

Maryland Narrative Report 2012-2013

During Fiscal Year 2013, the Adult Instructional Program provided state leadership to 28 local programs and the Correctional Education Program. Grantees were funded under a continuation grant and state leadership followed goals established in the State Plan for Adult Education. The transition to the new GED® 2014 series and web-based National External Diploma Program (NEDP) programs was a large focus of state activities as local programs prepared for these changes and the corresponding technology challenges. Considerable resources were also used to continue the commitment to expand Career Pathways and promote a vision of collaboration and alignment among state and local partners to better serve our mutual customers.

Activities of Statewide Significance Promoting the Purpose of the Title

Maryland National External Diploma Program (NEDP)

Maryland's NEDP remains the largest in the nation and produced 557 graduates during the fiscal year 2013 (FY13). After locals participated in the recent web-based "soft launching" of the program during FY12-13, the fully launched web-based program went into effect July 1, 2013. Clients enrolled in the paper and pencil version will have until December 2013 to complete the program or transition into the web-based system. The new web-based program has more rigorous competencies that reflect changing high school graduation standards and are aligned with the Common Core and Career Readiness Standards. Maryland's NEDP Coordinator also represented the state at the NEDP/CASAS Summer Institute in June 2013.

Professional Development

Professional Development (PD) initiatives continue to prioritize the identification and delivery of training to adult education staff through a train-the-trainer model in partnership with the local leadership team. State required foundation trainings are delivered to new and experienced staff on the local level by the Instructional Specialist (IS), Intake and Assessment Specialist (IAS) and Management Information Specialist (MIS). Each program submits a plan for professional development annually, detailing selection criteria, delivery method, target audience and evaluation method. Documentation of local PD offerings is submitted and maintained on the state online file sharing system and is reviewed by state staff. State-delivered foundation training included BEST Plus, ESL Content Standards, EL Civics, and NEDP (for new and experienced staff). Among the most popular state-facilitated offerings, are sharing sessions for leadership team members designed to encourage collegial collaboration and sharing of best practices. In addition to annual seminars for leadership personnel, a

meeting was convened for Administrators and Management Information Specialists to review impending National Reporting System (NRS) changes during this fiscal year.

A significant focus of PD was to prepare local staff for the GED® 2014 series. Twenty-seven instructors and Instructional Specialists applied for and were accepted in the GED®2014 Train the Trainer Professional Development Program. Participants attended three trainings: an Overview of the GED®2014, the Correctional Educational Association training in partnership with the GED® Testing Service, and a GED®2014 Training Planning Meeting. A GED® 2014 workgroup was formed to design and develop standardized training modules with resources for adult secondary education teachers responsible GED® test preparation.

The state continued with the roll out of *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE & ESL Curriculum (ICA)*. Three trainings were delivered during the fiscal year, two for instructional staff and one for transition specialists with a total of 77 participants. Programs were encouraged to allow teachers to participate with their Instructional Specialists in order to plan for program implementation. The training places considerable emphasis on contextualized instruction and collegial collaboration. The ICA curriculum will be required foundation training in FY 14.

In partnership with the English Language Learning University (ELL-U), thirty-four Maryland Adult ESL teachers participated in a sustained, five-month program of professional development activities on the topic of teaching reading to ELL students. Activities included a full-day training; and an online training, field trip, and study circle. Additionally the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), partnered with Maryland to provide a sustained, five-month, four-part Teaching Reading to Adults professional development activity. Twenty-two local program instructors and Instructional Specialists participated in two face-to-face meetings, two self-paced online courses and an active community of practice.

Distance Learning

The Maryland i-Pathways program, formerly GED-i, offers an online alternative to ASE-level students preparing to take the GED® tests. Its primary mission is to provide outreach to learners with barriers to the traditional adult education classroom setting. The grant was administered through the Maryland Workforce Corporation.

