

LITERACY

IT'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD

hope, achievement, education, technology, learning, freedom, career, progress, connection, life, future, choices, respect, opportunity, change, advancement, education



IT'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD

NIFL HOTLINE TTY: 1-800-552-9097 • <http://www.nifl.gov>



We hope you find these materials to be useful. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to call the Campaign staff at (202) 632-1500.

National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006-2712
NIFL Hotline: 1-800-228-8813 • phone: 202/632-1500 • fax: 202/632-1512
<http://www.nifl.gov>

[name]
President
Chamber of Commerce
123 Main Street
Anytown, USA 12345

Dear [name]:

While our nation has enjoyed record productivity in recent years, the current climate in the far east and parts of Europe is a reminder that the American business community must always be vigilant about keeping our economy strong. I'm writing to provide you and your members with information about a strategy that is often overlooked: how to improve the basic skills of our workers and their families as an integral part of sound business practice.

All across America, from the high-technology centers in the west to the heavy manufacturing plants in the east, there are countless examples of how a business's or industry's commitment to improving workers' skills results in a stronger, safer, thriving work place.

Georgia-Pacific in Crossett, Arkansas, the largest paper mill of its kind in the country, credits its investment in education with rising productivity and a stellar performance record. Georgia-Pacific's 1400 hourly employees receive at least 60 hours of formal training annually on company time, including workplace training from their peers. To ensure that all potential new employees have the skills necessary to meet the mill's demanding hiring requirements, Georgia-Pacific worked with local adult education groups to create an adult education program on-site. The on-site program is also open to employees who are seeking promotion or transfer within the company, as well as to their families and the community.

And it's not just large corporations that are making this kind of commitment. Invest Learning, an educational software company in San Diego, California, has committed itself to family literacy and self-sufficiency. It has created scholarships and prizes to reward employees who are working to improve their basic skills. It also donates hundreds of thousands of books to local literacy programs, workbooks to the San Diego Literacy Council, and computers with software to a homeless shelter.

Our local literacy organizations are here to help your members find the best ways to improve their businesses while also improving employees' lives and the overall health and stability of our community. We welcome the opportunity to speak with you and your members in greater detail and to answer any questions you may have about the many ways to get involved. We hope it will be possible for us to make a presentation at one of your regular meetings and will contact you shortly to follow up.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Organization]



Basic Skills and Literacy: A Smart Investment:

Why our community
needs your help to remain
economically strong



Changing times call for changing definitions:

- Literacy no longer simply means the ability to read and write.
- In 1991, Congress defined literacy as:
 - “an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.”



The problem: The National Adult Literacy Survey (1992) found:

- 22% of the adults in America – over 40 million people -- perform at the very lowest literacy levels (often equated to a fifth-grade reading and skill level)



These adults -- many of whom
are your employees -- have difficulty:

- locating an intersection on a map (i.e., truck drivers, delivery persons, taxi cab drivers)
- calculating total costs on an order form (i.e., administrative staff; retail customer service employees)
- interpreting charts and graphs (i.e., manufacturing line persons, hospital assistants)



The problem (cont'd):

- The “State of Literacy in America” report (1998) allows civic and business leaders in individual states, cities, and counties to determine the extent of the adult literacy problem in their areas:

