

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact Gage Harter.

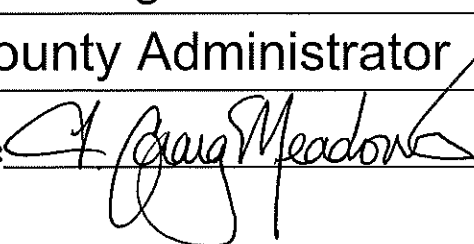
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Montgomery County
Program Title: Family READS Program
Program Category: Community & Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: F. Craig Meadows
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 

VACo Community & Economic Development Award Submission – Family READS

Program

Executive Summary

In 2018, Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library was selected as one of 20 public libraries nationwide to receive a \$10,000 American Dream Literacy Initiative grant from the American Library Association (ALA) and Dollar General Literacy Foundation. With the funding, Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library, in partnership with the Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley (LVNRV), implemented the Family READS (Reading and English to Achieve Dreams and Success) Program, which focused on English as a Second Language (ESL) and family literacy throughout the MFRL service area. In addition to the grant funding, the MFRL and partners spent \$6,781.13 on the worthwhile program.

The goal of the Family READS Program was to increase the English language skills of parents to achieve parenting, work, and community goals, and to fully partner in their children's education, while also increasing the English literacy and language skills of their children. Several regional partners participated in an effort to support the program's success to include: Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley; Head Start; New River Community Action; Virginia Preschool Initiative; Montgomery County Public Schools; Blacksburg Refugee Partnership; Mountain Valley Charitable Foundation; Blacksburg Chinese Church; Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley; Alpha Phi Omega at Virginia Tech; and Open Book NRV. The result was a 60% retention rate at the Blacksburg Library and a 100% retention rate at the Meadowbrook Library. Of the program graduates, 100% reported improved English vocabulary; 83% reported improved English listening and speaking; 100% reported improving skills to read with children; 100% reported increased use of library.

Overview

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library (MFRL) serves the public of Montgomery and Floyd Counties at four locations in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Floyd and Shawsville, with a range of material, programs and services to stimulate imaginations, satisfy curiosity, inform citizens and guests, and to connect people to each other and world. MFRL welcomed over 395,000 visitors last year, and checked out 672,000 items. In the past year, Library staff processed passport applications for 622 persons. The patrons in these communities are diverse in both ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic status. As a result, MFRL applied for and was selected as one of 20 public libraries nationwide to receive a \$10,000 American Dream Literacy Initiative grant from the American Library Association (ALA) and Dollar General Literacy Foundation. With the funding, Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library, in partnership with the Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley (LVNRV), implemented the Family READS (Reading and English to Achieve Dreams and Success) Program, which will focus on English as a Second Language (ESL) and family literacy throughout the MFRL service area. In addition to the grant funding, the MFRL and partners spent \$6,781.13 on the worthwhile program.

The program was implemented at two branches of the MFRL: Blacksburg and Meadowbrook. In Blacksburg, a weekly Family ESL/ Literacy class was held between March 27 and May 22, 2018. Each week represented 1.5 hours of instruction for adult learners while their attending children participated in storytime and educational and craft activities. During this program series attendance varied between 6-10 adults, and 8-14 children. The retention rate at the Blacksburg Library series was 60%.

At the Meadowbrook branch, the weekly Family ESL/Literacy class was held between June 18 and August 6, 2018. Each week, one family attended for ESOL and family literacy

instruction, as well as educational children's activities and storytime. While two families (one for ESOL and one for ABE) doesn't seem like much, this is the most rural and sparsely populated area in Montgomery County. Part of the reason why this program was such a success is that both participating families have chosen to continue their co-learning for the remainder of 2018 and the program has added additional families. The second portion of the program at the Meadowbrook branch did not use grant funds. The Meadowbrook Library series has experienced a retention rate of 100%.

Through a collaborative, regional effort, the Family READS program has had a huge impact on the community. The LVNRV provided staff time, ESL education expertise, planning, and volunteers to ensure the program's success. MFRL worked with Head Start and NRCA to provide storytime and books for their classrooms. For this program, NRCA assisted with recruiting participating families. The Virginia Preschool Initiative Program and Montgomery County Public Schools assisted with recruiting families and helped market the program in the schools. Blacksburg Refugee Partnership, which is a fairly new organization that supported the resettlement of six families from various parts of the Middle East, provided transportation for one of the participating families and volunteers to help that family transition in the program. The Mountain Valley Charitable Foundation is a long-standing partner with the Meadowbrook Library branch of MRFL. Volunteers from the Foundation provided dinner for the Meadowbrook program on three separate occasions. The Blacksburg Chinese Church also assisted with recruiting participating families and provided the Blacksburg Library program with dinner from a local Chinese restaurant on one occasion. Virginia Tech interns through the LVNRV were able to recruit three interns over the 10 months of the Family READS program. These interns assisted with classroom instruction, managing the childrens' activities, developing the program manual,

and completing reports. Our interns were instrumental in making this program a success. Alpha Phi Omega at Virginia Tech is a Literacy Volunteers connection that provided most of the class volunteers, particularly during the Blacksburg series. These volunteers assisted with adult instruction, helping students with five different first languages. They also helped with children's activities and crafts. Finally, Open Book NRV learned about the Family READS program through local media outlets, contacted LVNRV, and donated 100 new children's books so that families that finish the program would have new books to share with their families. The participating children loved the books that were provided by this wonderful group.

