

Massachusetts FY13 Federal Report Narrative

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.

Massachusetts applies State Leadership funding to support state staff to partially fund the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) and other professional development initiatives, as well as to contract for services such as program/project evaluation, task force facilitation and participation, and policy development, and to promote linkages with the workforce development system.

State staff support state ABE goals through State Leadership activities such as the provision of technical assistance to local providers, policy development, standards development, provision of an orientation for new local program directors, and other efforts to build the capacity of the field to increase college and career readiness, improve student outcomes, and improve program performance.

Some highlights of FY2013 accomplishments supported with both state and federal funds include:

Adult Career Pathways Grant Program

FY2013 was the first year of a new, two-year, \$3.5 million grant program developed and administered in collaboration with workforce development partners to support eligible adult students' career-related goals, and strengthen their preparation for employment opportunities and/or occupationally specific education and training programs. Programs in 16 Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) regions were funded to integrate ABE and ESOL instruction with priorities identified by the workforce partners. Although this grant program is funded with state matching funds, the significant investment of staff time required to develop and implement this new approach to collaboration with the workforce system is supported with Title II State Leadership Funds.

Building Teacher Capacity

Continuing the focus on building teacher capacity Massachusetts has expanded the standards-based professional development approach begun in mathematics to other areas. In FY2013, a comprehensive professional development program aligned with the ABE Professional Standards in Mathematics and Numeracy was outlined. While high quality professional development in Reading and Writing continues to be a high priority, the development of professional standards in these areas is deferred until Math and ESOL are fully implemented. In FY2013 the ACLS internal Educator Policy Team (EPT) charged with strengthening educator effectiveness convened a statewide teacher task force who made a number of policy recommendations including a stronger, more coherent and consistent ABE educator evaluation system. Together, the task force and EPT recommended adapting the current K-12 Model Educator Evaluation System and piloting the ABE Educator Evaluation trainings in FY2014.

Development of Professional Content Standards for ESOL

Massachusetts continues the development of Professional Content Standards for Teachers of Adult ESOL Students. The Standards outline what ESOL teachers should know and be able to do. A noteworthy aspect of the process is that the Standards have been developed collaboratively over a two-year period with considerable input from ESOL practitioners and

staff from ACLS, ESE's Office of Second Language Acquisition and System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES). These Standards will help guide teachers with instruction, and benchmarks are offered to structure assessment of students' progress toward the standards. Further, the Standards development is being informed by research into prevailing theories of, and methods in, second language acquisition and applied linguistics as well as by other standards developed for teachers such as those published by the international professional association, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). The standards also reflect attention to, and respect for, intercultural awareness and social context. We expect these Standards to be completed in FY2014.

Life Science Strand of a Science Framework

Massachusetts has used state leadership funds to procure a consultant to continue work on the Life Science Strand of a Science Framework anticipated to be completed in FY2014.

The Life Science Strand is a guide through the identification of essential questions, standards, and benchmarks for teachers to begin doing science in their classes. In addition, there will be appendices provides teachers with current resources—some on the web, some in their communities—that offer opportunities to learn science using the most recent research methodology and technology.

STudent Achievement in Reading (STAR)

In FY2013 21 practitioners from 8 programs participated in STAR training. Four nationally certified trainers continued to provide technical assistance and support to those 21 practitioners and to the 82 previously trained practitioners. The Massachusetts STAR team was recognized for the support it receives at the state level and was asked to present a webinar to all states sharing the development and implementation of STAR in Massachusetts. While the cost of program participation is state-funded, state leadership funding supports state staff time in the trainings and in policy development.

ABE Distance Learning Policy and Technical Assistance

In FY 2013, Massachusetts expanded the number of programs involved in its Distance Learning model. Policy revisions were released in revised guidelines for DL with the multi-year open and competitive RFP, which funded two DL Hubs, one for ABE and one for ESOL, and 25 local ABE programs funded to offer DL. Federal funds support the two Distance Learning Hubs, and state leadership funding supports state staff time in developing program policies, overseeing professional development for DL staff and providing statewide trainings (e.g., DL Kick-off for new programs and annual DL Summit for all programs that offer distance learning in Massachusetts).

