

North Dakota
Adult Education and Family Literacy
2009-2010 Narrative Report

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 ND Manual of Accountability and State Standards (ND-MASS) is annually reviewed, updated and disseminated to all Adult Learning Centers (ALCs). This manual is a State Leadership activity to provide guidance and assist the ALCs in the program improvement process regarding the implementation of Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs across the state. The Department of Public Instruction is committed to providing strong leadership to all 17 local programs to enhance policy, practice and the continuous program improvement process. The ND-MASS contains sections on orientation, registration and enrollment, assessment, goal setting and LEAP resources, gathering student data, student performance, program improvement, exiting and follow up, record keeping and program evaluation.

In preparation of the pending WIA reauthorization, the national common core standards and the new GED series, ND has begun to develop a professional development base to better prepare for and respond to the changes and opportunities these major initiatives will offer. State Leadership funds supported the development of a Professional Development Advisory Council; ALC staff representing instruction, administration, ESL/ELCivics, displaced homemakers program, and technology that form the 'front line' team to work in concert with the State Office to develop a three year professional development strategic plan, goals, activities and implement multiple formats for professional development delivery. A PD needs assessment completed every other year, as well as conference evaluations, state Performance Indicators, monitoring reports, meeting agendas and information from state level partners were used to create the strategic plan.

This past June, the ND Adult Education Resource Center was relocated from the Williston ALC where it had been housed for four (4) years to the State Office. Its purpose is to provide educational information and resources to teachers and administrators involved with adult education. Conceptually, the Resource Center was developed in the 1970's as a research-based 'vehicle' to provide a variety of instructional, curricular and classroom materials to users of the ND Adult Education system without having to make individual center purchases, similarly to that of a library check out and return system. Over the years, the Resource Center has gone from an inventory of hundreds to now a handful of materials; the availability and access to various products via internet has simply changed the way users seek, retrieve, use and maintain information - these days, everyone tends to have their own 'virtual' library of references and resources. Currently, the volume of Resource Center materials can be easily stored on one shelf. Over the next year, the PD Advisory Council will work with the ALC's to identify needs for Resource Center inventory and assess how to best meet their needs.

In collaboration with the state Adult Education Association - North Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning (NDALL) - State Leadership funds provided support for the annual Adult

Education Fall Conference held September 23-24, 2010. The Conference was attended by 75 participants from both the Adult Learning Centers and Even Start Programs. Conference evaluations were extremely positive and additional professional development opportunities will focus on adjacent activities to deepen the application of the Conference outcomes. To compliment the conference, the annual GED training was held on September 22, 2010 which allowed several GED training participants to attend the Adult Education Conference and provided the opportunity for networking and learning, particularly for those GED administrators who are not housed within an Adult Learning Center.

Another key component of State Leadership activities during 2009-2010 was working with the NDALL Board and membership to accomplish the following:

- Review and update the NDALL mission, vision and goals
- Review and update NDALL bylaws
- Develop a membership booklet
- Consolidate the subcommittees and related tasks and created a process for initiation of activities and evaluation of goals
- Update the website
- Reaffirm the content and dissemination process of a monthly electronic newsletter

The state office initiated a monitoring schedule for the ALCs. All ALCs are monitored on a three year schedule; annually if there has been a change in administration, previous monitoring compliance findings or upon request. A self assessment process is used which allows all ALCs to evaluate their programs prior to the site visit. Eight (8) ALCs are scheduled to be monitored in 2010.

Pursuant to the Federal monitoring Corrective Action Plan (CAP), the state office is working with the DPI MIS unit, state ITD and Montana OPI - Adult Education to further evaluate their data collection (MABLE) system. The upgrades to the current SIMS system will meet the OVEA and NRS requirements and will be in place by July 2011.

The state office has diligently worked with state partners and key legislators regarding additional state funding appropriations; the 2011-2013 DPI optional appropriation request (OAR) includes a request for an additional \$1,800,000 in adult education funding. Additionally, DPI will seek to amend HB 1400 to include GED students and develop criteria for post-secondary scholarship opportunities.

State staff provides ongoing technical assistance and information to all ALC staff as needed throughout the year on a variety of related topics. Of interest this year was the discussion and reaction regarding the NRS proposed changes to the Performance Indicators.

