# Alachua County Reads: Year One Summary

October 2025 – September 2026|Center for Nonprofit Excellence (CNE) with the Children's Trust of Alachua County (CTAC) and Alachua County Board of County Commission(AC)

Prepared October 2026

## Year One at a Glance

In Year One, Alachua County Reads (ACR) went from a community listening process to a working literacy system. The first five months focused on town halls, partner outreach, initial agreements and a planning team. In March, two events changed the design: the joint City–County meeting and the Helios model briefing. Afterward, CNE took on coordination and capacity building, focusing efforts with AC contract deliverables and funding on hiring a PT Coordinator and establishing the virtual and physical Literacy Hubs. The Literacy Catalyst operated by PEAK Literacy became the intervention provider funded through AC, and UFLI was refocused to K–2 instruction in ACPS funded through CTAC. From June to September 2026 the work launched. The UFLI contract was signed and teachers, literacy coaches, school and district administrators were trained, summer programs received literacy resource tubs, the virtual Hub went live, a full-time Literacy Specialist was hired, and the Community Advisory Council held its first meeting.

## How the project changed

The Year One project design shifted for three reasons. The original UFLI community-provider proposal was larger than the funding would cover (marketing, awareness and community impact were eliminated or reduced) and the initial ideas for majority funding to be spent on community based programming revealed that approach would not reach enough students to move results. A clearer outline of the priorities emerged, with PEAK Literacy and the Catalyst project taking the lead in community programming, and expert led instructional support with University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) as the second arm of the work. Turning to research, the Helios model gave a tested route to the two headline ACCLNA goals: Comprehensive school readiness and 90% 3rd-grade reading proficiency. The table below shows each change and what it produced.

| Area | Original Year One plan | What changed, and the result |
|---|---|---|
| **Operating model** | Four planning teams (experts, programming, outreach, hubs) under one collaborative led by CNE. | A two-prong model, confirmed at the March joint City–County meeting: CNE/ACR coordinates and builds capacity, and the Literacy Catalyst operated by PEAK Literacy delivers programming. The project outline was redrafted on March 27 and approved by CTAC in April. |

| Area | Original Year One plan | What changed, and the result |
|---|---|---|
| **Role of UFLI** | UFLI curriculum, training and wrap-around services for community-based providers (summer, afterschool, enrichment). | UFLI's comprehensive March 13 proposal exceeded the funding and would not reach enough students. Informed by the Helios model (Hillsborough/Pinellas), UFLI was redirected to K–2 instructional support in ACPS. The $175K contract was signed in June with the first phase focused on instructional support from July 2026 through December 2026. Additional MOU will Readiness work in Spring 2027. |
| **Priority framework** | Three ACCLNA priorities. | Four pillars: Readiness, K–3 Core Instructional Support, Intervention/Remediation, and Coordination + Community Awareness. Goals were updated to 100% school readiness, 90% 3rd-grade reading proficiency, and adult literacy. |
| **Funding sources** | ACR coordination was budgeted in the Alachua County literacy contract. | In April, the ACR coordinator and consultants were moved to CTAC funds, and the County was told no additional literacy funds would be requested. ACR funds now focus on systems-level capacity rather than support for individual agencies. |
| **COE consultation** | COE Department of Educational Leadership consulting project (MOU in progress). | The program was dissolved by UF College of Education in July 2026. Its funds were reallocated to the next priority, Project Read for ACPS K–2 classrooms in all 21 elementary schools. The Project Read PO was completed in October 2026. |
| **Intervention staffing** | Capacity support for the PEAK cohort to be defined. | In August, CTAC approved Year One rollover funds for a full-time Literacy Specialist for the Literacy Catalyst cohort. The position was hired, and strategic planning with each Literacy Catalyst Cohort site provider was initiated. |
| **Hubs & awareness** | Virtual hub concept and partner-identified physical hubs. | The virtual hub launched on August 1, 2026 and continuously receives updates. ACR moved into a shared space with CNE and Gainesville Thrives (2770 NW 43rd St.), and the Community Advisory Council held its first meeting on September 30, selecting a Chair. Literacy resources for physical hub sites were purchased by September 30. |

## Updated Priority Areas: The Four Pillars

The refined model links each ACCLNA need to a lead function and implementation pathway. Compared with the original graphic, this version renames Instructional Support to K–3 Core Instructional Support, credits the intervention lead as the Literacy Catalyst operated by PEAK Literacy, and adds Gainesville Thrives, Project Read, the Literacy Specialist, and the Community Advisory Council as key players. It also adds Year 1 progress and Year 2 investment for each pillar.

