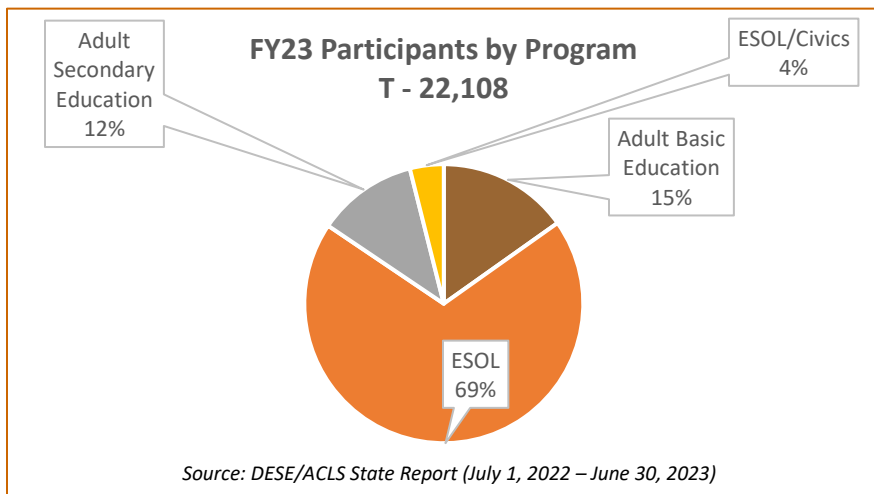


# COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

## 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 they need to realize their potential and to develop the type of workforce essential to a robust, innovative, and more equitable economy. ABE is the umbrella term that includes instructional services for adults over the age of 16 in these areas: **adult basic education (ABE)** which 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.

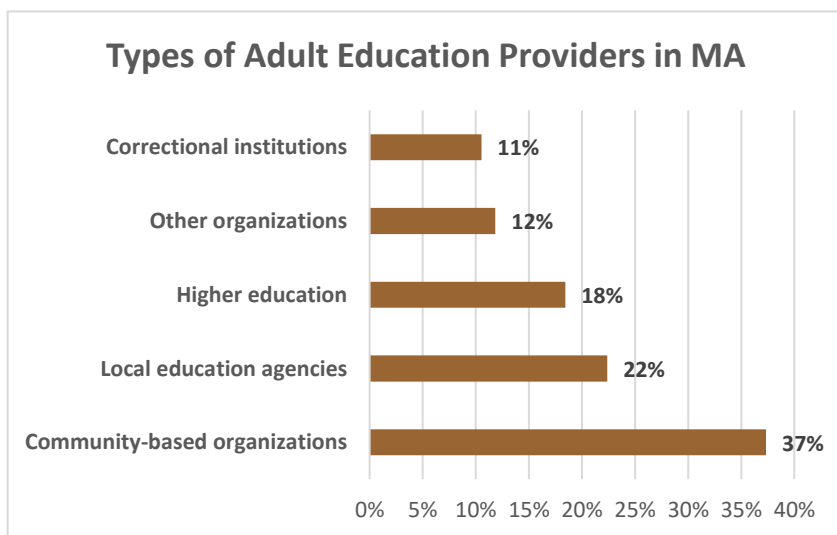


Education is the key to success in today's society and economy. More than 22,000 Massachusetts adults rely on more than 80 Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs across the state to gain the literacy and English-language skills needed to qualify for further education, job training, and better employment, and to reach their full potential as family members, productive workers, and community members. ABE is an essential component of the Commonwealth's economic engine: Adults need an education and skills to be self-sufficient; our economy needs skilled workers to prosper.

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 diverse provider network, a mixture of community-based organizations, local education agencies such as school districts, two- and four-year colleges, businesses, labor unions, and county correctional facilities. 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 help programs reach even more students.



Source: DESE/ACLS State Report (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)

Federally- and state-funded adult education programs employ 1,268 full-time administrators, counselors, paraprofessionals, and teachers across the Commonwealth, and employ 737 personnel part-time personnel, not including nearly 1,000 unpaid volunteers.



