

**CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA)**

**Final Program Narrative Report
(LSTA Form 9)**

Grant Information

Library Jurisdiction	Azusa City Library
Project Title	Grassroots ESL
Grant Award #	40-8276
Grant Period	July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014
Amount of Grant Award	35,500
Amount of Grant Expended	35,500
Local Match	27,000
In-Kind	30,110
Total Amount of Project (amount expended + match + in-kind)	92,610
Number of Persons Served (should not include total population of service area or potential population to be reached)	151 adult learners and volunteer tutors

Project Director

Name	Cathay Reta
Title	Adult Education and Literacy Coordinator
Library Address	729 N. Dalton Avenue
Phone Number	626-812-5266
Fax Number	626-334-4868
E-mail Address	creta@ci.azusa.ca.us

This report is due on the date listed in the LSTA Grant Guide for this project. Follow this link to view the Grant Guide. <http://www.library.ca.gov/grants/lsta/manage.html>

Email this report in "word format" to lsta@library.ca.gov then mail ORIGINAL and 2 copies to:

California State Library
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA 94237-0001
Attention: Fiscal Office - LSTA

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____
(Please sign in blue ink)

Project Final Report

A final narrative report is required on the use of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds following the completion of a project during each project year. The information you report will be used to complete the California State Library report of how funds were expended. Excerpts from this report may be submitted to the Federal government in their evaluation, or may be published by the State Library or shared with other institutions. Please answer all of the questions thoroughly. Please attach any reproduction copies of photographs of project activities or media produced for the project.

Project Purpose

Include your program purpose statement here

The mission of the Azusa City Library is to nourish minds, transform lives and build community. To this end, the Library's Grassroots ESL program will lead and support five community organizations to join with the library to conduct ESL tutoring at their sites to help non- and limited-English speaking adults learn English to become more fully engaged in their community.

Project Activities and Methods

How did you accomplish the project? What were the steps involved? How did you engage the target audience?

To accomplish the project, our goals were to: 1) strengthen the newly formed Azusa Literacy Council, which will help to oversee and support Grassroots ESL; 2) establish a foundation from which to expand and to add more partner organizations to reach more English language learners; 3) increase collaboration and networking among the Azusa community; and 4) directly tutor ESL to 180 adults. We addressed those goals through the activities listed below.

1) The development of the Azusa Literacy Council as a nonprofit organization to help sustain Grassroots ESL has been coming together much more slowly than we had anticipated, but is now fully underway, starting with the change of the name to Foothill Learning Alliance. Thanks to the high visibility of Grassroots ESL, the core organization members grew from two to five and are now actively working toward filing for 501 (c) 3 nonprofit status to support this program and other library literacy activities. The Alliance held its second annual Scrabble Night fundraiser in May 2014, in partnership with the Azusa Chamber of Commerce. They raised \$3500. It is also beginning to oversee community outreach, such as staffing booths at the city's Concerts in the Park this summer. Throughout the year the group met monthly, identified and recruited additional members, and are now working on branding the organization. We expect to soon adopt by-laws, and to have a website presence by September.

2) We have successfully established a foundation from which to function as a collaborative community effort. In preparation to submit our LSTA proposal, we met with community organizations and five signed on to become partner sites. By the time we received the grant and launched Grassroots ESL a sixth partner had come to the library and asked to be included. We launched Grassroots ESL with two churches, two nonprofit organizations and two elementary schools partnering with the library.

We asked each site to sign an MOU, and upon receipt of the MOU we were able to give the site a \$1,000 stipend funded by a local foundation which added its support to Grassroots ESL with a \$27,000 grant. I carefully state that we "asked each site to sign an MOU" because we unfortunately did not get signed forms back from three of the six sites. One church site dropped out of the program (at least temporarily) after the first two months because other church activities left no room and staff to continue Grassroots ESL; and they never returned a signed form to us. The school district, responsible for the two school sites, also did not return their signed forms, stating that it evidently got delayed in the business office, and then our key contact person left the district for another job. We are still trying to get signed copies; thus our first lesson learned: Get the paperwork signed first.

Each organization assigned a Site Coordinator and we conducted an initial training for them. They attended monthly meetings and became active in formalizing procedures and developing the two graduation programs (December and May). We created systems and forms and collected information with varying degrees of success from one site to another -- again, a learning curve, but one that will help to ease the way for new programs coming on board in the future. In our first year, collecting timely reports from tutors was a challenge. We are working on how to improve that process. At our April meeting, the coordinators shared how they perceive their roles. That discussion became the basis for a Grassroots ESL Site Coordinator job description, and a manual which will be used to support and train future Site Coordinators. The manual is not yet completed, but a copy will be forwarded once it is done.

