Beyond Literacy
LEARNING FOR WORK & LIFE

ADULT AND FAMILY EDUCATION *IS* WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

THE NEED *

- 29% of Pennsylvania's working-age adults lack basic literacy and/or numeracy skills needed for work, family, and community life.
- 646,612 PA adults between ages 18-64 do not have a high school credential.
- 396,637 PA adults between ages 18-64 have only an 8th grade education or less.
- 387,549 PA adults between ages 18-64 speak very limited or no English.
- Yet, PA only funds seats for 14,364 adults in Title II literacy programs.
- In the last 5 years, more than 68K students dropped out of high school. We expect COVID-19 has exacerbated this "Academic Pandemic" stop-out rate; these students require functional literacy upskilling to gain and sustain living-wage employment.

* **Source: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/skillsmap/**

THE PROBLEM

Adult and Family Literacy Education is Pennsylvania's *only educated-related* line to be level funded since 2011. By failing to increase funding, Pennsylvania is missing a critical opportunity to connect skilled, working-age adults to in-demand jobs.

- 2011-2023 Investment in Adult and Family Literacy Education = FLAT at $11.7 million
- The Adult and Family Literacy line item in the PA Department of Education provides the required match for Federal Title II funding of Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).
- 12 years of flat funding have starved adult basic and career education of resources needed for innovation, scale, and equity.

THE SOLUTION

Adult Literacy Education provides supportive upskilling programs that include:

- College & Career Preparation (credentialing for careers in high-demand industries)
- Digital, Financial, Health and Family Literacy
- Adult Basic Education
  - + High School Equivalency Preparation
  - + English for Speakers of Other Languages
  - + Civics and Citizenship Test Preparation
  - + Basic Academic Skills – Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science

Our students demonstrate learning gains equivalent to 1-2 years of K-12 schooling in 50–60 hours of instruction with an approximate annual cost of $2,200 per learner.

OUR IMPACT

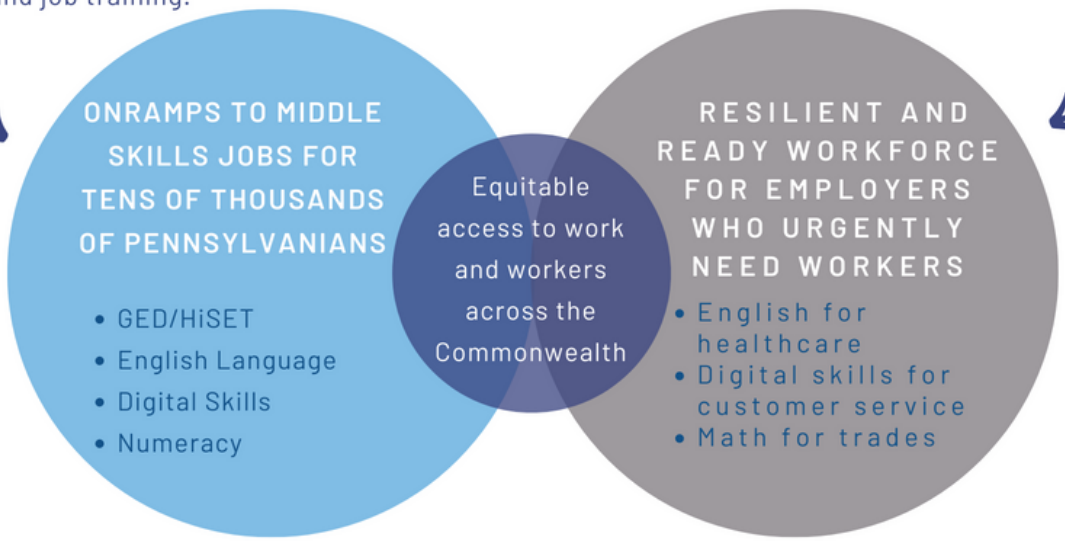
We serve the more than 1.4 million working age Pennsylvanians with significant skills gaps who are typically under-employed and raising families. Striving adults require adult basic education to earn middle skills jobs. Participation is at their own pace as they balance educational needs with life's demands. The majority (66%) of students who continuously attend for at least 60 hours make educational gains equivalent to two K-12 school years – a remarkable accomplishment for them and a significant return on investment for Pennsylvania at an approximate cost of $2,200 per student.

