



LAN

LITERACY ACTION NETWORK

2024

IMPACT REPORT

Advocating for Minnesota Adult Basic Education



President

KAIJA BERGEN

AN OVERVIEW OF **ADULT EDUCATION** IN MINNESOTA

WHO DO WE SERVE

Adult Education in Minnesota continues to serve approximately 28,000 adults annually, with a wide range of educational needs and abilities from preliterate to near college-level.

51% of participants are English language learners



49% of participants are ABE learners

SERVING THOSE AROUND THE WORLD

In addition to serving those in our state and in the nation, we serve adult learners from **152** different countries.

Top 10 % of Learners

- United States: 29%
- Somalia: 13%
- Mexico: 10%
- Ethiopia: 5%
- Ecuador: 4%
- Ukraine: 2%
- Laos: 2%
- Venezuela: 2%
- Guatemala: 2%
- Colombia: 2%



HOW DO WE SERVE

There are 39 local Adult Ed consortia — formal collaborations among partners that coordinate services and leverage local resources — that serve the specific needs of their communities at over 300 sites across Minnesota. A local consortium may offer services at a variety of sites based on its partners, which include:

- GED® (General Educational Development Diploma)
- HiSET® (High School Equivalency Diploma)
- Local Credit Completion Adult High School Diploma
- State Competency-Based Adult High School Diploma
- ESL (English as a Second Language)
- Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE)
- Distance Learning and Digital Literacy
- Adult Career Pathways
- Family Literacy



31 LOCAL ED AGENCIES

4 CBOS

2 CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

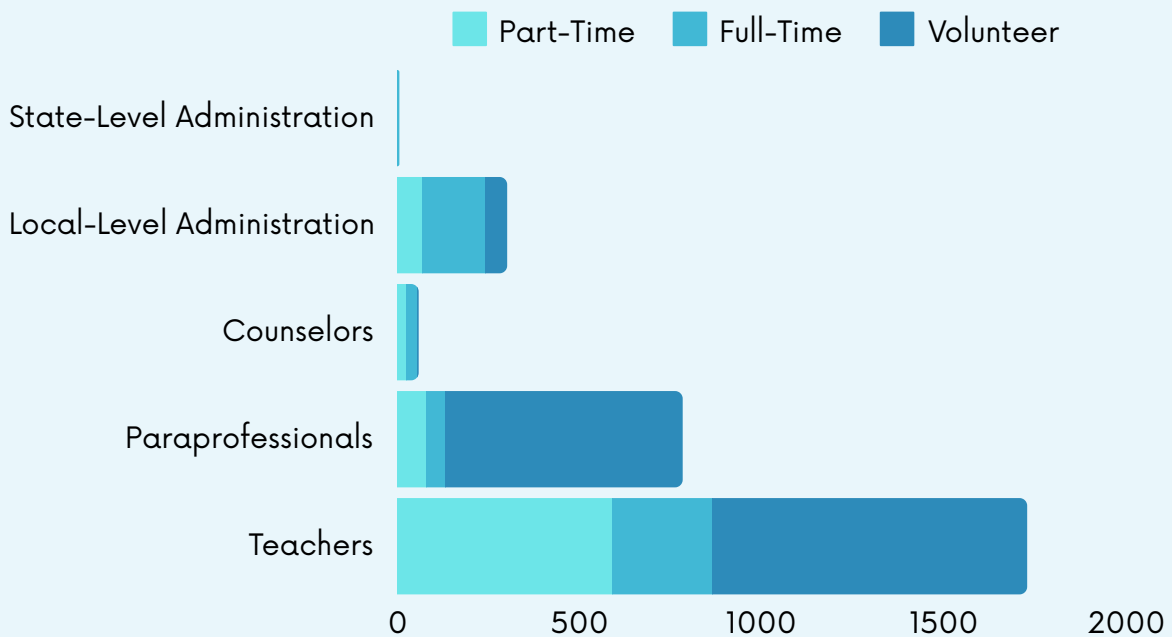
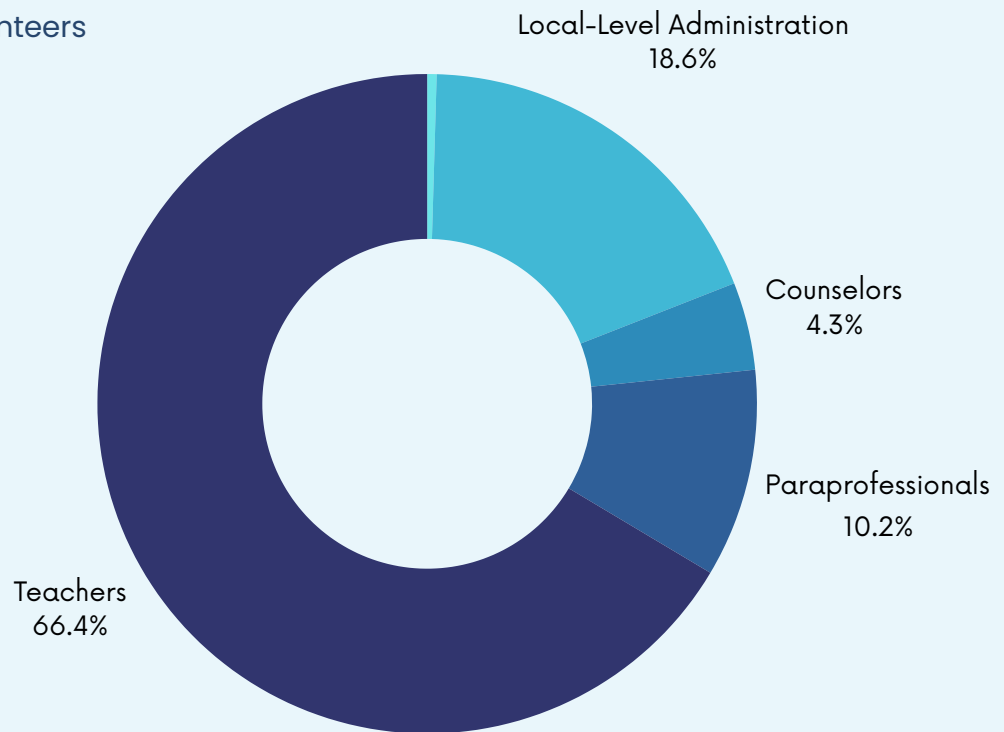
2 TRIBAL NATIONS

