

Journey to Success

The Literacy Resource Office of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries provides support, information, and technical assistance to more than fifty library and community based literacy programs throughout the state.

The Literacy Resource Office provides a lending library, funding opportunities, training, literacy-related marketing items, website, and toll-free number.

Local literacy programs collaborate with libraries, employers, education providers, government agencies, civic organizations, and others to serve their communities.



Literacy

Learning for Life

To be a part of Oklahoma's literacy effort, please contact your local literacy program or call the Literacy Resource Office at (405) 522-3205 or toll-free in Oklahoma (800) 522-8116, option 4.

Visit the Literacy Resource Office website at libraries.ok.gov/literacy for a list of community literacy programs and other information about literacy in Oklahoma.

O • K • L • A • H • O • M • A
LITERACY RESOURCE OFFICE

200 NE 18 Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73105
(800) 522-8116 (405) 522-3205
libraries.ok.gov/literacy

Adult Literacy in Oklahoma

Facts and Statistics

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Impact of Low Literacy on Oklahoma

Because there is no single measure to determine the rate and impact of illiteracy in Oklahoma, a number of factors are considered. These include census data; reports on dropouts, poverty, employment, and health; and national statistics and reports.

Families

Oklahoma ranks 41 in a new analysis of the most educated states in the nation. WalletHub analysis of 2017's Most and Least Educated States

It's generational. Educational experience is significantly lower for Oklahomans whose father or mother did not complete high school or post-secondary education and training. 45% of the target sample had no father or mother with any higher education experience. Oklahoma Works, 2017

85 percent (84,519) of children whose parents do not have a high school degree live in low-income families. National Center for Children in Poverty, 2016

Beginning in fourth grade, children use reading to learn other subjects, and therefore, mastery of reading becomes a critical component in their ability to keep up academically. Children who reach fourth grade without being able to read proficiently are more likely to drop out of high school, reducing their earning potential and chances for success. In 2017, 33% of OK fourth graders read at below basic level. Kids Count, 2017

The Economy

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, in Oklahoma the Class of 2015 reported 37,340 (82.5 percent) high school graduates. If the graduation rate had reached 90%, the estimated impact on the State of Oklahoma would have been:

- \$52.2 million—increased home sales
- \$35.1 million—increased annual earnings
- \$27.6 million—increased annual spending
- \$6 million—increased auto sales
- \$6.2 million—increased average state and local tax revenue
- 100 new jobs

Employment

Education impacts an individual's employment and earning potential.

Nationally, adults with a bachelor's degree earn an average of \$59,124 a year, while those with a high school diploma earn \$35,256, and those without a high school diploma average \$26,636. Smartasset.com

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the unemployment rate for individuals age twenty-five or older with at least a bachelor's degree was 3.5 percent. The unemployment rate was 6 percent for high school

graduates and 9 percent for high school dropouts. In 2017, an estimated 18.9 percent of high school dropouts were unemployed, compared to 16.8 percent of graduates. The Statistics Portal

The Labor report also listed Oklahoma as one of the states with the largest share of employment in occupations that required a high school diploma or equivalent, at 40.7 percent. (2013)

Health

Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information needed to make appropriate health decisions.

Poor health literacy is a stronger predictor of a person's health than his age, socioeconomic status or ethnicity. American Medical Association Foundation

For both men and women, more education often means longer life. On average, 25 year old college graduates can expect to live nine years longer than their counterparts who have not completed high school. This life expectancy gap has been widening since the 1960s with significant differences in women's health. Time to Act: Investing in the Health of our Children and Communities

A mother's education affects the health of her children. Babies whose mothers have less than 12 years of education are nearly twice as likely to die before their first birthdays as babies born to mothers with 16 or more years of schooling. Center on Society and Health

An excess of \$230 billion a year in health care costs is linked to low adult literacy. Nearly half of American adults have difficulty understanding and using health information. Lack of understanding impedes adults' abilities to make appropriate health decisions and increases the likelihood that they will incur higher health costs. ProLiteracy

In 2017, the United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings listed Oklahoma in 43rd place. The poor health ranking was due to Oklahoma's high rates of diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and preventable hospitalizations, as well as unhealthy behaviors such as low rates of physical activity and low consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Health Literacy classes are provided by library and community based literacy programs to promote better health and wellness in Oklahoma communities throughout the state.

