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COABE, 100+ Partners Mark National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week With Call for \$1B in Federal Funding

Additional Funding Needed to Help Nation's Adult Education System Recover, Reskill Displaced Workers for Jobs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Joined by more than 100 state, national and corporate partners, including Amazon, Google and IBM, the National Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) is intensifying its effort during [National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week](#) to secure \$1 billion in federal funding to help adult education programs and their learners recover from the pandemic.

National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week began Sunday and runs through Saturday, Sept. 26. During this week, COABE is spearheading a full schedule of activities designed to amplify the call on Congress to provide the additional funding and on state governors to allocate federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) stimulus funding to the adult education recovery.

The call for additional funding comes at a time when the education and skills provided by the nation's system of adult education are needed to help reskill or upskill low-skill Americans into new jobs that provide family-sustaining wages. According to recent findings published by the American Institutes for Research, 43 million adults in the United States lack the skills needed for the bulk of the nation's family-sustaining careers.

“Adult education is an important part of our nation's economic recovery from COVID-19,” said Sharon Bonney, CEO of [COABE](#), which represents the field of 65,000 adult educators nationally. “It's low-skilled adults who are more likely to be negatively impacted by the current economic crisis and who are in need of upskilling. Adult education programs are struggling to get back on their feet and need help so they can safely and adequately educate displaced workers and give them the skills they need to get back to work, this time in better jobs.”

The nation's system of adult education has been hard-hit by COVID-19. Programs have struggled with the transition from brick and mortar to a virtual setting; to train educators to

deliver online instruction; to provide students with the technology needed for at-home learning; and to find – and afford – the physical space and personal protective equipment needed for safe social distancing for the return to in-person learning.

Of the more than 43 million adults who could benefit from services in the U.S., 1.5 million adults, with 74 percent of them being persons of color, received instruction under the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act (WIOA). COABE estimates the return on investment for adult education, which includes preparing adults to earn their High School Equivalency diploma, is \$2.5 billion in tax revenue and reduced expenses for every 400,000 adults who earn a high school diploma – a savings of \$6,250 per person.

The week’s activities include Virtual Hill Meetings with governors and members of Congress, led by state adult education associations; a Twitter “storm;” and daily awards ceremonies to honor elected officials, at the local, state and national levels, who have shown leadership in the area of adult education. [View the full schedule of events](#) and elected officials to be honored.

Among the partners joining the effort are Amazon, Barbara Bush Foundation, Dollar General Literacy Foundation, Google, IBM, Markle, the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education, National Coalition for Literacy, National Governors Association, National Skills Coalition, SkillsUSA, Strada Network, Tyson, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and The United States Conference of Mayors. [View the list of corporate partners](#).

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About COABE

The Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) is a non-profit organization that champions increased access and investment in adult education, leading to higher-quality instruction and greater student outcomes. We employ innovative and effective strategies to reach more adults who struggle with literacy, numeracy and problem-solving. COABE represents the field of nearly 65,000 adult educators and provides a variety of services, including professional development through annual, state-of-the-art national conferences, more than 50 webinars annually, and publication of the *COABE Journal*.