

Arkansas Narrative Report 2010-2011

A. 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.

AALRC:

The Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) is funded through the Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative by the Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ADCE/AED). It was established in 1990 to provide a source for identification, evaluation, and dissemination of materials and information to adult education/literacy programs. In 1994 the AALRC's vision and mission was expanded:

Vision Statement:

"Arkansas Adult Education/Literacy providers' access needed information and resources to enable Arkansas' adult learners to reach their full educational and economic potential."

Mission Statement:

"To operate an enhanced network of communication and coordination that provides information, resources, research, professional development, and technical assistance, and that facilitates collaboration to benefit Arkansas Adult Education/Literacy providers."

Staff:

The AALRC is located in Little Rock, Arkansas. The center has seven full-time employees, which includes a Director, Professional Development Coordinator, Information Technology Specialist, Disabilities Project Manager, Media Coordinator, Secretary, and Administrative Assistant. State funds support employee salaries while federal funds are used for the fulfillment of our mission.

Training Opportunities:

The AALRC supports the agency goal of "developing a strategic plan for effective delivery of lifelong career development and workforce education" through training opportunities and technical support. During the 2010-2011 fiscal year training opportunities provided by the AALRC for adult education and literacy councils included: ESL Institute, Administrators' Seminars, Instructional Strategies for the Classroom, Literacy Strategies, AERIS Management Information System, BEST Plus, BEST Plus Refresher, SmartBoard, Social Media, Movie Maker, Office 2007, Inspiration, Google Docs, Parental Involvement, LD Comprehensive, Distance Learning, Literacy Task Analysis, Summer Professional Development, MySkills Tutor Software Training, Woodcock Johnson, New Director Training, Teknimedia, Arkansas Ideas Portal Workshop, Best Practices, WAGE, Adult Numeracy Instruction Professional Development, Teaching with Manipulatives, Health Literacy, ESL Basics, LD 101, LD 201, Regional Summer Institute, and Test of Adult Basic Education Training.

Professional Development:

The AALRC also supports practitioners and trainers through professional development opportunities at state and national conferences. Those include: AR Association for Continuing and Adult Education & Arkansas Literacy Council, Inc. Conference (AACAE/ALC), Learning Disabilities Association (LDA), Commission on Adult Basic Education Conference (COABE), Hot Springs Institute for Technology, Project Ideal, Standards in Action Innovations Training, LINC'S Region 2 Regional Resource Center

Training, and Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference (CSUN), and Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education (SITE) Conference.

The AALRC also supports local programs by maintaining a current library of materials, providing research support/information, purchasing/distributing software and materials, and upgrading/redistribution of equipment.

Arkansas requires adult education directors, instructors and counselors to be certified in adult education within four years of initial full-time employment. The AALRC supports this effort by providing tuition reimbursement for these individuals.

The AALRC supports the ACE/AED agency goal of “providing an effective communication system that is involved, informative, and interactive,” by holding statewide directors meetings, numerous committee meetings, publishing a statewide newsletter, publishing a directory of literacy services, and maintaining a web-site (<http://www.aalrc.org>).

B. 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.

There are areas in which Arkansas has done an effective job in meeting core indicators of performance and areas that could use some improvement. Arkansas scored at or above the national average for the performance measures of ABE Beginning Literacy, ABE Intermediate Low, ABE High Intermediate, ASE Low, and ESL Low Intermediate and the core follow-up outcome measures of Retain Employment and Obtain a GED. At the same time, our performance improved or stayed the same over the 2010-11 year in ABE Beginning Basic, ABE Intermediate Low, ASE Low, ESL High Beginning, ESL Low Intermediate, and ESL High Intermediate. Moreover, Arkansas increased its performance in all of the core follow-up outcome measures over the 2009-10 year. Our highest percentage gains compared to the 2009-10 performance year were in ESL Low Intermediate (+6%) and ESL High Intermediate (+5%), Entered Employment (+5%), Retain Employment (+5%), Obtain a GED (=5%), and Enter Postsecondary/Training (+6%). On the other hand, our highest drop in performance was ESL Advanced (-6%). In addition, the number of students who entered post-secondary education and employment was below the national standards during 2009-10.

During our spring Administrators’ meeting, we shared the state’s 2009-10 performance measures with our adult education programs and literacy councils. We showed them the state’s performance measures and how we compared to the national average. In addition, we explained how the core indicators worked and how many students needed to meet the goal in each category in order for us to meet or exceed the performance measures.