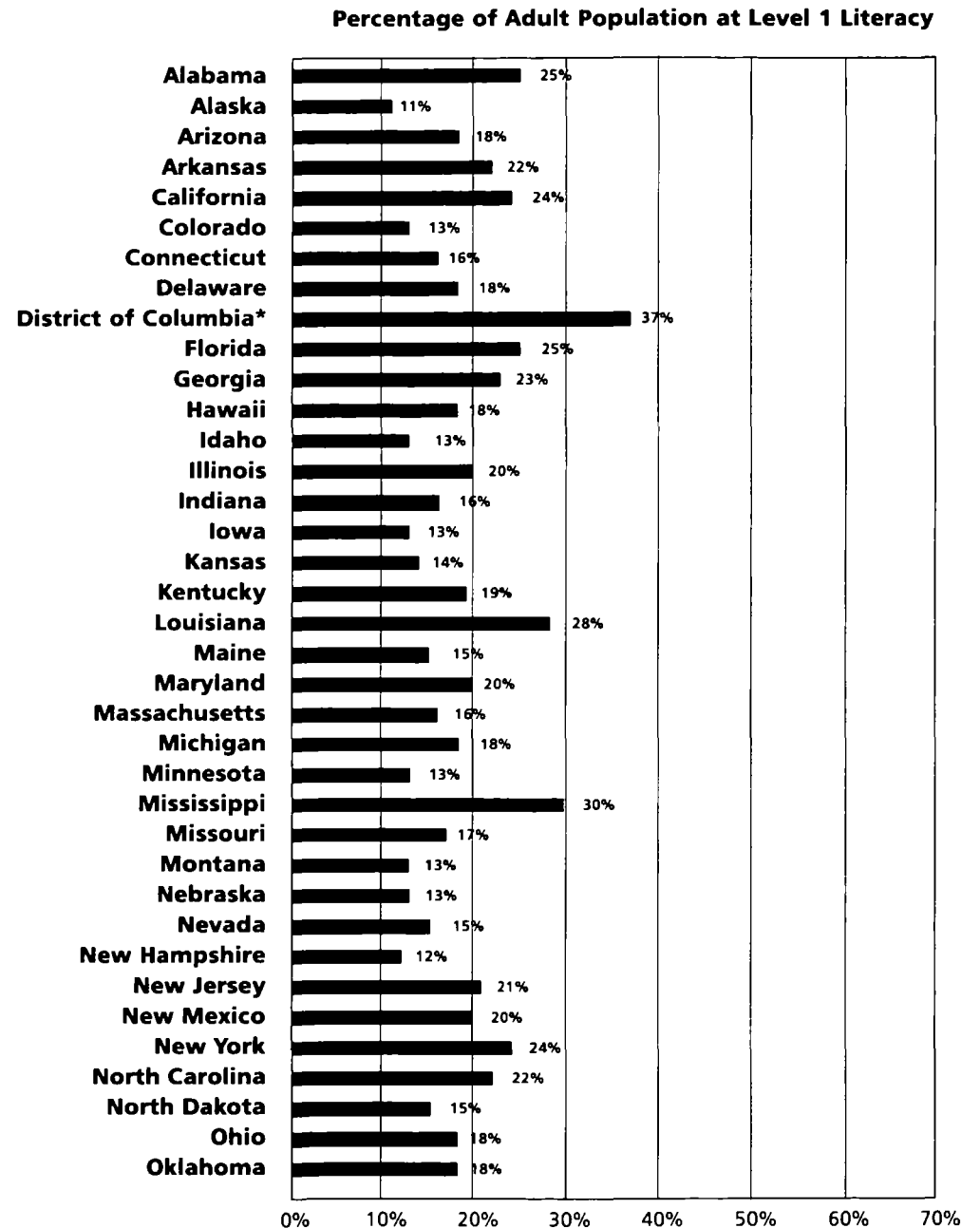
The State of Literacy in America



* This particular synthetic estimate has a 95% confidence interval larger than + or - 5 points, and should be used with corresponding caution.

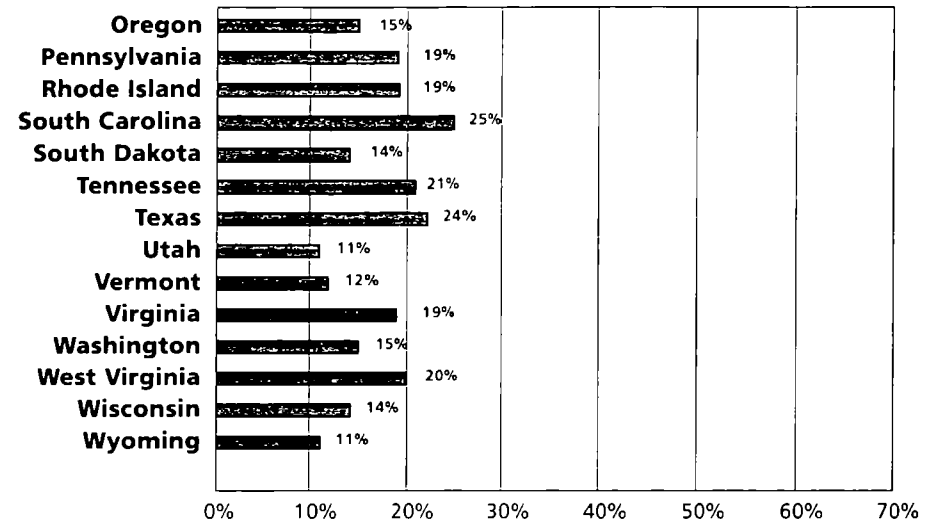
Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and to Appendix 1, the Technical Report, for additional information about these estimates. Information about the confidence interval/standard error associated with each estimate and other levels of literacy is available in a searchable database on the NIFL home page (<http://www.nifl.gov>).

Individual States



Individual States (cont.)

Percentage of Adult Population at Level 1 Literacy



* This particular synthetic estimate has a 95% confidence interval larger than + or - 5 points, and should be used with corresponding caution.

Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and to Appendix 1, the Technical Report, for additional information about these estimates. Information about the confidence interval/standard error associated with each estimate and other levels of literacy is available in a searchable database on the NIFL home page (<http://www.nifl.gov>).



These national reports have implications that are felt most strongly at the local level:

- 75% of unemployed adults have reading or writing difficulties
- Over 60 % of front-line workers in the goods-producing industry have difficulty applying information from a text to a required task
- Workers who lack a high school diploma earn less than 25% of those with Bachelor's degrees
- 43% of adults with low literacy skills live in poverty (as compared with less than 5% of those with high level skills)



Literacy organizations are
listening to the needs of business
leaders in their communities:

- In a recent poll, 90% of Fortune 1000 executives expressed concern that low literacy is hurting their productivity and profitability



The Need For A Strong Partnership:

- Adult basic education, skills development, and adult literacy classes are critical to maintaining a competitive business.



We can't simply blame our schools:

- Over 80% of our workforce for the year 2000 is already out of school and currently working
- If we're going to help employees improve their skills, the improvements must occur in the work place.



Economic benefits ...

- “Changing economic, demographic, and labor-market forces are creating a **human capital and skills deficit** that threatens U.S. competitiveness and acts as a barrier to individual opportunities for all Americans.”
 - *American Society for Training and Development*



Case study:

ITW Switches (Chicago, Illinois)

- Manufacturers high-quality technical instruments
- Employees' skill levels were critical to success
- Invested in on-site skills development, English as a Second Language, and literacy training
- Instructor works with supervisors to ensure classes meet production needs
- Results:
 - ITW was able to secure ISO registration (one of the highest quality credentials available)
 - Sales have increased substantially



Safety and health benefits...

- Case Study: Georgia-Pacific (Crossett, Arkansas)
 - Largest paper mill of its kind in the country, and also the safest
 - Employees can receive on-site workplace training and adult education, much of it peer-taught
 - Results:
 - Company credits its investment in education for rising productivity and a stellar performance record
 - Accident frequency declined significantly



Community development benefits...

- Even if employees of your company aren't in need of literacy and skills development training, someone in this community is:
 - The recently released “State of Literacy in America” estimates that, in some communities, the percentage of adults who struggle at the lowest literacy levels reaches 40 or even 50 percent
 - Large or small, there's a role for you and a need for your participation.



Case Study: Longview News-Journal

- Mid-sized newspaper in Longview, Texas
- Supported the local literacy program, allowing it to use 2,000 square feet of the building
- News-Journal employees also volunteer as tutors and co-sponsor an annual Summer Reading Rally.



Case Study:

Time Warner Inc., New York, NY

- Created nation's largest corporate-sponsored volunteer literacy program, Time To Read
- Trains volunteers to mentor and tutor children and adults to improve literacy skills
 - 4,150 volunteer tutors
 - 950,000 hours of tutoring
 - 16,000 students
 - 86 cities
 - 18 states and the District of Columbia



You can provide support in many different ways:

- Time (management and employee hours)
- Space (classroom space for tutoring in the evening, over weekends, and during lunch hours)
- Money (to our local non-profit literacy organizations)
- Other creative ways to lend support that meet your business' objectives:
 - Cape Smythe Airlines (Alaska) awards free round-trip airline tickets to adult ed. students who pass the GED.
 - WJJZ 106.1 FM (Philadelphia) holds special fundraising jazz nights to benefit and increase public awareness of local literacy programs.