Through the program website and the online application process 2,882 individuals applied for adult education services, an increase of 461 applications from FY 12. Of the 2,882 learners who applied for online services, 751 visited a local program to obtain adult education services, either as an online or traditional student. Due to the unique characteristics of the i-Pathways learner,

it can be assumed that these 751 learners would not have otherwise sought out services during FY 13. The program continues to work to move more prospective learners to pre-testing and from pre-test to entry into the online program. The automated letter campaign begun in 2011 was continued throughout this fiscal year and provides a greater level of communication with customers who are challenged by higher than average scheduling and transportation issues. In FY 13, a total of 18 regular 12 week sessions and seven seven-week sessions were offered, serving 378 new learners with 211 completers and 63 carrying over into the new fiscal year. The Maryland High School Diploma was awarded to 88% of the cohort completing all five sections of the GED test.

Training for State Staff

State staff attended the following conferences as presenters or participants: Career Pathways Institute; Annual State Directors Meeting; COABE; National Conference on Family Literacy; Maryland Association for Adult, Community and Continuing Education (MAACCE), both regional and annual conferences; NRS; NEDP Conference; CASAS Summer Institute, and the LINCS Region 1 Advisory Partner Meeting.

Maryland Adult Literacy Resource Center

The Adult Literacy Resource Center (ALRC) and Resource Center for Language and Culture located at University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) provided a strong, statewide, multi-component professional development center that supports the Maryland literacy provider network. The major focus of the Centers was to improve and enhance program quality and learner outcomes through the provision of professional development, logistical support for training and technical assistance, teacher resources, instructional materials, and the dissemination of research information. Additionally, the ALRC provides a toll-free telephone line for public inquiries; an average of 3 calls per day requested information on adult education programs and GED® testing.

The Centers include a lending library containing over 12,000 items, including professional development resources, instructional materials, workbooks, and media to support grantees. Five hundred forty-one resources were circulated among the field in FY13.

Support and regular technical assistance were provided to adult education programs via 17 conference calls, as well as periodic face-to-face meetings and 6 electronic discussion lists for the following local program staff: Adult Education Administrators, Instructional Specialists, Intake Assessment Specialists, Management Information Specialists, External Diploma Program staff and Family Literacy staff. A total of 557 posts enhanced communication and collaboration and provided networking opportunities among adult education programs.

On average, three calls a day were received for adult education program and GED information during FY13.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of 28 grantees and Correctional Education was performed by state staff through a combination of on-site visits and desk monitoring of mid-year and final reports, performance measure achievement and reported Literacy Works Information Systems (LWIS) data. State staff members typically function as a team to oversee grant activity, with Specialists providing technical assistance in a specialty area as well as having general monitoring responsibilities. Recruitment was underway to fill two staff vacancies for the Adult Secondary Education and ESL Specialist positions.

Approximately 33 program visits were made by specialists to provide orientation to new administrators, technical assistance for targeted issues and to monitor program and instructional practices. Adult Education staff also participated in learner recognition ceremonies at local programs. Monthly conference calls provide information and updates on state and federal initiatives to grantees.

Quarterly data analysis and reporting is done by each grantee and reviewed by state program managers who provide feedback and technical assistance as needed. The report assists program administrators in identifying areas for program improvement and effectively addressing problems that might affect performance.

In FY 13, the adult education program began a comprehensive, formal fiscal monitoring of grants, using a risk analysis tool to prioritize selection of grantees. Experienced fiscal monitors in the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning worked with adult education staff to identify specific monitoring concerns and develop familiarity with adult education program policies. Two programs received fiscal monitoring in FY 2013; fiscal monitoring will be performed routinely for all programs in subsequent years on a three year rotational schedule.

Family Literacy

A family literacy sharing session was held in April for family literacy providers to exchange information regarding new program initiatives and thoughts regarding innovations in partnerships, retention and additional funding streams. Additionally, family literacy program providers were given the opportunity to share their program implementation and activities through a special family literacy activity grant. Providers submitted videos that demonstrated their work at the local level with a special emphasis on collaboration with literacy partners in

hopes of being selected to attend a professional development event. As a result of the grant, 6 staff members from local programs attended the National Conference on Family Literacy held in Louisville, KY in April. The conference draws over 1,200 participants ranging from children's and adult educators to government officials, literacy advocates and community leaders. Important prospects are looking for innovative approaches and resources to enhance the quality of their work. Peers exchange cutting-edge ideas and information. Individuals and businesses have opportunities to share strategies, resources and innovations with leaders in the fields of family learning, literacy, early childhood development, adult education, and parent engagement.