State staff continues to coordinate program services with partner agencies at the state level as well as the local level. Primary partners include the Workforce Development Council and subcommittees to include:

- a) Youth Development Council;
- b) Workforce Intelligence Council (responsible for developing a Workforce Intelligence system to meet the workforce intelligence needs of partner agencies, organizations, communities,

education, business and industry, students, parents and policy makers. The Council identifies the workforce intelligence needs of the system partners and stakeholders, identifies what workforce intelligence currently exists and where it is located, identifies gaps in existing workforce intelligence, identifies methods to fill these gaps, and develops methods to disseminate to all partners and stakeholders qualitative and quantitative workforce intelligence. The Council generates recommendations to improve workforce intelligence coordination, to insure that it is responsive in addressing the needs of policy leaders, state agencies and institution administrators of workforce development workforce training); and,

c) Governor's Workforce Summit Executive Planning Committee.

There is a strong maintenance of collaboration with state partners: North Dakota Job Service, North Dakota Department of Human Services, Career & Technical Education, North Dakota University Systems and the North Dakota Department of Commerce. Two new partnerships this past year included the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and the NDUS Chancellor's Adult Learners Council. The ND SLDS project has resulted in collaborative projects as it relates to data collection and analysis of data use, evaluation of results and agency partnerships. The NDUS Chancellor's Adult Learners Council is committed to developing, implementing and sharing adult education best practices to make post-secondary education accessible and affordable to all North Dakotans. The council works to increase public and policymaker awareness of relationship between education and economic viability and to improve collaboration among public, private and tribal colleges. Additionally, the Council strives to increase community colleges' capacity to connect adult learners to career pathways and promote the development of strategies that support students in the completion of their postsecondary certification and degree programs. And, there remains a long and strong history and relationship with local school districts, institutions for higher education, and regional career and technical education centers.

Following are four examples of partner collaboration this year:

Williston ALC: The ALC had been housed for years in a small trailer on the far side of the college campus. Taking a campus tour with the interviewing committee, a perspective president interviewee inquired as to its use. Sadly, no one on the committee knew what was housed in the trailer. He immediately crossed the campus in sub zero temperatures to further inspect and found 17 students and 3 staff diligently working on their ABE/GED goals in tight quarters. After a lengthy visit, he promised that if hired, he would provide a better environment. Indeed, Dr. Ray Nadolny was hired; two months later, the ALC was relocated from the trailer (which was destroyed) to the hub of the Student Center. President Nadolny visits the ALC often and encourages students to take part in all campus activities and to return as 'college students' seeking a post secondary degree. ALC graduation exercises are now incorporated into the college ceremony.

Wahpeton ALC: This ALC was currently housed in a petite room in the basement of the city library. Accessible via bus and centrally located in the community, the Center was small and offered minimal space for one on one instruction, testing and administrative responsibilities. The ND State College of Science was approached about housing the ALC near the current GED testing center to streamline activities and also encourage students to 'see themselves' acclimated in a college setting in the hopes of increasing the post secondary enrollment the college offered.

College administration was supportive and the ALC relocated to the campus in August to a collection of rooms six times as large as the previous location. ABE and GED enrollment has already increased.

Bismarck ALC: The Bismarck ALC, while in a newer and roomier facility, was quickly busting at the seams and in need of more classrooms. The limited space resulted in student waiting lists. A strong partnership between Bismarck State College, the Career Academy and the school district envisioned the multiple opportunities of relocation for both the three institutions and for prospective students. As a result, the Bismarck ALC is slated to relocate in January 2011 into 7000 square ft of classrooms on the college campus and across the street from the Career Academy where vocational / technical classes will be available to students.

Ft Totten ALC: Many students attending the Ft Totten ALC are working towards their GED as a condition of employment at the Spirit Lake Casino, a significant area employer where wages, benefits and advancement opportunities are strong. The ALC Director realized that transportation and work schedules were barriers given the distance of the ALC in relation to the Casino, which resulted in many students not obtaining their GED within the required timeframe upon hire, who then lost their job. Subsequently, the ALC and Casino HR division collectively collaborated to hold classes at the Casino. A room was provided for instruction three hours before and three hours after the midday shift break (as well as meals). This allowed students to come to work before a shift and allowed students to remain after a shift to receive instruction. Additionally, ALC staff was asked by HR management to assess specific work skill sets and incorporate various concepts into instruction. This partnership resulted in more students obtaining their GED within a user friendly schedule and also improved work-related skills.

