Title

Reading and Education for Adult Development (dba READ RVA)

07/17/2026

id. 54671117

by **Mary Graham** in **Impact 100 Richmond Grant Application (2026)**

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Original Submission

07/17/2026

Score	n/a
1. Name of Organization	Reading and Education for Adult Development (dba READ RVA)
2. 501C3 Number	54-1364885
3. Geographic Area(s) Served:	Chesterfield County City of Richmond Goochland Hanover Henrico Powhatan
4. Application Contact Name:	Mary Graham
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7. Organization Website (if applicable):	www.readrva.org

8. Organization Executive Director/CEO Contact:	Mary Graham
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10. Organization Executive Director/CEO Email:	mary@readRVA.org
11. What is your highest rating on GuideStar (we recommend at least Gold):	Platinum
Provide a link to your GuideStar organizational profile, if applicable.	https://www.guidestar.org/profile/54-1364885
12. Please confirm that the following grant criteria are met by the applicant:	Organization has an annual operational budget above $250,000. Organization has been in existence for 36 months or longer, and is currently in good standing in the state where the entity was formed. Project will serve needs in the City of Richmond and/or the surrounding counties (Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, and Powhatan). Funds will be utilized within 12 - 18 months, and the program/project has demonstrated sustainability following the use of Impact 100 Richmond funds.
13. Select ONE of Impact 100 Richmond's focus areas where your proposed work best aligns:	Education
14. Summary: Provide 1-2 sentences that summarize your specific funding request and the goal of this project or program effort?	With Impact 100's support, READ RVA will transform lives by bringing free, personalized adult literacy instruction directly to Richmond's East End.

15. Organization: Briefly describe the history and mission of the organization.	READ RVA's mission is to empower adults and strengthen greater Richmond through adult literacy. By providing free, personalized instruction to adults reading below an eighth-grade level, READ RVA removes barriers to economic mobility, health, civic participation, and family stability. Since 1984, READ RVA (Reading and Education for Adult Development) has provided free adult literacy services to Greater Richmond residents. We offer classroom instruction, tutoring, small-group learning, and workshops that build reading, writing, and communication skills. READ RVA is the region's only nonprofit focused exclusively on adults (18+) who read below an eighth-grade level—a population often excluded from GED® and workforce training programs and that faces barriers to employment, health care, and essential services. Through individualized instruction, volunteer tutors, and practical lessons, adults gain literacy skills for employment, health care, and daily life, expanding their independence, confidence, and opportunities for themselves and their families. READ RVA has tripled the adults served in the last three academic years, from 114 to 300, while expanding volunteer participation and partnerships with libraries, adult education programs, justice-system partners, and community organizations. With four decades of experience, measurable results, and a board-approved growth strategy, READ RVA is poised to bring its model to Richmond's East End.

16. Community Need: Describe the community need(s) that the program/project will address.	More than 100,000 adults across greater Richmond struggle with limited literacy, making it difficult to obtain employment, understand medical information, access public benefits, manage finances, support their children's education, and fully participate in community life. Because these challenges are often hidden, adults with low literacy frequently go unidentified and underserved. Limited literacy is strongly associated with unemployment, lower earnings, poverty, poorer health outcomes, and involvement with the justice system. Workers without a high school education earn substantially less than their peers, and research shows that even modest gains in literacy significantly reduce the likelihood of living in poverty. The effects extend across generations. The National Institutes of Health identifies a mother's reading ability as one of the strongest predictors of her child's future academic success. Parents with limited literacy may struggle to help with homework, communicate with schools, or access important educational information, contributing to generational cycles of educational and economic disadvantage. READ RVA is addressing this unmet need by expanding access to free adult literacy instruction and establishing a dedicated literacy center in Richmond's East End, where many adults face significant barriers to educational opportunity and essential services and a disproportionate number of households live below the poverty line.
17. Community Need: Describe how a $100,000 Impact 100 Richmond grant for this program/project would be transformational for your organization and/or the community.	A $100,000 Impact 100 award would enable READ RVA to launch and sustain East End operations at a critical moment of growth and bring proven adult literacy services directly to a community where many adults face barriers to education, employment, and essential services. The grant would support the people and programming with skilled instructors, trained volunteer tutors, instructional materials, outreach, and student recruitment. It would help READ RVA establish a trusted East End presence, enroll new learners, and provide the individualized support adults need to build lasting literacy skills. The transformation extends beyond individual students. Many learners are working parents seeking to support their families, advance careers, and navigate daily systems with confidence. Partnering with Anna Julia Cooper School and St. James Children's Center, READ RVA will connect with families, strengthen multigenerational learning, and create accessible educational pathways. The long-term return will be multifold, resulting in increased earnings, improved health outcomes, and stronger support for the children of adult learners. Impact 100's investment would enable READ RVA to better serve adults in the East End and build a foundation for long-term growth. The award would reduce barriers, including transportation challenges, by bringing literacy resources where residents live, work, and raise their families—supporting economic mobility, stronger families, and a more resilient Richmond.

