



# GROWING THROUGH ADVERSITY

2022 ANNUAL REPORT (SY21-22)



**THE LITERACY LAB**

*Strong Readers. Strong Futures.*

# We Believe Literacy is a Human Right.

## Our Mission

The Literacy Lab provides students in communities experiencing racial and/or economic inequities with evidence-based, culturally responsive literacy instruction as preparation for academic, professional, and personal success.

## Our Vision

We believe literacy is a human right. When we achieve our mission, we will have created a more just society where all students have the literacy services needed to unlock educational opportunities and success in life.

### We achieve our mission by:

1. Prioritizing the development of staff, Tutors, and Fellows.
2. Using data analyses to drive innovation and continuous improvement.
3. Engaging in strategic partnerships to meet the needs of students, schools, and communities.



## Dear Literacy Lab Community,

The 2022-23 school year is a cause for celebration for The Literacy Lab. For the first time in two years, all of our Tutors and Fellows are serving students in person again. Although the COVID-19 pandemic plays a minor direct role in our daily work with students, its broad impacts continue to loom large.

Student progress toward achieving grade-level literacy targets has fallen since 2020, with students from low-wealth communities and Black and Brown students experiencing academic challenges most acutely. Our work with students is more critical than ever, and it's also as difficult as ever to provide. A tight labor market coupled with increased demand for tutoring and the urgent need to make equity an explicit and integral part of our work have contributed to our challenges. With an unwavering commitment to serving students, we devoted ourselves during the past year to **growing through adversity**.

We have worked to overcome an incredibly tight labor market. With private businesses offering incentives and attractive starting pay, we knew we needed to offer more. For that reason, we increased pay for both our Tutors and Fellows. Pay increases were aligned as closely as possible to regional conditions, but Tutors and Fellows across the board benefited from this increase. Although money will rarely be cited as the top reason a Tutor or Fellow chooses The Literacy Lab, we want it to be rarer that money is cited as the reason they don't choose it (or complete their service year). I'm pleased to report that we have seen increases in recruitment and interest since implementing the improved pay.

With increased demand for tutoring services, The Literacy Lab expanded into three new regions for the 2022-23 school year: Atlanta, GA; Cincinnati, OH; and Greater Phoenix, AZ. Expansion to one new region is a challenge; expansion to three new ones in a single year is a greater one. Our organization saw three terrific opportunities to begin serving three new communities while they needed it most. We took them. And it's a testament to the entire Literacy Lab community that we are successfully serving thousands of students across three time zones for the 2022-23 school year. It was a lot of work, and it has been worth it. As a result of the expansions, many more students will be better supported to reach grade-level targets in literacy.

Finally, we have committed ourselves to more explicitly integrating equity into our work. When we look at the students whom we serve, they are almost exclusively in low-wealth communities, communities with a majority of Black and Brown students, or both. To best serve our partner communities, we must truly see and understand the people living in them. To that end, we hired a full-time Equity, Impact, and Anti-Racism Manager, who organizes monthly trainings for staff to explore how to integrate best practices into their work, among other initiatives. We remain committed to honoring the communities that we serve in the work that we do.

As I reflect upon the last school year, I am grateful to our staff and partners for their commitment to overcoming any obstacles that we faced. Because of that commitment, we grew through adversity. I look forward to continuing our journey together in the days, months, and years ahead. Together, we can help to ensure that every student will have equitable access to literacy. Thank you.

