



**Division of Technology, Career, and  
Adult Education  
Office of Adult Education and Literacy**

**Annual Performance Report  
to the U. S. Department of Education**

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**July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Commonwealth of Virginia, through its Department of Education, provides leadership and oversight to Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs for adults who do not hold a high school credential, possess a secondary level education, or who seek English language instruction. The Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) is responsible for managing federal and state funds allocated for these programs. Although the *Code of Virginia* places the responsibility for the provision of adult education services with Virginia's 132 local school divisions, a spectrum of services is delivered through partnerships with public and community-based providers that include local school boards; community colleges; nonprofit and faith-based organizations; state institutions and agencies; employers; and state, local, and regional correctional facilities.

OAEL supports service providers through a centralized resource center for adult educators and professionals, a distance learning center, regularly scheduled regional and statewide meetings and webinars, and regional literacy committees that organize activities throughout Virginia. Fiscal year 2010-2011 saw continued OAEL support related to high-quality professional development and technical assistance for adult educators in Virginia.

The FY 2010-2011 data point to Virginia's challenges in meeting the goals cooperatively established by the U. S. Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Education. Programs in Virginia continue to be impacted by the economic downturn and related job losses and local budget shortfalls. The response to Virginia's Race to GED initiative was still significant, but many responders to that GED initiative continued to require ABE-level instruction and were not ready for Fast Track or GED preparation classes. Outreach across the state continued to be addressed as target populations were recruited and assessed. Although the high percentage of part-time staff continues to present a challenge to programs' effective implementation of professional development efforts, the continued implementation of the certification program for adult educators in the Commonwealth resulted in greater numbers of participants in professional development activities than in previous years.

During 2010-2011, OAEL continued implementation of its revised and revamped monitoring and evaluation plan, resulting in strengthened technical assistance and regional support. This included issuance of program performance report cards to all programs, follow-up monitoring site visits, and an expanded focus on technical assistance and guidance to local programs in advance of, and subsequent to, scheduled monitoring visits. The comments and feedback received from local and regional programs informed further development for technical support and continued improvement of the monitoring and evaluation process.

The following pages describe progress made in reaching programmatic goals established for grantees who are awarded federal and state resources to deliver adult education services. The report is divided into the following four major sections: (1) State Leadership; (2) Effectiveness of Adult Education and Literacy Activities; (3) Integration of Activities; and (4) EL/Civics Activities and Services.



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## STATE LEADERSHIP

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In 2010-2011, OAEL employed leadership funds to provide opportunities throughout the state for professional development, technological advances, and technical assistance.

### **Professional Development**

#### Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC)

During 2010-2011, VALRC provided online and face-to-face training for 3,035 participants in 125 workshops and courses. The development of the Virginia Adult Educator Certification Program (VAECP) continued, with a total of 915 participants during the year. VALRC staff developed new VAECP training curricula for three program manager sessions, three ABE/GED instructor sessions, and three ESOL instructor sessions, in addition to offering the first session of the Support Staff strand and planning the addition of a numeracy course to the ABE/GED online certification program.

In addition to VAECP sessions, VALRC continued to provide training, both face-to-face and online, in reading, writing, numeracy, learning disabilities, assessment, content standards, goal setting, ESOL and GED instruction, technology integration, and other topics. VALRC coordinated a two-day EL/Civics Symposium, which had 51 participants, and assisted with several other OAEL meetings.

Highlights of new professional development resources made available during the past year are noted below.

- VALRC conducted extensive training and technical assistance on the new Electronic Registrar Online system and registered 2,005 adult educators.
- VALRC developed and launched an online numeracy training course, which was evaluated and revised based upon suggestions from a nationally recognized expert in math instruction for adult learners.
- VALRC staff worked with OAEL staff to provide training on updated features of the management information system for reporting data to the National Reporting System (NRS) and to conduct grant-writing training and consultation for provisional grantees that were required to submit grant application revisions.

VALRC also published three issues of the statewide newsletter *Progress*; maintained the GED Helpline; and provided resources, information, and technical assistance to the field through in-person and telephone support, as well as Web sites and listservs.