### Key Priority Areas — Year 1 Update

Each ACCLNA need is connected to a lead function and implementation pathway. Status reflects October 2026; investments reflect the Year 2 budget (Oct 2026 – Sep 2027).

#### READINESS — PENDING

**Anticipated Partners**

*Not yet confirmed — MOUs pending*

*UFLI + ELC/VPK partners + Anita Zucker Center + Gainesville Thrives*

**Purpose**

Build early literacy foundations before kindergarten.

**Year 1 Groundwork**

- Early Learning Experts group convened with ELC leadership
- Gainesville Thrives secured BOCC funds to expand Imagination Library
- Items for 100 school-readiness bags received
- Partners and MOUs to be finalized for Spring 2027

**Year 2 Investment**

GNV Thrives $235,000
UFLI readiness phase (anticipated Spring 2027)*

#### K–3 CORE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

**Lead / Key Players**

UFLI + ACPS + Education Foundation + Project Read

**Purpose**

Strengthen K–3 implementation, coaching and professional learning in evidence-based literacy instruction.

**Year 1 Progress**

- UFLI Phase One contract signed ($175K)
- Administrators, coaches and K–2 teachers trained
- Kick-off at four SI schools; fidelity walkthroughs underway
- Project Read PO complete

**Year 2 Investment**

UFLI expert services $250,000*
ACPS stipends $35,000
Project Read $21,080

#### INTERVENTION / REMEDIATION

**Lead / Key Players**

Literacy Catalyst operated by PEAK Literacy + Literacy Specialist + community providers + libraries

**Purpose**

Provide targeted support for striving readers and adult learners.

**Year 1 Progress**

- Full-time Literacy Specialist hired
- 27 literacy tubs to 14 summer programs
- Regular cohort contacts with current sites
- Protocols built for adding new sites
- Juvenile Justice Center support
- GHA Elite Training Center support and materials
- Library Partnership and ACLD sites for physical hubs

**Year 2 Investment**

Literacy Catalyst + Home Instruction $624,684
Community program investment $43,000

#### COORDINATION + COMMUNITY AWARENESS

**Lead / Key Players**

CNE / ACR Team + Community Advisory Council + Torees Media

**Purpose**

Build the infrastructure that connects, sustains, and scales the work.

**Year 1 Progress**

- Virtual Literacy Hub launched Aug 1
- July 15 partner Kick-Off; WUFT coverage
- Advisory Council first meeting held; Chair selected
- Ilene Silverman Show appearance
- CTAC podcast and show
- Shared workspace with CNE + GNV Thrives