Local Grantee Network

Twenty eight local programs and Correctional Education were provided funding through a continuation grant during FY 13. A Baltimore County Public Schools program serving out-of-school youth, elected to discontinue providing adult education programming in FY 13. They were given a three-month transition grant to allow for a smooth transfer of the students to another existing grant program at the Community College of Baltimore County. Another grantee, the Literacy Council of Prince Georges County, was unable to fulfill their obligation to the grant. Funding was discontinued and another grantee in the jurisdiction, Prince Georges Community College, was able to continue programming for affected students.

Transitions to Post Secondary Education

Programs continue to implement plans to transition students to postsecondary education as required in the FY 2011 Competitive Application. The FY 2013 continuing application highlighted the importance of career pathways and preparing students to access education and training opportunities leading to employment in high demand industries. Maryland was able to launch a successful rollout of the Integrating Career Awareness (ICA) curriculum for both instructors and transition counselors. The curriculum was enthusiastically received and provided a focus for grantees to guide students as they set goals beyond achievement of a high school credential.

As a result of the state's continued emphasis on transitions, a number of programs employ transition counselors to facilitate goal setting and transition activities for high intermediate and advanced learners. The state transition specialist facilitated a meeting with these staff during the fiscal year to explore resources and best practices in transitioning students.

Adult education partnered with the Maryland Higher Education Commission(MHEC) and College Goal Maryland, a statewide volunteer program that provides free information and assistance on financial aid for students who wish to attend post secondary education. A local adult education program hosted a College Goal Sunday event with their One-stop and community

college partners as part of a week-long transition initiative. College Goal Maryland provides trainers and funding to support these events. Students were guided through the process of completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and two scholarships were awarded to participants. Several grantees refer students to similar events sponsored through College Goal Maryland or college financial aid offices.

MHEC and DLLR provided a workshop for 22 adult education staff including administrators, instructors and transition counselors on financial aid. The MHEC presenter covered a variety of resources including types and sources of financial aid and financial literacy for students preparing for college. Following the presentation, teams worked together to develop sample lesson plans integrating financial aid information into adult education curriculum and program practice. Evaluations indicated that both the presentation and opportunity to discuss and strategize how to implement financial aid planning was highly valued by participants.

Previously sponsored Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) participating colleges have been funded to continue developing the integrated instructional model as part of the Department of Labor (DOL) Workforce Innovations Grant, Accelerating Connections to Employment. The colleges are joined by colleagues in Connecticut, Georgia and Texas and will work on introducing or scaling up integrated instructional models for low skilled workers in high demand occupations. They will also explore implementing system innovations in partnership with Workforce Investment Boards and community partners to better coordinate services and resources. Maryland will expand MI-BEST programming to additional programs in FY 2014. Programs that have been part of the early MI-BEST implementation continue to expand their bridge program, contextualized curriculum, and integrated instructional program offerings with state and local funding and in partnership with local organizations.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Program in partnership with the Maryland Association for Adult Community and Continuing Education (MAACCE) sponsors the Regina Milio Scholarship program for people who earn a score of 3000 or better on the GED® tests and plan to pursue postsecondary education and training programs. This scholarship program is given in memory of Regina L. Milio, a former Specialist in the GED® Office at the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR). Scholarships are awarded annually at the MAACCE Spring Conference for adult education professionals and 63 deserving GED® graduates have received a total of 101 scholarships, since the fund began in 2002. Recipients receive \$500 towards colleges expenses at Maryland accredited post-secondary education or training institutions. Scholars may re-apply annually if they have maintained at least a 2.3 CPA. Each year, these applicants have documented 3.0 -4.0 GPA's.