#### Radford University (RU)

During 2010-2011, RU supported OAEL through the organization of regional trainings and conferences, as well as professional development initiatives. RU organized the Virginia Institute for Lifelong Learning (VAILL), where 271 adult educators participated in the VAECP sessions, and the bi-annual Data Summit, which provided data training to 141 participants. RU also organized the annual Program Managers' Meeting (98 participants), Transition Specialist Meeting (23 participants), and Regional Specialist Meeting (23 participants). In addition, RU worked with OAEL to hire 4 Targeted Technical Assistance Consultants (TTAC) that met with program managers and initiated program-specific discussions about data integrity and data-driven decision making. TTAC also assisted OAEL with monitoring and evaluation activities, as well as a variety of research projects related to career pathways and integrated education and training.



## **Technology and Technical Assistance**

### Electronic Registrar Online (ERO)

During 2010-2011, Virginia implemented the Electronic Registrar Online (ERO) as the new online registration system. ERO is currently being used by all state-funded adult education and literacy programs to access information about and register for meetings and training opportunities conducted by either VALRC or OAEL. The system maintains records of VAECP participation and provides a variety of reports to adult educators, program managers, VALRC, and OAEL. ERO also provides access to a calendar listing of all training programs, courses, and conferences. The adoption of this new system has resulted in improved tracking of program participation in professional development activities, allowing OAEL to more accurately monitor and evaluate such activities in desk audits and the program report cards.

### eLearnVA

OAEL continues to develop a distance learning center, administered by VALRC. The center maintains the eLearnVA Web portal ([www.elearnva.org](http://www.elearnva.org)). Using this portal, learners may access a variety of well-known ABE/GED-preparation products via streaming videos, as well as online mentors who correspond with learners and provide instructional support. In addition to the central Web portal, eLearnVA also maintains a toll-free helpline for students, mentors, and teachers, which received an average of 307 phone calls per month during 2010-2011.

During 2010-2011, eLearnVA enrolled 170 new students, thirty of whom passed the GED tests. Since the eLearnVA program was launched in 2007-2008, one quarter of the participants have accomplished their goal of passing the GED tests. Of the 879 learners enrolled in eLearnVA since 2007, a total of 214 have passed the GED tests. In addition, eLearnVA assisted OAEL with the dissemination of information and program guidance on the *Distance Education Policy for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs*, published in January 2011.

### PluggedIn VA

In 2010-2011, OAEL continued to develop PluggedIn VA, an integrated education and training program that provides GED preparation, community college credits, and instruction of technology and industry-specific skills. With the addition of two new cohorts during 2010-2011, the initiative grew to a total of 6 cohorts. Specially trained instructors provided learners with comprehensive GED instruction through project-based learning implemented with the support of professional mentors. Through the program's partnerships with business and the community college system, learners were prepared to obtain their GED credential and earn college credits, as well as complete capstone projects, develop industry sector skills, receive Career Readiness Certificates, and collect valuable professional contacts.

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## **EFFECTIVENESS OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES**

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### **NRS Highlights**

During 2010-2011, OAEL released the *Distance Education Policy for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs* and continued to build upon the 2007 release of the *Assessment Policy for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs* and the *Goal-Setting Policy for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs*. These three documents, along with the standardized intake and student learning plan form, the Universal Student Profile Document (USPD), have been the impetus for significant shifts in the practices and procedures of Virginia's adult education programs. They have had major impact upon the delivery of services and data reporting in the Commonwealth. OAEL continued to provide policy-related support to the field through in-person trainings, regional workshops, and regular technical assistance via telephone and e-mail.



