

**New York State  
Narrative Report  
2010-11**

**1. 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.**

State leadership funds supported the following five activities during 2010-11:

1. Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) System;
2. Adult education program licenses with Kentucky Educational Television and Houghton Mifflin;
3. New York State's Adult Student Information System and Technical Support (ASISTS);
4. Professional development on the National Reporting System (NRS) data monitoring for program improvement and web-based NRS data management;
5. National External Diploma Program.

During 2010, a competitive Request for Proposals was issued to fund professional development organizations that plan and deliver quality, research-based professional development and training. Funded for five years, this Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) system provides staff development resources to improve the skills of adult education practitioners and to improve the quality of the adult education and family literacy programs funded by the New York State Education Department. The RAEN represents seven geographic areas of New York State: Long Island, New York City, Hudson Valley, Capital/North Country, Central/Southern Tier, Finger Lakes and West. In 2011-12, the RAEN developed annual work plans that addressed the areas of networking, technical assistance to high-need programs, accountability, staff development, English Literacy/Civics Education, distance learning, technological infrastructure, National Reporting System (NRS) technical assistance, health and financial literacy activities, and Literacy Zone development. Uniform staff development and outcomes in each of the areas addressed customized presentations in a variety of topics and trainings for specific professional audiences and timeframes to meet the needs of the adult education programs in each region. Staff development topics included: learning standards for

beginning teachers in adult basic education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) strategies, GED® test preparation, citizenship education, evidenced-based instructional strategies, program improvement activities, and instructional strategies for adults with learning disabilities.

In addition, RAEN directors played a critical role in the 2011 Literacy Zone and Postsecondary Transition Summits. Each summit convened over 200 participants and offered an array of workshops (26 offerings at the Literacy Zone Summit and 18 at the Postsecondary Transition Summit).

RAEN Directors participated in a variety of adult education activities in 2011-12. The Literacy Information and Communications System's (LINCS) National Career Awareness Project, designed to assist adult education program staff incorporate career awareness and planning in instruction and career counseling, was an area where a RAEN Director was instrumental in New York State's participation. Another RAEN project, Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program (BTOP), forged a partnership between New York State's 18 Literacy Zones and volunteers from Literacy New York using an electronic platform, Learner Web, to share digital literacy skills with Literacy Zone students. The Open Society Foundation's Points of Entry Project focuses on the educational and career needs of adult students who are functioning at NRS Level 4 and incarcerated students who will be transitioning back to their communities. This project was implemented in 2011 and will continue into 2012. Points of Entry, coordinated with the Central-Southern Tier RAEN Director, was the direct result of New York's participation in the Office of Vocational and Adult Education's *Policy To Performance* project. Other RAEN programs included *Under-Resourced Learners: 8 Strategies to Boost Student Achievement*, which addresses diversity and an understanding of cultural poverty, and *27 Months and Counting-The GED Test and Common Core Standards* to integrate the Common Core Standards into regional teaching preparation.

In August 2011, under the direction of a RAEN director, two New York State teacher participants attended the Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL) Summer Institute in Washington DC, where they participated in activities designed to further demonstrate successful classroom strategies for teaching evidence-based writing. These teacher participants shared how they applied the skills of the ten-month professional development project in their classrooms and received feedback from the experiences of the other 11 participating states.

Each of the seven RAEN directors dedicated 90 percent of their technical assistance to three large programs in each region identified as needing improvement. These 21 programs received intensive technical assistance under an ITAP process designed to improve program performance; the programs identified must have low NRS performance and be funded by Workforce Investment Act Title II funds.

RAEN directors worked with the program improvement committees from the 21 identified programs to develop processes to achieve data quality and activities for program improvement. An interactive web-based tracking system logged the accomplished activities that contributed to the continuous improvement process.

