



# LCSWPA ANNUAL REPORT

Changing lives one word at a time.

# 20 23



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of Literacy,

The year 2023 was an inspiring time for us. We saw our share of challenges, but celebrated successful student achievements through our staff and volunteers' dedicated advocacy of our mission. In following the Literacy Council's mission, we have empowered adults and families with literacy skills to lead successful, fulfilled lives.

Since 2020, we have grown 204% in student enrollment. Within our four-county service area, we have developed new classes and recruited, trained, and retained volunteer tutors to meet the ongoing needs we are experiencing with this exponential growth. We ended the fiscal year with a record breaking 602 enrollments and we are on track for another record-breaking year.

Our success would not be possible without the partnerships we have established throughout our communities. I would be remiss if I did not mention our amazing partners at Intermediate Unit 1. They are dedicated to providing opportunities, second chances, and better futures for our students and their families. We are eternally grateful for them and their commitment to the success of our programs.

I would like to personally thank Washington County Community Foundation for their efforts in helping us create our first Annual Report. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to our donors and supporters. Their generosity is truly unmatched and the kindness they have shown to our organization reflects through our students and volunteers in each of our programs.

As we move through fiscal year 2024, we will continue to help our students and families assimilate and become productive members of our communities.

Let's continue changing lives, one word a time.



Brandi Miller  
Executive Director



# ABOUT US

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Literacy Council of Southwestern PA (LCSWPA) is to empower adults and families with literacy skills that enable them to lead successful, fulfilled lives as members of our communities.

---

## OUR VISION

Founded in 1985, the LCSWPA has transformed the lives of adults and their families throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania by giving the gift of reading, writing and language skills to adults, thereby empowering economic opportunity, a sense of community and a higher quality of life. The LCSWPA is a privately funded nonprofit with a mission to promote economic opportunity, a strong and united community, and a higher quality of life for all people through literacy.

The LCSWPA, in collaboration with Intermediate Unit 1, provides adult tutoring services through their Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, both TOEFL and Citizenship preparation, and GED Test Preparation programs. It supports the families of the students by offering a children's literacy program and the signature Baby Book Bag Program.

---

## STAFF

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Brandi Miller</b><br><i>Executive Director</i>   | <b>Lauren Piszczor</b><br><i>Program Manager</i> | <b>Anne Marie Morse</b><br><i>Administrative Assistant</i> | <b>Louvilla Skariot</b><br><i>Child Development Coordinator</i> |
| <b>Jean Wilhem Alcenat   Getro Bernabe   Amy Wang</b><br><i>Part-Time English as a Second Language Teachers</i> |  |  |   |

---

## BOARD

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Danielle Marchesi</b><br><i>President</i><br><i>Washington Financial Bank</i> | <b>Dr. Sally Mounts</b><br><i>Vice President</i><br><i>City Mission</i> | <b>William J. Campbell</b><br><i>Treasurer</i><br><i>Alcoa (Ret.)</i> | <b>Rachel Zilcosky</b><br><i>Secretary</i><br><i>Intermediate Unit 1</i> |
| <b>Parker Burroughs</b><br><i>Observer-Reporter (Ret.)</i>                       | <b>Dr. Christine Shaffer</b><br><i>Accelerate Online Academy</i>        | <b>Gary Weinstein</b><br><i>Washington Health System (Ret.)</i>       |  |

# STUDENT SUCCESS



## LUKE AND NINA

---

English is “hard to learn”, but Luke is now an intermediate-level student with a solid grasp of the language basics. Nina, too, now has a tutor at the Literacy Council and is one of the fastest learners in our program.



## ABIGAIL

---

*GED Pass Rate:  
87% for 2022-23!*

Abigail was determined to get back to school and finish her high school education. She enrolled in IU1's GED program and, being a sleep-deprived new mom, she faithfully attended her GED classes and studied relentlessly.



## HA

---

Ha married an American citizen and moved from Vietnam to America. Upon arrival in America, Ha found it very difficult to communicate. Her husband found the literacy council and arranged for Ha to start classes.

# -OUR STUDENTS ORIGINATE FROM OVER 69 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES-



## ANGELICA

After living in Chile for most of her life, Angelica moved to America with her daughter. She has acquired enough English skills to work three days a week with adults with Downs Syndrome and she obtained her United States citizenship.



## JUAN

Juan was an assistant manager of a restaurant in Mexico City when he decided to move to the United States in 2004. He's been studying English in the ESL program in hopes to improve his English language skills to find a higher paying job.



# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The Literacy Council, in partnership with Intermediate Unit 1, offers free programs and services to adults and families living in Washington, Greene, Fayette, and Westmoreland Counties.



## Adult Basic Education

As a basic education program for adults, it embraces the "Each One, Teach One" philosophy of individual tutoring to help our students. Whether a student's goal is to achieve functional literacy, improved job skills, or the ability to help their children with homework, we are prepared to help learners to achieve these objectives.



## English as a Second Language

For adults whose first language is not English. Tutors and students meet weekly throughout the county in various libraries, Zoom, and other public locations.



## High School Equivalency Preparation

The program offers students an opportunity to obtain their high school equivalency. Upon completion of classes, free vouchers are provided to students to take the GED or HiSET exam. Students who excel in the classroom may apply for the Literacy Council of Southwestern PA and Intermediate Unit 1 Post-Secondary Scholarship of \$500. Support for vouchers and scholarships is provided by EQT Foundation and Local Share Account (LSA) - Washington County.



## Citizenship Preparatory Class

Classes cover the topics present in the United States Naturalization Test and intensive speaking and language skills preparation for the oral exam portion. Materials are provided free of charge. Eligible students may receive a scholarship reimbursement of up to \$500 provided by the Washington County Bar Foundation, Inc. to help offset the cost for the test.

# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## Baby Book Bags

The program encourages new mothers to read with their infants soon after birth. Every baby born in Washington Hospital goes home with a book bag containing a suitable baby book, literature on the importance of engaging babies in reading from birth, early childhood literacy intervention information, and local library locations. We have distributed over 50,000 baby book bags.



## Young Adult English as a Second Language

Over the past few years, we have experienced explosive growth in our immigrant population in Washington County and, as a result, in our ESL enrollments. The Literacy Council of Southwestern PA offers teens with little to no English a jump-start in their language skills before school starts in the fall.



## Test of English as a Foreign Language Exam Prep

This class includes intensive work on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as strategies for approaching TOEFL tasks and testing on the computer for advanced ESL students considering taking the TOEFL exam.



## Children's Literacy

In 2013, we realized that many of our potential students lacked the language skills and finances to come to classes because of preschool children in the home. As a result, we started the children's program for these mothers. Early literacy means helping children develop a rich vocabulary, self-expression, and reading comprehension.



# HOW TO HELP

10,390.25  
Tutor Hours



## VOLUNTEER

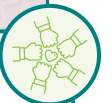
Volunteers are the life blood of the Literacy Council—without their support, our programs and opportunities would not be possible.

Our volunteers take on a number of roles, including

- tutoring
- special events
- fundraising events
- marketing & communications
- web & social media
- administrative
- and more



\$330,409  
Worth of  
Service Hours



## DONATE

Your donation makes a difference in the lives of the adults and families we serve. For only \$65 per student per month, we can provide everything needed to help someone gain critically important literacy skills.

Help support the life of a student.



**\$65**

Supports a student  
for one month.



**\$390**

Supports a student  
for six months.



**\$780**

Supports a student  
for 1 year.

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

*An excerpt from the Observer-Reporter by Karen Mansfield*

Judi Ickes didn't know it at the time, but 10 years ago, when a tutor for the Literacy Council of Southwestern Pennsylvania asked if she could use a room in First Presbyterian Church 1793 to teach an ESL (English as a Second Language) student, Ickes, a retired Spanish and home economics teacher, would find a new purpose.

Ickes wasn't familiar with the literacy council, but the tutor mentioned there was an upcoming tutor training class. So, two weeks later, Ickes and a few others attended.

While Ickes was there, recalled Kris Drach, a tutor and literacy council board president, three Latina women knocked on the door to inquire about classes.

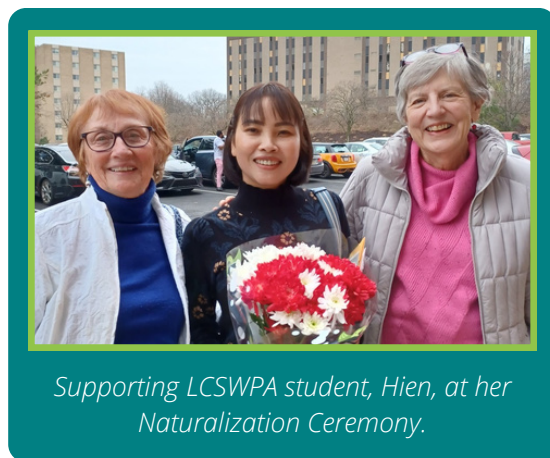
Drach asked if any of the tutors spoke Spanish, and Ickes raised her hand.