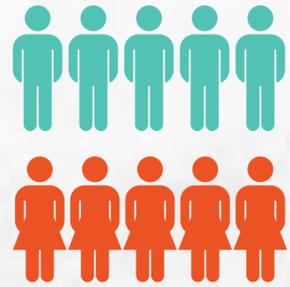
With gratitude,



**Heather Jenkins, CEO**

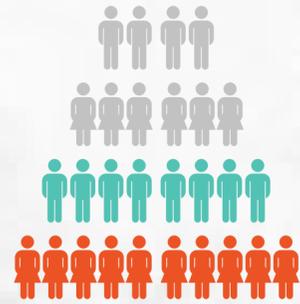


# Impact by the Numbers (SY21-22)



**5,221**

Total students served nationwide



**365**

Tutors and Fellows placed in schools

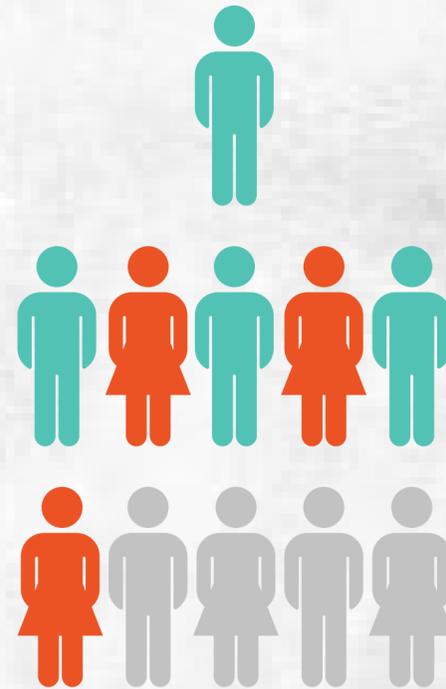


**142**

School Partners

**4,530,517**

Minutes of Americops Tutoring



STUDENT GROWTH

**58%** of AmeriCorps K-3 students exceeded target growth



**5x**

as many AmeriCorps pre-K students were on track to meet Kindergarten targets on their Spring assessment



**4x**

as many Leading Men pre-K students were at or near Kindergarten readiness in the Spring than in the Fall

# Programmatic/Regional Highlights

The Literacy Lab has two programmatic areas:

