

Adult Education and Literacy Network



Vermont's Adult Education and Literacy Network is requesting an increase in base funding of \$1.5million in FY2024 to address systemic underfunding for the state's four AEL providers.

Vermont's four Adult Education & Literacy Providers were grappling with systemic underfunding prior to the pandemic, and now face increased costs, as well as increased need. The additional funding will support staffing needs, as well as operational costs to ensure that the students we serve are getting what they need to succeed.



Our Work Changes Lives. Vermont's four non-profit Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) service providers offer a broad range of services that build assets and change people's lives. Our students are at the center of our work, and we know that success looks different for every student, which is why our programming and activities are specifically tailored to each student's unique needs and goals. Vermont's AEL students are often the most vulnerable and underserved of our communities. *The majority of our students live in poverty, have a disability, identify as a person of color, and/or experience homelessness or unemployment.* Many AEL students are parents and have school-age children and lack the technology, skills or resources to work or learn remotely.

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. We celebrate every achievement so that students can see that they can succeed.

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

In order to continue delivering these vital education and training services to vulnerable Vermonters on behalf of the state, the Adult Education and Literacy Network needs an increase in state funding support. The one-time funding that was provided for FY2023 did help to decrease the gap between expenses and revenue, but we need ongoing funding to ensure that our students get the services they are entitled to.

FY24 Budget Request: +\$1,500,000 base appropriation to cover staffing and operational costs.

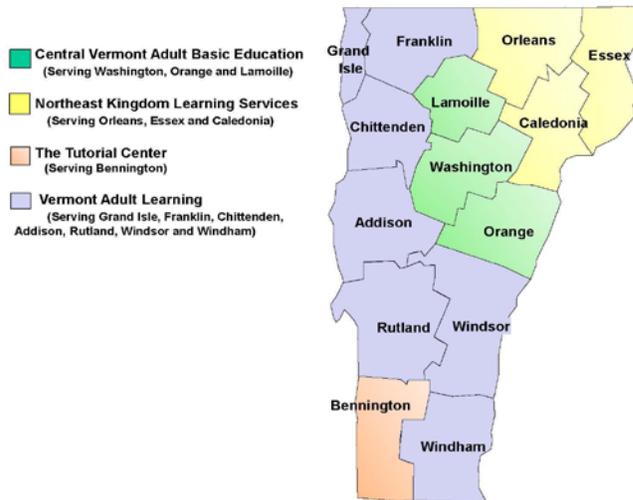
Each year as a Network of four AEL providers, we employ approximately 132 educators and support staff to provide educational services to students from every city and town in the State. Our operating costs have risen sharply over the past few years, and like all organizations and employers, we face budget and staffing shortfalls. Your support will ensure that our students can be successful both now and in the future.

Categories of Funding and Estimates of Costs for \$1.5million FY24 budget request:

- Staffing salary & benefits
- Technology needs & software upgrades
- Outreach
- Property maintenance and services

Thank you for considering this request from the Adult Education and Literacy Network. This funding will allow us to ensure that we can continue to provide critical adult education and literacy services to all Vermonters, especially those who are most vulnerable.

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



Keionna, 20 - Bennington



I couldn't be any more grateful for what this program has done for me. This program brought light to the fact that every position in life is vital. Whether it be a company CEO, bus driver, janitor, teacher, astronaut; in unity we make the world a remarkable place. No person is more or less important than the last. I started schooling at The Tutorial Center at 16 years old, hopeless for a future I deemed unpleasurable and mediocre. Three and a half years later, I am now a woman accomplishing goals I didn't think were possible. My out-of-the-ordinary daily life was accommodated because of The Tutorial Center's flexibility. This also enabled me to work more often granting me the money for my license, first car, and apartment. I also have time to properly take care of my brother. I was able to learn at my own pace on essentially my own time. I gained amazing genuine relationships that contributed to my success at school as well as other parts of the community. The Tutorial Center is an amazing school in Bennington especially for those whose lives don't fit within society's typical margins. I believe The Tutorial Center contributed to my success. Overall, my entire experience felt very personal and steady. The Tutorial Center provided me with a very individualized, independent, education that allowed me to gain lifelong knowledge as well as early exposure to adulthood.

Who Are Our Students?

- ✦ 58% female
- ✦ 22% BIPOC (variable by county)
- ✦ 46% with at least 1 disability
- ✦ 53% unemployed
- ✦ 100% with barriers to employment
- ✦ 76% no high school credential

(FY22 data)

Incoming Student Academic Levels

- ✦ FY19* - 59% below high school levels
- ✦ FY22 – 75% below high school levels
- ✦ This data illustrates that students are entering our programs with lower skill levels.

*FY19 was pre-Covid and using the same assessment instrument

When comparing the months of July-November 2021 to July – November 2022, we have seen a 24% increase in English Language Learners entering our programs. In FY22 our ESL students came from 61 countries and had 45 different primary languages.