Effectiveness of Activities based on the Core Indicators of Performance

Enrollment

Enrollment numbers were virtually static, with Maryland's overall enrollment for FY13 at 31,029, compared to the FY12 enrollment of 31,094. The composition of the statewide enrollment cohort has shifted somewhat however, with the relative proportions of students at the ASE level declining from 13% to 11% since FY12, and the ESL population increasing to 45% in share from the previous 42%. ABE students continued to comprise 45% of the entire enrollment. The shift is consistent with another demographic fluctuation seen in FY13, where the Hispanic or Latino group increased in share from 31% in FY12 to 37% in FY13, while the Black or African American students decreased from 41% to 38% of the total enrollment. Regarding the age spread of our students, a small decrease (1.6%) in the share of our students in the age 16-18 group who now account for just under 9% of our enrollment, reflects a gradual multi-year trend beginning after 2008, when our 16-18 year olds had a 15% share of the total.

Literacy Attainment

Forty three percent (43%) of the enrolled students increased educational functioning levels in FY13. This is an increase over FY12's 42%, and returns Maryland to the overall FY11 outcome on this measure. Broken out by categories, the ABE outcome increased from 37% to 39% for the year, the ASE increased from 43% to 47%, and the ESL decreased from 49% to 45%. As our share of ESL students increased significantly, this affected our overall outcome. It is very likely that the challenge of finding appropriate assessments for the ESL learners contributed to the decline in ESL level completions. It is widely believed by the providers that the decrease is the result of the transition from CASAS 80L to 50L. The timing of this change was a logistical challenge for programs starting summer classes and in some cases, the assessments were not delivered until after classes had begun. Local programs reported an impact on level completions through the second quarter of the year while instructional and test administration adjustments were made. This was particularly significant on the advanced level, where Maryland's outcome declined from 26% in FY12, to 17% in FY13.

Diploma Attainment

The total number of high school diplomas awarded to enrolled learners decreased slightly since FY12, from 2,417 to 2,345. The rate of learners achieving the outcome declined from 74% in FY12 to 68% in FY13, and slightly from the 69% in FY 11. This decrease could be reflective of the new NRS cohort measurement methodology, however it may take additional years of data to accurately assess the trend.

The NEDP program continues to be an excellent option for high school credentialing in Maryland with 557 graduates and accounts for 24% of all high school diplomas in FY13. The slight decline in the number of graduates since FY12's 579 graduates may be reflective of the early implementation of the new online format of NEDP, which cause some minor delays in matriculation.

Employment Outcomes

State employment outcomes continue to be affected by the lack of available jobs in Maryland and surrounding states for adults without college education or technical training. Learners who lacked basic skills or a high school diploma were unable to qualify for available employment or training programs, compounding the difficulty to enter and retain employment.

In FY13, of the learners identified in the "entered employment" cohort, 29% achieved the outcome, compared to 27% of the learners with a goal to enter employment who achieved it in FY 12. The actual number of enrollees who met the definition of the cohort to enter employment and could be matched with employment data was 4,860, a sizeable increase over the 3,730 who reported the goal to enter employment in FY12 and could be matched with employment data. Most importantly, the actual number who succeeded in entering employment grew from (817) in FY11, (1,019) in FY12 and (1,427) in FY13. The number of learners in the retained employment category was comparable, at 5,883 in FY13, to 5,775 who articulated a goal in FY12; however, the rate of adult learners of achievement on the retained employment measure was 54%, down from the rate of 63% during FY 12 and FY11.

Transition to Other Education and Training

The outcome for entered postsecondary education and training decreased significantly from 41% in FY 12 to 6% in FY13. The actual number of individuals who met the definition of the cohort group and could be matched for this measure is more than double, at 2,050, the number of learners who articulated the goal and could be matched in FY12 (913). The rate of achievement of the outcome is a vast concern and it is hoped that the second year follow-up will yield a higher outcome. Nevertheless, this will be a major focus of ongoing analysis in FY14 and beyond. The adult education providers have identified postsecondary education as a key component to adult programming and have hired transition specialists, integrated career awareness, developed transition plans and worked with local partners at the community colleges and One Stops.

One factor that contributes to the actual performance is underreporting, due to the lack of a single database that can capture all entry into postsecondary education and training. Maryland partners, including the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the Maryland State

Department of Education and DLLR continue to seek broader capacity to document student entry in the postsecondary programs.

