



### **Making the Case for Adult Literacy: The Facts**

The budget impasse has caused adult education organizations to suspend their programming, lay off staff, and turn thousands of adult learners away. Adult education is a revenue-building tool; without it, our economy will suffer. Stronger, safer, and healthier communities depend on educated adults. Finally, our next generation needs educated parents so young people can be prepared for school and a self-sustaining career.

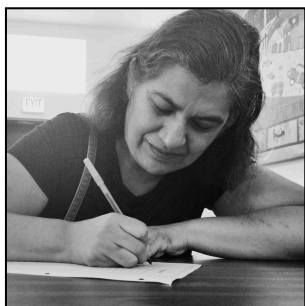
In **Cook County**, low literacy levels among adults translate into greater costs for society and government across a range of areas. These are the estimated annual public costs associated with low literacy in:

- **Public Benefits - \$5,017,631,771:** Public benefit costs for individuals with only a high school diploma or no diploma are 14% and 45% higher, respectively, than for individuals with some post-secondary education.
- **Healthcare - \$3,085,714,286:** Individuals with low literacy have healthcare costs four times higher than those with proficient literacy skills.
- **Cook County Corrections - \$146,836,600:** These are the taxpayer costs due to recidivism among the 23,300 individuals who return from prison to Cook County each year. Improved literacy has been shown to be directly correlated to lower rates of recidivism.

The benefits for adult education are clear:

- In 2014, across Illinois, **adult education programs helped nearly 90,000 students** improve their literacy skills, complete their high school education with either a diploma or a GED®, or improve their English language skills.
- By 2020, **over 67% of jobs in Illinois will require some postsecondary education or training** - yet 3 million adults lack education beyond high school. Adult education is a workforce development solution. Without adult education providers, who will address this need?
- **For every dollar spent on adult education, the state is paid back \$2.50.** Adult education saves the state millions of dollars by reducing the need for state-subsidized programs such as those for public aid, housing, unemployment, food stamps, and Medicaid programs, as well as prison costs.

## Making the Case for Adult Literacy: Personal Testimonials



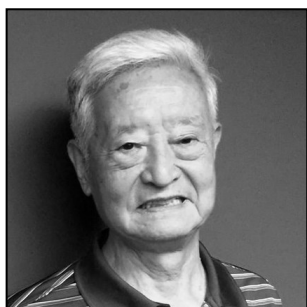
Eva, student,  
Tolton Center

If there are no English classes, I won't be able to speak with my children's teachers and this is the most important thing. I want to know how my kids are doing in class, what are they learning during the day, how are they progressing.

I feel like I was shy, but I learned to open up. I'm doing GED classes not just for me, but for my teenagers. My motivation is my family. I'm ready to shine.



Samantha, student, Howard  
Area Community Center



Jiasong, student, Chinese  
Mutual Aid Association

It's very hard for immigrants to live in Chicago. Learning English is very important. Every day I use English to buy food or to see the doctor. If my program closes, where will I go?

With each week that passes without a budget, human services organizations are increasingly forced to reduce or eliminate services or, in some cases, shut their doors entirely. Once a budget is finally approved, these agencies won't be able to reopen or resume services easily. By not investing in its people, the state of Illinois will only end up spending more in other areas. We need to invest in education to grow our economy in the long run.



Gisella Faggi, staff, Chinese  
Mutual Aid Association