

**SO I MADE UP MY MIND:
Introducing a Study of Adult Learner Persistence in
Library Literacy Programs**

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The evaluation of the Literacy in Libraries Across America (LILAA) initiative, which is introduced in this overview, is an important new research project for MDRC. It continues our work in adult literacy — a research area of growing significance. As jobs and other aspects of everyday life come to require ever more advanced skills, literacy is becoming increasingly critical for successful functioning in society. MDRC's past studies of adult education and literacy programs have found evidence that greater literacy brings greater work opportunities, but have also revealed that many adult learners fail to participate long enough to benefit substantially from adult education. This is one reason why more research on learner persistence — the primary focus of this research project — is necessary.

From recent studies of adult education provided to welfare recipients, we know that learners' consistent participation and commitment to program goals are key to program success. This is as true for education programs as it is for efforts to provide job training or welfare-to-work services. Our participation in the LILAA initiative creates opportunities to identify new and promising strategies for fostering persistence in library literacy and other programs.