

# ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY NETWORK

Request for Additional Funding in Fiscal Year 2024



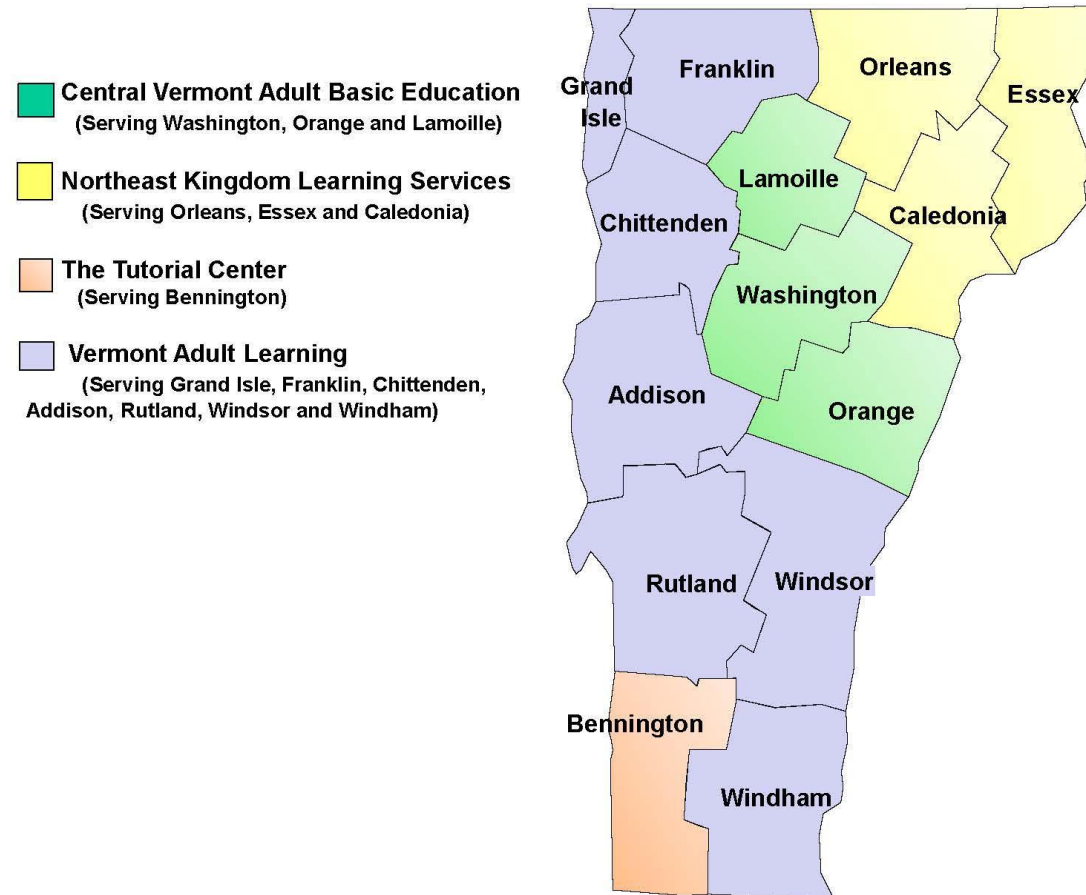
# OUR REQUEST: AN INCREASE IN BASE FUNDING OF \$500,000 IN THE FY24 BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

To fill the funding gap and address systemic underfunding for the state's four AEL providers.

## Categories of Funding for \$1.5million FY24 budget request:

- Staffing salary & benefits
- Technology needs & software upgrades
- Hardware (textbooks, supplies & other instructional materials)
- Outreach/Recruitment

Vermont's Four Adult Education and Literacy Providers  
Help Achieve State Goals



# THE NEED

Each year as a Network of four AEL providers, we employ approximately 132 educators and support staff to provide educational services to about 2,500 students from every city and town in the State.

Our operating costs have risen sharply while revenue streams from the State have declined, and we face budget and staffing shortfalls.