The second activity supported by leadership funds was NYSED's license agreements with distance learning contract vendors. These include Kentucky Educational Television (KET) and the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS). This license agreement and digital rights include the following programs: *Workplace Essential Skills*, *Pre-GED Connection*, *GED Connection*, and *TV 411*. These ongoing license agreements provide the curriculum framework for many of New York's distance learning programs. NYSED also contracts with Intelcom Intelligent Communications for the digital rights for the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs *Crossroads Café* and *On Common Ground*, and life management programs *Life Lines* and *Madison Heights*. Training in using the *On Common Ground* materials for English Language/Civics Education students is offered statewide using the Moodle online course delivery system. This course includes becoming familiar with *On Common Ground* materials, incorporating web-based activities, and developing lesson plans and activities that reflect the integration of EL/Civics Education and literacy instruction.

In addition to these licenses, a site license was purchased from Houghton Mifflin for *Skills Tutor*, an online tutorial program for students enrolled in literacy programs who successfully tested above the third grade reading level and who are in need of employability skills. With Corstar Communications LLC, NYSED contracts for E-Literacy NY, an electronic platform that is an adult education portal and a learning management system hosting adult education curriculum for NYS-funded adult education programs.

The third leadership project continued funding a web-based data system, Adult Student Information System and Technical Support (ASISTS). New York State's ASISTS has effectively supported local program data for the past five years. During the 2010-11 program

year, 180 local programs maintained their student data and submitted performance data utilizing this web-based management information system. The ASISTS system provided the NYSED staff and the seven RAEN directors access to local program data in real time. The data results determined strategies for program improvement and design changes. Technical assistance and troubleshooting are accomplished online through conference calls and webinars, eliminating costly travel for in-person consultations and data reviews. Planning has begun to link ASISTS with NYSED's P-20 longitudinal data system funded under Race To The Top (RTTT) funds.

The fourth leadership project supported technical assistance and professional development on NRS data monitoring for program improvement. A Request for Proposal was issued in 2010 to fund technical assistance personnel to oversee the accountability of NRS in New York State. The project assisted local adult education program personnel in identifying and defining the interrelationships between data and program performance and identifying program improvement efforts they can implement. In 2011, a new interactive accountability website ([www.adult-education-accountability.org](http://www.adult-education-accountability.org)) was designed and implemented that provides electronic access to a NRS real-time blog where programs can ask questions directly to the NRS Accountability Specialist. An individual account is maintained for each of the 21 Individual Technical Assistance Plan (ITAP) programs and 25 corrective action programs, allowing for electronic storage of data reports, self-review reports, and NYS Report Cards. In addition to providing technical assistance for NRS accountability, the Accountability Specialist, along with the Central-Southern Tier RAEN Director, has adopted Learner Web ([www.learnerweb.org](http://www.learnerweb.org)) technology that provides structure and support for adults who seek specific learning objectives primarily focused on postsecondary transition. Learner Web was introduced to selected Literacy Zones in 2010. It was expanded to include additional adult education programs in 2011, including the first county correctional facility to allow an online platform for inmates. Learner Web and postsecondary transition programs were integrated into the USDOE's Policy To Performance initiative.

The final leadership project is the funding of the National External Diploma Program (NEDP). The New York State Education Department has contracted with Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) to provide a competency-based, applied performance assessment system that allows adult education students in New York to demonstrate their transferable skills to achieve a local high school diploma. . The four components are diagnostics,

generalized assessment, post-task assessment, and portfolio review and graduation. NEDP has updated the number of competencies to measure 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and the total program is being aligned to Common Core/College and Career Readiness Standards. Currently there are 18 programs in New York State; however, the goal is to increase programming to 40 agencies by 2014. The inclusion of web-based training and instruction in 2012 will support the expansion of NEDP programming.

**2. 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.**

New York State's Adult Student Information System and Technical Support (ASISTS) effectively supported local program data for the past four years. During the 2010-11 program year, 180 local programs maintained their student data and submitted performance data through this web-based management information system. The ASISTS system provided NYSED staff, the seven RAEN Directors, and the Accountability Specialist with access to local program data in real time. The data results determined strategies for program improvement and design changes. Technical assistance and troubleshooting are accomplished through an online system through conference calls and webinars, eliminating costly travel for on-site consultations and data reviews. Through contract services, New York State has had an Accountability Specialist for adult education for the past four years. This specialist conducts over 130 virtual data review sessions annually with local programs. Through these sessions, programs can view their data with the specialist's guidance and implement data management strategies in real time with each respective program's data. A Task Master is designed for ITAP programs to provide guidance on program improvement strategies through data mining and analysis.