The statewide averages for the core indicators of performance and the follow-up measures for the last three program years are found in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: **National Averages, Performance** (2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011), and Targets (2010-2011)

ARKANSAS

CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE	National Average	2007-2008 Performance	2008-2009 Performance	2009-2010 Performance	2010-11 Performance	2010-2011 TARGETS
ABE Beginning Literacy	42%	42%	42%	47%	46%	43%
ABE Beginning Basic	41%	41%	41%	39%	39%	42%
ABE Intermediate Low	40%	41%	41%	40%	40%	42%
ABE Intermediate High	36%	42%	42%	42%	40%	43%
ASE Low	38%	42%	42%	42%	43%	43%
ESL Beginning Literacy	39%	25%	33%	30%	29%	34%
ESL Low Beginning	50%	38%	32%	33%	31%	33%
ESL High Beginning	48%	44%	44%	37%	40%	45%
ESL Low Intermediate	44%	39%	48%	40%	46%	49%
ESL High Intermediate	40%	36%	38%	30%	35%	39%
ESL Advanced	30%	25%	32%	27%	21%	33%
Enter Employment	68%	50%	48%	39%	44%	49%
Retain Employment	54%	67%	67%	62%	67%	68%
Obtain a GED	57%	63%	72%	80%	85%	73%
Enter Post-Secondary/Training	62%	26%	33%	38%	44%	34%
AVERAGE	46%	41%	44%	42%	40%	45%

Another criterion we use to evaluate how effective our programs are in meeting their goals is by looking at a program's Effective and Efficiency (E&E) score. The E&E calculation is based on the number of students enrolled and uses "weighting" to give fair weight to each student with a goal. Programs are required to meet or exceed 80% of the state's negotiated core indicators of performance. A program that fails to meet E&E the first year must meet with its program advisor and develop a written improvement plan aimed at the program attaining E&E status which will be submitted to the Adult Education Division within 30 days following the review conference. Programs that do not meet or exceed 80% of performance benchmarks for a second consecutive year will be assigned a state technical assistance team to assist the program in addressing its deficiencies and developing a program improvement plan. Programs not meeting or exceeding 80% of performance benchmarks for three consecutive years will be submitted to the State Board of Career Education for appropriate action prior to continuation of funding.

During that first program year of implementation, 2007-2008, twenty-eight (out of 77) adult education and literacy programs failed to meet 80 percent of the core indicators of performance based on the E&E calculations. As a result, those programs were required to develop and implement a program improvement plan that was closely monitored by the state office. In 2008-2009, only two programs failed to meet E&E requirements. Those two programs were successful in meeting E&E during program year 2009-2010. The majority of these programs, eleven of them, were community-based literacy councils.

During program year 2010-11, seven programs failed to meet E&E requirements, two, of which, are on their second consecutive year of not being E&E. As stated earlier, these programs will meet with state staff to discuss their E&E results, and will submit a program improvement plan for 2011-2012. The programs' E&E will be monitored by the state staff on a regular basis and all efforts will be made to ensure that these programs meet or exceed E&E and the federal benchmarks during 2011-2012.

C. 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 Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (WIB), 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 Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ACDE/AED) responds to both the employer and the potential employee to help enhance the local workforce skills through its Arkansas **Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy™** (WAGE) program. The WAGE program is designed to ensure that unemployed and underemployed Arkansans have the academic skills necessary for success in the workplace. WAGE places business and industry at the center of an effort to redefine basic skills required by today's workplace. WAGE includes 112 basic skill competencies identified in the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and deemed essential by the nation's and Arkansas's employers. As part of WAGE, educators perform literacy task analyses (LTA) for participating businesses and industries and use the results to determine what basic skills are necessary for competent job performance, particularly in areas that

significantly impact production, profit and safety. For an adult education program to become WAGE-certified, it must have a WAGE advisory committee that must consist of more than 50 percent business and industry members. The local WAGE advisory committee chairperson must also be from business and industry.

Community WAGE alliance members include the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Economic Development, the Workforce Investment Boards and other local economic development agencies and boards, postsecondary educational providers, chambers of commerce, employment training and placement agencies, local businesses and industries, and county and city governments. A WAGE student who successfully completes the program earns a state-issued certificate in one or more of five areas: Industrial, Clerical, Bank Teller, and Customer Service I and II or Employability. Some WAGE centers are located in area one-stop career development centers.

The ADCE/AED is an active partner in the comprehensive **one-stop career development center** movement in Arkansas. Twenty out of 51 adult education programs are located within workforce centers or have a satellite program located there, and all of the adult education programs across the state provide services to one-stop participants. These services include the assessment of participants' basic academic and computer skills and the education of those participants to increase their skills when needed. Adult education programs also assist one-stop centers through resource sharing and, in a few cases, through the payment of rent and utilities. Several WAGE centers are also located in one-stop centers.

Adult education is represented on the local **Workforce Investment Boards** by at least one member in each of the ten regional workforce areas. In some cases, this is a local adult education provider, director, or president of a local two-year technical or community college.

The ADCE/AED in conjunction with the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Transitional Employment Board, and the Southern Good Faith Fund collaborated to develop the **Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative**. This is an initiative to improve earnings and educational attainment of low-income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-eligible adults in Arkansas. It encourages and assists those adults to gain the requisite skills to earn a marketable employability credential for immediate entry into a job or to enter college and complete a degree in order to sustain a better quality of life.

The original Career Pathways Initiative in Arkansas was developed at an adult education WAGE program located at a two-year college. This pilot was funded with a grant from the ADCE/AED and services were provided from the local adult education program's funding. Expansion of the initiative to other two-year college campuses has been supported with TANF funding. Local partnerships between adult education programs and Career Pathway programs are close and supportive, especially with adult education programs located on college campuses.

