



A visitor gets one-on-one computing assistance from the Chicago Public Library's "Cyber Navigator" program.

By the Numbers

- One in six adults (or about 36 million) in the U.S. have **low literacy skills**.
- Nearly one-third of adults have **weak numeracy skills**.
- One-third of low-skilled adults are **immigrants**.
- Thirty-five percent of black adults, 43% of Hispanic adults, and 10% of white adults have **low literacy skills**.
- Two-thirds of low-skilled adults are **over the age of 35**.
- Two-thirds of young (16-25) low-skilled adults are **men**.
- Most (63%) low-skilled adults in the U.S. are **employed**.
- Low-skilled U.S. adults are more likely to have **poor health** than adults with the highest skills.
- U.S. adults with high school or lower level of education **score lower in problem solving** in technology-rich environments than adults with similar level of education in other countries.

How Library Programs Benefit Adults

- Libraries provide learning opportunities for adults who are no longer part of the K-12 educational system, including adults who face economic and other challenges.
- Libraries offer classes that help low-skilled adults to build their reading and math skills. This is important, because adults' cognitive skills continue to develop after they leave formal education (Reder, 2009).
- Libraries provide English classes and help immigrants prepare to become citizens.
- Libraries have computer labs where young adults can get information about finding a job as well as developing their digital literacy and other skills.
- Librarians help adults to find information about healthcare.
- Libraries offer computer classes as well as self-directed tutorials that adults can use onsite or at home to build their digital literacy skills and awareness.

Recent Grants from IMLS Help

- Libraries and community partners develop service plans and programs for adult English literacy, digital literacy, and job training. (Free Library Foundation; Providence Public Library)
- Libraries offer General Equivalency Diploma (GED) institutes to help better prepare instructors who teach youths and adults who struggle with preparing for the GED exam. (District of Columbia Public Library)
- Libraries and library associations come together to create action steps for accessible, effective, and innovative adult literacy programs, services, and resources. (Onondaga County Public Library)