

North Dakota
Adult Education and Family Literacy
2010-2011 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 North Dakota Adult Education program has had another exciting year! The State Office is proud to represent seventeen local Adult Learning Centers and staff who work diligently and with passion to give adults a second chance for success through additional education and services.

In preparation for the pending Workforce Investment Act (WIA) reauthorization and the implementation of national/state common core standards, the State Office launched a professional development (PD) plan to better prepare for and respond to the changes and opportunities these major initiatives will offer. State Leadership funds supported the creation of a Professional Development Advisory Council; Adult Learning Center staff representing instruction, administration, ESL/ELCivics, displaced homemaker program and technology. This Council, representing the 'front line' of adult education, worked in concert with the State Office to draft a three year PD plan, goals and activities utilizing multiple delivery formats. The plan was designed using the PD needs assessment, conference evaluations, state Performance Indicators and local program monitoring reports. Subsequently, an additional part time Department of Public Instruction (DPI) staff has been identified to help coordinate, implement and evaluate the PD plan.

The ND Manual of Accountability and State Standards (ND-MASS) had been the long-standing manual for Adult Learning Centers. Reviewed and updated annually as a State Leadership activity, this document provided guidance in the program improvement process regarding implementation of Adult Basic Education programs. The State Office is committed to providing strong leadership to local programs to enhance policy, practice and the continuous program improvement process; and in cooperation with the local programs, will develop a new guidance document. To date, we have had several discussions with directors and staff about their needs for program information, delivery method, content and organization of a new document. Additionally, we have reviewed other state guidance and created a draft outline and table of contents. The new manual is expected to be completed in first draft by January 2012 and final completion by April 2012 following a sub-committee review and edits.

The State Office worked diligently with state partners and key legislators during the 2011 legislative session regarding additional state funding appropriations. The 2011-2013 department budget included a request for an additional \$1,800,000 in adult education funding; the Department received \$1,300,000/biennium. Additionally, DPI sought and received an amendment to HB 1400 to include GED students for post-secondary scholarship opportunities. The increased state funding has been designated to offer summer programs, open satellite sites and extend current hours to offer greater program accessibility.

North Dakota was one of four states to meet their Performance Indicators and received \$1,210,964. as a WIA Incentive Grant. Four local programs and the State Office were recipients of grant awards which totaled \$683,822.

Pursuant to the OVAE monitoring Corrective Action Plan (CAP), the State Office reviewed and evaluated several data collection systems before selecting LiteracyPro (LACES) as its statewide student data management system. Two trainings were held (April 2011, September 2011); all 2010-2011 student data was entered and the system is completely operational and functional. A survey among users is slated for January 2012 to assess the system, the need and topics for further training and its overall value and role in program improvement. The related portion of the CAP was subsequently approved by OVAE.

As in past years, in collaboration with the North Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning (NDALL), State Leadership provided support for the annual Adult Education Fall Conference held September 22-23, 2011. The Conference was attended by 105 participants from both the Adult Learning Centers and alternative high schools. Conference evaluations were extremely positive and additional professional development opportunities will continue to build upon those key concepts of instructional strategies and outcomes. A required pre-conference session on the new student data management system was held on September 21, 2011 and attended by key 27 ALC staff.

The ND Adult Education State Director and a Department Fiscal Office staff attended the NRS Fiscal Management training in Kansas City in June 2011. As a result, the compliance monitoring fiscal procedures were revised/updated; training was provided to all ALC Directors (September 2011) and the revised/updated procedures were incorporated into the monitoring process.

The State Office continues to monitor all ALCs 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 ALCs to evaluate their programs prior to the site visit. Eight (8) ALCs have been monitored in 2011.

As a result of expressed interest on the part of various education and literacy partners, the State Office has taken the lead in the formation of a statewide Literacy Council. The focus will be on strengthening efforts across North Dakota to coordinate and promote information and programs to enable access and participation in literacy and workforce preparedness. Statewide partners will collaborate to help adults over the age of 16 achieve functional levels of reading, writing, and speaking English so that they may improve the quality of their life, seek and secure meaningful employment, and participate in their community. A statement of mission, vision, beliefs, goals and membership has been established.

Several long-standing features of the Adult Education program are under review and evaluation. The ND Adult Education Resource Center was relocated last year from the Williston ALC to the State Office. Minimal requests for information - due mainly to the availability and access to various curriculum, activities, and products via internet and its subsequent change in the way users seek, retrieve, use and maintain information to create a personal 'virtual' library of references and resources - changed the original intent of a Resource Center. The PD Advisory

Council, after consultation with the ALCs, recommended minimizing the Resource Center inventory to assessment accommodations. Current inventory was made available to ALCs, donated or disposed. Secondly, the existing websites for the Resource Center and the website for the ND Association for Lifelong Learning (NDALL) are in the process of merging to streamline content and updated to offer additional features to allow for interaction between members. Finally, drawing upon last year's NDALL activities and recommendations, the State Office provided assistance and leadership to the Board as they specifically evaluated their role, services and effectiveness. As a result, the NDALL Board recommended the membership recruit additional associations; subsequently the ND alternative high school administrators and staff have joined NDALL to further our mutual missions and goals.

