

Alabama Narrative Report 2012-2013

According to the American Community Survey 2009-11, U.S. Census Bureau, *Tapping the Potential, Profile of Adult Education Target Population*, Alabama, has a total state population of **4,782,021**. Of that population, **622,575** adults or **13%** of the state population are adults without a high school credential. There are **60,082** adults, or **1%** of the total state population, who do not speak English well or at all. These potential students necessitate that the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (ALDPE) address, seek and promote best practices to provide adequate training for program improvement. As the fiscal agent for federal and state education funding for adult education, ALDPE provides grants to eligible agencies so they can assist individuals in becoming more literate by obtaining the skills and knowledge they must have to improve their lives.

Realizing that the labor market has shifted to one requiring workers to have a postsecondary credential in order to compete successfully, Alabama has placed additional emphasis on how its services are delivered. In order to improve students' economic prospects, Alabama's plan prepares students by focusing on their transition to postsecondary education and skills training. To encourage Adult Education students that earn a GED to then enroll in college, ALDPE has had the policy that they are offered a free class of their choosing at any of Alabama's postsecondary colleges. This policy has been in effect for over ten years.

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 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; and some to brush up for new job responsibilities and demands. Whatever their reasons for attending our classes, they are a diverse group with a variety of backgrounds and personal challenges.

Classes are offered free of charge at various locations with flexible hours throughout the state. Instructional methodologies vary according to students' abilities, including but not limited by one-on-one instruction, group instruction, and computer-aided instruction. Students who are assessed academically above the 9.0 grade level and who are able to work independently can benefit from Alabama's distance education offerings that include the GED Online computer educational program. Regardless of students' functioning levels, professionally trained staff is readily available for guidance and individualized planning.

During 2012- 2013, the Department provided several State Leadership funded professional development opportunities for faculty and administrators and assisted in other opportunities as well. The largest offering each year in Alabama is the three-day Adult Education Summer Conference that is attended by over 600 program directors, instructors, support personnel and volunteers. At least 12 hours of professional development is provided each conference, which exceeds the mandatory ten hours detailed in the State Plan. Conferences were held in June, 2011 and July, 2013 so a conference was not actually held during the July, 2012- June, 2013 timeframe, but the conferences were still provided each calendar year. Due to the proximity of

the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Conference held in New Orleans in March, the ALDPE used State Leadership funds for 61 adult educators from Alabama to attend the conference and share what they have learned when they returned to their local programs.

With the ALDPE's assistance, the Alabama Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education (ALAPCAE), Alabama's adult educators' professional association, recorded a detailed New Instructor training session and a English as a Second Language (ESL) session. Both are posted on their website (http://alapcae.com/Professional_Development_PJ.htm). DVDs for each session were provided to each funded program. An additional recorded professional development session dealing with recruitment and retention was posted on the ALDPE's website (<http://www.accs.cc/AdultEduDivision.aspx>) during this time as well. There are now seven comprehensive videos posted on ALDPE's website that have been frequently by the local Adult Education programs.

During this timeframe, numerous meetings were held with program directors to discuss and train participants on a number of topics, including but not limited by: new provider training, compliance with the state's assessment policy, information management systems upgrades, guidance on meeting the goals in the State Plan, and budget process training. State staff members also conducted local onsite training sessions at a number of programs during the program year.

These State Leadership funded training sessions aided Alabama significantly in implementing the goals of the State Plan. Participants learned how to implement more effective techniques in their classrooms and are now more aware of the expectations ALDPE has for them.

Academic Performance Measures

An analysis of Alabama's academic performance shows that only one academic performance goal was met during the program year. Primarily due to the significant changes in the state's assessment policy for this program year, there were fewer students being post-tested before they separated from the program. As a result, academic performance measures were much lower this year compared to previous years. Alabama is working tirelessly toward improving these performance measures and it is now apparent that local programs are making steady progress.

- Beginning Literacy, State Goal 45% and Program Performance 46%
- Beginning ABE, State Goal 54% and Program Performance 42%
- Low Intermediate ABE, State Goal 55% and Program Performance 41%
- High Intermediate ABE, State Goal 51% and Program Performance 37%
- Low Adult Secondary Education, State Goal 59% and Program Performance 41%

- Beginning Literacy ESL, State Goal 56% and Program Performance 54%
- Low Beginning ESL, State Goal 56% and Program Performance 42%
- High Beginning ESL, State Goal 55% and Program Performance 41%
- Low Intermediate ESL State Goal 49% and Program Performance 42%
- High Intermediate ESL State Goal 45% and Program Performance 34%
- Advanced ESL State Goal 30% and Program Performance 23%

Core Indicators of Performance

An analysis of Alabama's Performance Measure Outcomes and activities based on core indicators of performance indicated that Alabama did not meet these goals this program year. Like the states across the country, this has been a transition year with a number of the cohort groups changing significantly. In time, Alabama will be able to adjust accordingly so that these goals will be met in the future.

- Placement in unsubsidized employment, State Goal 53% and Program Performance 31%.
- Retention in unsubsidized employment, State Goal 37% and Program Performance 31%.
- Placement in postsecondary ed. or training, State Goal 38% and Program Performance 28%.
- GED or high school completion, State Goal 78% and Program Performance 70%.

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

For 2012- 2013, 24,375 Adult Learners enrolled in 28 programs throughout the state at the following functioning levels:

- 4,021 Adult Secondary Education (Grades 9-12 education functioning level)
- 18,323 Adult Basic Education(Grades 1-8 education functioning level)
- 2,031 English as a Second Language Students

Achievements of Students/Adult Learners:

- 12,423 Students increased their Educational Functioning Level
- 4,367 Students earned a GED
- 1,475 Students pursued postsecondary education or training

Achievements of Incarcerated Students:

- 3,614 Incarcerated students enrolled in Adult Education Program
- 1,949 (54%) of 3,614 students increased an Educational Functioning Level
- 834 Incarcerated Students earned a GED

Federal Review

The US 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 one commendation, five findings and four recommendations. During the July 1, 2012- June 30, 2013 timeframe, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) was developed and submitted for approval in October 2012. Each of the findings and recommendations has been addressed and ALDPE is awaiting official approval of the plan. The timeframe for completion of all items identified in the CAP is September 30, 2015.

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 not less than 19 hours of classroom instruction per week. Also, according to Title II of the Workforce Investment Act, the local program directors are members of their regional Workforce Investment Boards. This coordinated system has proven to be successful at the local as well as the state level.

Policy to Performance Project

Alabama continued to have success with the Policy to Performance Project. The goal was to develop the existing Middle College model in which adults with limited employment skills are concurrently enrolled in accelerated GED preparation and a postsecondary occupational course. 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 that state's 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 55% pass rate for the general population. This proved that the \$41,300 investment in test waivers that were provided to adult education students during the 2012-13 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 850 Career Readiness Certificates during 2012-2013.

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. ALDPE funded 12 programs throughout the state with EL/Civics grants during 2012-2013.
- The ALDPE 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 ALDPE which provides a centralized location.

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 1,283 students; with 691 students completing an educational functioning level. These grant funds enabled programs to assist new language learners acquire proficiency in English so that they may effectively participate in the education, employment and civic opportunities in this country.