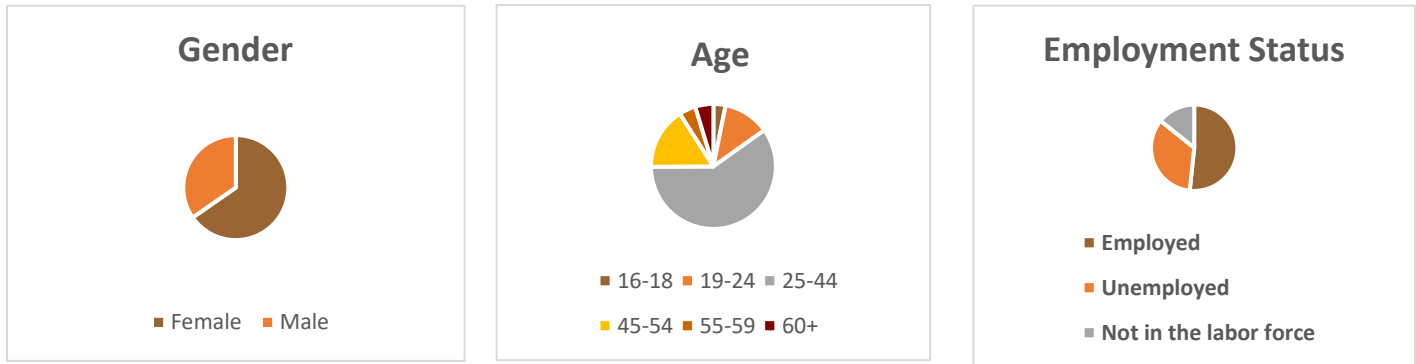
**MCAE: The Voice of Adult Education in Massachusetts**

For more on adult education in Massachusetts, including a list of sources for this fact sheet, please visit [www.mcae.net](http://www.mcae.net).

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## 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 (65%) are women and most adult education students (60%) are in their prime working years.



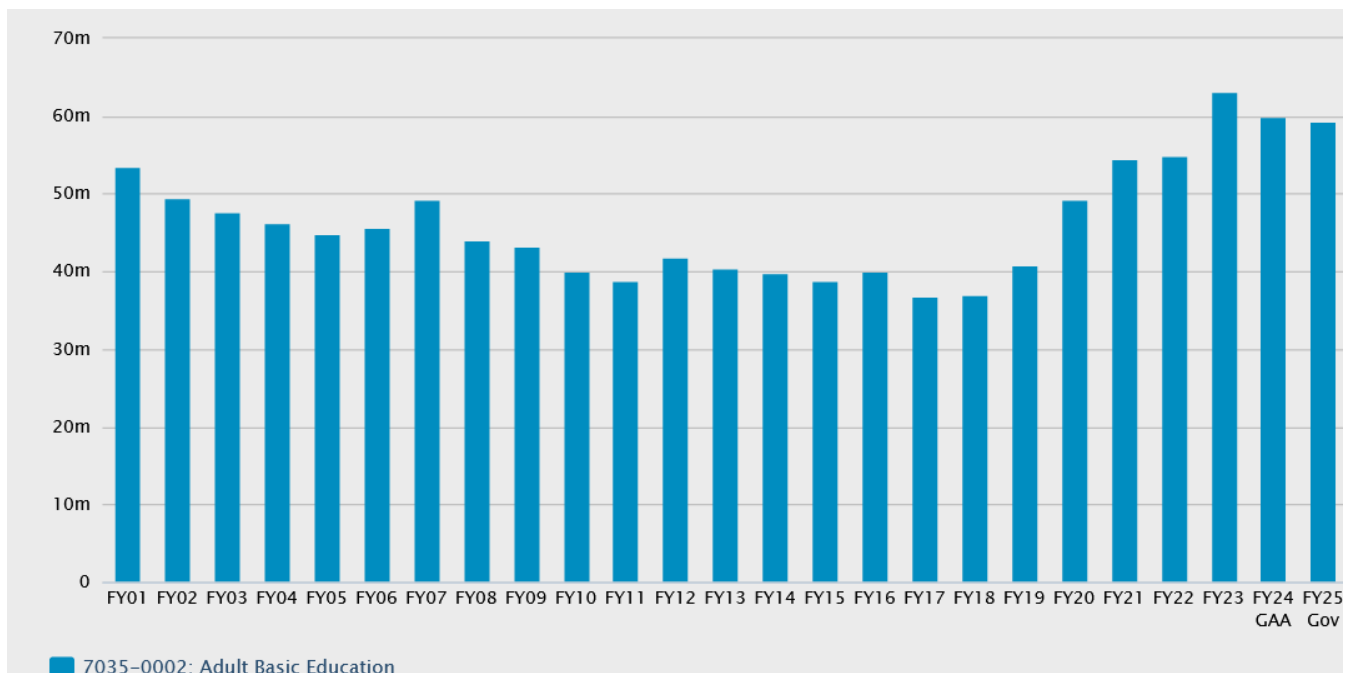
Source: DESE/ACLS State Report (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)

Over half (52%) of all adult education students in Massachusetts are currently employed. Adult Education helps these working adults move to skills training and higher paying jobs leading to increased wages, stability, self-sufficiency, and economic contribution to the state over the long term.

## How is ABE funded in Massachusetts?

Adult basic education in Massachusetts is funded 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 the state budget passed each year by the state legislature.

Below is a chart of the state funding levels for the ABE line item, adjusted for inflation using the consumer price index.



Source: Mass Budget & Policy Center – Budget Browser



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