**Year 2 Investment**

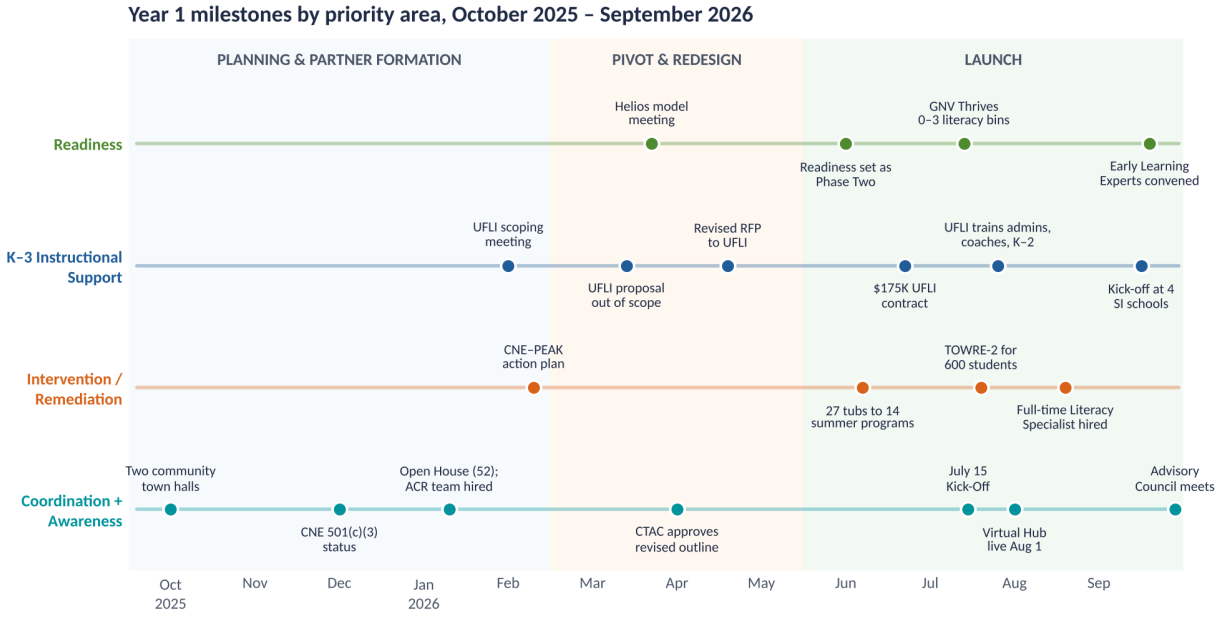
ACR Team $120,000
Hub maintenance $5,000

**Shared goal: literacy for life through aligned services, access, capacity, and accountability.**

*UFLI expert services ($250,000, Jan–Sep 2027) span K–3 instructional support and the pending readiness phase. Readiness partners are anticipated and not yet confirmed. Sources: CNE monthly reports Oct 2025–Aug 2026; CTAC briefing, Oct 12 2026.

## Milestones

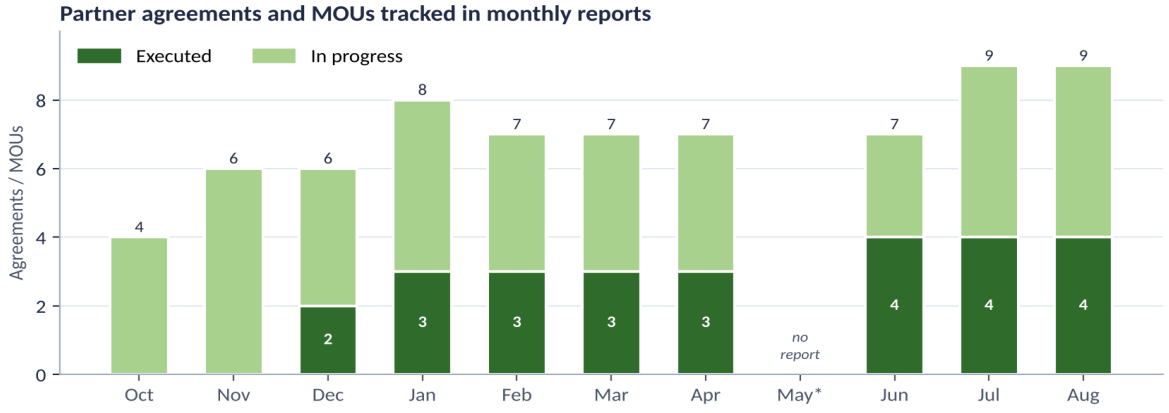
Year One ran in three phases. From October to February, the team engaged in strategic planning and partner formation: two community Town Halls, establishing the alachuacountyreads.org domain, hiring consultants from the College of Education and the Literacy Coordinator for the project, building and distributing summer literacy tubs, identifying and meeting with expert providers, and outreach to 17 identified community providers. From March to May, the team paused to redesign: the UFLI proposal review, the Helios briefing, the revised project outline, and a new RFP to UFLI. From June to September, the work launched across the strategy pillars.