All 4 AEL providers in Vermont have seen a significant increase in student numbers in recent years, most notable among English Language Learners (**40% increase** in ELL students statewide from FY22 to FY23).

Your support will ensure that our students can be successful both now and in the future.



## FY22-FY24 STATE APPROPRIATIONS

Since calendar year 2021 the AELN has approached the General Assembly with a request to increase our base funding by \$1.5million. In response, the Vermont Legislature appropriated \$350,000 in one-time funding to the AELN in the FY22 Budget Adjustment Act; \$700,000 in one-time funding in the FY23 state budget; and another \$1,000,000 in one-time “bridge funding” in the FY24 state budget.

These one-time appropriations helped to cover operational costs and budget deficits, but relying on one-time funding to cover ongoing costs is unsustainable and we still need to fill that \$500,000 budget gap.

Without additional support from the State, Vermont’s AEL providers risk running budget deficits and making further cuts to staff and/or services. Action is required just to maintain the current level of services that we offer.



## **Our work changes lives.**

Adult Education and Literacy services help people build the assets they need to move out of poverty successfully, as well as the confidence to continue to move toward success throughout their lives.

**We help students to identify concrete goals and then break those goals down into steps.**

Our students set goals in the domains of:

- Family and life
- Academics
- Career and college readiness

Our services include:

- Literacy Education: Reading, Writing, Math including computer and financial literacy education
- English Language Learning and US Citizenship preparation
- High School Diploma and GED Credentialing
- Career and College Readiness





**ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROVIDERS OFFER A BROAD RANGE OF SERVICES THAT ARE TARGETED, TAILORED AND RELEVANT TO EACH STUDENT'S GOALS AND NEEDS.**

With additional investments in the Adult Education & Literacy providers, Vermont can ensure that all people who live here can achieve their full potential.

Vermont's four Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) service providers have a statutory role under Title 16 in providing adult education and a path to a high school diploma or GED. There is no other program in Vermont that offers a free path to a high school credential for all people 16 and up not in the public school system.

# AELN'S ROLE IN CTE

AELN is a key part of Vermont's statewide workforce development system, and any conversation around strengthening Vermont's CTE system should also consider the needs of Vermont's Adult Basic Education system as the "on-ramp-to-CTE" piece of the pipeline.

The AELN serves a different population than CTE Centers - our students are often not yet eligible or ready for CTE. Our students may come to us directly after dropping out of high school, or much later on in life, and they often lack the basic skills to participate successfully in tech ed programs, free college programs or workforce training.

Our ELL students must first learn English before moving through the workforce development pipeline.

**We are the very first stop for Vermont's most vulnerable populations.** Investing in AEL services upstream supports and increases the success of money invested further downstream in workforce development initiatives such as CTE.

# High School Completion

AEL providers administer the High School Completion Program (HSCP) for the State. Funding for the HSCP has decreased significantly due to lower student enrollment, policy changes within the program, and lower literacy skills among our student population.

A representative from the AEL Network Chaired the **Adult Education and Literacy HSCP Student Access Study Committee** which is tasked with making recommendations to the General Assembly for increasing access and equity in the HSCP and identifying long-term funding solutions for Adult Basic Education programs generally. We look forward to bringing these recommendations forward for consideration in the **FY25 budget process.**



## FY22 & FY23 Student Numbers

	High School Completion Program	English Language Learning	Adult Basic Education
Fiscal Year 2022	384	390	925
Fiscal Year 2023	407	547	941

Common outcomes for our students include:

- Attaining specific skills to get a job or a better job
- Earning a high school diploma or GED
- Achieving a certification or other credential for a job
- Deciding to attend college or other educational & career development opportunities
- Improving their English language abilities to apply their skills and education to careers here in Vermont

**The AELN served approximately 1,837 students in FY2023. Over the last 5 years, the average cost per student served by the AEL providers was \$3,124.**



Thank you!

We hope you will support our request for an increase in base funding of \$500,000 for the 4 AEL providers to help address systemic funding and support operational costs.