

# ADULT LEARNING & LITERACY

## ADULT EDUCATION ACT: 1966 - 1991

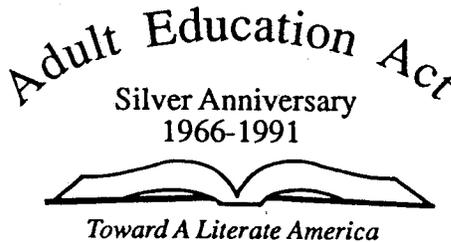
### Introduction

On November 3, 1966, Congress approved the first adult education legislation in the Nation's history. The legislation was part of an overarching long-term national strategy aimed at improving the economic condition of disadvantaged populations. As the number of enrollees increased from a half million adults in 1968 to more than three million in 1988, the programs authorized under this legislation have been expanded and their purpose better defined.

For a quarter of a century now, these programs have served as the major resource for providing educationally disadvantaged adults with the opportunity to reach their full potential. In the decade of the '90s, they will become even more critical in addressing the National Education Goal of a fully literate society, in attaining a more productive and skilled workforce, and in building a strong economy founded upon a well-educated citizenry. This year the Nation can take pride in celebrating the Silver Anniversary of the Adult Education Act.

### An Evolving Purpose

- 1964 The Adult Basic Education Program was established in Title II B of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (P. L. 88-452). A number of State plans were approved and began operation in FY 1965. By the close of FY1966, all States had established adult education delivery systems and local programs were underway.
- 1966 The Adult Education Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-750) established the authorization for the Adult Education Program in the Office of Education, expanded the program to adults with limited English proficiency, and authorized grants for special experimental demonstration projects and for teacher training. The Act was designed to "initiate programs of instruction for persons 18 years and older whose inability to read or write the English language constitutes a substantial impairment of their ability to obtain employment," and generally provided education for adults below the 9th grade level.
- 1968 The Adult Education Act (P.L. 90-576) amended the Act to change the definition of an adult from 18 to 16 years of age or older.
- 1970 The Act was amended (P.L. 91-230) to expand educational opportunities and to encourage adults to continue their education at least through the high school level through the Adult Secondary Education (ASE) program component.



1978 Further amendments (P.L. 95-561) defined the purpose as assuring that "all adults acquire basic skills necessary to function in society." This reflected adoption of a competency-based approach to assessment and programming, that identified levels of adult functional competencies as an alternative to school-based measures of literacy.

1988 Congress amended the Act (P.L. 100-297), expanding the scope to include:

- The National Workplace Literacy Partnerships Program to support basic skills programs for workers through partnerships between business or labor organizations and education agencies;
- The English Literacy Grants Program to support services to limited English proficient adults (and their families);
- A program of research and development to identify and evaluate exemplary practices in adult education and promising innovative methods for service delivery; and
- New requirements for improved planning and evaluation in State adult education programs.

	Enrollees (millions)	Federal Funding (millions of \$)	State/Local (millions of \$)	Total Cost (millions of \$)
FY 1967	.389	26.3	8.3	34.6
FY 1972	.820	51.1	17.4	68.5
FY 1977	1.7	71.5	41.9	113.4
FY 1982	2.2	100.0	128.6	228.6
FY 1987	2.9	112.9	403.5	516.4
FY 1992	3.6*	238.8	560.0*	798.8*

\*Estimate

## Current Priorities

- To work toward achieving the National Education Goal for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning, that states "by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills to compete in a global economy and enjoy the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."
- To support the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) 1991-1993, that will provide the first comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of the literacy skills of adult Americans to better identify and serve educationally disadvantaged adults.
- To coordinate and integrate services under the Adult Education Act with those of related Federal programs, such as those involving job training, family literacy, and services to special needs populations, including immigrants, limited English proficient, institutionalized and the learning disabled.
- To assist undereducated adults achieve economic self-sufficiency through the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Program.

## SILVER ANNIVERSARY CALENDER -- 1991

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<p>U.S. Department of Education - Press Release, ERIC Review Article</p> <p>American Association of Community and Junior Colleges - <i>Times</i> Article</p> <p>International Reading Association - Reading Today Article</p> <p><i>GED Items</i> Article</p> <p>Library of Congress - <i>Center for the Book News</i> Article</p>	<p>International Reading Association - Local Councils Notice</p> <p>U.S. Dept. of Ed - <i>All Points Bulletin</i> Article</p>	<p>U.S. Department of Education - <i>ERIC Digest</i> Article</p> <p>National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education Newsletter</p> <p>International Reading Association - <i>Perspectives on Literacy</i> Article</p> <p>District of Columbia Open House</p> <p>Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages - Conference</p>	<p>Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) National Conference - Hartford, Connecticut</p> <p>State Centers for the Book - Idea Day</p>
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) U.S. Dept. of Ed. Kickoff of Celebration</li> <li>2) International Reading Association Conference - Las Vegas</li> <li>3) COABE - <i>AEA Workbook</i></li> <li>4) American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) Conference - New Orleans</li> </ol>	<p>Laubach Literacy Action - (LLA) Promotion Kit</p>	<p>State Directors of Adult Education/ GED Conference - St. Paul, MN</p>	<p>Tribute to States - Ceremony in Charlotte, NC, sponsored jointly by North Carolina and U.S. Department of Ed.</p>
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>Adult Education Student Congress - Washington, DC</p> <p>ANPA Foundation: Literacy Day News Supplement</p>	<p>LLA - <i>Literacy Advance</i> Article</p> <p>National Alliance of Business Workforce America Conference - Washington, DC</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Dept. of Ed &amp; Center for the Book/Special Event &amp; Reception</li> <li>2) ERIC - <i>AEA History</i></li> <li>3) U.S. Dept. of Education - Exhibit</li> <li>4) NAB - <i>Workforce America</i> Magazine Article</li> <li>5) American Association for Adult and Continuing Education <i>Journal</i> Article</li> </ol>	<p>ERIC - <i>Guide to AEA Literature and Projects</i></p>

For further information on any of the above events contact the Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202; 202/732-5399, or individual organizations directly.

- To support the new National Institute on Literacy Research and Practice by contributing to its programs of technical assistance; program evaluation and validation; research; and information dissemination through a national clearinghouse.
- A ceremony honoring the States' role in implementation of the Act, to be held in August in North Carolina — the first State to receive adult education funding.

## Celebration Activities

- A special anniversary program on adult education and literacy, and celebration reception at the Library of Congress, James Madison Library in Washington, D.C., sponsored jointly with the Center for the Book, Library of Congress, in November 1991.
- Presentations/receptions/exhibits at major national conferences throughout the year.

Additional activities by a number of national organizations are noted on the attached Calendar.



*For further information contact:*

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