

Adult Education Comes Through with Level Funding in First Bill for FY07

Federal adult education funding would remain at current levels next year under a fiscal year 2007 funding bill approved by a House subcommittee yesterday.

In the first indication of what is to come for literacy-related programs in FY07, the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee gave the literacy community some good news and some bad. The level funding for Adult Literacy Basic Grants—at \$563.975 million—was considered good news in a year in which any program is game for cuts.

See the House subcommittee's funding levels for all literacy-related programs.

But Even Start sustained yet another blow, with the subcommittee recommending just \$70 million for the family literacy program. While some might consider that a victory over the Bush administration's third straight attempt to strike the program from existence, most consider it a further harbinger of the program's demise.

Even Start, which was funded at a relatively robust \$225 million in FY05, was slashed to \$99 million this year, and now faces another 17 percent cut under the House panel's bill. That cut would send Even Start programs reeling, after a year in which participation is expected to be cut by more than half.

Each year since the Bush administration has tried to wipe out Even Start, the House has come to the program's rescue. Last year, the Senate stunned the literacy community by acquiescing to the president's request to end the program.

The adult literacy community has joined with the Even Start community to work to save the program. A missive from ProLiteracy America yesterday noted that members of the National Coalition for Literacy were meeting this week to determine next steps after the good and bad news of this week's action.

Of course, these numbers are a long way from reality, as the House subcommittee action is just the first step in the congressional appropriations process.

The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to mark up the bill June 13, a panel staffer told *RLP*.

The Senate Labor-HHS-ED Subcommittee still must make its marks, and then both chambers must pass a bill before a House-Senate conference committee will resolve differences in the mammoth bill that funds the Education, Labor and Health and Human Services departments.

Along with level funding for adult education state grants, the House subcommittee stuck with the same amounts for National Leadership Activities, \$9 million, and the National Institute for Literacy, \$6.572 million.

President's Perkins Plan Rejected

The subcommittee once again turned back President Bush's proposal to do away with the current funding scheme for vocational education programs.

Whereas Bush wants to get rid of the Perkins programs and absorb their funding into a new High School Reform Initiative, the subcommittee said no to both ideas. No money was allotted for the president's \$1.475 billion high school reform plan, and level funding was put in for Vocational Education Basic State Grants, Tech-Prep Education and National Programs.

"The program is an important component of the competitiveness initiative to ensure ALL students have the high tech skills necessary to succeed," the panel said in explaining why it rejected the president's plan.

Competitiveness Initiative

In response to Bush's American Competitiveness Initiative, the panel said it raised funding for math and science partnerships by \$43 million and the advanced placement program by \$48 million. In all, some \$322 million was included for American Competitiveness programs, the subcommittee said.

The panel also said no to the president's plan to replace Workforce Investment Act programs with a new \$3.4 billion Career Advancement Accounts job training program. Instead, the subcommittee kept WIA programs alive, albeit with lower funding for each account.

Head Start would be essentially level-funded, at about \$6.8 billion. That is \$3 million above the president's request.

(Continued)

Funding for Literacy-Related Programs

(amounts in thousands)

Program	Fiscal 2005 Budget	Fiscal 2006 Budget	Fiscal 2007 Request	Fiscal 2007 House Labor-HHS-ED
Department of Education				
<i>Adult Education</i>				
Adult Education State Grants	569,672	563,975	563,975	563,975
National Leadership Activities	9,096	9,005	9,005	9,005
National Institute for Literacy	6,638	6,572	6,572	6,572
<i>Literacy & Education</i>				
Even Start	225,000	99,000	---	70,000
Reading First State Grants	1,041,600	1,029,234	1,029,234	1,029,234
Early Reading First	104,160	103,118	103,118	103,118
Striving Readers	24,800	29,700	100,000	35,000
Literacy through School Libraries	19,683	19,486	19,486	19,486
Math Now/elementary school	---	---	125,000	---
Math Now/ middle school	---	---	125,000	---
High School Reform (<i>New</i>)	---	---	1,475,000	---
High School Equivalency	18,737	18,550	18,550	18,550
College Assistance Migrant	15,532	15,377	15,377	15,377
Title I Grants to Districts	12,739,571	12,713,125	12,713,125	12,713,125
21 st Century Community	991,077	981,166	981,166	981,166
National Writing Project	20,336	21,532	---	21,532
Dropout Prevention Programs	4,930	4,900	---	---
English Language Acquisition	675,765	669,008	669,007	669,007
<i>Vocational Education</i>				
Basic State Grants	1,194,331	1,182,388	---	1,182,388
Tech-Prep Education	105,812	104,754	---	104,754
National Programs	11,757	9,164	---	9,164
Tech-Prep Ed Demonstration	4,899	---	---	---
Occupational/Employment Information Program	9,307	---	---	---
<i>Student Aid: Pell Grants</i>	12,364,997	13,045,230	12,659,713	13,009,000
Department of Labor				
Community-Based Job Training	249,000	125,000	150,000	125,000
Adult Training	896,618	864,199	0	854,000
Dislocated Worker Assistance	1,476,064	1,596,903	1,114,582	1,476,064
Career Advancement Accounts	---	---	3,412,000	---
Youth Training	986,288	940,500	840,500	935,500
Job Corps	1,551,860	1,592,758	1,501,602	1,523,000
Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative	19,840	19,642	19,642	---
Department of Health and Human Services				
Head Start	6,843,114	6,878,571	6,785,781	6,788,571

Funding

Overall, elementary and secondary reading programs were level-funded, with \$1 billion for Reading First and \$103 million for Early Reading First. The president's Striving Readers initiative would be raised from the current \$29.7 million to \$35 million, but that is a far cry from the administration's requested \$100 million.

Low-income college students would get a boost under the House panel's bill, as maximum Pell Grants would be raised by \$100, to \$4,150. That would mark the largest single increase in more than five years for the government's major student grant program, the subcommittee noted.

The higher education community, however, had sought an even higher raise to help poorer students meet the steeply rising cost of a college education. The American Association of Community Colleges, for example, has been working for a \$450 increase, to a \$4,500 maximum Pell Grant.

The group said Pell Grants currently help about 2 million students enroll in community colleges each year. Overall, the program serves more than 5 million students, with the overwhelming majority—70 percent—coming from families with incomes of \$20,000 or less a year.

Contact: House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, (202) 225-3508, www.house.gov/appropriations.

END

This article was reprinted by permission from Report on Literacy Programs, a publication of Business Publishers, Inc., 2601 University Blvd. W., Suite 200, Silver Spring, MD 20902, (800) 274-6737, Custserv@bpinews.com, www.bpinews.com