Data from [MN ABE Overview of Adult Basic Education \(2019\)](#)

MN Adult Ed consortia:

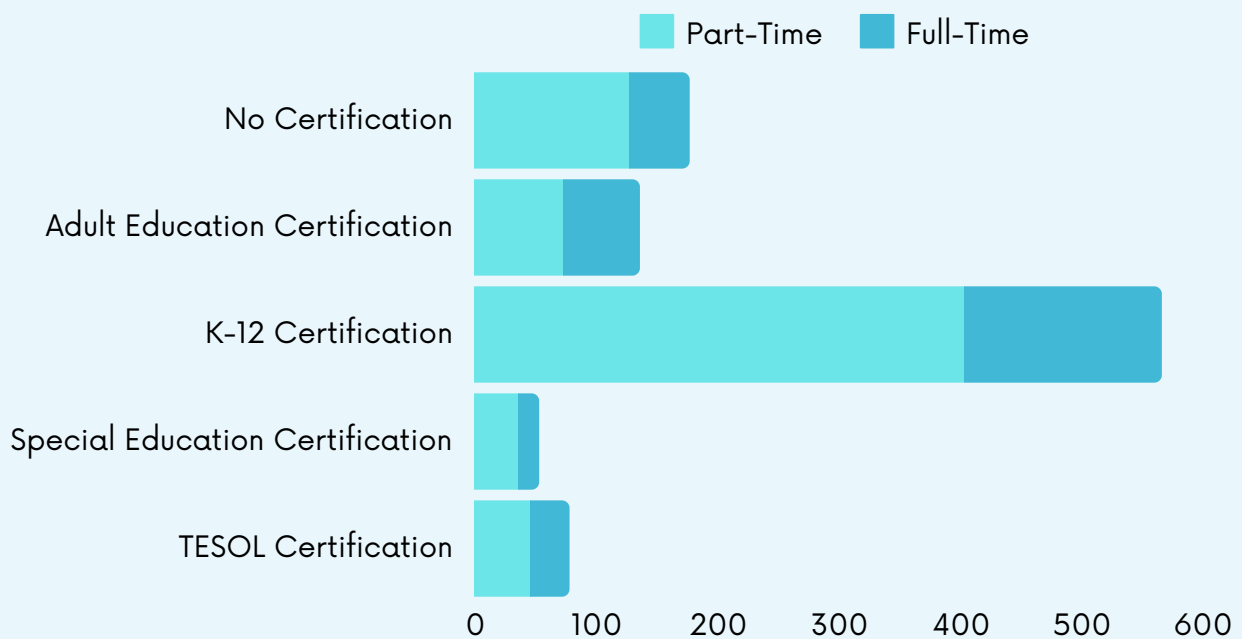
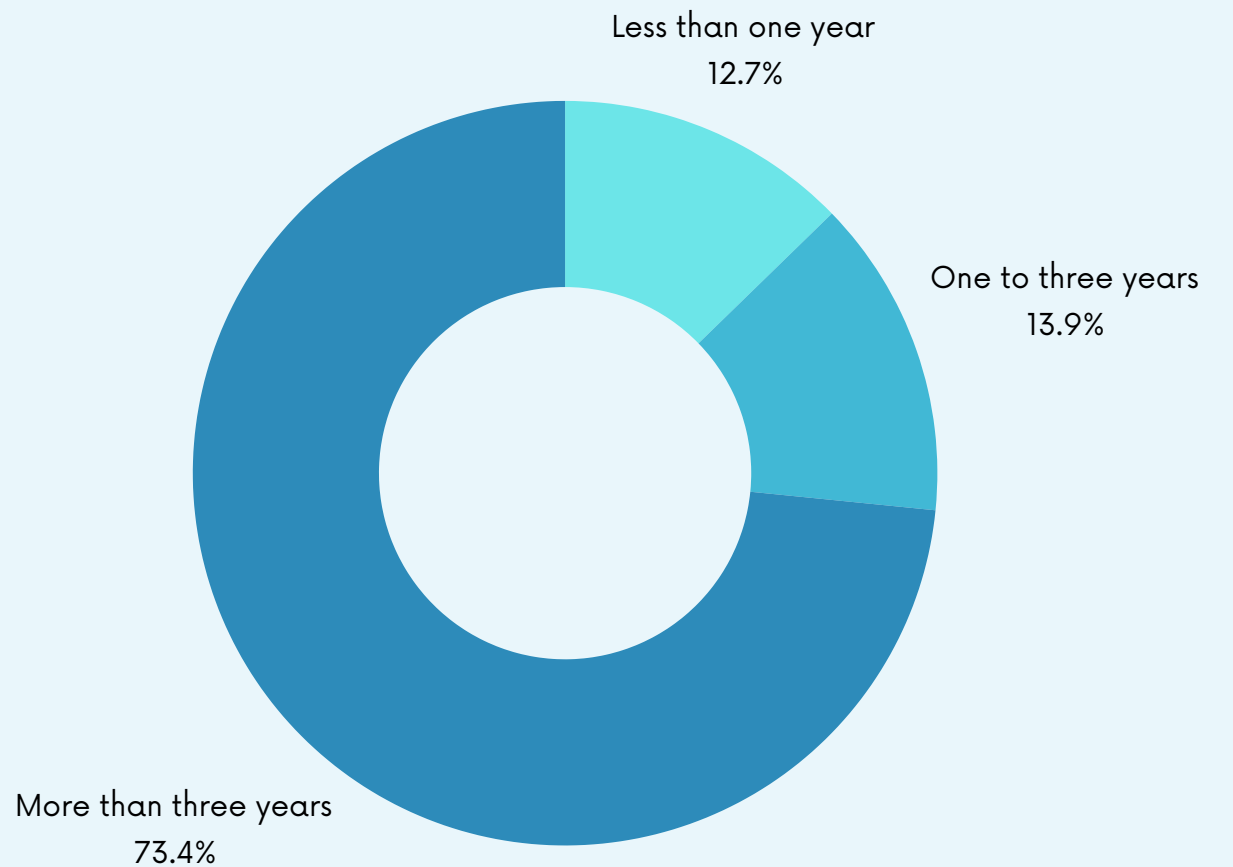
- hired **3,177** staff members
- trained **1,406** volunteers

ADULT ED STAFFING



Data reported from Table 7 from the [National Reporting Service in 2022 for Minnesota](#).

