



Hal Cohen, Executive Director, Vermont Adult Learning
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Good morning. I'm Hal Cohen, I live in Middlesex. I'm the Executive Director of Vermont Adult Learning which serves seven of Vermont's fourteen counties—Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, Addison, Rutland, Windsor and Windham.

I'm here to ask you to support the statewide Adult Education and Literacy Provider Network with an appropriation of \$350,000 for FY2022 to address budget deficits due to COVID-19. We serve Vermont adults who need help with basic skills to access educational and training opportunities. The Adult Education and Literacy Network has not received any additional financial support from the state during the entire COVID-19 Pandemic.

Literacy—in reading, writing and math—results in expanded educational and employment opportunities. Our students are generally low-income, over 30% identify as BIPOC. Many experience a disability; almost all of our students lack a high school credential. Our work helps them build better lives for themselves and their families.

My own dad left high school to serve in the Navy during World War II. He eventually earned his GED and became a successful small business owner. Access to education transformed my family's circumstances.

An educated workforce is an employed workforce. A high school credential is essential to earning a livable wage. Our services in education and workforce development are tailored to student goals and needs to foster success. Our graduates often remain in Vermont, forming the backbone of our local economies and communities.

Please support the statewide Adult Education and Literacy Provider Network with an appropriation of \$350,000 for FY2022 to address budget deficits caused by COVID-19. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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802-257-9449

Chittenden County
77 College Street
Burlington, VT 05401
802-846-7245

Rutland County
16 Evelyn St., Ste. 101
Rutland, VT 05701
802-775-0617

Windsor County
225 Maple Street, Unit 6
White River Jct., VT 05001
802-299-2469

**Addison County /
Central Office**
99 Maple Street, #18
Middlebury, VT 05753
802-388-4392

Franklin & Grand Isle
5 Lemnah Dr., Ste. 5
St. Albans, VT 05478
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Windsor County
100 River St., Ste. 102
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