

# 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.<sup>1</sup>

## Member Services



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



Less than 10% of adults in need are receiving services.<sup>2</sup>

## 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.<sup>3</sup>

**\$106-238**  
Billion

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

**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.<sup>5</sup>

## English Language Learners



One-in-Five

The U.S. has the world's largest immigrant population, holding one-in-five of the world's immigrants.<sup>6</sup>

**53%**

Proficient

Among immigrants only half (53%) are proficient English speakers.<sup>7</sup>



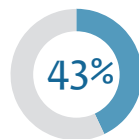
**103 MILLION**

By 2065, immigrants and their descendants are projected to increase the U.S. population by 103 million people.<sup>8</sup>

## Incarceration



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



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

## 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.<sup>9</sup>

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## References

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