

# INVEST IN MASSACHUSETTS

## INVEST IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

FY 2018 BUDGET REQUEST FOR LINE ITEM #7035-0002: \$31,468,517

Education is the key to success in today's society and economy. Over 19,000 Massachusetts residents rely on Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs throughout the Commonwealth to gain the literacy, English language, math, and other skills they need to provide for themselves and their families.<sup>1</sup> Nearly another 19,000 people now wait to enroll in programs in their local communities, while still more have been deterred from participating by a lack of resources.<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts needs to invest in ABE today to secure a better future for everyone tomorrow.

Accordingly, the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE) calls on policymakers to appropriate \$31,468,517 for Adult Basic Education (Line Item #7035-002) in FY 2018.

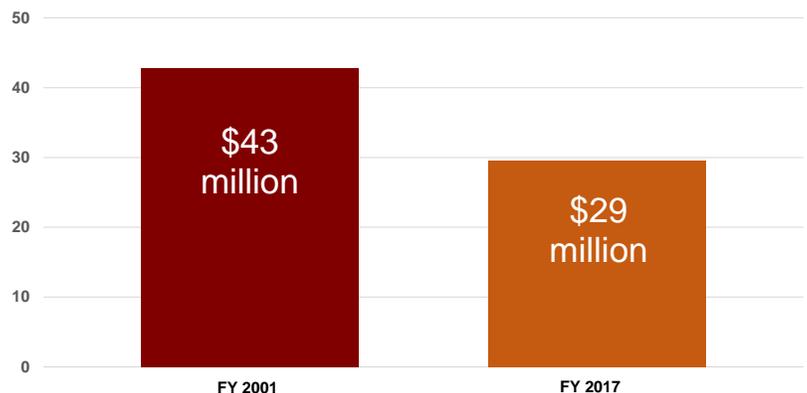
Funding at this level represents an increase of roughly \$2.6 million over FY 2017 and would:

- Restore \$644,444 in "9C" spending cuts made by Governor Baker in December 2016
- Provide \$800,000 to move approximately 445 adult students from waiting lists into classrooms
- Allocate \$600,000 for curriculum development to meet the rigors of the College and Career Readiness Standards and to link basic skills instruction to skills needed in the current labor market
- Use \$600,000 to improve working conditions and compensation for adult education staff, thus reducing turnover, increasing continuity of teaching, counseling and program staff, and enhancing program quality

### Resources for ABE Continue to Fall as Demand Remains High

Since FY 2001, the purchasing power of ABE funding has declined by 31 percent.

- In FY 2001, ABE appropriations had a purchasing power of close to \$43 million in today's dollars. In FY 2017 (after taking 9C cuts into account), appropriations amounted to roughly \$29 million.



Line Item #7035-0002 in millions of constant FY 2018 dollars  
Source: Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center

More people want and need to take part in ABE than existing programs can serve.

- Over 18,000 adults are on waiting lists for ABE and ESOL programs.<sup>3</sup>
- More broadly, 1.1 million Massachusetts adults are ill-equipped to meet the demands of the state's rapidly changing economy, with 1 in 10 Massachusetts adults over age 25 lacking a high school credential and 1 in 11 unable to speak English very well.<sup>4,5</sup>



**MCAE: The Voice of Adult Education in Massachusetts**

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# Adult Basic Education Helps Promote Economic Security, Build Thriving Communities, and Produce Long-Term Budgetary Savings

## A high school credential increases earning potential and self-sufficiency.

- More than 471,000 Massachusetts adults lacked a high school credential in 2015.<sup>6</sup> Yet, median earnings for high school dropouts are \$8,825 less than those for workers who hold only a high school credential and \$33,617 less than the typical earnings of bachelor's degree holders. Consequently, the lack of high school credential for all adults potentially represents an annual earnings loss of some \$4.1 billion.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the unemployment rate for adults without a high school credential was 11.4 percent in 2015, 2 to 4 times higher than the rate for high school and college graduates.<sup>8</sup>
- Over 25 percent of adults over age 25 who do not have a high school credential lived in poverty in 2015; the comparable rates for adults with strictly such a credential and for adults with a bachelors' degree were markedly lower: 12.1 percent and 4.3 percent, respectively.<sup>9</sup>
- In FY 2016, 875 adults received their high school credential through state-funded ABE programs, raising their collective earning potential by nearly \$7.7 million. That same year, 3,168 adults in ABE programs kept their current jobs and another 1,041 gained employment.<sup>10</sup>

## Education and literacy foster healthy and engaged families.

- Low literacy is linked to increased mortality, hospitalization, poorer control of chronic illness, more frequent hospitalization, and underuse of preventative services.<sup>11</sup>
- The best indicator of a child's success in school is the education level of his or her parents.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2014, less than 25 percent of US citizens without a high school credential reported voting in that year's Congressional elections, while 53 percent of adults with a bachelor's degree indicated that they had cast such a ballot.<sup>13</sup>

## Education lowers incarceration and recidivism rates, potentially reducing corrections costs.

- Incarceration rates were 63 times higher among high school dropouts between the ages of 16 and 24 than among college graduates; 70 percent of offenders never finished high school.<sup>14</sup>
- A 2006 Department of Correction study found that receiving a high school diploma reduced recidivism by 17 percent.<sup>15</sup> Other research suggests that graduating from college can reduce recidivism by 72 percent.<sup>16</sup>
- In FY14, the average cost per year to house an inmate was \$53,040.87; thus, reducing entrants and returns to the corrections system could save the Commonwealth millions of dollars each year.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OVAE/NRS/tables/view.cfm?state=MA&year=2015&tableID=8>

<sup>2</sup> MA Department of Education, ACLS, <https://smartt.doemass.org/smartt/pAbeDirectoryHome>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <http://massinc.org/research/new-skills-for-a-new-economy/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_5YR\\_S1501&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_S1501&prodType=table)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Data on earnings differentials taken from the American Community Survey; estimate of collective annual earnings loss reflect MCAE calculations based on ACS data on the number of individuals without a credential and the earnings differential between those with and those without such a credential

<sup>8</sup> [http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/pdf/MA2015\\_Workforce\\_and\\_Labor\\_Area\\_Review.pdf](http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/pdf/MA2015_Workforce_and_Labor_Area_Review.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_5YR\\_S1501&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_S1501&prodType=table)

<sup>10</sup> Data on outcomes for ABE programs taken from US Department of Education, OCTAE, <https://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OVAE/NRS/tables/view.cfm?state=MA&year=2015&tableID=8>; estimate of increased earning potential reflect MCAE calculations based on OCTAE and ACS data

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp058328>; <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2005/0801/p387.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2853053/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2015/demo/p20-577.html>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.northeastern.edu/clms/wp-content/uploads/The\\_Consequences\\_of\\_Dropping\\_Out\\_of\\_HighSchool.pdf](http://www.northeastern.edu/clms/wp-content/uploads/The_Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_HighSchool.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/doc/research-reports/450.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> C. A. Chappell, "Post Secondary Correctional Education and Recidivism: A Meta-Analysis of Research Conducted 1990-1999," *Journal of Correctional Education* 55, no. 2 (2004): 148-169. M. E. Batiuk, "The State of Post-Secondary Education in Ohio," *Journal of Correctional Education* 48, no. 2 (1997): 70-72.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/doc/madocannualreport201412-1-15final.pdf>