

North Dakota
Adult Education and Family Literacy
2011-2012 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 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. State Leadership funds are used to implement the goals of the North Dakota State Plan which align with the strategic goals of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

The State Office continues to implement its professional development (PD) plan to better prepare for and respond to the changes and opportunities the pending WIA reauthorization and the 2014 GED series will offer. State Leadership funds support the work of the 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, works in concert with the State Office to implement the developed three year PD plan utilizing multiple delivery formats. The plan was originally designed using the PD needs assessment, conference evaluations, state Performance Indicators and local program monitoring reports. The PD plan is reviewed and revised annually to accurately reflect staff needs and follow up.

As part of the PD plan, the State Office created the concept of quadrant trainings; the goal is to provide a structured forum for ALC's to meet and discuss similar topics. The state was divided into 4 quadrants – all staff from each quadrant met on the same day with the same agenda. This was of particular valuable to those small ALC's who only have one or two staff; the opportunity to network and discuss like topics was helpful according to the evaluations. Building on this success, the State Office then arranged for quadrants 1/2 and 3/4 to meet, also on the same day with a common agenda. Next spring, quadrants 1/3 and 2/4 will meet using the same criteria. With the relational foundation in place, the 2013 PD plan can be implemented using the quadrant concept for instructional preparation of the new GED series, etc.

The ND Manual of Accountability and State Standards (ND-MASS) had been the long-standing manual for Adult Learning Centers; this document provides 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. The State Office targeted 2012 to update the guidance document. To date, there have been multiple discussions with directors and staff about their needs for program information, delivery method, content and organization of a new document. Additionally, other state guidance was reviewed and a draft outline and table of contents have been created. The new manual was expected to be in first draft by January 2012 with final completion estimated by April 2012. However, due to time constraints, the document

is still in draft form and being reviewed as time allows. The new timeline for completion has been extended to Summer 2013.

The State Office will be available for information, resources and consultation during the 2013 legislative session which begins January 2013 and runs for no more than 80 days. There is no agency initiated legislation related to adult education at this time, but the State Office will monitor and support partner legislation as it pertains to adult education (i.e. Job Services, Career & Technical Education, University Systems, and Department of Commerce).

Last year, North Dakota was one of four states to meet their Performance Indicators and received a WIA Incentive Grant. Four local programs and the State Office were recipients of grant awards which totaled \$683,822. Quarterly progress reports are provided by each recipient and presented to the Governor's Workforce Development Council.

North Dakota has now been using our new student data collection system (LACES) for 20 months. Training continues to be offered via individual site audits, group webinars and conference calls. Training was provided to all Adult Learning Centers on the NRS changes which took effect July 1, 2012. A follow up webinar is slated for December 2012 to address follow up questions/issues and also review the overall PY 2011-2012 NRS tables and data.

As in past years, in collaboration with the North Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning (NDALL), State Leadership provided support and funds for the annual Adult Education Fall Conference held September 12 - 14, 2012. The Conference was attended by 95 participants from both the Adult Learning Centers and alternative high schools. Conference evaluations were highly positive and additional professional development opportunities will continue to build upon those key concepts of instructional strategies and outcomes. The pre-conference session focused on TABE training. Key general sessions spotlighted teaching computer literacy and keyboarding in preparation of the new GED and computer-based testing option.

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. Seven (7) ALCs have been monitored in 2012.

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 and children 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.

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. Leadership funds support a conference call every other month with all ALC Directors.

The State Office is working with the DPI Special Education unit on a memorandum of understanding which focuses on K-12 local special education staff to be available for student consultation, instructional assistance and individual testing of students who self identify a disability and need for specialized instruction. This population of student is growing; as existing ALC's do not employ instructors with special education background or credentials, the access to qualified staff will help ABE instructors provide appropriate instructional material relative to the identified disability and advance instructional gain.

The State Office used Leadership funds to purchased "RUReadyND" access to each Adult Learning Center. The RUReadyND software program, developed and maintained by the ND Career & Technical Education staff, is a program specific to career readiness and allows students to create an electronic portfolio, complete a variety of inventories and assessments relative to various fields/industries of employment specific to North Dakota. Training was provided by the ND CTE Career Advisors.

The State Director attended the NRS Longitudinal Data System regional meeting in Chicago this past June with the agency MIS director; the information was thoroughly discussed and several points of information incorporated into the ND SLDS program. The State Adult Education Director attended the OVAE Director meeting in April.

All ALC's submitted grant applications for the PY 12-13; each application was reviewed, approved and budgets finalized. New ALC Director training was provided in July; subsequent follow up conference calls each month on varying topics will continue through February 2013. Last year, the Department granted the Adult Education unit a half time FTE to provide assistance to the Director; as a result of staff needs elsewhere within the agency, that position is now vacant.

The grants management website is currently being revised and updated; all ALC's will be able to access their budgets, request for funds and submit quarterly and final narratives, as well as the application each spring using this online tool.

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.

Last year, 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 totaling \$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 all measures and strategies are shared for student success on a constant basis.

North Dakota's current economy has put us in the national spotlight. As of November, our state unemployment rate was 2.4%. The oil and energy industries are driving the economic need at this time, primarily in the western part of the state; but all industry clusters have demonstrated growth and continue to report hiring shortages statewide. 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 now offering \$18/hour for front line workers; Wal-Mart offers a \$750 signing bonus as a recruiting tool in addition to paying cashiers \$23/hr as well as a weekly incentive bonus for employees working 40 hours a week. 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 22,000 workers and a projected demand for over 111,000 workers through 2018 (JSND 2012). Oil revenues are estimated to contribute \$2 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 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: Job Service, Department of Human Services, Workforce Safety & Insurance, Career & Technical Education, University Systems, Department of Commerce and local education agencies. The State Director of Adult Education is a Governor appointed member of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, actively participates in many related committees 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 three times each program year to coordinate student services, network and partner on community and regional projects.

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 580 New American adults (and approximately 710 children) transition to North Dakota. Three (3) 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: For a second year, the Fargo ALC worked with the Fargo Lions Club and several local ophthalmologists to initiate a free vision clinic. Approximately 70 ESL and GED students were screened this past year; 32 students received reading glasses, 15 were referred for more services and, approximately 7 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 training sessions on the BEST Plus by our State Trainer and the TABE CLAS-E by CBT McGraw Hill. As part of the PD strategic plan, an ESL Summer Summit was held in June 2012; this 2.5 day Summit focused on related topics specific to New Americans in North Dakota. Thirty-five participants attended and participated in the Summit. The second ESL Summit will be a pre-conference session at the 2013 NDALL Fall Conference.

During the reporting year, ND served 452 students (with 12 hours or more) under the ESL categories.