We contracted with one partner, Neighborhood Homework House, for an intern from Azusa Pacific University (APU), to be our community organizer. She developed print materials, made presentations to civic groups, delivered materials to site coordinators, set up the recordkeeping process, and worked with an APU Graphics Design professor for a class to design a logo for the program. She also interviewed students and tutors to begin a "story bank" of testimonials to draw from, supported the Scrabble Night activities and helped us to understand and to formalize our recruitment process for future APU interns for the library.

We created tutor and student recruitment fliers to distribute throughout the community and also made copies available for each site to customize and distribute to their clients and neighborhoods. We put ads on the city's cable channel, staffed volunteer fairs at APU and at Citrus Community College, and issued news releases. One resulted in a very nice article about the program in our local newspaper. With funding from the Canyon City Foundation, we created t-shirts with the Grassroots ESL logo to present to students and tutors at our May 2014 ceremony.

3) We increased collaboration among our partner sites. Early on, one site visited another to learn from them and share ideas. This is the type of sharing we hope to see become more common so that they support one another and not be solely dependent on the library. The program is benefiting from the unique talents and skills of diverse site coordinators. One brought excellent suggestions for giving recognition to our students, such as making the t-shirts. Another asked that we develop a video that can be shown around the city to recruit students and volunteers and gain support. That project is scheduled for next year. That coordinator also offered to spearhead a project next year to engage the men in the households served, having seen the statistics that over 95% of our students are female. He has experience in working with Latino males, in particular, and feels passionate about the need to involve them in their family's literacy and language development. The partner which supervised our APU intern is very well-established and connected in the community. This significantly improved our outreach success since she opened doors for our intern, rather than leaving her to make "cold calls" to gain support. All of these examples serve to demonstrate how much stronger the program is because of the shared ownership and collaboration among the sites.

We had also hoped this project would help to improve our relationship with Azusa Adult School and Citrus Community College. Our contacts with them did make them more aware of what the library brings to the adult education and literacy field, but we did not actively pursue forging these relationships as initially planned. Rather, as AB 86 came on the scene for adult schools and community colleges to form local consortiums, we let them take the lead and are now a part of that consortium, after being persistent to be invited to their meetings. The size and visibility of Grassroots ESL has been very instrumental in gaining respect for literacy services offered through the library. As a partner in the Citrus College Consortium, we will continue to define our niche and articulate what makes our programs different than those offered at the adult school and the community college.

4) We set out to tutor ESL to 180 adult students; we tutored 114. We fell short of the goal for two reasons: 1) lack of space at the partner sites, and 2) not enough tutors. We are pleased with our model of a community-collaborative offering tutoring at diverse community sites. It is proving to be successful --just not in the numbers we anticipated each site would reach. Most of the sites had only one room available for Grassroots

ESL, and most of those rooms would accommodate only 2 - 3 small tutoring groups. That made it impossible for the sites to serve 30 students each. They served from 8 to 20 students each.

Further, as the year rolled along it became apparent that the most consistent attendance came from students who were in some way connected to the site (parents of children at the school, clients at the nonprofit, members of the church, etc.). This has helped us to refine our niche and understand that partner sites will likely have the most success with individuals who are close and feel a sense of trust and safety with their organizations. We believe that they will likely reach smaller numbers of students, but the relationship and commitment to learn will be deeper. Our data showed that many of our students have lived in the United States for a very long time (see attached data charts) and learning in these environments is helpful. The public library is the exception to this since it does not have the same type of relationship with its patrons. The library's tutoring sessions draw students from the public in general, and they soon form a "sense of family" in their groups.

Our student recruitment strategies were intentionally minimal since we were concerned that we could easily be inundated by far more students than we could serve. Much of our recruitment was word of mouth from the partner organizations to their constituencies, supplemented by fliers. Even with this limited effort, we immediately had waiting lists at the two school sites, one of the nonprofits, and the library. One of the church sites ended up tutoring a group of 12 students, rather than keeping them in groups of 3-5 as planned. The other church site had a solid group for their daytime class, and surprisingly the evening class never gained traction; it was cancelled after inconsistent attendance by only two or three, and sometimes no students. The second nonprofit had greater difficulty recruiting students, but by the end of the year had a fairly steady group of 4 students who are being tutored by the one tutor recruited at that site. We look forward to increasing that to at least two groups with additional tutors next year.