2010-2011 Adult Education state program goals are as follows:

- 1) Ensure the financial needs of ND Adult Education programs with federal and state appropriations for existing ALC sites to ensure all students have equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities on demand. In addition to local program infrastructure maintenance and growth, if funding is available, create 12 satellite sites in rural areas of greatest need.

Short-term goals:

- Identify geographic pockets of non-GED students, economic development indicators and educational partners
- Identify legislative champions and develop strategies for 2011 legislative session;
- Monitor federal funding status

- 2) Ensure the adult education infrastructure functions in an exemplary model to meet federal standards for quality student outcomes and services which includes have effective teachers.

Short-term goals:

- Provide annual training on enrollment, data collection, follow-up process/procedures
- Review quarterly and annual Performance Indicators with ALC staff
- Conduct monthly audits on ALC SIMS data
- Convert the SIMS system into NRS approved system
- Conduct monitoring of all ALC sites

- Use the PD Advisory Council to identify professional development needs of ALC staff according to the PD strategic plan to meet those needs
- 3) Maintain and expand local and statewide collaboratives and partnerships to
- a. maximize resources for ALC sites, staff and students needs, to include recruitment strategies where indicated, and
 - b. identify and meet economic development and workforce needs to advance student outcomes and opportunities.
- Short-term goals:*
- Actively participate in meetings which promote the mission, vision and goals of North Dakota's ALC program
 - Provide presentations and information to new partner groups which can advance and strengthen the ALC program
 - Explore options for social marketing strategies
 - Analyze Job Service and Commerce data regarding workforce needs and develop communication plan to ALCs with timely information
- 4) Explore opportunities for ALC sites to have access to staff with proficiencies in counseling/social work, special education and career advisors.
- Short-term goal:*
- Develop a strategic statement of need and identify partner groups
- 5) Offer a companion curriculum /classroom-based instruction and work-based learning to ALCs which focuses on leadership training, computer literacy, workplace skills and community service to meet academic, employability, and technical industry standards.
- Short-term goal:*
- Develop a strategic statement of need and identify partner groups
- 6) Amend HB 1400 to include GED students and develop criteria for post-secondary scholarship opportunities so all students have access to college and career pathways.
- Short-term goals:*
- Identify partners, meet with partners to inform of omission and anticipated outcomes, research similar national programs, determine appropriate criteria
 - Identify legislative champion, provide testimony to Education Interim Committee and Governor's Education Commission

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 State Office, members of the Governor's Workforce Development Council and local ALC programs have all worked diligently to monitor and evaluate North Dakota's Adult Education and Family Literacy program Performance Indicators. While we have had multiple discussions about our inability to achieve some of our Performance Indicators and eligibility for a WIA incentive grant, by consensus, stakeholders are proud of our Indicator ranking and pleased with the program accomplishments.

North Dakota has not met some of the Performance Indicators the past three years; since 2003, ND has received four (4) WIA incentive grants from OVAE for meeting Performance Indicators in conjunction with partners Job Services and Career & Technical Education. The ND Performance Indicators are high; in four measures our performance for 2008-2009 was almost twice as high as the national average. The state is ranked #1 for ESL Beginning Literacy and ESL High Beginning and in the top 10 for seven other measures.

The State office facilitated several partner meetings this past year to review and analyze the Performance Indicators to further assess those measures which fell below the target, what strategies have been put in place to address that and how we could continue to exceed the OVAE negotiated targets. North Dakota is one of the most rural and frontier areas of the United States; 46% of the state's population live in the four metropolitan counties. With a population of approximately 650,000, ND is one of the smallest state populations. While these traits lend itself to quality services, it also creates difficulty in effective service delivery. Given fluid factors beyond our control, it is becoming more difficult to continually improve upon great results:

- It is difficult to mandate attendance to reach the 60 hour rule for post-testing with an audience of voluntary students who come and go at will;
- Projecting progress one year in advance when economic and social factors can change quickly make the process of Performance Indicator selection difficult;
- Many rural sites serve small numbers of students. When one or two students don't remain in the program long enough to be post tested, no progress is recorded. Consequently, the percentage drops significantly and the absence of educational gain is then reflected in lower Indicators.

