

# Local Church Literacy Missions Needs Survey

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Teaching someone to read and write or to speak English can be a ministry - a ministry called literacy missions.

This survey will help you discover literacy needs in your community.

## **For Statistical Information:**

1. Ask the person responsible for church and community ministries in your Baptist state convention for information. Ask if any area churches or associations have literacy missions ministries.
2. Ask your local newspaper editor for articles about literacy needs in your city, county, and state. Ask for information about agencies or groups that provide literacy services.
3. Ask your local Board of Education for information about literacy rates and the number of non-native, English-speaking people in the school system. Ask what services are available to help adult nonreaders and non-English speakers. Ask the cost; times, places, and dates offered; and the number of people currently served.
4. Ask your local library for information about literacy rates and the number of non-English-speaking people in your community. Ask what services are available for adults with limited reading skills or limited English skills. Ask the cost; times,

places, and dates offered; and the number of people currently served.

5. Ask your local community-based literacy program personnel for information about literacy rates and services offered. Ask the cost; times, places, and dates offered; and the number of people currently served.
6. Inquire at your local university or community college school of education about information on literacy rates. Ask what services the school provides for adults with limited reading skills or limited English skills. Ask the cost of the services; times, places, and dates offered; and the number of people currently served.

## **For Specific Information:**

Using the following sample questions, interview representatives of the groups listed. First say, "Our church is thinking about beginning a ministry to help people learn to read better or to speak English better." Then ask:

1. Do you have students/clients/employees who would benefit from one-on-one help improving their reading skills?
2. Can you give me an idea of how many?
3. Do you have students/clients/employees who would benefit from learning to speak English better?

4200 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta, GA 30022-4176

A Southern Baptist Convention agency supported by the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

For general information, call (770) 410-6000, or visit [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net)

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Page 2.....

4. Can you give me an idea of how many?
5. Are any organizations currently helping to meet those needs?

People to interview:

1. Your church members
2. Ethnic/language church pastors
3. Representatives of educational institutions
  - Junior High School principals or counselors
  - High School principals or counselors
  - People with vocational/technical programs; GED program directors or counselors
  - Baptist campus ministries directors
4. Government agency personnel
  - Department of Human Services - social workers
  - Department of Health - directors of community health centers
  - Department of Corrections - jailers or prison wardens
5. Military representatives
  - Family services directors
  - Chaplains
  - Base education officers
6. Business people
  - Employers at hotels, restaurants, factories

- Labor union members
  - Chamber of Commerce members
  - Local labor board members
7. Ethnic association representatives - such as Chinese fraternal society and American/Vietnamese society members

This list is not exhaustive. It only suggests where to begin. Personal interviews build relationships from which future student referrals may come.

When you begin a new literacy missions ministry, give the beginning date and specific details to those whom you interviewed.

### When you finish your survey:

1. Compile the statistical information on literacy rates in your community. If the rate is in percentages, multiply the percentage times the population of your area for the total number.
2. Compile the statistical information on non-English-speaking people.
3. Compile the information on services provided for nonreaders and non-English-speaking people. A calendar showing days and times services are offered may be helpful.

NOTE: The existence of other groups providing some services for nonreaders or non-English-speaking people should not prevent your church from beginning a literacy missions ministry.

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Page 3.....

The number of nonreaders and non-English-speaking people usually exceeds the capacity of existing programs. The structure, cost, and time schedule of many community-based literacy programs prevent some people from using these services.

People working with local community-based literacy programs may suggest that volunteering with their programs is the best way to help. But it is not the best way for your church to reach people and proclaim the gospel. Beginning your own church or associational literacy missions ministry is the best approach. Your church literacy missions ministry can cooperate with existing literacy programs without being controlled or limited by their guidelines or restrictions.

4. After compiling your information, you will see the opportunities available for teaching people in your community to read and write or to speak English. Present this information to your Missions Development council, Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood, or whatever group is considering beginning a literacy missions ministry.

## **How to begin a literacy missions ministry:**

Your church or association can begin one of three kinds of literacy missions ministries by organizing a training workshop. An Adult Reading and Writing Workshop equips individuals to teach people to improve their reading and writing skills. A Conversational English Workshop equips individuals to teach non-English-speaking people to speak English. Both of these workshops require 16 hours. A 14-hour Tutoring Children and Youth Workshop will prepare people to tutor children and youth currently enrolled in school.

Contact the person responsible for Church and Community Ministries in your state convention for information and names of people trained by NAMB to lead these workshops.

For more information about Literacy Missions Ministry, call (770) 410-6360 or visit us at our web site:

**[www.namb.net/ccm](http://www.namb.net/ccm)**

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