"The rest is history," said Ickes, who was honored with a 10-year Tutor Service Award during a May 10 recognition ceremony at the literacy council's headquarters in Washington.

For Ickes, who currently teaches three ESL classes a week, tutoring immigrants was a perfect fit.

Over the past decade, Ickes has taught all levels of ESL, and she respects the courage and dedication of students committed to improving their literacy skills.

But it's much more than just helping them improve their literacy skills. We take them for driver's tests, go to doctor's visits, help them fill out forms whenever they need a little extra help," she said. "Once you get the students, you help them whenever you can. (Knowing the language) helps the students be brave enough to go out into society, get a job, be a part of their community."



*Supporting LCSWPA student, Hien, at her Naturalization Ceremony.*



*LCSWPA Past Board President, Kris Drach, and Judi Ickes receiving her award for 10 years of tutoring.*

Ickes said she and her fellow tutors find satisfaction in their students' achievements. One former student, who now lives in Arizona and keeps in frequent touch with Ickes, told her that she and a friend who was visiting from Venezuela drove to visit her brother in New England and stopped in New York City for a few days of sightseeing.

"She was so proud of herself for being able to get around and to use her English, and I was so proud of her," said Ickes. "We're just so proud of all of their achievements, especially the women who take classes. We empower women, and that's really important. Tutoring really is so meaningful. We just fall in love with our students, and that's why we keep doing it."

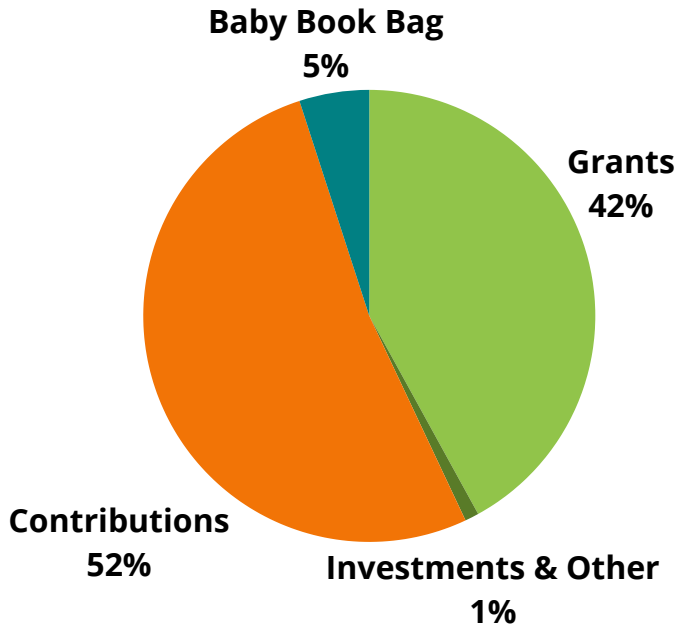
## **To become a volunteer:**

Call us at 724-228-6188, e-mail [Lauren@LCSWPA.org](mailto:Lauren@LCSWPA.org), or fill out the application at [LCSWPA.org](http://LCSWPA.org).

# FINANCIAL TRENDS & HIGHLIGHTS

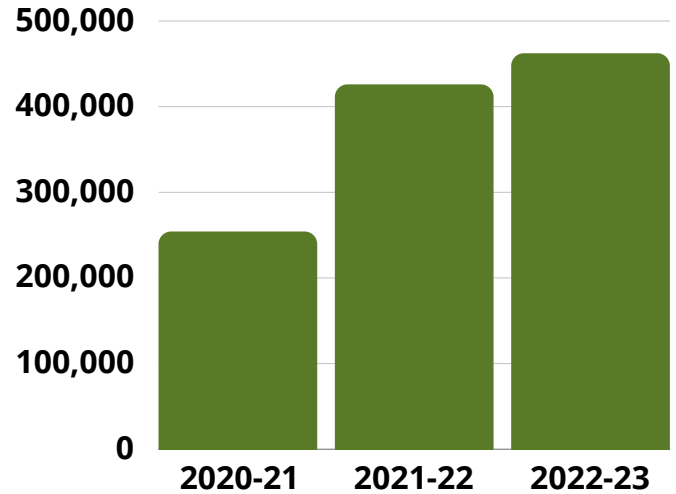
## Revenue Sources

The LCSWPA depends on contributions from community members to provide its services.