Transition Programs

ACLS funded 11 ABE-Transition-to-Community-College programs (fund code 668; state funds) in FY2013; this was the first year of funding in a two-year funding cycle. The purpose of this grant program is to provide a foundation of services within Massachusetts community colleges that enable adult learners to transition into and ultimately complete postsecondary education. Programs employ student cohorts and offer two required courses, *College for Success* and *Technology for College*; programs also offer academic courses to students at no cost. Programs are required to prioritize seats in these programs for students referred by ESE-funded adult basic education programs, and enrollment is 15 or more students per program per semester. An open and competitive ABE-Transition-to-Community-College RFP will be released in FY13 for a three-year funding cycle beginning

in FY2014. State leadership funding supports state staff time in developing program policies and providing guidance to the 11 ABE –Transition-to –Community-College programs.

Also in FY2013, Massachusetts used State Leadership funds to:

- provide customized, program-based Targeted Technical Assistance to programs identified by the state as underperforming, which improved sufficiently to meet or exceed state standards¹; and
- jointly monitor local funded programs and support ABE staff out-stationed in career centers.

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.

Core Indicator #1: We are pleased to have generally met our overall target for FY13 (missing it only by one percentage point). Our numbers improved markedly compared to those in FY12. Please see Table 1.

Table 1: FY13 Negotiated and Actual Performance Standards

Education Level	FY13 Target	FY13 Actual	Above/Below Target
Beginning Literacy ABE	29%	30%	+1 point
Beginning ABE	33%	34%	+1 point
Low Intermediate ABE	40%	31%	- 9 points
High Intermediate ABE	25%	26%	+ 1 point
ASE Low	17%	13%	- 4 points
Beginning Literacy ESOL	44%	45%	+1 point
Low Beginning ESOL	55%	60%	+5 points
High Beginning ESOL	51%	52%	+1 point
Low Intermediate ESOL	45%	48%	+3 points
High Intermediate ESOL	39%	40%	+1 point
Advanced ESOL	35%	33%	- 2 points

¹ In the process of providing customized program based technical assistance to underperforming programs, MA has learned that insufficient paid time, educational leadership, and communication consistently emerge as issues in such programs.

Compared to last year where we posted low percentage points in Beginning Literacy ABE and in Low Beginning and High Beginning ESOL levels, we improved Beginning Literacy ABE significantly (increasing from FY12 actual of 21% to FY13 actual of 30%), and in Low Beginning ESOL (increasing from FY12 actual 56% to FY13 actual of 60%) and High Beginning as well (increasing from FY12 actual 50% to FY13 of 52%). Please see Table 2 for an illustration of these figures. The professional development work we implemented for our practitioners this past year at these ABE and ESOL levels appears to have been successful.

ABE GAINS

We are, however, concerned about continuing to see our educational gains decrease in the Low Intermediate ABE and ASE Low Educational Functioning Levels. Our Low Intermediate ABE level was 9 points off our target (though only 3 percentage points off our FY12 actual gains of 34%).

ACLS is unsure why our numbers remain low in the Low Intermediate ABE level. We continue to train additional programs in the use of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI, as reflected in the STAR training). Massachusetts has required that by 2017, all programs must train their intermediate level teachers in the STAR Reading Program and use it in their classroom instruction. The attention we have given to STAR does not appear to be having an overall impact yet, because we have trained less than half (35 of 84) of ESE-funded programs to use STAR. We have also seen that practitioner turnover has a particularly detrimental effect on programs when STAR-trained teachers leave the program. We have been working with directors of STAR-trained programs in how to plan for and/or mitigate the effects of staff turnover. Despite these setbacks, we do continue to hear positive reports from STAR teachers and see qualitative gains in students of STAR classes. ACLS expects that our Low Intermediate ABE and High Intermediate ABE gain levels will increase as time goes on and additional programs implement STAR.

In addition, Massachusetts formerly adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards for ABE this past October. ACLS provided a statewide conference the Standards on November 1 to our field by presenters including Donna Curry (TERC), Mary Ann Corley (TEAL), Mary Beth Curtis and Amy Trawick (EBRI/STAR), a PARCC Fellow, and Reecie Stagnolia (Kentucky ABE State Director). The training was successful in introducing the CCR Standards to ABE teachers and directors and setting the stage for additional professional development, which is in process. ACLS believes that the rigor and clarity of the CCR Standards, in conjunction with extensive professional development, will help raise our ABE EFL gains.

