

## Alabama Narrative Report 2011-2012

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 800,000 Alabamians sixteen years of age or older have neither graduated from high school, nor earned a GED credential. As a result, not having a credential, these adults have fewer career options, low earning capabilities and more challenges for their families. As the fiscal agent for federal and state education funding for adult education, the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (ALDPE) provides grants to eligible agencies to assist individuals in becoming more literate by obtaining the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their lives.

Realizing that the labor market has shifted to one requiring workers to have a postsecondary credential in order to compete, Alabama is placing emphasis on how its services are delivered. Therefore, in order to improve the student's economic prospects, Alabama's plan prepares students to meet the new demands by focusing on their transition to postsecondary education or skills training. Each student who successfully passes the GED Test is offered a free class at one of Alabama's postsecondary colleges.

Alabama's adult education students vary greatly in age, years of schooling, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic status, English proficiency, and prior knowledge and experience. Some learners come to study to prepare for the GED Test; others to learn English; some to prepare for college; some to develop their literacy skills to help their children and families; some to brush up for new job responsibilities and/or demands. Whatever their reasons for attending our classes, they are as diverse as the population that we serve.

Classes are offered free of charge at various locations and flexible hours throughout the state. Instructional methodologies vary according to a student's ability and may range from one-on-one instruction to computer-aided instruction. Students who are assessed and function academically above the 9.0 grade level and who might not be able to attend regularly may benefit from distance education or GED on-line. Regardless of the student's functioning level, a professionally trained staff is necessary.

During 2011- 2012, the Department sponsored several professional development (PD) opportunities for faculty and administrators. Recorded PD sessions of key topics dealing with recruitment, retention and managing the classroom are posted on the Department's web site (<http://www.accs.cc/AdultEduDivision.aspx>). Also, the Alabama Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education (ALAPCAE), Alabama's adult educators' professional association recorded new instructor training session and an English as a Second Language (ESL) session which are posted on its web site ([http://alapcae.com/Professional\\_Development\\_PJ.htm](http://alapcae.com/Professional_Development_PJ.htm)) and DVDs for each session were provided to each funded program. State Leadership funds were used to provide a statewide, three day conference that was held in June, 2012 and attended by over 600 adult education program directors, instructors, support personnel and volunteers. The attendees received an opportunity for 12.5 hours of professional development, which exceeded the mandatory requirement in the State Plan.

## **Core Indicators of Performance**

An analysis of Alabama's Performance Measure Outcomes and activities based on core indicators of performance indicated that we achieved the goal of students advancing from their entering academic functioning levels in three of the eleven goals. Although the Core Measures goals were not met, all of them except one were missed by only a few percentage points as shown below:

- Placement in unsubsidized employment, State Goal 81% and Program Performance 75%.
- Retention in unsubsidized employment, State Goal 89% and Program Performance 88%.
- Placement in postsecondary ed. or training, State Goal 87% and Program Performance 51%.
- GED or high school completion, State Goal 79% and Program Performance 76%.

For program year 2012-2013, Alabama has moved to a data matching method for all Core Measures. This move should allow us to capture our data with better accuracy. We will match data with the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations and the National Student Clearinghouse, in addition to our current GED database match.

## **One-Stop Delivery System**

Classes are offered in each of the One-Stop Career Centers where space is available. Each career center is funded for no less than 19 hours of classroom instruction per week. Plus, according to Title II of the Workforce Investment Act, the adult education directors are members of their regional Workforce Investment Boards.

## **EL/Civics Funds**

EL/Civics funds were used to fund 12 programs through a competitive application process. There were 32 class opportunities for service. The programs enrolled 630 students; with 455 students completing a student performance level. These grant funds enabled programs to assist new language learners acquire proficiency in English so that they may effectively participate in the education, work and civic opportunities in this country.

