

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 23, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin to craft the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) 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 more acute in recent years as the skills gap has widened. With recent findings by 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 2023,¹ it is no surprise that employers are finding it difficult to fill vacancies for in-demand jobs.² At current funding levels, adult education programs, many of which have waiting lists, can only reach approximately 1.1 million people.³ 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 address this critical need, 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 FY26.

Adult education provides literacy, numeracy, digital and information literacy, English language skills, work readiness, soft skills, high school equivalency, and numerous wraparound services. These programs help some of our most vulnerable communities in our country including immigrants, formerly incarcerated persons, and persons without high school diplomas access educational resources, integrate into their community, and participate in our economy. If properly resourced and supported, adult education programs can be the difference between earning a family-sustaining wage and struggling to make ends meet. It should be a top priority to ensure a

¹ Highlights of the 2023 U.S. PIAAC Results. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/2023/national_results.asp.

² Manpower Group. The United States' 2022 Talent Shortage. Retrieved https://go.manpowergroup.com/hubfs/Talent%20Shortage%202022/MPG_2022_TS_Infographic-US.pdf.

³ Department of Education. Career, Technical, and Adult Education Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request. Retrieved <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget25/justifications/o-ctae.pdf>.

healthy resilient economy that lifts up all communities and provides employers with a pool of skilled workers.

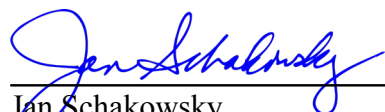
According to a recent study, “unemployed residents with prior U.S. work experience who enrolled in an employment-focused English course boosted their earnings by an average of more than \$7,100 annually for two years after starting the program, compared with unemployed non-English speakers who weren’t in the program.”⁴ Now is the time to build the capacity of adult education programs, and in doing so, strengthen our workforce development system and our overall economy.

We urge you to increase funding for the Adult Education State Grant program to \$810 million for FY26 and specify this funding in the bill text. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



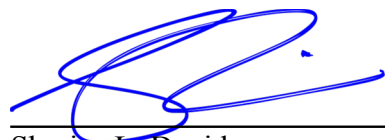
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



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Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

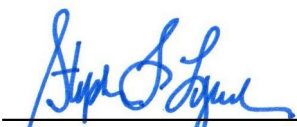


Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

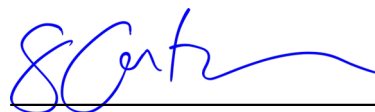


Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

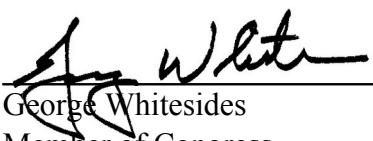
⁴ Anne Roder and Mark Elliott. Stepping Up: Interim Findings on JVS Boston’s English for Advancement Show Large Earnings Gains. Economic Mobility Corporation. (Nov. 2020) Retrieved <https://economicmobilitycorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SteppingUp.pdf>.



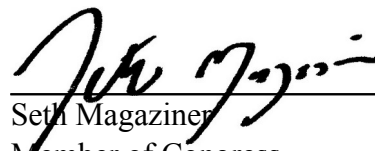
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



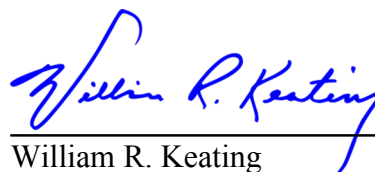
George Whitesides
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



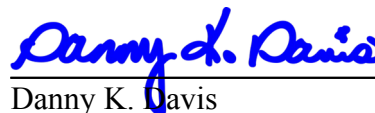
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



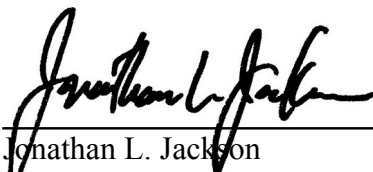
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Morgan McGarvey
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Ilhan Omar
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Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



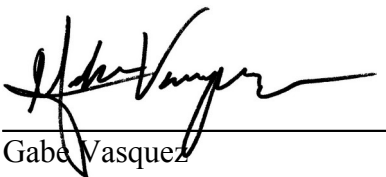
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



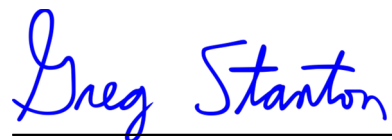
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress

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Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Stanton", written over a horizontal line.

Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frederica S. Wilson", written over a horizontal line.

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress