

« [Video: Protesters interrupt speech by Gov. Martinez](#)
 NM House members fight over paying for appeal of redistricting decision [UPDATE: Dems file appeal, Gov's office says "they're spending even more tax dollars" »](#)

Estimate says 46 percent of NM adults are illiterate or functionally illiterate; coalition urges funding increase



The numbers are alarming.

The [New Mexico Coalition for Literacy](#) (NMCL) told reporters at a news conference in Santa Fe that it estimates nearly half of the state's adults (46 percent) are either illiterate or functionally illiterate — and the coalition is urging the legislature and Gov. [Susana Martinez](#) to add \$347,200 to its budget.

Given the high rate of high school dropouts in New Mexico, the startling statistics are probably not surprising but Lewis Lamar of the NMCL said there is

hope for adults who do not read proficiently and emphasized that NMCL programs in cities and towns across the state offer one-on-one tutoring in English and Spanish and the coalition guarantees confidentiality.

"Our motto is, you read to understand but you write to be understood," Lamar said.

A number of years ago, the NMCL had a budget of \$755,000 but when the state budget crisis hit, the coalition saw its funding cut by 11 percent and then last year, was in line to get its budget reduced to zero. "It was not because of ill will or malice or politics or anything like that," NMCL executive director [Heather Heunermund](#) told [Capitol Report New Mexico](#). "The money simply wasn't there."

Heunermund said \$325,000 was restored in last year's legislative session but the NMCL is asking for an additional \$347,200 this year to bring its budget up to \$672,200.

"What we desperately need is public support," Heunermund said, adding that legislators in the Roundhouse "act at your will. So contact your lawmakers, let them know that you do support this cause. Give them a reason to work very hard to identify that funding."

Heunermund said she's received verbal support from the state Senate and House as well as Gov. Martinez. At Wednesday's news conference, First Gentleman [Chuck Franco](#) spoke in favor of the NMCL, saying that adults who take literacy programs "not only better their children's lives, but their own as well ... and they become a mentor for the little ones. And that's our goal."

Here's more from Heunermund and Lamar, who spoke bluntly:

Archives

- [March 2012](#)
- [February 2012](#)
- [January 2012](#)
- [December 2011](#)
- [November 2011](#)
- [October 2011](#)
- [September 2011](#)
- [August 2011](#)
- [July 2011](#)
- [June 2011](#)
- [May 2011](#)
- [April 2011](#)
- [March 2011](#)
- [February 2011](#)
- [January 2011](#)
- [December 2010](#)
- [November 2010](#)
- [October 2010](#)
- [September 2010](#)
- [August 2010](#)
- [July 2010](#)
- [June 2010](#)
- [May 2010](#)
- [April 2010](#)
- [March 2010](#)
- [February 2010](#)
- [January 2010](#)
- [December 2009](#)
- [November 2009](#)
- [October 2009](#)
- [September 2009](#)
- [August 2009](#)
- [July 2009](#)
- [June 2009](#)
- [May 2009](#)
- [April 2009](#)

March 2012

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
« Feb						

Recent Posts

- [Helping the environment is more than just feeling good about being green](#)

- Thomas Garcia may leave NM House and challenge Pete Campos in Senate
- Redistricting battle ends; Susana says her office isn't pushing on GOP incumbents
- Conrad James stays put
- Baseball manager's one rule



Also at Wednesday's news conference, a representative from [PNM](#) announced a \$20,000 grant to assist the coalition.

If you know someone who might be interested in the NMCL's adult literacy programs, call 1-800-233-7587. There are 25 locations across the state that offer one-on-one, confidential instruction. Here's the coalition's website: www.nmcl.org

 [Capitol Report New Mexico](#), [Chuck Franco](#), [Heather Heunermund](#), [Lewis Lamar](#), [New Mexico Coalition for Literacy](#), [Susana Martinez](#)

This entry was posted on Wednesday, January 18th, 2012 and is filed under [News](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through [RSS 2.0](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

No comments yet.

Name (required)

E-Mail (required) *(will not be published)*

Website

[Submit Comment](#)