



FAST FACTS

Functional illiteracy is the hub around which nearly all social ills revolve – from crime, incarceration and recidivism, to hardcore poverty, to low standardized test scores and high drop-out rates, to accidents and deaths caused by the inability to read medication labels, to low worker productivity, and drains on the tax base and local economies.

Without an educated workforce, Atlanta cannot attract and keep businesses and **cannot remain a global competitor.**

Without literate parents, we risk losing another generation of children to **high drop-out rates and dead-end jobs.**

- **More than 800,000 adults in metro Atlanta are functionally illiterate.**
- 93 million American adults have limited reading, writing, and math skills.
- 43% of all non-readers live in poverty.
- 85% of all juvenile offenders have reading problems.
- The greatest indicator of a child's success is the educational level of his or her mother.
- High school dropouts are likely to stay on public assistance longer than those with a degree, and they are more likely to become involved in crime.
- **Illiteracy costs Georgia \$2.6 billion annually** in lost wages and reduced productivity, and it **costs American businesses more than \$60 billion each year** in lost productivity and health and safety issues.
- 75% of unemployed adults have reading or writing difficulties.
- Adults with less than a high school diploma are 58% more likely to be unemployed than high school graduates, and **221% more likely to be unemployed than those with a Bachelor's degree.**

Functional illiteracy is defined as the inability of an individual to read and write in everyday life situations, which means they cannot read the labels on medication, follow a bus schedule, or help children with homework.

Our History/Mission: Literacy Action provides FREE classroom instruction to adults (18 and older) who have low reading, math, and life skills. Since its founding in 1968, LAI has grown to be the largest private provider of adult basic education in Georgia.

The agency's **Mission** is to lead the coordination of comprehensive adult education efforts to ensure **metro Atlanta's 800,000 functionally illiterate adults** succeed as individuals, citizens, parents and employees.

Who We Serve:

- Literacy Action serves 600-700 students per year.
- 98% of our students are native English speakers.
- 90% are at or below the poverty level; all are low-income.
- More than 50% are women, half of whom are single heads of households.
- 40% are the primary caregiver to a school-aged child.
- The majority of students enter the program at a fifth-grade reading level.

The cost of educating an adult for one year at Literacy Action is \$2,000.

In 2001, the average **annual operating expenditure per inmate** in U.S. state prisons was **\$22,650**, and the **average annual expenditure per pupil** in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools was **\$7,734**.