

INVEST IN MASSACHUSETTS

INVEST IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

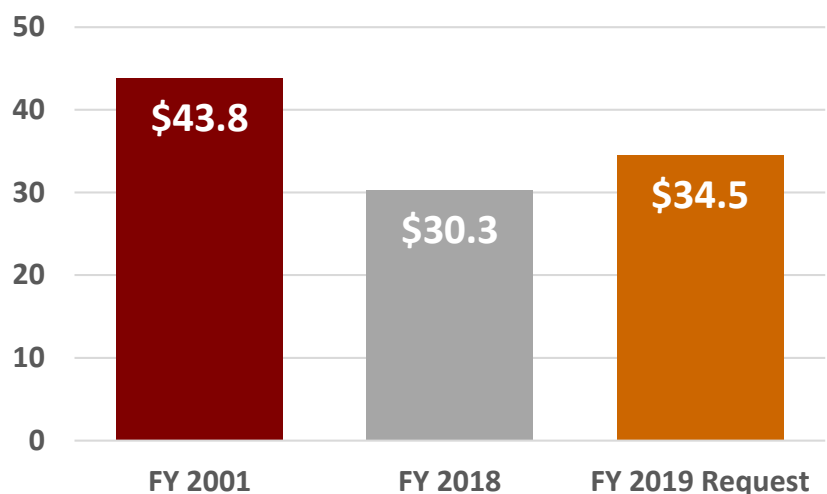
FY 2019 BUDGET REQUEST FOR LINE ITEM #7035-0002: \$34.5 MILLION

Education is the key to success in today's society and economy. Nearly 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. More than another 18,000 people now wait to enroll in programs in their local communities, while still more have been deterred from participating by a lack of resources. 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 \$34.5 million for Adult Basic Education (Line Item #7035-0002) in FY 2019.

Funding at this level would enable Massachusetts' ABE system to:

- **Serve more students**, moving adults off waiting lists and into programs;
- **Reach underserved communities**, increasing the likelihood that students are able to enroll in programs near where they live or work;
- **Strengthen program quality**, advancing curriculum development and linking instruction to the demands of existing and emerging labor markets, and;
- **Improve working conditions** for thousands of dedicated instructors, advisors, and counselors, reducing turnover and disruption and increasing the continuity of services.



Line Item #7035-0002 in millions of constant FY 2019 dollars

Source: MCAE calculations based on data from MassBudget, US BLS

Despite its far-reaching and long-lasting impact, state appropriations for Massachusetts' ABE system declined 30 percent between FY 2001 and FY 2018 after adjusting for inflation, falling from \$43.8 million to \$30.3 million in constant FY 2019 dollars. Investments in ABE are needed now to reverse this decline and in so doing:

- **Prepare all adults to meet the demands of the modern labor force.** More than 462,000 adults aged 25 and older – or roughly 1 in 10 – lacked a high school credential in 2016. That same year, close to 530,000 adults aged 18 and older – also nearly 1 in 10 – were unable to speak English very well.
- **Promote economic security.** Adults without a high school credential experience lower annual earnings, higher poverty rates, and greater unemployment.
- **Build stronger families and thriving communities.** Parents' educational levels are a key indicator of children's success in school, while low literacy is associated with adverse health outcomes, including increased mortality.
- **Improve Massachusetts' long-term budget outlook.** Education can lower incarceration and recidivism rates and thus potentially save millions in corrections costs over time; on the other side of the ledger, education can also yield earnings and employment gains that ultimately bolster state tax collections.



MCAE: The Voice of Adult Education in Massachusetts

For more on adult education in Massachusetts, including a list of sources for this fact sheet, please visit www.mcae.net.

617.482.6223 • info@mcae.net