TEACHER EXPERIENCE IN ADULT ED



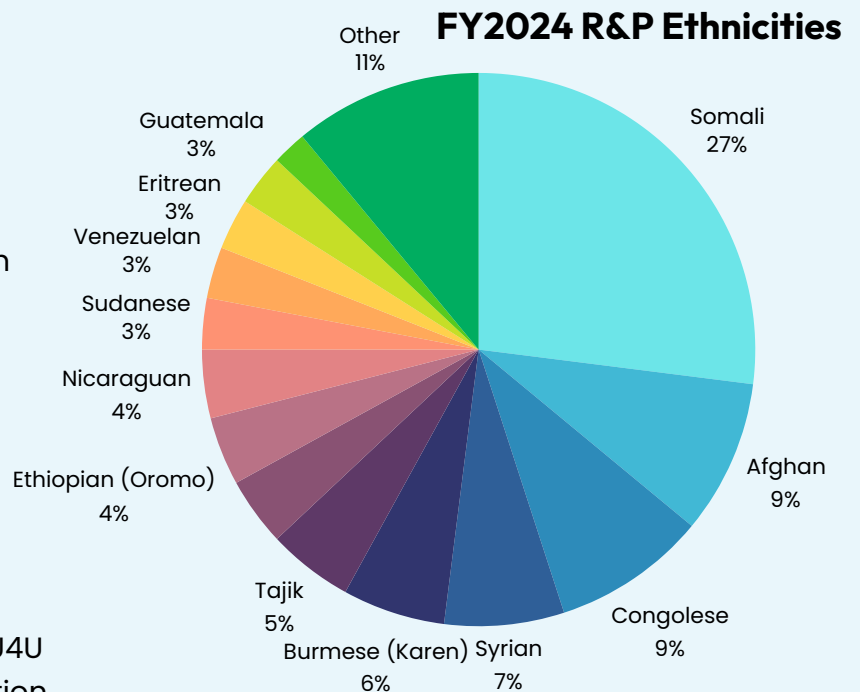
Data reported from Table 7 from the [National Reporting Service in 2022 for Minnesota](#).

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT & ABE

Adult Education serves as a vital support system for the many new Americans making their homes in Minnesota through resettlement. As of September 2023, President Biden set the Presidential Determination on refugee admissions for FY2024 at 125,000 refugee individuals. In addition to that number there are 40,000 Special Immigrant Visas which brings the U.S Refugee Program to a total approved admission of 165,000 for FY2024.

Minnesota has welcomed people from over 30 different countries, with the metro area alone set to resettle 2,445 people this year. In addition to these numbers, Minnesotans around the state are applying to sponsor families through the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program, and the Welcome Corps – two federal programs designed to allow US citizens to help resettle people. As of February 2024, people or groups in Minnesota filed more than 5,400 applications to support Ukrainians through U4U.

Private citizen sponsorship groups like U4U and Welcome Corps mean that, in addition to large numbers of refugees in the Twin Cities metro-area, new arrivals are making their homes across the state in areas that traditionally saw less resettlement.



Adult Education classes are not only a federal requirement for some arrivals, but provide resettlement clients with essential English classes, as well as establish a place for them to build community and learn about US culture and customs. Job training classes provided through Adult Education also allow people to re-skill or adapt their existing skills for the US job market. For those resettled in areas not traditionally served by resettlement agencies, Adult Education's network of programs (online and in-person) serves as one of the key sources of resources and information about life in Minnesota.

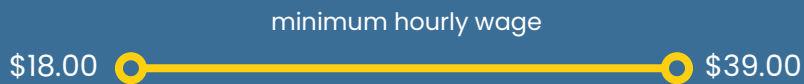


Counties Welcoming Resettlement Arrivals

2023 SALARY AND BUDGET SURVEY

In 2023, Literacy Action Network surveyed consortium managers on staffing, salary, and program budgeting. A total of 29 consortiums participated in the survey.

