

## Subrecipient Spotlight – Siena Literacy Center



Siena Literacy Center (SLC) is a non-profit organization that works to improve the lives of families in northwest Metropolitan Detroit by providing a basic education program for adult learners. Together with volunteer tutors, they teach reading, math, computer skills, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Since 1995, over 600 tutors have helped over 2000 adult Learners meet the challenges of their everyday lives.

In response to Michigan's changing economy, SLC is supplementing instruction with lessons and skills relevant to their Learners' lives and work goals. This is called contextualized learning. Learners will identify a long-term career goal and then be able to make the connection between their studies at Siena with their success in the labor market. By making the learning

relevant, SLC hopes Learners become more engaged in the program, and remain motivated.

The Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) has provided multiple benefits to SLC. One of the most impactful is that because they received the NOF award, Siena Literacy Center was able to remain open five days a week instead of just four days for selected staff, tutors and Learners in order to meet their Learner's needs and serve more of the community.

Siena also reports many concrete accomplishments that the NOF award allowed their Learners to achieve. According to SLC "Our learners reported the following information to staff in June of 2018: 17 learners obtained or improved their job; 5 demonstrated Improved employability skills; 1 attained their GED; 1 entered other education or training; 2 obtained their citizenship; 14 registered to vote (or voted for first time); 2 obtained a driver's license; 30 reported increased involvement in community activities; and 20 reported increased involvement in their children's education."

Stories from both Learners and Tutors show the impact that Siena Literacy Center is able to have on their community:



"I heard about Siena from my friend. I could not read or write very much English. Since April 2008, I have had two English tutors and two math tutors. I always did very well on my job as an assembler in an auto parts supplier factory, but I couldn't be promoted because I couldn't read or write well. Earlier this year I was promoted to the job of Section Leader because of what I have learned at Siena." – Learner

"Like most people, I just assumed that everyone could read. Public service announcement statistics on illiteracy really opened my eyes to the reality of the problem. I contacted ProLiteracy America and found out that if I could read I could teach. I have been a tutor now for almost a year and it is one of the most rewarding volunteer efforts I have ever been involved with. My students have been so very grateful for the opportunity to learn and my reward has been in knowing that I played a small part in their accomplishments." – Tutor

With the help of the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, the Siena Literacy Center is able to have a profound effect on their northwest Metropolitan Detroit community.

Visit their website at: <https://www.sienaliteracy.org/>