

# **Iowa's Adult Literacy Program Annual Narrative Report**

## **Program Year 2009**

(July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009)

*Describe successful activities, programs, and projects supported with State Leadership funds and describe the extent to which these activities, programs, and projects were successful in implementing the goals of the State Plan.*

The purpose of Title II, The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is to create a partnership among the federal government, states, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy services in order to:

- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
- Assist adults who are parents obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children;
- Assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.
- The major purposes of *Iowa's Adult Literacy Program State Plan Extension for Program Year 2010* are:
  - Provide a comprehensive blue print for implementation of Title II of the Act;
  - Serve as a basis for both immediate and long-range planning and continuous, systematic evaluation of program effectiveness;
  - Provide basis for common understanding among Iowa's literacy partners, other interested entities and the U.S. Department of Education.

**The following narrative and Matrix demonstrate how Iowa is implementing the goals of the State Plan and the most recent extension.**

Iowa funded two major projects with the 12.5% State Leadership funds: (1) the Iowa Literacy Resource Center, and (2) the state staff development/leadership project.

### **Iowa Literacy Resource Center**

The Iowa Literacy Resource Center (ILRC) works closely with the Iowa Dept. of Education. The goal of the ILRC is to be responsive to the federal reporting needs and curriculum support needs of the adult literacy community in Iowa.

### **Collection Development**

The ILRC sends materials to adult literacy learners, teachers and tutors across the state. It's like a public library specializing in instructional materials. This allows teachers to supplement classroom materials as well as support their own professional development. Adult learners are also able to borrow materials so that they may do extra work without having to purchase their own books, videos or CDs. Nearly 1,500 items were checked out during Program Year 2009. Many teachers and tutors take advantage of our extended borrowing period and use the materials for an entire year. Nearly 200 new items were added during the last year, most of them in time for personal examination by instructors at summer training opportunities.

## **National Reporting System**

The ILRC continues to work with the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) to provide Iowa's adult literacy local programs the best tools to assess and assist instruction to Iowa adult students. This work also includes compiling data used by the U.S. Dept. of Education: Division of Adult Education and Literacy (USDE:DAEL) to evaluate state and local adult literacy programs as reported by the National Reporting System (NRS). The ILRC collects real-time data from all of Iowa's federally funded adult literacy programs and provides analysis for documents like *Iowa's Community College Adult Literacy Annual Report*.

## **Communications**

Communication at the ILRC encompasses many things. The ILRC website is used to distribute information to the statewide adult literacy community and other interested parties. The website had over 1,050,000 page views last year. A new feature added to it last year was a section for GED on Demand. The ILRC helped edit and published all the support materials for the projects on the website as well as designing and purchasing promotional items for the colleges to distribute to potential users.

The ILRC also hosts several listservs used by the Iowa literacy community. Nearly 300 subscribers are aided by these listservs in the following topics: GED, ESL, TOPSpro Usage (Tracking of Programs and Students), Project POWER (Providing Options for the Workplace, Education and Rehabilitation) and Content Standards. These provide a means for people in all parts of the state to share information with others in their area of interest. REDIOWA.org also hosts several forums as another means of sharing and has an announcements archive to make sure news items are always available to the field.

## **Professional Development**

ILRC staff participates in workshops for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Coordinators and in-service training for all adult literacy faculty and staff. The ILRC addresses anything from the basics of utilizing materials from the collection like *Putting English to Work* or *Workplace Essential Skills* to NRS procedures. A Moodle server was also set up so that professional development could be delivered directly to participants' desks, decreasing the need for travel. The ILRC continued support of the Iowa Literacy Council and the New Readers of Iowa.

## **Staff**

The ILRC employs two people (1 FTE) to make all this happen. They travel as needed for presentations and professional development, answer questions by phone and email, maintain the servers and the collection, and add documents to the website. ILRC staff handled over 1,200 office contacts last year from the field as well as the general public. Staff also attended a LINCS Partners Meeting (a program of the National Institute of Literacy) and the CASAS Summer Institute to help them better meet the needs of Iowans. Approximately half of one staff member's time is spent on information technology (IT) functions. These functions include: (1) server maintenance, (2) website development and (3) technical support to TOPSpro software users in the field.

## **State Staff Development Leadership Project**

The State Staff Development Leadership Project is designed to fund and coordinate state level staff development activities in the following areas: (1) NRS reporting, (2) program improvement, (3) GED 2002 preparation activities, and (4) CASAS statewide staff development activities.

