

Arkansas Narrative Report 2012-2013

A. 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.

AALRC

The Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) is funded through the Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative by the Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division. It was established in 1990 to provide a source for identification, evaluation, and dissemination of materials and information to adult education/literacy programs. In 1994 the AALRC's vision and mission was expanded:

Vision Statement:

"Arkansas Adult Education/Literacy providers' access needed information and resources to enable Arkansas' adult learners to reach their full educational and economic potential."

Mission Statement:

"To operate an enhanced network of communication and coordination that provides information, resources, research, professional development, and technical assistance, and that facilitates collaboration to benefit Arkansas Adult Education/Literacy providers."

The AALRC is located in Little Rock, Arkansas. The center has seven full-time employees, which include a Director, Professional Development Coordinator, Information Technology Specialist, Disabilities Project Manager, Media Coordinator, Secretary, and Administrative Assistant. State funds support employee salaries while federal funds are used for the fulfillment of our mission.

The AALRC supports the agency goal of "developing a strategic plan for effective delivery of lifelong career development and workforce education" through training opportunities and technical support. During the 2012-2013 fiscal year training opportunities provided by the AALRC for adult education and literacy councils included: AD-HD Demystifying, AERIS 101, AERIS 201, Best Plus, Best Practices Using TABE, Computer Security /Speedup, Distance Learning 101, ESL Summer Institute, Excel, Fall Administrators Mtg., Inspiration, Kahn Academy, Leadership Excellence Academy, LD Comp, LD 101, LD 201, Literacy Task Analysis, New Adult Ed Administrators Training, Photo-Graphics, Computer Basics, Spring Administrators Meeting, Health Literacy, The Teenage Brain, Woodcock Johnson, Career Awareness, Skillstutor, Teknimedia, Career Development Facilitator, Summer Professional Development, Math Institute I, Math Institute II, Standards in Action, Microsoft IT Academy, and Office 2007.

The AALRC also supports practitioners and trainers through professional development opportunities at state and national conferences. Those include:, AR Association for Continuing and Adult Education & Arkansas Literacy Council, Inc. Conference (AACAE/ALC), Learning Disabilities Association (LDA), Closing the Gap, Commission on Adult Basic Education Conference (COABE), National Training Institute, Hot Springs Institute for Technology, Project Ideal, LINCOS Region 2 Regional Resource Center Training, and College and Career Readiness Conference.

The AALRC also supports local programs by maintaining a current library of materials, providing research support/information, purchasing/distributing software and materials, and upgrading/redistribution of equipment.

Arkansas requires full-time adult education directors, instructors and counselors to be certified in adult education within four years of initial full-time employment. The AALRC supports this effort by providing tuition reimbursement for these individuals.

The AALRC supports the ACE/AED agency goal of “providing and effective communication system that is involved, informative, and interactive,” by holding statewide directors’ meetings, numerous committee meetings, publishing a statewide newsletter, publishing a directory of literacy services, and maintaining a web-site (<http://www.aalrc.org>).

B. 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.

There are areas in which Arkansas has done an effective job in meeting core indicators of performance and areas that could use some improvement. Arkansas met 10/15 or 67% of its 2012-13 Targets. The increase ranged from +1% to +26%, with the largest being in the outcome, Obtain a GED. The performance indicators met or exceeded include ABE Beginning Literacy (+3%), ABE Beginning Basic (+3%), ABE Low Intermediate (+3%), ABE Intermediate High (+1%), ESL Beginning Literacy (+2%), ESL Advanced (+5%). The follow-up targets met include Retain Employment (+9%), Enter Employment (+5%), Enter Postsecondary (+2%), and Obtain a GED (+26%). The highest increase for the state this year was Obtain a GED. This may have been attributed to the GED close out campaign. Many students were trying to finish their GED before it became computer based and possibly more challenging to pass. Also, students must pass the GED Official Practice Test (OPT) before they can take the GED test. The OPT gives a strong predictor of a student’s readiness to take and pass the official test.

