

**LAN Legislative Platform - COVID-19 Response:
March 2020**

- 1) **Adjust the contact hours reporting period for program year 2019-20 to cover the period 3/15/2019 to 3/14/2020 for purposes of allocating FY21 funding.**

Rationale: LAN is concerned about the impact of school closures due to COVID-19 on Adult Basic Education programs. In order **to hold programs harmless** from this unprecedented disruption in service, we propose adjusting the reporting period for contact hours. Since closures began in mid-March, we recommend changing the reporting period to 3/15/2019 to 3/14/2020 for purposes of allocating FY21 funding.

This adjustment is simple and has no cost. It would allow ABE programs to focus on the health and safety of their students, staff and communities and on providing high quality distance education for as many adult learners as possible.

This proposal would remove significant anxiety and pressure around funding, assuring programs that they will be able to remain open and retain teachers and staff.

Note: We understand that a similar proposal may be forthcoming from the Minnesota Department of Education. In that case, LAN will support specific language that the Department proposes.

- 2) **Provide a supplementary funding request for next year of \$3 M, given likely significant growth in learners**

Rationale: The need for increased funding for Adult Basic Education is more urgent than ever. In times of economic hardship, many adults turn to ABE to increase their skills and employability. During and following the Great Recession, the demand for ABE services in Minnesota skyrocketed. The recession already beginning to occur due to the pandemic crisis will likely create a significant increase in demand for ABE services. Increased funding will allow us to scale up to meet that demand and help more adults improve their academic and workplace skills.

- 3) **Provide for growth in services and increased costs by allowing the growth factor growth of K-12 formula aid or growth in contact hours up to 3%, whichever is greater.**

Rationale: Overall ABE funding has been stagnant for several years. This has had a negative effect on services as expenses increased, and expectations for high-cost ABE service development in areas such as career pathways, college prep, and IT skills expanded. Failure to provide adequate resources will ultimately prolong damage to the state's economy as access to high quality services diminishes.