

# Literacy Volunteer Program



## **New Tutor Orientation**

***“Is this the  
right volunteer opportunity  
for me?”***

For special accommodations contact the Office for Persons with Disabilities, 399-5192 (voice/TDD) at least 2 working days in advance. Chemeketa Community College is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer

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# Welcome

You are about to embark on a journey like no other! Think about everything you've done in the last 24 hours. What would have been different if you had trouble reading and writing, or speaking English? If you wanted to learn to read and write or speak English, where would you go for help?

Our society is growing more complicated and more technical. At the same time, literacy levels remain low, preventing millions of people from full participation in the activities so many of us take for granted. This is one of our biggest challenges as a nation. After completing this orientation we hope your answer to the question, "is this the right volunteer opportunity for me?", will be a resounding "YES!!" By joining our program you can help us make a difference in someone's life!

## Some History

In the 1970s and 1980s, Oregon became "home" for thousands of refugees, persons determined by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to be unable to return to their native countries due to fear of persecution. Programs around the state realized there was a need to help homebound refugee adults learn basic English and survival skills in order to move toward self-sufficiency. In 1982 Chemeketa Community College obtained a federal refugee grant in order to start a Volunteer Tutor Program. In cooperation with community social service agencies and the college's basic skills program, a program coordinator began recruiting highly-committed and qualified volunteers. Soon after, the goal of the program expanded to include native English speaking adults who needed assistance in learning to read.

## LVP Today

The Literacy Volunteer Program introduces adults with low basic skills (and often low self-esteem) to an array of training and educational opportunities. Volunteer tutors frequently provide the link to help adult learners explore new possibilities, maintain morale, and measure and celebrate accomplishments.

# Literacy

The definition of “literacy” has changed throughout our nation’s history. Let’s look at some past definitions, what we need to ask about literacy today, and some impacts of low literacy in our communities.

## Definitions Past and Present

<u>Era</u>	<u>Definition of Literacy</u>
Pre-Civil War	“Read and write own name”
1930’s	“Attending school through third grade“(Civilian Conservation Corps)
1950’s	“The ability to read, with understanding, a short statement from ordinary life” (United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization)
1960’s	“Completion of grade school” (U.S. Dept. of Education)
1970’s	“Completion of high school” (U.S. Dept. of Education)
1998	“An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job , in the family of the individual and in society.” (U.S. Dept. of Education)

## What Does This Mean?

Instead of the question “Can you read?” we must ask:

*“Do you read well enough to use your employee manual effectively?”*

*“Do you write at such a level that your child’s teacher, your boss, your customer, or team members understand what you are trying to communicate?”*

*“Do you speak English clearly to communicate your needs when making an emergency phone call to 911?”*

*“Do you know when you need outside help and how to get it?”*

## The Impact of Low Literacy Skills

The **health** care industry spends billions annually due to low literacy. Low-literate adults have trouble reading medical instructions from care-providers, consent forms and prescription labels. Adults with low literacy skills cannot clearly express their health concerns.

**In families** where parents have attained higher levels of education there is a better chance that their children will be involved in literacy based activities such as reading, working puzzles, and discussing homework.

There is a correlation between **crime** and functional illiteracy. In the early 2000’s it was estimated that 60% of adults in federal and state prisons and 85% of juvenile offenders had problems associated with reading, writing and mathematics.

Low literacy creates a barrier to **employment**. Many of today’s jobs require specialized skills.

## Adult Learners (Students)

Adult Learners seeking LVP services come from various social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. They come at different times of their lives for a variety of reasons.

### Who Are The Learners?

- their age ranges from 18 years to 60+
- they may be a native speaker of English or an individual learning English for the first time
- they may or may not be employed
- they have 0 – 12 + years of schooling
- they have a range of reading/writing/math/speaking English abilities
- they may or may not have a learning problem

**Learners are** grouped according to goals and prior experience with English. The program defines students in the following terms:

**ABE – Adult Basic Education** is an umbrella term that includes the following:

**ABS – Adult Basic Skills – ABS students** are proficient in oral English skills (may be native English speakers) but have not mastered basic literacy skills.

