

Louisiana Narrative Report 2012-2013

Introduction

The adult education vision in Louisiana is built on the notion of recasting the expectations of our most important natural resource - our people. The adult education mission in Louisiana is to prepare our students with the skills necessary to compete for family sustainable employment and be contributing members in their communities. This mission is driven by a focus on providing a strong literacy foundation that is embedded in college and career readiness standards. The 600,000 working age adults in Louisiana without a high school credential need an opportunity to obtain the skills necessary to achieve a better life. By placing the responsibility for adult education with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), creating clear pathways into and through career and technical education programs that lead to life-sustaining jobs, Louisiana has radically changed its adult education delivery model and can now substantially increase the number of people who are part of the middle class.

As a symbol of our new vision, the Louisiana adult education program has been re-named "WorkReady U." With a renewed set of expectations and a vastly different culture, adult education in Louisiana is no longer just about obtaining your high school equivalency diploma, but acquiring the means to improved life circumstances resulting from gaining the skills that lead to a job providing a sustainable wage. The state has redesigned the organizational, operational, and financial models of the state adult education delivery system in order to build upon the diverse resources of the LCTCS and its varied partners. The primary emphasis of WorkReady U in Louisiana is to provide highest quality adult educational services to our undereducated and/or underemployed citizens in order to provide opportunity toward self-sufficiency by providing high quality basic skills instruction, in addition to secondary credential attainment and transitional services that lead to a seamless matriculation to post-secondary enrollment, technical skill mastery, and industry recognized credentialing leading to family sustainable employment.

The new vision and mission for adult education delivery in Louisiana, WorkReady U, was fully implemented in FY 2012-2013. An open competition was conducted in May 2012 to establish a provider network that was fully committed to the new expectations and services that is WorkReady U. Additionally, Louisiana underwent a full OVAE monitoring visit in May 2012 that further defined adult education delivery services in the State by addressing four (4) findings, in addition to taking into consideration the recommendations that resulted from the visit through our Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The full implementation of WorkReady U and the implementation of the CAP resulted in a new performance baseline for adult education services in Louisiana. Statewide enrollment for FY 2012-2013 and overall academic performance slightly declined from the previous year. This decrease represents a convergence of key factors that were anticipated as a result of the WorkReady U plan implementation and adherence to the CAP:

- *Shift in the provider/new provider delivery network*
It is projected that the provider network will be in evolution through FY 2013-2014 as the WorkReady U culture of adult basic education delivery and added desired outcomes is better understood and embraced, in addition to the adaptation of the new providers to the network as they get fully established in the communities that they serve.

- *Increase in the number of managed enrollment providers*
A focus on high quality instructional delivery that embraces a dynamic classroom: whole group, small group, peer-to-peer, and one-on-one instruction, initially decreases provider's enrollment capacity until scale is established through implementation of new organizational, operational, and fiscal models.
- *Adjustment to age demographics of enrolled students*
Actions of the 2010 Regular Legislative Session amended LA R.S. 17:221. School attendance; compulsory ages; duty of parents; excessive absences; consent to withdraw; condition for driving privileges was amended by four different acts of the 2010 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature resulting in a decrease of 16 and 17 year old students entering adult education programs throughout Louisiana. Additionally, WorkReady U has identified the need to attract underemployed individuals that possess basic skills deficiencies that previously may have been unable to attend because of the traditional K-12 operational schedule. The establishment of comprehensive evening offerings throughout Louisiana is an on-going initiative.
- *Adjustment to the new assessment policy*
A reduction in the number of academic sessions a managed enrollment program can provide per year that resulted from the required strict adherence to the Test Publisher's Guidelines without the ability for exceptions has placed added stress on program retention practices and space utilization plans for previously identified classroom needs, class scheduling, and wrap-around student services. This adjustment requires creative service modifications throughout the network and additional partnership and resource procurement.

A commitment to excellence, by the LCTCS and its WorkReady U provider network, to deliver quality adult education and literacy services that are highly accountable and embedded in best practices research to the citizens of Louisiana remains strong despite the anticipated minimal overall performance decrease experienced in the new 2012-2013 baseline year. This commitment is evident in Louisiana's academic performance data on Table 4B. This solid foundation will be built upon as WorkReady U continues its quest to build the Louisiana of tomorrow through comprehensive adult basic education delivery that affords students the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed.

