

Adult Education Programs Provide Economic Opportunity at Lewis and Clark Community College National Adult Education and Literacy Week is Sept. 18-24

by Laura Inlow
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GODFREY – National Adult Education and Literacy Week, Sept. 18–24, underscores the continued demand for programs and services for adult students who need to improve basic skills in reading, writing and math and obtain a high school equivalency certificate.

More than 36 million adults nationwide, including 1.2 million here in Illinois, lack basic literacy skills that limit their ability to advance in education and at work. Lewis and Clark Community College is one of 72 adult education providers offering programs funded through the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) that improve and expand the nation's available pipeline of workers by assisting those who lack the educational requirements to achieve gainful employment in today's increasingly high-tech, global job market.

“Adult Education focuses on a population of learners who have found the courage to give education another try,” said L&C Associate Dean of Adult Education Val Harris. “While some may refer to our students as at-risk or disconnected, we know they are full of grit and potential. They represent an economic opportunity – they just need education and support to get on track. Many are eager to further their education, to gain relevant work experience and to help their families and communities. National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week is a great time to advocate for our efforts and for our students and their families.”

Adult education provides a path from low-income jobs and limited opportunities to middleclass wages and increased family sustainability. Full-time workers with a high school diploma earn almost \$10,000 more per year than those without a diploma. L&C's Adult Education division offers a myriad of programs including High School Equivalency/GED® preparation classes, Building Futures YouthBuild, Career Pathways training in construction, Certified Nurse Assistant, Computer Careers and Warehousing /TDL, English as a Second Language classes, Family Literacy, and Project READ tutoring.

These programs are designed to meet students where they are and get them on track to a higher education and satisfying and sustaining career. In most cases, these programs and services are free to students. “Illinois community colleges are the driver for a trained workforce working with nearly 10,000 unique employers across the state,” said ICCB Executive Director Brian Durham.

“With nearly 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs in our state requiring education beyond a high school diploma, the Illinois Community College System is the ideal place for getting on a path to a good paying career.”

Lewis and Clark Community College is calling on instructors, students and graduates to help celebrate National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week by sharing their experiences and stories on social media using #AEFLWeek2022 #IACEA and #TrailblazerNation and by listening to L&C Adult Education's podcasts at <https://buildingfutures.libsyn.com/website>. L&C Adult Education students and staff will be joining the 2nd Annual Invest in the Midwest Virtual Rally Tuesday, Sept. 20 at 10 a. m. with five other Midwestern states to see first-hand how adult education changes lives in our region. L&C's Building Futures YouthBuild students will also be designing and creating Free Little Libraries to install at various locations in the community in the near future.

For more information about adult education programs and services at Lewis and Clark Community College visit www.lc.edu/adulted. For information on adult education throughout Illinois visit <https://yourpathyourfuture.org/>.