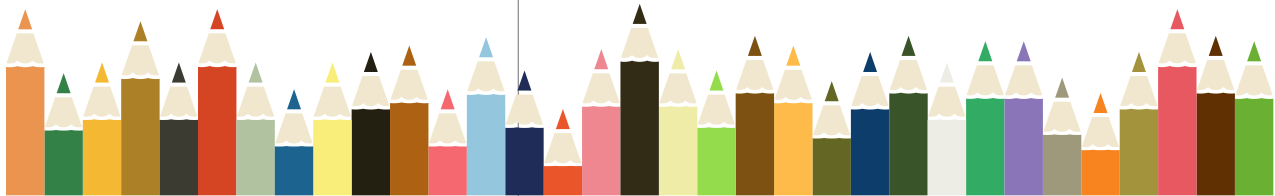


Urban Literacy Update

Newsletter of the Urban Alliance for Adult Literacy

A National Project of ProLiteracy

www.urbanallianceforadulthoodliteracy.org



WELCOME!

New National Network Lays Groundwork

For the past two years, a small Steering Committee of adult educators has explored creating a new version of the national urban adult literacy networks of previous decades. (See summary of those past networks on page 2.) This new network is the Urban Alliance for Adult Literacy (or “Urban Alliance” for short). It is to serve as a forum for information-sharing, advocacy, joint projects, and community-building for coalitions of adult foundational education (AFE) practitioners, advocates, and other stakeholders serving U.S. urban communities. The Committee has hosted webinars and other discussions, created a website and asynchronous discussion group, and partnered with ProLiteracy, among other things. This newsletter is one more vehicle for AFE-related dialogue and action within and across U.S. urban communities.

Why & How to Get Involved

By getting involved in this new national network, supporters of urban adult foundational education (AFE) can collaborate to access useful ideas, information, and inspiration they can use to strengthen AFE efforts in their cities and states, and nationally. You can get involved in these ways:

- Tell us how this fledgling network might be useful to you and others.
- Participate in, plan, and facilitate webinars.
- Participate in our asynchronous discussion group.
- Visit our website (<https://www.urbanallianceforadulthoodliteracy.org/>) and submit information for the site and for this newsletter.
- Publicize this network to others inside and outside your community.
- Tell others how to get on our mailing list.
- Join our Steering Committee or help our Sub-Committees with particular tasks.

(To pursue any of these options, email urbanallianceforadulthoodliteracy@gmail.com.)

What’s Inside this Inaugural Issue

Part 1 (pp. 2-3) of this first issue covers some “basics” about urban AFE history and terminology we are using. Part 2 (pp.4-5) describes supports we’ve begun to provide to AFE efforts in urban communities.

We invite you to become familiar with these resources — and use them and share them!

Some Urban AFE “Basics”

A Very Brief History of Urban AFE Coalitions

A FE coalitions have been around in the U.S. – in various forms, with varied goals – for decades. The following very brief history is presented to help us understand the historical context of our field in general and of “coalition-building” efforts in particular. For a more complete history, visit <https://www.urbanallianceforadulthoodliteracy.org/resources/resources-page-2>.



PLUS Task Forces of later 1980s to 1990s: Focused on coordinating services (including referral systems) and building capacity (e.g., fundraising) in response to increased demand generated by the national Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) public awareness campaign led by the PBS and ABC television networks.

Urban Literacy Network: Later 1980s and early 1990s national network of urban AFE programs funded by B.Dalton/Dayton-Hudson Foundation and other sources to advocate for and build expertise for urban community-based adult literacy efforts.

National Alliance of Urban Literacy Coalitions (NAULC): 20-year network begun in mid-1990s to build expertise and advocate for urban AFE efforts. Supported by AmeriCorps, the National Institute for Literacy, and other sources.

Workforce Investment Boards and other initiatives to integrate adult literacy with other services and partners. Examples included prisoner-re-entry task forces, family/intergenerational literacy programs, community health education efforts, labor union consortia, National Workplace Literacy Program, and Equipped for the Future.

Urban CAFÉ/Urban Alliance for Adult Literacy (aka The Urban Alliance): Since fall 2022, a small group of urban AFE advocates has explored how to create a new version of a national network that would support (through advocacy, sharing of information, possible joint projects) AFE coalitions in urban communities. The Urban Alliance Steering Committee invites others to join us in this new effort.

Some Urban AFE “Basics” (cont’d.)

Terminology We’re Using

When developing a new collaborative effort, it’s important to clarify the terminology (language, key words, vocabulary) that the group will be using. Shown below is a short list of important terms that our Steering Committee has developed. This is by no means complete, as there will likely be other words to add to it. The definitions are also not meant to be proscriptive. We might see them as working definitions that we — as individuals and as a group — can adapt according to our respective backgrounds and the contexts (administrative, cultural) we work in.



“Urban”

Can include cities of various sizes and counties and metropolitan areas that include cities.

“Adult foundational education” (AFE)

A fairly new umbrella term referring to the mix of services traditionally going by the names of “adult literacy,” “GED/HSE” prep, “adult basic education,” “ESL/ESOL,” and contextualized education for workforce/workplace literacy, college preparation, citizenship prep, family literacy, financial literacy . . .

