U.S. Adult Literacy Facts

U.S. Facts

43 Million

More than 43 million adults in the United States cannot read, write, or do basic math above a third-grade level.1

The Cost of Low Literacy

$2.2 Trillion

Bringing all adults to the equivalent of a sixth-grade reading level would generate an additional $2.2 trillion in annual income for the country.3

$106-238 Billion

It is estimated between $106–$238 billion in health care costs a year are linked to low adult literacy skills.4

3X

The Earnings

Workers who have less education than a high school diploma have the lowest median weekly earnings ($592), three times less than the highest level of education.5

Incarceration

75% of state incarcerated individuals did not complete high school or can be classified as low literate.10

43%

Incarcerated individuals who participate in correctional education programs are 43% less likely to recidivate than inmates who do not.11

English Language Learners

53%

Proficient

Among immigrants only half (53%) are proficient English speakers.7

One-in-Five

The U.S. has the world’s largest immigrant population, holding one-in-five of the world’s immigrants.6

Family Literacy

A mother’s reading skill is the greatest determinant of her children’s future academic success, outweighing other factors, such as neighborhood and family income.9

Member Services

50% of ProLiteracy member programs put students on a waiting list due to demand exceeding program capacity.2

Less than 10% of adults in need are receiving services.2

Every adult has a right to literacy.125
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References