In 2011, for the sixth consecutive year, New York State issued each funded program an Adult Education Report Card. A weighting system, used since 2008, provides additional credit for agencies performing well in Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) in which gain is harder to achieve. This methodology discourages programs from providing service only to populations where it is easier to show educational gain. Programs are subsequently ranked in quartiles to allow for a fair and calculated comparison in and among all 180 local programs. Follow-up outcome performance and post program test rates are also quartile ranked among all local programs. In addition to the quartile rank, solid state benchmarks are set in both Educational

Gain and Follow-Up Outcomes. These benchmarks are calculated using the average from the prior year's data. Quartiles are identified as "highly proficient", "proficient", "in need of improvement" or "unacceptable". Programs that meet or exceed the state averages in gain and follow-up measures are considered "proficient". Those identified as "unacceptable" are placed under corrective action.

In 2010, the New York State Education Department added "post-testing rate" to the following report card components: educational gain, follow-up measures, goal setting, and response rate. At the summer 2008 OVAE *Use of Data* training session, post-test rate, a significant predictor of program effectiveness, was identified as a key performance factor. High-performing agencies placed in the top quartile in post-test rate while low performing agencies placed in the bottom quartile. In 2011, the NYS average post-test rate was set at 65 percent based on the prior year's data. Identical to the process used for educational gain and follow-up measures, programs were quartile ranked based on their score. Although the benchmark was set at 65 percent, the quartile rank calculation encouraged all local programs to post-test as many of their students as possible. The average post-test rate for 2011 was 75 percent and educational gain for 2011 was 54 percent, exceeding the state benchmark by 7 percent.

In 2011, 28 agencies were placed under corrective action. Programs under corrective action must submit a corrective action plan and form a program improvement team to monitor progress and recommend new strategies. Agencies under corrective action must demonstrate satisfactory incremental improvement over three years or less to be considered for continued funding. The report card score will be used in deciding state and federal funding in 2012.

Overall program enrollment declined from 129,636 in 2009-10 to 122,833 in 2010-11. The decline is partially based on reduced state and federal funding while program costs have increased. With a fixed amount of money, fewer hours can be provided each year. In addition to these funding decreases, the number of hours per student has increased over program year 2010. The average number of hours per student in 2010 was 113 and in 2011 the hours increased to 115 per student. Fewer students were served overall but students persisted longer, resulting in higher educational gain and follow-up outcomes.

For the third consecutive year, New York State met or exceeded all federal targets for educational gain and for follow-up outcome measures. The work being done across the state regarding the collection, recording, and reporting of data has impacted the ability to move

programs beyond state and federal performance targets. Through desktop monitoring and the use of Individual Technical Assistance Plans (ITAP), NYSED staff, the NRS Accountability Specialist, and RAEN Directors are better able to monitor and support programs in need of improvement. Underperforming programs have received support based on needs reflected in their data. The effectiveness of this ITAP process is evidenced in the progressive increase in statewide performance.

For New York State's ESL population, the BEST Literacy test was found to be a more accurate assessment for students scoring outside the valid range on the BEST Plus. These students have developed good speaking and listening skills but need to further develop their reading and writing skills. Students scoring on the Advanced EL level of the BEST Literacy test tend to score at intermediate or higher levels of ABE when pre-tested on the TABE. The implementation of the BEST Literacy has given students more opportunity to demonstrate educational gain.

**3. 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 Boards, the provision of core and other services through the One Stop system and the estimate of the Title II funds being used to support activities and services through the One Stop delivery system.**

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) have worked collaboratively to implement the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) for New York State. The New York State Commissioner of Education represents WIA Title II on the State Workforce Investment Board. New York State has 33 local workforce investment boards. Each local workforce investment board has a Title II representative identified by NYSED and recommended to the county elected official for approval. The Title II designee represents NYSED at local negotiations meetings with the local workforce investment boards. NYSED works closely with the local Title II designee to develop and approve the local Memorandum of Understandings for each of the 33 local workforce investment boards.

