



Educate & Advocate!

Adult Education & Family Literacy Week

Adult Education & Family Literacy Week Toolkit



 **essential education**

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Toolkit Contents

Ask your Governor to Issue a Proclamation

Plan a Meeting With Your Governor and State-level Elected Officials

- Goal
- Ask

Plan a Virtual Meeting with your State's Federal Legislators

- Goal
- Ask
- Purpose
- Target
- Scheduling Meetings with Staff in Capitol Hill Offices
- Federal Legislative Talking Points
 - Background
 - Funding Request
 - Policy Requests
- Sample Meeting Template
 - Follow-Up Activities

Connect with your State Advocate Fellow or Mentor

Sign Up you State Association to Participate

Resources

Ask Your Governor to Issue a Proclamation

Governors can show their support for Adult Education by issuing a proclamation in their state recognizing national Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) Week.

1. Contact your Governor ([Click here](#) for the email address).
2. Share the proclamation template ([here](#)) and request that he/she issue a statewide proclamation.
3. If possible, take a picture with your Governor and tweet the picture, thanking him/her for his/her support.
4. Let the COABE office know when your Governor issues the proclamation by sending an email to advocacy@coabe.org. The COABE office will publicly recognize each Governor who issues a Proclamation.
5. Ask your Senator to cosponsor the bipartisan Adult Education and Family Literacy Week resolution. Have your Senator contact Sen. Reed or Sen. Collins' offices to add their name.

Plan a Meeting With Your Governor and State-level Elected Officials

1. Make an appointment with the legislator/office staff. Click [here](#) to send an email with COABE's campaign software to easily reach all your legislators at once.
2. Plan the call utilizing the COABE state fact sheet. Click [here](#), and select your state on the map.
3. Assemble and prep your team
 - a. Your team should consist of a state association board, program leaders, and a student and/or teacher.
 - b. Identify who will say what, and what [slides](#) you will show during the zoom call. You can send the powerpoint to the federal office if they can't see the video on zoom.
4. Remember to make "The Ask."

Goal

To educate, inform, and urge policymakers to increase funding for and strengthen adult education programs.

Asks

1. With funding for adult education threatened at the Federal level (the President's FY 26 budget calls for the elimination of this funding and the Administration withheld the release of FY 25 already-appropriated funds for adult education for nearly a month), please work to increase the investment in adult education in the state budget.
2. To ensure better coordination, support for adult learners, and address employer demands for skilled workers, work to ensure adult education has a seat at the table when it comes to the implementation of workforce development funding and programs. Workers need foundational literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills to be able to learn specific and in-demand workplace skills. Adult education bridges that gap and must be part of the state workforce development conversation.



Plan a Meeting With Your State's Federal Legislators

1. Make an appointment with the legislator/office staff. Click [here](#) to send an email with COABE's campaign software to easily reach all your legislators at once.
2. Plan the call utilizing the COABE state fact sheet. Click [here](#), and select your state on the map.
3. Assemble and prep your team
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Goal

To educate, inform, and urge policymakers to increase funding for and strengthen adult education programs.

Ask

Increase adult education funding to enable more learners to gain the literacy, numeracy, and digital skills necessary to succeed in the workforce, allowing them to earn wages that support their families and providing employers with a pool of skilled workers to fill in-demand jobs. Congress should provide at least \$810 million for the Adult Education State Grant program in the FY2026 appropriations bill to do this. Additionally, members of Congress should support the Adult Education WORKS Act, the COABE-supported bipartisan bill led by Senators Reed (D-RI) and Todd Young (R-IN) in the Senate ([S.1400](#)) and Representative McBath (D-GA) in the House ([H.R.2789](#)).

Purpose

To conduct outreach with Members of Congress, Senators, and their staff focused on adult education to:

- Build relationships and influence those who control federal purse strings;
- Share key information about the importance of adult education to the economy and local communities in their district (if a House member) or state (if a Senator);
- Explain why increased funding for adult education is needed so that you can do your job even more effectively; and
- Provide information based on your experiences related to adult education on why federal law needs to be strengthened to better meet the needs of adult learners, adult education providers, and local employers.

Target

Congressional delegations based on where COABE members live and/or work, with a focus on:

- Members and staff of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS).
- Members and staff of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee and the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

Scheduling Meetings with Staff in Capitol Hill Offices

This is a multi-step process, so start now!

1. You can set up meetings in a variety of ways.
 - a. Call your member's office to get the education staffer's email and email them directly. (Preferred method)
 - b. Use our campaign tool to send your legislators an email to let them know you are participating in COABE Capitol Hill Days and would like to do a phone or video call.
2. Read and use the sample email to the staffer
 - a. Ask for a 30-minute meeting – plan for the meeting to be between 15 and 30 minutes.
 - b. Schedule meetings between 9:00am-5:00pm EST.
3. If you do not get a response from the office in about a week, follow up with the staffer to request a meeting again.
4. Let us know how the appointments went and any follow-ups [HERE](#).



