

Basic Facts about Literacy

- 93 million adults in the United States lack basic literacy skills. *(National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2003)*
- 286,000 adults in Arkansas lack basic reading skills. *(U.S. Department of Education, 2003)*
- 30,000 adults in Central Arkansas lack basic reading skills. *(U.S. Department of Education, 2003)*

Families

- 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. *(U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, 2010)*
- Children whose parents are involved with them in family literacy activities score 10 points higher on standardized tests. *(National Center for Family Literacy, 2006)*

Health

- Low health literacy costs up to \$236 billion each year in the U.S. *(National Patient Safety Foundation, 2007)*
- Annual health care costs for low literate adults are 4 times higher than those with higher literacy skills *(ProLiteracy America, 2010)*
- Adults with low literacy...
 - Make more medication or treatment errors
 - Are less likely to comply with treatments
 - Lack the skills needed to comprehend healthcare documents
 - Are at higher risk for hospitalization *(National Patient Safety Foundation, 1998)*

Workforce

- 43 % of the labor force functions at basic or below basic reading levels. *(National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999)*
- High school dropouts, on average, earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about \$1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates. *(The Silent Epidemic, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2006)*
- 76% of Arkansas employers say less than half of the recent high school graduates who apply for jobs in their company have adequate writing skills or the ability to do basic math. *(Arkansas Department of Education, 2010)*
- 60% of Arkansas employers are not satisfied with the ability of recent high school graduates to comprehend written instructions and materials. *(Arkansas Department of Education, 2010)*
- The United States ranks fifth on adult literacy skills when compared to other industrialized nations. *(ProLiteracy, 2010)*

Immigrants

- 56% of immigrants in Arkansas have limited English proficiency. *(U.S. Census Bureau, 2009)*
- 73% of foreign born adults in Arkansas read below or at basic level. *(National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2003)*
- 48% of immigrants in Arkansas have not earned a high school diploma. *(Migration Policy Institute, 2009)*

Cost to the Nation

- Low literacy costs the U.S. \$225 billion or more each year in non-productivity in the workforce, crime, and loss of tax revenue due to unemployment. *(ProLiteracy, 2010)*
- 43% of adults with the lowest literacy rates in the United States live in poverty. *(ProLiteracy, 2010)*