



Funding Request:

Invest \$810 million in the Adult Education State Grants program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

- If properly resourced and supported, adult education programs enable learners to gain the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce and earn family-sustaining wages, while providing employers with a pool of skilled workers to fill in-demand jobs.
- Demand for adult education programs is high because of the economic boost these programs provide to participants, employers, and communities.
- Additional support for adult education programs will strengthen our nation's economy by providing millions of adult learners with necessary workforce and life skills, lifting people out of poverty and off government assistance, and ensuring employers can find skilled workers.
- With an increase in funding, local programs will be able to build capacity to serve more learners, hire more full-time teachers and increase retention, thereby boosting the ability of adult education to continue to serve as a critical component of our nation's workforce development system, supporting employers and individuals in every State.

Policy Request:

Cosponsor the bipartisan Adult Education WORKS Act when it is reintroduced by Senators Reed (D-RI) and Young (R-IN) and Representative McBath (D-GA) and push for its full inclusion in the WIOA reauthorization

- The reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides a significant opportunity to strengthen adult education (Title II of WIOA).
- The Adult Education WORKS Act contains recommendations COABE gathered through the input of educators, program directors, employers, and adult learners.
- This legislation will update adult education, a critical component of our workforce system, to better meet the needs of learners and ensure employers can find skilled workers. The bill will address recent [findings](#) 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.
- Last year, Congress was close to reauthorizing WIOA through the bipartisan [A Stronger Workforce for America Act \(ASWA\)](#), which incorporated several of COABE-supported priorities included in the Adult Education WORKS Act.
- COABE urges **cosponsorship** of the bipartisan Adult Education WORKS Act **and passage** of a WIOA reauthorization bill that **retains the existing provisions and adds in the rest of the Adult Education WORKS Act:**
 - o improve collaboration and coordination between Title I and II programs by adding adult education representation on the state workforce development board
 - o allow states to pilot new accountability measures that better measure the performance of students and success of programs
 - o ensure learners gain digital **and** information literacy skills – **digital literacy included in ASWA**
 - o devote more funding for professional development of adult educators, boost the professionalization of the adult education field, and elevate the use of career navigators – **included in ASWA**
 - o promote integrated education and training programs (IETs) – **included in ASWA**
 - o strengthen data collection and facilitate a common reporting system for performance accountability measures – **included in ASWA**