The ND Workforce Development Council recommends OVAE assess the opportunities for states to be eligible for WIA Incentive grants based on overall indicator averages or consider Performance Indicators met if they exceed and remain over 70% rather than document continuous improvement in each of 15 categories.

Pursuant to the Federal monitoring Corrective Action Plan (CAP), the state office is working with the DPI MIS unit, state ITD and Montana OPI - Adult Education to further evaluate their data collection (MABLE) system as required by NRS and OVAE. The upgrades to the current SIMS system will meet the OVEA and NRS requirements and is expected to be in place by July 2011.

As a result of the diligent work of the state's Longitudinal Data System and participation of the DPI Adult Education staff, the capabilities for highly effective and efficient data matching will become more evident. This process will still be complimented with personal survey at the local program level.

North Dakota's economy remains strong; the October unemployment rate was 3.2%. There continues to be a strong demand for employees across the state; as a result, potential adult students are currently working rather than attending school. However, those who are coming to the Adult Learning Centers have significantly lower skills. In addition, students between the ages of 16-21 seeking adult education services continue to grow faster than any other age range.

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.

North Dakota is a single service area; as a result, all eligible agencies continue to work collaboratively and effectively in meeting common goals and outcomes. Through the Workforce Development Council (quarterly meetings) and its sub-committees (monthly meetings), all partners have opportunities to share program needs, successes, data, and reporting.

State staff continues to coordinate program services with partner agencies at the state level as well as the local level. Primary partners include the Workforce Development Council, as well as sub-committees to include: a) Youth Development Council; b) Workforce Intelligence Council (responsible for developing a Workforce Intelligence system to meet the workforce intelligence needs of partner agencies, organizations, communities, education, business and industry, students, parents and policy makers. The Council identifies the workforce intelligence needs of the system partners and stakeholders, identifies what workforce intelligence currently exists and where it is located, identifies gaps in existing workforce intelligence, identifies methods to fill these gaps, and develops methods to disseminate to all partners and stakeholders qualitative and quantitative workforce intelligence. The Council generates recommendations to improve workforce intelligence coordination, to insure that it is responsive in addressing the needs of policy leaders, state agencies and institution and program administrators of workforce development workforce training), c) Governor's Workforce Summit Executive Planning Committee, North Dakota Job Service, North Dakota Department of Human Services, Career & Technical Education, North Dakota University Systems (NDUS Chancellor's Adult Learners Council) and the North Dakota Department of Commerce. A new partnership with the SLDS project has resulted in collaborative projects as it relates to data collection and analysis of data use, evaluation of results and agency partnerships. Additionally, there remains a long and strong history and relationship with local school districts, institutions for higher education, and regional career and technical education centers.

The State Director of Adult Education is a Governor appointed member of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, actively participates in many related committees in representing the Department as well as the Title II programs.

Local ALCs, which are funded by Title II funds, maintain a strong working relationship with all local WIA partner agencies. This includes Job Services, Human Services, education, higher education, Career & Technical Centers, Job Corp, business and government.

In 2010, North Dakota Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, allocated and spent in excess of \$68,000 in ARRA funding to supply multiple ALCs with ergonomic related chairs, desks and equipment to better serve clients/students with disabilities.

The State does not contribute Title II funds to support activities and services through the one-stop delivery system; however, we do share non-cash resources at the state and local level.

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

North Dakota receives the minimum allocation (\$60,000) for ELCivics. In the past year, Lutheran Social Services, a statewide social services ministry that provides a lifespan of care to individuals, families and communities has supported over 470 New American adults (and approximately 550 children) transition to North Dakota; estimates for 2011 are expected to be slightly greater. Six (6) local programs are funded which have the largest concentration of New American (ESL) students; all but 3 programs report serving some population of New Americans. These six programs have effectively implemented the following activities:

- a. Provided citizenship classes.
- b. Civics instruction for all ESL students.
- c. Provided training to the staff on Common Ground curriculum.
- d. Developed civics curriculum for entry-level language classes.
- e. Field trips to historic, community and cultural sites.

The need for ESL, tutor training and BEST Plus training significantly increased this past year, as reflective of the numbers transitioning to the state and those seeking services at the Adult Learning Centers. Consequently, North Dakota now has a BEST Plus state trainer who has offered multiple trainings across the state and provides follow up and technical assistance as warranted/requested. During the reporting year, ND served 410 students under the ESL category.