The five areas in which Arkansas did not meet its 2012-13 Targets include ASE Low (-4%), ESL Low Beginning (-11%), ESL High Beginning (-5%), ESL Low Intermediate (-5%), and ESL High Intermediate (-4%). The state’s performance for ASE Low was the same as it was in 2011-12, 40%. Unfortunately, the areas not met this year were actually increases in 2011-12 from previous years. For example, ESL High Intermediate declined by as much as -11% in 2012-13 after increasing +8% in 2010-11. Other areas of ESL that declined this year compared to last year’s performance included, ESL Low Beginning (-4%), ESL High Beginning (-4%) and ESL Advanced (-3%).

On a positive note, although some of the targets were not met this year, Arkansas continues to show an increase in educational gains and outcomes compared to last year’s performance. The greatest increase for the state compared to last year’s performance were in Obtain a GED (+11%), ABE Beginning Literacy (+5%), and ESL Beginning Literacy (+7%). ABE Beginning Literacy marks the first time in over five years in which the state has met at least 50% of its targets in educational gains.

During the Spring Administrators’ meeting, the state’s 2011-12 performance measures were shared with local providers and compared to the national average. An explanation was provided on how the core indicators are negotiated and the number of students who needed to show educational gains in order for the state to meet or exceed the performance measures. Lastly, we shared the 2012-13 Negotiated Targets with providers and explained their responsibility in helping us to reach the targets.

The statewide averages for the core indicators of performance and the follow-up measures for the last three program years are found in Figure 1 below.

	<p>Figure 1: National Averages, Performance (2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13), and Targets (2012-2013)</p> <p>ARKANSAS</p>					
CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE	National Average	2010-11 Performance	2011-12 Performance	2012-13 TARGET	2012-13 Performance	Change from Target to Performance
ABE Beginning Literacy	42%	46%	46%	48%	51%	+3%
ABE Beginning Basic	47%	39%	40%	40%	43%	+3%
ABE Intermediate Low	47%	40%	41%	41%	44%	+3%
ABE Intermediate High	39%	40%	41%	41%	42%	+1%
ASE Low	40%	43%	40%	44%	40%	-4%
ESL Beginning Literacy	49%	29%	29%	34%	36%	+2%
ESL Low Beginning	52%	31%	31%	38%	27%	-11%
ESL High Beginning	54%	40%	42%	43%	38%	-5%
ESL Low Intermediate	49%	46%	42%	47%	42%	-5%
ESL High Intermediate	44%	35%	43%	37%	33%	-4%
ESL Advanced	26%	21%	35%	22%	32%	+5%
Enter Employment	58%	44%	46%	36%	41%	+5%
Retain Employment	65%	67%	75%	62%	71%	+9%
Obtain a GED	61%	85%	84%	69%	95%	+26%
Enter Post-Secondary/Traing	58%	44%	31%	32%	34%	+2%
AVERAGE	50%	49%	49%	45%	46%	+3%

Another criterion we use to evaluate how effective our programs are in meeting their goals is by looking at a program's Effective and Efficiency (E&E) score. The E&E calculation is based on the number of students enrolled and uses "weighting" to give fair weight to each student with a goal. Programs are required to meet or exceed 80% of the state's negotiated core indicators of performance. A program that fails to meet E&E the first year must meet with its program advisor and develop a written improvement plan aimed at the program attaining E&E status which will be submitted to the Adult Education Division within 30 days following the review conference. Programs that do not meet or exceed 80% of performance benchmarks for a second consecutive year will be assigned a state technical assistance team to assist the program in addressing its deficiencies and developing a program improvement plan. Programs not meeting or exceeding 80% of performance

benchmarks for three consecutive years will be submitted to the State Board of Career Education for appropriate action prior to continuation of funding.

C. 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 Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (WIB), 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.