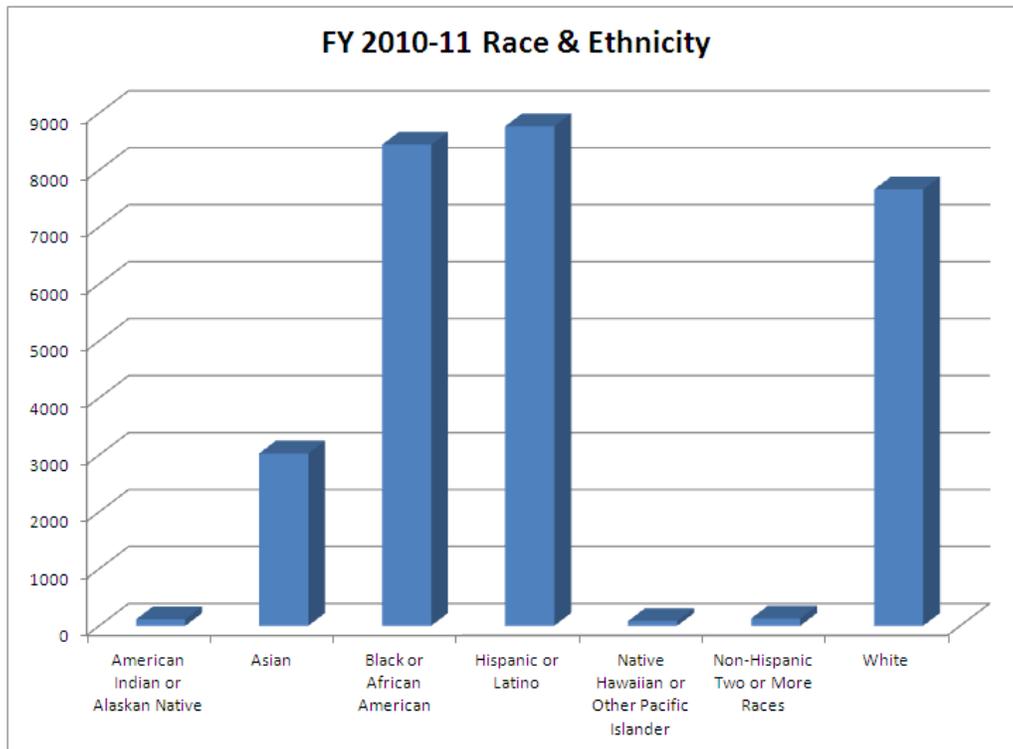
### Staffing

Virginia's local adult education programs are largely supported by part-time or volunteer staff. In 2010-2011, approximately 95 percent of all staff was either part-time or volunteer. Four percent of all staff served in an administrative capacity, with the majority of administrative staff functioning on a part-time or voluntary basis. In many instances, local programs experienced significant turnover, which resulted in an increased need for staff development and training activities.

### Participants

Virginia programs experienced a decrease in enrollment during 2010-2011. Enrollment totaled 28,220 individuals, representing a decrease of 1,582 learners from the previous year. The three largest ethnic groups participating in programs were: Hispanic or Latino (8,767 participants), Black or African American (8,446), and White (7,659) (See Figure 1). Virginia programs served more individuals in the 25-44 age group (14,416) than any other age group. The 19-24 age group (6,232) was the second largest. In 2010-2011, fifty-seven percent of participants, or 16,140, were female, while 43 percent, or 12,080, were male.

**Figure 1**



### English as a Second Language (ESL)

A total of 12,403 learners were reported across the six ESL levels. In 2010-2011, the number of ESL learners served in Virginia (12,403) was larger than the number of ABE learners (11,481) and the number of ASE learners (4,336). The largest educational functioning level (EFL) group reported was ESL Intermediate High, with 2,410 or 19 percent. In 2010-2011, ESL learners averaged 85 hours of attendance compared to an average of 78 hours of attendance in 2009-2010. ESL Beginning Literacy learners attended the lowest average number of hours (71), while ESL Intermediate High learners attended the highest average number of hours (96). Of the total ESL learners served, approximately 33 percent, or 4,147, made EFL gains.



ESL learner enrollment continued to decrease for the fourth consecutive year. Transience, family demands, and the political climate are among the potential causes for the downward enrollment trends. Virginia continues to provide training for ESL practitioners in curriculum and assessment, with the goal of increasing retention and supporting ESL learners' instructional needs.

#### Adult Basic Education (ABE)

ABE learners comprise the second largest population served by Virginia programs. A total of 11,481 learners were reported across the four ABE EFLs. The largest EFL served was ABE Intermediate High. ABE learners attended classes for an average of 67 hours in 2010-2011, compared to an average of 64 hours in 2009-2010. Of the total number of ABE learners served, 37 percent, or 4,264, made EFL gains.

#### Adult Secondary Education (ASE)

A total of 4,336 learners were reported across the two ASE levels. On average, ASE learners attended classes 41 hours, representing a slight decrease from 2009-2010. Of the total ASE learners served, 52 percent, or 2,238, made EFL gains.

With improved assessment practices and a greater focus on scale scores in math and reading for instructional purposes, a significant number of learners were placed in the ASE levels. Many of the learners at the ASE levels participated in Fast Track and GED Prep, successfully obtaining their GED credential. In total, 3,613 NRS-reportable learners were reported as earning a GED certificate, representing a slight decrease from 2009-2010. Additional learners reported at the ASE levels found success in the National External Diploma Program (EDP) or Adult High School Diploma program. Local programs reported 134 learners completing the EDP and 87 adults earning a high school diploma.

