

Maine Narrative Report 2011-2012

Introduction

Major administrative, policy and procedural changes continue to impact Maine Adult Education's 107 local programs during the reporting period of July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. Among those changes were the appointment of a new state director in October of 2011, the development of a new NRS compliant data management system, the passage of legislation redefining Maine adult education as a college and career pathways delivery system and substantial reductions in state funding. Additional challenges presented themselves as awareness grew of long standing data gathering and reporting inconsistencies. This has been a time of great challenge for Maine adult education.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Data

In FY12, the Maine Department of Education funded 61 AEFLA adult education programs statewide under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. These programs consisted of individual public school adult education programs, consortia of public school adult education programs and non-profit agencies, and county and state correctional facilities. The numbers reflected in the NRS report are from AEFLA-funded programs only and do not represent the efforts of the other Maine adult education programs not supported with federal funds.

Data: Maine continues to address its data collection processes. Recognizing that the state office did not have the personnel or capacity to bring about the type of remediation efforts required, a former local program director recognized for her understanding of NRS protocols and the effectiveness of her program standards and data accuracy was hired to conduct data training and auditing. All directors and their data entry people were required to attend data training.

During October 2011, very direct steps were taken to remediate the data management practices of the field. These steps dealing with data were integrated with instruction regarding the assessment policy, state plan and NRS guidelines for student reporting. The October general sessions were followed up by 1-on-1 meetings for each and every AELFA program with required participation by the local director and data entry person(s). During that 1-on-1 meeting, programs were instructed in proper data gathering and entry using their own data. Programs then had an opportunity to make necessary corrections and resubmit. Data audits were also conducted in the spring of 2012. Though some programs needed some additional instruction, the majority of programs were reporting appropriately.

As will be evident on Maine's FY12 year end tables, Maine student numbers dropped slightly from the audited numbers of FY11. Total enrollment decreased from 6,776 to 6,433. However, for the first time in many years, there is confidence in the validity of the student numbers reported by the local programs and captured in the year-end federal tables. With the development of the new NRS compliant data management system that replaced the inadequate Maine Adult Education Managed Information System (MAEMIS), Maine will be reporting accurate numbers from this time forward.

Data Remediation Plan: At the same time the data management and reporting issues were being remediated at the local program level, it was discovered that state office data was not being gathered, analyzed or reported accurately. Upon learning and verifying that this was indeed the situation, the following corrective steps were taken:

1. The discrepancies and inaccuracies were reported to senior staff in the Commissioner of Education's office.
2. The person responsible for the state adult education office data collection and reporting is no longer employed by the Department of Education (DOE).
3. The state adult education director contacted OVAE to report the findings and seek direction.
4. The adult education office has begun working closely with the DOE financial office to ensure understanding of state reporting processes and to learn what is needed to generate accurate reports.
5. The new NRS compliant state-wide adult education data system has been tested and will produce the appropriate year-end tables.
6. A relationship has been established with Maine Department of Labor (DOL) so DOL can provide us with regular employment matching reports.
7. The new hire for data collection and the state director will work closely together to develop a system of checks and balances as well as seek opportunities to be trained by appropriate federal and state staff members.

Summary of Student Data

By program types there was a decrease of 118 learners in ABE, a decrease of 95 learners in ESL, and a decrease of 130 learners in ASE. The breakdown in participants by age group reflected numbers that were very consistent with FY11. It will be interesting to see how our numbers look next year when there is comparative data for the 2 or more races.

Maine continues to run a robust, state-funded Maine College Transition (MCT) program. Maine College Transition programs receive their funding through a competitive grant process and are currently serving 35 communities- available in about one-third of Maine's roughly 100 adult education sites statewide. The target population for MCT is learners in the 25-44 year old age group with a primary goal of post-secondary education. With College Transition participant numbers ranging from 1,300 to 1,350 per year, this explains the low numbers in ASE numbers. The National Student Clearinghouse returned records for 5,344 students that participated in MCT between 2006 and 2011. Just over half (51% or 2,731 people) enrolled in college for at least one semester after their MCT participation. College participation rates in the grant-funded communities ranged from 32% to 77%. All of our adult education programs are being encouraged

to integrate the successful strategies and best practices (advising, learning plans, focused professional development for staff) of MCT as much as possible. The annual MCT conference is now open to all programs.

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 were used to continue a contract with a Professional Development (PD) Coordinator through the state office. The PD Coordinator provided practitioners with professional developed activities based on needs identified through the annual local program Professional Development Needs Assessment and Program Planning process and also served as a conduit to keep the field abreast of the many excellent online and regional trainings offered by other agencies. Maine continues to make excellent use of the Professional Development Portal where the PD Coordinator is able to post PD offerings and participants can register for courses and manage their professional development transcripts.

