on access to COVID-19 testing and accurate information addressing vaccine hesitancy.

The additional funding being requested for our CDBG capital project allows us to continue to full fill our mission. The project scope includes adding a fire suppressant system (i.e.sprinklers), enhancing the water line to accommodate this new system, adding a single story lift, building an Arctic entryway and installing some new floor covering. These improvements would improve the functioning of our space as well resolve the zoning questions. But most importantly will ensure safety to our pre-school and more than 200 students that attend classes in our building. With the bulk of our English classrooms located on the second level the lift will allow much needed improved access for our students, volunteers and staff.

COVID-19 has been hard on us all and this project is no exception. We have run into delays and cost overruns and additional funding is critical for us to move forward. We want to express our gratitude to the Municipality's staff who have guided us through this process, to date.

It is the philosophy of Alaska Literacy Program that adults have the right to be free from the burden of illiteracy - free to function as independent, productive citizens. We hope you will approve the Work Plan which will enable our project to be completed. Thank you.