In analyzing our Low ASE level percentage of 13%, ACLS found that there were quite low post-test rates in both reading and math at this EFL Level. Fewer students post-test at Low ASE than at any other level. We found that for tests taken in reading, about 41% of students who pre-test in Low ASE do not post-test. In tests taken in math, about 38% of those pre-tested don't post-test at this level. In analyzing our learning gains at the Low ASE level, among students with pre-/post-tests, the level completion rates for students taking math tests is about 28%, and for those taking reading tests, is 14%. However, when looking at all students at this level, math level completion falls to 17% and reading to a

dismal 8%. In order to enable students to make more learning gains, we must first consider strategies to improve our post-test rates of Low ASE students, as well as support teachers teaching at this level in receiving professional development that will help improve student learning gains.

ESOL GAINS

This Fiscal Year, Massachusetts met and exceeded its targets in five of the six ESOL levels, up from two of the six NRS levels this past year. Compared to actual FY12 percentages, we increased 3 percentage points in Beginning Literacy ESOL, 4 in Low Beginning ESOL, 2 in High Beginning ESOL, remained the same in Low Intermediate ESOL, and improved 1 percentage point in High Intermediate ESOL. We only dropped one percentage point in Advanced ESOL. Please see Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of Actual Percentages of FY2013 to FY2012

Education Level	FY12 Actual	FY13 Actual	Difference
Beginning Literacy ABE	21%	30%	+9 points
Beginning ABE	31%	34%	+3points
Low Intermediate ABE	34%	31%	- 3 points
High Intermediate ABE	24%	26%	+2 points
ASE Low	14%	13%	- 1 point
Beginning Literacy ESOL	42%	45%	+3 points
Low Beginning ESOL	56%	60%	+4 points
High Beginning ESOL	50%	52%	+2 points
Low Intermediate ESOL	48%	48%	Same
High Intermediate ESOL	39%	40%	+1 point
Advanced ESOL	34%	33%	-1 point

Core Indicator #2: ACLS used wage record information provided by the state’s Department of Revenue (DOR) for the employment measures. The state office requests the data from DOR quarterly to update wage information in the ABE data system. ACLS uses data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) for data matching as well as information entered in the “College Course” screen available to our transition programs. We need to submit data to NSC on a schedule more closely aligned to when they receive data regarding student enrollments within academic terms occurring toward the end of the reporting period. Our programs need to better understand the relationship between a student’s date of exit and their entry into the “enter postsecondary” cohort. Our ability to capture outcomes will improve when entry of student exit dates into our database are more closely aligned to their last date of attendance. Exit date entries corresponding to later points in time forestalls student entry into the cohort. This increases the likelihood for obtaining an NSC match that cannot be included as an outcome due to that greater possibility of receiving within the matching record a postsecondary enrollment date that is earlier than their date of entry into the cohort.

Table 3: FY 2013 Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual
Entered Employment	35%
Retained Employment	48%
Entered Post-Secondary Education or Training	2%

Core Indicator #3: Again this year, Massachusetts implemented data matching with Oklahoma Scoring Service for the GED goal, downloading information monthly. Massachusetts’ data matching protocols enable matching of several data fields regardless of whether a social security number is provided, assuring valid and reliable data. The survey method is used only for the secondary school diploma goal, which represents about 10% of the students for this core indicator.

Indicator	Actual
Obtained a GED or Secondary School Diploma	76%

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 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.

In FY2013 the MA state ABE office continues to foster strong collaboration with the workforce system in the following ways.

1. The FY2013 – FY2017 Multi-Year Open and Competitive RFP

The FY2013 – FY2017 Multi-Year Open and Competitive RFP for Adult Basic Education were released in November of FY2012 and the first year of service delivery was in FY2013. For over 20 years, in each multi-year Open and Competitive cycle, Massachusetts has funded ABE services through a regional approach. Proposal review teams were convened in each of the 16 workforce regions with workforce partners represented on each team to review proposal applications.

The priorities of the RFPs reflect the strategic goals and objectives of *Facing the Future: Massachusetts Strategic Framework for Adult Basic Education for 2010–2015*

- Goal 1: Ensure that adults needing basic education have access to services;
- Goal 2: Increase system effectiveness and quality of the ABE system; and
- Goal 3: Prepare students for success in their next steps: in college and further training, at work, and in the community.

The first goal, ensure that adults needing basic education have access to services, attests to the ABE system's commitment to keep the door of opportunity open to all adult students in need of literacy and language skills.

