Clear Language Lab
A program of Literacy Works
Information is power.

We believe that mission-driven organizations across all sectors — healthcare, legal aid, social services, workforce development, and more — have a duty to center audiences and create communications that are clear, inclusive, and useful for communities.

We believe that communication designed with a lens of plain language, information design, and a healing-centered approach are tools toward this goal.

We believe in creating content that rejects oppressive norms and advances anti-racist principles, justice, and liberation for all.

Learn more about our work.

PARTNERS & CLIENTS

- Chicago Board of Election Commissioners
- Chicago Jobs Council
- Corporation for Supportive Housing
- Evanston Community Foundation
- Housing Action Illinois
- Northwestern University
- Restore Justice
- Shriver Center on Poverty Law
- University of Chicago Urban Labs
- University Michigan-Dearborn
- YWCA Evanston/North Shore
- And more
Who We Are

Literacy Works has been strengthening the adult literacy community in Chicago for more than 25 years.

Through our Community Literacy program, we bolster the adult literacy field by providing professional development and assistance through a social justice lens. We focus on three major areas: instructional techniques, student support, and program operations.

In our work in adult education, we have seen first hand the need to address the systemic barriers that many people, especially those that have been historically most impacted by oppressive systems, face in understanding information about going to the doctor, filling out government forms, getting help during a crisis, and other critical everyday matters.

That’s why we created the Clear Language Lab in 2018.
Training

The Lab trains more than 500 professionals in clear communication strategies annually to better meet the needs of their participants. In-house trainings are virtual. Tailored training can be virtual or on-site.

FORMAT
Quarterly 2-part workshops that focus on specific mediums such as forms, flyers, slide decks, and more

Writing for Understanding
An intensive 3-part workshop series in a supportive, small-group setting

Lab Community of Practice
Quarterly meet-ups to talk about resources, explore issues, and get feedback in a supportive space

Literacy Action Project
Quarterly discussions on advancing anti-racist practices in the adult literacy and non-profit sector

Plain Language Foundations
Free quarterly series on varied topics related to plain language practices

Tailored Workshops
Personalized workshops designed to meet the needs of your sector and organization
Fantastic trainer. Legal aid organizations should require this training for all attorneys and paralegals.

This training was AWESOME...I think information-sharing as a form of equity is not something many nonprofit professionals/folks who have higher education think about—even though they should.

Since we have implemented the strategies taught at the training, our materials are clearer and far easier to use.
100% of Clear Language Lab attendees surveyed said training content would help them better serve their participants.
Consulting & Materials Review

The Lab can support your project in a variety of ways:

Material Review and Revision
We help you re-imagine your current content or assist you in creating new content, such as handbooks, slide decks, informational documents, and more.

Individual and Small Group Consultation
We work with your team to identify opportunities for communication improvement in informal or informal settings.

Community Engagement Feedback
Whenever possible, we incorporate feedback from our team of Community Engagement Experts and/or community members with lived experience in your team's networks.

"I absorbed Clear Language Lab's enthusiasm for the important work of improving readability."
Before

Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, Provisional Ballot Receipt

MAKE SURE YOU ARE IN THE CORRECT PRECINCT PRIOR TO VOTING A PROVISIONAL BALLOT
CONTACT THE BOARD AT 312-269-1604 TO VERIFY YOUR PROPER PRECINCT

WHY YOUR BALLOT IS PROVISIONAL

- Voter not found in the Electronic Poll Book and voter refused the opportunity to register in the voter's precinct or at another grace period registration site.
- Voting status has been challenged and the judges of election agree with the challenge.
- Voter registered to vote by mail and was required to show ID before voting and was unable to do so.
- The voter's record shows he or she voted during the early voting period, but the voter claims not to have voted during early voting.
- The voter received a Vote By Mail ballot but did not return the Vote By Mail ballot to the Board.
- A Federal or State Court has ordered the extension of voting hours beyond 7 p.m.
- The voter attempted to register to vote on election day but failed to provide the necessary documentation.

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROVISIONAL VOTERS

✓ Complete the Affidavit you receive from the election judge. The pink copy will be given to you as a receipt.
✓ An election judge will mark the Affidavit to indicate the reason your vote is provisional. The judge will place any supporting documentation you provide in the plastic sleeve.
✓ An election judge will issue a provisional ballot to you along with your Provisional Voter Affidavit / Ballot Envelope.
✓ After you complete voting, fold your ballot along the scores and insert it into your Provisional Voter Affidavit / Ballot Envelope, seal it and return it to the election judge.
✓ The judge must place your completed Provisional Voter Affidavit / Ballot Envelope into the Provisional Carrier Envelope – Envelope P.

You may submit supporting documentation to the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners to verify your voting status. The Board must receive the information no later than the close of business on the Tuesday following Election Day. The Board is located at 69 W. Washington, Suite 600, Chicago, IL.

