

Pass the Budget!

The state budget impasse, now almost six months old, resulted in the suspension of Center for Literacy classes on November 2. Six hundred of our students are unable to take classes in adult basic education, GED prep or English as a second language. Our tutoring program is still continuing, with volunteer tutors.

With the state legislators divided over what to do - resulting in two separate budget tracks - the odds of a resolution anytime soon are slim. As reported in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, "Frank Dermony, a top House Democrat, predicted on the floor Tuesday [December 8] that lawmakers might still be debating the budget on January 1."

Which leaves CFL students doing their best in these challenging times.

Adam Stewart is determined to not go back to his old life, selling drugs. He is keeping busy by volunteering at his nine-old daughter's school in West Chester, and looking for jobs. He misses his classes and is determined to come back. "I have seen the light. Education is now a big part of my life," he says. Adam now has a CFL tutor, Gina Bernitt, who is helping him with his reading.

Antonio Bonser is studying with practice work given to him before classes were suspended by his teacher, Michelle Jensen. "I'm studying two to three hours a day, mostly in math and a little reading. I need to stay focused," he says. Antonio wants to get his GED and become a registered nurse.

Many other students have difficulty studying independently and need the supports that CFL offers.

Without a General Fund Budget for fiscal year 2015-2016, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has not reimbursed CFL for any of the services rendered under various contracts since July 1, 2015. More than 80 percent of our \$2.4 million budget comes from the state.

With 20 CFL teachers and case managers furloughed, a skeleton crew of clerical, administrative, and volunteer tutor program staff are working. CFL has used our cash reserves and drawn on a line-of-credit from our bank.

We anticipate opening our classroom doors within two weeks after the budget is passed.

Your gift to CFL is more important than ever.