Section 1: A description of successful activities, programs, and projects supported with State Leadership funds and a description of the extent to which these activities, programs, and projects were successful in implementing the goals of the State Plan.

The adult education delivery network in Louisiana, WorkReady U, continued to work with local stakeholders and other partnering agencies to facilitate new methods of service delivery, increase secondary credential attainment opportunities, expand instructional content and delivery techniques to include college and career readiness standards, utilize technology to fill the gap between basic skills deficiencies and the knowledge necessary for self-sufficiency through

reinforcement practices of face-to-face delivery, in addition to fully implementing the WorkReady U vision and mission. Building capacity in Louisiana adult education programs focuses on the following four areas: connecting assessment and accountability; developing new models for service delivery and outreach; expanding the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning; and developing professionalism of personnel.

During FY 2012-2013, Louisiana Leadership funds were dedicated to compliance with regard to the WIA law and supporting the instructional needs of local providers as they fully implement the WorkReady U vision and mission that is embedded in college and career readiness standards. The apex of this effort was the establishment of Regional Centers of Excellence that are designed to be epicenters of a three pronged approach to professional development delivery activities throughout Louisiana.

Goal 1: To connect assessment and accountability

USDE/OVAE conducted a monitoring visit in May 2012 for the adult education program in Louisiana. The purpose of the visit was to ensure that Louisiana's adult education program meet AEFLA requirements and provide guidance toward best practices. The monitoring visit provided Louisiana with recommendations to improve the quality of funded activities, provided assistance in identifying and resolving potential accountability problems, as well as providing guidance with policies and procedures for program accountability. As a result of the monitoring visit, policy changes were proposed to the LCTCS Board of Supervisors and approved during FY 12-13. An assessment policy change called for a strict adherence to Test Publisher's Guidelines. State Leadership funds were utilized to promote awareness, professional development, and compliance monitoring, in addition to added focus on using data for decisions, retention techniques, and overall best-practices instructional delivery.

Accountability in adult education in Louisiana is framed by WIA and the National Reporting System (NRS)—the federal and state mandate to disaggregate and report on data relevant to adult education. To meet the requirements of interagency reporting of student outcome factors and the National Reporting System, State Leadership funds were used, in part, to purchase LiteracyPro LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System). The LiteracyPro LACES web-based data collection/management software is used by all federally-funded adult education programs in the State of Louisiana.

The following are activities and initiatives used to connect assessment and accountability in Louisiana as referenced in the State Plan for Title II of WIA.

- The LCTCS adopted a performance-based funding formula for adult education that is aligned to performance indicators with the NRS and WorkReady U desired outcomes.
- Louisiana continues its commitment to reach the “harder to teach” adult learners who are most in need of adult education and literacy services by targeting federal funds to students working below an 8.9 grade level equivalent. During the fiscal year, approximately 81% of the students served were ABE level students (NRS Table 1&3).

- The LCTCS's monitoring procedures included analysis of data and program performance through monthly data submissions and data desk reviews. Based upon desk reviews, state staff may request local data documentation according to a risk assessment determination. Follow-up onsite visits were conducted when warranted.
- During 2012-2013, as a benefit of the USDE/OVAE monitoring visit, Louisiana's onsite monitoring instrument and philosophy was revised to a risk-assessment model that incorporates six vital modules - data, recruitment/retention, classroom activities, records/reports, partnerships, and finance in an effort to model the USDE/OVAE instrument and place emphasis on what is valued and consistent with the WorkReady U blueprint. Onsite visits included an examination of student files, student attendance records, and program data submitted through the statewide data management system. Monitoring reports are prepared after each onsite monitoring visit. Sites that are non-compliant/have findings will receive recommendations for program improvements. Programs are given 30 days to prepare and submit a written plan of action describing the plan of resolution for the non-compliant/findings noted in the report. State staff are assigned to ensure all plans are adhered to and non-compliance addressed.
- Technical assistance was ongoing to all projects, with special interest and follow-up given to sites with indicated findings. Future funding may be impacted for sub-grantees who fail to meet corrective compliance measures or continue to perform poorly. After a comprehensive organizational needs assessment, additional state staff has been hired to assist with monitoring program progress and providing technical assistance to the local provider network.
- The LCTCS Internal Audit Division conducted onsite fiscal monitoring during FY 2012-2013. Based upon fiscal desk audits which examined program budgets and reimbursement claims, a risk assessment was determined. Onsite visits were scheduled with identified recipients to determine if expenses were reasonable, allocable, and allowable as required by Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, LA Title 34 and LCTCS Board Policies.