Adult education programs are not just a second chance at a basic education; for many adults in Pennsylvania, these programs are *the last chance*.

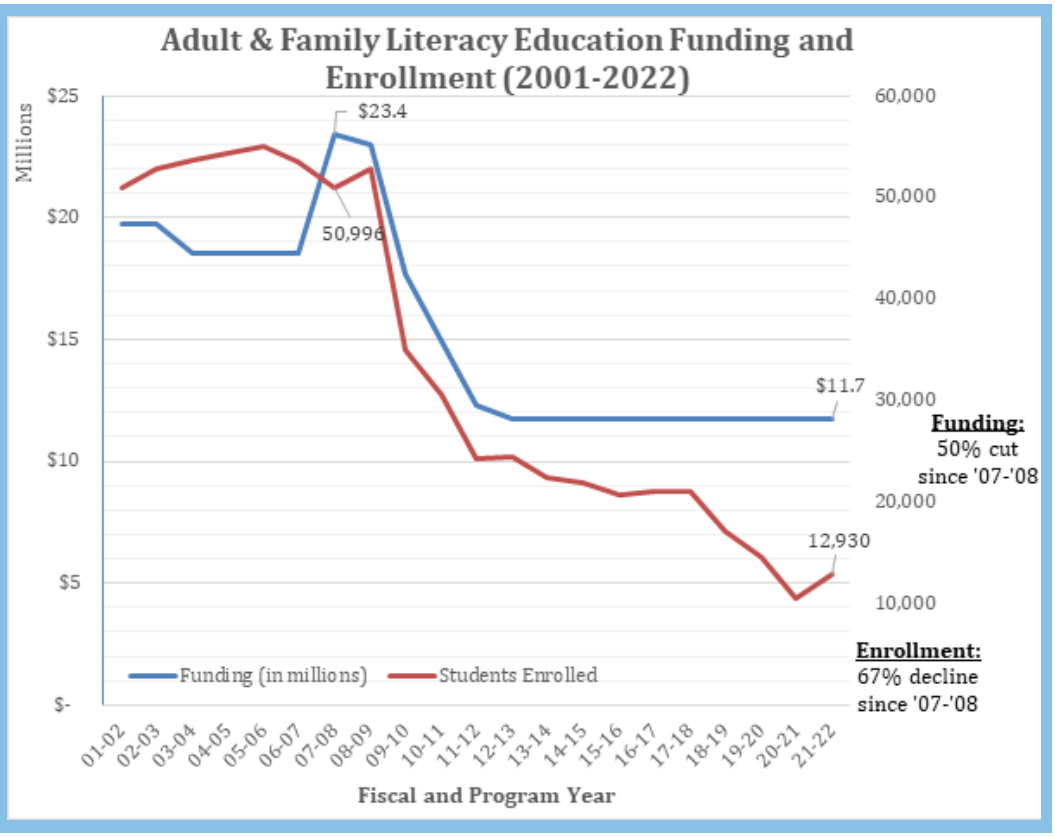
WHAT'S AT STAKE

Adult basic and career education *provides* HSE credentials and essential skills that are gatekeepers to post-secondary education and job training.

Adult basic and career education *needs* flexible resources to accelerate employability and employment by contextualizing basic skills to employer needs.



CAPACITY VS. NEED

CAPACITY: 29% of PA adults age 16-64 lack basic skills.

NEED: 15 years of flat funding has starved adult education agencies of the resources needed for scale and equity.