*Milestones are placed in the month they were reported. Phase shading marks the planning, redesign, and launch periods.*

### Partnerships

Formal agreements grew slowly because of the redesign and UF legal requirements. By August, four agreements were executed: American Innovation Media, COE Literacy Consultants, the Literacy Coordinator, and UFLI. Five more were in progress: GHA/Elite Training Center hub, PFSF/Library Partnership hub, Project Read with ACPS, the Education Foundation, and the Literacy Specialist consultant.




*The May file supplied duplicates the June report. Executed: Torees Media, COE Literacy Consultants (Dec); Literacy Coordinator (Jan); UFLI (Jun).

# Budget

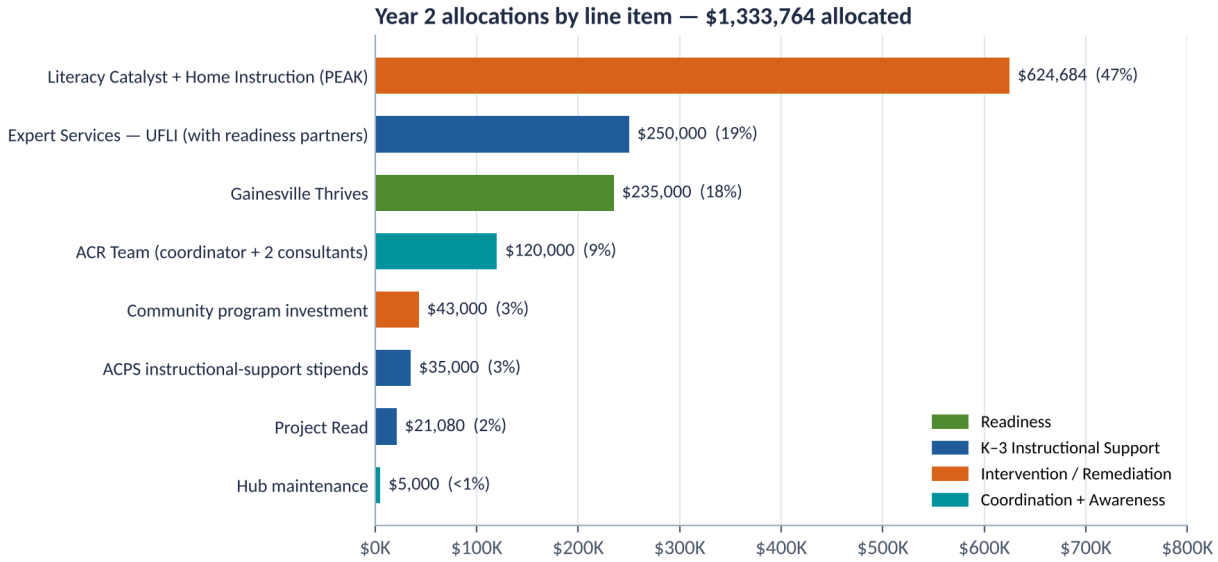
## Year One: Project Launch Highlights

| Item | Amount | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| UFLI Phase One — K–2 instructional support to 4 SI schools | $175,000 | Contract and invoice signed in June 2026; payment scheduled for July. |
| Launch-period investments (through Sep 30, 2026) | $73,265 | Teacher stipends (via TEFAC), evaluation materials for the Literacy Catalyst, decoding materials for ACPS UFLI implementation, cohort professional development, and summer literacy tubs. |
| Hub Development and Supplies | $25,000 | Virtual hub development and 3 physical site supplies |
| Full-time Literacy Specialist | $66,000 | CTAC approved the use of rollover funds in August 2026. |

## Year Two projected budget (October 2026 – September 2027)

Year Two brings together new CTAC and Alachua County funding with Year One rollover, for $1,357,500 available. Of that, $1,333,764 is allocated, leaving a projected $23,736 to roll over. Nearly half of the allocation goes to the Literacy Catalyst and Home Instruction operated by PEAK Literacy. UFLI expert services and Gainesville Thrives together make up just over a third. CNE also expects carry-over in the Community Program Investment line to support Year Three programming.