“AFE coalition”

Formal or less-formal collaborations of AFE providers and other stakeholders to improve and/or expand supports for adults and out-of-school youth who are challenged by various kinds of basic skills limitations and/or a lack of secondary-school credentials.

- Stakeholders might include public policy makers, public and private funders, employers, labor unions, and providers of healthcare, family, correctional, housing, financial, disability, and other services.
- Such coalitions can go by names like “network,” “council,” “alliance,” and others.
- Can be based in governmental (mayor’s offices, Workforce Investment Boards) or non-governmental institutions.

“Community”

- “Community” often is used in the U.S. to refer to a geographic location (e.g., neighborhood, municipality). But we use the term to also include other social groupings that have common purposes/goals, behaviors, and concerns.
- Communities might include ethnic/racial groups, workplaces, labor unions, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, persons with disabilities, and individuals of a common age, gender, family, health, occupational, or other demographic background.
- Stakeholders can include individuals from those groups and supporters of those groups.

Supports Provided by the Urban Alliance

Our Webinars and Other Presentations



Shown below are webinars hosted by the Urban Alliance for Adult Literacy (formerly Urban CAFE) in 2023 and 2024. Recordings and/or slides are available at <https://www.urbanallianceforadulthoodliteracy.org/webinarspresentations>.

Upcoming Webinars

- May 29, 2024, 1:00-2:30 eastern: **A Community-Oriented Approach to Urban Adult Foundational Education** by Paul Jurmo (AFE Consultant, Washington, DC) and Jessica Tomkins (Literacy New Jersey). Register at <https://uso6web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErdumorTktGdYl-MaThoX1cP6IUhKZRhSr#/registration>.
- June 17, 2024: 1:00-2:30 eastern: **Family Literacy for Urban Communities** by Melissa Moore (Read Muskegon) and Anna Kuipers Marquez (National Center for Families Learning). Register at <https://uso6web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEpde-uzqgrHtI86FRT-LqiEXPoyqlwHBVr>.

Past Webinars

2023

- **How AFE Can Support Equitable Workforce and Economic Development** presented by Paul Jurmo, Consultant in Adult Foundational Education Development. January 17, 2023.
- **The GOAL Collective**, an AFE collective impact model in Nashville, Tennessee, presented by its Associate Executive Director, Ameshica Linsey. February 7, 2023
- **The Digital Equity Act**, Presented by Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, Senior Fellow at the National Skills Coalition March 21, 2023
- **The Houston Adult Literacy Initiative**, presented by Federico Salas-Isnardi, Director of the Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy. April 18, 2023.

2024

- **Urban Alliance for Adult Literacy**. A COABE 2024 national conference presentation by Larueen Atkins-Holliday and David J. Rosen.
- **An Introduction to Urban Adult Foundational Education Coalitions** presented on April 22, 2024 by David J. Rosen, Paul Jurmo, Laureen Atkins-Holliday, Melissa Moore and Steve Hannum.
- **Urban Alliance for Adult Literacy**. A May 1, 2024 Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education Statewide *Network* conference presentation by Brooke Machado and David J. Rosen.

Supports Provided by the Urban Alliance (cont'd.)

Connect. Learn, and Share in Our Asynchronous Discussion Group

Urban Adult Literacy CAFE is a new asynchronous discussion group for supporters of adult foundational education in urban communities.

Purpose

Enable urban AFE supporters to meet each other and share their expertise related to opportunities and challenges they face and useful strategies and resources.

Current Topics

- Urban Partnerships for Digital Literacy
- Media Campaigns
- Potential Partners for AFE Initiatives
- Community-Oriented AFE
- Funding Opportunities
- Advocacy Strategies

Give it a try! Email moderator David J. Rosen at djrosen123@gmail.com, indicating that you'd like to join the Urban Adult Literacy CAFE.



This newsletter issue was edited and written by Paul Jurmo and David Rosen, with additional input from other Steering Committee members. Design by Paul Jurmo.

Visit Our Website

Our newly-re-designed website (www.urbanallianceforadulthoodliteracy.org) contains six tabs (sections) of information for supporters of adult foundational education in urban areas. We encourage you to visit, learn something useful, and suggest other resources we might include.

- **Front Page** serves as an introduction to the Urban Alliance's purposes and activities.
- **Urban Alliance Reports Page** presents a report of our first year of activities (2023).
- **Four Resources Pages** contain documents (from the former National Alliance of Urban Literacy Coalitions and other organizations) related to planning of urban AFE coalitions, advocacy strategies, a history of urban AFE coalitions, collective impact models, and strategies for creating partnerships with diverse stakeholders (e.g., employers, unions, re-entry services, health organizations, universities, environmental organizations).
- **Webinars and Other Presentations Page** contains links to recordings and/or slides of our 2023-2024 webinars (described on p. 4).
- **Urban Collaboration Profiles Page** describes AFE coalitions in Birmingham, Boston, Cleveland, Flint, Muskegon, Nashville, and San Diego.
- **Steering Committee Page** shows the seven individuals who have served on our Steering Committee.