THE READ CENTER

Volunteer Handbook

5211 W. Broad St., Suite 102
Richmond, VA 23230
804-288-9930

www.readcenter.org   frontdesk@readcenter.org

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Program Director: Nausha Brown-Chavez, nausha@readcenter.org

Program Coordinator: Chris Miller, chris@readcenter.org

Administrative Assistant, Emma Tinney, emma@readcenter.org

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday

8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Welcome to The READ Center

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to The READ Center! We are delighted you have chosen to volunteer your time with us. We understand your time is valuable and are honored you are willing to spend some of it with us. Each and every day, our agency depends on volunteers like you to ensure we operate efficiently and successfully to serve our students. Volunteers at The READ Center do everything from tutoring students and substitute teaching classes, to attending community and outreach events. In short, The READ Center could not operate without dedicated volunteers like you.

The Volunteer Handbook provides answers to many of the questions you may have about The READ Center's volunteer program. It covers policies and procedures, and mutual responsibilities. You are responsible for reading and understanding the Volunteer Handbook, and for adhering to The READ Center's policies and procedures. If anything is unclear, please discuss the matter with the Program Coordinator.

On behalf of our staff, students, and everyone here at The READ Center, we welcome you to our volunteer program. Thank you for dedicating your time to help adults with low-literacy levels develop the skills they need to fulfil their roles as citizens, workers, and family members.

Sincerely,

Nausha Brown-Chavez
Program Director

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Mission and History

MISSION:
Changing lives through adult literacy.

VISION:
A community in which all adults have a literate life.

WHO WE ARE:
The READ Center is a community-based nonprofit organization which has been providing educational opportunities to adults with low-level reading and communication skills for more than 36 years. READ was founded as the Literacy Council of Metropolitan Richmond in 1982 by Altrusa International Richmond, Inc., a professional women's business service club and became a 501(c)(3) organization in 1984. READ is funded by individuals, community organizations, foundations, businesses and Chesterfield and Henrico Counties.

WHAT WE DO:
READ Center's mission is accomplished by providing classroom instruction, one-to-one tutoring, an adult literacy curriculum, and educational resources to support students.

WHY WE DO IT:

The ability to read is something most of us take for granted. It is something we assume every adult can do, but that is not true. In the United States an estimated 43 million people cannot read, write or do basic math above a third-grade level. In the greater Richmond region, roughly 1 in 10 adults lack these skills or more than 81,000 adults.

Every important issue is impacted by literacy – health, employment, housing, parenting, education, and civic engagement. The inability to read creates huge barriers for adults trying to function in our society. Low literacy traps families in cycles of low-educational attainment and poverty that is hard to break.

WHO WE SERVE:
We serve adults 18 years of age and older who have limited literacy skills. Learning to read as an adult is complex, and the students are often those who have had very limited success in school. Many adult learners spend years struggling with reading and hiding their inability to read from family members, friends, coworkers, and employers. About 75% of READ students read at or below the 5th grade level.

Expectations

What The READ Center Expects from You

The READ Center expects the following of its volunteers:

- To be respectful of students, teachers, staff, and other volunteers;
- To know your duties and how to execute them correctly;
- To communicate with READ staff and cooperate with your fellow volunteers;
- To take advantage of professional development, including trainings and social/networking events that are offered to you, and to share any professional development opportunities you become aware of;
- To support the safe and pleasant learning environment READ strives to build;
- To help READ improve programs and volunteer experiences by providing regular feedback.

What You Can Expect from The READ Center

As a volunteer for The READ Center, you can expect:

- To receive a clear and specific job description;
- To be given appropriate assignments according to your skills, interests, availability, and training;
- To be given appropriate formal and informal expressions of recognition;
- To receive orientation, training, support, and supervision for the jobs you accept and know why you are being asked to do a task;
- To receive feedback regarding tutor evaluations;
- To receive prompt attention from The READ Center staff for any concern that may arise;
- To be recognized for your hard work and time you give to READ through volunteer celebrations, special events, and more.

Classroom Tutor Job Description

Position Title:	Classroom Literacy Tutor (in person or virtual)
Job Description:	Provide small-group or individual tutoring in reading and writing for English-speaking adults. Classes are held in person in the READ Center and in various classroom locations throughout Richmond and surrounding counties. Classes are also conducted remotely via Google Meet.
General Duties:	Attend class regularly – in person or online. Collaborate with teachers to create lesson plans for student goal work. Communicate frequently with appropriate staff.
Time Commitment:	Two hours of tutoring per week with a one-year commitment.
Qualifications:	Dependable, patient, and flexible. Ability to encourage and support adult learners by helping them develop confidence about learning. Be aware of cultural differences and respectful of learners as adult peers. Ability to support adult learners who may not have as much experience using digital platforms or the tools they own.

