



California Library Literacy Services (CLLS) Frequently Asked Questions

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What is the definition of an enrolled adult learner?

A person must meet the following criteria to enroll in CLLS Adult Literacy Services (ALS):

- Be at least 16 years old and not enrolled in high school or another degree-granting program. A Career Online High School (COHS) learner may count as a CLLS learner if they receive regular tutoring. (See [“Can you clarify ‘are not enrolled in a degree-granting institution?’”](#) for more detail.)
- Seek literacy services for themselves in English and can do the intake interview in English
- Complete an intake interview and assessment that includes reading and writing skills
- Have established one or more learning goals related to reading and/or writing
- Spend most of their instructional time improving reading skills or writing skills
- Attend at least two instructional sessions in the current program period

Once a person meets these criteria, they are considered an "enrolled adult learner."

What is the definition of an enrolled English as a Second Language (ESL) learner?

A person must meet the following criteria to enroll in CLLS ESL Services:

- Be at least 16 years old and not enrolled in high school or another degree-granting program. A Career Online High School (COHS) learner may count as a CLLS learner if they receive regular tutoring. (See [“Can you clarify ‘are not enrolled in a degree-granting institution?’”](#) for more detail.)
- Seek literacy services for themselves in English although they may not be able to do the intake interview in English
- Complete an intake interview and assessment that includes listening and speaking skills
- Have established one or more learning goals, including communication-related (listening and speaking) goals
- Spend most of their instructional time improving their English skills, such as conversation and pronunciation
- Attend at least two instructional sessions in the current program period

Once a person meets these criteria, they are considered an "enrolled ESL learner."

Are there any CLLS guidelines for onboarding adults with disabilities?

Many CLLS programs serve adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. In many places, there is a gap in services for adults with disabilities after they age out of school-based services at ages 21 or 22. Some CLLS programs work with community day programs. Other programs refer these individuals elsewhere.

To enroll in CLLS, it is important that potential learners sign up for the service themselves. Each participant should be able to contact the library themselves or have a way to initiate and respond to contact. Each participant should complete the enrollment process. See [“What is the definition of an enrolled adult learner?”](#) and [“What is the](#)

[definition of an enrolled English as a Second Language \(ESL\) learner?](#)” for more support.

It is also important to have the right tutor or group activity. Many tutors will have to learn new modalities for helping adults learn. Tutors should also have realistic expectations about a learner’s rate of progress.

If an individual with a disability is interested, any previous records about testing and accommodations can be very helpful.

In what ways can an adult learner and ESL learner receive instruction?

An enrolled ALS learner and ESL learner can receive instruction in the following formats:

- One-on-one tutoring
- Small group instruction in groups that average 2 to 8 people
- Class instruction in groups that average 9 or more attendees
 - NOTE: To offer class instruction, there should be a justifiable need for this service. Class instruction should not duplicate current community services.
- Walk-in tutoring or literacy-related computer lab time with informal help from staff or volunteers

What is "walk-in tutoring"?

Walk-in tutoring is a literacy program option for enrolled or eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled learners to receive just-in-time literacy support. During this time, learners may work with a literacy staff person or volunteer to meet this need.

For enrolled learners, walk-in tutoring time can be counted towards their overall instructional hours.

Eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled learners may be counted as active if they undergo an intake, assessment, goal setting, and attend at least two walk-in tutoring sessions.

See ["What is the definition of an enrolled adult learner?"](#) and ["What is the definition of an enrolled English as a Second Language \(ESL\) learner?"](#) for more support.

Where can I find the Roles & Goals list?

The 2023-2024 Roles & Goals list and the 2024-2025 Roles & Goals list can be found on the CLLS website under the ["Measuring Success"](#) section.

The 2023-2024 Roles & Goals list will be archived as soon as the 2023-2024 CLLS Final Report closes. Programs should begin using the 2024-2025 Roles & Goals list that reflects the 2024-2025 changes.

How does ESL align with other CLLS programs?

CLLS ESL funding expands CLLS services to those who were not served by the CLLS adult literacy definition. CLLS ESL programs can now serve learners who do not meet the minimum qualifications of an CLLS ALS learner. See ["What is the definition of an enrolled adult learner?"](#) and ["What is the definition of an enrolled English as a Second Language \(ESL\) learner?"](#) for more support.

Below is more information about how CLLS ESL programs align with ALS and FLS programs.

Adult Literacy Services

There are three key differences to help identify an ALS and ESL learner:

- ESL learners are speakers of languages other than English
- ESL learners may not speak English "proficiently"
- ESL learners have primary goals that are speaking/listening related

You can use these points, learner eligibility guidelines, and your CLLS program's internal guidelines to distinguish between an adult learner and an ESL learner. You can also use your best judgment based on what you know about the learner and their goals.

