



The Literacy Alliance

## Media Release

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### **U.S. Department of Education to Release National Assessment of Adult Literacy**

The U.S. Department of Education intends to release the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) in Washington D.C. on or near International Literacy Day, September 8, 2005. NAAL will provide updated numbers that indicate the variety and depth of the adult literacy issue and the effectiveness of adult literacy programs.

“We know that adult illiteracy is a problem,” says Judith Stabelli, Executive Director of The Literacy Alliance. “Up-to-date information about the exact scope of the problem is important.”

The Department’s National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) of 1992 estimates that 15% - 17% of Indiana adults function at the lowest level of literacy skills, meaning about 700,000 Hoosiers do not have sufficient literacy skills to access and use information effectively in their daily lives. Robert Wedgeworth, President and CEO of ProLiteracy Worldwide, predicts that the NAAL estimate will paint “a much grimmer picture of the state of adult literacy.”

For Allen County, information available right now shows that about 14% (33,586) of those over 18 years function at the lowest level of literacy skills. Their daily struggles can include:

- The inability to read and understand the editorial page of the newspaper  
Having trouble understanding pricing when grocery shopping
- Being unable to successfully complete a job application or get a better job
- Not being able to help a child with homework assignments
- Not understanding materials distributed by health care providers.

Since 1988, the nonprofit Literacy Alliance has been dedicated to ending illiteracy in Allen County. Learning centers, literacy programs, and tutoring services empower individuals to succeed at work, at home, and in the community. Last year, The Literacy Alliance helped over 600 adult students.

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