

Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998

Adult Education & Family Literacy Act

“The Other WIA”

✎ The Adult Education Act of 1966, the first federal legislation on adult literacy, was reauthorized throughout the years until the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) repealed the latest statute, “The Adult Education Act of 1996.”

✎ WIA established the ***Adult Education & Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)***, acknowledging the correlation between literacy skills and job success, as well as the difference between adult education and elementary (K-12), secondary (high school), and post-secondary education (college).

✎ The intent of the AEFLA is to ensure “no child is left behind” by making sure all parents have necessary basic skills to provide for their families. Provider agencies must address literacy needs in their communities and place priority on those most in need/with the lowest levels of literacy.

✎ All literacy providers are eligible for funds, and a diverse group of entities provide adult education and literacy services. Providers include school districts and other public agencies, community colleges and community-based organizations, as well as other institutions such as those providing developmental and mental health services, in addition to jails and correctional facilities, library and volunteer literacy programs.

✎ AEFLA requires a multi-year State Plan, including provisions related to state assessment, planned services, performance measures, flexible scheduling, support services, access to local providers, public participation in plan development, strategies to serve special populations, and coordination of services such as child care and transportation.

Adult Education Act of 1966

*“One of the primary changes in this legislation
is the new connection between job training and adult education systems.
Too many individuals seeking job training find themselves unable to benefit from programs
because they do not have the literacy skills necessary to benefit from training programs.”*

- President Lyndon B. Johnson

A National Look At Literacy:

- According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 10.5 million U.S residents speak little or no English
- More than 50% lack “functional skills needed to perform adequately in a technologically advanced workforce”
- Fewer than 10% participate in federally funded adult education and literacy programs
- Many have undiagnosed learning disabilities

Literacy and Immigration:

- A large percentage of immigrants speak a language other than English at home
- Data from the 2000 U.S. Census indicates there are over 26 million individuals who speak Spanish and almost 7 million who speak an Asian or Pacific language at home
- Immigrants have a wealth of knowledge/experience to contribute, but many are relegated to low-school jobs with minimum language requirements
- ESL and civics programs are essential to help immigrants find work, prepare for citizenship, and participate in community life

Literacy and Self-Sufficiency/Health Care:

- Strong link between literacy and employment (high school graduates earn significantly more)
- Connection between literacy and welfare (more than half of those on welfare 5+ years have less than high school education)
- Low literacy linked to poor health and early death, poor prenatal care and low birth weight
- Billions spent each year resulting from inability to follow instructions, read labels, etc.

Intergenerational Issues:

- Low literacy levels are often intergenerational
- Helping parents with their own skills helps children succeed academically
- Education of a parent is strong predictor of a child’s school achievement
- Literacy is necessary for participation in civic activities such as joining PTA



For more information, including technical assistance, go to www.OTAN.us - the largest adult education website in the country