#### Follow-up Measures

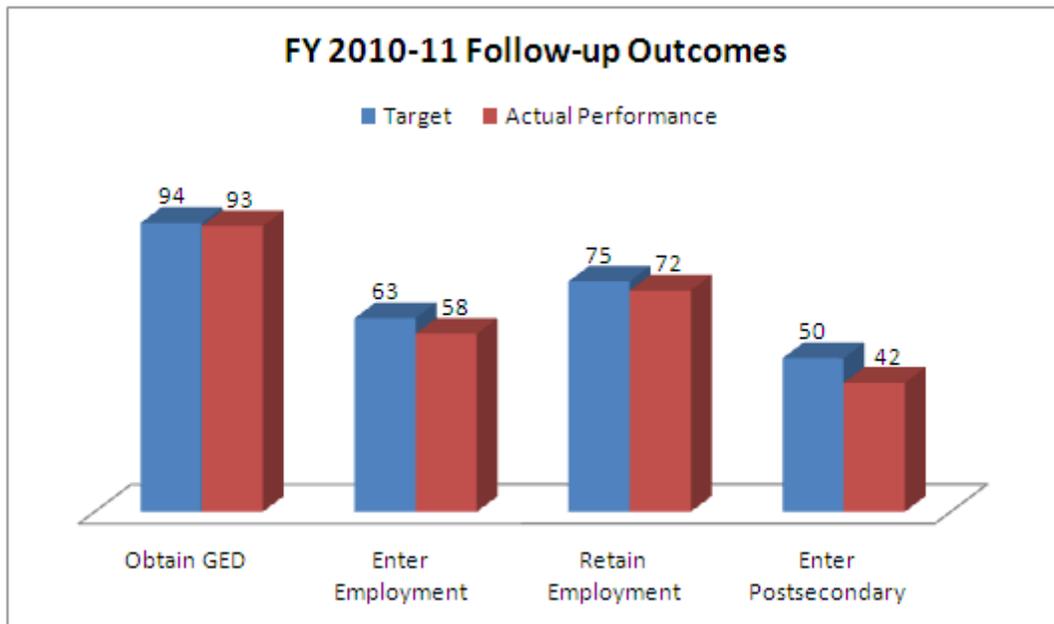
Follow-up measures continue as an important component of all programs. Participant status and exit from programs often dictate the number of learners available for follow-up. In Virginia's programs, 44 percent of all learners indicated an employed status when entering and approximately 33 percent of learners indicated that they were unemployed and not in the labor force. Learners identifying themselves as "unemployed and in the labor force" comprised approximately 23 percent. Learners in institutional programs, such as correctional facilities, were approximately 8 percent of the learner population. Approximately 29 percent of Virginia's learners lived in a rural area of the Commonwealth during 2010-2011. Public transportation was more limited in rural areas than in urban areas, resulting in decreased access to adult education programs.

Virginia measures its follow-up performance through a data matching process. Three databases are used to complete the match: (1) the Virginia Employment Commission, for entering and retaining employment goals; (2) the National Student Clearinghouse, for the postsecondary education and training goal; and (3) NRSP.com, for the receipt of secondary credential goals (GED).

During 2010-2011, the Commonwealth did not meet the targets for the four follow-up goals. Figure 2 provides an overview of follow-up goal performance.



**Figure 2**



### **GED Testing Services**

The Virginia GED testing program provides adults who lack a high school diploma with the opportunity to earn a high school equivalency certificate. Like many states, Virginia has a high number of working-age adults without a secondary credential. In 2010-2011, there were 80 official GED testing centers located throughout the Commonwealth.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

In 2010-2011, OAEL continued to develop its comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system that was implemented in FY 2007-2008. During 2010-2011, OAEL distributed an annual program performance report card to each local adult education program that received OAEL funding. The report cards provided each program with a snapshot of its performance in terms of financial management, target performance, and policy compliance. Each of these three areas was based on measures that identified particular strengths and weaknesses within each area. OAEL also used the report card to develop a system to determine site visit eligibility.