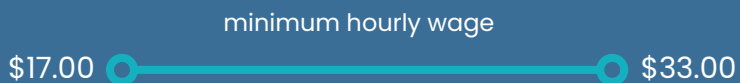
Licensed Teacher



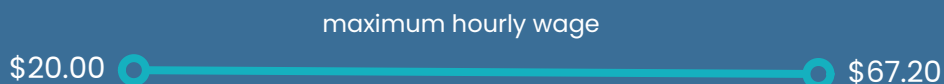
MEDIAN: \$45.50



Non-Licensed Teacher



MEDIAN: \$42.10



Support Staff



MEDIAN: \$37.50



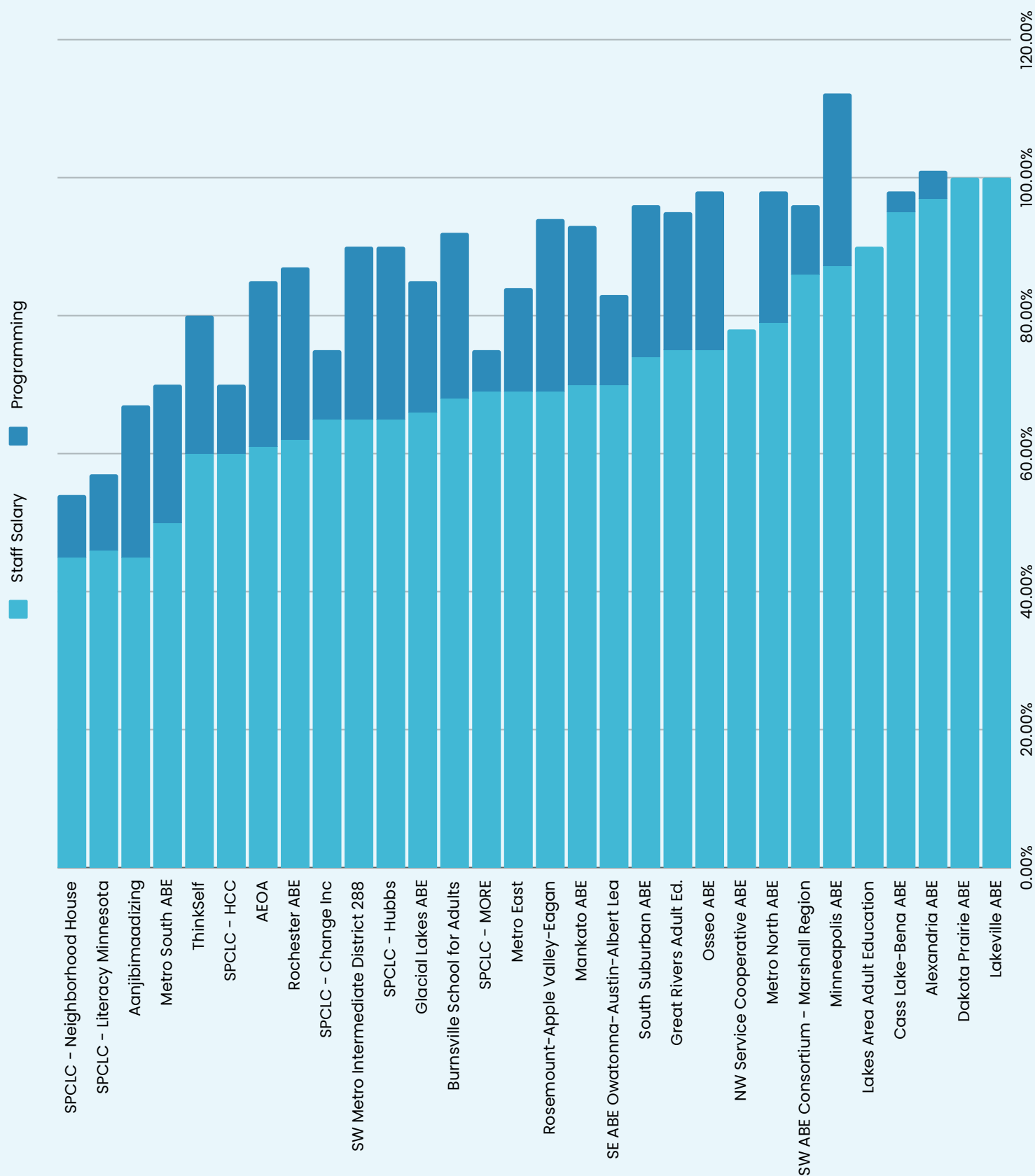
76%

of consortium
surveyed required
teachers to be
licensed

56%

of consortium
surveyed are part
of a union.

SALARY & BENEFITS PERCENTAGE OF PROGRAM BUDGET



LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE UPDATE

In the previous legislative session, all three of Literacy Action Network's initiatives were passed when **HF2497** signed in May of 2023.



