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## Federal and State Budget News

We finally received some good news about the state and federal budgets last week. 🎉🥂🍷

Our advocacy work isn't done, and waiting lists remain, but we feel more confident that we can maintain the same outstanding programs we have provided to our community for more than 40 years.

This past week, the President signed the budget bill, which includes level funding for adult basic education. These are the funds we've been watching for to secure our FY27 operational and programmatic funding.

Additionally, Governor Shapiro proposed a \$2.5 million increase for Adult and Family Literacy Education, sharing the following in his budget address:

*And we can't lose sight of the fact that there are literally hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians who could be added to the workforce, if we take care to give them the tools to succeed. Take the 614,000 Pennsylvania adults who don't have a high school degree, for example. That's a ton of untapped potential. Right now, almost 7,500 Pennsylvanians are sitting on a waiting list to get into adult education initiatives that lead to their GED. And the need is all across our Commonwealth.*

This is a budget proposal, so we have work to do to convince state legislators to include it in the final budget negotiated for July 1, 2027. Stay posted for how you can help

Now, we can redouble our focus on ensuring every student has the learning opportunities they need to meet their goals! With your continued support - as advocates, volunteers, donors, and partners - we can look forward to watching more students succeed.

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## International Mother Language Day



# Celebrating

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER  
LANGUAGE DAY

FEBRUARY 21

UNESCO designated February 21 as [International Mother Language Day](#) to promote diversity in language and culture. According to UNESCO, every two weeks, a language disappears, taking with it an entire cultural and intellectual heritage.

International Mother Language Day was proposed by Bangladesh to commemorate the [Bengali Language Movement](#), a grassroots effort to fight systemic cultural and linguistic discrimination and oppression. On February 21, 1952, protests were met with tear gas and guns, resulting in the deaths of several demonstrators.

Literacy Pittsburgh is proud to partner with local organizations to celebrate the languages and cultures that make Pittsburgh a vibrant place to live. Over the past several years, we have recorded videos of immigrants from around the world discussing how they preserve their languages and cultures. You can check out the full collection of videos on our [YouTube channel](#) - and more will be added in the days leading up to February 21

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## Tutoring FAQs

Sometimes new volunteers tell us they have been considering tutoring for many years, but were hesitant to sign up because they weren't sure they could do it. At Literacy Pittsburgh, our Academic Team provides training and ongoing support to all our tutors to help them succeed.

Tutoring Specialist Lindsey Crumley and Tutor Training Coordinator Jeff Rice compiled some of the most frequently asked questions from new volunteers. If you have been considering signing up to tutor, you may have some of these questions yourself! [Keep reading](#)



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## Welcome New Board Members

We recently welcomed four new members to our Board of Directors, including a Golub Fellow from

the Tepper School at CMU.



**Cindy Donohoe** started in tech companies like GE, Netscape, and AOL where she helped shape online stores, software as a service, and digital health when no one had a playbook. At UnitedHealthcare, Walgreens, and Highmark Health, her teams doubled marketing-driven sales while spending less. Since retiring from corporate life, Cindy has focused on community work. She also serves on the board of the Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh.



**Shahfar Shaari** is an experienced business consultant and educator with nearly three decades of expertise helping institutions strengthen how they engage, develop, and empower people. His career has focused on aligning human capital strategies with institutional goals, streamlining operations, and enabling inclusive growth through thoughtful process design and change leadership. Currently, Shahfar serves as a Principal at Lead First.



**Nancy Marshall of BNY** is a skilled financial and accounting professional advisor with wide range of experience serving high net worth families and individuals, including family offices. Her base professional competency is as CPA, serving individuals and families, fiduciary compliance, tax compliance, accounting and financial reporting. She has specialized training and experience with all aspects of philanthropy.



**Christian Cajigal** is a first-year MBA candidate at Carnegie Mellon's Tepper School of Business, he is building on years of experience as a Marine Corps infantry officer, where he led high-performing teams in complex, high-pressure environments. These experiences shaped his skills in leadership, adaptability, and decision-making under uncertainty. Christian comes to us through the Golub Capital Nonprofit Board Fellows Network and will serve as a nonvoting board member through June 2027. This program develops MBA candidates and alumni to serve as impactful nonprofit board members through classroom and experiential learning.

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## Spotlight on Success: Ben



Ben began meeting with a math tutor at Literacy Pittsburgh's Beaver County site in April 2025. A residency issue pushed him out of his high school during his senior year. He hit roadblocks when looking for a job and was denied several times because he didn't have a diploma.

Ben has overcome many hardships, moving out of his parents' home at 16 and facing serious health problems. However, his attitude, drive, and intelligence shine through. He embraces advice from a friend, "Always bet on yourself. If you don't, who else will?" He earned his GED in June 2025. Ben says that the best part of having his high school credential is that it demonstrates that "I am smart. I am able to do this. I do know what I am doing." Beaver County Program Coordinator Callie Angelo is helping him apply to Penn State Beaver. Ben hopes to work in game development and wants to be the first member of his immediate family to graduate from college. "No matter what you've been through, there will be people who will help you," Ben says. "I can't imagine where I'd be without Callie, Literacy Pittsburgh, and all their resources."

## Staff Reconnect and Recharge at Retreat

Literacy Pittsburgh's staff gathered at the end of a snowy week in January for our first all-staff retreat of 2026. Retreats are always an opportunity to recharge, reconnect, and realign priorities. The day closed with staff teams giving creative pitches about Literacy Pittsburgh. [Check them out at this link!](#) We thank Highmark for hosting us at their site and Outside Angle for creating a fun and informative retreat.



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## Tutor Interviewed for West Hills Gazette

Rachel Stalker, who tutors an English language learning student at the West End Library, was recently interviewed by the West Hills Gazette to help spread the word about our February 14 tutor training. Read more about Rachel's tutoring experience [at this link](#).

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## Sign Up for Our Next Introductory Tutor Training

[Learn more](#) about becoming a volunteer adult literacy tutor and register for training.

**Saturday, February 14**

**10:30 AM - 12:30 PM**

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - West End

47 Wabash Street

Pittsburgh, PA 15220

CLP is not the host or organizer of this event. CLP does not support, sponsor, or represent this group or event.

**Thursday, March 5**

**11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

Coraopolis Community Development Corporation

923 5th Avenue

Coraopolis, PA 15108

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### Why We Do the Work We Do 📖 📄 🌈

***One tutor met her student's mother over FaceTime.*** "How often, as an adult, have you introduced your parent to someone?" she explained. "My student's mother is in Afghanistan. Honestly, I don't know the exact words my student used. ***But I heard the pride in her voice, and I saw her mother's face in response.***"



Support Literacy Pittsburgh with your purchase of comfy tees, cozy sweatshirts, and other cool merch. 10% of each purchase will help our students to succeed. Visit our merch store.

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**Literacy Pittsburgh**  
411 Seventh Avenue, Suite 525  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
412-393-7600  
info@literacypittsburgh.org  
[www.literacypittsburgh.org](http://www.literacypittsburgh.org)

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