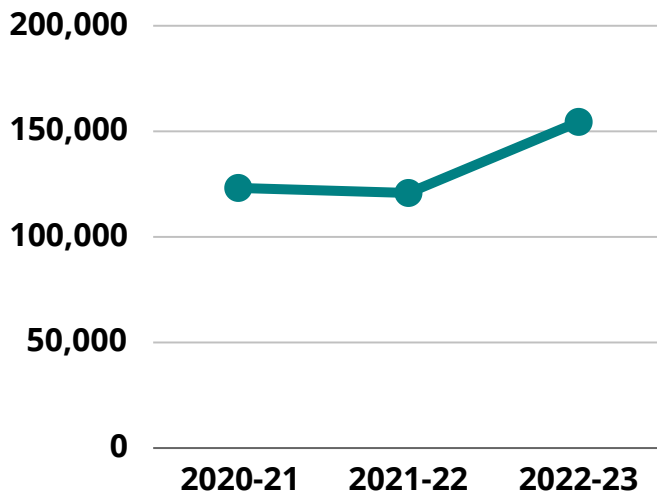
## Net Assets

A focus on increasing the LCSWPA's capacity to address its increased services has resulted in an increase in net cash assets over the past three years.



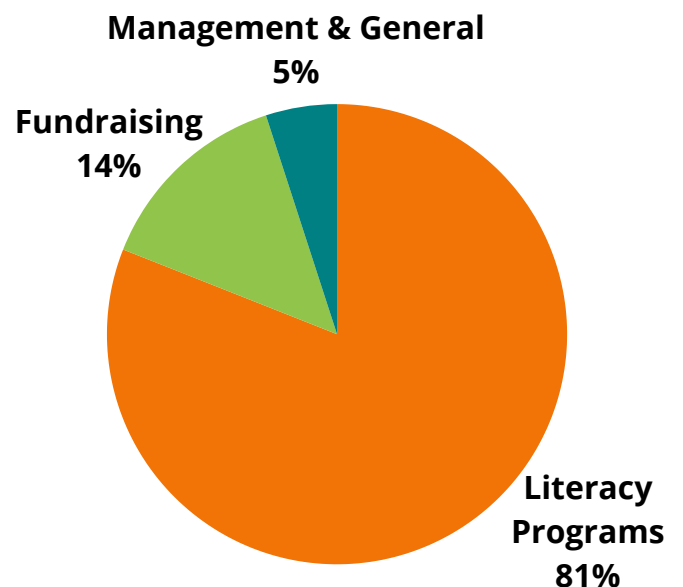
## Program Expenses

Over the past few years the LCSWPA has experienced a significant increase in programming expenses.



## Expense Categories

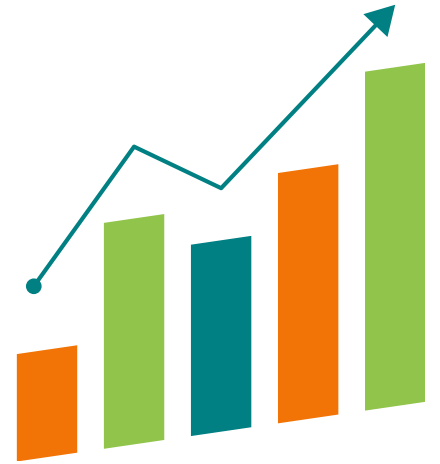
The LCSWPA devotes a majority of its revenue to program expenses.



Complete audited financial statements and Internal Revenue Service Form 990 are available upon request.



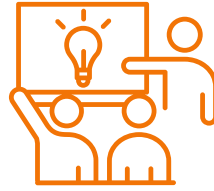
**602**  
Enrollments



**204%**  
Growth since  
2020



**28**  
Passed  
GED or HiSET  
Exams



**50+**  
Tutors

# AN IMPACTFUL YEAR



**50**  
New or  
Better Jobs



**10**  
Driver's  
Licenses



**5**  
Citizenships

**4**  
Post-Secondary  
Scholarships





**P.O. Box 1584  
Washington, PA 15301**

*Return Service Requested*

## Thank you to our Friends of Literacy Partners:

Intermediate Unit 1  
Fairhill Manor Christian Church  
Washington City Mission  
Washington Health System  
Washington Health System Teen Outreach  
ARC Human Services  
Blueprints  
Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services  
Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Church  
Central Assembly of God  
Presbyterian Church of Charleroi

(724) 228-6188 | [www.lcswpa.org](http://www.lcswpa.org)  
Literacy.Council.of.Southwestern.PA

The Literacy Council of Southwestern PA is a 501(c)(3) organization under section 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code. The official registration and financial information of the LCSWPA may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.