State staff provide ongoing technical assistance, resources and professional development to all ALCs and staff as needed throughout the year on a variety of related topics. Of interest this year was the discussion regarding the NRS changes to the Performance Indicators.

2010-2011 Adult Education state program goals still needing time and attention are two of the original five listed below:

- 1) Explore opportunities for ALC sites to have access to staff (currently within their respective sponsoring agency) with proficiencies in counseling/social work, special education and career advisors and develop criteria/guidance for sharing staff.
- 2) 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.

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.

As previously written North Dakota was one of four states to meet their Performance Indicators and received \$1,210,964 as a WIA Incentive Grant. Four local programs and the State Office were recipients of grant awards which totaled \$683,822. Since 2003, North Dakota has received four (4) WIA Incentive Grants for meeting Performance Indicators in conjunction with partners Job Services and Career & Technical Education.

The State Office works with the Governor's Workforce Development Council and local ALC programs about all targets for Performance Indicators and the process of annual negotiations with OVAE. This same group is in constant conversation about the quarterly monitoring of Performance Indicators; conversations have focused on priorities of quality service provisions, access and student outcomes and work-based learning. Secondly, we recognize the limitations of working with a voluntary audience and the challenge to continually meet and exceed substantially high indicators as well as identifying and addressing our areas of greatest need.

The State Office reviews and analyzes 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 continue to meet/exceed the OVAE targets. As in past years, ND Performance Indicators are among the highest of all states. Ranging from a low of 22% (ESL Advanced) to eleven Measures

over 65%, ND met and exceeded all Performance Indicators with the exception of three: ABE Beginning, ESL Beginning Literacy and Enter Employment.

North Dakota is one of the most rural and frontier areas of the United States; 48% of the state's population live in the four metropolitan counties. With a population of only approximately 670,000, ND is one of the smallest state populations. North Dakota's economy remains strong; the November 2011 unemployment rate was 3.3%. There continues to be a strong demand for employees across the state; as a result, potential students are currently working rather than attending school and as such, statewide enrollment is less than previous years. Employers such as McDonalds are offering \$17/hour for front line workers; Wal-Mart offers a \$750 signing bonus as a recruiting tool. The oil and energy related job opportunities prevalent in the western part of the state have impacted the state in a positive way; there is a current demand for 35,000 workers and a projected demand for over 131,000 workers through 2018 (JSND 2011). Oil revenues are estimated to contribute \$1 billion in state revenues in 2012, higher than the \$756 million revenue in 2011.

While the above 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.

As in the past several years, the Governor's Workforce Development Council again recommends OVAE assess the opportunities for states to 'meet' performance indicators when they reach and remain over 70% rather than document continuous improvement in each of the 15 categories or consider overall indicator averages. This would allow OVAE to provide targeted assistance to those states who constantly fail to meet identified standards.

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 has become more evident. This process will continue to be complimented at the local program level with personal survey and follow up to compensate for data not collected for certain employment sectors (self employment, contract work, small business, etc).

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.

The State Office continues to coordinate program services with partner agencies at the state and local level. Key state partnerships are maintained through the Governor's Workforce Development Council and sub-committees to include the Youth Development Council, Workforce Intelligence Council and Governor's Workforce Summit Executive Planning Committee.

There is a strong collaboration with state partners: North Dakota Job Service, North Dakota Department of Human Services, Workforce Safety & Insurance, Career & Technical Education, North Dakota University Systems, North Dakota Department of Commerce and local education agencies. Of particular interest continues to be 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.

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. All ALC's have an advisory committee which meet at least quarterly to coordinate student services.

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 lifespan care to individuals, families and communities supported over 500 New American adults (and approximately 610 children) transitions to North Dakota. Six (6) local programs are funded which have the largest concentration of New American (ESL) students; additionally, all ALCs, but three report serving New Americans. Both funded and non-funded 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.

ND ALCs have long since recognized that educational services in isolation will not further any individuals opportunities alone; comprehensive services in the areas of housing, healthcare, transportation, daycare, employment, religion, and social connectiveness are critical to full community inclusion and quality of life. An example can be illustrated by this scenario as one of many collaboratives across the state: In Fargo, the ALC worked with the Fargo Lions Club and several local ophthalmologists to initiate a free vision clinic. Approximately 55 ESL and GED students were screened this past year; 26 students received reading glasses, 11 were referred for more services and, approximately 5 were prescribed treatment/medication for conditions not currently under diagnosis or treatment.

Historically, New Americans residing in ND opted to live and work in the four largest communities; however, their comfort and desire for employment have resulted in relocation into all areas of the state. As a result, all ALC's have provided ESL services. To facilitate that need, the State Office sponsored two training sessions on the BEST Plus by our State Trainer. As part of the PD strategic plan, an ESL Summer Summit has been scheduled for June 2012; this 2.5 day Summit will focus on related topics specific to New Americans in North Dakota. During the reporting year, ND only served 393 students (with 12 hours or more) under the ESL categories.