Goal 2: To develop new models for service delivery and outreach

The Louisiana Adult Education Program served a total of 19,728 or 81% adult basic education (ABE) students in fiscal year 2012-2013, in addition to 1,679 or 7% English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) students (Louisiana 2012-2013 NRS Tables 1&3) during the FY 2012-2013. The state funding formula for adult education incorporates a financial incentive to recruit new students with literacy levels from 0-8.9 grade levels and ESL students as the skills gap continues to widen. Louisiana is at a cross road. As the economy rebounds and the skills gap widens in the workforce, WorkReady U is committed to serving all undereducated and underemployed citizens to meet the growing workforce needs and provide opportunity to family sustainable employment.

After successful participation in the Design Phase of the Jobs for the Future (JFF), Accelerating

Opportunity: A Breaking Through Initiative, Louisiana was awarded a three year implementation grant. This initiative reinforces the WorkReady U vision in Louisiana, to change the way adult basic education is delivered by positioning adult students to gain access to postsecondary credentials so they can seize the opportunity to earn family-sustaining wages and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. As we utilize these philanthropic funds to explore alternative instructional delivery techniques and best-practices transitional service offerings identified in the Policy to Performance (P2P) Initiative, Louisiana State Leadership funds are utilized to solidify basic literacy instructional delivery practices in an effort to establish a strong foundational pipeline of well-prepared adult learners. These efforts are designed to prepare students to meet their full potential, while at the same time, creating the workforce pipeline our state demands through basic skills mastery that leads to some form of post-secondary training and ends with family sustainable employment.

Goal 3: To expand the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning

LCTCS's WorkReady U strives to improve upon and expand the opportunities that are available to adult education providers and students by offering multiple outlets for the increased use of technology in the classroom, including distance learning.

- During 2012-2013, LCTCS continued to provide access to distance education opportunities for adult education students. Through a contract with Louisiana Public Broadcasting, funded with State Leadership funds, local programs were provided with access to *GED Connections* online courses and series airings on all Louisiana Public Broadcasting television stations statewide.
- LCTCS Online offers unlimited potential to assist the Louisiana provider network meet the goals and outcomes of WorkReady U. Through its non-credit delivery portal, plans continue to utilize LCTCS Online as a multifaceted tool to assist with the delivery of professional development activities centered around statewide strands, assist in basic skills instructional delivery options for the provider network to reinforce concepts taught in the face-to-face instruction, support transition activities, and contribute opportunities to interested adult learners to become college ready.
- Louisiana had a total of 10,464 student attendance hours utilizing the distance education curricula provided by the State that resulted in 55% of the students completing a level (NRS Table 4c).

Goal 4: Professionalism of Personnel

Louisiana had 93 local administrators/support staff, 433 adult education instructors, 170 instructional assistants and 34 unpaid volunteers in FY 2012-2013 (Louisiana 2011-2012 NRS Table 7).

WorkReady U continued its commitment to excellence by offering professional development activities for FY 2012-2013 to ensure professional growth opportunities were offered to support the State Plan and the WorkReady U vision and mission. WorkReady U staff continued its quest

to offer the highest quality professional development opportunities by consulting with national professional development experts and convening a state task force in order to streamline and focus professional development efforts on areas of value to the system - data, recruitment & retention, classroom activities, records/reports, and partnerships. As a result of a professional development task force recommendation, LA Federal Leadership funds were utilized to implement Regional Centers of Excellence. The established centers provide regionally appropriate trainings, resources, and mentorship opportunities throughout Louisiana's eight Regional Labor Market Areas. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was conducted in FY 12-13 to establish the centers. The Regional Centers of Excellence provide on-site meeting rooms, resource libraries, and leadership to guide research-based adult education best practices.

