

INVEST IN MASSACHUSETTS

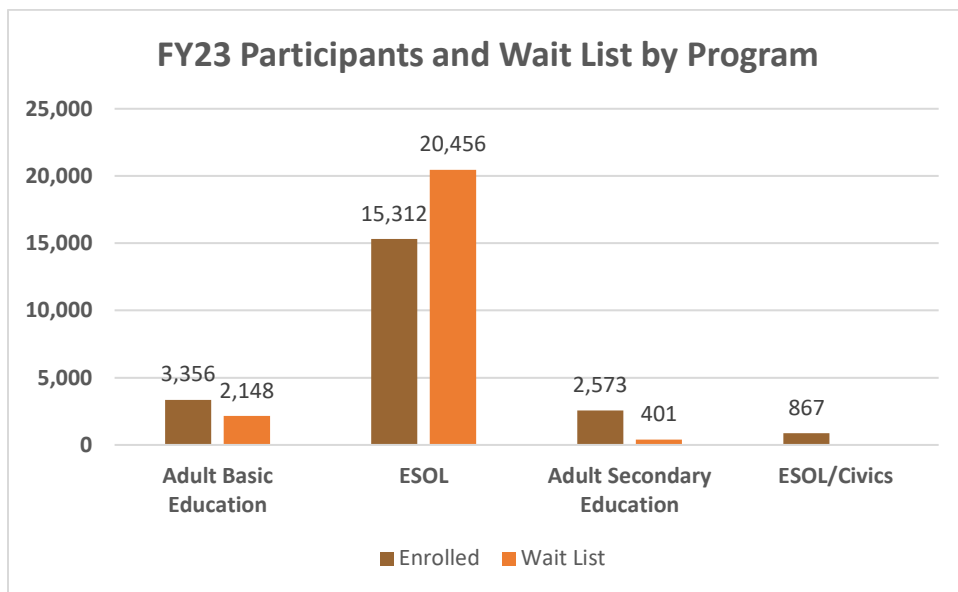
INVEST IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Education is the key to success in today’s society and economy. Nearly 19,000 Massachusetts adults rely on more than 125 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 citizens. 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. ABE programs, teachers, and students are facing unprecedented challenges and new expenses as a result of the pandemic, yet they have persisted. Continued deep investment is needed to sustain their success and maintain their forward momentum.

FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST FOR LINE ITEM #7035-0002: \$65 MILLION

Funding at this level would expand and strengthen the capacity of the ABE system to:

- **Serve more adults, especially recent refugees**, moving hundreds who want and need to learn off waiting lists and into programs.
- **Reach underserved communities**, increasing the likelihood that adults can enroll in programs where they live or work.
- **Improve staff compensation and working conditions** to reduce costly and de-stabilizing turnover.
- **Address COVID and other trauma-related challenges to instruction** (e.g., need for qualified mental health professionals and training, other vital support services and technology).
- **Improve services to adults with learning differences and physical disabilities** for more inclusion.



CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN ABE IS NEEDED TO:

- **Prepare all adults to meet the demands of the modern labor force.** More than 458,000 adults aged 25 and older – or nearly 1 in 10 – lacked a high school credential in 2017. That same year, close to 542,000 adults aged 18 and older – also roughly 1 in 10 – were unable to speak English very well.
- **Promote economic security and self-sufficiency.** Adults without a high school credential experience lower annual earnings, higher poverty rates, and greater unemployment. Post-pandemic employment opportunities are expected to be radically different as some industries have been decimated. Adults will need new and better skills to obtain new jobs.
- **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. During a pandemic, the ability to process health care information is vital for public health.
- **Improve Massachusetts’ long-term budget outlook.** Education can lower incarceration and recidivism rates and thus potentially save millions in corrections costs over time. These savings, the other economic benefits of education cited above, higher earnings and employment gains leading to higher state tax collections are all positive returns on the investment in adult basic education.