Additional Resources Available:

- National Alliance of Business, Washington, DC
 - Provides technical assistance and materials, including “Job Performance Learning: A High Performance Workforce Training System,” a publication offering employers the tools they need to develop a comprehensive learning system for their employees.
 - Supports a Workforce Education and Training Program
 - Phone: 202-289-2934
 - <http://www.nab.com>

National Literacy Resource List

ASSOCIATIONS

American Association of Adult and Continuing Education

1200 19th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
202/429-5131 or 202/857-1100

American Bar Association

Standing Committee on Law & Literacy
740 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202/662-1024

American Council on Education, GED Testing Service

1 Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20036
202/939-9490

American Library Association

50 E. Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611
312/944-6780

Adult Literacy & Technology Network

301 S. Geneva St., Room G-10
Ithaca, NY 14850
607/273-0634

Correctional Education Association

4380 Forbes Boulevard
Landham, MD 20706
301/918-1915 or 800/783-1232

International Reading Association

444 North Capitol Street, Suite 706
Washington, DC 20001
202/624-8800

National Alliance of Business

1201 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
202/289-2934

National Alliance of Urban Literacy Coalitions

600 Jefferson, Suite 500
Houston, TX 77002
713/659-2007 ext. 3022

National Association of State Literacy Resource Centers

901 G Street, NW, Room 300
Washington, DC 20001
202/727-1616

National Council of State Directors of Adult Education

P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23216-2120
804/225-2293

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education

1118 22nd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202/429-9292

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/836-0774

FAMILY LITERACY

Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy

1112 16th Street, NW, #340
Washington, DC 20036
202/955-6183

National Center for Family Literacy

325 West Main Street, Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
502/584-1133

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Center for the Book

Library of Congress
101 Independence Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20540-4920
202/707-5221

National Institute for Literacy

800 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006-2712
202/632-1500

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services –

Office of Family Assistance
370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, 5th Fl., E
Washington, DC 20447
202/401-4619

U.S. Department of Education

- Division of Adult Education & Literacy
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202-7240
202/205-8270 or 1-800-USA-LEARN

- America Reads Challenge
600 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202
202/401-8888 or 1-800-USA-LEARN

U.S. Department of Labor

Employment & Training Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Rm. N5637
Washington, DC 20210
202/219-8660

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning Disabilities Association

4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
412/341-1515

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center

1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20009-1202
202/884-8178

National Center for Learning Disabilities

381 Park Ave., South, Suite 1401
New York, NY 10016
212/545-7510

International Dyslexia Association

The Chester Building
8600 LaSalle Road, Suite 382
Baltimore, MD 21286-2044
410/296-0232 or 800/222-3123

RESEARCH/ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy

Pennsylvania State University
102 Rackley Building
University Park, PA 16802
814/863-3777

National Center on Adult Literacy

University of Pennsylvania
3910 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111
215/898-2100 or 215/898-4539

National Center on the Study of Adult Literacy and Learning

Nichols House, Harvard University
Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, MA 02138
617/496-0516

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

Laubach Literacy

1320 Jamesville Avenue, Box 131
Syracuse, NY 13210
315/422-9121

Literacy Volunteers of America

635 James Street
Syracuse, NY 13203
315/472-0001

Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education

140 1/2 E. Franklin St., CB #3505
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3505
919/962-1542

National Institute for Literacy PUBLICATIONS

To order any of the following **free** publications:

- Call **1-800-228-8813** (or **1-800-552-9097 TTY**).
- See the National Institute for Literacy's homepage on **LINCS** at:
<http://www.nifl.gov>, or
- Complete the following form.

ORDER FORM

Yes! I want to learn more about literacy.

_____ Please send me the documents I have checked on the back of this page.

_____ Please add me to your mailing list for future publications. *(Or, call 202/632-1500 and choose option #1, or E-mail your request to: staffasst@nifl.gov).*

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

BY MAIL: National Literacy Hotline & Clearinghouse
ATTN: Lisa Weiss
P.O. Box 81826
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501

BY FAX: 402/464-5931

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

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Publication List

Directory of State and National Literacy Contacts

_____ *This 241-page document provides a comprehensive listing of key literacy contacts in every state.*

The State of Literacy in America:

Estimates at the Local, State, and National Contacts

_____ *This report discusses the extent of low literacy in the U.S. and breaks down information on national literacy needs by state, Congressional district, county, and city/town.*

Equipped for the Future

A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

This 121-page research report and compilation of essays by adult learners on how improving their literacy skills has changed their lives is the foundation of a long-term project to create national literacy standards and systemic reform.

1997 Update

This 34-page report lays out the long-term standards development and system reform effort of the literacy field and provides information on progress made thus far.

Literacy Leader Fellowship Program Reports

Adult Education and Welfare-to-Work Initiatives: A Review of Research, Practice & Policy

This 72-page report provides current and comprehensive information on adult education's role in welfare reform.

Driver Education for the Information Superhighway

This report discusses how the Internet can be used by adult education and literacy instructors, and provides a collection of Website reviews, a staff development model, and search tools of special use to adult educators.

State Level Policy for Workplace Basic Education: What Advocates are Saying

This report examines barriers to workplace basic education programs and recommends successful strategies for educating policymakers about this timely issue.

Teaching and Learning with Internet-based Resources

This 133-page guide provides innovative and proven ideas for utilizing the Internet in the adult education classroom.

Learn to Earn: An Interactive Teleconference

This video provides an overview of how several states are including basic skills training in successful welfare-to-work projects.