The program manual that was created and the list of resources needed for the Family READS program can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TFxgC0kVzM8C1YqLrUyihJx7MxkNLGFuJCh7N_4LEk

Also, ESOL Playaway Launchpads were purchased midway through the program and were given positive feedback by the participants. With grant funds, a set of English No Problem books (New Readers Press) of different levels to enable volunteer-based instruction to adult learners of varying skills were purchased. This comprehensive five-level series provided an opportunity for parents to apply their emerging English skills as they examine and transform their own lives and communities. Additionally, Word by Word, a set of bilingual picture dictionaries, to use for instruction of English vocabulary that supports parent reading of the children's book of the week was purchased. Furthermore, a set of 4 of a children's books, Where is the Green Sheep, was purchased in both English and Spanish.

Family READS Cost:

Contributor	Contribution	Amount
Blacksburg Chinese Church	Food to support the Blacksburg Library program	\$150.00
Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library	Printing, marking materials, programming supplies	\$150.00
Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library	ESL and GED books and other tools to support learning	\$5,235.00
Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library	265 hours of staff time from three branches over 24 weeks of the programs, plus planning hours	\$6,603.13
Mountain Valley Charitable Foundation	Food for Meadowbrook Program	\$100.00
Open Book NRV	Children's books to be used as gifts at program completion	\$346.00
Volunteer Instructors	170 hours of combined volunteer hours	\$4,197.00
Total		\$16,781.13

Participants Highlights:



At the Meadowbrook library, the families included a young migrant mother trying to learn a new language and improve her education, and a grandmother with a background from traditional Appalachian culture, who is raising her grandchildren and in need of basic education for herself. At first, the women would not speak to each other, but by the end of the program the grandmother was helping the young mother with her new baby and they had developed a friendship.

Aurora, Parent Program Graduate, (spoken in English at the annual LVNRV Recognition Event) stated, “I read with my children and can help my son with homework. I improved my

English and now study English in an English class. I have a job now at a hair salon. I improved my English and I thank you for this program.”

Anne, Program Volunteer Tutor, stated, “This past spring one of the families supported by Blacksburg Refugee Partnership participated in the program, and it was of great benefit to them. This is a family of non-literate, non-English speaking refugees who have settled in Blacksburg; not only did the program expose the family to the benefits of reading with their children and visiting the library, but it also provided an important connection to the Blacksburg community. The opportunity to speak English with other non-native speakers as well the fellowship which it provided was priceless for this recently arrived family. As an LVNRV ESL tutor working with this family, I was present during many Family READS sessions and witnessed the great work being accomplished by the staff and volunteers as they engaged the families in the program activities. During my tutoring sessions with the family at their home, I have seen how the mother now gets out books for her toddler and preschooler and points out pictures using English words. I believe she understands how valuable this is for her children’s growth.”

The Results:

The goal of the Family READS Program was to increase the English language skills of parents to achieve parenting, work, and community goals, and to fully partner in their children’s education, while also increasing the English literacy and language skills of their children. The result? Of the program graduates, 100% reported improved English vocabulary; 83% reported improved English listening and speaking; 100% reported improving skills to read with children; 100% reported increased use of library. Of the adult participants who completed the first two programs, 75% pursued opportunities to continue English language learning. Data on the third

program are not yet available. Reading logs were not consistently returned during the program so daily reading during the program was difficult to document. However, 82% of parents completed most but not all reading logs documenting daily reading activities during the program. The Family READS Program has offered a great opportunity to reach a diverse group and help solve some of the language-based issues they face in the community.

The program has garnered some local media coverage to include the Roanoke Times and the News Messenger. The stories can be found here:

- <https://montcova.com/local-stories/library-family-reads-program-helps-parents-learn-english-and-read-to-children/>
- <https://montcova.com/top-stories/literacy-volunteers-of-the-news-river-valleys-family-reads-program-helps-parents-and-children-read-together-while-learning-english/>
- https://www.roanoke.com/nrv/community/library-program-helps-parents-learn-english-read-to-children/article_89189cc5-58cd-5572-b61c-600ea024ec35.html

At this time, classes are still being offered to the participants enrolled in the Meadowbrook Family READS program, though in a modified format. The scope of the class has expanded to include both ESL and GED instruction and new students have joined the class. Family meals and story time are no longer provided. Snacks and drinks are available each week as are children's activities. Each week, a volunteer children's activities facilitator provides homework help as well as a group art activity. Participants have voluntarily engaged in several additional hours of instruction. Furthermore, the development of relationships in the community and with English Language Learners has been a catalyst for growth of locally-based LVNRV adult ESOL programming, which resulted in an increase in local volunteer contributions and an anticipated increase in local government and grant funding.