One RAEN Director serves on three local workforce investment boards in his region, and chairs the Capacity Building sub-committee where he coordinates regional staff development and endorses post-secondary transition for adult education students in the NYSDOL One Stop centers.

In another region of the state, the RAEN Director worked closely with Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD) to inform the local workforce investment boards of employer skill gaps and develop adult career pathways with strong support from business leaders in the advanced manufacturing, hospitality and healthcare sectors.

During 2010-11, an additional 18 Literacy Zones were funded to provide a framework to comprehensively connect adult education programs to other community services and programs in communities and neighborhoods with either high concentrations of poverty or immigration. Literacy Zones are most visible in New York State's large urban areas of New York, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers. They are also found in economically depressed communities across New York. The successful applicants demonstrated, with letters of support or cooperative agreements, their partnerships with the local workforce investment board. In addition, many are co-located at One Stop sites or satellites. CareerZone and JobZone (job search web sites developed by the New York State Department of Labor) have been integrated into 18 Literacy Zones. In 2011, the 18 Literacy Zones served 4,617 students and demonstrated a cumulative educational gain of 60 percent. This gain is attributable to the intense case management and individual educational planning provided at each of the zones. Literacy Zone educational gain is calculated at 14 points above the NYS Benchmark of 46 percent. In 2010-2011 an additional 17 Literacy Zones were funded.

Supported by federal incentive grant funds under Section 503(a) of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), a three-part curriculum in career planning, Work Readiness preparation, and individual roles and responsibilities that prepare job seekers to pass the National Work Readiness Credential exam was presented to the 18 statewide Literacy Zones. Training was provided in two areas of the state and 38 teachers were instructed in using the curriculum.



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

New York State has the nation's greatest linguistic and cultural diversity. In 2008, according to the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the foreign-born population of New York State was 4,216,714. In 2008, the New York State Education Department issued a Request for Proposal for Workforce Investment Act Title II for English Language/Civics Education programs and 53 successful applicants proposed to identify, recruit, and educate immigrants in English language acquisition and civics education. Approximately 67,171 students are enrolled in English literacy classes and of those, 15,204 students are in English Language/Civics Education programs. The majority of the immigrant population resides in the New York City area, although foreign-born populations are increasing in other regions of the state. In the five boroughs of New York City, nearly 47 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home. To reach the non-native English speakers, the diversity of grant recipients included nationality-specific community-based organizations, public schools, BOCES, the City University of New York system, and three public library systems in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

In the Finger Lakes region of the state, the RAEN Director has provided an EL/Civics Education workshop for teachers entitled *Hit the Ground Running: Preparing Adult ESL Learners of All Levels for Academic Readiness*, to assist with transitioning students to postsecondary education and training. The local regional Office of the United States Citizenship Information Services in Buffalo has been providing intensive staff development for adult education teachers in civics education. Another English Language/Civics Education program in central New York provides instruction specifically for the refugee population. In addition to English instruction, other civics-specific topics taught in the program are preparation for the driver's license examination, workplace safety, immigrant health issues, cultural awareness, car and health insurance issues, and preparation for the citizenship test.

Immigrant education training in a New York City community-based organization participates in raising awareness of different aspects of immigrant life with a focus on the citizenship process. The program emphasizes writing and speaking English and contextualizes

civics in this literacy class. The speaking portion of the class incorporates questions that might be a part of the oral citizenship test.

Another funded program at a New York City community college developed “CUNY Citizenship Now!” a free naturalization services and citizenship test preparation for each of the five boroughs. This curriculum helps low-intermediate students prepare for the citizenship test using brief readings to review what they know and provides suggested follow-up. An EL/Civics wiki was developed for CUNY instructors with 24/7 access to websites and materials related to teaching EL/Civics themes.

An EL/Civics grant recipient program on the Canadian border has worked with foreign-born migrant workers in the orchards, teaching English and civics instruction. The classes are seasonal and are held before and after work and during breaks by volunteers from the local literacy affiliate. One student of this program has attained citizenship and is employed by the United States Homeland Security in a border control position.