Tutor recruitment was our stronger focus. We placed ads on VolunteerMatch, with the city's cable channel, in the Pennysaver, and we created and distributed hundreds of flyers. We staffed booths at volunteer fairs at Citrus Community College and at Azusa Pacific University (where students are required to volunteer in the community each semester). Our APU intern posted ads on the university's 411 e-blasts to students. While we received numerous responses from APU students, their schedules were often mis-matched with the students' needs and they could not be available for the number of weeks we required. Also, we were taken by surprise when APU ended their spring semester in the first week of May (rather than June as we had assumed would happen). Four of our volunteers abruptly ended their tutoring once school was out, leaving us to scramble for back-up plans.

Our project coordinator and ESL trainer conducted the first tutor training workshop, and among those tutors identified and recruited someone to begin to assist with tutor training. That person soon assumed the role of providing tutor training and support. That was an important step since our original tutor trainer found it was a more difficult and time-consuming commute than she had realized it would be. The transition to the second person, who lives locally, was smooth and better meets our needs. She was able to work with most of the tutors individually, make site visits and lead the in-service training. A second in-service training was scheduled but unfortunately no tutors attended. Still, in the future we will hold an in-service training every other month.

We did not select a core curriculum at the start of the project, expecting that we could train the volunteers to develop their lessons to meet student needs and interests, drawing from a variety of resources we would provide. That did not work well, so we researched and selected a core set of materials for tutors to use -- All-Star. The tutors and students were very pleased and appreciated the support. At our May Site Coordinator meeting, some commented that it would be really helpful if students could keep their books and take them home instead of having them only available in the classroom for use. We decided to make that our practice going forward. We were able to use funds from the grant to purchase materials to begin that process and will continue to find ways to fund those purchases (most likely through WIA Title II funding or with the funds raised by the Foothill Learning Alliance).

We developed a simple student pre- and post-assessment to help place them in appropriate levels, and to assess their progress. Basic information was asked in English and Spanish. At the start of the project, we welcomed a team of APU TESOL graduate students to assess our students' levels with an assessment they had developed as a part of their coursework. We used it with a group of students at the library. We felt their test was not appropriate for our use -- it was too academic, formal and intimidating, and too long. Interestingly, with our 20 minute simple assessment we came up with the same student placements that their 60 minute formal assessment revealed. We chose not to use their assessment elsewhere.

While our informal assessment was useful in placing students in groups, we have determined that it was not as helpful in truly gauging progress. We will not be using those assessments in the future. We will be administering the standardized CASAS tests as a requirement of receiving WIA Title II Funding from the California Department of Education.

Project Outputs

What was created for the project and how much? (For instance three promotional brochures were created and 75 copies distributed; or three training classes were designed; two sessions of each were held, and 80 people were trained)

This pilot year of Grassroots ESL was a very busy year. Our outputs include the following:

- 5 initial tutor workshops conducted
- 37 volunteer ESL tutors trained/ 26 matched with students
- 114 English language learners taught
- 1 in-service training workshop conducted
- 20 site visits made to partner sites
- 2 program celebrations held, each with attendance of approximately 60 students and tutors
- 7 sites for ESL tutoring established
- 7 Site Coordinators recruited and trained
- 8 tutor recruitment fliers created; 1500 distributed
- 4 student recruitment fliers created; 350 distributed
- 2 volunteer fair booths staffed (Citrus Community College, Azusa Pacific University)
- 2 news releases submitted, resulting in one local newspaper article
- 2 local cable ads, 1 Penny Saver ad for volunteers placed
- numerous VolunteerMatch ads posted and reposted
- 1 Grassroots ESL logo designed
- 1 Site Coordinator manual in development
- 9 Site Coordinator meetings held
- 5 forms created

Project Outcomes (if applicable)

Please state the outcomes and the results of your evaluation.