An ESL learner may become an ALS learner when they meet the criteria for adult literacy services. For reporting purposes, a learner can only be recorded in one program. A learner is either an ALS learner or an ESL learner for that year. You may change their enrollment status in the next year. This is important for any learners crossing over from one program into another.

ALS learners can join ESL programming, such as conversation groups. ESL learners can join ALS programming, such as book clubs. A learner's learning data should be reported in the appropriate program of participation. For example, if an ALS learner joins 10 sessions of a conversation class, the ten hours will be reported as ESL learning instructional hours.

Family Literacy Services (FLS)

CLLS FLS intends to serve enrolled adult learners and eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult learners and their families. Throughout the CLLS ESL funding period (2021-2026), enrolled ESL learners or eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled ESL learners may also participate in FLS programs. ESL learners can be counted and reported as FLS program during this period.

NOTE: Bilingual or multilingual FLS programming may be offered. FLS programming should not be offered only in languages other than English.

Can we use CLLS ESL funds to cover services for FLS like books for home libraries and at-home learning kits?

CLLS ESL funds cannot be used for FLS program or activity expense like books for home libraries or at-home learning kits for families. These expenses are only allowable with FLS funding.

What are the goals of the CLLS FLS program?

The goals of the CLLS FLS program are to:

- Support enrolled adult learners and ESL learners (if a program receives CLLS ESL funds) to meet their family learning goals through special programming.
- Engage eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult learners or ESL learners (if a program receives CLLS ESL funds) and their families. Outreach services should connect directly back to the literacy program. The goal for FLS outreach is to enroll

learners in adult literacy or ESL services.

The priority for CLLS FLS programs is to serve enrolled adult learners and their families.

Can you clarify an “eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled” adult learner?

An eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult learner is an adult who qualifies for literacy services. But they have not yet enrolled in literacy services. Eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult learners may take part in family literacy programs with the goal of enrolling in your literacy program.

See [“What is the definition of an enrolled adult learner?”](#) and [“What is the definition of an enrolled English as a Second Language \(ESL\) learner?”](#) for more information about enrolling learners.

Can a learner who only participates in family literacy programs be considered an enrolled adult learner?

If an adult learner can only participate in FLS programs, they can be enrolled learners. Those learners must meet the minimum criteria of an adult or ESL learner. They should be working toward family goals they established during their intake.

How should family literacy programs measure eligibility for eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult learners and their families?

FLS programs should target enrolled adult learners or eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult learners and their families. FLS programs may be open to the public, especially in high need areas, but are not general library programs. FLS programs that are open to the public should use a metric to determine eligibility. There are a few ways to identify families who may be eligible for ALS:

1. Before the program, conduct a short intake of learner eligibility.
2. When attending the program, conduct a short intake of learner eligibility.
3. Use community partner knowledge in the area you are providing services.
4. Use your local educational attainment data to estimate how many attendees may be eligible for services. Sources that can be used are [U.S. Census data](#) or [PIAAC Skills Map](#) data. If you are serving a school, you may use enrollment data for that school. To use the U.S. Census data, you may find that an FLS program with 100 families takes place at a school where 50% of parents have not graduated from high school. Using this data, you can count 50 of the families attending as eligible. You can do a similar calculation with PIAAC Skills Map data. If 32% of your county’s residents are considered Level 2 or below, then 32% or 32 families of 100 families in attendance can count as eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult learner families.

What are some considerations when developing a CLLS FLS program?

Consider the following to determine if a program qualifies as a CLLS FLS program:

1. Does the program target low-literacy adults? If it does not, then it is not a CLLS FLS program. We always encourage CLLS learners to attend general library programs to help learners meet goals and connect with the community. CLLS

FLS programs are meant to be run by CLLS staff. CLLS staff may work with Youth Services/Children's staff from the library. However, a general library program is not considered a CLLS FLS program because CLLS adult learners attend.

2. Are only enrolled adult learners and their families invited to the program? If so, it is a CLLS FLS program. Enrolled adult learner families may bring friends who may be interested in enrolling in literacy services. These programs are not open to the general public.
3. Is it a one-time outreach program that targets low-literacy adults? If so, it can count as family literacy outreach. You may count the proportion of attendees that fall under the Level 1 and 2 PIAAC Skills Map statistics for your county.
4. CLLS staff may present information about literacy services at a regular library program, like a storytime. That activity is outreach rather than being a CLLS FLS activity.
5. For an ongoing library program to count as an FLS program, CLLS staff should do an intake and assessment with the adults involved. Then, CLLS staff can provide services that help adults work toward those goals and skills. Once the learners are assessed and set goals, they can be counted as enrolled CLLS learners. If most participants meet these criteria, the ongoing program can count as a CLLS FLS program.
6. If the program primarily serves adults who do not qualify for adult literacy services, is directed only at children, or the program does not intend to enroll adults in literacy services, it does not count as a CLLS FLS program.