The impact of professional development on instruction and adult learner outcomes is evaluated against the following criteria:

- Statewide implementation, adoption and diffusion into adult literacy instructional strategies, methodologies and curriculum infusion;
- Long-term improvement in program outcomes measured by the state and local program's ability to continually meet negotiated benchmark levels.
- Adult learner assistance to effectively meet personal and program literacy goals.

**Following is the summary of activities conducted during the 2008-2009 program year:**

**ABE Institute**

The annual Adult Literacy (ABE) Summer Institute joined with the Missouri Valley Adult Education Association (MVAEA) and the Iowa Association for Lifelong Learning (IALL) to present the "New Roads on the Journey to Lifelong Learning" conference on July 16-18, 2008 in Council Bluffs, Iowa for all Adult Literacy Coordinators, teachers and support staff. "The Politics of Adult Education" preconference was presented by Art Ellison, Policy Committee Chair of the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education. The preconference Leadership Academy attendance was at 100 attendees, and conference attendance surpassed 200 registrations. There were over 30 sessions from which participants could choose, beginning with the preconference event featuring Art Ellison, the keynote with Byrd Baggett's message of "Building Relationships" and "Growing to the Season of Significance." Following the keynote were 18 professional development sessions focusing on adult literacy, family literacy, adult learning (credit), professional development, technology, and business and industry training.

**Iowa Literacy Council**

The Iowa Literacy Council met September 12, 2008 at Iowa Public Television, Johnston, IA; November 21, 2008 at Iowa Workforce Development, Des Moines IA; February 20, 2008 at Iowa State Library, Des Moines, IA; and May 22, 2008 at Ashland Ridge Elementary School, Ankeny, IA. This advocacy group includes diverse business and education members from all over the state who support literacy.

**CASAS Training**

A CASAS TOPSpro Basics Training was held October 8, 2008 in Fort Dodge, Iowa with ten participants. A CASAS Writing training for New Local Examiners was held on October 28, 2008 at Marshalltown, Iowa for fifteen participants; a CASAS Writing Recertification Training was held November 6, 2008 over the Iowa Communication Network (ICN) for sixteen participants; a CASAS Implementation Training in Reading and Math was held over the ICN on September 11, 2008 for forty-three participants; and a CASAS ESL Implementation Training was held over the ICN on November 17, 2008 for twenty-two participants.

**CASAS Trainers**

CASAS-certified trainers include: EL/Civics, 1 basic IT, POWER, TOPSpro and 3 Writing Skills cadre. These experts conduct training in their content areas as needed across the state and at conferences. One trainer attended the CASAS Summer Institute in June 2009.

**Monitoring Visits to Colleges**

The Adult Literacy State Director and State Staff Development Consultant monitored all Community Colleges from January through June 2009. These included four on-site visits and eleven desktop visits. The purposes were to meet staff, learn about programs/facilities and procedures across the state, provide an opportunity for the staff at each center to ask questions/ to share ideas and concerns, and provide

technical assistance. In addition, site monitoring included observation of instructional practices using a standard monitoring document that was provided to each center prior to the visit and document review. Peer Coordinators were encouraged to participate as visiting monitors to encourage sharing and collaboration. The monitoring tool and visit addressed data collections, instructional practices, benchmarks, materials, and assessment practices.

### **State Staff Development Committee**

The State Staff Development Committee is comprised of representatives from each community college, and teleconferences were held on a bi-monthly basis. The Committee reviews the staff development efforts of the previous year and makes recommendations for the next year and longer (2-3yrs.). The Committee is also involved in planning the Adult Literacy (ABE) Summer Institute.

### **Other Staff Development**

A collaborative training on the new Naturalization Test for fifty-nine participants (nineteen from Iowa Workforce Development) was held on August 13, 2008. Follow-up via e-mail was made with Irlen screeners throughout the year to support their implementation of screening action plans. A Content Standards Alignment workshop was held on March 13, 2009 for seventeen participants at Cedar Rapids, Iowa; a writing presentation was held for the regional Corrections Education Association on May 6, 2009.