18. Program/Project: Provide a high-level description of the program/project for which you are seeking funding.	Thousands of adults in Greater Richmond lack the literacy skills needed to fully participate, prosper, and reach their potential in work, family, and community life. READ RVA is preparing to launch its proven adult literacy program in Richmond's East End through a new instructional site at the former Anna Julia Cooper Lower School (AJCS). As one of two nonprofits selected for this community-centered campus, READ RVA will bring free, personalized adult literacy instruction to a neighborhood where access to education and essential services remains a challenge. READ RVA is the only nonprofit in Greater Richmond focused solely on helping adults (18+) who read below the eighth-grade level. This underserved population is frequently overlooked by traditional GED® and workforce initiatives, despite facing significant challenges related to employment, healthcare, financial security, and full participation in their communities. More than 25% of current learners spend hours each week using public transportation or commuting to attend classes at Willow Lawn. An East End location will reduce transportation barriers and support student retention and success. This request supports the launch of READ RVA's East End operations. While renovation funding is being secured separately, this investment will support the staff, volunteers, programming, and outreach needed to begin serving residents and establish a trusted local presence. During the initial phase, READ RVA will build relationships through free community workshops and events. Once renovations are complete, the space will offer adult literacy classes, a public computer lab, digital literacy instruction, financial education workshops, math instruction, pre-GED® preparation, book clubs, and other practical learning opportunities. The first two adult literacy classes will launch in September 2027, serving at least 10 learners per class. Following READ RVA's proven model and science-of-reading curriculum (Wilson Reading System), students will receive individualized instruction from trained volunteer tutors with low student-to-teacher ratios that support measurable gains and confidence. Through this initiative, READ RVA will serve additional East End adults in 2027 through literacy classes, tutoring, workshops, and community programming. Working parents will benefit from accessible services and family resources. Through partnerships with AJCS and St. James Children's Center, READ RVA will engage parents, caregivers, and families in opportunities that support multigenerational learning and strengthen the community. Funding will support launch operations, including teacher salaries, volunteer tutor recruitment and training, instructional materials, equipment, workshop and book club supplies, and community engagement. By providing free adult literacy instruction at a dedicated site in the East End, READ RVA is investing in stronger families, a prepared workforce, and a more resilient Richmond community.