Can family literacy programs target caregivers with children of any age or learners without children?

FLS programs may include enrolled or eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult learners with children of any age. FLS programs may also include enrolled or eligible adult learners in other, non-parent family roles. Non-parent roles include their own role as a child, grandparent, sibling, caregiver, or others. FLS programs should serve the family goals expressed by adult learners.

Examples of possible FLS programs include:

- Early literacy programs for families with young children. These programs should build the caregiver's capacity to support children in their family. Possible programs include Raising a Reader, Every Child Ready to Read, Mother Goose on the Loose, and Read & Rise.
- Programs for caregivers with children beginning the college application process.
- Programs for grandparents to build their digital skills to communicate with their grandchildren.
- Programs for children or relatives of older adults who would like to support their aging parents or family members. These programs can include improving caregiving skills for older adults or learning about resources such as medical benefits.
- Programs about mental health resources for family members of all ages.

NOTE: CLLS FLS intends to serve enrolled or eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled adult

learners and their families. During the CLLS ESL funding period (2021-2026), enrolled or eligible-but-not-yet-enrolled ESL learners may participate in FLS programs. CLLS libraries that receive CLLS ESL funds may offer bilingual or multilingual FLS programs for ESL learners. FLS programming should not be offered exclusively in non-English languages.

Can a COHS student participate in CLLS?

A COHS student can participate in ALS or ESL programs. A COHS student may be counted as a learner if they meet the minimum learner qualifications. To be eligible, COHS students must complete an intake, assessment, and goal setting. Some COHS students will not qualify as CLLS learners. However, if a COHS student meets with a volunteer tutor on a regular basis, they may be counted as a CLLS learner. COHS learners who drop in for help from staff are not generally counted as enrolled learners.

What types of program data do I need to collect?

Data collection for ALS and ESL programs is similar for both learners and tutors. ESL program data should be counted separately from ALS program data. ESL program data is reported separately because ESL Services is supported through separate one-time funding by the State of California. Collecting this data separately means that the success and effectiveness of ESL services can be measured and reported to the State Legislature.

Visit the [CLLS Manage Your Current Grant](#) page for data collection support for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. NOTE: Data collection is changing for 2024-2025.

Can you clarify learners “are not enrolled in a degree-granting program”?

Enrolled learners may not be “enrolled in high school or another degree-granting program.” When enrolling into your CLLS program, learners may be enrolled in adult classes that lead to an alternative degree (see below). Adult learners and ESL learners should not be enrolled in high school. They should also not be enrolled in for-credit classes that are intended to lead to a degree. For-credit classes are classes that fulfill college or university graduation requirements.

Adult learners and ESL learners may be enrolled in adult school. Allowable programs include alternative diploma programs, HiSET programs, GED programs, professional training, or certificate programs. Learners may also be enrolled in COHS. Although CLLS does not enroll college or university students, a learner may enroll in college or university while participating in your CLLS program. In this case, you may decide whether the learner still qualifies for literacy services.

When do CLLS programs interested in ESL programs apply for funding?

The application period for 2021-2026 CLLS ESL funds has closed. All funds have been awarded. No new libraries may apply for these funds.

What is considered a “local match”?

A local match can be any funds paid for by the library or another funder to support your CLLS program(s). These are cash (not in-kind) expenses paid by non-CLLS funds. Local matching funds must be spent on allowable CLLS expenses. Funds may come

from your library budget, grants, donations, or other sources. Non-monetary, in-kind contributions should not be reported as part of your local match. See the [CLLS Manage Your Current Grant](#) page to access the CLLS Allowable and Unallowable Expenses document.

NOTE: CLLS ALS suggests a minimum \$15,000 local match. The minimum local match factors into the CLLS ALS award calculation. FLS and ESL Services do not require a local match. If your library provides matching funds for FLS or ESL Services, you should report these funds as a local match for that program. Matching funds for FLS or ESL Services must be allowable CLLS expenses. Matching funds show local libraries' commitment to literacy services. They are a key part of ensuring ongoing funds for CLLS.

Can local matching funds be used to pay for unallowable CLLS expenses?

Local matching funds must follow CLLS allowable expenses guidelines. Local funds can be used to pay for unallowable CLLS expenses. However, these funds cannot be included in your CLLS local match and cannot be reported.

Visit the [CLLS Manage Your Current Grant](#) page for the most up-to-date CLLS allowable and unallowable expenses guidelines.

What if I am awarded CLLS ESL Services funding and also use other funding to offer ESL services?

Programs that receive CLLS ESL Services funding and other ESL funding should report the additional ESL funding as part of your CLLS ESL local match. Additionally, you may count learners served in these programs as ESL learners. ESL learners must follow the guidelines for enrolled learners. See "[What is the definition of an enrolled English as a Second Language \(ESL\) learner?](#)" for more information. For example, WIOA funding may count towards your ESL Local match. Learners in these programs may count as CLLS learners who receive instruction via large classes (9 or more people) if they are assessed and set goals.

