

Adult Foundational Education

This is a term adopted by the Steering Committee of the Open Door Collective in 2022 to describe an education field that has often been described with terms such as *adult literacy*, *adult education and literacy*, *adult basic education*, *adult basic skills* or *adult education*.

The definition below was created and improved in 2021 and 2022 by members of the Steering Committee of the Open Door Collective and other researchers, professional developers and practitioners. The definition's details are still evolving, and comments on it are welcome.

David J. Rosen
djrosen123@gmail.com
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The term *Adult Foundational Education* refers to core skills and knowledge that adults need for work, further education, supporting their families, participating effectively in their communities, and/or as citizens in a representative democracy. It includes:

- English language skills for immigrants and refugees (ESL/ESOL)
- Beginning literacy for adults who cannot read and write well, or at all
- Numeracy
- Adult basic education
- Adult secondary education leading to an adult high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate
- U.S. citizenship preparation
- Preparation for post-secondary education and occupational training or apprenticeships
- Employability skills
- Family/intergenerational literacy
- Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)
- Other foundational education and skills that are needed throughout the adult life span but are not necessarily related to work or career, such as: digital literacy; financial literacy; health literacy; native language literacy; and literacy for self-advocacy, civic engagement, and social justice.

Adult Foundational Education may be offered by community-based programs, public schools, community colleges, volunteer tutoring programs, public libraries, corrections institutions, adult public charter schools, employers, labor unions, faith-based organizations, and other kinds of organizations and institutions.