FY12 professional development trainings conducted in the following program identified areas:

- Assessment Trainings: CASAS implementation, CASAS Refresher, Formative Assessment
- Instruction: Math, Reading (including 3, 2-day STAR institutes, comprehension, building vocabulary, and a LINC'S guided study circle), Technology (a variety of topics focused on integrating technology into the adult education classroom), Differentiated Instruction, Common Core, WorkReady, and Contextualized Instruction
- Data Quality
- Learning Disabilities
- Peer Observations
- Persistence
- New Directors Training – This 2-part training will be expanded to 3, all-day sessions based on participant feedback. The handbook for new directors was also updated.
- College Transition Conference – Best practices were shared at this December 2011 event when for the first time, the conference was open to all adult education programs and not only those with a College Transition grant. Due to increased interest and space constraints, conference attendance had to be capped at 100, and increase of 25 from prior years.
- Leadership funds were also used to support participation at the following state and national conferences: National Career Pathways Network, National State Directors, Family Literacy, COABE, LINC'S, National College Transition Network and the

Maine Adult Education Association annual meeting. When support is provided for participating in national conferences, those attendees are required to share what they have learned with their Maine colleagues at local meetings and conferences.

- Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA) – In May, 13 local program directors graduated as *Certified Program Managers in Program Improvement* from the second cohort of this 2-year program. First year graduates as well as the most recent class acknowledged the greater understanding they gained from their participation regarding the importance of data quality and accountability.
- New Data Management System – In the fall of 2011, the contract for the new web-based, NRS compliant data management system to replace the inadequate legacy system (MAEMIS) was signed. The following 9 months were spent in weekly meetings with the developer to ensure the system would function for all segments of Maine adult education programming (GED, WorkReady, College Transition, Enrichment) and not just the NRS courses and administration. The Go Live date for the new system was set for August 1, 2012.
- Career Pathways – In August of 2011, work was begun on legislation to redefine Maine Adult Education. The legislation was unanimously adopted in the spring by the legislature. An Act to Enhance Career Pathways, establishes a career pathways system approach to programming. Based on best practices in career pathways, the legislation required programs to include career pathways elements such as intake and assessment, academic and career advising, individual student plans, use of data for decision making, professional development plans, and appropriately certified staff. Now it is in statute that programs must undergo annual monitoring and as additional steps to raise rigor, local programs must offer at least 3 of the following program areas: Basic literacy or ESL; high school completion, college transition, workforce training; enrichment. Programs must also show evidence of partnerships and outcomes from integrating activities with career centers, DHHS, other state agencies, employers and other post-secondary educational and training providers.

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.

Maine continued to conduct monitoring in FY 12. Local programs now realize it is a part of the way we do business (annual desk audits and on-site at least every three years) and have established procedures within their programs to facilitate access to information and showcase their programs. A revised risk-based monitoring tool was developed and programs are aware of factors that may cause their program to be monitored more frequently. The new data system will allow for ongoing monitoring of programs throughout the program year. Now that program monitoring has

been institutionalized, monitoring in FY 13 and beyond will also place equal weight on financial monitoring.

3. Describe how the Eligible Agency has supported the integration of activities sponsored under Title II with other adult education, career development, and employment 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.

In FY12, the Governor put for his plan to dissolved the Maine Jobs Council and replace it with a State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) which would also take the place of the four Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBS). The new SWIB was given the charge to develop a plan to be submitted to DOL which would allow for local chambers of commerce to function as employer conveners. The Adult Education State Director was appointed as a voting member of the SWIB. In addition, a Program Committee (a sub-group of the SWIB) was formed with SWIB members such as Adult Education, DHHS, DOL, HUD, higher education, community college system, and Vocational Rehab. This Program Committee has provided a means for the service providers to establish inter-agency relationships, share programming information, become better informed regarding the mission of each group, and to begin planning inter-agency programming.

In the spring of 2011, the adult education state director and the director of the DOL Bureau of Employment Services, surveyed their field offices to determine the status of interagency cooperation. While most adult education programs reported working collaboratively with their career center, a few felt that there was little to no contact. Plans are now underway for bringing local DOL and adult education staff together for joint planning as well as professional development. Adult education is represented on each of the four Local Workforce Investment Boards by a local program director and is represented on the SWIB by the State Director of Adult Education.

WorkReady, a 60-hour soft-skills, pre-employment training initiative designed to get people into (or back into) the workforce, continues to play a positive role in Maine. Based on employer and participant feedback, 30-36 hours of computer instruction were added to the program. Under the continued leadership of the Coordinator, 13 additional WorkReady sites were approved and a total of 93 facilitators have been trained. Special sections of WorkReady were also offered for a 55+ population. The total number of adults participating in all sections of WorkReady was 150, with 70 earning the credential. The discrepancy between participants and graduates is that some programs are offered in settings where students may not be able to meet the graduation criteria, but still benefit from participation. In addition, a new online course for facilitator professional development has been developed.

