

December 2017

Dear Friends,

English At Large (EAL) is facing new challenges in our service to the community and we need your help.

Since 1970, EAL has served as the sole provider of individual and small group English language instruction for adults in our 21-community service area in Middlesex County. Our One-to-One Tutoring Program, Conversation Groups, Career Access Lab and Beginner English programs provide life-changing services that empower hundreds of immigrants and refugees each year to achieve their life goals.

We are a small organization with a big impact. This past year alone, English At Large has served more than 550 adult learners through programs that build their English language skills and help them acquire the cultural knowledge they need to fully engage in life in the United States. We operate efficiently with only three full-time employees and direct more than 85% of our annual budget to program services. Our network of more than 240 volunteers deliver more than 5,500 hours of direct service each year. These volunteer hours more than double the impact of every program dollar. Our board members provide stringent fiscal oversight and are sound stewards of the mission. Funding of our \$209,000 budget is secured from a variety of sources, including private and corporate foundations, individual donors, special events, community partnerships, and for the past 20 years, a contract with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

This, however, is about to change. Beginning July 1, 2018, EAL will have to continue our important work to improve the lives of local immigrants without state backing. For the first time since 1977, we will depend completely on private sources of funding to sustain program services. This represents a \$100,000 reduction in our funding base. **Your support means more now than ever before.**

What has happened? Simply stated, DESE has dramatically changed the terms of the contract proposal (RFP) that previously led to our support. The new RFP, posted without notification to stakeholders, specifies funding for only one volunteer organization, and that organization must provide both English language instruction and adult basic education across the state. These requirements are beyond the scope of the targeted mission that has allowed us to be so effective at meeting the needs of immigrants in our communities.

What does this mean? Beginning July 1, 2018, there will be no DESE-funded program providing volunteer-delivered English language instruction in our service area in Middlesex County.

What is at stake? For the more than 500 English language learners in our programs, and more than 200 individuals on our waiting list, the loss of state funds could mean a dramatic reduction in the availability of services that would enable them to move forward with their lives in the United States. **If we cannot keep our promise to serve them, local immigrants and refugees may have nowhere else to go.**

We have an ambitious plan to raise the funds necessary to keep all services in place. It involves efforts on many fronts to rally our troops, mobilize our base and to engage a high level of support from our community.

You can make a real difference in our success. Here's how:

- Help us build consensus. Let your friends, neighbors and community know what is at stake with the loss of programs for local immigrants.
- Contact your state legislator and voice your concern. (Contact us for a list and sample script.)
- Connect us to others who have a passion for our work and the capacity to make a difference.
- Make a donation at any level and inspire others to do the same.

Take Action Today. Your support is an investment in the potential these learners, and in their dreams to fully assimilate as contributing members of our community.

Thank you for your support of English At Large.