

Storm Recovery Mentor & Guide

Adults with limited literacy or English skills struggle with documents and online forms at the best of times – and after Harvey, many of them don't know where to start. Documents and forms, whether online or in paper format, can be really baffling to someone struggling to understand written English. Our students don't always know where to go for help and are in danger of missing deadlines, not being awarded crucial funds, and more.

As we become aware of students struggling to deal with FEMA forms, or regain employment after losing a job due to the storm, or work with their child's school, or countless other storm-related difficulties, we want to match them with friendly helpers who can be cheerleaders and mentors. We need volunteers willing to meet with a student at Literacy Advance, or be available by phone or email, to assist students as they recover from storm-related damages. We anticipate these relationships to last for at least a month or two, and very likely longer. We're not looking for case-workers, just someone to help explain processes and sift through daunting mountains of information alongside an adult student.

How is this role structured?

Diana Delgado, the Literacy Advance Transition Coach, is working with students on storm-related recovery. When she becomes aware of a student who could use this sort of help, she will ask them if they would like to be matched with a mentor. If they say yes, Diana will call available mentors to make the match and explain the student's needs. The first time the student and mentor meet, it would ideally be at the Wilcrest campus, with access to a computer if applicable. After that, it will be up to the student and mentor to work out what's needed, on an ongoing basis.

What are the requirements for a volunteer helping in this role?

Volunteers who want to assist as a mentor should:

- Have some prior experience as an ESL or ABE tutor (ideally with Literacy Advance);
- Have completed a Criminal Background Check (performed by Literacy Advance at no cost to you);
- Agree to keep the student's personal information confidential;
- Be willing to share contact information such as cell phone number and email address;
- Be patient, helpful, and responsive to particular requests and needs of the student;
- Respect the student's autonomy and ensure that they make their own decisions;
- Be flexible, and available – there is no expectation that mentors are able to meet any time the student needs them, but we hope that mentors will have good general availability over at least the next 2 – 3 months, and can be ready to commit to assisting a student on multiple occasions and as new needs arise.

I'm interested! How do I get started?

Talk to Diana Delgado, the Literacy Advance Transition Coach, about next steps:

ddelgado@literacyadvance.org or 713.266.8777