Federal Legislative Talking Points

Background

- Adult education provides numeracy, literacy, English language skills, digital and information literacy, work readiness, soft skills, high school equivalency, and numerous wrap-around services to millions of adult learners nationwide.
- *[Provide background on the services your program provides to your State and the number of people served]*
- Data confirms the need for adult education: The 2023 Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC) study found that 28% of American adults are at a Level 1 literacy proficiency or below, which is a 9% increase from the levels measured in 2017. Additionally, a 2023 report from the National Skills Coalition (NSC) found that while 92% of jobs in the labor market require digital skills, one-third of job-seeking individuals don't have the necessary skills.
- Adult education can be the solution to the skills gap between employers and workers, if funding meets demand. Employers see the potential for adult education programs to combat the skills gap as evidenced by partnerships to develop courses that provide learners the skills and knowledge that local employers need.
- Additionally, adult education programs provide an economic boost to participants and communities. In terms of participants, according to an Economic Mobility Corporation study, "unemployed residents with prior US work experience who enrolled in an employment-focused English course boosted their earnings by an average of more than \$7,100 annually two years after starting the program, compared with unemployed non-English speakers who weren't in the program."
- According to COABE estimates, for every dollar invested in adult education, the surrounding community receives \$60 back in increased income and property taxes and savings on legal system and welfare expenses.



Funding Request

- Demand for adult education programs is high because of the economic boost these programs provide to participants, employers, and communities.
- Adult education programs enable learners to gain the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce, allowing them to earn wages that support their families. At the same time, adult education programs provide employers with a pool of skilled workers to fill in-demand jobs. Our request is for \$810 million for the Adult Education State Grants program in FY 2026. With an increase in funding, local programs will be able to build capacity to serve more learners, hire more full-time teachers and increase retention, thereby boosting the ability of adult education to continue to serve as a critical component of our nation's workforce development system, supporting employers and individuals in our State.

Note: The President's FY26 budget request proposes eliminating Federal adult education funding altogether, saying it is not necessary if K-12 systems improve and that States should determine whether to support adult education in their budgets. On July 31, the Senate Appropriations Committee favorably reported by a vote of 26 to 3 its version of the FY 26 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which rejects the President's request by level funding Adult Education State Grants at \$715 million. The House Appropriations Committee is slated to consider its version of this legislation in September.

Policy Requests

Adult Education WORKS Act/WIOA Reauthorization

[Please feel free to adapt what is below, but the best approach would be to share local or statewide facts or anecdotes that illustrate why updates are needed to WIOA.]

- We appreciate efforts last Congress to start the process to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in order to strengthen adult education (authorized under Title II of WIOA). While the bipartisan agreement ([A Stronger Workforce for America Act \(ASWA\)](#)) did not end up making it across the finish line last year, it included several provisions stemming from the bipartisan Adult Education WORKS Act ([S.1400/H.R.2789](#)) that COABE worked to secure. We hope to see renewed efforts to reauthorize WIOA this Congress.

- COABE urges [Member] to cosponsor the bipartisan Adult Education WORKS Act and support a WIOA reauthorization bill that retains the provisions that were included in ASWA and adds in the rest of the Adult Education WORKS Act:
 - Improve collaboration and coordination between Title I and II programs by adding adult education representation on the state workforce development board – *Needs to be added*
 - Allow states to pilot new accountability measures that better measure the performance of students and success of programs – *Needs to be added*
 - Ensure learners gain digital and information literacy skills – *Digital literacy included in ASWA*
 - Devote more funding for professional development of adult educators, boost the professionalization of the adult education field, and elevate the use of career navigators – *Included in ASWA*
 - Promote integrated education and training programs (IETs) – *Included in ASWA*
 - Strengthen data collection and facilitate a common reporting system for performance accountability measures – *Included in ASWA*

Coordination between Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED)

These Federal Departments have signed an [Interagency Agreement](#) with the goal of better connecting education and workforce training programs in order to reduce administrative burdens, ensure greater efficiencies, and strengthen the workforce development system.

- We ask that you ensure DOL and ED work with COABE to ensure the needs of adult learners continue to be met and that adult education is not swallowed up by DOL. The foundational needs of adult learners – those who lack literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills – must be addressed for successful participation of workforce development programs and ultimately the workplace.

Sample Meeting Template

AEFL Week Meeting Agenda

Meeting Agenda (email short agenda to everyone before visit)

[Meeting Time]

Who is in the meetings:

- [Legislator]
- [Ambassadors]
- [Zoom link/access information, if applicable]

Agenda:

1. Welcome & Introductions - 5 minutes [Assigned Ambassador]
 - a. Thank you for meeting
 - b. Introductions: In the order listed above
 - c. Check on timing

