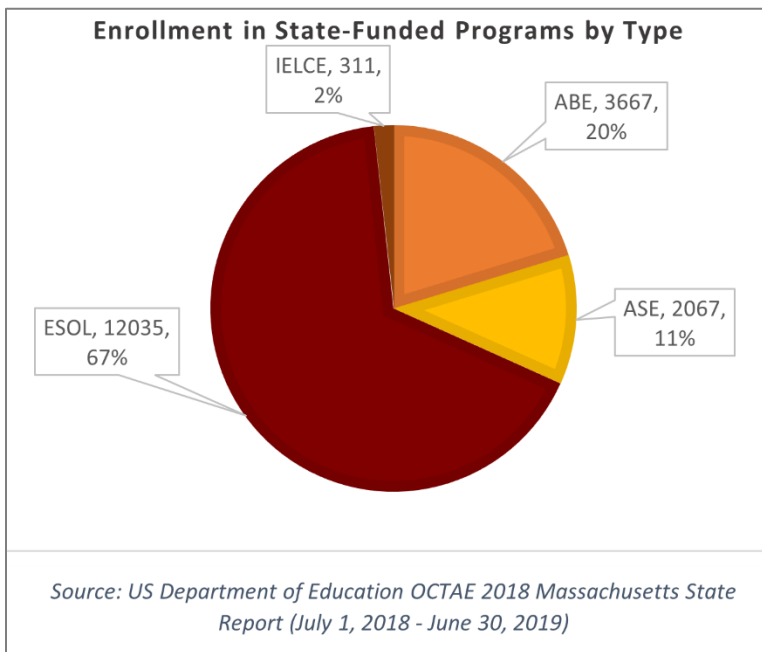


COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

What is adult basic education (ABE)?

Massachusetts' adult basic education (ABE) system is a critical element of the Commonwealth's efforts to ensure that every resident has the education he or she needs to realize his or her full potential and to develop the type of workforce essential to a flourishing, innovative, and more equitable economy. Adult literacy also contributes toward the achievement of a range of other public priorities, including improved health outcomes, lower unemployment and incarceration rates, and deeper civic engagement.



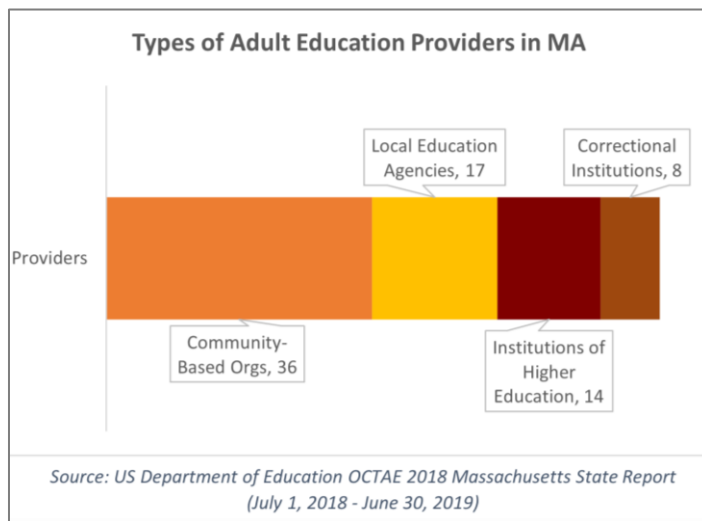
Adult basic education is an umbrella term that includes instructional services for adults over the age of 16 in one of four areas: **adult basic education (ABE)**, that is, reading, writing, and math below the high school level; **adult secondary education (ASE)**, leading to a high school equivalency credential; **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**, and; **Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE)**, which combines ESOL instruction with civics education and workforce preparation activities.

In FY 2018, 18,167 adult learners were enrolled in state-funded adult basic education programs in Massachusetts. The greatest share of ABE programs are those serving English-language learners (67%), which includes immigrants who attained school credentials in their home country, as well as those seeking an American high school equivalency.

In addition to these core educational offerings, adult basic education programs provide a variety of related services to students, such as citizenship classes; employment and career readiness training; transitions to college; and family, financial, and health literacy assistance.

How is ABE delivered in Massachusetts?

One of the great strengths of Massachusetts' ABE system is its diversity, as a wide array of entities are responsible for delivering such services. In FY2018, 88 entities received public funding to provide adult education services in Massachusetts: a mixture of community-based organizations, local education agencies such as school districts, two- and four-year colleges, businesses, labor unions, and state and county correctional facilities. (Some grantees offer multiple service locations). This unique mix of program providers means that ABE in Massachusetts meets students wherever they are, greatly reducing barriers to accessing program services. Adoption of new technology and hybrid and remote learning models will help programs reach even more students over time.



