

# Adult Education is Needed Now



## Pennsylvania Adults 25 and Over

**1,380,727**

do not have a high school credential

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**358,442**

have less than a 9th grade education

**187,708**

are limited English proficient

- These adults are in or want to be in our workforce.
- Many of them are raising children.
- More than **1.6 Million** never learned to read, perform simple math, use a computer, or creatively solve problems.
- Dropping out of high school impacts skill levels. Between 2010 and 2015, an average of 13,550 students in Pennsylvania dropped out of high school. In the last five years, **67,752** students dropped out of high school. Many of them dropped out because they were failing. If they don't have access to adult education, they will not be able to get their High School Equivalency Diploma.

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**Pennsylvania needs skilled workers to stay competitive. Pennsylvanians need access to services that will get them skilled and ready to work.**  
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## Impact of Low Literacy Among Adults

- Adults without a high school diploma are more than twice as likely to be living in poverty than high school graduates, and more than three times as likely to be unemployed than adults with college degrees.
- The costs of low literacy are estimated nationally to be around **\$225 billion** due to loss of tax revenue from unemployment, reduced workforce productivity, and crime.
- Low literacy skills are directly linked to inequality, higher rates of unemployment, lower income, and poor health.
- Patients with low literacy skills have a **50%** increased risk of hospitalization.

Adult and Family Literacy Education plays an essential role in helping low skilled adults get and keep life sustaining jobs. Labor market economists project that by 2020, nearly two-thirds of all jobs will require some postsecondary education and training beyond high school (Carnevale, A., Smith, N., & Strohl, J., 2013). Yet, **9%** of adults in Pennsylvania don't even have a high school diploma. These adults lack the literacy, numeracy, and problem solving skills they need to get and keep good jobs or advance in a career. Pennsylvania employers need skilled and credentialed workers.



**PAACE** 

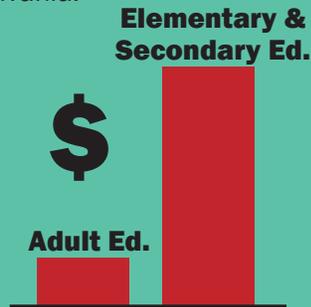
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## Challenges

From Program Year 2000-2001 through 2008-2009, total annual federal and state adult basic and family literacy funding combined ranged from \$42 to \$52 million. Since then, it has declined to under \$30 million with the majority of the decline coming from cuts in state funding. This decline in funding has impacted Pennsylvania's capacity to serve adults who need an education.

- State funds reach only **21,000 of 1.6 Million** adults who need basic skills instruction in Pennsylvania.
- Pennsylvania's average spending per adult learner is around **\$1,450** annually. The average for public elementary and secondary education is around **\$10,000** a year. Adult education is a great value for taxpayer dollars.
- Postsecondary education systems often don't make effective use of adult learning providers who know how to provide developmental education for students most in need of support.

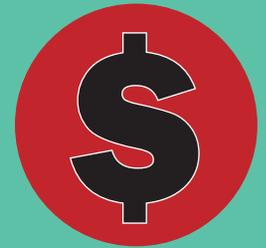


Resources are needed to:

- help people build work readiness skills;
- ensure that employers can meet their staffing needs;
- help families become self-sufficient;
- help parents support their children's literacy development;
- ensure that adults who were not able to complete school can get a diploma;
- provide English language instruction so that immigrants can integrate, work and become citizens; and
- enable students who want to enroll that would otherwise not be available due to wait lists.

## Return on Investment

- Funding adult education pays for itself: for every dollar invested in these services, Pennsylvania gets **\$3.25 back** in decreased welfare costs and tax revenue.
- **100 hours** or more of adult education attendance equates to **\$9,621 extra** earnings per year.
- When parents succeed, children succeed.



## References

- COABE Report, Adult Education is Needed Now  
<http://www.coabe.org/adult-education-is-needed-now/>
- The National Assessment of Adult Literacy  
<https://nces.ed.gov/naal/estimates/StateEstimates.aspx>
- Pennsylvania Department of Education Statistics  
<http://www.education.pa.gov/Data-and-Statistics/Pages/default.aspx#tab-1>
- American Community Survey (ACS)  
<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>
- Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)  
<https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/>



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