DID YOUR VOTE COUNT?

✓ Call 1-866-780-VOTE (1-866-780-8683) or visit chicagoelections.com to determine if your vote counted. If it was not counted you can determine the reason.
✓ Your information will be listed by last name, first name, suffix and street name and number.
✓ The Board has two weeks following the election to verify the registration for provisional voters. If the Board determines you are a registered voter, your provisional ballot will be counted.
✓ If the Board determines you are not a registered voter, your provisional ballot will not be counted. The Affidavit you completed will be used as a registration application and you will be sent a Verification of Voter's Registration.
Information for Provisional Voters from the Chicago Board of Elections

What is provisional voting? Provisional voting allows you to cast a ballot if there are questions about your eligibility to vote or a mistake in the registration record needs to be corrected. In the two weeks after the election, we will check our registration records and decide if your vote counts.

Why is my ballot provisional? You can see the reason(s) an Election Judge (Judge) marked on the back of this receipt.

Important! Before you vote a provisional ballot, call us at 312-269-1604 to check your correct precinct. You can cast a provisional ballot in the precinct you are in now even if you don’t live in this precinct. However, under state law, if you do vote in the wrong precinct, only some of your ballot might count.

How do I vote a provisional ballot?

Now that you and a Judge have filled out the Affidavit, follow the directions below.

On Election Day
1. A Judge will give you a provisional ballot and the Affidavit attached to the ballot envelope. A Judge will direct you to a voting booth where you can vote.
2. Vote. After you vote, fold the ballot along the creases. Place the ballot in the envelope, and seal the pink envelope flap with the ballot inside.
3. Then, give the envelope with the ballot in it back to a Judge. Don’t put your ballot in the ballot scanner!

A Judge will put your envelope with other provisional ballots to be reviewed later.

During Early Voting
1. A Judge will give you a voter activation card and direct you to a voting booth where you can vote.
2. Vote. After you vote, return the voter activation card to a Judge.

What if I have other documents that show I am eligible to vote?

You must submit the documents to our office by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday after Election Day in one of the following ways:

In person or by mail
69 W. Washington, Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60602

By fax
312-269-7880

By email
registration@chicagoelections.net

Did my vote count?

Call 1-866-780-VOTE (1-866-780-8683) or visit chicagoelections.com to find out if your vote counted. Please know that it takes two weeks for us to review your provisional ballot.

If we find that you are eligible to vote, we’ll count your ballot. If your ballot was not counted, we can explain the reason.
Minimum Wage

- Domestic Workers in Illinois must be paid the minimum wage if:
  - They work more than 8 hours a week for one or more employers.
- It does not matter how many employees work for your employer.
- In Illinois, domestic workers must be paid at least $8.25 per hour.
- Workers who work in Chicago at least 2 hours a week must be paid at least $12.
- Workers who work in Cook County but outside of Chicago, may be entitled to a higher minimum wage of at least $11.
What is minimum wage?

Minimum wage

The lowest amount of money your boss can legally pay you to work

In some places, you must also work at least 8 hours a week.
Self-Advocacy Assistance
Teaching people about their rights.
We help people and families learn about their rights at work, school, and other public places. We also have free trainings to educate people with disabilities and their family members on advocacy and legal rights. To learn more, call our main number.

Special Education Helpline
Staff on our Helpline give free legal advice and information on special education laws, what to do if a child is having problems at school, and how to ask the school for what a child needs. Call 1-866-543-7046 or email SpecialEd@equipforequality.org.

Employment Rights Helpline
We provide free help and legal assistance to people with disabilities who need help with job applications, asking for reasonable accommodations, and stopping discrimination in the workplace. Call 1-844-744-4879 or email Employment@equipforequality.org.

Online Resources
Our website has a large collection of fact sheets, training materials, and information to help people with disabilities learn about their rights. www.equipforequality.org
Get Free Help
We can talk with you about your rights at school, at work, where you live, and in the community. Our lawyers can help you in many ways.

Get Help for Your Child
Do you have questions about your child’s rights at school? We can help you:
• Learn about special education rights
• Know what to ask for and how to get the help your child needs to succeed
• Feel confident by going to school meetings with you

📞 1-866-543-7046 (1-866-KIDS-046)
✉️ SpecialEd@equipforequality.org

Get Help at Work
Do you know your rights at work? We can help you:
• Talk to your boss about your disability and how to ask for what you need to do your job
• Learn what to do when someone at work treats you unfairly because of a disability
• Solve problems you have at work

📞 1-844-744-4879 (1-844-RIGHTS-9)
✉️ Employment@equipforequality.org
Let's change systems together.

Get more info email or call:
Melanie Sampson
Content Director at Clear Language Lab
melanie@litworks.org
773-969-9823