The next step in Louisiana's professional development plan will be to implement the WorkReady U Virtual Academy. The WorkReady U Virtual Academy will include online courses that will provide a cost-effective means of ensuring that quality information is disseminated to providers. Six modules have been identified as part of the effort to streamline information and place emphasis on what is valued in adult education. These modules include data, recruitment/retention, classroom activities, records/reports, partnerships, and budgets/finance. Under each module there will be both required and optional self-paced courses. Required courses will include new instructor/supervisor training and policy updates. Optional courses will be tailored to specific groups such as ESL instructors or those working with non-readers and will include topics that advance the WorkReady U vision to move adult education beyond attaining a high school equivalency credential and towards college and career readiness standards.

During FY 12-13, sub-grantees were awarded additional federal funds earmarked for professional development activities including conference participation. WorkReady U continues to strive to shift the mindset and culture of both adult education and postsecondary institutions through consistent, clear messaging delivered over time and in multiple contexts. In 2013, adult education and technical/community college instructors and administrators attended the same annual statewide professional conferences sponsored by the LCTCS and the LA Association for Public, Community and Adult Education (LAPCAE). Both conferences provided a unified means of communicating the WorkReady U vision to participants and emphasized the importance of integrating basic skills remediation and work skills.

The USDE Policy to Performance (P2P) Initiative provided LA an opportunity to evaluate state and local policy while planning and developing practices to expand the state's adult basic education transition system. The P2P Initiative greatly enhanced the implementation of the WorkReady U vision in Louisiana by ensuring policy and practice supported sustainability, quality service, and accountability. The P2p project and the USDE/OVAE onsite visit provided the tools and support for Louisiana to deeply examine the adult education policies currently in place. During FY 12-13, policy revisions were drafted and sent to the LCTCS Board of Supervisors to review and approve as a result of participation in the above mentioned events.

Summary: Snapshot of Adult Education in Louisiana, 2012-2013

The Louisiana Adult Education Program served a total of 24,700 undereducated adults in FY 2012-2013 (Louisiana 2012-2013 NRS Tables 4&12). The total number of students served with at least one hour of instruction during 2012-2013 was 33,125. Data reveals that a total of 49.4% of those who participated in adult literacy services during the FY 2012-13 program year completed or advanced an educational functioning level (Louisiana NRS Table 4).

The total amount of federal and state funds expended by LCTCS and local programs was \$11,884,913.05 this amount includes Federal Funds of \$7,638,185.86 and \$4,246,727.19 of State Funds for 2012-2013.

The total number of participants served statewide across all groups and at all levels was 33,125. In FY 2012-2013, the total number of student attendance hours was 2,281,408 (NRS Table 4), which equates to the following:

average cost per adult education student.....	\$358.79
cost per contact hour.....	\$5.21

Administering the adult education program statewide were five full-time professional staff members. The professional background of these staff members ranges from K-12 and adult education teaching experience to higher education administration experience. Staff members have participated in professional development activities including NRS Workshops and OVAE-sponsored meetings.

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System maintained a presence in state-level meetings of agencies (both within and outside of the System) relating to adult education. Close alignments also were maintained with the Department of Corrections, the Workforce Commission, Workforce Investment Council, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Louisiana Board of Regents and the Department of Education.

In 2012-2013, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System expended federal funding at the following levels (including carry-over federal funds from prior year):

State Leadership.....	\$448,840.38
Administration	\$380,566.38
Basic Grant to Local Providers	\$6,808,779.10
Total	\$7,638,185.86

Section 2: A description of any significant findings from Eligible Agency's evaluation of the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities based on the core indicators of performance.

After a thorough review of the 2012-2013 adult education performance data, it is clear that the changes to the adult education provider network and the new assessment policy, that requires strict adherence to Test Publisher's Guidelines, impacted 2012-2013 performance outcomes. As new local programs got established in their communities and as Louisiana's seasoned programs altered their managed enrollment instruction cycles and service schedules in order to adhere to the new assessment policy, disruption to traditional adult education instructional and student services occurred throughout Louisiana.