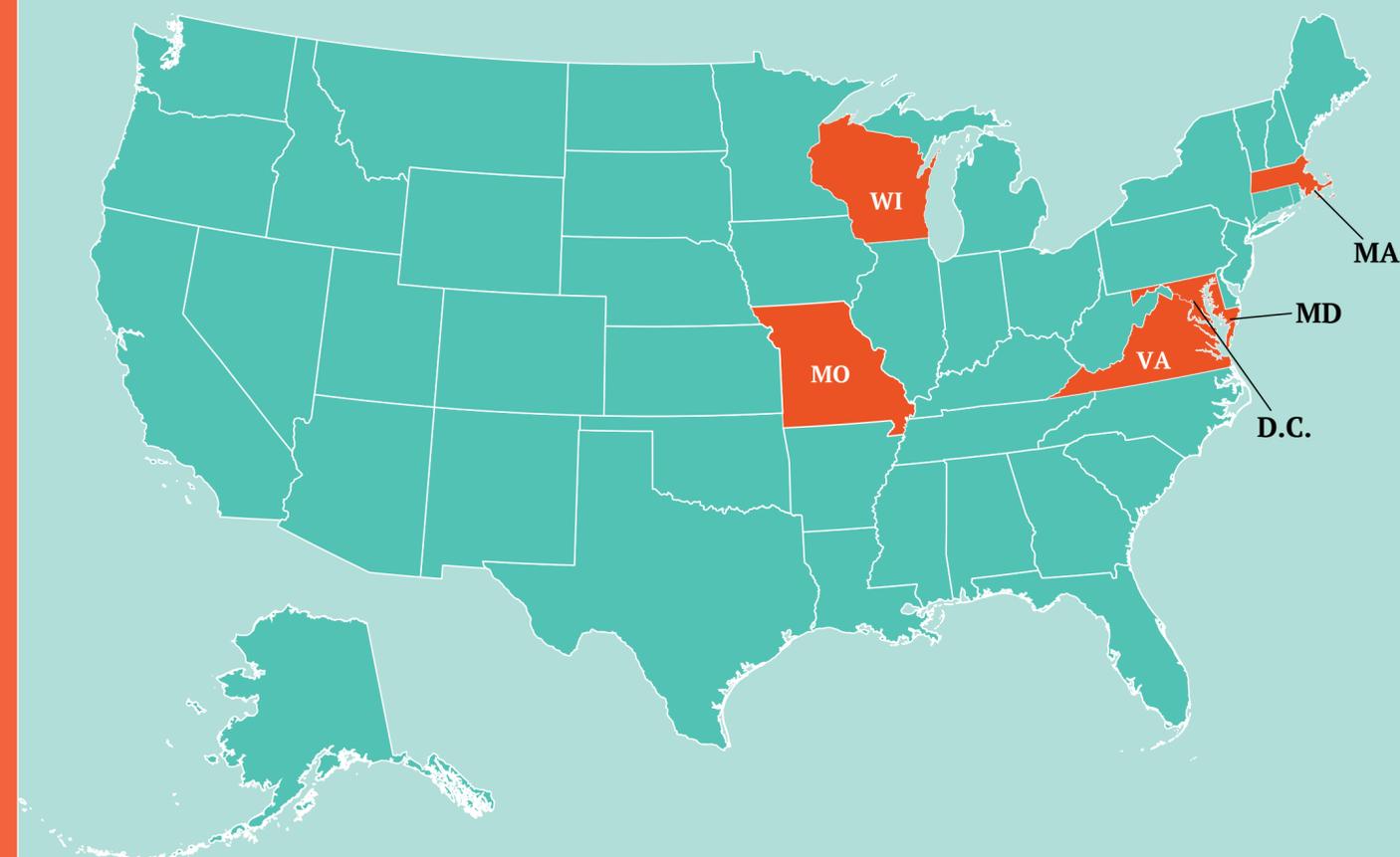
## Leading Men Fellowship

The Leading Men Fellowship established in 2016, prepares young men of color for careers in education, by providing robust skill-building and professional development opportunities over a one-year period. The Fellows receive rigorous training and coaching in early literacy intervention and social-emotional development, and work with pre-K students to deliver high-quality learning interventions, setting them on the path to kindergarten readiness and long-term success. Fellows also participate in standardized weekly Professional Learning Groups to build their readiness for college and career success.

## Reading Corps

The Literacy Lab has been a replication partner of the [Minnesota Reading Corps](#) since 2012, and in this program our AmeriCorps Tutors strive to provide as many under-resourced students in pre-K through 3rd grade as can be reached with a strong educational foundation. Using a research-based and evidence-proven learning model, young learners who are encountering challenges are transformed into confident students. The tutoring time and rigor of The Literacy Lab's approach is the differentiating factor, and on average students experience accelerated growth equivalent to an extra half-year of schooling.

## Where We Work (SY21-22)



Both our Reading Corps program and Leading Men Fellowship benefited tremendously from a return to in-person learning and engagement with Tutors, Fellows, students and our school communities. The 2021-22 school year was also our first time extending our Leading Men Fellowship reach and impact into Portsmouth, Virginia! We look forward to continuing to build a strong foundation for the expansion and community impact into our three new regions for the 2022-2023 school year: Cincinnati, OH; Phoenix, Arizona; Atlanta, Georgia.



# Virginia

During the 2021-22 school year, 10 Leading Men Fellows, placed in pre-K classrooms in Richmond and Portsmouth Public Schools, served 149 pre-K students. A total of 84% of the students began the year with a composite assessment score that was far below kindergarten-readiness targets. By the spring, this number had been reduced to 37%. A total of 54 K-3 AmeriCorps Tutors served 715 students across six school divisions with 59% of those students that exceeded their target growth rate. Overall, an impressive 67% of the 3rd graders we served achieved this goal.

We're also excited to see our AmeriCorps Tutors and Leading Men Fellows show interest in pursuing education as a full-time career. On our end-of-year survey, 59% of K-3 Tutors and 80% of pre-K Fellows responded that they were planning to pursue a career in education.

Finally, Tutors and Fellows serving in Virginia participated in training and workshops to prepare them for personal and professional success: K-3 tutors completed a 4-part training series on inclusive education practices provided by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, while Leading Men Fellows completed numerous Professional Learning Group sessions focused on personal and professional growth, health and wellness, financial literacy, and college and career readiness.



# Metro DC

Through the dedication of 108 AmeriCorps Tutors, The Literacy Lab delivered tutoring to more than 1,600 pre-K and K-3 students in 52 schools in Metro DC! At the end of the school year, 54% of K-3 students exceeded grade-level target growth, and 62% of pre-K students achieved a composite score reflecting kindergarten readiness.

As part of our org-wide commitment to integrate equity into our work, Tutors in Metro DC completed a 5-part DEI training series: Viewing The World Through An Equity Lens, Confronting Implicit Bias, LGBTQIA+ Identities in Education and School, Ableism and Education, Staying on Course - Having a DEI Mindset Beyond Your Service.

In our end-of-year survey, 58% of Tutors and 82% of Fellows indicated they were likely to pursue careers in education or service. The DC region was also able to continue integrating Tutor and Fellow alumni into our staff. This year, we invited one Tutor and one Fellow to join the DC staff team at the end of their service years. We believe in our Tutors and Fellows and are excited to see the impact our alumni make in their next steps.