Matched Literacy Level Assessments

The state pre-post match rate was 69%, which an increase from 68% in FY12 and 67% in FY 11. This statistic had been steadily improving as a result of intake processes, local attendance policies, and the managed enrollment policy. Local programs submit quarterly data reports that provide a tool for program administrators and state staff to monitor their progress toward meeting performance goals. Programs are instructed to ensure adherence to the mandates of the assessment policy which requires a minimum of 40-60 hours between pre and post test while analyzing the testing data throughout the year. This continuous monitoring has resulted in more attention to student attendance hours and increased instructional intensity. The Intake/Assessment Specialist (IAS) position has been critical in training instructors in the pre-post testing procedures.

Integration with Other Adult Education, Career Development and Employment and Training Activities

The Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council (MALAC) originally convened in 2011, continued to meet during this fiscal year. Appointees to the committee, who serve two years, represent a wide range of stakeholders including government agencies, Maryland delegates, community colleges, public schools and community based organizations. The committee meets quarterly to discuss issues related to their shared constituencies. This year's focus has been the changes to GED® testing that impact students, require the establishment of Pearson VUE testing centers, and necessitate teacher preparation training. The adult education office has participated with the following groups to inform the public of the changes and train instructors: the Maryland Association for Adult, Continuing and Community Education (MAACCE), the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Job Opportunities Task Force. Public announcements, face to face teacher training and informational webinars have been developed through these partnerships.

Adult Education coordinates with the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) initiatives including the Interagency Workforce Committee, charged with coordinating workforce development programs and policies to meet the needs of Maryland's high demand industries and increasing collaboration among WIA partners. The Director of Adult Education was appointed to serve on this committee. Local adult education providers and Workforce Investment Boards plan for integrated services through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that is updated annually. Most jurisdictions meet on a quarterly basis and share information about program offerings and eligibility requirements; refer qualified participants

for services; and attend partner orientations to provide information to applicants about available services. Alignment through youth services is a particularly strong area for adult education programs and many administrators serve on the WIB Youth Council. A request for joint regional meetings of local adult education and Workforce Investment Board partners will be fulfilled in 2014.

Maryland continues to commit resources to developing career pathways programming in local jurisdictions. In August 2012, DLLR's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning convened a Maryland Career Pathways Institute modeled on the successful practices developed in the 2011 Department of Labor Career Pathways Planning Grant. The goal of the Institute was to foster the development of a career pathways system in Maryland, in order to improve the skills and credential attainment of lower-skilled workers and to provide technical assistance and support to regional career pathways teams (adult education providers, workforce investment boards, community colleges and other agencies serving the target population). Eight career pathways teams (86 team members) were selected through a competitive application for the training. Teams worked together to develop a career pathways plan based on a high demand industry for their local jurisdictions and were provided with planning tools (developed by DOL) and assistance from national subject matter experts. Feedback from participants indicated that the institute was a valuable use of their time and the opportunity to work with partners with the assistance of experts was extremely helpful. In order to continue the work begun in the institute, DLLR funded grants to support planning. The process has been intensive and largely focused on labor market analysis, industry selection and business engagement. Teams reconvened on a quarterly basis to report on progress and share resources. One of the primary challenges continues to be identifying sources of funding to move the work forward. The state contracted with CLASP to provide training in Braiding Funding Sources for Career Pathways and Bridges for FY 2014. Teams will also seek funding through the Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) grant opportunity awarded to DLLR in the 2013 state legislative session to support the creation and expansion of industry partnerships.

Activities and Services Supported with EL Civics Funds

In FY 2013 the state funded 21 local grantees with a total distribution of \$1,451,126.00 in EL Civics funds. A total of 7271 English language learners reported as having a goal of civics education; of these, 6,327 completed as least 12 hours of EL/Civics instruction. The state continues to provide technical assistance to the field to ensure that the appropriate population and curriculum are supported by EL Civics funding. Annual training provided for key ESL/EL Civics staff and instructional specialists included information on the background and history of EL Civics instruction, federal definition and evaluating tools and lessons for instruction.