

American Rescue Plan State Fiscal Recovery Fund Recommendation Cover Sheet

Please submit this document with any recommendations for funding from Rhode Island’s allocation of federal fiscal recovery funds available through the American Rescue Plan Act. This information will be made available to the public along with any detailed documents submitted that describe the proposal. It is encouraged that such documents identify clear goals and objectives and quantifiable metrics.

This is not a formal request for funds, and submission of recommendations does not guarantee a response, public hearing, or appropriation from the General Assembly.

Name of Lead Agency: Economic Progress Institute

Additional agencies making recommendation (if applicable): _____

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Brief Project Description (attachments should contain details)

Funds to stabilize and enhance the adult education provider system to provide foundational skills to low-income and BIPOC com

Total request: \$ \$4.6M

One-time or Recurring Expense? One Time

ARPA Eligibility Category (check all that apply) – See link for further information

<https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/arpa/commdocs/Treasury%20-%20Quick-Reference-Guide.pdf>

- Respond to the public health emergency and its economic impacts x
- Premium pay to eligible workers _____
- Government services/state revenue replacement _____
- Water/sewer/broadband infrastructure _____

Submitted to the House ARPA Portal

May 7, 2022

Request for \$4.6M in ARPA funds to strengthen access to foundational work-force skills for adults.

The statewide network of Adult Education programs administered by the RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) is the infrastructure that provides critical foundational services (literacy, numeracy, English language services, digital literacy) for thousands of Rhode Islanders who have basic work-force skills gaps. Adult Education participation puts lower skilled adults on pathways to family-sustaining wages and develops the skilled workforce that employers seek.

The need for access to foundational skills is profound:

- ***By 2025, at least 70 percent of jobs in Rhode Island*** will require some postsecondary education (degree, apprenticeship, industry-recognized credential, or license).
- **68,000 working-age adults** in Rhode Island do not have a high school credential
- **31,250 adult Rhode islanders** have limited English proficiency

The 20 RIDE-funded Adult Education programs located around the state provide academic skill development at or below high school level (including GED preparation), ESOL, workforce preparation, digital literacy skills development, workforce development and job training, GED testing and citizenship preparation. Most also receive funding through the Governor's Workforce Board and braid funding to support occupational training developed in response to employer need. In 2021, 42% of participants were employed, 51.6% were unemployed and 5.9% were not in the labor force.

The Adult Education system is a vital part of the state's workforce development system. Providers offer pre-apprenticeship programs that put adults on a path to apprenticeships that lead to well-paying jobs. They partner with businesses to train individuals for available jobs, such as partnering with nursing facilities and home care providers to train CNAs, and then provide career advancement training for those workers. Adults interested in attending CCRI or particular training programs are connected with those opportunities. As businesses funded through "Real Jobs" seek to help incumbent workers improve their English language skills, digital literacy or other foundational skills, they turn to the network of Adult Education providers to meet this need.

The Adult Education network also is an important part of the K-12 educational system, serving students who are not staying in the classroom until graduation and have Alternative Learning Plans to ensure they receive a high school equivalency diploma. These students attend GED and other programs at Adult Education providers.

Programs need additional funding to meet demand:

Like the K-12 system, Adult Education programs shifted to distance learning in March 2020, and stayed open, delivering remote programming, and supporting students while adapting to pandemic challenges. This allowed students to continue their own learning and to help their children with their remote classes. RIDE did not provide any CARES Act funds to Adult Education programs to support this transition, while Maine (\$1M), New Hampshire (\$500,000) and Vermont (\$400,000) granted CARES Act dollars to their programs. Programs have wait lists for services.

The \$4.6M for FY 2023 requested in State Fiscal Relief Funds would be used for the purposes outlined in the chart below.

	FY 2023
Strategic Plan	\$120,000
Learning, Intake and Assessment Centers (Real-time engagement of learners in appropriate AE activities)	\$400,000
Enhance digital literacy for programs and learners	\$475,000
Integrated education and training A best practice that combines literacy and/or ESOL with job training	\$1,200,000 (increase number of participants by 200)
Learn and Earn A best practice that allows participants to receive a stipend while engaging in education/training	\$1,920,000 For 400 participants
TOTAL	\$4,635,000

Please note that Rep. Cortvriend’s bill, H-7637 seeks an appropriation of \$11.2M in ARPA funds over 3 years. This is a request for an appropriation in the FY 2023 budget.