



Quick Facts: Adult Education in Maryland & The Need for Additional Investment

Additional investment will enable Maryland to:

- Increase enrollment by 5,000 and reduce the waiting list.
- Increase instructional contact hours per learner from 40 to 120 and implement evidence based approaches to produce results.
- Expand the External Diploma Program to all 24 jurisdictions (instead of only 15).
- Increase the number of adult learners becoming high school graduates.
- Increase the English language proficiency of Maryland adults.
- Aid Marylanders who because of their low literacy skills do not qualify for the vast majority of available jobs.
- Increase the pool of literate workers in the state of Maryland to provide the business community with a better skilled workforce.
- Break the intergenerational cycle of low literacy.
- Increase expectations for achievement from every student, not just the brightest.
- Attract, develop and retain well qualified teachers and instructional leaders with more competitive wages.

The additional investment will generate significantly greater revenue returns for state and local municipalities.

- Every dollar invested in adult education yields a return of \$3.15 to Maryland economy in increased earnings within 18 months.
- Learners achieve significant annual wage gains within 18 months after program exit, ranging from \$1,817 to \$2,579, an 18 to 25 percent gain for minimum wage workers. (Source: U.S. Department of Commerce's *Educational Attainment in the United States*)
- Individuals earning a High School Diploma increase annual wage capacity by \$7,216; Maryland awarded 16,503 diplomas in the last five years through MSDE funded adult literacy programs.
- Local economies netted \$45 million in *annual* earning gains.

The need for adult education in Maryland is immense. (*Research Triangle Inst.*)

- Almost **one million** Marylanders need literacy skills, a high school diploma, or English language skills
- Over 20 percent of Maryland residents function at the lowest literacy level (below fifth grade).
- 57 percent are not in the labor force.
- 69 percent are in prime work years, ages 16 to 59.
- 25 percent are at or below 125 percent of poverty.

The demand for adult education in Maryland significantly exceeds current capacity.

- The desire to learn is strong. Potential learners are motivated to achieve the American Dream through the hard work of returning to school as adults.
- We need to exceed the national average and enroll more than 3 to 5 percent of the target population.
- We need to give seats to the 5,000 Marylanders on the annual waiting lists

The consequences of not increasing our investment are unacceptable.

- Maryland's BRAC jobs will go to out-of-state applicants unless we invest more in our workforce.
- Illiterate adults stand a much greater chance of living in poverty, having health problems and/or being incarcerated than those who are literate.
- Inadequate literacy contributes to \$ 73 billion in additional health care expenditures (Source: National Academy of Science 2003)
- Illiterate adult parents stand a much greater chance of parenting children who are less likely to succeed in school than those with literate parents. These children are more likely to be "Left Behind" no matter what we do in our schools, unless we help the parents to improve their own literacy and English language skills. Adults currently enrolled in Maryland adult education programs have about 22,000 school-age children (Source: *2007 Literacy Works Report*).
- Per learner cost for ABE and GED classes and testing is higher than the average weekly wages earned by those learners.

Maryland needs more investment to compete with other states' in the adult education enterprise.

- Maryland State funding has increased significantly to advance the State to 10th position out of 17 East Coast states .
- Maryland still lags behind in state investment per learner, only \$213 compared to the East Coast states' average of \$964.
- Maryland's per learner state investment is 78 percent below the average of the East Coast states.
- Maryland learners average 61 hours of instruction per year. While this has increased since the Superintendent's Panel report, it is still short of the 120 hours are needed to make significant progress. Programs need more funding to increase instructional contact hours.
- In FY 06, Kentucky enrolled 30,903 learners; Maryland enrolled 30,047 (*National Reporting System*).
- In 2006, Virginia had 13,173 learners pass the GED Test; Kentucky had 8,724 pass the GED Test; Maryland had 5,095 pass the GED Test.

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