



ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY
FACT SHEET

Congressman David Davis
Tennessee 1st District

What is Adult Education?

Adult education is an education program serving adults, 16 years of age and older, who are functioning below the high school completion level with emphasis on reading, numeracy, and English literacy.

Adult educators work with each adult student to design an individual learning plan that responds to the student's needs and goals such as:

- to get a job;
to help their children with homework and be successful in school;
to get off of welfare and achieve a family sustaining income;
to learn the English language, understand US culture, and participate in society;
to complete high school or obtain a GED; and/or
to transfer to post secondary or other training and education programs.

What is the Need for Adult Education?

In the 1st District:

According to the 2000 census, 493,120 adults reside in the 1st District. Of that number:

58,539 have less than 9 years of school
79,835 have 9 to 12 years of school but no diploma
85,674 (17% of all adults) are challenged to succeed and contribute
18,491 adults have limited English proficiency challenging their ability to succeed and contribute (Source: US Census Bureau, Table S1601, 2006)

### National Need—3 Indicators

1. Of the 200,000,000 adults in America, 43,000,000 (22%) have not finished high school.
2. According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, a study issued in December 2005 by the National Center for Education Statistics, (U. S. Department of Education):
  - approximately 30 million adults have serious educational deficiencies which affect their ability to continue their education, benefit from occupational training programs, obtain and retain employment, or, in the case of limited English proficient individuals, succeed in their new home country;
  - an additional 60 million have education deficiencies that could also prevent them from fulfilling their potential;
  - thus, more than 90,000,000 adults (**45% of the adult population**) are in jeopardy of not fully participating in family, work, and community opportunities.
3. According to the Department of Homeland Security, approximately 12 million documented aliens live in the US. These 12 million adults are parents, workers and community members who need English literacy skills to benefit from and contribute to their employers, their families, and their community.

### How Effective Are Adult Education Programs?

#### **In the State:**

**See the attached Blue Book page for demographic and performance information.**

#### **In the Nation:**

- **OMB Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART):** Adult Education and Family Literacy is one of only four US Department of Education programs that received the “Effective” PART rating by OMB.

## Why is Adult Education So Important?

Because 45% of the adult population has basic skills deficiencies, adult education services are important to many sectors of society. As a result, adult education is important to:

- **Business**

- American businesses **lose more than \$60 BILLION in productivity each year** due to employees' basic skill deficiencies.
- **New jobs require advanced skills.** Over a thousand employers hold workplace adult education classes at their worksite to upgrade the basic skills and English literacy of their current employees.
- **Public schools produce ONLY 2% of the workforce annually.** The current labor pool and immigrants are the workforce. Employers need adult education to ensure that basic skills and English literacy match the job requirements.



- **Immigrants**



- 46% of current adult education enrollees are non-natives seeking to improve English literacy and cultural understanding. Although limited English proficient adults constitute 15% of the eligible population, they make up 46% of students.
- Only one million of the estimated 12 million limited English proficient (LEP) adults can access adult education classes.
- Their roles as parents, workers, and community members require that they have access to adult education English literacy (ESL) classes.

- **No Child Left Behind**

- Children of parents who are unemployed and have not completed high school are five times more likely to drop out than children of employed parents.
- Children's literacy levels are strongly linked to the educational level of their parents, especially their mother.



- **Public Health**

- 46% of American adults can not read or follow medical instructions.
- AMA says that individuals with low health literacy incur medical expenses that are up to four times greater than patients with adequate literacy skills, costing the health care system BILLIONS of dollars every year for unnecessary doctor visits and hospital stays.
- According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), adults who were ages 65 and older had lower average health literacy than adults in younger age groups. This has serious implications for the health and well-being of our nation's senior citizens.
- The NAAL also found that Hispanic adults had lower average health literacy than adults in any other racial/ethnic group.

- **Corrections**

- Participation in correctional education reduces re-arrest, re-convictions, and re-incarceration.
- Young Adults
  - Increasing numbers of 16-18 year olds leave school and come to adult education—their only alternative.
- Learning Disabled
  - 50% of adults without a high school diploma are learning disabled
  - These adults were not lazy or uncaring about school. They have average or above intelligence, but the way schools taught and the way they learned did not match. They were truly LEFT BEHIND and deserve another chance.

**What is the Current Budget Situation?**

- The current Federal appropriation (\$571,000,000) coupled with state and local funds (\$1.6 Billion) allow ONLY 3% of the 90,000,000 who could benefit from adult education to access classes and other services. In a recent survey, we know we have waiting listing of a minimum of 100,000.

**What is the Impact?**

Adult education programs play a role in the success of many national initiatives, including job training, keeping our nation competitive, improving the academic achievement of our nation's children, providing alternatives for incarcerated individuals, improving the health of our nation's citizens, and helping individuals obtain the skills they require to obtain a job and end their dependency on federal programs. The RETURN ON INVESTMENT in adult education is significant.

*National Adult Education and Literacy Contacts*

**National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, Inc.**

*Professional development and policy catalyst for the adult education state directors and their staff members. Email at [lmclendon@naepdc.org](mailto:lmclendon@naepdc.org) web site [www.naepdc.org](http://www.naepdc.org)*

**National Council of State Directors of Adult Education**

*Professional association and advocacy for adult education state directors. Email at [dc2@ncsdae.org](mailto:dc2@ncsdae.org) web site, [www.ncsdae.org](http://www.ncsdae.org)*

**444 N. Capitol St., Suite 422 (Hall of States)  
Washington, DC 20001  
202.624.5250  
202.624.1497 FAX**

<i>Key Officers</i>	
Mr. Israel David Mendoza, <b>Chair</b> Director, Adult Basic Education Office State Board for Community and Technical Colleges 319 Seventh Avenue, P.O. Box 42495 Olympia, WA 98504-2495 Phone: (360) 704-4326 Fax: (360) 664-8808 E-mail: <a href="mailto:imendoza@sbctc.ctc.edu">imendoza@sbctc.ctc.edu</a>	Ms. Denise Pottmeyer, Chair-Elect State Director Adult Basic and Literacy Education Ohio Department of Education 25 South Front Street Columbus, OH 43215-4183 Phone: (614) 466-5015 Fax: (614) 728-8470 E-mail: <a href="mailto:denise.pottmeyer@ode.state.oh.us">denise.pottmeyer@ode.state.oh.us</a>
Ms. Patricia Bennett, <b>Policy Co-Chair</b> Chief, Adult Education and Literacy Services Branch Maryland State Department of Education Phone: (410) 767-0168 Fax: (410) 333-2099 E-mail: <a href="mailto:pbennett@msde.state.md.us">pbennett@msde.state.md.us</a>	Mr. Art Ellison, <b>Policy Co-Chair</b> Administrator Bureau of Adult Education New Hampshire Department of Education Phone: (603) 271-6698 Fax: (603) 271-1953 E-mail: <a href="mailto:aellison@ed.state.nh.us">aellison@ed.state.nh.us</a>

<i>Council and Consortium Staff and Consultants</i>	
Dr. Lennox L. McLendon Executive Director 202.624.5250 804-314-6747 Cell <a href="mailto:lmclendon@naedpc.org">lmclendon@naedpc.org</a> <a href="mailto:dc2@ncsdae.org">dc2@ncsdae.org</a>	Ms. Lynn Selmsler Policy Analyst 703-560-5541 <a href="mailto:lcselmsler@cox.net">lcselmsler@cox.net</a>
Ms. Vonda Burns Executive Assistant 202-624-5250 <a href="mailto:vburns@naepdc.org">vburns@naepdc.org</a>	