**GED – General Educational Development – GED students** are ABS students whose goal is to pass the GED exam and receive a GED certificate, accepted by many employers in lieu of a High School Diploma.

**ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages – ESOL students** seeking literacy services have limited or no ability to speak, read and/or write the English language. Their abilities depend on a variety of factors including, among other things: number of years of school in their native language; previous experience studying English; and the amount of English used in the home and/or at work.

### Why Are They Seeking Help?

- Job loss or the desire for a better position that requires a significant improvement in skills
- Loss of a significant other who previously handled their paperwork and reading
- Referred by a social service agency, employer, neighbor
- Desire to be able to help one's children in school and set a good example
- The realization that there are many things that are missed in the world by not being able to read and write at a higher level

# Volunteer Tutors

As you have previously read, the need for literacy services is great, the population of students seeking services is diverse, and the reasons are varied. It is this diversity that makes the role of volunteer tutors so important.

## Qualities of Effective Tutors

Learner-Centered	Sensitive	Respectful
Patient	Creative	Willing to share authority
Enthusiastic	Sense of Humor	Prepared
Organized	Flexible	Openness

Traditionally, the concept of tutor and student has been that the tutor has the “knowledge”, and the student does not have that “knowledge.” The tutor is in control of the process and is to impart his or her “knowledge” to the student.

However, our program advocates a collaborative process, in which the tutor respects the student as an equal partner in the decision making process, slowly moving the control to the student. The learner can then determine his/her own needs according to his/her personal goal.

Students may expect the tutor to be in charge because of past experiences. It is easy for learners to let tutors take that responsibility. With patience and encouragement, the tutor can gradually get the student to take ownership of his/her own learning.

This collaborative relationship results in the empowerment of students. Rather than being trapped within problems caused by limited literacy proficiency, they become better prepared to reach their potential.

## Tutor Responsibilities

- After initial placement, establish a mutually agreed upon schedule with student(s), and/or instructor, if working in a classroom. Each assignment requires a minimum commitment of two-four hours a week for the length of a college term.
- Notify student and/or instructor ahead of time if not able to attend a scheduled session
- Display welcoming and courteous behavior towards adult learners
- Speak English using proper grammar and appropriate vocabulary
- Tutor adult students utilizing materials and techniques recommended by the LVP or instructor
- Demonstrate sensitivity to learner’s culture by maintaining appropriate dress, and keep an open mind to their style of living and beliefs.
- Attend in-service trainings relevant to your tutoring
- Maintain a record of hours spent tutoring and submit all requested program forms and paperwork in a timely manner.

# Tutor Code of Ethics

The tutor displays an attitude of shared adulthood and respect for students

The tutor holds in confidence personal information offered by the student/instructor.

The tutor does not elicit information about a student's personal life, nor burden a student with his/her own personal issues; an atmosphere of friendly give and take is established.

The tutor refers a student to appropriate Chemeketa College personnel when that student requests help beyond the tutor's training and skills.

The tutor offers constructive criticism for program improvement to Literacy Volunteer Program staff or other appropriate Chemeketa Community College personnel.

The tutor does not speak on behalf of the program without prior approval of appropriate Chemeketa College personnel.

The tutor keeps the commitment of interest and time made to students and to the Chemeketa Literacy Volunteer Program.

The tutor honors all policies and procedures of the program, including assessment, reporting and recordkeeping.

The tutor shares information about teaching and learning with the Chemeketa Literacy Volunteer Program.