2. Brief COABE Overview [assigned state association person OR COABE rep]
 - a. About COABE:
 - i. Mission: provide leadership, communication, professional development, and advocacy for adult education and literacy practitioners to advance quality services for all adult learners
 - ii. 79,000 educators
 - b. State and National Stats
 - i. Nationally:
 - o [Fact sheets](#)
 - ii. In [state/territory]:
 - o Find your fact sheet [here!](#)
3. Brief program overview - 2 minutes [Assigned Administrator]
 - a. Details about your program, such as:
 - i. Types of offerings
 - ii. How many students are served/year
 - iii. How many sites
 - iv. Yearly outcomes/goals
 - v. Where funding comes from
 - vi. Partnerships
 - vii. Any upcoming events/achievements (you can use this to invite the member to see your program in action!)
4. State level perspective & student stories - 5 minutes [Assigned Ambassador(s)]
 - a. Intro students / Ambassador Training
 - b. Student stories: 2-3 minutes each (speak from your heart and paint a picture of what adult education has meant for you)
5. COABE's asks - 5 minutes [Assigned COABE rep]
 - a. Urge funding for the Adult Education State Grant program (under WIOA Title II) to be increased to \$810 million in the FY26 appropriations process.
 - i. 43 million adults lack the skills needed for the bulk of the nation's family-sustaining careers.
 - b. Support the full inclusion of the bipartisan Adult Education WORKS Act (S.1400/H.R.2789 in 119th Congress) in a final WIOA reauthorization bill.
 - c. Any additional state-specific asks
 - d. Emphasize:
 - i. Upskilling adults to provide them with in-demand workforce and essential life skills will improve the well-being of the learner and their family, help employers get the workers they need, and strengthen the overall economy.
 - ii. For every dollar spent on adult education, we estimate a return of \$60 to local communities in terms of increased income and property taxes and savings on public benefits and legal expenses.

6. Teacher and/or Ambassador Ask [assigned teacher or Ambassador]
7. Q&A-15min
8. Wrap Up

Follow-Up Activities

- Send an email thanking whomever you met with and include any follow up information that was requested.
Submit the [Feedback Form](#) to let COABE know how your meeting went.

Connect with Your State Advocate Fellow or Mentor

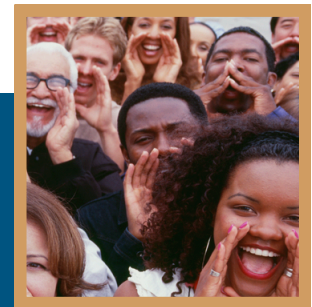
For support with advocacy events, connecting with legislators, or brainstorming ways to make this AEFL Week the most powerful yet, please request to be connected with your State Advocate Fellow who can serve as an advocacy mentor.

Contact advocacy@coabe.org to be connected with your State Advocate Fellow.

Are you ready to join?

[Click here to sign up your state to participate in the 2025 National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week.](#)

Contact advocacy@coabe.org with questions.



Resources below



Resources

[National Adult Education and Family Literacy home page](#) Learn about what COABE has scheduled for virtual events during AEFL Week.

[Look up your legislator](#) Use this tool to identify legislators to target based on your home or work address.

[Send an email to schedule an appointment](#) COABE makes it easy to request a meeting with your legislators. Simply fill out your information and our software will match your address with legislators.

[Feedback Form](#) Let us know how each meeting went. COABE uses this information to show the extent to which our members are making a difference in adult education awareness and policy.

[Powerpoint slide deck template](#) Want to share information with legislators via slides? COABE offers a high-quality slide deck pre-loaded with national level data and eye-catching graphics. Add your local and state information and some adult learner success stories, and you are ready to go!

[Virtual background for legislative meetings](#) Update your virtual background in celebration of AEFL Week 2025!

[Tweet deck](#) for your state to promote your visits and adult education during AEFL Week

[Eye catching graphics](#) COABE makes social media simple with eye-catching graphics that you can use on any platform. Download them today, and start posting!



[Twitter \(X\) storm link for all members and state leaders](#) Reach all of your legislators on Twitter (X) with a few easy clicks. Our software will link to your Twitter account, post about AEFL Week, and tag your legislators. *It posts once and does not continue posting on your behalf.

[Sample Press Release](#) Share this Press Release to your local newspapers, Chambers, and other partners with marketing reach to share information about AEFL Week.

[Newsletter Article](#) You can use this ready-made newsletter article to include in your state or program newsletters. Consider sharing this with your adult learners as well.

[Invite your legislator to an event](#) When someone sees the work you do, they cannot ignore its importance. Invite a legislator to one of your events. Open the document, go to file, make a copy, and enter your information where it says “Add the location here”.

[Sample Proclamation](#) Share the sample proclamation with your Governor, mayor, and other elected officials. Governors usually have a form on their website to submit the proclamation template. Mayors and other elected officials respond best to an email request. Once you receive the proclamation, be sure to email a copy to media@coabe.org to have it added to the Padlet.

[Download State Fact Sheets](#) Prepare for your legislative meetings and print for your meeting leave-behinds.

[Download or share the National Data Sheet](#) Prepare for your legislative meetings and print for your meeting leave-behinds.

[Prepare with our COABE Talking Points](#) There is something for every audience in our curated and data-supported 16 talking points for adult education.

Customized Collateral: logo, web banner, and web slider featuring your state’s leadership in national Adult Education and Family Literacy Week - contact advocacy@coabe.org

[2025 Padlet](#) See the impact of advocacy as it happens. COABE’s Padlet highlights events, proclamations, and advocacy across the nation. Email padlet@coabe.org to add your events to the Padlet.