1

INCREASE ABE FUNDING ANNUALLY BASED ON % INCREASE OF K-12

2

INCREASE THE CONTACT HOUR CAP FROM \$22/HOUR TO \$30/HOUR

3

INCREASE SUBSIDY FOR HSE TESTING TO \$500,000 ANNUALLY

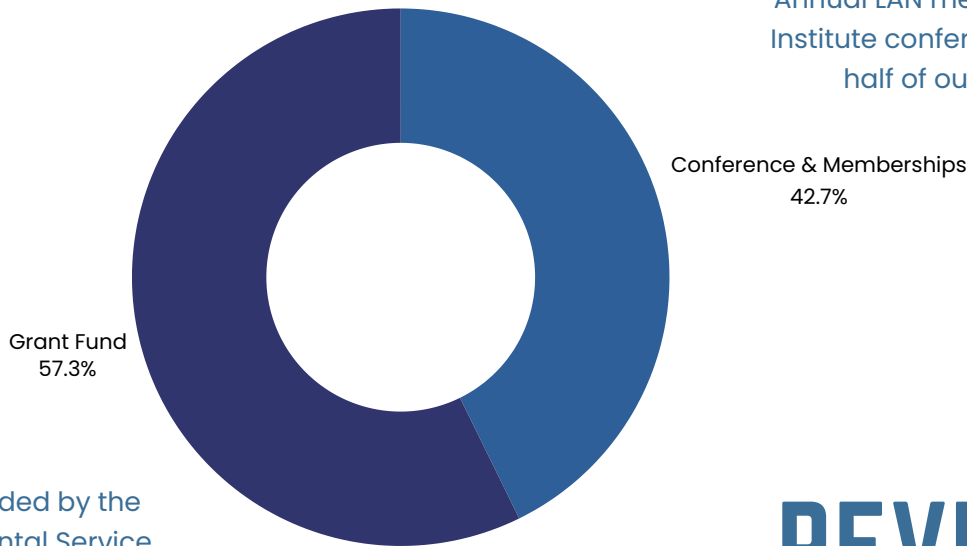
ABE-related changes found in the bill are the following:

- **Line 190-191** (defining community education (ABE and early childhood) teachers as teachers in school district contracts)
- **Line 305** (new increased amount of state ABE funding and change to growth factor to link with K12 funding growth)
- **Line 306** (adjusting the gross revenue per contact hour cap to \$30)
- **Line 306-307** (one-time pot of funding equaling \$490,000 to pay 100% of the GED or HiSET test fees through June 30, 2027, or when funds run out, whichever comes first)
- **Line 332** (detailed budgetary allocation amounts for state ABE funding)

Thank you to our bill authors Senator Tou Xiong and Senate Chair Mary Kunesch for being great champions for ABE - together with Representative Kristi Pursell and House Chair Representative Cheryl Youakim. Thank you to everyone with your efforts; Sherry Munyon (LAN's lobbyist), Scott Helland (Legislative Chair), Susie Evans (Legislative Co-Chair), Aaron Gutze and Clarice Grabau (additional testifiers), Kaija Bergen (LAN President-Elect) and #IAMABE for Day on the Hill, and all who responded to LAN's call-to-action.

2023 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Annual LAN memberships and the Summer Institute conference help to generate under half of our operational expenses.

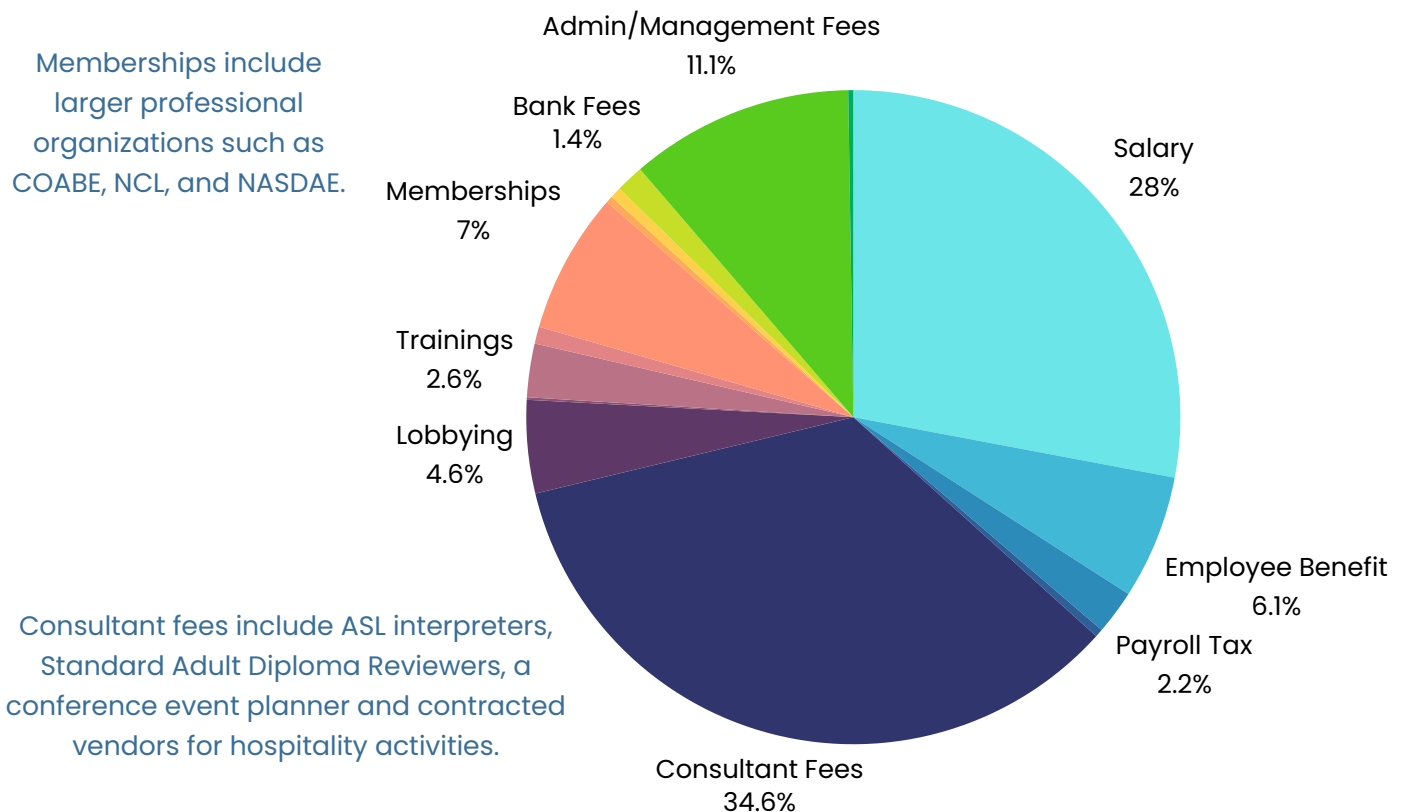


LAN is funded by the Supplemental Service Grant through the State of Minnesota.

REVENUES

EXPENDITURES

LAN has one paid employee with full-time benefits along with a contracted lobbyist.



SUMMER INSTITUTE HIGHLIGHTS



Each year, the Summer Institute Planning Committee puts together a statewide education conference that provides highly relevant, timely and innovative content to the field in Minnesota. Summer Institute 2023 was held once again in-person after three years of pivoting to a virtual platform. LAN hosted at a new venue called the Park Event Center in Waite Park, MN.

346 ATTENDEES

35 BREAKOUT SESSIONS

52 PRESENTERS

12 VENDORS

3 SPONSORS

Welcome Back, ABE! was the theme of this year's conference - a play on the 1970s American sitcom *Welcome Back, Kotter*. Keynote speaker, Brandy Logan from MN ABE, shared about her inspirational journey by obtaining her GED through adult education in *ABE: Ghost Writers to Your Students' Stories*.

97% strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the conference

93% strongly agreed or agreed that the topics selected were engaging.

85% strongly agreed or agreed that the flow of the conference was good.

81% strongly agreed or agreed that the length of the conference was just right.



15-18
AUGUST





2023 AWARD WINNERS

OUTSTANDING LEARNER

Rajsultan Baysudee, Adult Options in Education

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Liddy Rich, Harmony Adult Basic Education

LEADERSHIP

Christine Wytaske, Metro South

ADVOCATE & PARTNER

Alice Meyer, Mahube-OTWA

INNOVATION

Maadaadizi Workforce Center

TODD WAGNER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE & ACHIEVEMENT

Traci Pederson, Northwest Service Cooperative ABE

Empowering the Deaf Community through Education

ThinkSelf, Inc., a Deaf-founded and Deaf-led nonprofit organization, has been a beacon of hope and empowerment for Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf Disabled, Late-Deafened, and Hard of Hearing adults in Minnesota since its establishment on July 1, 2017. Rooted in a legacy that stretches back over 30 years, ThinkSelf provides invaluable community-based programs that challenge systemic oppression and foster growth and independence.