National Resources for Adults with Learning Disabilities

_____ *This guide is for adults who suspect they have a learning disability. By providing information on assessing the problem, a learning disabilities checklist, and a list of resources, it is a starting point for gaining information that can lead to obtaining services. (Also available at: info@nalldc.aed.org).*

NIFL News

_____ *Marketing Literacy (Fall 1997)*

_____ *Literacy Standards and System Reform — Equipped for the Future (Spring 1997)*

_____ *Technology and Literacy — LINCS (Fall 1996)*

_____ *Learning Disabilities and Literacy (Spring 1996)*

National Institute for Literacy Policy Updates

_____ *How to Prepare for Welfare Changes, Part I*

_____ *How to Prepare for Welfare Changes, Part II*

_____ *President and Congress Agree on Education as a Top Priority*

_____ *New Reading Report Finds Literacy Demand is Rising*

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Better literacy skills have
helped millions of Americans
improve their lives as
workers, family members, and citizens.





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1-800-228-8813

National Institute for Literacy

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L I T E R A C Y
A SMART INVESTMENT

For more information, call these numbers:

National Institute for Literacy Hotline:
1-800-228-8813

Local Literacy Contact: _____

(insert your local number, which the Hotline can provide)

National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006-2212

phone: 202/632-1500
fax: 202/632-1512
<http://www.nifl.gov>



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Washington, DC 20006-2212

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Washington, DC 20006-2212

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Washington, DC 20006-2212

phone: 202/632-1500
fax: 202/632-1512
<http://www.nifl.gov>

***FAST FACTS* ON LITERACY**

SCOPE...

- More than 20 percent of adults read at or below a fifth-grade level — far below the level needed to earn a living wage. The National Adult Literacy Survey found that over 40 million Americans age 16 and older have significant literacy needs.
- The National Literacy Act defines literacy as “an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.”

LITERACY & CHILDREN...

- As the education level of adults improves, so does their children’s success in school. Helping low-literate adults improve their basic skills has a direct and measurable impact on both the education and quality of life of their children.
- Children of adults who participate in literacy programs improve their grades and test scores, improve their reading skills, and are less likely to drop out.

LITERACY & POVERTY...

- Forty-three percent of people with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty, 17 percent receive food stamps, and 70 percent have no job or a part-time job.
- Workers who lack a high school diploma earn a mean monthly income of \$452, compared to \$1,829 for those with a bachelor’s degree.

EFFORTS TO PROMOTE LITERACY...

- The federal government provided \$469 million dollars for adult education and family literacy program in 1997. This funding enables millions of families to participate in basic education programs that help people help themselves
- Federal adult education funds leverage an additional \$800 million each year in state funds for literacy, and millions of dollars in private funding.

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FACT SHEET:

the national literacy delivery system

Literacy services are provided across the country by a broad array of public and private organizations.

need

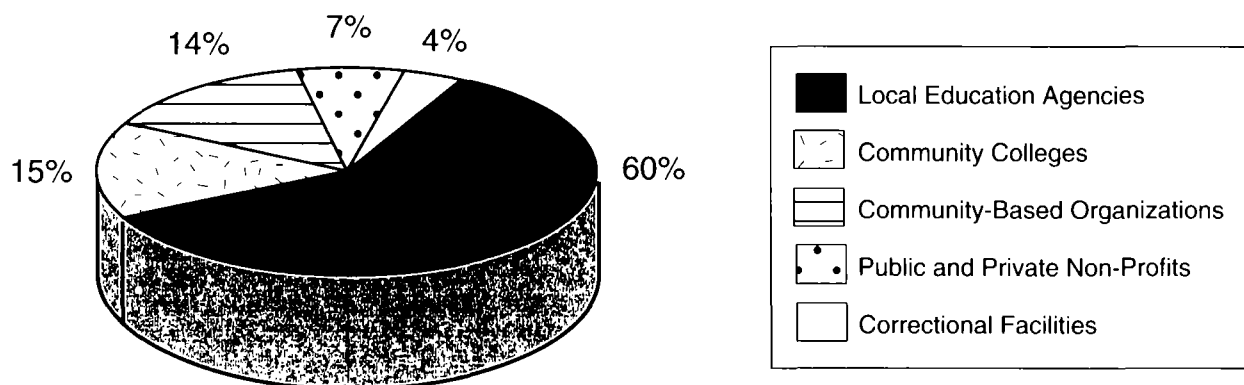
- More than 20 percent of adults read at or below the fifth-grade level — far below the level needed to earn a living wage.
- Over 40 million Americans age 16 and older have significant literacy needs.

resources

- Federal investment = \$345 million for FY 1998
- All State and local investment combined = estimated \$958 million for FY 1998

literacy provider network

Nationally, 4.0 million adults (fewer than 10 percent of adults without a high school diploma or GED) enrolled in adult basic education programs in 1996. Adult learners participate in literacy programs offered by the following:



Local Providers by Type of Agency

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NIFL Hotline: 1-800-228-8813 fax: 202/632-1512 <http://www.nifl.gov>

outcomes

Of adults participating in literacy programs in 1996:

- 331,511 earn a high school diploma or GED;
- 175,255 move on to more advanced education and training;
- 110,000 get a job;
- 101,000 get a better job. } 306,982 got a job or advanced on the job

Source: Division of Adult Education and Literacy / U.S. Department of Education

volunteer efforts

- Over 140,000 certified volunteer tutors teach 250,000 adult literacy students annually.
- Most volunteers work through 1,500 local programs that are affiliated with two national volunteer literacy organizations: Laubach Literacy Action and Literacy Volunteers of America.
- Volunteers give 7 million hours of literacy service annually.
- Sixty percent of funding for volunteer programs comes from individual, corporate, and foundation support; 40 percent from federal, state, and local government grants.
- Volunteer programs are based primarily in libraries, churches, and community centers.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Division of Adult Education & Literacy
Department of Education
600 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202-7240
202/205-8270 or 1-800-USA-LEARN
<http://www.ed.gov>

Literacy Volunteers of America
635 James Street
Syracuse, NY 13203-2214
315/472-0001
www.literacyvolunteers.org

Laubach Literacy
Box 131
Syracuse, NY 13210
315/422-9121

Student Coalition for Action in
Literacy Education
140 1/2 Franklin Street, CB #3505
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3505
919/962-1542

By using a comprehensive and holistic approach to education, family literacy programs are making great strides in helping families break the cycle of low literacy, poverty, and hopelessness.

need

- Children's literacy levels are strongly linked to the educational level of their parents, especially their mothers.
- Parental income and marital status are both important predictors of success in school, but neither is as significant as having a mother (or primary caregiver) who completed high school.
- Children of parents who are unemployed and have not completed high school are five times more likely to drop out than children of employed parents.

