

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2023

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

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

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin to craft the Fiscal Year 2024 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.

The need for adult education has grown more acute over the last three years, as many adult learners live in communities and work in sectors of the economy that have felt the greatest impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. An economic recovery that reaches all communities will require greater investment in the 43 million adults with low literacy skills and the 62.7 million adults with low numeracy skills.¹ At current funding levels, adult education programs only reach about 1.1 million people.² Without the opportunities provided through adult education programs, many adults will struggle to find jobs that provide family sustaining wages.

Recent research by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that job growth for individuals without a high school diploma or some college experience is about zero or negative. 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 the Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

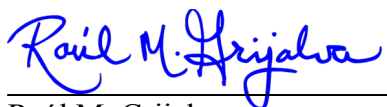
Adult education provides numeracy, literacy, digital and information literacy, English language skills, work readiness, soft skills, high school equivalency, and numerous wraparound services to nearly one million of adult learners nationwide – all essential services, especially during an economic crisis. These programs help some of our most vulnerable communities in our country including immigrants, formerly incarcerated persons, and persons without a high school diploma access educational resources and integrate into their community. If properly resourced and supported, adult education programs can be the difference between earning a family-sustaining wage and struggling to make ends meet, and to ensuring a strong economic recovery by providing employers with a pool of skilled workers.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. *Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC)*. <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/faq.asp#6001>

² Department of Education. *Career, Technical, and Adult Education Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request*. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget23/justifications/m-ctae.pdf>

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.”³ Now is the time to build the capacity of these programs.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



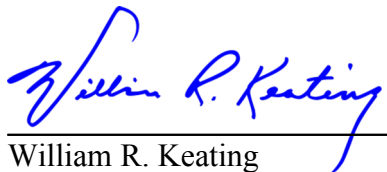
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Ayanna Pressley
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William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

³ 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. <https://economicmobilitycorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SteppingUp.pdf>

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