

## Adult Basic Education

### *What is adult basic education?*

Adult basic education (ABE) is a program for people to earn a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. ABE is for people over 16 years old who do not attend an elementary or secondary school and function below the 12th grade level in any of the basic academic areas including reading, math, writing, and speaking.

ABE is a day or evening program offered by a school district, a consortium of districts, the Department of Corrections, or a private nonprofit organization.

Total ABE enrollment was 73,387 in fiscal year 2009. ABE enrollment has increased by 42 percent over the last ten years (51,785 to 73,387).

### *How is ABE funded?*

ABE programs may charge a sliding fee to program participants.

ABE programs receive federal funds and state general funds. In fiscal year 2009, state general funds accounted for about 85 percent (\$42.3 million) of ABE funding. The state funds are distributed to programs by a formula based on population, contact hours, enrollment of students with limited English proficiency, and the number of adults age 20 or older with no diploma residing in the district.

State total ABE aid annual increases are limited to the lesser of 3 percent growth from one year to the next or the average growth in state total contact hours over the prior ten program years. Individual program annual increases are limited to the greater of 11 percent growth from the preceding fiscal year or \$10,000 per year.

### *Who may receive ABE funding?*

School districts, school district consortia, the Department of Corrections, and private nonprofit organizations may receive ABE funding. In fiscal year 2009, 53 consortia and organizations received ABE funding.

### *What types of programs are available?*

The following programs are available through ABE: General Educational Development (GED) diploma, adult diploma, English as a Second Language (ESL), basic skills enhancement, family literacy, and citizenship/civics education.

- GED: A national high school equivalency program that includes a set of five tests: math, reading, writing, social studies, and science.
- Adult diploma: Programs for eligible adults leading to a high school diploma from a Minnesota school district.

- ESL: A program for learners whose native language is not English.
- Basic skills enhancement: A program for learners who need goal-specific elementary or secondary level basic skills such as work-related math, functional literacy, reading, or writing assistance.
- Family literacy: A program for adults and their preschool children. The program features instruction for adults in literacy, instruction in parenting, and educational/developmental services for kids.
- Citizenship/civics education: Programs that prepare Minnesota noncitizens for U.S. citizenship. The programs include U.S. citizenship application preparation and English language instruction. Civics education includes content related to general civics knowledge and full participation in U.S. society, culture, and employment.

**For more information:** Contact legislative analyst Danyell Punelli LeMire at 651-296-5058. Also see the House Research publication *2000 Adult Learner Legislation*, August 2000.

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