Eligibility Requirements:

- 18 years of age or older; High school diploma or GED
- Able to speak and understand English with ease
- Participate in additional professional development
- Access to the internet and a tool to use when tutoring, e.g. smartphone, iPad tablet, laptop or computer

Support Provided:

- Orientation: In person or online
- Classroom Observations: In person or online
- ProLiteracy online courses and web-based resources
- Initial 3-hour training: In person or online
- Staff consultation and support
- Tutorials on how to use various video conferencing tools

Contact:

The READ Center
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frontdesk@readcenter.org

One-to-One Tutor Job Description

Position Title:

One-to-One Tutor (in person or virtual)

Job Description:

Provide one-to-one tutoring in reading and writing for English-speaking adults. Tutoring takes place in various public spaces in Richmond and surrounding counties, or via video conferencing based on the device and system available to the tutor and student.

General Duties:

Meet with your student in a public space or via video-conferencing tool.
Create student-centered lesson plans.
Collaborate with student to achieve their goals.
Submit monthly student progress reports.

Time Commitment:

Two hours of tutoring per week with a one-year commitment.

Qualifications:

Dependable, patient, and flexible. Ability to encourage and support adult learners by helping them develop confidence about learning. Be aware of cultural differences and respectful of learners as adult peers. Ability to support adult learners who may not have as much experience using digital platforms or the tools they own.

Eligibility Requirements:

- 18 years of age or older; High school diploma or GED
- Able to speak and understand English with ease
- Participate in additional professional development
- Access to the internet and a tool to use when tutoring, e.g. tablet, iPad or laptop

Support Provided:

- Orientation: In person or online
- Tutoring Observations: In person or online
- ProLiteracy online courses and web-based resources
- Initial 3-hour training: In person or online
- Staff consultation and support
- Tutorials on how to use various video conferencing tools
- Copies of the workbooks provided to the students

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Digital Literacy Volunteer Job Description

Position Title: Digital Literacy Volunteer (in person)

Job Description: Provide support during basic digital literacy classes to English-speaking adults. Classes include Basic Computer Skills, Mousing, and Keyboarding. Classes are held in person at the READ Center and led by our Distance Learning Coordinator.

General Duties: Attend scheduled digital literacy class in person.
Circulate throughout the room to help monitor student progress.
Model digital literacy tasks as needed.
Provide reading literacy support by reading instructions in the learning module.
Communicate frequently with appropriate staff.

Time Commitment: One-time, two hour class - with the opportunity to volunteer for multiple classes.

Qualifications: Dependable, patient, and flexible. Ability to encourage and support adult learners by helping them develop confidence about learning. Be aware of cultural differences and respectful of learners as adult peers. Ability to support adult learners who may not have as much experience using digital platforms or the tools they own.

Eligibility Requirements:
- 18 years of age or older; High school diploma or GED
- Able to speak and understand English with ease
- Comfort performing basic tasks on a computer (such as opening a program and navigating to a website) and familiarity with formal keyboarding techniques.

Support Provided:
- Orientation: In person or online
- Classroom Observations: In person or online
- ProLiteracy online courses and web-based resources
- Initial 3-hour training: In person or online
- Staff consultation and support
- Tutorials on how to use various video conferencing tools

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Substitute Teacher Job Description

Position Title: Substitute Teacher

Job Description: Substitute teachers are needed in the absence of our regular teachers to instruct adults with low-level literacy skills and to run the classroom environment. (in person or virtual.)

General Duties:
Use materials provided to attain lesson goals.
Create student-centered lesson plans.
Collaborate with students to achieve student goals.
Communicate frequently with tutors and appropriate staff.

Time Commitment: Depending on need; classes are 2-hours in length.

Qualifications: Some classroom teaching experience. Dependable, patient, and flexible. Ability to encourage and support adult learners by helping them develop confidence about learning. Aware of cultural differences and respecting learners as adult peers. Experience with the digital tools used by the teacher. Ability to support adult learners who may not have as much experience using digital platforms or the tools they own.

Eligibility Requirements:
- 18 years of age or older; High school diploma or GED
- Able to speak and understand English with ease.
- Certificate in teaching a plus
- Participate in additional professional development
- Access to the internet and a tool to use when tutoring, e.g. smartphone, iPad, tablet, laptop or computer
- Completion of Diversity Training

Support Provided:
- Orientation: In person or online
- Classroom Observations: In person or online
- ProLiteracy online courses and web-based resources
- Initial 3-hour training: In person or online
- Staff consultation and support

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Tutor Mentor Job Description

Position Title: Tutor Mentor

Job Description: Experienced tutor mentors meet with new one-to-one or classroom tutors looking for advice on getting started and making tutoring effective.

