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ALP Launched, SNAP E&T, Health Literacy, & More

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In this last issue of the CAAL E-News, we are pleased to announce the launching of [ADULT LEARNING PARTNERS, LLC](#). Founded by Gail Spangenberg to build on CAAL's work, ALP's primary mission is to improve Adult Education and Workforce Skills in the U.S, including the areas of health literacy and distance learning. We will give strategic attention to important leadership activities that advance effective policy, planning, research, program design and service, and outreach.

ALP's activities will include an ongoing blog and an E-News service. ALP's core team of Principal Associates at start-up consists of Mary Ann Corley (AIR), Brenda Dann-Messier (recently OCTAE), James Parker (CAAL), and Gail Spangenberg (CAAL). We have the support of a broad group of expert advisors, some of whom may work with ALP on occasion. For more information, visit ALP's website at [www.AlpAmerica.com](http://www.AlpAmerica.com).

**ACTION ITEM:** Please note that CAAL's email will soon be out of service. Effective immediately, readers who currently use either of these two addresses to communicate with CAAL ([gspangenberg@caalusa.org](mailto:gspangenberg@caalusa.org), [bheitner@caalusa.org](mailto:bheitner@caalusa.org)) should replace them with this ALP email address for Gail Spangenberg: [gspangenberg@alpamerica.com](mailto:gspangenberg@alpamerica.com). (Note: CAAL's publications, essays, blogs, and e-newsletters will remain accessible through 2017 at the CAAL website, [www.caalusa.org](http://www.caalusa.org).)



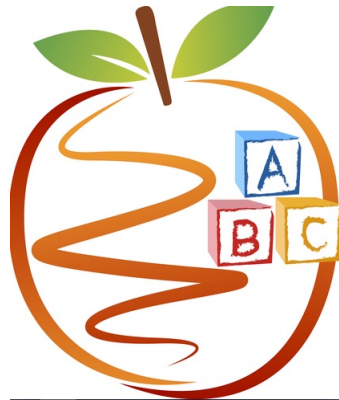
## SNAP E&T: ADULT EDUCATION CAN BENEFIT

**SNAP E&T** is an employment and training program of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (formerly Food Stamps) of Education & Training, administered by the Department of Agriculture. The program provides funds to States for services and support that will help SNAP participants find jobs and gain skills to prepare for employment. Adult educators are generally not accustomed to thinking about their programs in this context. But at a time when it is essential to reach beyond limited traditional funding sources for ABE, you should be aware that many federal agencies operate programs with an adult education component or potential, and that SNAP E&T is one of them.

SNAP E&T includes adult education in its thinking. States have the flexibility to use SNAP E&T funds to serve certain categories of low-skilled adults who often have little access to job training. Up to 10 sites will be selected for E&T pilots, with the aim of moving SNAP recipients toward economic self-sufficiency. State and regional grants can be used for education and training purposes. States are allowed to determine what services best fit local needs and can use SNAP E&T funds for innovative programs that result from education or workforce initiatives in their states. Such components can be included as search and job training, workfare, support services for participants, basic education or vocational training, and job retention services.

Numerous sources provide excellent material about how SNAP E&T operates, what it strives to achieve, and who is eligible to participate -- e.g., the **U.S. Department of Agriculture** ([click here](#)), the **National Skills Coalition** ([click here](#)), and the **Center for Law and Social Policy** ([click here](#)). For further information from the Department of Agriculture about the SNAP E&T

program as a whole, contact Rachel Gragg at [rachelgragg@fns.usda.gov](mailto:rachelgragg@fns.usda.gov). For information about adult education specifically, contact Marcie Foster at [Marcie.Foster@fns.usda.gov](mailto:Marcie.Foster@fns.usda.gov). Programs should also work through their state and regional offices. A SNAP E&T [Resources for States](#) page is available from the USDA.



## HEALTH LITERACY ON THE MOVE

**Health Literacy** has grown rapidly in a very short time. Among other developments, more than 20 state or regional health literacy coalitions are in operation now, some still in their infancy, others with established track records, and new ones in various stages of planning. Various upcoming activities invite your participation:

(1) [The Health Literacy Discussion list of the Institute for Healthcare Advancement](#) (IHA) will sponsor a week-long health literacy discussion (February 9-13) on the phenomenon of health literacy coalitions in states and regions across the country. The e-mail discussion will bring together a variety of stakeholders who can and should be working together, including adult education professionals, to improve health services for the hardest-to-reach populations. The focus will be on creating and maintaining a new health literacy coalition based on advice from those with a successful track record. It will look at such issues as what partners to reach out to and how to do that, the benefits and challenges of operating a coalition, and how multiple state coalitions can help each other by working together. Members of the [LINCS Health Literacy Community of Practice](#) (see below) can get more information at the LINC's site. Cynthia Bauer of the Center for Disease Control and Michele Erikson of Wisconsin Health Literacy will lead the discussion.

