

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As you craft the Fiscal Year 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you increase funding for the Adult Education State Grant program to \$810 million. Further, we ask you to specify this funding in the bill text.

The need for adult education has grown in recent years as the skills gap has widened. With recent findings of the [Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies \(PIAAC\)](#) indicating that low performance in literacy increased from 19 to 28 percent and numeracy from 29 to 34 percent of U.S. adults between 2017 and 2023, it is no surprise that employers are finding it [difficult to fill vacancies for in-demand jobs](#). At current funding levels, adult education programs, many of which have waiting lists, can only reach approximately [1.1 million](#) people. Without the opportunities provided through adult education programs, many adults will be sidelined from the economy as they struggle to find jobs that provide family sustaining wages and employers will continue to face workforce shortages.

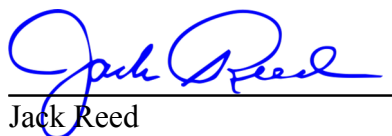
To bridge the gap between adults struggling to gain needed skills and employers facing workforce shortages, we urge you to work toward doubling funding for adult education over the next five years, with a first installment of at least \$810 million for the Adult Education State Grant program in the Fiscal Year 2026.

Adult education provides numeracy, literacy, digital and information literacy, English language skills, work readiness, soft skills, high school equivalency, and numerous wraparound services. These programs help some of the most vulnerable communities in our country access educational resources, integrate into their community, and participate in our economy. If properly resourced and supported, adult education will help build a resilient economy that lifts up all communities and provides employers with a pool of skilled workers.

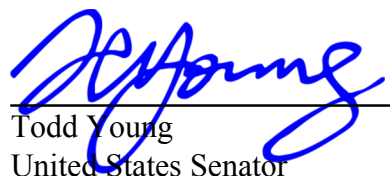
We urge you to increase funding for the Adult Education State Grant program to \$810 million

for Fiscal Year 2026. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



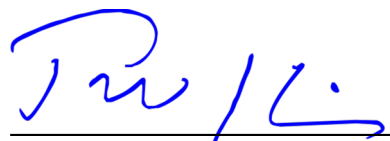
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



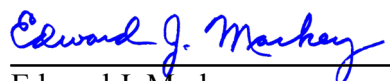
Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



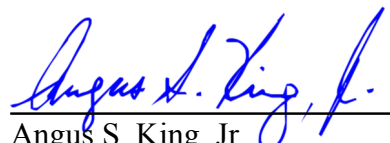
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



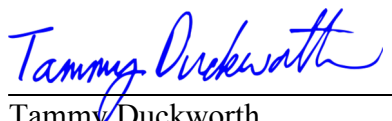
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



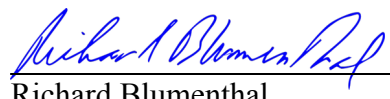
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



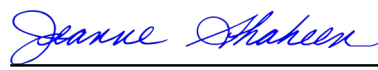
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



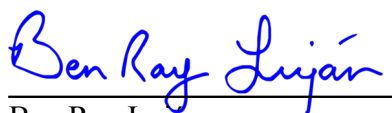
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



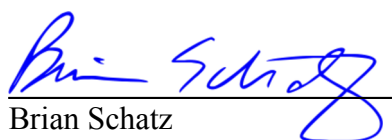
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



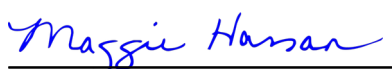
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



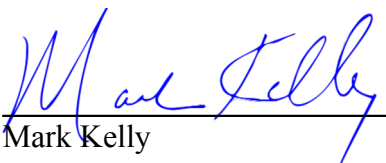
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator

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Mark Kelly
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bernard Sanders", written over a horizontal line.

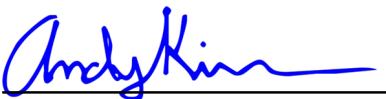
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Catherine Cortez Masto", written over a horizontal line.

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gary C. Peters", written over a horizontal line.

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Andy Kim", written over a horizontal line.

Andy Kim
United States Senator