

NEBRASKA NARRATIVE REPORT 2012-2013

I. Describe Successful Activities, Programs and Projects...

Quality professional development is essential to the state and local programs as more emphasis is placed on assisting Adult Education (AE) students become college and career ready (CCR), and for preparation for the new GED 2014 test series. It is important that staff development activities address program needs, as well as state and federal initiatives and best practices. Professional development is truly an ongoing process that is fundamental to maintaining and improving the instructional and leadership components in Adult Education. Additional activities for CCR and GED 2014 are planned for next program year. A CCR committee consisting of interested AE staff, will get underway in the 2013-2014 program year to assist the State Office prepare our staff for increased CCR in their classrooms, whether it be ABE, GED, or ESL classes.

Some of the professional development activities are on-going from year to year, (i.e. state data management system, assessment, curriculum for ABE, ESL, EL/Civics, and ASE, continuous program improvement) while other trainings involve areas recognized as problems/challenges for instructors/ students/AE staff, or focusing on new initiatives.

Following is a brief look at state leadership activities during the 2012 - 2013 program year:

Local Staff Development/Teacher Training: An integral part of professional development is the required local staff development component. Since PY 2009 each local program has been required to either independently develop a staff training activity or work collaboratively with other regional programs to create training to satisfy the requirement. Most of our programs act individually to provide professional development days for their staff members, but some of the smaller programs collaborate in this area for “strength in numbers” and combine their staff development resources. The programs seem very pleased with the process and enjoy the networking available as part of the event, and the sessions meet the needs of staff members who may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend regional, state or national events. The local training sessions will continue with the State Office providing additional guidance so the professional development addresses program needs as well as state and federal initiatives, and in particular, continuous program improvement.

Program Director Meetings: Three local program director meetings were held during the program year. The first and second meetings were held in Kearney in August 2012 and January 2013, the third at Mid Plains Community College, Ogallala campus, in April 2013. At least one meeting is typically held in Kearney, which is close to the geographic center of the state. The spring meeting is hosted by a local Adult Education program; this provides an opportunity for all program directors to visit and learn about another program each year.

In addition to yearly progress reports and presentations by state and local program staff on NRS, performance standards, AIMS, and continuous program improvement (a must and a given), we also discuss other items as suggested by the participants. Such items this past year included: growth in distance education opportunities for i-pathways and USA Learns, grant proposals, methods for program monitoring, federal and state updates, professional development opportunities, as well as success stories from local programs and roundtable problem-solving sessions. All three Director meetings also featured an all-day workshop presented by the Leadership Excellence Academy. Stacey Wright and Lupe Revalcaba of the Leadership Academy led the training that is designed to bring about Program Improvement and is centered around three starting points: Stakeholder Assessments; Research and Professional Wisdom; and Data. In addition to the face-to-face trainings the program administrative staff is expected to conduct projects at their home program and participate in three webinars and two conference calls relating to the project. The Learning Excellence Academy continues into and will be completed during the 2013-2014 year.

Adult Education Annual Conference XXXI: The thirty-first annual Adult Education Conference was held in Kearney, NE on October 11-12, 2012. The theme of the Conference was **Charting a New Course**. Approximately 180 Adult Education staff members from across Nebraska attended the conference and experienced focus sessions including I-Pathways, USA Learns, GED 2014, and Healthy Living by Design.

Michael Oster of Oster Consulting in Rapid City, South Dakota, got the conference off to a great start with his keynote presentation “It’s All About Attitude.” Oster encouraged the participants to “take a look inside yourself and see where you are finding relevant purpose in what you do; add passion to that purpose . . . and make excellence your average.” The momentum generated during the keynote extended throughout the conference.

Thirty-three concurrent sessions were presented to conference attendees. The topics covered a wide variety of topics with strands in ABE, ESL, GED, Corrections, Digital Learning/Technology, Best Practices, CCR, and Using Volunteers in Adult Education. Evaluations indicated a successful and enjoyable learning experience for the attendees.

GED 2014 Workshop: A two-day training for GED teachers, classroom volunteers and administrative staff was held in June 2013. Two excellent national GED trainers, Bonnie Goonen and Susan Pittman, provided pertinent and up-to-date information to approximately 125 participants. AE staff was anxious to learn about the individual test changes, the computer-based testing, new math calculator, new types of questions, as well as recommended curriculum and teaching strategies to use with the GED 2014 assessment. In addition, many AE staff has taken advantage of the several webinars sponsored by GEDTS over the past year. Topics such as the Webb’s Depth of Knowledge, required computer skills, types of questions including extended response in the new tests, and the various changes in the four subject areas.