However, as Table 4B reflects, Louisiana and the WorkReady U implementation is on the correct path. Gains were accomplished in each of the twelve (12) identified functioning levels. This across the board gain is a strong indicator that the adult education instructional practices and delivery system throughout Louisiana is on solid foundation from which to build upon. The FY 2012-2013 will be used as the "New Base-line" for Louisiana through which future years progress and success will be measured as Louisiana continues to strive to be the solution to many of the educational, social, and economic dilemma's our citizens must overcome.

Additionally, the collaborative efforts of the Louisiana Department of Education and the LCTCS continues its trend downward of the percentage of 16 and 17 year olds that are being served in adult education. Through clearer defined state mandatory attendance laws and more diverse alternative programs being offered in the K-12 system, Louisiana is working hard to address the dropout rate. Louisiana is also committed to ensure all individuals that are undereducated and/or underemployed have an opportunity to receive basic skill remediation and an opportunity toward self-sufficiency as evidenced by Table 3 that reflects 88% of the students served were Adult Basic Education or English-as-a-Second Language learners. This long-term commitment is yet another measure that WorkReady U and its mission is dedicated to building the Louisiana of tomorrow by providing comprehensive adult educational services to Louisiana's most at-risk citizens.

Section 3: A description of how the agency has supported the integration of activities sponsored under Title II with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities.

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System has supported the integration of activities sponsored under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 in multiple areas relative to adult education, career development, and employment and training activities.

Many local adult education programs used their federal funds, in addition to the state allocation, to provide instructional activities at the One-Stop Centers. In each of the 18 Workforce Investment Areas an adult education director is responsible for continued communication with the local Workforce Investment Board. This coordination and communication provides opportunities for the director to attend WIB meetings and to serve as a conduit for the exchange of information. LCTCS leadership participate in all appropriate committee and board activities

with regard to the State agencies responsible for Workforce, Corrections, Higher Education, and Economic Development.

A highlight of the collaborative work of these agencies during FY 2012-2013 was the use of 2010 Incentive funds. These funds are being utilized to support strategic efforts in each of the State's eight (8) workforce regions to establish comprehensive career pathways for adult learners that are embedded in regionally appropriate labor market data that possess stackable/ portable credentials tied to national certifications and job readiness skills.

Section 4: A description of successful activities and services supported with English Language/Civics education funds.

Louisiana awarded \$263,031 through a competitive grant competition, ranging from \$21,920 to \$36,624, to nine (9) providers. Allocations were based upon proven adult educational services and prior year success in providing both English language instruction and civics instruction. The total number of English Language/Civics education students served by the nine (9) sub-grants in 2012-2013 was 972 which reflects a 29% enrollment increase from the previous year. Below are snapshots of two such programs, which provided services with English Language/Civics Education Funds:

Lafourche Parish

Due to the unique geographic design of Lafourche Parish, EL-Civics classes were located in the three major areas of the parish—north, central, and south. Each area offered daytime and evening classes. Advancements were made in providing participants with the needed social and academic supports to be successful mainly due to partnerships with various partnering agencies. The school system provided transportation services for daytime students whose access was limited by a lack of transportation. Some participants received childcare services through collaboration with the Career Solution Centers and the Office of Family Support.

Changes in the orientation/registration process and curricula were made to encourage and educate students on the benefits of life-long learning and training. Furthermore, students worked on the skills needed to enter a post-secondary program and employability skills. EL/Civics participants had an overall 67% benchmark completion rate exceeding the state percentage in all levels except Advanced ESL.

Terrebonne Parish

EL-Civics activities, including guest speakers and field trips to the library, post office, and local restaurants, were established to emphasize cultural infusion through daily activities. The incorporation of citizenship/naturalization material as well as the introduction of material from popular culture into daily practice was a motivating factor for students. As a result, four students attained naturalized citizenship status. Additionally these activities served as both formal and informal methods of retention, fostered camaraderie and social interaction for the co-hort.