

Dear [Senator/Assemblymember Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I'm a member of the Board of Library Trustees of the Santa Clara City Library. I'm writing to ask you to support including \$3 million in the state budget for library-based English as a Second Language (ESL) services for adults through California Library Literacy Services (CLLS).

Libraries are meeting a growing need. More than one in six Californians speaks English "less than very well." In the City of Santa Clara, as per the Census data, 16.7% of our residents have limited English language skills. Last year, California libraries served nearly 4,900 adult English learners—a 50% increase from the previous year. For the past 30 years, Read Santa Clara, the Santa Clara City Library's literacy program, has been helping adults gain basic literacy skills through 1:1 and small group tutoring. In 2023, Read Santa Clara started offering ESL tutoring for adults at the library and at school sites, recognizing the growing need in the community. The program started with 15 learners and served 102 learners last year. 88% of adult learners served through this program had met a goal they had set for themselves.

Adults are learning English to succeed at work, communicate with teachers and doctors, and participate more fully in their communities. One such learner is Vanessa, a single mother with a special needs child, who had limited English skills. After attending the ESL Tutoring for Parents that the library offered at an elementary school site last year, she was able to effectively communicate with her child's teachers and doctors in English.

The one-time ESL funding that made this success possible will expire in June 2026. Without renewed state support, these proven programs will disappear just as they're taking off. A modest investment makes a big impact.

An annual \$3 million investment will sustain and expand these services statewide, leveraging volunteers, local partnerships, and community energy to keep California adults learning and contributing. I hope you will support the inclusion of \$3 million for library-based ESL services in the 2026-27 state budget. These programs are proven, cost-effective, and life-changing for Californians who want to learn English and fully participate in their communities.

Thank you for your time and for supporting literacy and lifelong learning in California.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Email or Phone]