# Maryland

During the 2021-22 school year, 58 AmeriCorps Tutors served over 1,200 pre-K and K-3 students. 10 Leading Men Fellows served 152 additional pre-K students. In total, The Literacy Lab reached 1,450 Baltimore students across 23 school sites.

In addition to the impact we're making with our students and school communities, we are also creating a pipeline for our Tutors and Fellows to enter into careers in the education field! We are thrilled to report 61% of Tutors and Fellows surveyed at the end of the year said they are planning to pursue a career as a teacher. At the Literacy Lab, we are committed to the career advancement of our Tutors and Fellows and diversifying the education workforce.

Lastly, we were proud to have partnered with the Maryland Book Bank to distribute personalized Story Kits to Literacy Lab students. Tutors and Fellows shared the interests and reading levels of each of their students and the Maryland Book Bank created an individualized set of 5 books for each student to take home. Over 5,000 books were distributed!



# Massachusetts

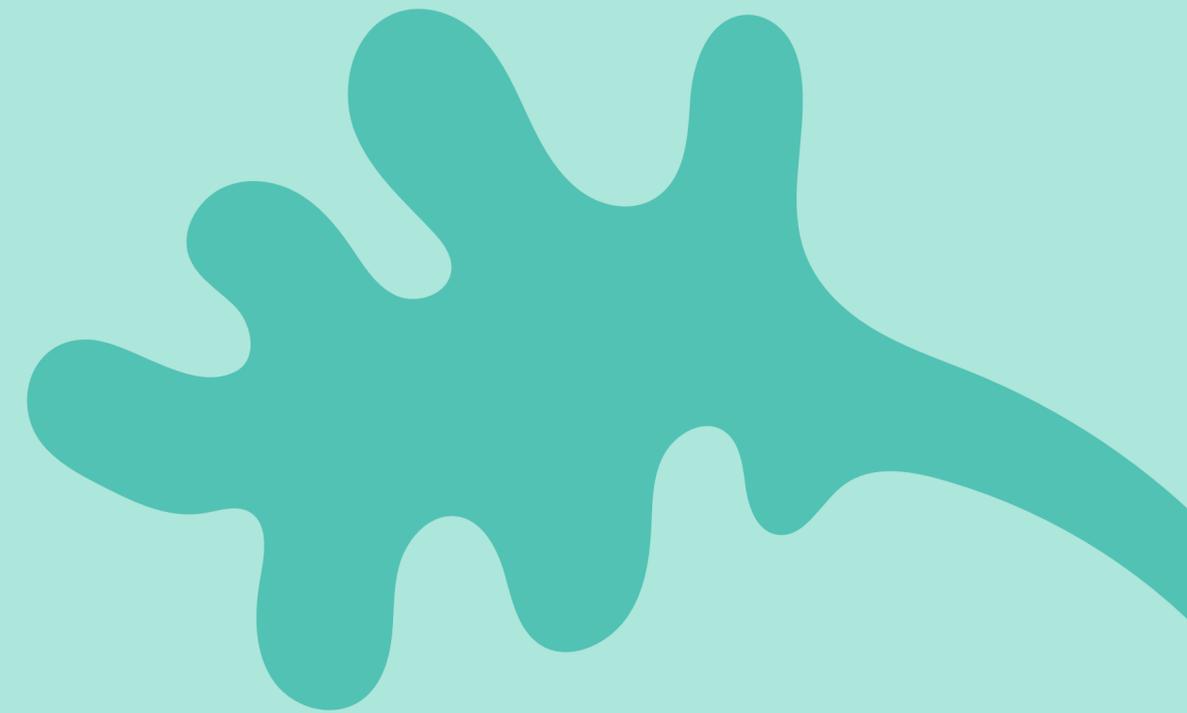
Through the dedicated service of our 2021-22 AmeriCorps Tutor cohort, over 500,000 minutes of high quality literacy instruction were delivered over the 2021-22 school year! Massachusetts pre-K Tutors operated with an average fidelity over 93%, and 68.2% of K-3 students were above their target growth rate at the end of the year!

We remain incredibly grateful for our school partners at Springfield Public Schools, Holyoke Public Schools, Springfield Partners for Community Action, and Springfield Prep Charter School. Without our school partners, meeting The Literacy Lab mission would not be possible! We're extremely proud of our 2021-22 Tutor cohort and our Massachusetts Literacy Lab team! Despite the continued challenges associated with COVID-19, our Tutors and regional staff remained focused on delivering high quality services to the students in our community.