The second goal, increase system effectiveness and quality, incorporates a commitment to support educational and career advising, a well-qualified ABE workforce, and innovative programs. It also recognizes the need to hold programs accountable for continuously improving services that result in increased student outcomes. Strategies to support the goal of increased quality and effectiveness include improving working conditions for ABE staff and the continued development of Massachusetts' standards-based ABE system. The Adult Career Pathways RFP, developed in collaboration with workforce development partners, presents an opportunity to meet local and regional labor market needs through innovative programming that serves adult students with postsecondary and employment-related goals. Currently a total of 40 Adult Career Pathways programs are funded through this initiative. ACLS is planning a release of an FY2015-FY2017 three year Adult Career Pathways RFP, again based on regional priorities articulated by each workforce region.

The third goal, prepare students for success in their next steps: in college and further training, at work, and in the community, acknowledges the ABE system's responsibility to become a system focused on the college and career readiness of students at all levels. Another key strategy in support of the goal of preparing students for success in their next steps include the ABE Transition to Community College RFP, a critical part of the system's efforts to support the successful participation of adult students in post-secondary education.

2. ABE Representation on the State and Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs):

The state ABE office works with Chief Elected Officials in each workforce region and with local Workforce Board Executive Directors to appoint representatives of ABE to the 16 regional boards, ensuring that ABE is a stakeholder in each workforce development region. A local ABE Program Director is selected to participate on the WIB and to inform ABE program directors in the region of workforce development priorities and activities. Each of Massachusetts' sixteen regions has an ABE representative on its WIB. Additionally, the State ABE office is represented on the State's Workforce Investment Board and its subcommittees.

3. The Policy to Performance (P2P):

Eight pilot projects "Models to Successfully Transition Adult Learners to Community College" funded through Commonwealth Corporation were an outgrowth of the P2P, a technical assistance grant from OVAE. A Massachusetts P2P state team was convened that consisted of the Massachusetts Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education (ACLS), Higher Education, and Transitional Assistance as well as the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Commonwealth Corporation.

The Massachusetts P2P state team was active during the years of funding. For example, the state team convened monthly, collaborated to host a statewide conference, and supported the eight pilot grantees to prepare students for college and career readiness. P2P state team members also attended meetings convened by US DOE/OVAE to learn about model efforts to support adult basic education students' future success, and to hear from leading researchers about best and promising practices. The positive outcomes of the P2P pilots were shared at many venues. These include the 2013 ABE Directors' Meeting, where P2P grantees

presented information about their successes, offering models of effectiveness in contextualized curricula and advising. Additionally, grantees also offered workshops at Network 2013, the annual conference of the Massachusetts Coalition of Adult Education (MCAE). Overall, P2P has had an important impact at both the state and the local level.

4. Learn at Work:

Currently 12 workplace education partnerships are funded through the collaboration of ACLS and the Commonwealth Corporation and coordinated by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. This collaboration was prioritized by an ABE/ESOL subcommittee of the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board. The Learn at Work grant program is administered by the Commonwealth Corporation. These partnerships 1) provide incumbent workers with the basic academic skills required to pursue careers in high wage/high demand occupations, and 2) provide businesses with workers who can better contribute to the businesses' productivity, performance, or competitiveness.

Commonwealth Corporation and ACLS share the oversight of 12 partnerships, jointly monitor the projects and plan for their professional development as well.

5. Appointments of ABE Representatives to Local Workforce Investment Boards:

ACLS works with chief elected officials and local workforce investment board executive directors in each region to appoint representatives of ABE to the 16 regional boards, ensuring that ABE is a contributing voice in the regional discussions. The ABE program director chosen to participate on the LWIB keeps other ABE program directors in the region informed of workforce development priorities and activities. All sixteen regions have ABE representatives on their LWIBs.

6. Collaborations with One-Stop Career Centers:

ACLS continues to expend \$100,000 to support local ABE program staff out-stationed in the career centers in 15 of the 16 regions to conduct intake, assessment, and referral services. One region, Partnership for a Skilled Workforce, (formerly the Metro South/West REB) has elected not to pursue this strategy.

7. Professional Development Activities:

ACLS provides the majority of its professional development opportunities through funding and providing direction to the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES). SABES supports ABE programs in areas related to workforce development by providing professional development designed to address the range of needs among ABE program staff. In FY2013, the PD continued to emphasize the critical importance of preparing adult learners for success in post-secondary education and in careers.

