

HOW THE WORK OF THE **CLA** HELPS DRIVE MORE EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES



1. **INPUTS**

THE ALLIANCE

A network of more than 100 literacy organizations convening to promote essential conditions, literacy building, and civic fluency to achieve progress across communities in Chicago.

2. **ACTIONS**

CAPACITY-BUILDING

We grow a vibrant, functional work environment for Chicago organizations, providing a unique, cost-advantageous space as well as professional development, best-practice sharing, and curated resources.

ALIGNMENT

We guide vision and strategy in the literacy sector, boost service coordination, promote opportunities for collaborative work, and establish shared measurement practices and community mapping.

ADVOCACY

We raise the visibility of literacy as a core issue of equity and justice, driving regional conversations about best practices and pursuing long-term strategies like advancing policy, building public will, and mobilizing funding.

3. **OUTCOMES**

ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS

Increasing access to diverse literacy-based resources, highly prepared educators, holistic early childhood development experiences, safe learning spaces, and scientifically-backed teaching practices.

FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY

Gaining foundational skills in reading, writing, storytelling, and critical thinking that lead to increased confidence, self-esteem, and love of learning.

ADVANCED LITERACY

Advancing foundational literacy skills through multiple contexts, including but not limited to the arts and sciences, culture and identity, civic learning, and digital technology.

CIVIC FLUENCY

Leveraging advanced literacy skills for employment readiness, financial agency, civic participation, access to social services and health care, and the capacity to learn.

4. **IMPACT**

ACCESS

Essential conditions for literacy gains are abundant, equitably distributed across communities, and inclusive of individuals of varied learning abilities.

ENGAGEMENT

Individuals have foundational skills of reading, writing, and language acquisition to enable global communication.

Individuals consistently expand literacy skills through creating, interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating content in multiple contexts.

AGENCY

Outcomes of literacy gains become present through personal agency and community participation.

PROGRESS

Community members are able to participate in a just and equitable society that is inclusive of all individuals, cultures, and communities.

WHY WE'RE HERE

Our mission is to improve literacy in Chicago by driving collaboration and increasing the impact of our community's literacy organizations. Literacy opens doors to full civic and economic participation, deeper cultural awareness, and interpersonal and social-emotional capacities. Literacy is a foundational point of access in our diverse, shared world. Ensuring that members of all communities have access to literacy is essential to realizing a more just and equitable society.

We envision a 100% literate Chicago, where the transformative power of literacy is accessible to all.

Through a network of more than 100 organizations, our Alliance addresses the **Essential Conditions** that need to be in place for learning to occur, which include access to diverse resources, highly prepared educators, holistic early childhood development experiences, safe learning spaces, and scientifically-backed teaching practices.

Our Alliance builds **Foundational Literacy** skills in reading, writing, storytelling, and critical thinking that lead to increased confidence, self-esteem and love of learning.

Our Alliance also builds **Advanced Literacy** skills through advancing foundational literacy skills through multiple contexts, including but not limited to the arts and sciences, culture and identity, civic learning, and digital technology.

Our Alliance also focuses on **Civic Fluency** by leveraging advanced literacy skills for employment readiness, financial agency, civic participation, access to social services and health care, and the capacity to learn.

We do this through three main strategic actions:

Through physical and virtual space and programs, we lower the barriers to our members' work, providing workspace, professional development, curated resources, networking opportunities, and more, so they can focus on what's important: their ability to **build capacity** and deliver their impact.

We help **align** more than 100 literacy and education organizations serving Chicago by boosting service coordination, promoting collaboration, and establishing unified community mapping and evaluation so that, as a collective, we're able to more efficiently and effectively boost literacy in Chicago's communities.

Literacy is a core issue of equity and justice, and we **advocate** by creating and supporting platforms for conversation and learning, including through our own programs, like DECODE, an annual conference for literacy professionals and stakeholders. We pursue long-term strategies like advancing policy, building public will, and mobilizing funding.

OUR APPROACH:

Increase Access to the essential conditions needed for literacy gains to occur, helping to ensure that resources are abundant, equitably distributed across communities, and inclusive of individuals with varied learning abilities.

Increase Engagement through building foundational and broad literacy skills that enable people to create, interpret, analyze, and evaluate content in multiple contexts.

Increase Agency of individuals to apply developed literacy skills through activating civic opportunity and participating in community.