

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2026

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 2027 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. Findings by [the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies \(PIAAC\)](#) indicate 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. Combined with the projection that [50 percent](#) of the workforce will have to reskill by 2050, it is no surprise that [72 percent](#) of U.S. employers are already finding it difficult to find skilled talent 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 2027.

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 2027. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

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