# Missouri

Missouri students saw pre-pandemic levels of growth in the 2021-22 school year! 64% of K-3 students exceeded the target growth rate for their grade level by the end of the school year. At the start of the year, 87% of pre-K students had a composite score below the kindergarten readiness standard. The majority of pre-K students made progress toward the standard by Spring, with 67% of pre-K students on or near target at the end of the year.

In addition to providing high dosage tutoring services, we formed a partnership with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide funding support for tutoring students in Missouri and to make services more accessible to Missouri schools.



# Strong Partnerships and Long-Term Impacts

Not only did the Leading Men Fellowship have a successful year in its existing 4 regions (Metro DC; Baltimore, MD; Milwaukee, WI; and Virginia) but it was also an incredible year of infrastructure growth and strategic planning across the country. The Literacy Lab was honored to be selected as a GreenLight Fund multi-year investment recipient in both Atlanta, GA and Cincinnati, OH, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. Additionally, the State of Arizona awarded The Literacy Lab with a multi-year agreement to bring Leading Men Fellowship services to the Phoenix region. Together, these 3 new investments from 3 new regions opened the door for additional national, regional, and local public and private partnerships, making the Leading Men Fellowship expansion timely as well as fiscally responsible and sustainable, within new communities where we could reach even more children and young men of color in education.

As Milwaukee looks ahead to the 2022-2023 school year, we are pleased that the region has received multi-year investments from the City of Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin. This investment has made it possible for Milwaukee to increase its cohort size from 10 to 15 Fellows for the 2022-2023 school year and up to 20 Fellows for the 2023-2024 school year.

Finally, we are excited about the new Program Managers, Coaching Specialists and Program Operations staff who have joined our team to ensure that we continue to extend service in excellence to children and young men of color across a total of seven Leading Men regional sites. We are committed to delivering the same level of service that our Fellows and education partners have grown to expect from us in our legacy regions, even as we have expanded into new markets. During the 2021-2022 school year, for example: 95% of Leading Men Fellows reported that the Fellowship had a positive impact in their lives; 90% of Leading Men Fellows felt more confident in their professional skills and understanding as a result of the Professional Learning Group training sessions held by The Literacy Lab; and 100% of Fellows felt that their lead teacher and other school staff provided a safe and supportive workspace that was free from discrimination. We are grateful to our community and state partners for recognizing the value of men of color in education and we look forward to meeting and exceeding these benchmarks, in the year ahead!



## AmeriCorps Tutor Spotlight

As a K-3 AmeriCorps Tutor, building strong relationships, showing up for my students, and seeing my efforts reflected in their work was incredibly rewarding. One of my most memorable achievements in the classroom was helping my students apply their reading and writing skills to officially publish a class book.

I started my first year with The Literacy Lab as a virtual Tutor, and I was immediately blown away by how comprehensive the virtual training was. That same year, we transitioned to working in-person with the students and I was able to join committees, volunteer after school, and help other teachers – which greatly strengthened my relationship with my students and Garfield Elementary community.

During my second year, I took on more responsibilities as a Lead Tutor. Due to the strong, years-long partnership between Garfield and The Literacy Lab, I was a valued and trusted member of the community. Thus, I got more involved with the school – such as supporting staff in identifying students who needed additional reading support, collaborating with grade-level teaching teams, and coaching the 3rd-5th grade Girls on the Run team after school. I treasured being a community member in the school at large, but my focus was always on helping my students improve their literacy skills.

During my first year, I saw an advertisement about a publishing company that provides a free kit to make a class book with students, and I had the idea of creating one with my students. However, I needed help figuring out how to get this project off the ground, and financing it presented a challenge. I did not want to ask parents or the school to send money for their kids to buy a copy of the book when there are many more pressing needs, especially during a pandemic. So I kept the resource in the back of my head and in March of my second year, I officially signed up online to receive a kit. I created a

Go Fund Me account to raise money and shared it with my personal network. Thanks to generous donors who care about education, I raised more than 100% of what we needed to publish our book with individual copies for each student to take home and share with their grown-ups.

Before we started the writing process, I worked with all of my K-3 students to learn the parts of a book and vote on the theme. We chose “When We Grow Up.” To produce the final product, we would take 2 to 3 minutes at the end of every tutoring session to brainstorm, write, and add illustrations to our book for several weeks. It took a lot of patience as some students needed more help with writing and spelling, but they were all motivated to complete this hands-on project.

