

CMP PROPOSAL: RESOURCES FOR ADULT LITERACY IN HAWAII

Introduction

Literacy includes the ability to read and write at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family, and in society. 46 to 51 percent of Americans lack these basic skills to function successfully in our society.¹ Such a startling issue should be one supported by the public library of the community. The Honolulu community recognizes its own adult literacy issue. Therefore, the Hawaii State Library requests the ways and means to increase their collection of adult literacy resources.

Hawaii State Library

The Hawaii State Library is the main branch of the Hawaii State Public Library System that serve the entire state of Hawaii, population 1,211,537.² The Hawaii State Library (often referred to as the Main Library) is located in downtown Honolulu and serves the greater Honolulu area. The 2000 Census cites Honolulu County, which encompasses the island of O'ahu, at a population of 876,156.³ The Honolulu community is supported by an Aloha United Way non-profit organization that specializes in adult literacy. Hawaii Literacy, since 1971, has helped adults learn and improve basic reading and writing skills that help them succeed in life. The presence of such an organization represents a need in the community. Hawaii State Library is one of the primary resources for Hawaii Literacy's students and

¹ National Institute for Literacy. <<http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/faqs.html#measure>> [25Feb05].

² U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Demographic Profile Highlights: Hawaii. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=05000US15003&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=&_cityTown=&_state=04000US15&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=>> [24Feb05].

³ U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Demographic Profile Highlights: Honolulu County, Hawaii. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=ChangeGeoContext&geo_id=05000US15003&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=honolulu&_cityTown=honolulu&_state=04000US15&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=>> [24Feb05].

tutors. In addition, there are other organizations and individuals in the community who may have interest in these areas. As an institution that promotes lifelong learning and access to information, it is the responsibility of the library to meet these needs.

The Collection

In order to support adult literacy, it is imperative that the public library is supplied with an adequate collection in this subject. This collection request will focus primarily on resources for adult learners, resources for family and support, resources for tutors and administrators. Also included will be general materials on the issue of literacy and illiteracy. As Hawai'i has its own unique cultural aspects, special efforts will be made to find materials pertaining to literacy issues in Hawai'i.

A search into the holdings of the Hawaii State Library reveals only 29 items on the subject of adult literacy. The entire state system, including the outer islands, has roughly 50 items cataloged, which is still a small number given the size of the library collection and county population. Of the small number only five of the 29 items were published after 2000. The existing collection is somewhat dated, from the late 1970's to the present. While there is no reason to discount the older materials, it can be speculated that more attention needs to be given to newer materials published in the field. In addition, quality materials available should be researched and collected retrospectively if needed. While immigrants and other new learners of English are also an important community in Honolulu, this collection will not include exclusively English as a Second Language materials. Another area not focused in this request is literacy and reading programs for children.

Budget

The library proposes \$2000.00 to build the collection described in the section above. A brief study in the available materials reveal that monographs in the subject of adult literacy is averaged at about 37.00 each (7 items ranging from 18.95 - 69.95). Subscriptions average about

30.00 per year. The library proposes to purchase 40 monographs as well as supplement the collection with five-year subscriptions to two or three journals. In addition, the library will attempt to locate other materials such as educational or informational videos and DVDs.

In conclusion, residents of the United States, in order to succeed in their society and community, must have the support of their public institutions. To that end, the Hawaii State Library, with this modest request, asks for assistance from their community partners to provide the critical resources for adult learners and their support networks.