Can indirect costs be charged to the CLLS awards?

Indirect funds can be budgeted for each of your CLLS awards and each of your local match budget columns. Indirect costs can be charged up to 10% of the subtotal of each budget column. If you expect to charge indirect to your CLLS awards, these figures must be included on your approved budget.

What does it mean to encumber funds?

Encumbered funds are funds that have been deposited in the grantee's accounting system. A budget for these funds has been approved by the State Library. CLLS funds must be encumbered by June 30 of the fiscal year in which the funds are awarded. Beginning in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, encumbered CLLS funds must be spent by the final report submission date for the program period (usually September 30).

NOTE: This change will take effect in the 2024-2025 CLLS program period. For the 2023-2024 CLLS program period, CLLS encumbered funds must be spent by December 31, 2024.

Can we encumber 2024-2025 CLLS funding? When is the deadline to spend encumbered funds?

2024-2025 CLLS funds can be encumbered by May 31, 2025. All 2024-2025 CLLS funds must be spent by the final report submission date for the program period.

NOTE: For the 2023-2024 program period, the encumbrance deadline is December 31, 2024. Contact your grant monitor if you expect to encumber your 2023-2024 CLLS funds before or by May 31, 2024.

Does the encumbrance deadline apply to CLLS ESL Services funds?

CLLS ESL encumbered funds follow the same encumbrance deadlines as CLLS ALS and CLLS FLS award funds. In general, we encourage libraries to spend their CLLS funds by June 30 when possible. However, we do understand this may not be possible for all CLLS programs.

NOTE: All CLLS ESL funds must be fully expended by June 30, 2026, in accordance with the deadline set by the California State Legislature. Contact your grant monitor if you need to encumber CLLS funds.

Where should the COHS program be reported on the application?

COHS students may be assigned a volunteer tutor and receive one-on-one tutoring. COHS students with a literacy tutor may be reported as an enrolled adult learner. Because COHS staff time is reported separately to the State, a COHS learner may not be reported if they only work with a CLLS staff member.

Other COHS program information should not be included in the CLLS application or report forms.

What if we do not know our authorized representative(s)?

An authorized representative is the person who can sign documents on behalf of your library. Contact your library's administration if you do not know your authorized representative. Contact your grant monitor for help with the documents that need signature. Together, you may be able to identify the best person to sign the document(s) requiring signature.

Should we report non-literacy staff salaries who occasionally help in literacy in the matching costs section?

A non-literacy staff person who regularly spends more than one hour per week providing direct support in your CLLS programs may be reported as part of your CLLS program. Their burdened salaries, wages, and benefits may be reported as a local matching cost. Salaries, wages, and benefits should be proportional to the time worked in the CLLS program.

A non-literacy staff person who spends less than one hour per week or provides only indirect support to your CLLS program is considered indirect support. Indirect support includes custodial staff, payroll administrators, and desk staff who refer or direct patrons to literacy services. Their salaries, wages and benefits may be reported as an indirect

cost. Salaries, wages, and benefits should be proportional to the time work in the CLLS program.

What if a staff person's FTE varies from week to week?

We understand that a staff person's time may change from week to week. On CLLS application and report forms, you can use the average time a staff person works each week to determine FTE. You should only report staff time and burdened salaries, wages, and benefits for a staff person's time worked in a CLLS program.

If any staff member works less than a full year, you will need to calculate their FTE based on a full year. For example, a .5 FTE (or half time) staff member who only worked January 2024 to June 2024 would be reported as .25 FTE. A 1.0 FTE (or full time) staff member who worked October 2023 to June 2024 would be reported as .75 FTE.

If we have a volunteer who volunteers in more than one program, how are they counted?

A volunteer may spend time supporting more than one CLLS program. In this case, a volunteer should only be counted in their primary program for 2023-2024 data reporting. For example, a volunteer who is a one-on-one tutor and a conversation club facilitator can only be reported as a volunteer for one program. They should not be reported as a volunteer in both programs because we need an unduplicated count of volunteers. Their primary program is based on which program they spend more time volunteering. Their instructional hours, however, can be reported in the corresponding program.

For example, the tutor above spends 100 hours tutoring an adult learner and 50 hours leading a conversation club. This tutor can be considered an adult literacy tutor because they volunteered more hours in this program. The 100 hours of adult literacy tutoring will be reported as adult literacy instructional hours. The 50 hours of conversation club facilitation will be reported as ESL instructional hours. Time spent preparing for these programs will be reported as "non-tutoring volunteer" hours.

NOTE: This direction applies to volunteer reporting on the 2023-2024 CLLS Final Report. For 2024-2025, libraries will be reporting all volunteer hours together.