solution

The National Center for Family Literacy supports programs that include four essential components for family literacy:

1. *Early Childhood Education*: focuses on pre-literacy skills such as vocabulary building and verbal expression.
2. *Adult Literacy Education*: helps parents enhance their own reading, math and language skills.
3. *Parent and Child Together (PACT)*: brings parents and children together in the pre-school classroom in order to teach parents how to best fulfill their role as their child's most important teacher.
4. *Parent Time*: offers topics for study and discussion, including child nurturing, managing and coping with child behavior, self-esteem, career options, and community resources.

outcomes

- Adults stay enrolled in family literacy programs longer than in most adult-only programs, and their attendance rate is higher.
- Children participating in family literacy programs in 15 cities made gains at least three times greater than would have been expected based on their pre-enrollment rate of development.
- Adults significantly improve their self-confidence, confidence in their parenting abilities, and their employment status (29 percent increase).
- Children showed an 80 percent increase in reading books, and made twice as many trips to the library.
- Long-term National Center for Family Literacy follow-up studies¹ found the following:
 1. Fifty-one percent of adults participating in family literacy programs earned their GED or the equivalent.
 2. Forty-three percent became employed, compared with 14 percent before enrolling.
 3. Thirteen percent enrolled in higher education or training programs and another 11 percent continued in GED programs.
 4. Twenty-three percent of those who were on public assistance when they enrolled are now self-sufficient.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

National Center for Family Literacy
Waterfront Plaza, Suite 200
325 West Main Street
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
502/584-1133

Even Start Division
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20202
202/260-7764

Barbara Bush Foundation
for Family Literacy
1112 16th St., NW #340
Washington, DC 20036
202/955-6183

Division of Adult Education and
Literacy Clearinghouse
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Ave. SW, ME 4414
Washington, DC 20202
202/260-7764

¹ "The Power of Family Literacy," 1996 Edition (available by calling 502/584-1133).

FACT SHEET:

english for speakers of other languages

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the fastest growing area of the adult basic education system.

the need

- Nearly 32 million people in the United States speak languages other than English — a 38 percent increase over 1980.
- More than 50 percent of adults learning English as a second language are Hispanic. Other common first languages of ESOL participants are: French, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese.
- There is not enough space in programs to serve everyone who wants to learn English. Most cities have waiting lists of several months to several years, and some rural areas have no available classes.

esol programs

- ESOL programs vary in scope and content. Some programs, especially those for recent arrivals, emphasize life skills and focus on improving listening and speaking abilities. Others stress vocational topics, citizenship education, family literacy, or academic or GED preparation.
- Over one million adults are enrolled in federally-funded ESOL instruction. Many more are tutored by volunteers in churches, libraries, local businesses and unions, community colleges, and other community-based organizations.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education
Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd St. NW
Washington, DC 20037-1214
(202) 429-9292, ext. 200
<http://www.cal.org/ncle>
E-mail: ncle@cal.org

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/836-0774
<http://www.tesol.edu>
E-mail: tesol@tesol.edu

Thanks to the National Clearinghouse of ESL Literacy Education for providing the information for this fact sheet.

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In order to stay competitive in the global economy, employers need workers who can read, write, compute, solve problems, and communicate well.

need

- American businesses are estimated to lose over \$60 billion in productivity each year due to employees lack of basic skills.
- About 20 percent of America's workers have low basic skills, and 75 percent of unemployed adults have reading or writing difficulties.
- Workers who lack a high school diploma earn a mean monthly income of \$452, compared to \$1,829 for those with a bachelor's degree.
- The number of companies reporting skilled worker shortages more than doubled between 1995 and 1998, from 27 percent to over 47 percent.
- A survey of more than 300 executives found that, while 71 percent reported that basic written communication training was critical to meeting their workplaces' changing skills demands, only 26 percent of companies offered this kind of training. While 47 percent of the executives reported the need for workers to improve basic math skills, only 5 percent of companies offered basic math skills training.

solution

- Workplace literacy programs provide workers with the skills needed to get or retain a job, advance in their careers, or increase productivity.
- Workplace literacy programs do not have to be expensive. Federal and state grants and tax credits are available.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
202/289-2934
<http://www.nab.com>

Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802-3202
814/863-3777
<http://www.psu.edu/institutes/ISAL>

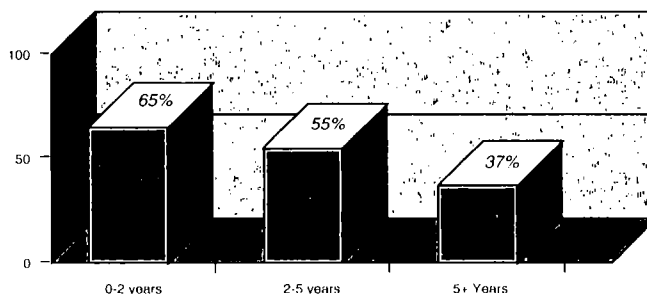
Improving basic education and literacy skills can be the key to long-term self-sufficiency for welfare recipients because:

Welfare recipients generally have low education skills.

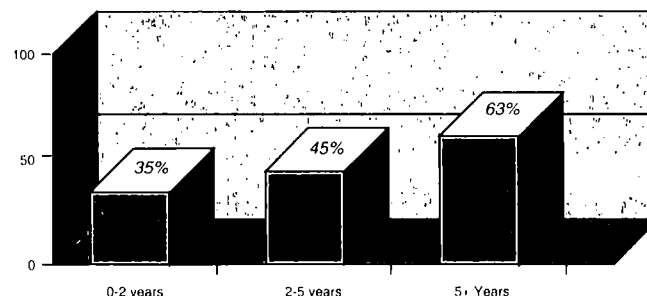
- Welfare recipients ages 17-21 read, on average, at the sixth grade level. When teens drop out of school, they are likely to drop in to the welfare system.
- Almost 50 percent of adults on welfare do not have a high school diploma or GED.

Welfare recipients with low education skills stay on welfare the longest; those with stronger education skills become self-sufficient more quickly.

