

NEWS RELEASE



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Verizon Awards \$150,000 to English as a Second Language Technology Programs

Seven Nonprofit Agencies Expand Reach of Literacy Programs Across Massachusetts

BOSTON – Thousands of students across Massachusetts are improving their literacy skills through innovative, technologically-based literacy programs.

The Verizon Foundation has donated a total of \$150,000 in English as a Second Language technology (ESL) grants to seven nonprofit organizations to foster innovative literacy programs that expand their reach into diverse communities through the use of broadband and video technologies.

“Verizon’s goal is to ensure that people in the communities we serve have the complex literacy skills needed to effectively participate and compete in the 21st century,” said Donna Cupelo, Verizon region president of Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

“Literacy provides the key to opportunity,” Cupelo added. “We are proud to be partnering with seven wonderful agencies throughout Massachusetts that provide individuals from diverse backgrounds the ESL training necessary to build happy and productive lives here.”

The 2007 ESL Technology Grant winners include:

Boston Adult Literacy Fund: The Boston Adult Literacy Fund (BALF) was chosen as one of seven pilot sites nationwide to deliver LearnerWeb, an innovative Internet and telephone-based portal for distance ESOL learning, to students in the Boston area. The LearnerWeb program uses technology as tools to support self-directed learning for adults with basic skills needs. Students can prepare for the GED or pursue other learning goals such as fluency, citizenship, family literacy or preparing for college. The LearnerWeb makes literacy resources accessible to students on their own time and in their own environment.

Cambridge College: Cambridge College will expand its advanced ESL training program, Ladder to Language, to offer pre-college computer education and literacy services to adult learners in Lawrence and the Merrimack Valley. The expansion will prepare students for employment or to pursue additional education (certificates, college coursework) through English language mastery. The Language Lab provides state-of-the-art software enabling students to practice the TOEFL exam, improve pronunciation with voice recognition software, hone basic computer skills through tutoring software, and improve English language comprehension with intensive listening exercises.

Framingham Adult ESL Plus: Framingham Adult ESL Plus will develop an extensive curriculum that will integrate Pronunciation Power software into the existing ESL Plus curriculum. The software includes highly interactive activities, games, and dictionary pages to help students improve their pronunciation while learning the English language. Funds also will be used to train staff members on how to teach the curriculum as part of the overall ESL program and run a pilot class.

Massachusetts Career Development Institute (MCDI): MCDI will launch its year-long English for Employment program, which will provides adult learners in the Springfield area with English language classes, coupled with computer literacy, career and life skills, and motivational workshops. Students engaged in the program also will have access to a comprehensive menu of one-stop education, training, and support services, and a job placement center that prepares and helps place students in the workforce.

Northern Essex Community College (NECC): NECC will provide students enrolled in Developmental Education, ESL and literacy programs with an opportunity to develop Information Technology literacy skills while continuing to improve literacy and academic skills. Through this project, students will become fluent in information technology and be encouraged to consider careers in information technology by enrolling in and completing the college's Certificate in Information Technology.

United Neighbors of Cleghorn: The Cleghorn Neighborhood Center will offer an adult education program for low-income Latinos through a technology-based curriculum that combines four main components needed to succeed in life: General Education Diploma (GED) preparation, ESL, computer training, and leadership development. Curriculum will be offered in both Spanish and English. Learners will gain skills in basic math and literacy, computers, and the English language, and the skills needed to find better job opportunities, and career advancement.

Worcester Public Library: The Worcester Public Library, in partnership with Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester, will provide critical instruction in English literacy to learners in central Massachusetts. The Worcester ESL program will provide classroom instruction in English through Rosetta Stone software, which covers four integrated literacy skills: comprehension, speaking, writing and reading. The project also will provide learners with computer lab instruction. The goal is to increase English literacy, and integrate technology literacy to enhance computer skills while improving functional English literacy.

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, is committed to improving literacy and K-12 education; fostering awareness and prevention of domestic violence; and promoting the use of technology in health-care delivery. In 2006, the foundation awarded more than \$69 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the United States and abroad. The foundation also matched charitable donations from Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in \$29 million in combined contributions. Under the foundation's Verizon Volunteer initiative, one of the nation's largest employee-volunteer programs, company employees and retirees have also contributed nearly 3 million hours of community service since Verizon's inception in 2000. For more information, visit www.verizon.com/foundation.

Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE:VZ), headquartered in New York, is a leader in delivering broadband and other wireline and wireless communication innovations to mass market, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America's most reliable wireless network, serving 60.7 million customers nationwide. Verizon's Wireline operations include Verizon Business, which delivers innovative and seamless business solutions to customers around the world, and Verizon Telecom, which brings customers the benefits of converged communications, information and entertainment services over the nation's most advanced fiber-optic network. A Dow 30 company, Verizon has a diverse workforce of more than 238,000 and last year generated consolidated operating revenues of more than \$88 billion. For more information, visit www.verizon.com.

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