| Line item | Amount | Pillar |
|---|---|---|
| Literacy Catalyst + Home Instruction (PEAK Literacy) | $624,684 | Intervention / Remediation |
| Expert Services — UFLI anticipated with readiness partners (Jan–Sep 2027) | $250,000 | K–3 Instruction + Readiness |
| Gainesville Thrives | $235,000 | Readiness |
| ACR Team (coordinator + 2 consultants) | $120,000 | Coordination |
| Community program investment (Literacy Specialist Apr–Sep; provider PD conference) | $43,000 | Intervention / Remediation |
| ACPS stipends for instructional support | $35,000 | K–3 Instruction |
| Project Read | $21,080 | K–3 Instruction |
| Hub maintenance | $5,000 | Coordination |
| **Total allocated** | **$1,333,764** | |
| Total available ($550,000 CTAC + $640,000 County + $162,500 Year One rollover) | $1,357,500 | |
| **Projected unallocated / rollover** | **$23,736** | |

**CTAC portion.** The CTAC contractual and professional services contract managed by the ACR team for Year Two totals $492,816 and is outlined below. In addition, funding for GNV Thrives at $95,000 and PEAK Home Instruction at $124,684 is also being invested through CTAC but managed outside the ACR contract.

| CTAC contractual & professional services (Year Two) | Amount | Share |
|---|---|---|
| UFLI Services | $250,000 | 50.7% |
| ACR Team | $120,000 | 24.3% |
| Community Program Investment | $64,236 | 13.0% |
| ACPS Instructional Support Stipends | $35,000 | 7.1% |
| Project Read | $21,080 | 4.3% |
| Hub Maintenance / Marketing | $2,500 | 0.5% |
| **Total requested from CTAC** | **$492,816** | **100%** |

## Current Status and Next Steps

| Pillar | Where things stand (Oct 2026) | Next steps |
|---|---|---|
| **Readiness** | BOCC funds received by Gainesville Thrives for Imagination Library; Initial meeting with early learning experts to identify interested partners | Identify early learning locations for targeted support, gather scopes of work, and execute MOUs ahead of the Spring 2027 Readiness implementation phase. |
| **K–3 Core Instructional Support** | Monthly UFLI–ACPS meetings; fidelity walkthroughs by UFLI and ACPS school and district leadership; School Implementation Team meetings at all four SI schools; Project Read PO complete with all K-2 ACPS teachers rostered | Preview the Project Read implementation plan with ACPS; review walkthrough data; execute coaching cycles with feedback; extend the UFLI professional learning resource portal to all ACPS educators. |
| **Intervention / Remediation** | Literacy Catalyst Cohort providers in strategic planning with Literacy Specialist across all sites, Florida Ready to Work access secured with Elite Training Center; literacy resources purchased for ACLD and GHA Elite Training Center young-adult learners; partnership to support youth at Juvenile Justice Center established | Share Florida Ready to Work with additional partners; deliver resources to youth and young-adult sites; review PEAK tutoring start-up and Literacy Specialist progress. |
| **Coordination + Community Awareness** | Moved to the shared work location; items for 100 Readiness bags and young-adult learning received; Community Advisory Council established and Chair selected. Variety of media outlets engaged | Launch physical Hubs resources; schedule a funders' tour; Community Advisory Council Chair to set the Council meeting schedule; Council to raise awareness and media; regular updates to virtual Hub |

## Challenges and Lessons from Year One

- **Scope versus funding.** UFLI's full community proposal was beyond the available funding, and drafting it took longer than planned. Reframing UFLI around ACPS and anticipated support in early learning produced a fundable scope that matches the Helios model.
- **Contracting pathways.** UF legal requirements, ACPS legal review of Project Read, and staffing changes at COE all slowed agreements. Future timelines should plan for institutional review.
- **Parallel efforts.** The United Way Campaign for Grade Level Reading group built a separate birth-to-grade-3 resource hub. ACR links to it rather than duplicating it.
- **Partner engagement.** Engagement was uneven early on. Joint ACR-PEAK weekly reporting meetings and holding the July 15 Kick-Off improved coordination.
- **School-year timing.** Assessment and classroom implementation could not start until school opened, so the first measurable results will come in Year Two.