### **Family Literacy**

In July 2004 the U.S. Department of Labor awarded Iowa a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Section 503 Incentive Grant to fund innovative job-readiness programs. The grant, administered jointly by the Iowa Department of Education (DE) and Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), focused on literacy as the essential foundation of success in employment, career growth, and economic self-sufficiency. In addition, the project concentrated on systemic change by establishing a literacy model that promotes achievement and success within the most basic and appropriate institution: *the family*. Since the initial funding, Iowa had been eligible for three more rounds of funding, the last round ending on June 30, 2009. The second round focused on technology and career awareness efforts, and the third round which extended through June 2008 focused on “The Working Family”. A fourth round of funding which extended through June, 2009, focused on student transitions, while continuing to address needs that had been identified and supported in earlier rounds.

### **Family Literacy Project Components:**

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and children (PACT).
- Education for parents in facilitating children's learning and becoming partners in their education.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency and meets adults' stated goals.
- Age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

### **Family Literacy Program Efforts:**

- A consultant was hired for a short-term contract to support local programs with transitioning their family literacy efforts to post-grant status. She also worked with the Federal Data Consultant at the Dept. of Education to provide guidance related to data collection and evaluation reporting.
- A representative from Pfizer Outreach presented to Hispanic adult literacy students at the Education and Training Center in Marshalltown, IA on August, 28, 2008 to provide information about health literacy for the students and their families.

- In February, Lynda Franco from OLÉ Education presented three sessions to staff and families on the topic of Reading at Home With Your Child. Two sessions were presented in Spanish.
- On February 7, Lynda Franco from OLÉ Education presented a session for staff from all over the state on the topic of Using Delta phonics with Adult Literacy Students to support reading instruction.
- Materials for a “Bridges Out of Poverty” (a Ruby Payne-based workshop) on March 17, 2009 were supplied to seventeen participants who joined a collaborative training with Iowa Department of Corrections.
- In addition, April 9-10, 2009 was a “Training of Trainers” (TOT) for Iowa’s seven ESL Regional Specialists in Des Moines, IA, which was conducted by the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) national trainers.
- The annual Adult Literacy (ABE) Summer Institute combined conference, “New Roads on the Journey to Lifelong Learning” on July 16-18, 2008 in Council Bluffs, Iowa, provided professional development in such areas as practical ESL strategies, the impact of culture on family literacy, data reporting for family literacy programs, Parent-Child-Together strategies, and strategies for motivating and retaining adult learners.
- As the final year of the family literacy incentive grant came to a close, programs were offered the opportunity to apply for funds to support a mini-grant that would allow the programs to conduct a short term activity. The following chart shows how the mini-grant funds were used:

CC	Purpose	Performance Measures
SECC	Purchase of Rosetta Stone software, network versions for three locations to support family literacy	Program will prepare a report of how the added software will enhance the family literacy efforts.
IVCCD	Grant Development time ,Clerical Assistance, data collection, translation, Materials/supplies (copies, paper, laminating, etc.), Purchase of published curricula/ student workbooks, Grant writing expenses	Program will prepare a report of how the grant efforts progressed and how they will enhance the family literacy efforts.
NICC	Cultural Visit to NICC’s Effigy Mounds Cultural Event and End of Year Ceremony to include: Charter Buses, Awards (Books), Park and Guide Fees	Program will prepare a report about the cultural visit and how it enhanced the family literacy efforts.
HCC	GED and ESL Textbooks, Paperbacks for ESL Book Club, Recognition Supplies for Student Successes, Supplies for “All Metro Reads”, Children’s Books, Children’s Supplies, Career Exploration Materials, Back to School Boxes, Parent Lending Library Books, Program Supplies such as color printer ink cartridges to create recruitment flyers, etc.	Program will prepare a report of all purchased items and how they will enhance the family literacy efforts.

### Writing Skills

Iowa has had over 8 years of experience with the CASAS Functional Writing project. There are local (25), state (2), and national (1) readers who have been trained to administer, score and use materials to teach writing. All colleges have had professional development on this topic. In 2009, the state level reader/trainer held an annual recertification and was responsible for ongoing in-services. As one outcome, Iowa's Writing Certificates increased from 463 issued in PY 2008 to 578 in PY 2009. (This was an increase of 115 certificates.)

### State and National Conferences

One individual was funded to participate in the CASAS Summer Institute.

## **Future Staff Development Plans:**

### **ABE Institute**

The ABE Institute will hold its conference, "Navigating the Winds of Change," on July 16 & 17, 2009 at Marshalltown, IA. The keynote speaker will be Richard Cooper, PhD, eminent authority on learning disabilities.

### **CASAS Implementation Training**

A CASAS IT will be offered in Fall 2009 for Reading and Math, a Writing re-certification, and TOPSpro training.