Using the money from the fundraiser, I purchased a published copy of the book for all students to take home and a copy for Garfield and Mr. Terry, the wonderful Garfield-Literacy Lab liaison. The extra money raised was donated to Garfield in the form of a gift card, and the students celebrated their hard work with Publishing Parties and popsicles.

I am amazed at the effort my students put forth to co-author this book, and I feel grateful they get to keep their copy with them forever. **Ultimately, publishing this book with my students made a significant impact on their learning because it connected Literacy Lab tutoring sessions to real-world situations and a final product in a way that built their confidence as they applied their literacy skills and knowledge.**

**Nora Boles is currently pursuing her Master of Science in Education in the Urban Teaching Apprenticeship Program at the University of Pennsylvania. She is also a 2nd grade Student Teacher at a school in Northeast Philadelphia.**



# Leading Men Fellow Spotlights

## Creating Pathways to a Career in Education

The Literacy Lab developed the Leading Men Fellowship to build a pipeline of diversified educators by offering a meaningful, rigorous professional opportunity for young men of color. During 2021-22 school year, we were excited to see two of our Fellows accept teaching opportunities with one of our school partners while continuing their education in higher ed. Both Fellows, Antrone Turner and Ahmad Shaffer, were consistently acknowledged for stellar performance in the classroom and expressed a strong desire to advance in early childhood education. One of our Milwaukee early childhood education partners, Next Door, recognized their commitment and hired both Fellows as part-time employees for an additional 3 hours per day during the Fellowship. The added work extended the Fellows' time in the classroom with the children from 5 hours to the full 8-hour school day. By the end of the Fellowship, Next Door hired Antrone and Ahmad as full-time teaching assistants for the 2022-2023 school year! Antrone and Ahmad not only secured this full time employment post-Fellowship, but are also enrolled as early childhood education students at Milwaukee Area Technical College, our university partner in the region.



## LMF Legacy Building for Today and Tomorrow

Nigel Williams was a 2021-2022 Leading Men Fellow who made a difference in the lives of the students he served every day. He had a particular impact on the life of one child who began the year not engaging with staff or other children. Nigel built on the SEEDS of Early Learning framework that he learned from his Coaching Specialist, Sheila Williams, and consistently made a connection with the student by getting on his eye level and stressing to him that it was “okay to learn.” Nigel displayed patience and resolve by slowly building a relationship with his new friend until this student opened up and began to learn. Nigel will be returning as a Senior Fellow, at Turner Elementary for the 2022-2023 school year with plans on becoming a paraprofessional within DC Public Schools.

# Measuring Our Growth and Progress

The Literacy Lab is committed to further embedding our data-informed approach within all aspects of the organization's scope, driving innovation and continuous improvement in our work. Tri-annually, we conduct benchmarking assessments to measure student literacy growth from the start to the end of the academic year. With guidance and ongoing support from trained Coaching Specialists, our Tutors and Fellows implement these assessments, as well as daily interventions, with students to provide a holistic and individualized approach to each student served.

As students, Tutors, and Fellows returned to schools in person this year, we saw an increase in the number of students served by The Literacy Lab from the previous year. **Our Tutors and Fellows successfully navigated an ongoing pandemic and delivered tutoring with a 94% average fidelity to our model across all programs.**



## Data to Enhance our Effectiveness

In addition to our data-informed work in delivering high-impact tutoring to students, The Literacy Lab is committed to collecting and analyzing data that assesses our organizational health and operational effectiveness. This year, some of these initiatives include:

- A Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism assessment conducted by the Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Manager, which collected staff feedback on the current DEI state of the organization,
- The Chief Executive Officer hosted roundtables to collect input on program experience from Tutors and Fellows, and
- The hiring of a new Data and Evaluation team that will invest greater resources into job training for all members of The Literacy Lab community.

In the 2022-23 school year, we are committed to improving our data collection systems and focusing on survey creation and delivery, as well as incorporating data conversations into regular all-staff spaces. The Data and Evaluation team will expand to include an Associate that will allow for capacity building for data analysis and strategic planning and the creation of organizational and regional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). We will continue to invest in the intentional use of data and stewardship of resources for Tutors, Fellows, and staff in service of improving our programmatic impact and achieving The Literacy Lab's mission.

