

Adult Literacy Programs

Adult illiteracy is one of the most impactful and pressing issues affecting Georgia today. Low-literacy adults cannot upskill or reskill as the workforce changes. Their children are more likely to struggle with reading. Providing programs to increase adult literacy skills have both immediate and long-term benefits.

Background

Currently, [1 in 6 Adult](#) Georgians struggles with low literacy. 43% of adults with the lowest literacy levels live in poverty, and 70% of adult welfare recipients have low literacy levels. Low-literate adults currently cost Georgia nearly [\\$1.3 billion annually in lost tax revenue, incarceration costs, and social service needs](#). Additionally, low literacy causes inefficiencies in the workplace and leads to increased mistakes, costing businesses as well.

Low literacy is directly correlated with issues such as incarceration rates, teen pregnancy, and poor health outcomes. [75% of state prison inmates are classified as low literate](#) and lack high school diplomas that become increasingly necessary for job placement, often leading to repeat offenses. Poverty and lack of job placement impact not only individuals but their families as well. Adult low literacy often results in and from generational cycles. Because low-literate adults cannot pass on literacy skills to their children, the children of low-literacy adults are left disadvantaged and fall behind their peers in academic settings. [72% of children with low literate parents](#) will fall into the lowest literacy percentiles. These children will then pass this on to their children, [perpetuating the cycle of low literacy, poor health outcomes, and financial issues](#).

Proposed Actions

It is vital to [break the cycle of low literacy and to empower low literacy adults](#) through evidence-based programs that work with their needs. By leveraging private-public partnerships, Georgia can help low literature adults thrive. Georgia has existing programs that are underutilized due to [stigmas around literacy](#) that [discourage adults](#) from seeking support, and by under-advertisement or inaccessibility.

Existing programs include:

The [Technical College System of Georgia](#), offers multiple free English Learners and High School Equivalency pathways that work to support low-literate adults.

[Literacy Action](#), provides classes to those needing additional assistance for little to no cost.

A proposed way to encourage participation is to help workplaces to provide information on adult literacy programs offered through the state or giving tax credits to businesses that give literacy-based professional development. Showcasing continuing education programs in the workplace ensures that everyone knows what options exist for them, and highlights self-improvement options for people of all literacy levels. Businesses also will [benefit from these programs](#) by [increasing efficiency and improving workplace culture](#).

Sources and Additional Readings

The Implementation of an Extensive Reading Program with Adult Learners:

<https://www.proquest.com/openview/01009750508813eced638a0a27350073/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=30221>

Current Adult Education Options Through TCSG: <https://www.tcsg.edu/adult-education/>

National Assessment of Adult Literacy Report:

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007480>

2020 Community Literacy Indicators by County:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xesbKfwfWbcyABm7IfLfm7U1k75x_Vje

National Council for Adult Education Needs Report:

<http://www.ncalamerica.org/AdultEDFacts&Figures1215.pdf>

Deloitte's Low Literacy in Georgia Overview: [https://74416df5-6c45-48f7-8698-](https://74416df5-6c45-48f7-8698-6a6b5f10f915.filesusr.com/ugd/8b6097_05419dbddf8843648346fed021c0b810.pdf)

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Preliminary Georgia Literacy Commission Study on Best Practices for Decreasing Low Literacy: [https://74416df5-6c45-48f7-8698-](https://74416df5-6c45-48f7-8698-6a6b5f10f915.filesusr.com/ugd/8b6097_b9a2d8af9dba471d82d92b2de1386dec.pdf)

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Proliteracy 2019-2020 Annual Statistical State of Literacy Interventions Report:

<https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/Membership/Statistical%20Reports/2019-2020-ProLiteracy-Annual-Statistical-Report.pdf>

Education and the Age Profile of Literacy into Adulthood:

<https://www.nber.org/papers/w14073>

Literacy Action Programs: <https://literacyaction.org/>