### **Monitoring Visits**

All Community Colleges will continue to have an annual monitoring review: a one/two-day site visit or annual desk-top monitoring review each year. This process will allow the State Director of Adult Literacy, State Staff Development Consultant and Federal Data Consultant to review the findings of the previous year, observe classrooms, and meet staff. ABE Coordinators will have an opportunity to travel to another college and be a part of the review. In addition, the monitoring process will allow for a check on compliance with the federal ABE grant. Aspects of the visits include: selection criteria, benchmark and reporting, staff development, outreach and cooperative agreements, curriculum and instruction, English literacy/civics and observations. To facilitate the monitoring process, a rubric has been developed that identifies exemplary, intermediate and base level standards of excellence. The Adult Literacy Sub-committee for the Monitoring Instrument will review this document and process annually for revision/modification purposes.

### **Study Circles**

Facilitation will continue to be given to programs who wish to use NCSALL study circles, which are research-based. Areas identified by the field as needful include Retention and Reading strategies, which will be priority targets.

### **CAELA Project**

Iowa was selected to participate in the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) Network from July 2008 through 2010. This project is intended to improve and enhance the design and delivery of professional development offered to practitioners working with adult English language learners. A needs survey and application process for prospective local trainers were the first steps of a Training of Trainers (TOT) project, which was selected by the CAELA steering committee. Training for the Iowa trainers was targeted for spring 2009, with the overall goal to broaden Iowa's resource base for effective trainers in research-based ESL strategies. The TOT was held April 9-10, 2009 for Iowa's seven ESL Regional Specialists in Des Moines, IA, which had a focus on multi-level lessons. Coordination meetings will be held at locations for the ABE Institute and Iowa Language and Cultural Conference (ICLC) on a semi-annual basis; and 3-6 Tri-fold (fall/spring) regional trainings will be held during 2009-2010. ESL Regional Specialists will follow with technical assistance to their regions as needed. In Spring 2010, Iowa's steering committee team will meet and report outcomes at a national meeting in Washington, D.C.

### **Learning Disabilities**

Iowa will be hosting a regional *Learning to Achieve* training from the National Institute of Literacy (NIFL) during Summer 2009. Also, keynote and breakout sessions will be conducted by Richard Cooper PhD at the ABE Institute in Summer 2009, with videotaped sessions to be placed in the Iowa Literacy Resource Center for circulation.

***Describe any significant findings from the Eligible Agency's evaluation of the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities based on the core indicators of performance.***

The following observations were made relative to the evaluation of the effectiveness of Iowa's programs for adult literacy and an analysis of Iowa's benchmark performance goals for Program Year 2009.

1. Iowa experienced a 6.5% increase in NRS reported enrollment with a 16% increase in ESL. ABE (1.1 percent) and ASE (1 percent) reported slightly higher enrollments for fiscal year 2009. This also indicates a direction we need to go in offering professional development opportunities to better prepare instructors to serve this population.
2. We saw decreases in the pre/post assessment percentages of ABE (-5%), ASE (-3%) however, ESL had pre/post assessment percentage gains of 4 percent. There is work to do to refine the pre/post assessment percentages. Professional development in coding and data-driven instruction will be implemented. A total of 82% of learners received pre-post assessments across the three instructional programs which represented a 3 percent decrease over program year 2008.
3. The major areas for program improvement are in ABE Intermediate Low, ABE Intermediate High, ASE Low, and ESL Advanced. With a continued, concentrated professional development effort in these areas, our goal is to improve teacher preparation and ultimately, student success. In addition to the EFL improvement efforts, Iowa will continue to pursue high levels of pre/post assessment percentages.

***Describe how the Eligible Agency has supported the integration of activities sponsored under Title II with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities. Include a description of how the eligible agency is being represented on the Local Workforce Investment Boards, adult education's involvement on the State Workforce Investment Board, the provision of core and other services through the One-Stop system and an estimate of the Title II funds being used to support activities and services through the One-Stop delivery system.***

The Iowa community college consortium based adult literacy delivery system has successfully integrated the activities sponsored under Title II with other relevant adult education, career development and employment and training activities. The integration has been achieved through the cooperation, collaboration and coordination efforts achieved through the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Workforce Development and Iowa Department of Human Services and Iowa Department of Corrections working collaboratively to achieve common goals and objectives. The Title II component has been identified as the basic literacy skills component of the overall WIA state level collaborative efforts. The local adult literacy coordinator serves as the adult education representative on the Local Workforce Investment Board. The provision of core and other services is delineated in the state level MOU. A rough estimate would indicate that approximately 2-5% of Title II funds are used to support activities through the One-Stop delivery system.

