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Suggested Talking Points for FY 2009 OSSE Budget Hearing

Prepared by D.C. LEARNs

Comments/Suggestions: jcarter@dclearns.org

What We Know:

According to information provided to us by OSSE, the federal grant for adult education in FY 2009 has been reduced by \$279,000. (It was \$1,738,000 in FY 2008 and will be \$1,441,371 in FY 2009.)

We do not, as of this date, know what has been proposed for local funding for adult education, or the total amount of funding (local + federal) for adult education in FY 2009. Adult literacy is cited as one of OSSE's seven objectives, but is not identified as a line item in the Mayor's proposed budget.

Last year, based on information that D.C. LEARNs obtained from OSSE, OSSE's budget for adult education totaled just over \$6.5 million. Of that total, approximately \$3 million was used to fund grants to community-based adult education instruction at 28 local adult education programs. Other than the Lifelong Learning Coach program, (which had a budget of \$500,000), we do not have a detailed accounting as to what the remaining \$3.5 million was used for. This is not to suggest that these funds were used inappropriately. We simply do not have a clear understanding of how they were used—or how adult literacy funds not being used for grants to programs will be used in FY 2009.

The Mayor's Adult Literacy Council's report, which is referenced in the Fair Budget Coalition's recommendations, has not been released. It is unknown as to whether any local adult education spending has been designated to specifically address any of that report's recommendations.

Suggested Talking Points for Testimony (Programs)

- Start by introducing yourself. Briefly describe your program and the population you serve.
- If you received a grant from OSSE/SEA last year, describe in detail how that money is used. How many more individuals could you serve with additional funding? Who would be affected if you did not receive a grant next year?

- Next, you may want to express your concern that the budget does not provide any detail on the amount being invested in adult literacy program such as yours in FY 2009. You also may want to mention that, according to information obtained by D.C. LEARNs from OSSE, the federal grant for adult education was reduced in FY 2008 and will be slightly reduced in FY 2009 ~~has been reduced by \$279,000.~~
- You may then want to ask the Council whether local money could be used to make up for any reduction in federal funding.
- Secondly, you may want to express support for not only making up for any potential reduction in federal funds, but also for increasing local funding for grants to adult education programs. You could cite D.C. LEARNs and the Fair Budget Coalition's recommendations (in particular, the recommendation to increase adult education funding by \$450,000 to significantly reduce waiting lists for programs).

Suggested Talking Points for Testimony (Students)

- Start by introducing yourself. Briefly describe your accomplishments as a student at an adult education class.
- Talk about a positive economic impact that you experienced because you attended adult education classes, such as obtaining a better job or going to job training or post-secondary education.
- If you are a parent, you may want to talk about a positive impact that improving your education has had on your ability to support their child's education.
- If you were ever on a waiting list for a class, talk about how long you had to wait.

The information provided above is based on the best information D.C. LEARNs has been able to obtain at this time. We expect this document will be updated as new information becomes available, so check to be sure you have the latest version.