



National Coalition For Literacy

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education ◦ Adult Literacy Media Alliance ◦ American Institute for Research ◦ American Library Association ◦ Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers ◦ Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee ◦ Commission on Adult Basic Education ◦ Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy ◦ GED Testing Service ◦ Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy and the Goodling Institute for Research, Pennsylvania State University ◦ International Reading Association ◦ Literacy USA ◦ National Center for Family Literacy ◦ National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy ◦ National Center on Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania ◦ National Council of State Directors of Adult Education ◦ ProLiteracy Worldwide ◦ Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education ◦ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. ◦ Voices of Adult Literacy United for Education ◦ World Education

FACT SHEET

Adult literacy is necessary to ensure a prosperous economy, a stable and productive family, and a strong democracy.

- **ECONOMY—A more literate America will be more competitive and more prosperous.** Improved literacy skills will create a stronger economy that helps all Americans.
 - 70 percent of U.S. adults who are poor, unemployed or welfare recipients have limited literacy skills
 - Those with only a high school education or below now qualify for fewer than 20% of all new jobs in the U.S. In short, high unemployment is closely correlated with the lack of basic skills.
 - Recent high school dropouts are more than 3 times likely to receive public assistance.
- **FAMILY—A more literate America will mean stronger families.** Parents with strong literacy skills help their children succeed in school.
 - As the education level of the mother increase so does the literacy level of the child.
 - Families who participate in family literacy programs showed a dramatic increase in the children's school attendance during and after the program.
 - Oral communication prepares the way for kids in learning to read. When adults use a larger vocabulary it affects their children and their ability to learn.
- **CITIZENSHIP— A more literate America will mean a stronger Democracy.** All adults will have an equal opportunity to contribute to their neighborhood, their community, and their country.
 - Forty-four percent of Hispanics students born outside of the U.S. drop out of high school. These students rely primarily on adult education programs for ESL or GED completion.
 - In 2003, almost 1.2 million people were enrolled in ESL programs. The number served would be even larger except that many states and local programs have waiting lists.
 - Immigrants who are literate in their native language, but not in English, are more likely to have noncontinuous employment and to earn less.

NCL priorities to advance adult literacy

- We need more professionally-trained instructors. The same approach taken for K-12 education with meaningful standards and best practices must be applied to the area of adult literacy.
- We support a research agenda for adult literacy comparable to the K-12 agenda. We must know more about best practices in order to deliver quality services
- We must draw on the best resources in the public and private sectors to meet the challenges. We must forge alliances on the federal, state and locals levels
- We must meet the demand. In every program in every state, adults are waiting for their opportunity to enroll in literacy programs. They aren't looking for a hand out; they're looking for a hand up