With our WIA 503 incentive grant, a new level of partnership is taking place on the state and local levels between adult literacy and Iowa Workforce Development. The collaboration is supporting ALWI- adult literacy for the workforce in Iowa, which requires local adult literacy programs to build partnerships to meet local employment needs and prepare communities for the future.

***Describe successful activities and services supported with EL Civics funds, including the number of programs receiving EL Civics grants and an estimate of the number of adult learners served.***

The EL Civics grants are used to support the EL population enrolled in civics and citizenship classes. The EL Civics classes are held in all 15 community college consortium sites throughout the state. The addition of the EL Civics funds has enabled the local programs to increase the number of classes to meet

the educational needs of the immigrant population. As a result, the EL enrollment constitutes 38% of Iowa's total adult literacy enrollment. A total of 3,703 learners enrolled in the EL Civics program in fiscal year 2009, representing an increase of 16 percent for fiscal year 2009.

The most significant, successful activity related to our EL population is participation in the **CAELA Project**. The State Staff Development Consultant and the State Director have been involved in the project from its inception, and Iowa will continue to support this effort through training and technical assistance. To support the CAELA Project in Iowa, a text was purchased for the trainers entitled, *Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL*, by Jill Bell. Other activities and Services that supported EL/Civics included a presentation by the ESL State trainer regarding the new citizenship test training, speaker at the Iowa Culture and Language Conference and participation and materials for staff to attend a Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop.

### **Future Direction**

Iowa is eligible for a WIA Incentive Grant for the grant period of July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2011. The focus of the grant will be the design and implementation of Adult Literacy for the Workforce in Iowa (ALWI). This effort will drive the professional development efforts and local program plans across the state. This is an opportunity for local programs to research economic and educational needs of their communities and to design, with key internal and external partnerships, an approach that will provide adult literacy students with transition opportunities to post-secondary and/or job training and placement. The statewide initiative, although customized in each community college, will provide a foundation for Iowa's future direction to meet the needs of the state, community colleges and students.

Adult Literacy Coordinators will continue to meet two to four times a year face to face or through the ICN (Iowa Communications Network). In addition, we will continue to have monthly conference calls during which pressing issues are discussed and plans made for future meetings and events.

The mission of the Adult Literacy Coordinators is: **The Adult Literacy Coordinators will develop and implement a quality, effective program that assists adults to gain knowledge and skills necessary for employment, citizenship and self-sufficiency.**

To define the work of the coordinators, six work-teams have been identified. The work-teams were defined by a needs assessment workshop that took place in August, 2007. The work-teams are:

- **To develop ongoing opportunities for professional development (sharing and training)**
- **To investigate options for a fair and equitable funding formula**
- **To review benchmarks and Iowa's accountability system**
- **To research, recommend and prepare to implement Program Innovations to be proactive in meeting the needs of the future**
- **To develop guidelines for selection of research-based curriculum for ABE, GED, ESL**
- **To develop a statewide marketing campaign to promote, support and advocate for adult literacy**

**PY 2008 Matrix Demonstrating How Iowa's Activities, Programs and Projects Support the Implementation of the Goals of the State Plan and Purposes of the Plan Extension**

Activity, Program or Project	State Plan Goals			Purposes of Plan Extension		
	Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;	Assist adults who are parents obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children;	Assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.	Provide a comprehensive blue print for implementation of Title II of the Act;	Serve as a basis for both immediate and long-range planning and continuous, systematic evaluation of program effectiveness;	Provide basis for common understanding among Iowa's literacy partners, other interested entities and the U.S. Department of Education.
ILRC- NRS	√	√	√	√	√	√
Collection Development	√	√	√			
Communications				√	√	√
Workshops	√	√	√	√		√
TOPSpro Enterprise	√	√	√		√	
State Staff Development Activities (CASAS Content Standards, Study Circles, CAELA, Naturalization Test Training)	√	√	√	√	√	
ABE Institute	√	√	√		√	
Iowa Literacy Council				√	√	
CASAS Training/Trainers	√	√	√		√	
Monitoring Visits				√	√	√
SSD Committee	√	√	√			√
Family Literacy	√	√	√			
Writing Skills	√	√	√			
State and National Conferences	√	√	√		√	