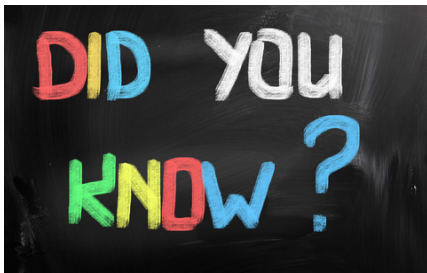
(2) **The Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit** will be held in Madison, WI, from April 13-15. It will offer a session on Health Literacy Coalition Building. A variety of health literacy resources will be made available for both literacy practitioners and health professionals. For information, [click here](#).

(3) On April 24th, the **3rd Annual Health Literacy Conference of the Southern Regional Area Health Education Center** will be held in Raleigh, NC. Its theme is incorporating health literacy principles into your practice. For information, [click here](#).

Resources suggested by the Institute for Healthcare Advancement to prepare for the LINCS online

discussion are:

- \* The [LINCS Health Literacy Community of Practice](#), and [Introduction to Health Literacy in ABE and ESOL](#). A good start for literacy programs or teachers who want to begin addressing health literacy.
- \* [Focus on Basics: Health & Literacy Partnerships](#). Material prepared by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), Harvard University, 2008.
- \* [Center For Disease Control Health Literacy Page](#). This site contains a map showing health literacy activities by state. Included are examples of coalitions created through adult literacy programs.
- \* [Wisconsin Health Literacy](#). This is the most fully developed example of a statewide health literacy coalition that began with a literacy organization.



## TELL YOUR LEGISLATOR: MONEY MATTERS

The President's FY2016 budget request to Congress for OCTAE programs includes \$568,965 million for ABE state grants, a freeze at last year's level. This includes funding for continuation of ESL/Civics and immigration programming. National leadership activities are increased from \$13,712 million for FY2015 to \$19,712 in FY2016, or an increase of \$6 million. Curiously, this overall funding is less than the amount authorized by WIOA.

Separate funding is proposed for community colleges, but no mention is made of upgrading incumbent worker skills. Although it may or may not be funded, it is worthy of note that \$200 million is proposed for a new American Technical Training Fund -- for a program of competitive grants for job training programs to help move low-income people into high-demand middle class jobs.

In light of these discouraging proposals for OCTAE, it seems timely to recall some facts that show how far we have to go in our collective adult education and workforce skills training effort. We take as the starting point the recommendation of the National Commission on Adult Literacy in 2008, that the adult education challenge is so enormous that we need a Marshall Plan approach

to it. The Commission recommended that the goal be to serve 20 million adults annually by the year 2020, with funding of \$20 billion each year.

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From [PIAAC](#), the Programme of International Assessment of Adult Competencies:

- 38 million - the number of U.S. adults aged 16-64 who scored at or below levels 1 and 2 on the PIAAC assessment scale. (PIAAC indicates that these levels reflect limited ability to engage in text, work in numbers, and solve problems in technology rich-environment.)
- 51% -- the percentage of those aged 16-24 scoring at level 1 and 2 and below on PIAAC.
- 46% -- the percentage of young adults aged 25-34 scoring at levels 1 and 2 and below on PIAAC.
- 48% -- the percentage of adults aged 35-44 scoring at levels 1 and 2 and below on PIAAC.
- 14%; 53% -- Hispanic test-takers as a percentage of all test-takers; Hispanic test-takers as a percentage of all test-takers scoring at levels 1, 2, and below on PIAAC.
- 13%; 21% -- Black American test-takers as a percentage of all test-takers; Black test-takers as a percentage of all test-takers scoring at levels 1, 2, and below on PIAAC.

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From [Reach Higher, America](#) (analysis by The Center for Labor Market Studies of Northeastern University) and [Mounting Pressures Facing the U.S. Workforce and the Increasing Need for Adult Education and Literacy](#) (NCHEMS), 2008, for the National Commission on Adult Literacy:

- *\$848 billion -- the increase in personal income in the U.S. over a working lifetime if all adults aged 25 to 64 with some college but no degree acquired at least an associate degree.*
- *\$191 billion -- the increase in personal income in the U.S. over a working lifetime if all adults aged 25-64 without a high school diploma acquired a high school diploma or equivalent (NCHEMS).*
- *\$900,000 per person -- how much more an adult holding a bachelor's degree would contribute to the tax coffers of federal, state, and local governments during a working lifetime compared to an adult with only a high school diploma.*
- *\$2.5 billion annually -- the net fiscal contributions to the federal government and state and local governments if 4 million dropouts a year earn a high school diploma.*
- *Up to \$1.4 billion per year -- the savings in reduced costs from crime if the high school completion rate increased by just 1 percent for all men aged 20 to 60.*

- *Up to \$238 billion annually -- the savings in health care expenditures by improving adult literacy.*
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From analysis of [data in the National Reporting System](#) (public users click [HERE](#) at the NRS sign-in site) -- between Program Year 2010 and Program Year 2014:

- *Adult education enrollments decreased from 2.2 million to 1.6 million -- a 27% drop*
  - *Family Literacy enrollments decreased by 30%*
  - *Workplace Literacy enrollments decreased by 60%*
  - *Enrollments of homeless adults dropped by 20%*
  - *Adult learners achieving a secondary education credential decreased by 18%*
- 

According to the [Migration Policy Institute](#), immigration is a significant driver of both ABE and ESL needs. See [2014 Adult Education Briefing on Capitol Hill](#):

- *18,714,900 -- the number of all limited-English-proficient adults in America in need of adult education services in 2012.*
  - *9,334,300 -- the number of foreign-born adults aged 18-64 without a high school diploma or equivalent in need of adult education services.*
  - *676,767 -- the number of ESL adults enrolled in adult education services in 2012-2013, down from 1,063,330 in 2007-2008.*
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From the [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) (CLASP), in that same Capitol Hill [Adult Education Briefing](#):

- *66% -- the percentage of adults, in 2013, enrolled directly in college after graduating high school, the lowest in a decade.*
- *All of the growth in the number of children in the U.S. from 2006-2011 was due to growth among immigrant families. These children are more likely to be living in poverty and less likely to go to college.*
- *Adult Education programs, CLASP says, are the on-ramp for many adults with low basic skills to [move into] postsecondary education and training. Students in "career pathway bridge" programs are 56 percent more likely than regular adult education to earn college credit, 26 percent are more likely to earn a certificate or degree, and 19 percent are more likely to achieve learning gains on basic skills tests.*
- *25% -- the percentage of decline in real terms since 2002 in federal adult education spending.*

- \$700-\$900 -- the annual per student spending for adult education, compared to \$10,000 for K-12 students.



## OTHER NEWS



**[PIAAC Research Conference](#)**. Over a year ago, in a national competition judged by a panel of reviewers, PIAAC awarded 11 small grants (with funding from OCTAE) to several sources for research to examine important areas of interest in "workforce issues, literacy and learning, skills of immigrants, and health literacy." The research aimed to look more closely at questions raised by the findings of the PIAAC assessment, a requirement being that PIAAC data had to be used in some way as part of the research design. On December 11-12, 2014, with funding from the Dollar General Corporation, more than 120 researchers, planners, and policy makers from the U.S. and abroad attended a PIAAC research-to-action conference in Arlington, VA. It was designed to provide a venue for presentation and discussion of the finished research. The PIAAC website now offers these research papers, other presentations, and the participant list and agenda. (Note: While at the PIAAC site, discover the other extensive information available on the PIAAC assessment and future plans related to it.)



**[Ed Surge](#)** is an independent group that provides information and a sense of community to people engaged in working to advance use of educational technology. **[Adult Learning: Building Paths to a Better Future](#)** is its recent online guide to show how technology can and is being used to support underskilled adults. The guide includes information about the ACT Career Curriculum courses, KET's online GED preparation program; the online courses of McGraw-Hill Workforce Access, Philadelphia's MyPlace Online, Skillshare, USA Learns; and many other distance learning programs.



**WIOA Implementation Regulations** from the Departments of Education and Labor, expected last month, are projected to be issued sometime in Spring 2015. **[CLICK HERE](#)** for more information. In the meantime, on February 17th, the Nova Research Company will unveil the U.S. Department of Education's programs and goals in response to the PIAAC findings, "**Making Skills Everyone's Business: A Call To Transform Adult Learning in the United States.**" The paper will soon be available from the Department's website.




**The American Federation of Teachers** recently passed a resolution titled "**[Reclaiming the Promise of GED Fairness in the United States](#)**." The AFT resolves to "fully support allowing

high school dropouts in every state the opportunity to use the nonprofit Iowa HiSET high school equivalency test to demonstrate their education achievements rather than the for-profit Pearson VUE GED test." The AFT says that the Pearson GED test is too expensive, costing nearly twice as much as the old GED test, and that its pass rates are "dramatically lower than the pass rates for previous GED tests."



**[College Is Just the Beginning: Employers' Role in the \\$1.1 Trillion Postsecondary Education and Training System](#)** is just out from **The Center on Education and the Workforce of Georgetown University**. According to the report, only 17% of employer-provided formal training expenditures go to workers with a high school education or less. One third of the overall spending goes to third-party providers. And 86% goes to "prime-age" workers aged 25-54, with only 3% going toward the training of young adults. This brief report gives all kinds of data on spending levels for both formal and informal employee training. It provides a comparison of expenditures in 2013 by business, postsecondary education, federal job training programs, and other sources...a comparison of employer spending by industry type...and a look at the relative role of training services provided in-house as compared to outside sources under contract. It cautions that in considering the report, readers should keep in mind that employers spend more on training than colleges do because people are enrolled in college for only a few years, whereas they must continue to learn at the workplace for decades. The report may raise more questions than it answers for some, but the data are important and provocative.

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