



# Literacy Facts

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## About D.C. LEARNs

### Our Mission:

To lead an active coalition of Washington, DC literacy programs, learners and supporters, and work with them to strengthen literacy services and present a strong unified voice on the importance of literacy as an investment in the community.

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## Adult Literacy Programs in Washington, D.C.

### Who do adult literacy programs serve?

- Adult education programs serve adult learners who are 16 years old or older, and who have one or more of the following needs:
  1. They do not have basic education skills.
  2. They do not have a high school diploma or its equivalency.
  3. They need to improve their ability to speak, read, or write the English language.
  4. They are senior citizens seeking literacy and basic computer skills.
- Adult education programs include: Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED preparation, External Diploma Programs (EDP, an alternative high school diploma program) English as a Second Language (ESL), computer classes, workplace education, family literacy, learning disabilities training, and services to seniors and institutionalized individuals.
- Programs are provided either free or at minimal cost to adult learners.
- It has been reported that, currently, adult literacy programs are only serving about 10% of the target population.<sup>1</sup> However, this statistic has not been verified by D.C. LEARNs.
- Many adult education programs have waiting lists ranging from one month to more than one year. For example, over 75% of programs in Ward 8 have waiting lists.<sup>2</sup>

### Who takes the GED?

- In 2003–2004, 1,328 GED tests were administered, 900 candidates completed either full or partial GED tests and 511 adult learners earned their GED.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2004–2005, 1,417 GED tests were administered, 1007 candidates completed either full or partial GED tests and 569 adult learners earned their GED.<sup>4</sup>

## How are programs funded?

- Public funds (both local and federal) for adult education programs in Washington are distributed through grants managed by the State Education Agency (SEA) at the University of the District of Columbia.
- The SEA provides grants to 30 community based organizations that provide adult education services.<sup>5</sup>
- 25% of adult education programs are funded through a combination of public (federal and District government funding) and private sources. D.C. LEARNs estimates that programs that receive public support likely serve the majority of adult learners in the District.<sup>6</sup> However, due to the mixture of public and private funding sources, D.C. LEARNs is unable to determine definitively how many learners are served exclusively via public dollars.
- 75% of adult education programs receive no public funds (they receive only private funding).

2004-05 Revenue Sources for SEA-funded programs:<sup>4</sup>

Federal (under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act):	\$1,472,246
District of Columbia (includes required federal match and grant funding from the State Education Office in the Executive Office of the Mayor under the District's Lifelong Learning Initiative):	\$2,591,929
Total:	\$4,064,175

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *The Washington Post*, 2003.
- <sup>2</sup> SEA, "The Mayor's Adult/Family Literacy Initiative: Second Year Report," 2005.
- <sup>3</sup> SEA, *2004 Annual Report*, 2005.
- <sup>4</sup> SEA, *2005 Annual Report*, 2006 (soon to be released).
- <sup>5</sup> SEA, *Literacy Program List*, 2005–2006.
- <sup>6</sup> Non-publicly funded programs are not required to report any data about their programs, so it is currently not possible to determine this figure conclusively.