Final Technical Report

TO: Delaware Division of Libraries

FROM: Rebecca McColl and Kelly Sherretz

         Center for Community Research & Service and Institute for Public Administration University of Delaware

RE: Adult Literacy Data

DATE: August 2022

Project Overview

In December, 2021 staff from the Center for Community Research and Service (CCRS) and the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware (UD) entered into a partnership with the Delaware Division of Libraries (DDL) to implement a two-fold plan for enhancement of data practices in the timeframe January through June of 2022. The two tiers of the plan are outlined below:

1. *Create a set of one-page advocacy documents*
   The UD team was initially contracted to create a set of one-page advocacy documents with the intended audience of state legislators, partner organizations, and other stakeholders. However, through conversations with DDL this goal evolved into creating a single comprehensive report on adult literacy mirroring the previous report created on child literacy by the KIDS COUNT in Delaware (KCDE) team. The report is formatted so each individual section may stand alone and be extracted for use as a snapshot. The purpose of this brief is to inform community partners on the baseline of adult literacy throughout the state and be a resource for adult literacy data.

2. *Assist in the creation of an adult literacy data dashboard*
   In conjunction with DDL, the UD team created a framework of indicators for an adult literacy database. The data included characteristics of adults in the state, library-specific data regarding cardholders, circulation, and use of library resources such as computers, and information on literacy programs and services throughout the state. The purpose of this database was to provide DDL with a foundation of adult literacy data to aid in the creation of a literacy dashboard. The UD team is committed to assisting in the design, implementation, or use of a data dashboard.

Strategy Meetings and Correspondence

The UD team met with the DDL team on three occasions via video conferencing. The purpose of these meetings was to create an initial plan for the adult literacy brief, discuss areas of interest for various DDL stakeholders, and to discuss edits made to the report by DDL. Additionally, the UD team met with the KCDE team four times to discuss the overall project, incorporating the two briefs into a final report, and creation of a combined recommendations section.

In addition to these virtual meetings, Becky McColl and Erin Nescott from the KCDE team attended several meetings on early literacy family outreach, hosted by the Delaware Readiness Teams. Becky also attended the Adult Literacy Action Forum hosted by Literacy Delaware on May 3rd, 2022. Information from these meetings, including helpful data sources and connections between child and adult literacy, were incorporated into the final report.

The UD team remained in correspondence with DDL via email for communications including exchange of data, data-related questions, and receipt of feedback on the report drafts.

Goal 1: Data Snapshots

As previously noted, the original final product was intended to be data snapshots, but this goal was altered to a single, comprehensive brief in order to create a document that was congruent to the brief previously created on youth literacy. The brief was formatted as such that individual sections may be pulled from the brief to act as standalone snapshots if DDL wishes to use them in that way.

The brief focuses on literacy through the lifespan, incorporating both adult literacy and multi-generational literacy. Visualizations, including tables, charts, and zip-code level maps, were created using data from the aforementioned literacy database.

In the initial editing stages, conversations with DDL indicated the intention for this brief to be published in conjunction with the youth literacy brief as a final report. The UD team worked with the KCDE team to combine both reports and create a recommendations section focusing on literacy for families and individuals of all ages.

Goal 2: Database of Literacy Indicators

The UD team constructed a database of adult literacy indicators using excel to ensure the data would be in the same format as the child literacy data prepared by the KCDE team. The design of the database was formatted in a way to mirror the design of the other pre-existing database. The file includes a table of contents with source information and individual tabs with a table for each data indicator that was discussed in the report. Data sources in the database included DDL and the US Census' American Community Survey. Depending on the indicator, data was disaggregated by either state, zip code, or county.

This database of indicators is intended to be utilized in two main ways. First, the UD team will create a report regarding adult literacy, discussed above, using the indicators in the database. Second, the database will contribute to a literacy dashboard as a resource for adult literacy data. The UD team will continue to work in conjunction with the KCDE team to provide technical assistance and support in the creation of a literacy dashboard as needed.

Closing

Thank you for your support of this work. If there are any additional questions, please contact Rebecca McColl bmccoll@udel.edu) or Kelly Sherretz (kscollon@udel.edu).