Time on Welfare for Recipients With a High School Diploma



Time on Welfare for Recipients Without a High School Diploma



- Over 60 percent of those who spend more than five years on welfare enter AFDC with less than a high school education.
- Over 65 percent of people on welfare who have a high school diploma or GED leave welfare and become self-sufficient within two years.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

800 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 200 Washington, DC 20006-2712 phone: 202/632-1500
NIFL Hotline: 1-800-228-8813 fax: 202/632-1512 <http://www.nifl.gov>

The education level of welfare recipients is closely linked to their income level.

- Adults with low literacy skills earn the least. As literacy skills improve, average weekly wages of welfare recipients increase.
- Workers who lack a high school diploma earn a mean monthly income of \$452, as compared to \$1,829 for those with a bachelor's degree.
- Among adults with low literacy skills, 43 percent live in poverty and 17 percent receive food stamps. In contrast, among adults with strong literacy skills, fewer than five percent live in poverty and fewer than one percent receive food stamps.
- Welfare recipients with low literacy skills work 11 weeks per year, on average, compared to 29 weeks for those with stronger literacy skills.

Helping welfare recipients improve their basic education and literacy skills improves our economic competitiveness.

- Ninety percent of Fortune 1000 executives expressed concern in a recent survey that low literacy is hurting their productivity and profitability.
- Forty million American adults need to improve their literacy skills. While they can read some basic information, they cannot locate an intersection on a map or read a newspaper article. Until they improve their basic education and literacy skills, these adults cannot effectively compete for today's jobs.

RECOMMENDED READING

1. "Literacy and Dependency: the Literacy Skills of Welfare Recipients Living in the United States," available from the Educational Testing Service (609/734-5694).
2. "A Brief Summary of Key Provisions of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant of H.R. 3734: The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996," available from the Center for Law and Social Policy (202/328-5140).
3. "How to Prepare for Welfare Changes," available from the National Institute for Literacy (202/632-1500, option 6, or <http://www.NIFL.gov>).

This emerging area — new for both the literacy and medical fields — has grown out of the recognition that there is a significant overlap in the populations served and that better literacy skills can contribute to greater well-being.

overview

- Individuals with low literacy skills are at risk of not being able to understand materials distributed by health care providers.
- Low birth weight is a condition that may increase a child's risk of developing health, learning, and behavioral problems.
- Children who are born at a low birth weight are more likely to be enrolled in special education classes, to repeat a grade, or to fail in school.
- Family literacy programs provide parents with an opportunity to learn about child development, good health, and proper nutrition through parent support groups that enable them to discuss health issues with specialists.
- Partnerships between literacy and health providers are making a difference in low literate communities. Massachusetts is a leader in this effort and has had significant success with some of its programs.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

System for Adult Basic Education Support
Northern Essex Community College
45 Franklin Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
978/688-6089
mdrewhohn@aol.com

World Education, Inc.
44 Farnsworth St.
Boston, MA 02210-1211
617/482-9485
wei@WorldEd.org

Talk to any adult literacy teacher and you are likely to hear of an apparently bright and able student who does not achieve to potential. The student who shows this unexpected underachievement may have a learning disability.

overview

- “Learning disability” is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide variety of disorders, including basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written languages.
- Learning disabilities may manifest themselves as significant difficulty in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, computational, and problem-solving skills needed by adults to function effectively as parents, employees, and citizens.
- People with learning disabilities are recognized as having a disability under federal law. This means that they are entitled to “reasonable accommodations” and certain other federally-supported services.

scope

Many people have learning disabilities. Estimates range from:

- Fifty to 80 percent of all students in literacy and basic education programs.
- Fifteen to 30 percent of all participants in job training programs.
- Twenty-five to 40 percent of all adults on welfare.

assessment

- Only diagnostic testing can accurately determine the presence of a learning disability.
- Some adults with suspected learning disabilities are eligible for assessment and other services through vocational rehabilitation.
- Literacy practitioners can be trained to help students with learning disabilities.

consequences

- **education**

Learning disabilities may manifest themselves as difficulties in spoken or written language, arithmetic, reasoning, and organization skills, and will affect adults in adult basic education, literacy, post-secondary, and vocational training settings. Many adults with learning disabilities have achieved academic and vocational success when appropriate accommodations have been provided.

- **employment**

Adults with learning disabilities commonly make errors in completing employment applications because of poor reading or spelling skills. Some may not reach employment at all. Job-related problems may arise for adults with learning disabilities as a result of their difficulties with tasks that require organizing, planning, scheduling, or monitoring; difficulties with language comprehension and expression; poor social skills; and inattentiveness. Accommodations for these problems may increase employability.

- **self-esteem**

Being criticized, put down, teased, or rejected because of failures in academic, vocational, or social endeavors over a lifetime often contribute to low self-esteem and depression in adults with learning disabilities. However, some adults with learning disabilities have also shown a tremendous ability to overcome the low self-esteem and achieve great success.

- **social interactions**

Adults with learning disabilities may misinterpret others' moods and attitudes and appear to be less aware of others' thoughts and feelings.

- **independent living**

Basic responsibilities such as writing checks, filling out tax forms, or recording phone messages may present problems for adults with learning disabilities.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

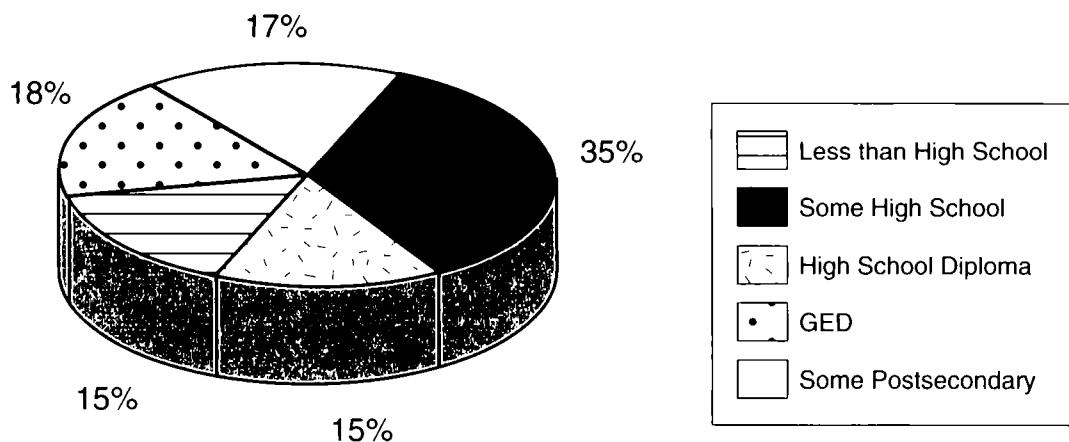
The National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center
Academy for Educational Development
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009-1202
Phone: 202/884-8185, 800-953-2553
Fax: 202/884-8422
info@nalldc.aed.org

