

Good evening. My name is Danielle Verbiest. I am representing the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy and I am the Executive Director of the Literacy Council of Montgomery County. LCMC is an active participant in MCAEL.

I am here today on behalf of the coalition:

- to thank you for your continued support;
- to underscore the MCAEL's continued work and need for support for BOTH its **operating budget** for FY 16, and for the capacity building grants that MCAEL provides to the coalition programs; and
- to underscore the return on investment that the county funding brings.

Funding for adult English literacy programs shows success on a program and individual level.

First, with additional county funding this year, LCMC was able to open a new program site in Gaithersburg – an area that we and other providers have identified as a high need area. *This example highlights that the increased investment has led to more learners served: At two locations in Gaithersburg, LCMC has already served 267 learners, compared to 60 learners last year. And, we anticipate that almost another 100 will*

be in classes through this spring. Last year 3 classes were offered, this year 19 classes were offered – thank you for helping us serve more than 3 times the students as we did last year.

Second, when learners have quality instruction, they stay engaged and they make progress toward their goals. Ruth, a native of Guatemala, lives in Rockville with her husband and three children. She entered the program as a high intermediate level student. She completed the intermediate level class and then after a post-test – quickly completed the advanced level after just 75 hours of instruction – *usually it takes 120 hours of instruction to move up one level.* Ruth met all of her session goals and some additional ones: **she attended her child’s parent-teacher conference and understood everything in English!** Ruth also received her citizenship this year.

MCAEL’s success as a coalition hinges on the support we receive from the county. Your investment in it and in the literacy programs is an investment in the county’s education system, its economic development, and the vibrancy of the community.

Thank you for your time today and on behalf of the MCAEL staff, board and entire coalition, thank you for your continued support of MCAEL.