Maine College Transitions Initiative (MCT), originally funded by the State legislature in 2007, continues to receive state and national recognition for its success in getting students ready for, in to and successfully through college. Data shows that participants are split almost 50/50 on the number employed and unemployed. Students are tracked through the National Student Clearinghouse. The required elements of the College Transition program which set it apart from adult transition classes are assessment, intake and orientation, academic preparation, technology, assistance with financial aid and college applications, career awareness and exploration, college tours and experiences, and college success classes and supports.

Exactly one-half of the 2,731 MCT students who enrolled in college remained continuously enrolled once they entered. The median length of enrollment among MCT students who persisted is three semesters of post-secondary study. Among MCT students who earned degrees, 60% earned associate degrees; 10% earned occupational certificates; 10% earned bachelor's degrees; 1% earned Master's degrees and 18% earned a degree or certificate that was not specified in the National Student Clearinghouse data.

The major learning from this successful MCT program is the success of participants as compared to GED recipients. College persistence in Maine for GED recipients is 29% while for MCT it is 50%. In FY12, there will be an added emphasis on placing our ABE and GED students on a college and career pathways model.

(<http://www.maine.gov/education/aded/dev/transitions.htm> and <http://www.collegetransition.org/home.htm>).

After each Maine College Transition site was monitored in FY11, in FY12 and going forward it was integrated into the regular department desk and onsite auditing process.

4. Describe successful activities and services supported with EL Civics grants and an estimate of the number of adult learners served.

EL Civics funds were used to support two projects in FY11: one in Lewiston and one in Portland. While those two communities serve the bulk of Maine's ESOL population, AEFLA programs throughout the state serve a total of 1,207 ESL learners.

In addition to professional development happening at the local program level, statewide offerings included student intake and goal-setting, and serving ELLs with disabilities.

Lewiston: In FY12, Lewiston had 264 students enrolled in a fully integrated ESOL program. Ninety-six students received direct service from EL Civics grant funds. Another 88 students received direct service from matching local funds. Of the total 184 students served in the EL Civics program this year, 13 earned their citizenship in FY12. Another 37 former EL Civics students met the requirements and earned their citizenship this year as well.

As part of the extensive scope and sequence in the Lewiston EL Civics curriculum, a variety of authentic instructional materials are used. To support instruction with employment, they included actual job applications and review job postings. For health

issues, health history forms as well as directions for using prescription medications were studied. To address goals involving family education, enrollment forms, report cards, parent-teacher conference requests, and online parent portal access were used in the classroom as well as information on housing, consumerism and civic engagement. Because Lewiston had a number of local elections this year, there was a lot of focus on voting information and materials on civic workshops. Computers and interactive projectors have provided access to real images, sounds, real-time information, and resources available to students.

In addition to the technology, Lewiston continued working with partner organizations to bring authentic resources to learners. These activities included a hands-on welding lab at an Adult Aspirations Fair, the local police department conducting on site workshops on legal issues, the League of Women Voters at the Naturalization ceremony assisting with voter registration, DHHS staff conducting on site trainings for TANF recipients, employers on-site assisting with mock interviews and adult education families involved in the Ready... Read! program.

The Lewiston EL Civics curriculum has two primary objectives: to assist students to gain sufficient communication skills to participate effectively in daily activities within the community and to assist immigrants and refugees who meet eligibility requirement to prepare for the INS citizenship interview. To address these two objectives, an integrated curriculum reviews communications that typical adults use daily in their roles of worker, family member, and citizen. These include; personal and public health and safety, active participation in the school system, general workplace culture, navigating public services and support systems, obtaining housing and general consumerism, and accessing community engagement information.

In preparation for the citizenship assessment, students review general facts and vocabulary and key information relevant to the INS interview, general review of US History including the legislative and executive branches of government, and an overview of immigration process and issues.

Portland: Portland Adult Education (PAE) offered EL Civics classes in conjunction with the Portland Housing Authority. During the school year 52 students enrolled in the five different citizenship courses, 40 in the beginning level and 12 at the intermediate. Additionally, more than 80 immigrants received citizenship tutoring from one of the 52 trained volunteers. PAE recorded 37 of the students as earning their citizenship.

PAE offers a multi-level class with elder students testing at levels pre-literacy through ESL 1 on the CASAS. A full oral language/literacy curriculum is tailored to the students' life needs in Portland. Though most Portland students are unable to read, their improved oral language and students skills enable them to understand stories used to inform them about real life situations dealing with healthcare, family, home and neighborhood, and shopping. There is also focus on reading and writing skill building to address the citizenship questions.

The primary texts used in the EL Civics classes are New Reader's Press *Talk of the Town* and *Civics and Literacy*. Because of the literacy levels of 1 and 2, much use is made of authentic materials in the classrooms; grocery store flyers, children's school records, housing issues and articles on current events; including ballots, mock elections and visits to the polls. Calendaring helps students orient themselves to this valuable personal management tool as well as a framework for important U.S. historical and cultural events.

The two teachers also infuse the curriculum with literacy. In addition to sight words and phonemic awareness, they choose the content of civics.