# Assignment Process

## Placement

Tutoring assignments are determined by matching the day and time you are available to work, with the student or classroom requests we receive. If you have a preference in working with an ABS or ESOL learner (see definitions of Adult Learners on page 3) every effort is made to grant that preference if possible. So that you will understand the expectations of your particular assignment you are given background information that may include: reading, writing and/or speaking level of the learner; the skills the learner needs to improve; and the reason(s) the learner has asked for help, ie his/her goals. This information helps tutors working with individual students plan lessons, and those in a classroom or small group setting, use appropriate tutoring techniques for the level of student(s) with whom they are working. A LVP staff member is usually with you the first time you attend your assignment.

## Skill Level Assessment

The program uses standard reading, writing, speaking and math assessments required by the state to place adult learners in national Educational Functioning Levels (EFL). Each level has a description of what an individual can read/ write or speak in a functional context at that level. The “goal” of the program is for the student, with the help of a tutor, to show progress and move up to the next EFL. However, these assessments do not tell us the specific literacy skills with which the learner needs help. Therefore, we will ask for your help in identifying specific areas in which the student needs assistance. For example, does the student know how to sound out words or recognize common sight words? Do they need help with spelling, or understanding what they’ve read?

## Goal-Setting

Goal setting is discussed with the learner when he/she initially enters the program. We ask you, the volunteer, to continue that discussion throughout your work with the student. Generally, an individual has one “large” goal when they enter the program. In order to effectively work with that goal, it needs to be broken down into smaller, manageable chunks. For example, to get a job the student may first need to learn the vocabulary on a job application so they can correctly complete the form. Another task may be to learn what words associated with a particular job look like in print. As student goals are met, new ones need to be determined.

The volunteer tutor plays an integral role in helping adult learners show academic progress and achieve personal goals. By utilizing the techniques and materials specific to the student literacy level and interest, tutors facilitate learning in a relaxed atmosphere.

Our tutor training sessions will cover more about assessing student needs and skill levels, goal setting, and the core and supplemental instructional materials utilized by our program. There is no cost to LVP tutors for materials.



## The Volunteer Tutor and Chemeketa Community College

In 1985, Chemeketa Community College's Board of Education adopted policy #3610, which states: "The college recognizes the services of volunteers in the accomplishment of its mission." It also recognizes that volunteer efforts are essential for the successful completion of the educational services goals of the department.

For LVP volunteers, this recognition signifies that they, the same as Chemeketa's paid employees, are expected to know and abide by the policies and procedures of the college. In order that you may meet this expectation, those policies and procedures that are most pertinent to a volunteer tutor have been included as an appendix to this orientation.

### The Next Steps

At this point, we hope you have learned enough about the **Literacy Volunteer Program** that you can answer the question, "Is this the right volunteer opportunity for me?" We also hope your interest has been piqued so that you'll want to continue on this journey and make a difference in your community! If you have additional questions that you need answered before making a decision, please call or e-mail the program staff person in your area.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the **Literacy Volunteer Program**. If this **IS** the right volunteer opportunity for you, then you're ready to take the **NEXT STEPS!**

1. Read the Chemeketa Policies and Procedures located in the appendix of this orientation, then print and sign the Tutor/Program Agreement. This will serve as your orientation "verification of completion" and also as an acknowledgement that you have read, understand and agree to abide by both the Literacy Volunteer Program's requirements, and those of Chemeketa Community College.
2. Submit your volunteer application located on the web page. When your application is received you will be contacted about training opportunities.
3. Attend Literacy Volunteer Tutor Trainings. Come ready to learn and to acquire tools that will help you make a difference in someone's life.

# Appendix A

## The Meaning of Chemeketa

The name Chemeketa is a Native American word meaning “place of peace.” Long before white settlers came to this area, Willamette Valley Native Americans would gather at a place they called Chemeketa, today known as Salem. There they conducted their councils, renewed friendships, and shared old ideas and cultivated new ones. It is hoped that many who come to Chemeketa today will do just that.

The meaning of Chemeketa is illustrated on the sculptured wall panels that appear on Building 3 on our Salem Campus. Designed by graphic artist Arvid Orbeck, the panels symbolize the territorial divisions of the tribes and the movement of the tribes toward the established meeting place.