English Language Learners

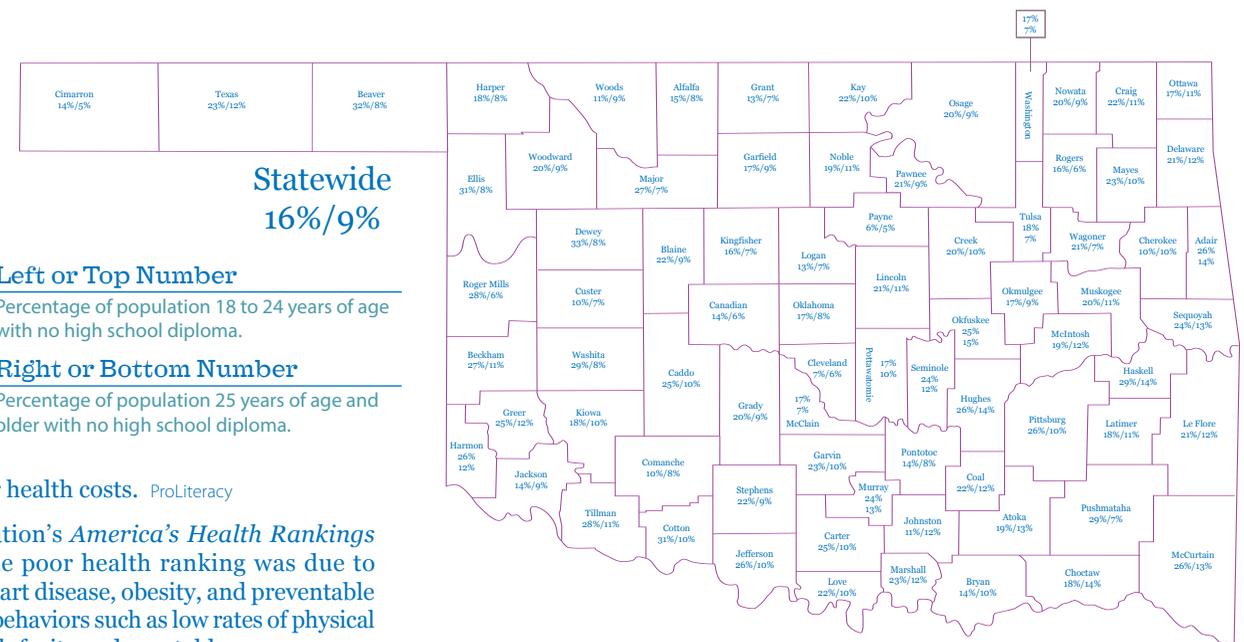
Oklahoma literacy needs have changed with the changes in demographics of Oklahoma residents. According to American Immigration Council, Immigrants in Oklahoma (2017), 235,350 immigrants make up 6 percent of the state's population.

Of that number 34 percent are naturalized US citizens. Immigrants are valuable assets to Oklahoma's workforce in several industries including farming, construction, accommodation and food services, manufacturing, etc. Additionally, 9 percent are business owners.

The 2016 American Community Survey revealed that 41 percent (89,154) of Oklahoma immigrants, age eighteen and older, speak English less than very well.

Citizenship, English language instruction, and conversation classes are services provided by library and community based literacy programs striving to assist immigrants as they prepare for better jobs, communicate with teachers and medical practitioners, and participate in community affairs.

Oklahoma Educational Levels



Based on statistics from 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates