



**Testimony Presented to the
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on K–12, School Aid and Education
SECTION 107 ADULT EDUCATION FUNDING**

Peter Ruark, Senior Policy Analyst

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My name is Peter Ruark, and I am a Senior Policy Analyst at the Michigan League for Public Policy. We advocate for state policies that help individuals and families with low incomes become economically self-sufficient. Increasing access to adult education plays a role in that mission, and I appreciate this opportunity to speak with you.

In the 21st century economy, a high school diploma is simply not enough. Entry-level job openings with a career track increasingly require a credential such as a degree, certificate or license. Unfortunately, many workers in Michigan lack certain basic skills needed to succeed in the occupational training leading to these credentials, either because they dropped out of high school or they passed classes without completely mastering the skills (a C- is still a passing grade!). Adult education is a crucial link that prepares these workers for training, credentials and, finally, skilled jobs.

Michigan is not reaching nearly enough of the working-age adults who need adult education:

- Over 210,000 Michigan adults age 25-44 lack a high school diploma or GED, yet fewer than 7% enroll in adult education.
- More than 234,000 Michigan adults speak English less than “very well,” yet fewer than 5% enroll in English as a Second Language adult education programs.
- Around 60% of Michigan community college students each year need to take developmental (remedial) education classes due to not having mastered a skill area needed for postsecondary education or training.

Attached to this testimony sheet I have provided some tables. Table 1 shows Michigan’s large reduction in state funding for adult education over the past 15 years. During budget years 1997 to 2001, the state funded adult education at \$80 million a year, but the Legislature cut funding drastically after that, to as low as \$20 million annually. After funding adult education at \$22 million a year for several years, the Legislature two years ago bumped up the funding to \$25 million

(actually \$23.7 million with the 5% administrative set-aside). As federal funding has also been reduced, total funding for adult education has dropped from \$96.3 million in 2001 to only \$37.2 million in 2016.

Table 2 shows how the funding reductions have resulted in fewer people enrolling in and completing adult education programs. The decrease in total funding since 2001 has been accompanied by a 51% decline in enrollment, a 32% decrease in students completing a level, and a 62% decrease in students completing and then advancing a level.

With more funding, adult education will reach more students and can facilitate student success by expanding into places such as community colleges, workplaces and sites in which parents can bring their children (i.e., Head Start).

The governor's proposed budget continues to fund adult education at \$25 million for Fiscal Year 2018. The Michigan League for Public Policy recommends that the adult education appropriation be increased by \$10 million, to \$35 million. At an estimated cost of \$1,266 per student, Table 3 shows that this would enable approximately 7,900 more students to be served.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address this important issue.

TABLE 1

History of Funding for Michigan's Adult Education Programs						
Program Year	Federal Funding			State Funding*	Total Funding	State Portion of Funding
	Base Grant	English Literacy & Civics Grant	Total			
1995-96	NA	NA	NA	\$185,000,000	NA	NA
1996-97	\$8,287,819	\$0	\$8,287,819	\$80,000,000	\$88,287,819	90.6%
1997-98	\$11,482,416	\$0	\$11,482,416	\$80,000,000	\$91,482,416	87.4%
1998-99	\$11,654,356	\$0	\$11,654,356	\$80,000,000	\$91,654,356	87.3%
1999-00	\$11,973,584	\$0	\$11,973,584	\$80,000,000	\$91,973,584	87.0%
2000-01	\$13,691,487	\$437,129	\$14,128,616	\$80,000,000	\$94,128,616	85.0%
2001-02	\$15,159,503	\$1,160,594	\$16,320,097	\$75,000,000	\$91,320,097	82.1%
2002-03	\$16,310,508	\$1,251,632	\$17,562,140	\$74,569,800	\$92,131,940	80.9%
2003-04	\$14,679,457	\$1,332,464	\$16,011,921	\$20,000,000	\$36,011,921	55.5%
2004-05	\$14,871,841	\$1,355,222	\$16,227,063	\$20,000,000	\$36,227,063	55.2%
2005-06	\$14,755,635	\$1,352,236	\$16,107,871	\$21,000,000	\$37,107,871	56.6%
2006-07	\$14,606,756	\$1,352,688	\$15,959,444	\$24,000,000	\$39,959,444	60.1%
2007-08	\$14,606,750	\$1,369,315	\$15,976,065	\$24,000,000	\$39,976,065	60.0%
2008-09	\$14,349,799	\$1,295,444	\$15,645,243	\$24,000,000	\$39,645,243	60.5%
2009-10	\$12,914,820	\$1,300,460	\$14,215,280	\$22,000,000	\$36,215,280	60.7%
2010-11	\$13,003,714	\$1,376,349	\$14,380,063	\$22,000,000	\$36,380,063	60.5%
2011-12	\$13,419,141	\$1,352,694	\$14,771,835	\$22,000,000	\$36,771,835	59.8%
2012-13	\$12,623,242	\$1,341,874	\$13,965,116	\$22,000,000	\$35,965,116	61.2%
2013-14	\$11,935,152	\$1,253,164	\$13,188,316	\$22,000,000	\$35,188,316	62.5%
2014-15	\$11,972,115	\$1,253,159	\$13,225,274	\$20,900,000	\$34,125,274	61.2%
2015-16	\$12,373,128	\$1,251,135	\$13,624,263	\$23,750,000	\$37,374,263	63.5%
2016-17	\$12,235,393	\$1,220,708	\$13,456,101	\$23,750,000	\$37,206,101	63.8%
Change FY 2001>2017	-10%	186%	-4%	-70%	-60%	—

*The two most recent figures for state funding take into account a new 5% administrative set-aside deducted from the \$22 million and \$25 million appropriations, respectively. | Source: U.S. Department of Education and Michigan House Fiscal Agency

TABLE 2

As Adult Education Funding Has Dropped, so Have Enrollments and Completions							
Program Year	Total Funding	Amount Spent per Student	Students Enrolled	Students Completed Level		Students Completed Level and Advanced One or More levels	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2000-01	\$94,128,616	\$1,681	56,001	15,471	28%	7,760	14%
2001-02	\$91,320,097	\$1,202	75,988	23,922	31%	936	1%
2002-03	\$92,131,940	\$1,300	70,893	17,496	25%	7,038	10%
2003-04	\$36,011,921	\$746	48,273	15,280	32%	6,588	14%
2004-05	\$36,227,063	\$1,042	34,768	11,210	32%	3,536	10%
2005-06	\$37,107,871	\$1,159	32,024	10,229	32%	3,139	10%
2006-07	\$39,959,444	\$1,216	32,856	12,293	37%	4,256	13%
2007-08	\$39,976,065	\$1,308	30,571	11,866	39%	3,587	12%
2008-09	\$39,645,243	\$1,404	28,243	11,265	40%	3,470	12%
2009-10	\$36,215,280	\$1,164	31,106	11,076	36%	3,320	11%
2010-11	\$36,380,063	\$1,413	25,745	10,289	40%	3,115	12%
2011-12	\$36,771,835	\$1,285	28,614	9,823	34%	2,754	10%
2012-13	\$35,965,116	\$1,218	29,533	10,779	37%	3,071	10%
2013-14	\$35,188,316	\$1,229	28,625	9,393	33%	2,762	10%
2014-15	\$34,125,274	\$1,243	27,443	9,951	36%	2,771	10%
2015-16	\$37,374,263	\$1,360	27,483	10,455	38%	2,980	11%
Change 2000-01 > 2015-16	-60%	—	-51%	-32%	—	-62%	—

Sources: U.S. Department of Education and Michigan House Fiscal Agency (Funding); Michigan Workforce Development Agency National Reporting System tables (Adult education participation)

TABLE 3

How Many More Low-Skilled Adults Could Be Served by Increasing Adult Education Funding?					
	Annual Funding Level	Number of Students Served	Increase in Students Served	If Entire Increase Serves Adults Age 25-44 Without HS diploma	
				# Served	% Served
Five-Year Average *	\$35,884,961	28,340	—	13,914	6%
If Increased by \$10 M	\$45,884,961	36,237	7,897	21,811	10%
If Increased by \$15 M	\$50,884,961	40,186	11,846	25,760	12%
If Increased by \$20 M	\$55,884,961	44,134	15,794	29,708	13%
If Increased by \$25 M	\$60,884,961	48,083	19,743	33,657	15%
If Increased by \$30 M	\$65,884,961	52,032	23,692	37,606	17%

* Five-year average is for Program Years 2011-12 through 2015-16