Prisoners generally have significantly lower literacy skills than the general population. Those who improve their skills return to prison less often.

need

- Only 51 percent of prisoners have completed high school or its equivalent, as compared with 76 percent of the general population.
- Seventy percent of prisoners scored in the two lowest literacy levels of the National Adult Literacy Survey. This means that while they have some reading and writing skills, they are not adequately equipped to perform tasks like writing a letter, explaining an error on a credit card bill, or understanding a bus schedule.
- Inmates who have a high school diploma demonstrate lower basic skills than members of the general public with a high school diploma.
- Eleven percent of prisoners self-report having learning disabilities, as compared with three percent of the general population.

education level of prisoners



delivery system

- The federal prison system began mandatory literacy training in 1982, and in 1991 raised the achievement standard from 8th to 12th grade.
- The percentage of inmates with low literacy skills who actually receive literacy education is estimated at 7 to 10 percent.

outcomes

- Various studies have found that education diminishes the rate of recidivism. A study by the Federal Bureau of Prisons concluded that “the more actively the inmates successfully participated in prison education programs, the less likely they were to recidivate.”
 1. A Virginia study found that out of a sample of 3,000 inmates, 49 percent of those who did not participate in correctional education programs were reincarcerated, compared to 20 percent of those who did participate in these programs.
 2. A 1996 Ohio study of 18,062 inmates recorded a 14 percent reduction in recidivism for inmates who received a GED in prison, a 10 percent reduction for those inmates with some college, and an 8.3 percent reduction for students who earned a vocational certificate.

Sources: “Literacy Behind Prison Walls,” National Center for Education Statistics, “Prison Literacy Programs,” ERIC Digest No. 159, “Literacy in Corrections,” Correctional Education Association, Ohio Central School System.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Correctional Education Association
4380 Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, MD 20706
301/918-1915
800-783-1232
<http://sunsite.unc.edu/icea>

Department of Education
Office of Adult & Vocational
Education
600 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202
202/205-9258
1-800-USA-LEARN

Libraries are a fundamental cornerstone of knowledge and information. They are easily accessible in virtually every community; offer free access to a wealth of books, computers, and videotapes; and provide a comfortable environment conducive to learning.

overview

- Public library literacy programs are a vital part of the national literacy system. Hundreds of thousands of adults with literacy needs participate in library literacy programs in over 7,000 public libraries in all 50 states.
- Public libraries offer educational access to people who might not receive services at schools or traditional basic education programs.

scope of services

Public libraries have a long history of meeting the learning needs of adult learners and their families through the following:

- Instruction to adult learners in English as a Second Language, family literacy, computer-aided instruction, and one-on-one and small group tutoring.
- Extensive educational materials, including collections designed especially for adults at low reading levels and books that parents can read to their children.
- Information on local literacy programs for potential students and tutors.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The American Library Association
Office for Literacy and Outreach Services
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2795
Ph: 312/280-4294 or 800/545-2433 x 4294
Fax: 312/280-3256
<http://www.ala.org/olos/>

Spangenberg Learning Resources
440 East 23rd Street, Suite 11C
New York, NY 10010
Ph: 212/667-8656
E-mail: GSpan1@AOL.com

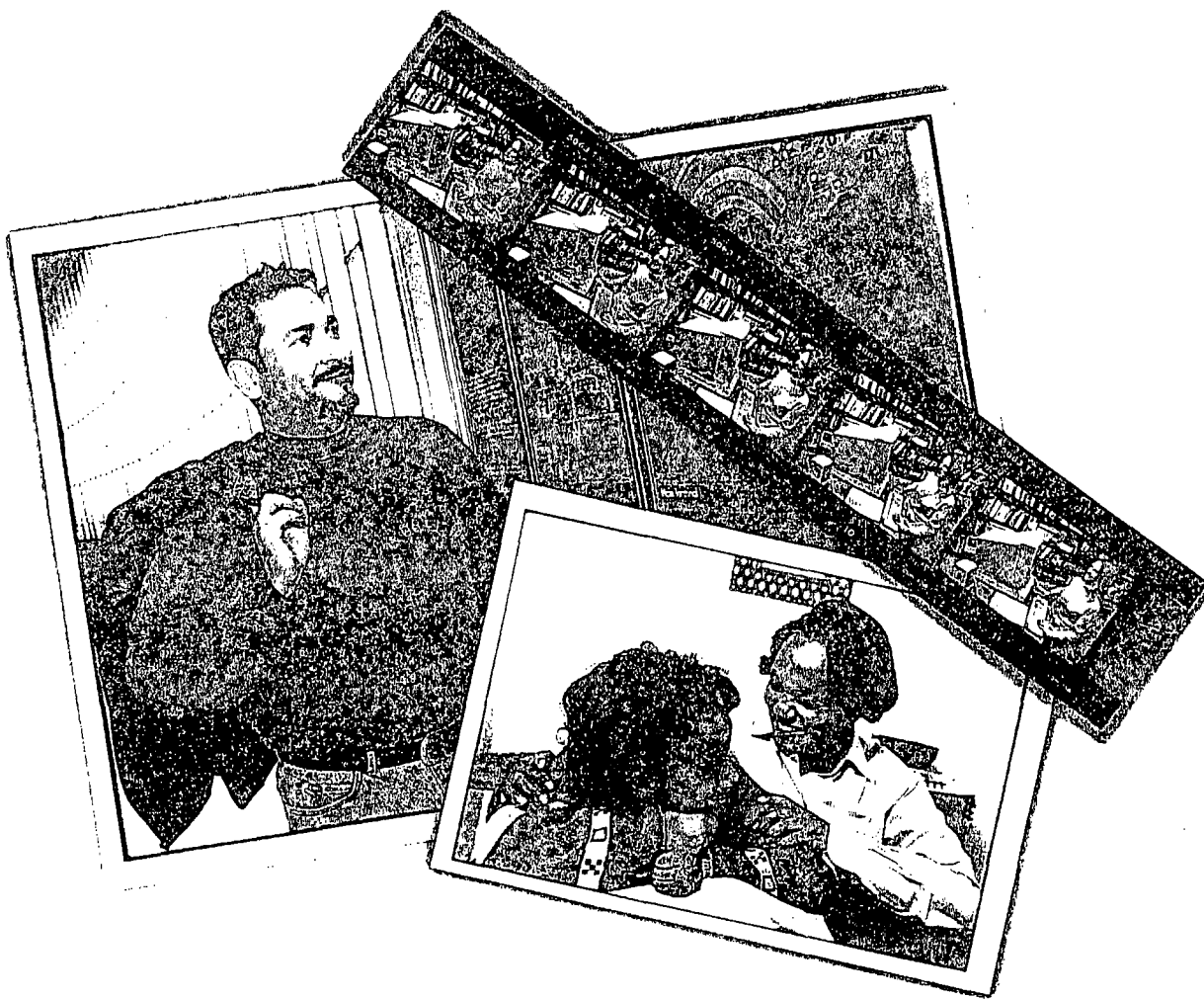
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Booklet, "National Institute for Literacy," 14 pages



