

Alabama Narrative Report 2009-2010

Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship.

Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General, United Nations

For most people, the ability to read, write and compute mathematically can open the door to more choices, pathways, and opportunities. Yet, according to the 2000 census, more than 800,000 Alabamians sixteen years of age or older have neither graduated from high school, nor earned a GED credential; for them, this means fewer career options, lower earning capability, and more challenges for their families. As the fiscal agent for federal and state adult education funding, the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education provides grants to eligible agencies that help individuals become more literate and obtain the knowledge and skills that they need to can improve their lives.

Alabama's adult education students vary greatly in age, years of schooling, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic status, English proficiency, and prior knowledge and experience. Some learners study to prepare for the GED Test; others come to learn English; some want to develop their literacy skills to help their children and families; some may need to brush up for new job responsibilities. Their reasons for attending our classes are as diverse as the population itself. Regardless of the student's functioning level, experienced staff can help.

Flexible schedules are a hallmark of adult education classes that are offered in various locations throughout all counties in Alabama. Classes are offered during the day and evening. Based on a student's abilities, instructional methodologies may range from one-on-one instruction to computer aided instruction. For students who may be more independent or who are not able to attend in person, distance education instruction is available. All of these services are provided at no cost to the student.

In 2009-2010, enrollment increased to 25,153, a 6% increase compared to the previous year. A total of 17,181 students increased their Educational Functioning Level. The number of adult education students earning a GED credential increased by 9%. Records indicate that 4,333 students earned the State of Alabama High School Equivalency Diploma (GED), and that the program experienced a 27% increase over the previous year in the number of students pursuing postsecondary education or training.

The adult education program transitioned to an October through September funding cycle so that the grant year would be aligned with Alabama's budget year. For the period of FY 2009-2010 a performance based funding formula was used for the second year that balances performance, enrollment and geographic need. A competitive application process yielded 26 programs that were selected for funding totaling \$18,992,802.

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.

Waiver of GED Fees

Beginning October 1, 2009, the test fee for eligible adult education students was reduced to \$25. The first-time pass rate for this group of students is 89%, well above the general population's pass rate of 62%. On October 1, 2010, the entire test fee of \$50 was waived for eligible adult education students.

Professional Development

The Department sponsored several regional professional development workshops for faculty and administrators. Recorded professional development sessions of key topics have been posted on the Department's website and given to each provider in DVD form. State staff members have provided onsite training sessions for providers upon request. Numerous state wide meetings have been held that addressed a variety of topics. A state wide adult education conference was held during the summer of 2009. The three day event was attended by over 650 adult education program directors, instructors, support personnel and volunteers.

Career Readiness Credential.

Adult Education continues to support the Career Readiness Credential (CRC). Since 2006, state-appropriated adult education funds have been used to reimburse programs for administering the WorkKeys assessment to adult education students. During FY 2009-2010 there were 1,674 credentials issued to adult education students. Since 2006, adult education students have earned 7,761 credentials.

Middle College

Alabama Department of Postsecondary's Adult Education Program implemented a Middle College Initiative with adult education state funds. The Middle College Initiative allows a high performing GED prep student to complete his/her GED and up to two career technical courses during a semester. All college fees, tuition, books, and equipment are funded by Adult Education state funds. Three pilots are currently being developed.

Describe any significant finding for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities based on the core indicators of performance.

Alabama continues to improve its rankings among all states in core achievements. Currently Alabama is one of the highest performing states in meeting federal goals relating to student academic gains.

The following table indicates Alabama's 2009-10 achievement of the core indicators of performance:

Performance Measures	State Goal	State Achievement
Beginning Literacy	72% of these learners will complete this level	71.5%
Beginning ABE	68% of these learners will complete this level	68%
Low Intermediate ABE	70% of these learners will complete this level	69%
High Intermediate ABE	64% of these learners will complete this level	67.6%
Low Adult Secondary Education	68 % of these learners will complete this level	71.4%
Beginning ESL Literacy	58% of these learners will complete this level	67%
Low Beginning ESL	66% of these learners will complete this level	75%
High Beginning ESL	68% of these learners will complete this level	78.8%
Low Intermediate ESL	62% of these learners will complete this level	75%
High Intermediate ESL	66% of these learners will complete this level	75.8%

Advanced ESL	60% of these learners will complete this level	49.4%
Placement in postsecondary education/training program *	70% will achieve this goal	77%
Placement in unsubsidized employment *	84% will achieve this goal	86%
Retention in job *	87% will achieve this goal	79%
High School Completion *	85% will achieve this goal	83%

- Only those students with this goal were measured.

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 in 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 system.

Adult Education continues to support the Career Readiness Credential (CRC). Since 2006, state-appropriated adult education funds have been used to reimburse programs for administering the WorkKeys assessment to adult education students. During FY 2009-2010 there were 1,674 credentials issued to adult education students. Since 2006, adult education students have earned 7,761 credentials.

All Adult Education Program Directors serve as members of the Local Workforce Investment Boards. The state staff participates in Regional Workforce Investment meetings and initiatives.

All Alabama Career Centers have an adult education component. Adult Education is integral to the success of Career Centers across the state.

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

Twelve programs received E.L. Civics grants in FY 2009-2010. There were 1,394 students served. The Alabama Adult Education Program has a strong collaboration with community partners committed to providing services to the English as a Second Language (ESL) population. The collaborative partners such as, community based organizations, faith based organizations, and libraries provide integrated English and Civics Education services to the increasing ESL population in Alabama.