MCAE: The Voice of Adult Education in Massachusetts

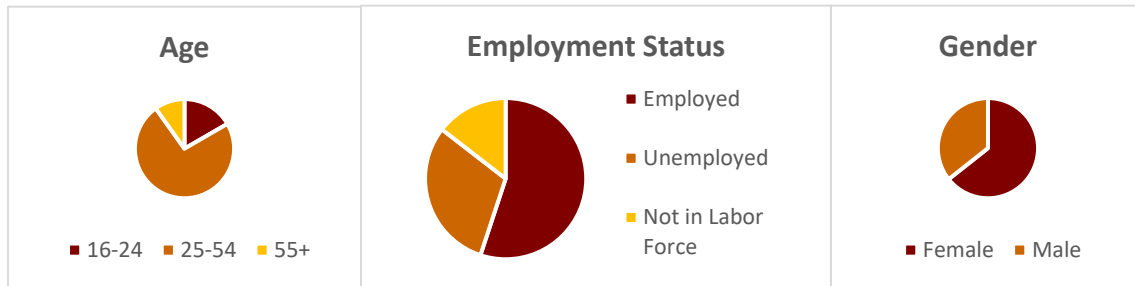
For more on adult education in Massachusetts, including a list of sources for this fact sheet, please visit www.mcae.net.

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All told, federally- and state-funded adult education programs employ 725 full-time administrators, counselors, paraprofessionals, and teachers across the Commonwealth, and employ almost 750 personnel part-time, not including unpaid volunteers.

Who enrolls in ABE programs in Massachusetts?

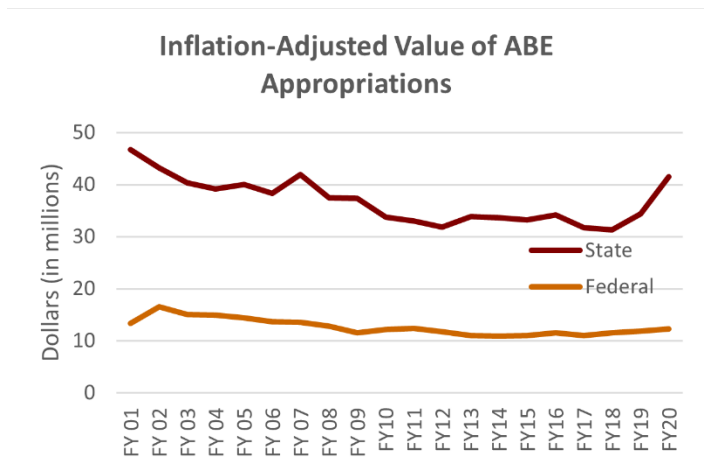
The ABE student population comes from communities across the Commonwealth, determined to acquire the skills and the knowledge they need to build a better life for themselves and their families. The majority of adult education students (62 percent) are women and most (73 percent) are in their prime working years.



Importantly, over half (55 percent) of all adult students in Massachusetts are currently employed, while another 30% are actively looking for work. Adult Education helps these working adults make the jump to skills training and higher paying jobs that increases their wages, stability, and economic contribution to the state over the long term.

How is ABE financed in Massachusetts?

Adult basic education in Massachusetts is financed through a combination of federal and state funds, with state funding comprising the vast majority of resources. Federal funds are authorized under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and must be appropriated by Congress each year. Likewise, state funds are allocated via line item #7035-0002 as part of each year’s general appropriations act (GAA).



Importantly, both sources of funds declined considerably in real terms since the early 2000s, failing to meet the real cost of programming over time. As the graphic suggests, after adjusting for inflation, federal grants to Massachusetts for adult education purposes dropped nearly 14 percent between 2001 and 2018. Over the same span, state support for ABE fell nearly 31 percent – from \$46 million in FY2001 to \$31 million in FY2018 (expressed in constant 2020 dollars). Only recently has Massachusetts increased the ABE investment in a significant way, in response to the steady demand for programs and the real costs of sustaining high-quality services and expanding services to include hybrid and remote learning options.

All figures are in millions of constant 2020 dollars by state fiscal year.
 Source: US Department of Education OCTAE and US Bureau of Labor Statistics
 CPI Inflation Calculator



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