## **Policy to Performance Project**

Alabama came to the Policy to Performance Project with the goal of developing the existing Middle College model in which adults with limited employment skills are concurrently enrolled in accelerated GED preparation and postsecondary occupational courses. In addition to providing the academic and career/technical coursework, the Middle College program provided employment preparation. The Middle College concept evolved over the course of the project to become College Connection. Over half of the pilot participants earned a GED and postsecondary credit in career/technical education courses.

## **GED Testing Fee Waiver**

The GED Test fee waiver funded by the GED Testing Division was provided to students who were enrolled in an Alabama adult education program. The waiver recipients were required to be first-time testers, attend classes at a minimum of 30 hours and achieved a standard score of 500 or greater on each of the five parts of the Official GED Practice Test. For those that took advantage of the fee waiver, there was an 85% pass rate compared to the 61% pass rate for the general population. This proved that the \$49,000 investment in test waivers that were provided to adult education students during the 2011-12 program year was beneficial.

## **Career Readiness Certificate**

Alabama's Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) is an assessment-based credential based on ACT's WorkKeys that gives employers and job seekers a uniform measure of key workplace skills. The Career Readiness Certificate is a portable credential, allowing employers and employees to use it anywhere in the nation. There are 4 levels of the certificate that an individual may earn: bronze, silver, gold or platinum. Since 2006, state-appropriated adult education funds have been used to reimburse programs for administering the WorkKeys assessment to adult education students. Adult education students earned 1,013 Career Readiness Certificates during 2011-2012.

## **Technical Assistance Model**

The Technical Assistance Model (TAM) was launched by the Department to effectively serve all the adult education classes offered throughout the state. Four regions were created based primarily on a geographic configuration and a staff member was assigned to each region to assist the programs with increasing adult learner participation and outcomes.

## **Federal Review**

During the program year, the U.S. Department of Education – Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) conducted a monitoring/program review (February 28 – March 2, 2012) of the Adult Education Division. The Federal Review Report received on June 1, 2012 identified 1 commendation, 5 findings and 4 recommendations. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) was developed and submitted and received approval in October 2012. The CAP includes, among other items, the Division's efforts for program improvement with regard to developing and implementing a comprehensive program evaluation system and the development and implementation of a systemic professional development plan for adult education administrators, practitioners, support staff and volunteers. The timeframe for completion of the items identified in the CAP is within the next 3 years (September 30, 2015).

## Strengthening Partnerships

- The Department of Postsecondary Education, in partnership with the Department of Human Resources (DHR), awarded *Employment Preparation Services* grants to 12 Adult Education Programs and Family Support Centers during this reporting period. The *Employment Preparation Services* (formally JOBS) program provides job readiness classes for welfare recipients so they will be better prepared to gain employment. As a result, 669 students gained employment.
- Alabama's Adult Education Program maintains a strong collaboration with the community partners committed to providing services to the state's ESL population. The Department of Postsecondary Education funded 12 programs throughout the state with EL/Civics grants during 2011- 2012.
- The Department joined forces with several regional literacy councils to form the Alabama Literacy Alliance. This partnership expanded the network of literacy services throughout the state in an effort to provide more comprehensive support to the adult education populations. The monthly meetings are now hosted by the Department which provides a centralized location.

**For 2011- 2012, 23,338 Adult Learners enrolled in 26 programs throughout the state at the following functioning levels:**

- 4,199 Adult Secondary Education (Grades 9-12 education functioning level)
- 17,628 Adult Basic Education(Grades 1-8 education functioning level)
- 1,511 English as a Second Language Students

### **Achievements of Students/Adult Learners:**

- 14,944 Students increased their Educational Functioning Level
- 4,020 Students earned a GED
- 1,004 Students pursued postsecondary education or training

### **Achievements of Incarcerated Students:**

- 3,243 Incarcerated students enrolled in Adult Education Program
- 1,949 (60%) of 3,243 students achieved measurable academic improvement
- 715 Students earned a GED