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UNH State Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget & Policy Priorities **Literacy Programs**

Adult Literacy Education (ALE) – Restore \$1 million and invest an additional \$8 million

Funding History:

Executive FY2018-19: \$6.3 million

Enacted FY2017-18: \$7.3 million

Enacted FY 2016-17: \$7.3 million

Services Funded: ALE funding supports English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation classes. ALE is the primary state funding stream available to Community Based Organizations, Colleges and Libraries; the other state funding source, Employment Preparation Education (EPE) is limited only to school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

Challenge and Opportunity: New York is home to 3.5 million adults who lack English language proficiency, a high school diploma, or both. In NYC alone, the figure is 2.2 million and typically 50,000 individuals are on waiting lists to access adult literacy classes at any given time. A 2012 report by the Center for an Urban Future found that the State was providing English classes to less than 4% of New Yorkers eligible for such services.

State investment in adult literacy can help New Yorkers better compete in the job market, support their children in school, experience better health outcomes, and more fully engage in the civic and social lives of their communities. According to research done by the Community Service Society, for every NYC resident who earns a high school diploma or its equivalent, there is a net economic benefit of ~\$324,000 over their lifetime due to increased earnings and tax contributions and reduced utilization of public benefits.

Support for ALE is more critical than ever as the New York State Education Department has estimated that already-enacted changes to the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will result in a loss of services to over 17,000 beginner-level and/or undocumented adult literacy students throughout the State.

UNH recommendation: Fund ALE at \$15.3 million to serve 8,000 additional immigrant and other adult learners to offset federal funding and policy changes.

(over)

Family Literacy – Create new \$10 million initiative

Services Funded: Although Family Literacy models vary, they represent one form of two-generation programs which are designed to focus equally on services for both a parent and their child in order to maximize the overall success of the family. Typical aspects of Family Literacy include: 1) Interactive literacy activities between parents and children; 2) Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; 3) Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency; 4) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life.

Challenge and Opportunity: Educational deficits jeopardize family economic security and educational success for too many New York families. Only 38% of NYC 3rd to 8th graders are considered proficient in English Language Arts, and just 36% are proficient in Math. Many of these children will eventually leave high school prematurely, without the full range of skills necessary to succeed in post-secondary education or the job market. In addition, NYS is home to 3.5 million adult residents who lack English proficiency and/or a high school diploma. As a result, these New Yorkers earn significantly less than their peers, putting economic success for them and their families out of reach.

At the same time, research into the benefits of two-generation and family literacy programs has found that:

- When parents are dedicated to their own education, they serve as positive role models for their children's academic success.
- More sophisticated language skills in children have been linked to parent's literacy skills and shared reading.
- Skills that parents learn through their own education can be applied to their children, leading to better educational outcomes.
- Family literacy programs increase job skills and employment opportunities for parents by incorporating vocational skills training into their programs.

Family Literacy programs are designed to involve a whole family in their collective educational success. By engaging both children and their parents (or other adult family caregivers) in a collaborative and mutually reinforcing learning process, families are better equipped to gain the skills they need to succeed. An investment in family literacy programming will empower generations of family members to achieve educational goals, family stability, and economic security. Providing evidence-based education and strengthening family support leads to high-functioning, healthy and economically stable families.

UNH recommendation: Fund a \$10 million initiative in FY2019 which will allow for approximately 32 community based organizations to expand or launch family literacy programs for roughly 900 families throughout the State, as well capacity-building grants for an additional 16 organizations.

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