General Duties: Make site visits to pairs to observe tutoring, observe online or listen in to remote tutoring sessions, observe classrooms.
Allow new tutors to observe your session – if student agrees.
Support new tutors to make student-centered lesson plans.
Facilitate READ Tutor Space Google Classroom communication and tutor collaboration.
Communicate frequently with tutors and appropriate staff.
Advise staff of requests from tutors for workshops.

Time Commitment: Depending on need

Qualifications: Dependable, patient, and flexible. Ability to encourage and support tutors and adult learners by helping them develop confidence. Aware of cultural differences and respecting learners as adult peers. Experience using digital learning platforms and video conferencing tools such as Google Meet and Google Classroom.

Eligibility Requirements:
- 18 years of age or older High school diploma or GED
- Able to speak and understand English with ease
- Completion of The READ Center tutor training
- Participate in additional professional development
- Access to the internet and a tool to use, e.g. smartphone, iPad, tablet, laptop or compute.
- Certificate in teaching a plus

Support Provided:
- Staff consultation and support
- Access to ProLiteracy's web-based resources
- Access to The READ Center tutor library resources

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Assessment Administrator Job Description

Position Title: Assessment Administrator

Job Description: Administer the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to all
                          new students enrolling in The READ Center.

General Duties: Administer assessments at The READ Center office.
                          Prepare testing materials and score assessments.
                          Ensure student intake forms have been filled out correctly.
                          Communicate frequently with appropriate staff.

Time Commitment: As needed based on scheduled student registrations.
                          Registrations are conducted during the daytime and evening.
                          Registrations are 2-hours in length.

Qualifications: Dependable, patient, and flexible. Ability to encourage and
                          support adult learners by helping them develop confidence
                          about learning. Aware of cultural differences and respecting
                          learners as adult peers. Attention to detail.

**Eligibility
Requirements:**
- 18 years of age or older
- High school diploma or GED
- Able to speak and understand English with ease
  Participate in additional professional development

Support Provided:
- TABE Administrator Training
- Observations
- Staff consultation and support

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Policies and Procedures

Commitment

Assignments to a classroom or location are based on student enrollment and are not guaranteed from year-to-year. The volunteer commitment is two hours per week for one year. At the end of each academic year, volunteers are evaluated and contacted to discuss continuing involvement. After two-years of service in an assignment, volunteers are encouraged to continue challenging themselves by transitioning to a new opportunity such as: one-to-one tutoring, entering a new classroom, or substitute teaching. If you find your schedule has changed, contact the Program Coordinator to determine if there are opportunities on a different day/time that may fit with your new schedule.

Communication and Information Sharing

The READ Center uses technology to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs. The READ Center's primary method of communication is email, and all volunteers must be willing and able to use email for communication. READ staff is always accessible to volunteers via email and telephone.
Open communication is mandatory. It is essential that you notify READ staff of breaks from tutoring, relocation of one-to-one meeting space, time or day changes, as well as program feedback and any concerns.

Confidential Information

Your volunteer service with The READ Center assumes an obligation to maintain confidentiality and respect privacy. As a volunteer, you may be privy to information that is confidential in nature, such as names and personal information about students and volunteers. In addition, you may have access to proprietary or privileged information involving staff, volunteers, students, or partner sites. Such information cannot be shared with family, friends, acquaintances, or the general public. Disclosure of confidential information will lead to dismissal.
During virtual tutoring a student's home and personal life may be on display. Photographs, screenshots, or audio recordings are not allowed during virtual tutoring.

Harassment

As a READ Center volunteer, you are responsible for keeping our learning environment free of harassment. Harassment may include intimidation, hostility, unwelcome sexual advances, or other offenses which may interfere with volunteer performance. Any volunteer who becomes aware of an incident of harassment against a student, a teacher, or another volunteer, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, **must** report it to any READ staff member with whom they feel comfortable.

Self-Determination

Exercising self-determination requires that learners know what the instructional resources and choices are and the consequences of selecting any of them. They shall not be placed in a position of clear or present risk to themselves or others.

Volunteer Background Screening

The READ Center values the safety of its volunteers, students, and staff. To reduce risks, prospective and current volunteers will have their names checked in the Virginia Sex Offender Registry, with rescreens occurring every two years.

Diversity and Equal Opportunity

The READ Center is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace and provides consideration for employment without regard to race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, or protected veteran status. We value, champion, and embrace diversity as an integral part of our business. We will strive to ensure that volunteers and staff broadly reflect the diversity of the community.