During 2010-2011, OAEL conducted new follow-up visits with eight localities and visited the two programs that were not compliant with policy during the 2009-2010 monitoring visits. Of the two programs that were previously non-compliant, one demonstrated compliance with all of the site visit criteria. OAEL has continued to work with the other program. During the site visits, programs were evaluated in the areas of student and grant record-keeping, delivery of services, budget and finance, recruitment and retention efforts, technology, staff preparation. Additionally, each program was required to conduct a data demonstration. As part of the site visit process, OAEL provided each program with a corrective action summary and recommendations for addressing each corrective action item. During 2010-2011, OAEL continued to implement a new program for providing site visit guidance and support. The new program includes the training of regional specialists to serve as a site visit resource for program managers within specific geographic regions in preparation for site visits. The regional specialist also works directly with programs in corrective action to expedite the process toward compliance.



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## INTEGRATION OF ACTIVITIES

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### **Integration and Partnerships**

#### Federal Policy2Performance Project (P2P)

During 2010-2011, Virginia continued to further the federal Policy2Performance Project (P2P), a targeted technical assistance initiative aimed at advancing the designated support of services for advancing low-skilled adults into postsecondary education and employment. OAEL focused on designing a PluggedIn VA Implementation Guide, as well as piloting and evaluating a new PluggedIn VA program. New PluggedIn VA sites were added in Danville and Pulaski during 2010-2011, which focused on advanced manufacturing skills and allied health sciences. Planning efforts continued to build teams of workforce partners who will focus on enhanced policies, comprehensive supports, and networking opportunities to increase access of low-skilled adults to training and learning opportunities.

#### The Governor's Work Group on Career Pathways System Development

In 2010-2011, the Secretary of Education accepted chairmanship of the Career Pathways System group. The name was changed from Task Force to Work Group. The Secretary's focus moving forward is to substantially increase the number of inter-agency partnerships and projects. Examples of these partnerships include OAEL's continued work with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), which has resulted in the development of Regional Adult Education Transition Specialists positions, the expansion of PluggedIn VA, and state-wide training co-sponsored by OAEL and VCCS for individuals in VA who provide adults with transitional services and career counseling. OAEL staff participated in the planning and execution of a second Governor's Forum, focused on adult post-secondary credentialing, and continued to make presentations to a wide variety of organizations, state agencies, and other stakeholders.

#### Regional Adult Education Transition Specialists

OAEL entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Community College System to jointly fund two Regional Adult Education Transition Specialists. The Regional Adult Education Transition Specialists worked with incomplete and non-passing GED learners to support secondary credential completion and transition into employment or postsecondary education or training. During 2010-2011, the Regional Adult Education Transition Specialists contacted 21,980 GED incompleters or non-passers. This effort resulted in 245 students completing their GED tests and 1,416 students being retested. Targets were met for the number of students who received support from the Adult Education Transition Specialists and went on to pass the GED test (636 students) or enroll in postsecondary education or training (207 students).

#### Communities for Opportunity (CFO)

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and OAEL jointly selected grants to be funded with CFO funds. The CFO initiative stimulated community development through workplace literacy under the Race to GED initiative. CFO funds assisted Virginia workers in improving basic workplace skills for job placement, stability, retention, and advancement. In 2010-2011, approximately \$125,000 of CFO pass-through funding was provided to recipients, including Southwest Regional Adult Education Program, Southside Community College, Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program, West Piedmont Regional Adult Education Program, Albemarle County Adult Education Program, Eastern Shore Community College, Regional Adult Educational Program for Lee, Scott, Wise and Norton Public Schools, Adult Continuing Education of Central Virginia (ACE), and West Piedmont Regional Adult Education Program.

### **WIB and One Stop Representation**

No staff member from OAEL sits on the Virginia Workforce Council; rather, the Secretary of Education holds a seat. Representation at the local level, however, is pervasive. There are 15 local WIBs in



Virginia. Within one-stop centers of each workforce investment board, adult education programs may provide referrals, collocate services, or both.

### **Funds Used to Support One-Stop System Activities and Services**

For 2009-2010, local programs reported that approximately \$368,019 in cash and \$129,622 in in-kind support was contributed to activities and services provided at the one-stop centers throughout the Commonwealth. The majority of the funds were used to support salaries and benefits. The second highest expenditure was for the purchase of materials and supplies. Listed below are the types of activities and services provided by local programs.