Workshops and other activities offered in 2013 ranged from the basic "Intro to Workforce Development" to the more advanced "Developing Contextualized Curriculum by Integrating Literacy and Workforce Skills." PD is offered for all levels of ABE and ESOL. For example, "Curriculum Solutions for Workplace Education: Multi-Level ESOL in Workplace Education" and the "Life Skills, College, and Career Readiness Guide" introduce CCR concepts at the most beginner through advanced ESOL levels. Labor Market Information

(LMI) Seminars and workshops such as the “Career Planning: Integrating Career Awareness into Workforce and ABE Programming and Advising” focus on access to labor market and career information for adult learners at all levels.

SABES PD is offered through a variety of options, including regional sharing groups among program directors, workforce development staff, and advisors. The highly popular and effective training, “Integrating Career Awareness” (ICA), was offered via face-to-face, distance learning, and hybrid formats. Customized technical assistance is also available.

SABES evaluates, analyzes, and reviews all PD for continuous improvement efforts. In FY2013, 90% of the participants in College and Career Readiness-related PD activities met all of the learning objectives of the trainings.

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.

In FY13, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provided EL/Civics instruction grants to seven ESOL programs. Grant recipients included both local education agencies and community-based ABE programs across Massachusetts. Funded programs were located in both urban and rural settings with the predominant populations served found in urban and suburban settings with high immigrant concentrations. Five hundred and forty-four ESOL students were served.

Some specific program activities are listed below:

Political Discourse: Many programs hosted visits by local elected officials who presented on their work and answered students’ questions. Many programs visited the Massachusetts State House on Adult Literacy Awareness Day and on Immigrants’ Day. All programs participating in these events prepared students for their visit through lessons that taught a deeper understanding of the political process. Students usually met with their elected state representatives and engaged in a dialogue on issues of interest to them.

Civic Engagement: Statewide, most programs made effective use of lessons on voter registration, education and political campaigns. One program promoted student involvement in community volunteer activities. One program organized eight classroom visits from the municipal Human Rights Commission for discussions on discrimination and rights in the area of employment, housing and lending, and public places. These conversations included role-playing scenarios to illustrate to students how they may experience discrimination and how they can successfully address such experiences, including reporting them.

Financial Literacy: Across the state, most programs included a curriculum unit on Financial Literacy. Topics generally covered are budgeting and savings, managing a checking account, avoiding credit card fraud, and saving for a college education. Some programs invited representatives from community banks as guest speakers to present selected topics in these areas.

Public Information: Statewide all programs introduced students to their local libraries where they applied for library cards and explored local resources that were offered at the library, such as story circles for children and free or reduced tickets to local attractions. Other programs invited speakers from local public service agencies to present information on how

to access health care providers, local legal services, and citizenship and immigration services. Many programs invited representatives from their local police, fire, and school departments to address students' concerns about current community issues. Some programs collaborated with the local One Stop Career Centers to facilitate the sharing of information on jobs and job training availability to students.

Some unique curriculum projects are listed below:

Civics and Naturalization: Several programs offered citizenship classes or workshops that integrated U.S. History and civics with English language instruction and the naturalization process. Topics included the overall INS citizenship process, eligibility, the application process, and the citizenship interview. A number of programs held mock interviews for students engaged in citizenship preparation. Programs maintain collaborations with local organizations that support immigration and the naturalization process. One program hosted an Americorps volunteer placed through the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition to greatly expand naturalization services in the program. Many programs include recognition of new citizens at their annual graduation ceremonies. One program hosts a July 4th naturalization ceremony every year that has become an annual tradition in the town.

A Community Art project: One program worked with an artist to create a quilt to be publically displayed in the program's building lobby. In addition to vocabulary and oral communication, students learned soft skills such as cooperation and collaboration. They used cloth to create flags from their countries and self-portraits, and wrote their hopes and dreams on the quilt. The final product was featured on the city Facebook page.

Student Leadership Teams: Student mentors developed bilingual resources to educate the student body and community at large about topics of significant interest to the program and local community. Mentors created PowerPoint presentations, pamphlets and flyers for use in the program-wide. Topics included breast cancer awareness, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug and alcohol prevention and Latino leaders.

Intensive ESOL and Civics: One program designed an intensive EL Civics class that met four days per week for three hours per class for four weeks. The course was designed to give beginning – to intermediate – level adult English Language Learners structured activities to maximize speaking practice. The main content area was occupations, job responsibilities, and the Massachusetts Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights. Students practiced occupational and workplace vocabulary and then assumed role plays to converse about job responsibilities. Students were introduced to domestic workers' issues and what is required to find safety and security in this type of work. A guest speaker from an advocacy group spoke to the class about the proposed Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.