

June, 2023

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.