# The Year Ahead

After three school years, defined in many ways by day-to-day responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, the year ahead feels different. In the 2022-23 school year, we are shifting our focus to charting the best path forward for students in a world affected but no longer defined by the pandemic. We are committed to providing equitable access to literacy instruction for students whose access to it during the pandemic was very much inequitable. The data tells us very clearly that this means serving Black and Brown students and students from low-wealth communities.

During the 2021-22 school year, The Literacy Lab developed its first-ever strategic plan, outlining the ways that we can ensure we are making good on our commitments to students and communities. The strategic plan focuses on innovation and adaptation in five key areas of our work.

## Five Key Areas of Our Work

- **Embedding equity and anti-racism into every aspect of our work.** Disparities in student outcomes are tied directly to inequity. To address that, we must name, understand, and confront those inequities directly. For this reason, we updated our mission, vision, and values to reflect the work that we are doing every day to support the students and communities we serve as well as to guide our ongoing development as an organization.
- **Rethinking recruitment of our Tutors and Fellows.** Tutors and Fellows are the lifeblood of our organizational work. As the labor market evolves, we must adapt to ensure that we continue to reach prospective Tutors and Fellows.
- **Advance Human Resources function from tactical to transactional.** Our work is impactful because we have a dedicated and talented staff. To honor them, we must ensure that our processes for hiring and supporting staff eliminate barriers for service to schools, students, and communities.
- **Optimize Operations functions.** To provide the best quality of service to schools, we strive to simplify the underlying logistics of our work. From entering and analyzing data to providing clear and simple processes for every aspect of Literacy Lab's work, stronger operations will drive greater impact.
- **Build out External Relations.** We're serving thousands of students every day because of the support of our partners and stakeholders. We're building out an External Relations team because we want to do a better job of sharing with you the impact of your support and to find new partners who can help us to reach even more students, Tutors and Fellows.



# Thank You to Our Supporters!

Thank you to our individual, foundation and corporate donors during our 2022 fiscal year! Additionally, thank you to our AmeriCorps and state commission partners in Washington DC, Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, and Virginia for their continued support of The Literacy Lab's Reading Corps programs. The impact we make in our communities is due to your support.

## Friends (\$1 - \$9,999)

American Sugar Refining, Inc.  
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## Partners (\$10,000 - \$49,999)

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Sherman Family Foundation  
Speas Memorial Trust  
Stanley and Lucy Lopata Charitable Foundation  
T. Rowe Price Foundation  
TD Charitable Foundation  
United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg  
Virginia Cretella Mars Foundation  
The Westminster Foundation  
Wright Family Foundation

## Builders (\$50,000 - \$99,999)

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Cafritz Foundation  
Dobbs Foundation  
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Education Fund  
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Richard E and Nancy P Mariott Foundation  
Serve Colorado  
Venable Foundation  
Wells Fargo  
Yelp Foundation

## Trailblazers (\$100,000 - \$499,999)

Accelerate Great Schools  
Aviv Foundation  
Clark Charitable Foundation  
Gosnell Foundation  
Hall Family Foundation  
The Hearst Foundation  
JW Marriott Foundation  
School Smart KC

## Champions (\$500,000+)

Ballmer Group  
Clark Foundation  
Greenlight Fund Atlanta  
Greenlight Fund Cincinnati  
Haile Foundation  
MacKenzie Scott