National Institute For Literacy

Helping Equip America for the Future

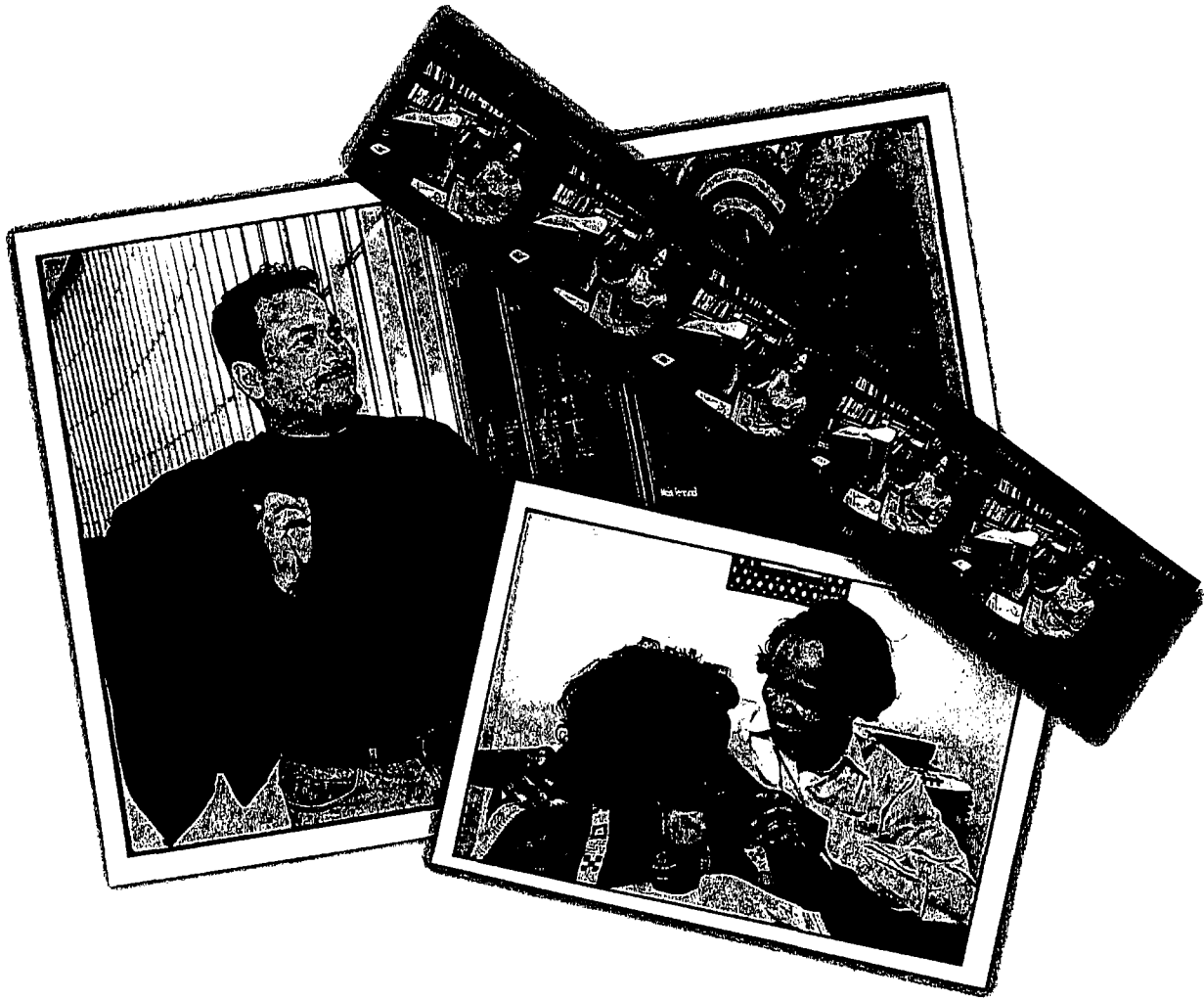
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BASIC SKILLS: A SMART INVESTMENT.

“As employers, we’ve seen for ourselves the obvious and important connection between literacy and success in the workplace—as well as in the family and community. By giving both financial and in-kind support to literacy organizations, we actually gain dividends in increased production—not to mention the benefits to our workforce and local economy. Everybody wins.”

—Rolf Hennington, Vice President
Industrial Coatings Group, Inc., Chicago, Illinois

Business and Industry

SUCCESS

S T O R I E S

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

National Institute For Literacy
800 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006
NIFL Hotline: 1-800-228-8813
NIFL Hotline TTY: 1-800-552-9097
<http://www.nifl.gov>