



## **COABE Recommendations for the Biden Administration & 117<sup>th</sup> Congress**

### **Who We Are:**

The Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) is the leading association for adult education, and we represent the 65,000 adult educators and leaders around the country. Our teachers and leaders provide numeracy, literacy, digital literacy, work readiness, soft skills, high school equivalency, and numerous wraparound services to more than 1.5 million adult learners nationwide. With over 2,200 WIOA Title II programs around the country, adult education serves the nation's most vulnerable adults. COABE members work tirelessly to help underserved adults master the skills they need to compete and build careers – along with better futures for themselves, their families, and their communities.

### **Adult Education Immediate Needs:**

- Adult education programs are in dire need of support as they continue to provide distance teaching/learning; connect with learners through digital means; and upgrade their digital infrastructure.
  - Many adult teachers and learners do not have access to the technology needed to participate in distance learning.
  - Programs are facing steep costs, amidst State budget cuts, as they navigate the virtual environment.
- Dedicated adult education funding has been left out of every COVID-19 relief package to date, yet our programs provide essential services – especially during an economic downturn.
  - Adult education services can be the difference between securing a job that pays family sustaining wages or struggling to make ends meet.
- Adult learners are being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic as they are often first out of the job market and the last back in during times of economic crisis.

### **Adult Education Long-Term Needs:**

- In the next 5 years, adult education programs are expecting a significant surge in participation, which is what happened following the last recession. To prepare for the inevitable increase in new students, we need funding to build capacity of the system.
  - Furthermore, adult education programs had lengthy waiting lists before the pandemic and have been unable to meet the demand due to lack of funding.

### **Funding Recommendations:**

**COVID-19 Relief: Match the \$3.6 billion in funding for adult education programs proposed by the House Education and Labor Committee in the reconciliation bill.**

- Adult education works.
  - 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 two years after starting the program, compared with unemployed non-English speakers who weren’t in the program.”

**Appropriations: Double the Federal funding for the Adult Education State Grant program over the next five years to \$1.35 billion by increasing annual appropriations by \$135 million each year.**

- With steady increases to our funding, we will be able to serve more adult learners, while continuing to provide high quality services to current students. This 5-year glidepath will also allow adult education programs to prepare for systemic growth with efficiency and quality.