

Verizon Awards \$185,000 to English as a Second Language Technology Programs



Eight Nonprofit Agencies Expand Reach of Literacy Programs Across Massachusetts

BOSTON -- Eight nonprofit organizations will be able to expand the reach of their innovative, technology-based literacy programs across Massachusetts, as the result of \$185,000 in grants from the Verizon Foundation

The grants, announced at an awards ceremony today at the Immigrant Learning Center in Malden, Mass., will support English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy programs throughout the state. Specifically, the grants will enable these organizations to expand their reach into diverse communities through the use of broadband and video technologies.

“Verizon is committed to helping people in the communities we serve gain the literacy skills needed to effectively participate and contribute to our economy,” said Donna Cupelo, Verizon region president of New England. “Literacy is a critical component to helping people succeed in the 21st century. We are proud to support eight great institutions that provide immigrant learners with the necessary tools to lead happy and productive lives right here in Massachusetts.”

The 2008 ESL Technology Grant winners are:

The Immigrant Learning Center, Malden – The center will design lessons that incorporate computer literacy into the ESL curriculum. Students will receive at least two hours of computer literacy instruction each week, addressing digital divide issues within the immigrant community.

English For New Bostonians, Boston -- The organization will strengthen its Multi-Media Project so that ESL training sites in Boston can use an online curriculum for students unable to attend traditional classroom instruction. They will provide distance learning technical assistance for the sites, teacher training on the curriculum, and evaluation for student learners.

Holyoke Community College -- The college will serve students enrolled in its ESL program by using more technology to deliver the curriculum. The program will use Smart Boards and provide laptop computers to students to ensure that technology is available to those participating in the program, and staff is trained to use it and effectively deliver the curriculum. In addition to strengthening English literacy, students also will learn computer skills by participating in the program.

Quincy Community Action -- The organization will add an advanced level ESL class, which will combine traditional face-to-face instruction with self-directed study by introducing students to various ESL software and Internet sites. The program also will help students further education, training and employment goals.

Operation Bootstrap, Lynn, Mass. -- The organization is running a distance learning program to help immigrant learners reach a higher level of English language proficiency by using an online curriculum along with e-mail and GoogleDocs to communicate with teachers and other classmate. The program enables students to learn English at their convenience and at their own pace. The program also includes an assessment instrument to measure learning gains from the course.

University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth, New Bedford, MA -- UMASS/Dartmouth Workers' Education Program (WEP) provides ESL and GED classes for adults in the greater New Bedford area. Funds will be used to plan and instruct students participating in four Reading Horizons Technology classes and to purchase phonics curriculum in order to provide direct and intensive phonics and decoding instruction for ESL students in the program.

World Education, Boston -- The organization will redesign its College for Adults Web site, making it more useful for ESL learners who are contemplating college. This will help learners gain exposure to English and immersion opportunities, and better prepare them to perform at the college level. World Education will introduce the program at three pilot sites: the Immigrant Learning Center (ILC) in Malden, the Center for New Americans (CNA) in Northampton and Asian-American Civic Association of Boston.

Worcester Public Library -- The Worcester ESOL Education Project provides critical instruction in English literacy to Worcester and central Massachusetts' residents. Partnering with talented instructors from Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester (LVGW), the Worcester Public Library will provide classroom instruction to learners using Rosetta Stone software instruction. This immersive and flexible instruction program provides coverage of four integrated literacy skills: comprehension, speaking, writing and reading.