For several years, the ADCE/AED operated the **Food Stamp Employment and Training Program** through a contract with the Arkansas Department of Human Services. This program is exclusively intended for non-exempt work registrants who wish to participate in the program on a volunteer basis. This program is currently operating with Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the

Arkansas Department of Human Services and local adult education programs. The Employment and Training Arkansas State Plan is approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

The **Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate** involves collaboration between ADCE/AED, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Arkansas Workforce Centers, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and the Arkansas Department of Education, with the governor signing the official Arkansas CRC certificates. Adult education programs provide basic skills improvement through regular adult education services as well as the Key Train software. Six (6) adult education centers also provide the WorkKeys assessment which an individual must pass to receive an Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate. Recently this initiative has begun offering the Platinum CRC, which takes higher skill levels to earn. It is hoped that this move will increase the number of people who come to adult education to improve their skills in order to earn this credential.

Further evidence of collaboration is the MOUs between Arkansas Department of Career Education and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education to **match data on employment and postsecondary enrollment for NRS reports**.

Collaboration between the ADCE/AED and the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) helps adult education **students with disabilities** through referrals to adult education programs for instruction and testing and referrals from adult education programs to ARS for diagnosis of students after thorough screening. In addition, one program provides basic skills instruction at the residential Arkansas Career and Technical Institute run by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services for students with disabilities.

ADCE/AED is an active participant in the meetings and activities of the **Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative** when they meet through representation by the director of the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center.

ADCE/AED is working with ACDE/Career and Technical Education, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Chamber of Commerce, and the Arkansas Transitional Employment Board on a major initiative of the Governor's office to extensively expand the **Arkansas College and Career Planning System** for use by youth and adults. In 2009-2010, this system, supervised by ADCE, was launch as Arkansas Works. This program is piloting career coaches for adult education students and Hispanic students.

ADCE/AED participates in the **Interagency Council on the Homeless** with Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, the Arkansas Department of Education, and many local service providers.

D. 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.

During the 2010-2011 fiscal year, ADCE/AED awarded EL/Civics grants to ten local programs – eight adult education centers and two literacy councils. These ten programs served 3,481 adult learners with EL/Civics funds.

According to the Arkansas state plan for the EL/Civics grant, programs are encouraged to supplement the classroom integration of civics and ESL instruction with field trips and guest speakers. Following a classroom unit on **US government**, several EL/Civics classes took advantage of guided tours of the various agencies of state, local and county government. One program visited Washington, D.C. and Little Rock, Arkansas by way of a virtual tour while others visited the Clinton Presidential Library.

In one program, students received a hands-on experience with voting when a county clerk brought a voting machine and sample ballots to class to help students become familiar with the voting process. The clerk discussed school elections, special elections, primary elections, and general elections. She detailed the qualifications for voting and explained how to register to vote. Voter registration cards were provided for students who requested them. The clerk explained that voting gives citizens a voice in how the country, state, and local areas are run.

Many EL/Civics programs have a **Speakers' Series** to enhance community outreach. The students benefited significantly from the various community representatives visiting the classes. The information provided is valuable, particularly to immigrants new to the community. Among the agencies participating were the local women's shelter, credit counseling, public library, LULAC, college admissions office and financial aid, Career Pathways, Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas, legal aid, and the Samaritan Center, fire department, health department and various health care organizations, Hispanic Heritage Center, police department, and post office.

One program attended an Opportunity Fair where a number of employers were available to visit with them. Many programs worked with students about how to utilize on-line job search programs, create resumes, fill out applications, and participate in interviews.

It was common for programs to provide training and experience in use of the computer and internet including the computer mapping programs for finding the locations of various services in their communities.

Many EL/Civics programs had representatives from the Catholic Charities of Arkansas Immigration Services come to their classes to discuss the **citizenship process and immigrants' rights**. These speakers also gave students advice on what to do if they are arrested or accused of a crime. They also provided students with information about the rights and responsibilities as a citizen, such as paying property taxes, renewing car tags, and applying for a driver's license.

Part of being a good citizen includes **civic responsibility** and one EL/Civics program helped create a much needed bilingual community directory. This go-to-guide details resources most used by students and their families. It will be a one stop go-to guide for students and new immigrant families for their county.

One program has a unique way of recognizing its students who become citizens. It has become a tradition now in this program for students who pass the citizenship exam to have their photos taken with their instructors. These photos are displayed on the "**Wall of Fame**" outside the citizenship classroom. Many students have stated that the photos have given them a goal to strive for and further

motivation to continue their studies. Another program, which has a district USCIS office in its city, invites the field office director to the EL/Civics classes twice a year to meet students and to help personalize the office. The informative sessions are followed by a mock interview. Several programs hold various celebrations where student achievements are recognized.

“Citizenship Bees” were held at one program. These contests, sponsored by the Junior League of the city, had over 90 students participating in friendly competition that allowed students to display their knowledge of the 100 civics questions that are an integral component of the citizenship exam.