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### **Supporting Adult Skill-Building and Family Literacy in the Michigan State Budget** *Michigan's Children Applauds Historic Adult Education Funding Increase*

The Michigan Legislature and Governor Gretchen Whitmer have reached a deal for the state budget for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year which begins on October 1, 2023. The agreement includes historic investments into the educational success of adult learners, including:

- **\$10 million base increase to adult education funding** to a total of \$40 million.
- **\$15 million to connect adult learners** with postsecondary and workforce pathways.
- **\$2 million for the creation of the Adult Literacy and Opportunity Grant** to support community-based literacy programs.

The investment will help meet Michigan's goal of making sure that 60% of adults have a postsecondary degree or skill certificate by 2030, and will improve early literacy rates among families.

#### How We Got Here

To help parents and adults achieve a full high school education and build family literacy, Michigan's Children initially recommended:

- **Increasing ongoing adult education funding by \$15 million** to a total of \$45 million.
- **\$15 million in one-time funds to connect adult learners** with postsecondary and workforce pathways.
- **Support the creation of the Adult Literacy and Opportunity Grant at \$4.725 million** to strengthen community-based literacy programs.

To kick off the budget process, Governor Gretchen Whitmer's budget recommendation contained an ongoing \$15 million increase for adult education programs as well as one-time \$15 million for adult learner postsecondary and workforce pathways, but no dedicated increase for adult literacy programs. The House had approved a plan with \$4.8 million for an Adult Literacy Opportunity Fund in the Labor and Economic Opportunity budget, and \$15 million in one-time funds for innovative programming but no ongoing increase for adult education in the School Aid budget. The Senate had approved two separate \$5 million and \$7.5 million grants for nonprofit adult literacy programs in the Labor and Economic Opportunity budget but only a \$15 million one-time increase for adult education in the School Aid budget. The final allocation is the product of final negotiations between the different branches.

#### Why Invest in Adult Education and Family Literacy?

Over 40,000 Michiganders ages 18-34 have less than a ninth-grade education; over 13,000 babies are born each year to a mom without a high school credential. An estimated 1.7 million Michigan adults fall below a ninth-grade level for reading and math, disqualifying them from access to post-secondary education and the workforce development pipeline. For these adults to be self-supporting, public school and community-based adult education programs support young adults and parents to build literacy and other basic skills, earn a high school equivalency, and prepare for a career. However, Michigan has consistently failed to invest into this critical piece of our education and workforce development system.