

4.2 What ESOL Offers to Health Literacy Partner Organizations

While the adult ESOL world is very different from the health care world and in a different funding universe altogether, there is much that adult ESOL can offer partnering health care organizations. Adult ESOL programs should not be shy to point these things out! This document identifies some valuable assets that adult ESOL can offer to health literacy partners. For example, adult ESOL offers:

- Classrooms where readily assembled, diverse groups of LEP adults already operate as a learning community: Under trained teachers, the classroom is seen by many learners as a safe, trusting environment. Learners often feel open to discuss life concerns in their ESOL class that they may not share in other areas of their public life.
- The expertise of staff in communicating with and educating vulnerable, traditionally hard-to-reach LEP populations.
- The diverse experiences and perspectives of recent immigrants on accessing, navigating, and communicating in U.S. health care.
- Perspectives of learners on how to effectively reach their communities with health messages.
- Possible peer educators among the learners who can take health messages into their communities.

Trained adult ESOL teachers can offer expertise in:

- The diversity within their learner populations.
- Creating simple messages in English that can be understood by all levels of English language learners.
- Breaking down new, complex information into small, usable chunks for ELLs' comprehension.
- Helping learners process this new information and understand how it applies to their life situations.
- Identifying cultural and linguistic barriers to ELLs' comprehension of new information.
- Evaluating print and web materials for appropriateness and relevance to ESOL learners.
- Eliciting trust and instilling a sense of community in a diverse student group.
- Understanding the socioeconomic and immigration challenges that make it difficult for many adult ELLs to access health care or follow through with medical advice.
- Understanding the cultures of their learners.



ESOL learners can offer:

- Insight into their experiences trying to access, navigate, understand, and communicate their needs in U.S. health care in your community.
- Reports on the barriers they have encountered.
- Suggestions for how the health care field can better reach and interact with their communities and work with their native cultures.
- Their skills and talents as potential health care system employees and volunteers.

