

## **The Future of English At Large: A Few Minutes of Your Time Could Have a Big Impact**

Will you make 2 calls to the state legislature to support English At Large?

It will take less than 10 minutes. We have provided a very short script for you (see below).

### **Why Do I Need to Call My State Legislators?**

The rules of the game have changed abruptly at the state level. English At Large is no longer eligible for funding from DESE — the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Basically, our DESE funding will end at the beginning of July because DESE officials have decided to restrict funding to organizations that can provide both English language instruction and Adult Basic Education across the entire state.

### **What Does This Mean?**

For the past 20 years, DESE grants have accounted for almost half of EAL's annual budget — about \$100,000 for FY 2018. This funding for individual tutoring has enabled EAL to support the work that you and over 240 other volunteers do, serving hundreds of immigrants and refugees in our communities. The EAL staff has reached out to the leadership of the one large organization that is eligible to apply for the new DESE grant and learned that it would not have the resources to enter our 21-community service area even if it does obtain the grant. Thus, our current learners and the 200 people on our waiting list for individual tutoring could face greatly reduced services.

### **Steps Already Taken**

EAL's Board has made a commitment to do everything possible to maintain our level of service to immigrants, including reaching out to our state senators and representatives and their staffs to make them aware of the situation with DESE, as well as working hard to find other sources of funding. We know that our highly effective and efficient staff of three people is critical to achieving our mission and we need to replace those DESE funds to keep them.

In December, EAL Executive Director Maureen Willis and a board member visited the offices at the State House of every state legislator whose communities are served by English At Large and quite a few expressed an interest in helping our cause.

### **Steps Still Needed**

However, legislators always listen most closely to their direct constituents. They need to be reminded to pay attention to the impact of DESE's decision, which will affect services to immigrants and refugees in THEIR communities. EAL's services, one-to-one tutoring, small group instruction, and career support, help immigrants improve their English language skills, adapt to American life, and participate in their communities.

### **YOUR Steps**

Please make two short calls this week to your state senator and representative. The goal now is to help EAL gain access to replacement funds. We've prepared a script for you and supplied the attached spreadsheet showing legislators and their office phone numbers for each EAL community served.

Note: Because some towns/cities are served by more than one representative or senator, you may need to verify the ones for your specific address. You can do that here:

<https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>

After your calls, please send a short email to Maureen ([ed@englishatlarge.org](mailto:ed@englishatlarge.org)) letting us know when you called and how the legislators or staff responded.

**Thank you for your advocacy of behalf of English At Large!**

## The Script

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ [your name]. I'm calling from \_\_\_\_\_ [your town] on behalf of English At Large, an organization I support.

### **Background**

In November our Executive Director, Maureen Willis, met with your staff to explain that DESE [*the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (pronounced DEH-see)*] funding will no longer be available to the organization after July 1, 2018.

This funding enables English At Large to provide English language services and to help immigrants in your district become better integrated into their communities.

Last year alone, EAL programs empowered over 500 immigrants and refugees to access health and other community resources, advance their education, support their children, secure employment, and obtain citizenship.

More than 240 volunteers are engaged in this work, all organized, trained, and supported by EAL staff as tutors, conversation group facilitators, career mentors, book group leaders, and teachers of Beginner English.

DESE funding represents almost half of the funding for English At Large services for your immigrant constituents in \_\_\_\_\_ [name of town]. We need your help, as a State Legislator, to keep these services available to your constituents.

### **Call to Action**

Please help us by doing the following:

- **Join in the effort to restore state funding for EAL programs. Representatives Dwyer, Donato, Garballey, Gordon, Kaufman, and others are going to the House Ways and Means to try to secure a line of funding for English At Large. Please add your support to these efforts.**

Thank you for your interest and support!