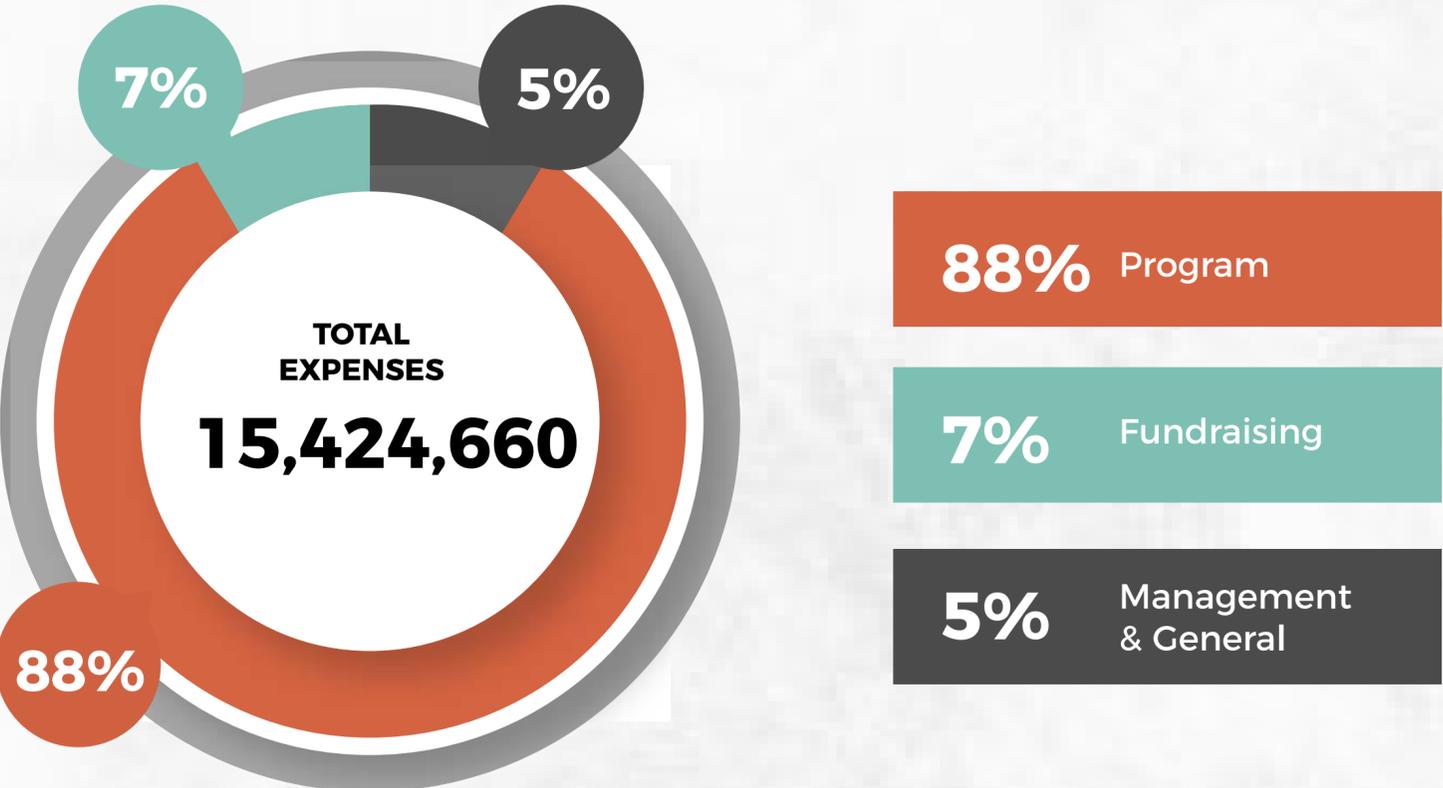
# Our Board of Directors

Thank you to our Board of Directors who champion our programs and give their time and talents to support the children, Tutors, Fellows and the communities we serve. Below is a list of all Board Members who served between the fiscal year August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022.

- Praveen Jeyarajah
- Hugh Cole III, Washington Property Company
- Melissa Connelly, OneGoal
- Betsy Duff, Harbour Capital Advisors, LLC
- Bailey Edelson, JBG Smith
- Bob Giannino, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
- Rachael Gibson, Marcum LLP
- Dr. Heather Jenkins, The Literacy Lab
- Ned Mandel
- Peter Schulman, Urban Teachers
- Dr. Bweikia Steen, George Mason University
- Terri Upshaw, Gene Upshaw Memorial Fund
- Adeola Whitney, Reading Partners

We are unfortunately unable to list all of our amazing supporters here, however your gifts of all amounts and types have not gone unnoticed and are very much appreciated. Thank you!

# Financial Statement



**TOTAL REVENUE: 29,378,165**



### Assets

Cash	10,685,556
Accounts Receivable	980,705
Grants Receivable	2,351,447
Contributions Receivable	8,911,666
Prepaid Expenses	297,489
Fixed Assets	77,038
Other Assets	29,877

**Total Assets** 23,333,778

### Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	157,323
Accrued payroll and payroll liabilities	387,752
Deferred rent	47,617

**Total Liabilities** 592,692

### Net Assets

Without donor restrictions	18,432,086
With donor restrictions	4,309,000

**Total Net Assets** 22,741,086

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** 23,333,778

THANK YOU

TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS



**Central Office:**  
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