- ABE/GED instruction
- In-service presentations for one-stop employees
- Career and job fair participation
- Continuous quality improvement training
- TABE training for one-stop staff
- Rapid response team participation
- Shared recruitment and referrals to and from one-stop partners
- WorkKeys assessment and KeyTrain training
- One-stop office staffing
- Internet job listing
- ESOL classes for one-stop partners

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## **ENGLISH LITERACY (EL)/CIVICS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES**

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### **Overview**

In 2010-2011, Virginia issued EL/Civics grant awards to 19 programs. The competitive grants were awarded to address priorities such as meeting NRS accountability targets, incorporating civics education into ESOL classes, providing citizenship preparation, and increasing access to EL/Civics services. The programs reflect a broad geographic distribution and multiple organizational types, including public school divisions, postsecondary institutions, regional programs, and community-based literacy organizations (CBLOs). At 46 percent (1736 students), students enrolled in Virginia CBLOs make up the single largest portion of the funded population.

### **Statewide Activity**

In 2010-2011, 3,761 EL/Civics learners were served, representing an increase of five percent from 2009-2010's enrollment of 3,577 and a seven percent increase over the 3,521 enrollment in 2008-2009. During the year, 1,874 (50 percent) EL/Civics learners took a post-test. Of those, 1,286 (69 percent) made an educational gain. Thirty-four percent of the total enrollment made an educational gain while 39 percent, or 1465 students, continued their enrollment beyond the fiscal year.

A revised assessment policy restricting the use of waivers for post-testing before the publishers' recommended timeframes was made effective during 2010-2011 and may account for the decrease in overall performance in educational gain. However, seven programs met at least 70 percent of their EFL targets—an increase over the last two years—and two programs met all targets for EFL gains for enrolled students. Additionally, 619 EL/Civics students set the goal of citizenship, and 517, or 84 percent, achieved it.

As in the past two years, the largest group of learners was adults 25 to 44 years old (61 percent), followed by adults 45 to 59 (19 percent) and adults 19-24 (14 percent). In terms of ethnicity, the largest group was Hispanic/Latino adults (52 percent), followed by Asian adults (23 percent) and White adults (15 percent).



## **Local Program Activity**

Brief descriptions of local program activities across four regions are provided below.

### *Eastern Shore*

#### Eastern Shore Literacy Council (Community-based Literacy Organization)

In its second year of EL/Civics funding, Eastern Shore Literacy Council (ESLC) increased its enrollment by 17 percent over the previous year. All volunteer tutors in the organization received EL/Civics training and applied their knowledge to integrate technology with one-on-one and small group instruction. A special class was formed to target the previously underserved Haitian population of the Eastern Shore. In addition to direct, classroom instruction, ESLC formed a citizenship study group, conducted a civics-oriented “dialogue café,” and provided distance education. Funding was also used to continue the staff’s participation in the Virginia Adult Educator Certification Program and maintain current staff certifications required by state assessment and goal-setting policies.

### *Tidewater*

#### Virginia Beach City Public Schools (Public School Division)

Virginia Beach City Public Schools used its EL/Civics grant funds to expand instructional opportunities to reduce the number of students on waiting lists, to strengthen EL/Civics education throughout its ESOL program, and to implement a program to serve learners functioning at the lowest levels. Additionally, the program used its SharePoint Web site to build a repository of EL/Civics lesson plans and funded student field trips to visit the Virginia General Assembly and nearby Williamsburg to supplement units on U.S. history and government. Virginia Beach surpassed its previous year’s enrollment while meeting all of the state targets for EFL gain and maintaining the lowest cost per student of all funded programs.

### *Central Virginia*

#### Richmond City Public Schools (Public School Division)

With its EL/Civics funding, Richmond City was able to expand its class offerings by adding a new satellite location and offering a summer EL/Civics class. Focusing on technology, the Richmond City program integrated Smart Boards, computers, and portable devices into small group and one-on-one instruction. In unit plans on U.S. history and government and civic participation, students participated in virtual tours, created group presentations, used EL/Civics software, maintained a blog, and attended workshops on volunteerism. With its diverse instructional methods and technologically enhanced retention efforts, Richmond retained 75 percent of its learners, advanced the average hours of attendance to 87 hours per student, and met 71 percent of its targets for EFL gains.

### *Valley*

#### Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle (Community-based Literacy Organization)

Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle (LVCA) served 132 learners through its EL/Civics activities. By adding group activities focusing on the naturalization process and citizenship preparation, LVCA expanded its offerings beyond one-on-one tutoring. As a result, six students obtained their U.S. citizenship during the year. Forty learners took advantage of extended learning opportunities to use the software program, *EASY at Work*, to gain knowledge of community and workplace systems. Through their guided use of the program, students gained an average of 50 additional hours of instruction each.

