



Augusta Adult & Community Education
22 Armory Street, North Wing, Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 626-2470
www.augustaadulted.org

April 13, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and Members of the 131st Legislature's Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

As the director of Augusta Adult and Community Education, I am testifying in favor of LD 1367- An Act Regarding the Funding Formula for Adult Education. As many of you are aware, Adult Education programs are funded separately from the school district. Adult Education saw a slight subsidy increase of \$300,000 in 2019 but nothing else in the past ten years. Local programs have been forced to increase their share to adequately support and fund their Adult Education programs.

When looking at the costs to run an Adult Education program, I will note that Augusta Adult Education pays facility rental fees to run the program. Facility fees are not subsidized in the current subsidy formula. We currently pay \$24,800 and our lease agreement has an annual increase of 3%. Again, this is not a subsidized expense and we can not use federal or state grant funds to pay this required fee.

Subsidized expenses include:

- Academic instruction expenses
- Administrative expenses that support academics
- Supply expenses for academic courses

The current FY 24 budget for Augusta Adult and Community Education is \$823,074.08, which is a \$35,785.08 increase from the FY 23 budget while our state subsidy from FY 23 to FY 24 decreased by just under \$11,000. Our proposed local contribution for the FY 24 budget is \$530,004.01; our state subsidy allocation is \$224,570.07. Our program makes approximately \$20,000 in enrichment fees (enrichment programming is not subsidized in any amount) and uses that money to balance our academic budget.

In Augusta we are lucky that we have strong local support; this is not the case in other districts. Many other adult education programs are responsible for similar overhead costs. They also simply do not have adequate state funding to employ full-time teachers and staff making it difficult to expand programming to support the growing number of learners entering programs. Even in a larger program like mine, the local taxpayer has a limit.



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Adult education provides many opportunities for Maine residents - from basic education to job preparation. One current learner came back to us because he could not pass a plumber's exam, I will read a letter written by this student momentarily. We also have an important partnership with Maine Veterans Home, students interested in the CNA earn while you learn program sign up with Augusta Adult and Community Education where we administer an assessment to determine if their reading level is where it should be to enter the CNA program. If the student's reading level is 240 or above, the student moves on to Maine Veterans Home where they are hired on as a health aid and work while they take the CNA course. This allows them to earn money while they also pursue their education. The students who do not meet the reading requirements are provided with tutoring through Augusta Adult and Community Education to improve their literacy skills. Once the student has met their literacy goals and obtained the required score, they are eligible to begin working with Maine Veterans Home. At the completion of the CNA course, students return to Augusta Adult and Community Education where we administer the state exam.

It is important to point out that Adult Education programs serve a wide range of learners. Adult Education programming has not seen a significant subsidy increase in over ten years. It's time to take a look at the funding formula and appropriately allocate funds to programs that serve our local communities. By increasing Adult Education funding, we can help grow Maine's local economy by investing in our local learners.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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