As the tribes move through the territorial divisions, the carved designs become less aggressive and less linear. Softer curves start to enter into the forms, showing more peaceful attitudes. The final points of the arrow shapes become completely calm upon reaching the center, where the individual chiefs, each indicated with his own form of dress, decoration, and behavior, sit down in a formal circle for peaceful work.

## **CHEMEKETA POLICIES/PROCEDURES**

### **Harassment/Discrimination Policy**

### **Policy #1750 POL**

Chemeketa is committed to maintaining a workplace in which everyone can achieve their full potential without being impeded by unlawful discrimination or harassment. The intent of this policy is to impress upon everyone at every level the seriousness of this commitment and strongly encourage everyone to report any conduct that they perceive to be discriminatory or harassing in nature.

Harassment or discrimination is prohibited when it is based on any of the following protected classes:

Race	Sexual orientation
Color	Family relationships
National origin	Marital Status
Religion	Pregnancy and related conditions
Age	Veterans status
Disability	Cigarette usage
Gender (see Sexual Harassment Policy)	

Any conduct relating to these protected classes is prohibited when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made, either implicitly or explicitly, a term or condition of employment or academic performance; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic performance; or
3. Such conduct is severe or pervasive and has the purpose or effect of the following:
  - Unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
  - Creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment.

## **Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse**

## **Policy #2250 POL**

Chemeketa Community College is committed to providing an environment which fosters excellence in learning for its students and community, and in work performance for all of its employees. The misuse and/or illegal use of alcohol and other drugs is contrary to this effort. In keeping with state and federal statutes, the illegal use, possession, distribution, manufacture or sale of alcohol and/or other drugs and/or being under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs is not permitted on college-owned or college-controlled property, or while representing the college on business or in other college-sponsored activities. There shall be no consumption of alcohol on the campuses of the college unless such use specifically authorized by the president of the college. Disciplinary action for violation of Chemeketa's policies may include temporary exclusion, disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion. The college enforces the state underage drinking laws on college premises.

College policies and procedures related to alcohol, drugs, tobacco and other topics can be accessed on the college Intranet. Information about drug and alcohol 12-step programs is available from the college's support group, **PANDA**.

## **Possession of Weapons**

## **Policy #2440 POL**

The possession of any firearm, or knife with a blade exceeding four (4) inches, or illegal weapon (see ORS Chapter 166), with or without a concealed weapon permit, is prohibited on college property. Law enforcement officers are exempt from this prohibition and other exceptions may be made by the Vice President/Chief Financial Officer or his/her designee.

## **Tobacco Products**

## **Procedure #2255 PRO**

The use of tobacco products is prohibited inside campus buildings and within 20 feet of a building entrance.

In addition, the following exterior areas are identified as smoke-free to allow non-smokers the opportunity to use outside areas without the presence of second-hand smoke. The following smoke-free zones are identified with signs identifying them as No Smoking areas:

1. The covered area near the rear entrance of building 2.
2. The curved brick seating area at the south side of building 2, facing the new quad and building 8.
3. The Art Gallery entrance to building 3.
4. Exterior stairwells leading to upper floors of buildings, including: the rear of building 6 and stairwells accessing the second floor of building 8.

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## Appendix B

# Literacy Volunteer Program



## *Tutor/Program Agreement*

By signing this page I acknowledge that:

- I have read and I understand the information included in the Literacy Volunteer Program Orientation
- Upon receiving a tutoring assignment, I will abide by both the Literacy Volunteer Program's and Chemeketa Community College's policies, procedures, responsibilities and guidelines included in the Literacy Volunteer Program Orientation.

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Received by \_\_\_\_\_  
(LVP Staff member signature)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print, sign and bring this form to the Pre-Service Workshop for which you have pre-registered. If you are unable to print this, there will be copies available at the workshop or from your local literacy specialist.