

Issues Groups

The Open Door Collective (ODC) is trying to better understand and help advocate for the role of adult foundational education (including ESL/ESOL, basic literacy, adult basic education, adult secondary education and preparation for post-secondary education and/or training) in reducing poverty and income inequality. We believe that one way we can help to reduce poverty and income inequality is through specific issue groups, and in considering perceptions about the role for adult foundational education within each issue group. Our key active issue groups for poverty and income inequality reduction advocacy include the following:

- **Labor and Workforce Development** -- Paul Jurmo is the convener/chair, pjurmo@comcast.net. The issues group began in early November 2016, published its first paper in February, 2018, and has prepared an extensive set of resources available on the Open Door Collective website that you will find under the ODC Papers and Resources tabs.
- **Health and ABE** (including health literacy and access to affordable health care) -- Greg Smith smithg@floridaliteracy.org is the convener/chair. This issues group has completed [Why Healthy Communities need Adult Basic Skills Education](#) and [Adult Basic Education and Community Health Center Partnerships: Improving the Health of ABE Learners](#), for audiences of adult basic skills practitioners and community health center practitioners and policy advocates. They address the importance of including a health focus in adult basic skills programs, and an adult basic skills and health literacy focus in community health centers. The group's work has included disseminating the papers and supporting ABE programs and community health centers to build partnerships for better services, reducing health disparities and advocating for both ABE programs and community health centers. It also has a sub-group that has developed a proposal for funding health-related digital navigation services. Currently there is an active sub-group focusing on digital navigation services needed in health contexts. The Chair of that group is Kathy Harris.
- **Immigrant and Refugee Education and Integration** This issues group has completed a paper, [Collaboration in Support of New Americans](#) and a related paper for a TESOL publication. It has put together a collection of resources and organizations for immigrants and refugees, and has presented the ODC Immigrant and Refugees paper at national conferences. The convener/chair is Catalina Gonzalez.
- **Public Libraries and Adult Basic Skills.** The Convener/chair is Gwenn Weaver, gwwork50@gmail.com. This issues group completed its first paper addressed to a public libraries audience, in September 2017.
- **Digital Inclusion.** The convener/chair of this issues group is Gwenn Weaver gwwork50@gmail.com

Issues Groups that are currently inactive

- **Criminal Justice Reform**, including corrections education and re-entry. Margaret Patterson margaret@researchallies.org is the convener. The issues group has completed two papers: [Education in Adult Basic Skills Can Contribute to Reducing Incarceration and Alleviating Poverty](#) and [Crimmigration in the USA](#). It is currently inactive.
- **The Well-being of Older Adults and Adult Basic Skills**. This issues group formed in May 2019 and has been active in the past. Its focus is, as the name suggests, on older adults. The chair is Galina Khartulari, gkhartul@jjc.edu

Issues Groups that have been discussed, but not yet been formed:

- **Affordable Housing for Low-income Adults and Basic Skills.**
- **Civic Engagement, Community Inclusion and Adult Basic Skills**
- **Civil Rights, Civil Liberties and Adult Basic Skills**
- **LGBTQIA rights advocacy and ABE**
- **Safety Net services and Adult Basic Skills**
- **Building a social activist talent pool for the ABE field** that is concerned about reducing poverty and income inequality
- **Public K-12 Education and Intergenerational Literacy** This issues group has completed an [Intergenerational Literacy](#) advocacy paper, but is now dormant. We are hoping to identify a new chair/convener soon.

For several of these advocacy issues groups the Open Door Collective has launched a *Make the Case* initiative and we have formed issues groups of ODC members who have expertise in adult basic skills, along with members who have expertise in the issues area, to write short *Make the Case* papers to persuade advocates and others working in the issues area to include adult basic skills in their services and public policy advocacy agenda where appropriate. The pairing of adult basic skills and issues area experts in these groups allows ODC issues group members to better understand how adult basic skills are considered within key issues areas and what kinds of information and evidence about the impact of adult basic skills can best make the case for including adult basic skills, or raising its priority, in the issues area public policy advocacy agenda. As of June, 2020, ten *Make the Case* papers have been published on the [ODC website](#) under the “ODC Papers” tab.

ODC members interested in joining an issues group should email Theresa Sladek at tsladek@literacymn.org or David J. Rosen at djrosen123@gmail.com