Our outcomes were not measured as well as we had planned. This is probably the only discouraging portion of our pilot project. Of the 114 students served, only a small sampling (31 students - 27%) have a pre and post assessment from which to evaluate. This lack of post testing students is a result of learning how to be a community program in which each site has autonomy and ownership of its program and yet contributes to and is a part of the whole. In this initial year we experienced a few pitfalls. One church site had a difficult start because they could not, and we could not, recruit tutors to fit their schedule. Our staff started the classes until two women from the church could take over and team teach a class of twelve students between October - December. Due to other activities which took priority over ESL tutoring, the church did not resume the classes after that, so students were not post-tested, nor were they referred elsewhere. Finally, some pre-assessment forms were lost along the way between the sites and the library.

At one of the school sites we were not made aware that the week we set up the post testing was near the end

of the school year and the week when most parents were on field trips or in other end-of-the year meetings at the school. The second school site attendance had dwindled a lot by the end of the year, and again most parents were not post-tested. To add to this, one of the nonprofit organizations told us only in their last week of classes that they would be closing for the summer -- starting that week. They did call students to ask them to return for post-testing after they officially stopped tutoring, but only a handful showed up. Then, when we collected the final paperwork from them, we found that in the last two months they had admitted a number of new students without letting us know and without getting pre assessments, and in some cases applications, from them. These are some of the issues which resulted in outcomes not being fully realized. The outcomes we set out to measure are:

95% (162) of GrassRoots ESL learners will have a library card, as documented on pre/post surveys.

Result: Of students with pre and post assessments, 84% had library cards at the end of the program; 7 of them got library cards during the program. However, 79 student pre-assessments showed that 46 students did have library cards upon enrolling in the program; 31 did not. Another 2 students did not answer the question. At each of our graduation celebrations held at the library we gave library tours and invited those without library cards to sign up for cards.

70% (126) of learners will have improved their English skills, as documented on student pre/post assessments and tutor observation forms.

Result: Of the 31 students with both pre and post assessments, 22 (70.9%) showed improved English skills; six (20%) remained at approximately the same; and 3 (9%) showed a decrease in skills. Students certainly gained confidence and many shared how they finally feel comfortable in the setting in which they are learning (as opposed to trying to attend a large class). Tutor reports in general did not give us the feedback and observations we wanted. The anecdotes shared below came from an online survey with tutors and from casual conversations with them. We will continue to train tutors to document stories and anecdotes they hear or improvement they notice. We will supplement that with lots of follow up in person.

70% (126) of learners will report having used their English skills outside of their tutoring sessions, as documented on pre/post surveys and tutor monthly reports

Result: Of those pre and post assessed, 4 (13%) students indicated using their English more, 24 (80%) the same, and 2 (7%) less. We attribute the low numbers to the lack of adequately documenting tutor observations and soliciting better feedback from students. The assessments asked students to check if they use English outside of class "never," "sometimes," "a lot." Increase in use was considered moving from "never" to "sometimes" or "sometimes" to "a lot". Certainly the confidence factor has a huge impact in getting students to change behavior to use English in the community, especially when they can generally negotiate their daily routines in Spanish only. Still, we will continue to look for ways to better document this impact.

100% (5) of community partners will express satisfaction with the pilot project and will agree to continue the program at their sites beyond the grant year, as reported in coordinator surveys.

We actually had six partners in this pilot year. To the best of our knowledge, five of those six will continue next year, and we are in the process of meeting with new potential sites: the local high school, a senior living mobile home park, the Catholic church which has the largest congregation in the city, and the Home Owners Association of a new neighborhood development which is home to mostly Chinese speaking families new to Azusa.

Additional Project Outcomes

Please state any additional intended or unintended outcomes and what data sources you used.

We perhaps had underestimated the value of this project to volunteer ESL tutors. Among those we trained and matched with students are individuals interested in teaching ESL as a career; they had the opportunity to try it out with us. For another this was valuable experience that he would use as he pursued a goal to teach ESL in the Peace Corp. Some of the tutors (from Ethiopia and from Iran) had learned English as a second language themselves and welcomed the chance to be a role model to new students. We were quite amazed that responses to our VolunteerMatch posts came from up to 15 miles away. People want the experience of tutoring English, but there are evidently few opportunities to do so. In this way, we provided a service to our volunteers as well.

Grassroots ESL is a recruitment tool for our basic literacy (CLLS) services. On two occasions as our literacy coordinator went for a site visit to two different sites, she met a student who spoke English very well. When she engaged them in conversation they responded yes, they can speak English but they can't write. Their spelling is terrible and they're embarrassed. They are more appropriate students for the basic literacy CLLS (California Library Literacy Services) tutoring.