The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ACDE/AED) responds to both the employer and the potential employee to help enhance the local workforce skills through its Arkansas **Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy™** (WAGE) program. The WAGE program is designed to ensure that unemployed and underemployed Arkansans have the academic skills necessary for success in the workplace. WAGE places business and industry at the center of an effort to redefine basic skills required by today's workplace. WAGE includes 112 basic skill competencies identified in the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and deemed essential by the nation's and Arkansas's employers. As part of WAGE, educators perform literacy task analyses (LTA) for participating businesses and industries and use the results to determine what basic skills are necessary for competent job performance, particularly in areas that significantly impact production, profit and safety. For an adult education program to become WAGE-certified, it must have a WAGE advisory committee that must consist of more than 50 percent business and industry members. The local WAGE advisory committee chairperson must also be from business and industry.

Community WAGE alliance members include the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Economic Development, the Workforce Investment Boards and other local economic development agencies and boards, postsecondary educational providers, chambers of commerce, employment training and placement agencies, local businesses and industries, and county and city governments. A WAGE student who successfully completes the program earns a state-issued certificate in one or more of five areas: Industrial, Clerical, Bank Teller, and Customer Service I and II or Employability. For the 2012-13 program year, 1189 WAGE certificates were awarded.

Banking: 73 (6%)
Clerical: 82 (7%)
Customer Service I 192 (16%)
Customer Service II 90 (8%)
Employability Skills: 514 (43%)
Industrial: 234 (20%)

Some WAGE centers are located in area one-stop career development centers. The ADCE/AED is an active partner in the comprehensive **one-stop career development center** movement in Arkansas. Twenty out of 51 adult education programs are located within workforce centers or have a satellite program located there, and all of the adult education programs across the state provide services to one-stop participants. These services include the assessment of participants' basic

academic and computer skills and the education of those participants to increase their skills when needed. Adult education programs also assist one-stop centers through resource sharing and, in a few cases, through the payment of rent and utilities. Several WAGE centers are also located in one-stop centers.

Adult education is represented on the local **Workforce Investment Boards** by at least one member in each of the ten regional workforce areas. In some cases, this is a local adult education provider, director, or president of a local two-year technical or community college.

The ADCE/AED in conjunction with the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Transitional Employment Board, and the Southern Good Faith Fund collaborated to develop the **Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative**. This is an initiative to improve earnings and educational attainment of low-income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-eligible adults in Arkansas. It encourages and assists those adults to gain the requisite skills to earn a marketable employability credential for immediate entry into a job or to enter college and complete a degree in order to sustain a better quality of life.

The original Career Pathways Initiative in Arkansas was developed at an adult education WAGE program located at a two-year college. This pilot was funded with a grant from the ADCE/AED and services were provided from the local adult education program's funding. Expansion of the initiative to other two-year college campuses has been supported with TANF funding. Local partnerships between adult education programs and Career Pathway programs are close and supportive, especially with adult education programs located on college campuses.

For several years, the ADCE/AED operated the **Food Stamp Employment and Training Program** through a contract with the Arkansas Department of Human Services. This program is exclusively intended for non-exempt work registrants who wish to participate in the program on a volunteer basis. This program is currently operating with Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the Arkansas Department of Human Services and local adult education programs. The Employment and Training Arkansas State Plan is approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

The **Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate** involves collaboration between ADCE/AED, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Arkansas Workforce Centers, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and the Arkansas Department of Education, with the governor signing the official Arkansas CRC certificates. Adult education programs provide basic skills improvement through regular adult education services as well as the Key Train software. Six (6) adult education centers also provide the WorkKeys assessment which an individual must pass to receive an Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate. Recently this initiative has begun offering the Platinum CRC, which takes higher skill levels to earn. It is hoped that this move will increase the number of people who come to adult education to improve their skills in order to earn this credential.

Further evidence of collaboration is the MOUs between Arkansas Department of Career Education and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education to **match data on employment and postsecondary enrollment for NRS reports**.

