

North Dakota

Adult Education and Family Literacy 2012-2013 Narrative Report

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.

The North Dakota Adult Education State Office is proud to represent seventeen local Adult Learning Centers and staff who work diligently and with passion to give adults a second chance for success through additional education and services. State Leadership funds are used to implement the goals of the North Dakota State Plan which align with the strategic goals of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

The State Office continues to craft, implement and evaluate its professional development (PD) plan to better prepare for and respond to the changes and opportunities the pending WIA reauthorization (specifically college and career readiness) and the 2014 GED series. State Leadership funds support the work of the Professional Development Advisory Council; Adult Learning Center staff representing instruction, administration, ESL/ELCivics, displaced homemaker program and technology. This Council, representing the 'front line' of adult education, works in concert with the State Office to design the PD plan utilizing multiple delivery formats. The plan was originally designed using the PD needs assessment, conference evaluations, state Performance Indicators and local program monitoring reports. The PD plan is reviewed and revised annually to accurately reflect staff needs and follow up. The 2013-2014 PD calendar includes quadrant training on common core state standards and related instructional shifts, college and career readiness, digital literacy, the state assessment plan and its connection with the NRS and LACES, and the NDALL State Fall Conference.

As part of the PD delivery plan, the State Office created the concept of quadrant trainings; the goal is to provide a structured forum for ALC's to meet and discuss similar topics. The state was divided into 4 quadrants – all staff from each quadrant met on the same day with the same agenda. This was of particular value to those small ALC's who only have one or two staff; the opportunity to network and discuss like topics was helpful according to the evaluations. Building on this success, the State Office then arranged for quadrants 1/2 and 3/4 to meet, also on the same day with a common agenda and then quadrants 1/3 and 2/4 met. With the relational foundation in place, the 2013-14 PD plan builds upon these critical relationships, geographical and industry sector similarities.

The ND Manual of Accountability and State Standards (ND-MASS) had been the long-standing manual for Adult Learning Centers; this document provides guidance in the program improvement process regarding implementation of Adult Basic Education programs. The State Office is committed to providing strong leadership to local programs to enhance policy, practice and the continuous program improvement process. The State Office targeted 2013 to update the guidance document. To date, there have been multiple discussions with directors and staff about their needs for program information, delivery method, content and organization of a new document. Additionally, other state guidance was reviewed and a draft outline and table of contents have been created. The new manual was expected to be in first draft by January 2013 with final completion estimated by April 2013. However, due to time constraints, the document

is still in draft form and being reviewed as time allows. The new timeline for completion has been extended to summer 2014.

The Director was involved in various issues, conversations and legislation during the 2013 legislative session January – April 2013. There was no agency initiated legislation related to adult education, but the State Office monitored and supported partner legislation as it pertains to adult education (i.e. Job Services, Career & Technical Education, University Systems, and Department of Commerce). Of interest were \$5,000,000 in grants for tribal reservations to ensure workforce preparation and training opportunities.

North Dakota has now been using the LACES student data collection system for just over two years. Training continues to be offered via monthly/quarterly site audits, group webinars and conference calls. Training is regularly provided to all Adult Learning Centers on NRS tables and data. As mentioned above, a PD event on the NRS tables, student data and assessment will be held in March 2014.

As in past years, in collaboration with the North Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning (NDALL), State Leadership provided support and funds for the annual Adult Education Fall Conference held September 11 - 13, 2013. The Conference was attended by 135 participants from both the Adult Learning Centers and alternative high schools. Conference evaluations remain highly positive. Key general sessions spotlighted teaching computer literacy and keyboarding, ESL instructional strategies and college and career readiness.

The State Office continues to monitor all Adult Learning Centers on a three year schedule; annually if there has been a change in administration, previous monitoring compliance findings or upon request. A self assessment process is used which allows ALCs to evaluate their programs prior to the site visit. Nine (9) ALCs were monitored during the fall of 2013.

State staff provide ongoing technical assistance, resources and professional development to all ALCs and staff as needed throughout the year on a variety of related topics. Leadership funds support a conference call every other month with all ALC Directors.

The Director continues to participate in multiple meetings and subgroups as it relates to the states Longitudinal Data System. Improvements to the system are routinely discussed as are the growing needs to access information for data driven decision making, budgeting, etc.

The State Adult Education Director attended the OVAE Director meeting in May 2013. The Director also participates in the monthly Shop Talk OVAE conference calls.

All ALC's submitted grant applications for the PY 13-14; each application was reviewed, approved and budgets finalized. New ALC Director training was provided in September; subsequent follow up conference calls each month on varying topics continue through February 2014.

The grants management website was revised and updated to be more functional for ALC's to access their budget information, request for funds and submit quarterly and final narratives, as well as the application each spring using this online tool.

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.

The State Office works with the Governor's Workforce Development Council and local ALC programs about all Performance Indicator targets and the process of annual negotiations with OVAE. This same group reviews each quarterly status of our Performance Indicators; conversations generally focus on priorities of quality service provisions, access and student outcomes and work-based learning. Secondly, we recognize the limitations of working with a voluntary audience and the challenge to continually meet and exceed substantially high indicators as well as identifying and addressing our areas of greatest need. The State Office reviews and analyzes Performance Indicators to further assess all measures and strategies are shared for student success on a constant basis. The incorporation of a dashboard feature in the LACES system is an easy tool for program staff and directors to use to regularly gauge their performance and focus interventions accordingly.