Anecdotal Information

Tell us a story. Give two or more examples of how the project has helped an individual or group in your community.

Elda, one of our first students to enroll in Grassroots ESL, shared with pride her recent experience at her doctor's office. After talking with her doctor for a few moments, the nurse entered the room. She told the doctor she would get a translator for Elda (as they always had done). "No, that's not necessary," the doctor said. "She can speak English." So for the first time, Elda completed her doctor visit without a translator. Her tutor says her confidence level took a huge leap.

A second student shared a benchmark success with her tutor. She said that her apartment manager is very chatty, but the student could never sustain a conversation with her . . . until Grassroots ESL. Now she can carry on a two-way conversation. The tutor reported, "The student seems very pleased with herself!"

A third student told her tutor that one day her daughter-in-law commented that her English was improved. That's when the student told her family that she was taking English classes.

A final anecdote relates to the praise the library has received for reaching out to the community by partnering with other organizations to respond to the community's needs. A program officer of a local foundation has several times commented that she and the boardmembers of the foundation are so pleased to see the library's new direction and community programming. That foundation also awarded us a grant to support Grassroots ESL and will continue that funding into the second year of the program.

Exemplary Project

If you feel your project was exemplary and others could learn from it and replicate it, please tell us why.

We do feel that Grassroots ESL is an exemplary project. The City Librarian and Adult Literacy Coordinator are scheduled to present a session on the program at the 2014 California Library Association Conference: "Grassroots ESL: A Community-wide Language Program".

Yes, it is effective in helping adults to learn English and to use it -- especially those who lack confidence, have lived in the United States a long time and have not yet been successful in other learning environments. Yes, it is effective in mobilizing volunteers to give to their community and learn new skills by tutoring non English speaking adults. Yes, it meets a strong community need and positions the library as a language and cultural center.

While these are important, what makes Grassroots ESL exemplary is its unique model. It is not simply "the library's program," but it is a community collaborative model. The model is set up so that each participating organization operates its own program; it is autonomous. At the same time, each benefits from the library's leadership and support. The burden of meeting the city's need does not rest on one organization, but is shared by many. Also, the talents and perspectives of diverse partners are shared by all and strengthen the overall vision.

That said, it is fairly easy to plan such a collaboration. Implementing it is much more challenging. The more common model is that "partners" make their sites available to the library for a program. The

partner benefits from a program held at its site, but the responsibility rests almost fully on the library. In this model, they are equal partners. Each site is accountable to its own administrators, as well as to the Grassroots ESL collaborative. Each organization maintains its own culture, procedures and practices.

As we have moved through this landscape this first year, we have learned many lessons and know we have much more to learn. For example, the library trains the tutors, and often has been the point of contact for their recruitment. It is therefore natural that when a tutor is going to go on vacation, or needs help, that they go directly to library staff. And it is natural for staff to respond. At one point our staff contacted a tutor to get her over due monthly reports. When the site coordinator asked that we give her a copy too, we realized we had short-circuited the system. Tutors submit their reports to their site coordinators, and those coordinators submit them to the library. No matter how late the reports are, we need to respect the partner sites and let them deal with their tutors and submit the reports to us, even when we apparently are much more concerned about it than the partner site. It is first and foremost, their program, and they need to review the reports first -- even if it means we don't get information in a timely manner. To create a system that is sustainable, our practices need to reinforce that the tutors report to their site coordinators, and the site coordinators to us. Otherwise, there is danger that the partner site will just look at it as the library's program, not theirs. Then they will not be as invested.

Schedules are set by the individual sites. We originally expected that we would all work on the same schedule, but quickly found that was not practical. At each of the sites, ESL tutoring is not their main focus and classes have to be worked around other schedules. For instance, when the schools and one of the nonprofits closed their tutoring for the summer, we had to respect that. We did open a drop-in class at the library two days a week throughout the summer and invited all students to attend so they would have an option.

While it is not yet operating to the degree which we envision, we do have a firm foundation and are continuing to build the experiences which make the project a true collaboration.

FEEDBACK FOR THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY ON THE GRANT PROCESS

We want to learn and improve our grant processes. Please let us know what worked and what we could do differently to make it a better experience. Thank you!

We enjoyed participating in the Pitch An Idea grant process, and all of the support and tips the California State Library staff provided to help us through the process. We feel it was effective. We have no suggestions for doing anything differently.

file:mcp/lsta/managegrant/1314