



Advocacy Day Talking Points

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 | Heritage Hall

Background

- Adult education gives Michiganders the skills to succeed at work and in life—from reading, math, and English to job readiness, digital skills, and high school equivalency—plus support services that help them stay on track.
- (Give background on the services your program provides and the number of people served in your community).
- Data shows a real need for adult education in Michigan’s workforce. Nearly half of Michigan adults have low literacy—18% at the lowest level and another 33% just above—leaving many without the basic reading and numeracy skills needed for today’s jobs. At the same time, nearly 90% of Michigan jobs require digital skills, yet about a third of workers lack the foundational digital literacy to succeed (National Skills Coalition, 2024 & PIAAC Skills Map, Educate & Elevate, 2020).
- Adult education can help close the skills gap—if funding meets demand. Employers are partnering with programs to ensure learners gain the skills they need for today’s jobs.
- Adult education provides an economic boost to participants. In fact, Michiganders with a high school credential can earn up to \$7,600 more per year than those without one (Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity, 2025).
- Investing in adult education pays off: COABE estimates that every dollar invested in adult education returns \$60 to the community through higher incomes, increased property taxes, and savings on legal system and welfare expenses.

Funding Request

- We respectfully request your support for Governor Whitmer’s proposed \$40.5 million for Section 107 of the School Aid Budget, the state’s dedicated adult education funding stream. Section 107 provides direct support for instruction, staffing, technology, and professional development across the state’s adult education system. This investment would allow local programs to expand capacity, hire additional full-time teachers, and improve learner retention, reinforcing adult education as a critical component of Michigan’s workforce development system that supports both employers and individuals statewide.
- We also request a \$2 million investment in the Adult Literacy Opportunity Fund (ALOF) to give Michigan adults with the lowest literacy skills the tools they need to succeed in the workforce and boost our state’s economy.

The Case for Adult Education: Five Key Points

1. Breaks the cycle of intergenerational poverty— a child’s literacy is linked to their mother’s literacy level 72% of the time. When we educate parents, we educate families, interrupting poverty at its roots.
2. Builds Michigan’s talent pipeline— adult education provides the foundational skills workers need to succeed in community college, career training, and the modern workplace. It is a direct investment in workforce productivity and economic competitiveness.
3. Supports successful reentry and reduces recidivism— adult education is widely recognized as one of the most effective deterrents to returning to incarceration, equipping individuals with the skills, confidence, and direction needed to reintegrate into their communities and build stable, productive lives.
4. Helps families move from public assistance to stable employment— by building adults’ reading, math, digital, and job skills, adult education creates a pathway from reliance on benefits to steady, family-supporting work.
5. Builds stronger, more self-sufficient communities— when adults improve their education, they are healthier, more involved in their communities, and better able to support themselves and their families. This strengthens neighborhoods and the broader community as a whole.

Sample Meeting Template

1. Welcome & Introductions

- a. Thank the lawmaker for meeting.

2. Brief MACAE Overview

- a. About MACAE:
 - i. We are a statewide network representing more than 120 agencies and 500 individual education practitioners across Michigan, including adult education programs, nonprofit literacy groups, community-based organizations, and more.
 - ii. Mission: Our mission is to engage in partnerships, provide member support, and advocate for lifelong learning, leading to employment and self-sufficient families.

3. Brief Program Overview

- a. Include details about your program including services provided, students served per year, number of program sites, partnerships, upcoming events, etc. **Pro Tip:** Consider using this time to invite the lawmaker to visit your program!

4. Share Student Stories

- a. Introduce students.
- b. Allow learners 2-3 minutes to share about how adult education has made an impact on their life.

5. MACAE’s Legislative Requests

- a. Urge the restoration of Section 107 funds to \$40.5 million to ensure stable, effective adult education programs and continued access for Michigan learners.

- b. Reinvest \$2 million into the Adult Literacy Opportunity Fund (ALOF) to support our state's least literate individuals.

6. Q & A

7. Wrap Up

- a. If there's a question you cannot answer, offer to share more information in a follow up email.
This is a great opportunity to continue the conversation.

Feedback Form

Use the QR code below to submit your feedback and let MACAE know how your meeting went, as well as how we can improve future Advocacy Days.

