



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES STAFF REPORT

September 15, 2025
Agenda Item No. 7

TO: BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

FROM: Library Services Department
Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director
(949) 717-3801, mhartson@newportbeachca.gov

PREPARED BY: Christina Smith, Literacy Coordinator

TITLE: Literacy Services Update

OVERVIEW:

The Library's Project Adult Literacy (PAL) began in 1988 and has had a significant impact in the Newport Beach community and beyond as we empower adults to achieve greater success in their lives. Our program offers no-cost, one-on-one tutoring and small group classes for adults who are interested in improving their reading, writing and communication skills.

Here are some of the program highlights from the past year:

- There are currently 62 active tutors and 61 adult learners enrolled in the program. PAL currently has 10 active small group classes. From July 2024 through June 2025, 6,983 volunteer hours were completed.
- In October 2024, Christina Smith became the new Literacy Coordinator and continued to maintain a successful literacy program with a growing number of volunteers and learners.
- In January 2025, Jennifer Rusiecki became the new part-time Literacy Department Assistant and quickly became a valuable addition to the program, forging connections with tutors and learners.
- In February 2025, Literacy Coordinator Smith attended the New Literacy Coordinator and Director Orientation in Sacramento with Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager. At this Orientation, Literacy Coordinator Smith was introduced to the California Library Literacy Services (CLLS) and networked with other new literacy coordinators.
- In March 2025, 12 learners participated in the 24th Annual Writer to Writer contest. One learner received second place in the Intermediate Writing Category and one learner received third place in the Advanced Writing Category.
- In April 2025, PAL held its first Volunteer Appreciation Celebration to honor and recognize the volunteers in the PAL program for their continued dedication to helping others.

- In May 2025, PAL participated in the CLLS Traveling Advisors program, where the coordinator spent two days with two retired literacy coordinators learning how to improve and grow the PAL program.
- In June 2025, Literacy Coordinator Smith completed annual learner/tutor conferences, meeting with every participant in the program.
- PAL has continued to build connections and partnerships with various groups throughout the Orange County area, including South Coast Literacy.

NOTICING:

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the Board of Library Trustees considers the item).