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Michigan Celebrates National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week: September 19-25, 2021

Here are 5 things you can do in the next 5 weeks to support Adult Education and Family Literacy right here in Michigan!

In response to Adult Education and Family Literacy Week, we are relaunching our “5 things” Series to complete over the next five weeks.

1. Advocate for additional funding for Adult Education in Michigan!

Now is the time to share the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for adult education participants. [Click here to send a letter to elected officials to directly invest in Michigan adult education services.](#)

MACAE has put forth a recommendation to utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for a targeted investment in adult skill building in Michigan due to the great and complicated implications from COVID-19. This recommendation goes one step further than recently announced initiatives with specific investments to reach more participants and support continued programming for adult education providers. MACAE's recommendation supports:

- Providing for program-wide **internet access, broadband connectivity, and technology access**
- **Supporting regional growth** (resources, professional development)
- **Targeted support for adults to meet their educational and career goals post- COVID-19** (Staffing, Career navigation, postsecondary transitional services, ESL transcription/translation of foreign credentials, fast track classes for high school diploma and equivalency completion, targeted credentialing opportunities that includes allowances for training costs for participants)
- **Closing the Funding Equity Gap for Instructional Delivery of Service** (Professional Development for online learning platforms, virtual and hybrid instructional strategies, online

2. Everyone has a voice: Encourage your participants and families to register to vote!

MACAE encourages all member programs to take time for staff, participants and community partners to be sure they are registered to vote. Voting is an essential part of our democratic process.

Here's more information:

- Use the Michigan Voter Identification Center to get started: [Register to vote \(michigan.gov\)](#)
- To learn more about the complicated history of voting in the United States, please visit the Library of Congress Website: [The Founders and the Vote](#) | [The Right to Vote](#) | [Elections](#) | [Classroom Materials at the Library of Congress](#) | [Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

3. Communicate with your Partners and Community: Let them know you're up and running!

COVID-19 has presented many new challenges and at times, confusion. Take a moment to share with your community what is happening in your program so they can be informed! Share with your broader organization leadership, community library or soup kitchens, local unemployment office, local school districts, newspaper publications, radio stations, etc. You can share the following in a simple email or telephone call:

- Updated hours of operation and programming
- Share how staff and/or participants have been learning and working
- Highlight new challenges that have emerged and how you may be working to address them
- Share bright spots! (ie: High School Equivalency Completers, Citizenship, new staff members, enrollment of new participants, etc.)

4. Update your policymakers

Share similar information with policymakers and elected officials! This could include your local school board, organization board of directors, town or city council, local mayor and state and federal representatives! You can share the following information in a simple email or telephone call:

- Share how your program is responding to the needs of COVID-19
- Describe what innovative changes you have implemented that are making a difference in the lives of staff and participants and families

Now is the perfect time to snag a few minutes with your elected policymakers! Many are hosting socially distanced coffee hours or virtual conversations. Much of this information can be found on their individual websites or social media. Take an hour and meet with them! Think about sharing three things:

- Who you are and what organization you are a part of
- The type of work that your organization does
- How your organization benefits the community through education, workforce development, providing resources adults, youth and families

Find your Michigan State Representative: <https://www.house.mi.gov/mhrpublic/frmFindaRep.aspx>

Find your Michigan State Senator: <https://www.senate.michigan.gov/fysbyaddress.html>

5. Raise student voices!

The beginning of a new program year is the perfect time to learn more about the participants enrolled in your program. Take time to spotlight learner success in the classroom or in your program through a vision board, success board or student spotlight. You can share these stories directly with policymakers, on social media or by emailing MACAE at macaeoutreach@gmail.com. Capture:

- The strengths of each participant
- The goals and dream of each participant

The Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education is the leading professional organization for over 400 adult, alternative, community education and workforce development professionals across the state. More information can be found at www.maca.org.