Collaboration between the ADCE/AED and the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) helps adult education **students with disabilities** through referrals to adult education programs for instruction and testing and referrals from adult education programs to ARS for diagnosis of students after thorough screening. In addition, one program provides basic skills instruction at the residential Arkansas Career and Technical Institute run by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services for students with disabilities. During Adult Education's Fall and Spring Administrators' meeting, a staff member from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services speaks to adult education providers about services for students as well as other programs that support student success.

ADCE/AED is an active participant in the meetings and activities of the **Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative** when they meet through representation by the director of the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center.

ADCE/AED is working with ACDE/Career and Technical Education, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Chamber of Commerce, and the Arkansas Transitional Employment Board on a major initiative of the Governor's office to extensively expand the **Arkansas College and Career Planning System** for use by youth and adults. In 2009-2010, this system, supervised by ADCE, was launched as Arkansas Works. This program is piloting career coaches for adult education students and Hispanic students.

ADCE/AED participates in the **Interagency Council on the Homeless** with Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, the Arkansas Department of Education, and many local service providers.

To further strengthen our alliance with Department of Workforce Services (DWS), under a state funded initiative, the Microsoft IT Academy is being used to service both DWS clients and Adult Education staff and students. The Microsoft IT Academy began with 24 pilot sites in 2012 and has grown to 34 full sites. The Microsoft IT Academy allows participants to become certified in the individual components of Microsoft Office. This collaboration between DWS with the implementation of the academy has strengthened our alliance for additional partnerships in the future.

D. Describe successful activities and services supported with EL/Civics funds, including the number of programs receiving EL/Civics grants and an estimate of the number of adult learners served.

During the 2012-2013 program year, ADCE/AED awarded EL/Civics grants to eleven local programs including eight adult education programs and three literacy councils. There were 3,528 adult learners served, an increase of 39% over last year's enrollment.

A. Describe successful activities and services supported with EL/Civics funds in the following areas:

a. Rights and Responsibilities of citizenship

Voting was encouraged by inviting the County Clerk to speak to the students. A voting machine was brought to class to provide contextualized learning to familiarize students with the actual process;

students practiced voting using sample ballots. School elections, special elections, primary elections, and general elections were discussed. Qualifications for voting were explained, registration cards were made available, registration locations were identified, and types of voting were taught. The clerk stated that voting provides citizens with a voice in local, state, and national governments. A detailed voter rights and responsibilities were explained and students were given copies of *Voting 101: A Pocket Guide to Voting in the Natural State*. The Adult Education Center keeps voter registration forms available in both Spanish and English for all students. In addition students are taught about the rights of citizens to be a part of the legal system by serving on jury with their peers.

One local program has incorporated Civics into the curriculum. This class is taught three days per week for one hour each day. The curriculum incorporates rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization, civic participation, and U.S. History and Government. Federal, state, and local laws are introduced during the Criminal Justice System module for EL Civics instruction. Many activities were provided for the students. Such activities incorporated into the curriculum included: A mock Presidential Election and a study of the electoral process, field trips to the local recycling center, fire department, and a town hall meeting. At the town hall meeting students were informed about the new developments regarding immigration, particularly the DREAM Act. After the meeting the students were given the opportunity to write and mail postcards to local and state elected officials asking for support of immigration reform. Many students participated in this activity.

b. Naturalization procedures

During the 2012-2013 school year, students were given the opportunity to attend an eight week course on citizenship offered each semester. Many students attended these courses and received thorough information regarding how to become a U.S. citizen. Eligibility was explained then a practice N-400 form was completed. Students used citizenship booklets to practice their English reading, speaking, and writing skills. In concluding the segment, students viewed the *USCIS Naturalization Interview* and test video. Students took a series of practice tests to assess their knowledge, as well as participate in mock interviews to help them feel comfortable and relaxed with the interview portion of the Citizenship process. Once citizenship was attained, the new U.S. citizens were given certificates by the center where they studied and were supplied with copies of the *Oath of Loyalty* and lyrics to the *Star Spangled Banner* for use at the Naturalization Ceremony. Those students that were unable to attend were helped with the same materials provided in the citizenship courses with on-on-one tutoring.

