



Michigan Association
of Community and
Adult Education

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Dear Representative and Senator:

We need your support now more than ever! Unprecedented times call for unprecedented solutions. Adult Education in Michigan has a record of collaborating, innovating and inventing to meet challenges for youth and adults across the state of Michigan. Each year nearly 26,000 youth and adults are served from age 16+ (through federal funds) and 18+ (through state funds) toward high school diploma or equivalency completion, English as a Second Language, career readiness, integrated education and training, employability skills and transition to postsecondary education.

Due to the nature of COVID-19's impact on programming and the relief funds that are similarly granted to K-12 public education, adult education programs throughout the state funded through the State School Act Section 107 and federally funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are appealing for federal revenue sources made available by the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The metrics of adult education align with the larger statewide strategies of getting Michiganders educated and working by 60% credential attainment by 2030, the Michigan Reconnect and Futures for Frontliners programs. Ultimately, adult education is an economic catalyst for bringing our Michigan economy back to life.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the adult education community has stepped up to ensure participant success and to maintain programs and support for those who need it most. Much of our work continues to be focused on education, training, helping with barriers such as unemployment, food and shelter and access to digital literacy and broadband internet connectivity to address the challenges facing program participants. At the beginning of the pandemic nearly 95% of providers had to shift programming to a hybrid or virtual learning model. Despite these successes, adult education programs have encountered new challenges due to COVID-19 including a lack of social emotional and mental health resources for participants, the need for stronger career navigation and postsecondary tools, access to transportation resources and to childcare for parents. Additionally, for providers, continued professional development on instructional strategies in a virtual education setting, increasing a program's digital learning footprint through devices and internet hot spots, skills training for graduates entering the workforce, retention and recruitment of adult education participants and labor shortages among educators and support staff.

While we understand that determining appropriate funds is complex, the Michigan Adult and Community Education Association (MACAE) has stepped forward to review three years' worth of data to determine the correct formula to provide equitable funding to help Michiganders reach their educational and career attainment goals and to improve innovative programs that will educate and support the workforce for Michigan's economy. Providers across Michigan would be eligible for funding through one of two funding streams currently already in use for adult education services: Section 107 and WIOA.

Investment using Federal Dollars in ARPA:

Providing for internet access and broadband connectivity:

We can close the equity gap for adult learners by ensuring that all providers receive an equitable portion of funding based on the number of participants they serve. This equitable funding apparatus is in line with recent K-12 investment in per pupil funding.

In our model, using these federal dollars would be for the equivalent of a two-year investment with a sunset of the work project to be in June 2024. Under the model each year, each adult education provider receiving State Aid 107 funds would be entitled to a base of \$25,000. These dollars would be to help directly support the digital divide we see with families who lack technology in either devices or bandwidth technology access. Programs throughout Michigan have created lending libraries and utilized funds to purchase laptops for participants as well as software to be able to host virtual programs, instructional classes and to offer hybrid learning options. Additional funds are needed to guarantee that all adult education participants in Michigan have access to needed technology. **The total of this ask is \$4,550,000 over two years.**

Closing the Funding Equity Gap for Instructional Delivery of Service:

In addition to the base financial support, we need to close the overall adult education funding gap and make the costs for providing education and training resources equitable for all Michiganders. Adult Education funding data indicates varying degrees of disparity across each of the ten prosperity regions from \$1400 to \$2900 for per participant costs. The average cost to educate and move a participant toward employment and postsecondary is \$1900 and so our model brings into alignment equitable funding for regions to meet that \$1900 threshold at the bottom of the scale and for those at the top to continue to increase their access and programming.

Similar to the K-12 formula, the per pupil allotment would range from an annual 2% to 30% increase over two years based on the three-year average of enrollment from program years 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19. Currently the funding stream has State Aid 107 dollars flowing through the regional fiscal agents and so we have determined this would be using the similar method.

Funds would not be able to be utilized for administrative costs, facility/rent/utilities or capital outlay but would instead be utilized to address instructional resources, staffing or professional development to mitigate the barriers presented during COVID-19 previously mentioned in this letter. Examples would include: Innovative programming that will be a change agent using best practices in adult education, Instructional delivery costs, Supportive services including career navigation or postsecondary ac or employment and training, technological or instructional equipment, social and mental health resources, transportation vouchers for access to education and training sites, childcare services voucher for access to education and training sites.

The total of this ask is \$9,942,700 over two years.

Section 107 Regional Support:

Finally, each regional fiscal agent would receive funds to support and sustain continued professional development and resources for adult education services. Understanding that each region is unique and diverse according to the workforce, demographics and proximity of adult education programs, this regional allotment would allow flexibility for regions to determine which resources are the best for them. **The total of this ask is \$1,000,000 over two years.**

Support for Integrated Education and Training:

Finally, through this ask, adult education providers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II that deliver integrated education and training, instructional and civics education would be eligible. These providers would receive the same \$25,000 base amount each year for two years through the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. Individual providers would receive \$400 per participant based on a three-year average enrollment and would be only providers who are receiving WIOA Title II funds in the 2020-2021 year.

Funds would not be able to be utilized for administrative costs, facility/rent/utilities or capital outlay but would instead be utilized to address instructional resources, staffing or professional development to mitigate the barriers

presented during COVID-19 previously mentioned in this letter. Examples would include: Innovative programming that will be a change agent using best practices in adult education, Instructional delivery costs, Supportive services including career navigation or postsecondary ac or employment and training, technological or instructional equipment, social and mental health resources, transportation vouchers for access to education and training sites, childcare services voucher for access to education and training sites.

The total of this ask would be \$4,780, 400 over two years.

The total relief package we are requesting to support adults in Michigan would lead to increased literacy skills, high school equivalency and diploma attainment, employment and training outcomes, work readiness and job training placement. Additionally, we expect that an additional 3,000-5,000 adults could be served through this investment. Thus, the total investment would be: **\$20, 273,100.00 over two years.**

Adult Education provides the backbone support for adult learners across our state who are making the leap to reach their educational and career goals. Whether it is during a recession, closures of auto plants, changing politics and changing research and curriculum, or a global pandemic we have been agile and receptive to the needs of adults who face barriers.

We hope you will be a continued champion for adults in Michigan through this endeavor.