Feedback

In addition to yearly volunteer satisfaction surveys, The READ Center welcomes and encourages regular feedback from volunteers. Our volunteers spend many hours in classrooms and with students, and we value their perspectives. Questions, comments, and concerns from volunteers help us think of new ways to innovate programming for our students. Should you have an idea or something to discuss, please contact the Program Director or Program Coordinator by calling (804) 288-9930.

Absences and Lateness

Volunteers are critical to serving READ students. If you are regularly absent or arrive late, you will not be able to fulfill our obligations to our students. In classes, please report any absences or late arrivals to the teacher at least one day in advance. As a one-to-one tutor, please contact your student directly at least one day in advance. In the event you are unable to reach the teacher or your student, please contact READ staff at 804-288-9930 or email frontdesk@readcenter.org. More than two absences or late arrivals that have not been pre-arranged may be cause for dismissal.

Professional Development

The READ Center recognizes that our volunteers are one of our greatest resources. Participation in at least two (2) professional development opportunities per academic year is strongly encouraged. These opportunities can be through READ sponsored in-person or online workshops and trainings, as well as opportunities you may come across through your own research. Completion of professional development opportunities can be reported to the

Program Coordinator or Program Director.

Tutoring Locations

One-to-One tutoring must take place in a public space that is both observable and interruptible by others. Tutoring may also take place over the phone or through remote video conferencing platforms. Home tutoring is not permitted under any circumstances.

Transportation

Volunteers and students are expected to provide their own transportation. Transportation of a student by a tutor in a vehicle or transportation of a tutor by a student in a vehicle for any activity directly or indirectly related to The READ Center is prohibited for reasons of liability. The READ Center is not liable for any conduct of tutor or student outside of the scope of the READ Center's policies on transportation.

Reporting Pair Hours for One-to-Ones

Monthly Progress Reports for one-to-one tutors are due no later than the 10th of each month for the previous month. Submission of reports is required for all one-to-one pairs. The process may be completed through the form on The READ Center website. These forms are the primary resource for The READ Center to measure one-to-one student success. Full and complete lesson plans and reports are crucial to helping students achieve their goals. More than two missing or late reports could be cause for your pair to be dissolved.

No Soliciting

The READ Center is obligated to respect and encourage the learners' rights to make their own decisions, identify their own needs, and choose the most appropriate option when faced with possible courses of action. READ staff and volunteers are prohibited from soliciting; political campaigning; and/or efforts to convert, persuade, or force a READ adult learner to another religion or a religious doctrine.

Alcohol & Drug Use

The READ Center believes that alcohol and drug abuse adversely affect volunteer performance, the work environment, and confidence in the organization. We will take immediate action against volunteers who use, distribute, or possess controlled substances while performing volunteer functions for The READ Center. Any volunteer who violates this alcohol and drug policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate discharge.

Dress Code and Personal Appearance

Appropriate grooming and personal cleanliness are expected of all staff, students, and volunteers. The dress code is casual and comfortable, but we ask your attire to be neat and

conservative. If staff feels your attire is out of place, you may be asked to change into proper attire. If you are tutoring at a partner location like the Richmond City Justice Center, please refer to their dress code requirements. Please do not wear attire, to include face masks required due to COVID-19, with offensive language or logos.

Office Equipment and Facilities Use

If something is necessary for the efficient undertaking of your responsibilities as a tutor, and it has not been provided by The READ Center, please contact your teacher or the Program Coordinator. Office supplies like the copier, staplers, paper, paper clips, folders, pencils, and markers are for use with discretion.

If you would like to meet with your one-to-one student or look for resources in the Tutor/Learner library space at The READ Center, please contact the office to schedule a time.

Inclement Weather Procedures

READ Center in person classes will be closed when Richmond Public Schools (RPS) are closed for inclement weather. Virtual classes may be conducted. READ does not follow the RPS academic calendar, always check The READ Center academic calendar for holidays and other planned class closures.

Textbook Policy

Once being paired one-to-one with a student; each tutor will receive a copy of the textbook **LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors.** Volunteers who are not paired one-to-one but would like a copy may purchase a book for $25.

Tutors will be lent teacher's manuals for their student's core texts. Please do not write in the teacher's manuals. When students complete texts or leave the program, tutors must return their teacher's manuals and all other materials that belong to READ unless they wish to purchase them. Tutors will receive the next manuals in exchange for the manual returned.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules, policies, and procedures of The READ Center or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be dismissed until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the dismissal with the Program Director—unless there is just cause. The READ Center reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer without appeal in order to protect students, staff, and volunteers. Reasons for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:
- Solicitation
- Breach of confidentiality
- Harassment or failure to report harassment
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Abuse or mistreatment of students, staff, or fellow volunteers