North Dakota's current economy continues to put our state in the national spotlight. As of November 2013, our state unemployment rate was 2.5%. The oil and energy industries are driving the economic need at this time, primarily in the western part of the state; but all industry clusters have demonstrated growth and continue to report hiring shortages statewide. There continues to be a strong demand for employees across the state; as a result, potential students are currently working rather than attending school and as such, statewide enrollment is less than previous years. As previously reported, employers such as McDonalds are now offering \$18/hour for front line workers; Wal-Mart offers a \$750 signing bonus as a recruiting tool in addition to paying cashiers \$23/hr as well as a weekly incentive bonus for employees working 40 hours a week. The oil and energy related job opportunities prevalent in the western part of the state have impacted the state in a positive way; there is a current demand for 21,000 workers and a projected demand for over 111,000 workers through 2018 (JSND 2013). Oil revenues are on track for \$2 billion in state surplus revenues for 2013.

While the above traits lend itself to a strong economic platform, it also creates difficulty in effective service delivery. Given fluid factors beyond our control, it is becoming more difficult to continually improve upon great results:

- It is difficult to mandate attendance to reach the 60 hour rule for post-testing with an audience of voluntary students who come and go at will;
- Projecting progress one year in advance when economic and social factors can change quickly make the process of Performance Indicator selection difficult;
- Many rural sites serve small numbers of students. When one or two students don't remain in the program long enough to be post tested, no progress is recorded. Consequently, the percentage drops significantly and the absence of educational gain is then reflected in lower Indicators.

As a result of the diligent work of the state's Longitudinal Data System and participation of the DPI Adult Education staff, the capabilities for highly effective and efficient data matching has become more evident. This process is complimented at the local program level with personal survey and follow up to compensate for data not collected for certain employment sectors (self employment, contract work, small business, etc).

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.

North Dakota is a single service area; as a result, all eligible agencies continue to work collaboratively and effectively in meeting common goals and outcomes. Through the Workforce Development Council (quarterly meetings) and its sub-committees (monthly meetings), all partners have opportunities to share program needs, successes, data, and reporting.

The State Office continues to coordinate program services with partner agencies at the state and local level. Key state partnerships are maintained through the Governor's Workforce Development Council and sub-committees to include the Youth Development Council, Workforce Intelligence Council and Governor's Workforce Summit Executive Planning Committee.

There is a strong collaboration with state partners: Job Service, Department of Human Services, Workforce Safety & Insurance, Career & Technical Education, University Systems, Department of Commerce and local education agencies. The State Director of Adult Education is a Governor appointed member of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, actively participates in many related committees representing the Department as well as the Title II programs.

Local ALCs, which are funded by Title II funds, maintain a strong working relationship with all local WIA partner agencies. This includes Job Services, Human Services, education, higher education, Career & Technical Centers, Job Corp, business and government. All ALC's have an advisory committee which meet at least three times each program year to coordinate student services, network and partner on community and regional projects.

The State does not contribute Title II funds to support activities and services through the one-stop delivery system; however, we do share non-cash resources at the state and local level.

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

North Dakota receives the minimum allocation (\$60,000) for ELCivics. In the past year, Lutheran Social Services, a statewide social services ministry that provides lifespan care to individuals, families and communities supported over 480 New American adults (and approximately 710 children) transition to North Dakota. Three (3) local programs are funded which have the largest concentration of New American (ESL) students; additionally, all ALCs, but three report serving New Americans. Both funded and non-funded programs have effectively implemented the following activities:

- a. Provided citizenship classes.
- b. Civics instruction for all ESL students.

- c. Provided training to the staff on Common Ground curriculum.
- d. Developed civics curriculum for entry-level language classes.
- e. Field trips to historic, community and cultural sites.

ND ALCs have long since recognized that educational services in isolation will not further any individuals opportunities alone; comprehensive services in the areas of housing, healthcare, transportation, daycare, employment, religion, and social connectiveness are critical to full community inclusion and quality of life. An example can be illustrated by this scenario as one of many collaboratives across the state: For a second year, the Fargo ALC worked with the Fargo Lions Club and several local ophthalmologists to initiate a free vision clinic. Approximately 90 ESL and GED students were screened this past year; 34 students received reading glasses, 15 were referred for more services and, approximately 7 were prescribed treatment/medication for conditions not currently under diagnosis or treatment.

Historically, New Americans residing in ND opted to live and work in the four largest communities; however, their comfort and desire for employment have resulted in relocation into all areas of the state and as a result, all ALC's have provided ESL services. Our assessment toolkit now includes both the TABE CLAS-E and BEST Plus for ESL assessments. The NDALL State Fall Conference included a conference strand for ESL specific sessions and was well attended.

During the reporting year, ND served 508 ESL students with 12 hours or more for 2012-2013.