19. Program/Project: What challenges are you likely to encounter? How will your organization address them?	As READ RVA establishes operations in the East End, our primary challenge will be building community awareness and trust. While READ RVA has served adults in Greater Richmond for more than 40 years, we are newer to this neighborhood. We have already begun addressing this by building relationships with local partners, hosting community workshops, and collaborating with the State's Adult Education Region 15 Program, Peter Paul Development Center, Anna Julia Cooper School, St. James Children's Center, other nonprofits, faith communities, and civic organizations to create referral pathways. Our Speakers Bureau will also help recruit learners and volunteer tutors. A significant challenge is the stigma associated with low literacy. Many adults hesitate to seek support due to shame or fear of judgment. READ RVA addresses stigma through targeted outreach, trusted partnerships, and a welcoming, strengths-based learning environment. Adult learners also balance work, caregiving, transportation challenges, and unpredictable schedules. READ RVA reduces these barriers through flexible class times, individualized tutoring, and virtual options. Situating a dedicated learning center in the East End will improve access by bringing services closer to where adult students live and work. Through strong partnerships, community engagement, and flexible programming, READ RVA will create a sustainable pathway for East End adults to build literacy skills and achieve their goals.
20. Program/Project: Will you collaborate with any other organizations? If so, who will be your partners, and what will they contribute?	Yes. READ RVA's East End initiative relies on strong partnerships with trusted organizations that will help us connect with residents, identify learners, and strengthen educational opportunities for adults and families. Anna Julia Cooper School and St. James Children's Center are key partners in this effort. Through their relationships with families, they will help connect parents, caregivers, and other adults with literacy services while supporting multigenerational learning opportunities. Community Action Network (CAN), led by Peter Paul Development Center, will support outreach and community connections in the East End, helping us reach adults who may benefit from literacy instruction. The State's Adult Education Region 15 Program will strengthen coordination within the adult education system, supporting referrals and connections to additional learning pathways. READ RVA will also engage faith communities, civic organizations, and neighborhood groups through our Speakers Bureau to raise awareness, recruit volunteer tutors, and encourage adults to pursue their literacy goals. These partnerships are critical to overcoming barriers such as transportation, work schedules, stigma, and limited awareness of available services. By working through trusted organizations, READ RVA can reach more learners and provide the individualized instruction adults need to achieve greater independence, economic mobility, and family stability.

21. Program/Project: Using metrics appropriate for your program/project, describe your goals, indicators of success, and plan for achieving success (i.e., people served, dollars raised, community outcomes, etc.).	READ RVA's dedicated East End operations will be a visionary expansion of our established adult literacy program based on best practices of co-locating wraparound services where those served live and work. The initial launch phase will focus on building community awareness, establishing partnerships, recruiting learners and volunteer tutors, and beginning classes in the new instructional space. We will launch two adult literacy classes in September 2027 and expand programming as demand and capacity grow. Long-term success will be measured through participation, learning gains, and community impact: • New adults served through classes, tutoring, workshops, and community programming (goal = 200 East End adults served by 6/30/28) • Learner engagement, including attendance, instructional hours completed, and continued participation. • Literacy growth via industry-standard CASAS assessments delivered on enrollment and after 40 hours of learning, to measure progress and guide individualized instruction. • Progress against individual learning goals. • Community engagement through partner referrals, workshop participation, and volunteer tutor recruitment. READ RVA will use these metrics to evaluate effectiveness, improve programming, and guide future growth. Over time, success will be reflected in adults gaining the literacy skills and confidence needed to pursue employment opportunities, support their families, navigate essential services, and participate more fully in their communities.

22. Program/Project: Is there a specific timeline for your program/project, or will it be ongoing? If ongoing, describe the metrics used to evaluate it in the long term.	The launch of READ RVA's East End operations will occur in phases: Winter–Spring 2027: READ RVA will focus on building relationships and trust within the East End community. We will strengthen partnerships with Anna Julia Cooper School, St. James Children's Center, Peter Paul Development Center, the State's Adult Education Region 15 Program, faith communities, and civic organizations; establish referral pathways; and recruit and train volunteer tutors. Summer 2027: READ RVA will activate the space through community workshops, outreach events, and educational programming to introduce residents to resources, build awareness, and engage learners and volunteers. September–December 2027: READ RVA will launch two adult literacy classes, serving at least 10 learners per class, while continuing workshops, tutoring, and community engagement. 2028 and beyond: READ RVA will expand programming based on community need and capacity, with a goal of serving approximately 200 new East End adults annually after launch through classes, tutoring, workshops, and other educational opportunities. Long-term success will be measured through enrollment, attendance, instructional hours, learner persistence, and literacy gains. Students complete a pre-assessment when they begin instruction and are reassessed after 40 hours to measure progress. READ RVA will also track partner referrals, volunteer engagement, and community participation to ensure services meet East End needs.