A cornerstone of ThinkSelf's initiatives is the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, which has been a pivotal element of the organization's mission since its inception. Conducted in American Sign Language (ASL), these classes offer a unique and accessible educational environment, crucial for overcoming language deprivation that many Deaf individuals face. By focusing on improving literacy, communication skills, and self-determination, ABE plays a critical role in enhancing the overall prospects and quality of life for its participants.



Addressing Social Barriers through Education

In addition to academic learning, the ABE program The ABE program is a comprehensive approach to addressing the social determinants of health that influence the well-being of diverse Deaf communities. By providing accessible education, ThinkSelf empowers individuals to break free from the constraints of isolation, poverty, and exploitation—issues often exacerbated by health inequities, racism, ableism, and socio-economic disparities. The program aims to create a foundation of knowledge that enables participants to pursue meaningful employment, thereby improving economic stability and housing security.

Trauma-Informed and Culturally Sensitive Approach



ThinkSelf's approach to education is deeply informed by an understanding of the unique communication barriers and diverse needs within the Deaf community. With a trauma-informed perspective, the organization ensures that its educational environment is collaborative, culturally humble, and flexible, providing personalized support to all participants. This approach not only makes learning more effective but also fosters a safe and inclusive space where individuals can thrive.

Professional Development and Community Engagement

Professional development is a key component of ThinkSelf's strategy, ensuring that staff, 90% of whom identify as Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing, are equipped with the necessary skills to support their community effectively. Ongoing training in adult education, victim assistance, and trauma-informed practices enables staff members to provide high-quality support and to continue their professional growth even beyond their tenure with ThinkSelf.



Community engagement is another essential aspect of ThinkSelf's work. By fostering strong social connections through community building and peer mentoring, the organization helps reduce isolation and promote overall well-being. These efforts are crucial in creating supportive environments where individuals can achieve their goals and contribute to a healthier, more inclusive society.

Through its Adult Basic Education program, ThinkSelf, Inc. upholds its mission of providing education, resources, and support to the Deaf community, challenging systemic barriers, and promoting health equity. As the organization moves forward, it remains dedicated to creating an environment where all individuals can learn, grow, and succeed.

2023 STATS

460 MEMBERS

74 SITES/ORGANIZATIONS

649 SUBSCRIBERS

14 NEWSLETTERS

55 FB POSTS

383 FB FOLLOWERS

13 IG POSTS

119 IG FOLLOWERS



Membership & Marketing Chair

CARA BERGER

2024 LAN Board Members

Kaija Bergen, President

John Ashby, Treasurer

Scott Helland, Legislative Chair

Susan Evans, Legislative Chair

Cara Berger, Membership & Marketing Chair

Ann Trochlil, Professional Engagement Committee Chair

Matthew Miller, Volunteer Engagement Chair

Andy Albee, Summer Institute Chair

Letter from the LAN Board Chair President

Every year in Adult Education brings new adventures and challenges. This impact report seeks to capture a snapshot of our diverse and ever-changing programs, as well as the impact we have as teachers, programs, consortia, and advocates around the state. Those of us in the field know the value Adult Ed provides by supporting learners as they practice everything from essential literacy to college readiness skills.

The report also highlights our programs' resources and needs. One of LAN's most significant accomplishments this year has been the successful advocacy efforts of our Legislative Committee. Through their dedicated work, we have secured annual increases in Adult Basic Education (ABE) funding, paralleling the percentage increases allocated to K-12 education, increased the contact hour cap from \$22/hour to \$30/hour, and secured funding for HSE testing. These legislative victories would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication and collaborative efforts of our members, volunteers, partners, and supporters. However, our work continues now to make sure that the additional changes passed by the legislature that redefined ABE teachers in school districts is accompanied by the funding necessary to implement those changes.

We invite anyone interested in being a part of the bigger work of advocating for adult education to connect with us! You can find information on the LAN committees on our website: <https://literacyactionnetwork.org/>. If you are not able to make a time commitment, we still encourage you to become a LAN member. Your memberships help support the work we do!

On a personal note for the Literacy Action Network, we are delighted to announce a significant milestone in our organizational journey. Over the past year, we have successfully transitioned our financial management, which was previously maintained by Literacy MN, to operate independently. It's a stage of growth for LAN, and we'd like to thank everyone involved in the process for their support.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to expanding access to quality adult education, advocating for policies that support our learners, and innovating our programs to meet the evolving needs of our communities.

Thank you all for your hard work,

Kaija Bergen

LAN Chair President