At another program, Students learned about the naturalization process through the use of DVDs in the citizenship kit. Upper level students practiced filling out a copy of the naturalization application. Students were also made aware information they needed to know to become citizens. The students learned the majority of the one hundred questions on the naturalization test by focusing on ten questions every class.

c. Civic participation

ESL students of one program visited their local library. Students received library cards and checked out materials that day. Students also received a calendar of community events held at the library. As

a result many students began bringing their children to story time on Saturdays. The story time hour is presented in English and Spanish.

Intervention Specialist with a local elementary school came and spoke to the ESL students and provided a list of resources available within the community. These resources ranged from assistance with medical care to food banks. Students learned that every school district has a Parent Center equipped with computers. The Parent Centers provide parents with access to assist in the educating of their children as well as themselves.

In another program, school supply lists, various school forms, and writing notes to teachers “Back to School” lessons were discussed. Volunteer opportunities in local schools, such as being a classroom helper or tutor were also discussed. Several bilingual parents participate in a reading program in a local school.

Another item of discussion included the responsibility to recycle in our homes. We have a local curbside recycling program in Russellville and students are taught what types of items can be recycled and how the process works at their house. For those students who do not reside in the Russellville proper, students learned where the recycling center is located for future drop offs.

Students are also made aware of opportunities to volunteer in the local food bank/kitchen. A few students actually volunteer to cook there once a week.

d. U.S. history and government

Annually local legislators of one region are invited to visit the local Adult Education Program and talk about the legislative process as well as answer questions for the students.

Three hours per week during civics instruction, teachers provided lessons from selected history books. Students learned important dates in American history while improving their reading comprehension and writing skills. Students were taken to the State Capitol to expand upon their knowledge of history as well as government. The tour included an opportunity to see where the state Senate and House of Representatives meet and make laws. The Governor of the state made himself available and allowed pictures to be taken with him and each individual.

U.S. History, U.S. citizenship, and Immigration Services are taught using interactive lessons, DVDs, and other technology. These lessons educated the students about different people who played important roles in U.S. history. Throughout this lesson students were required to research U.S. presidents or civil rights advocates. Once the research was completed, the students shared their information with one another.

History lessons included the following topics: Colonial America and Native Americans; the Declaration of Independence; the Revolutionary War; the early United States; the Star-Spangled Banner and why it was written; the Civil War and Emancipation Proclamation; and Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. A professor from an out of state university discussed the U.S. time line from Colonial times to the present.

Government lessons included the following topics: the U.S. Constitution; the three branches of government and how they check-and-balance one another; how bills become laws; and political parties and why they experience conflict. Local, state, and national governments were studied and

current officials identified. The students enjoyed receiving an 8x10 colored, autographed picture of the state's Governor.

e. Describe any other activities or successes you wish to report on.

Students compiled a list of local businesses. Working in small groups, the students filled out applications for employment from the compiled business list and addressed envelopes for mailing job applications. The internet and phone books were used for research purposes of local businesses.

Citizenship classes are offered on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The class is open-entry and open-exit and is available year-round. Students in this area take the Citizenship test in the local area. After passing the test, the students return to class to share their experience and to answer questions the other students may have. The class celebrates each new citizen with a cake and pictures. There is a "Citizenship" bulletin board in the centers hallway with pictures of the new citizens.

A local newspaper is sponsored by community businesses for the students in the Adult Education Center. In addition to using the newspaper for information about local, national, and international current events, students used the paper to find information about jobs, housing, the weather, and sports. The ESL Transition class in Sociology, which was designed to help ESL students study for the Sociology portion of the GED, used articles in the paper as a basis of discussion and informal writing about various sociological topics. ESL classes were also offered at a local elementary school for parents who were unable to come to the Adult Education Center.