23. Funding: Describe your organization's financial position, including current financial state, cash flow, endowments, annual fundraising, and goals related to revenue.	READ RVA's FY2026 reflects strong financial stability, steady growth, and readiness to launch operations in Richmond's East End. At year end, total assets were $2.17 million, including $245,000 in cash and cash equivalents, $1.58 million in investments, and $33,000 in property and equipment. Liabilities totaled just $19,000, primarily for operational accounts payable. Operating cash flow was $81,000, with an additional $101,000 in money market funds and $62,000 in savings generated from investment income, reflecting strong liquidity and prudent financial management. READ RVA's endowment, valued at $306,000 at FYE2026, grew by 15% over the prior year. In addition, our investment portfolio totaled $1.58 million at FYE2026, an increase of 12% year over year. These investments in diversified, low-risk assets provide long-term financial stability and support program sustainability. FY2026 fundraising included $218,000 from individuals, $80,000 from events and corporate sponsorships, $370,000 in foundation grants, $64,000 in corporate grants, and $70,000 in local government grants. We will continue to diversify revenue to sustain current programs and support new operations. For FY2027, READ RVA aims to generate $947,000 in revenue, increase individual giving by 20%, and expand corporate partnerships to strengthen long-term sustainability and community impact.
24. Funding: What is the total program/project budget request? Have you raised any other funds to date to support the program/project? If awarded, how will a $100,000 grant from Impact 100 Richmond be used?	The total program budget to launch READ RVA's East End operations is $100,082, representing the first-year operating and program costs. READ RVA has also secured a $50,000 grant from the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation to support renovation of the new East End site and has launched a capital campaign to complete the remaining facility improvements. These capital funds are separate from the program budget and will ensure the space is ready to serve learners. If awarded, the $100,000 Impact 100 grant will fund virtually all first-year program costs, including a half-time program manager, a part-time literacy instructor, classroom furnishings and technology, instructional materials, assessment tools, online learning software, volunteer tutor training, and other program supplies needed to establish two classrooms and a multipurpose learning space with a computer lab. Together, these investments will create the staffing, instructional resources, and learning environment needed to establish READ RVA's proven literacy model in Richmond's East End, providing adults there with access to free, high-quality literacy instruction close to home.

25. Funding: How will you fund ongoing expenses associated with the program/project if awarded the Impact 100 Richmond grant? If funding is for a capital project, what are the anticipated ongoing expenses (maintenance, utilities, etc.), and how will you sustain these expenses?	Impact 100 funding would support one-time launch and early operating costs for READ RVA's East End operations while recurring expenses are incorporated into the organization's annual operating budget. Ongoing costs include instructional and program staff, occupancy, utilities, supplies, technology, assessments, and volunteer recruitment and training. READ RVA will sustain these expenses through a diversified revenue portfolio that includes foundation and corporate grants, individual giving, local government support, annual fundraising, and board-approved organizational resources. In FY26, READ RVA secured more than $368,000 in confirmed private foundation funding and $70,000 in local government support. No single private foundation provides more than 5% of annual revenue, reducing dependence on any one source. The new East End location is part of READ RVA's 2025–2028 Strategic Plan and will be implemented in phases. The Board Finance Committee monitors enrollment, cost per learner, revenue performance, and cash flow to ensure growth remains financially sustainable. In addition, 175 highly trained volunteer tutors significantly expand instructional capacity while containing costs, strengthening our long-term ability to serve more adults. Impact 100's support would enable READ RVA to launch this East End community facility at full strength, accelerate progress toward sustainable operations, and establish a lasting East End resource for adult learners and the community.

Upload PDF Format Only: Organizations 501c3 Letter

READ_RVA_IRS_determination_letter.pdf

Upload PDF Format Only: Organization Budget for this Current Fiscal Year (showing annual budget of $250K or greater)

READ_RVA_FY26-27_Operating_Budget.pdf

OPTIONAL Upload PDF Format Only: Partner Budget for Current Fiscal Year (showing annual budget of $250K or greater), if applicable

Upload PDF Format Only: Detailed Program/Project Budget in a template of your choice (limit one page)

Program_Budget_-_READ_RVA.pdf

Upload PDF or JPEG Format Only: List of Organization's Board of Directors

READ_RVA_Board_of_Directors_2026-2027.pdf

OPTIONAL Upload PDF Format Only: Letter of Commitment or MOU from Partner Organizations (if applicable)

LOI_-_St_James_with_layout.pdf

Thank you for taking the time to apply for the Impact 100 Richmond grant! Once you submit you will receive a confirmation email.