COABE 2013: Ten Nebraska educators represented Nebraska at the annual Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Conference held April 24 - 28, 2013 in New Orleans, LA. Representatives attended various meetings and reported back to the state and local programs on the content of the various sessions. These reports came in the form of reports at Director Meetings, sessions presented at the Annual Fall Conference, and a required article for the monthly AE Newsletter. On the recommendation of Nebraska attendees at COABE, selected presenters from the conference have been invited to the annual Nebraska Adult Education Conference.

BEST Plus: All personnel who administer the BEST Plus assessment must receive certification through participating in an initial eight-hour orientation and training session before being allowed to administer tests. After that each test administrator attends a “Recalibration” training each year for three years. Recalibration is a four-hour training in which the principles of BEST Plus are reiterated and a test is administered. The administrators must successfully complete the test in order to continue being a BEST Plus administrator. Failure to do so results in more remediation prior to being able to continue testing. After successfully completing Recalibration three times the test administrators are deemed to have tenure under our state’s current system, but discussions about requiring additional annual trainings have taken place.

Three BEST Plus New Administrator Training sessions were held during the program year in Grand Island, Omaha, and Mahoney State Park, a location that is halfway between Omaha and Lincoln. Twenty-six new administrators were certified for BEST Plus. Six BEST Plus Recalibrations were conducted during the program year at Mahoney State Park, Ogallala, Lincoln, Bellevue, and twice in Kearney. Sixty-two BEST Plus Test Administrators successfully completed Recalibration during the session.

BEST Plus Test Administrator Trainers met three times during the year to discuss professional development for BEST Plus Test Administrators. One BEST Plus trainer visited with local program directors at one of their meetings about selection of staff members when determining who would fit the best fit the criteria for administering the assessment.

TABE Testing and TABE Online: TABE testing and TABE Online information was made available to local program directors via online webinars and discussion at a Director meeting. While administration of TABE is quite easy in comparison to BEST Plus, it is time to have some refresher TABE trainings and a review of its use for pre- and post-testing for ABE and ASE students. This was not accomplished this program year, but we plan to have a committee consisting of TABE test administrators meet next fiscal year to discuss TABE testing and to make recommendations to the State Office regarding test administration practices and guidelines. With the incorporation of GED CBT, hopefully more AE programs will see the online version as an excellent way to help students with computer-based testing.

AIMS Training: Each director meeting addresses local and state program performance and how the use of AIMS can be used to drive program decisions and improvement. Adult Information Management System (AIMS) training sessions are offered regularly for new staff members and /or staff members experiencing difficulty or wanting to keep skills and knowledge about the data system current. Additional training in “What’s New with AIMS” is presented each year at the Adult Education Conference in October. Webinars, conference calls, and face-to-face trainings are available to local AE programs, as requested.

TEAL: Teaching Excellency in Adult Literacy (TEAL) Training – A group of four Nebraska educators participated in the initial TEAL training in 2011. This project focused on assisting students to become better writers through differentiated instruction and self-regulated learning. Following the training the team presented workshops for local program staff at several locations during the 2011-2012 year. During the 2012-2013 year, the group made a presentation to 38 educators at Mahoney State Park in August 2012. The team also made a presentation at the 2012 annual Adult Education Conference in Kearney in October. TEAL resources have been distributed to all programs and those attending the workshops. We anticipate re-visiting these resources and how they can be adapted for curriculum planning for GED® 2014 and the college and career readiness standards.

i-Pathways: i-Pathways is an online learning curriculum designed to help those seeking their high school credential prepare for the GED Tests and focuses on those students functioning at the ASE low and ASE high EFLs. i-Pathways was presented to the teachers of Nebraska Adult Education at the Nebraska Adult Education Conference in October 2012. i-Pathways trainers periodically during a year, offer webinars and conference calls to teachers and program administrators to introduce new curriculum, format, and best practices each year; This year was especially informative as the new, and very appealing, curriculum for GED 2014 was introduced. This year, the State decided to offer i-pathways and USA Learns as both supplemental classroom and distance learning opportunities, thus increasing the use in our local AE programs.

USA Learns: USA Learns is a computer-based curriculum that is used by English as a Second Language (ESL) students in the classroom and as a distance-education tool. U.S.A. Learns is functional at multiple levels for students and offers both content instruction and computer-use instruction. This is the third year it has been utilized in the ESL classroom. USA Learns is in the midst of some updating for its students and teachers; this information was shared with ESL teachers at a focus session and concurrent sessions at the AE Conference in October 2012.

Program Visitation: Program Visitation funds are made available for local staff members to visit others areas and programs with the intent of networking, and observing best practices. This opportunity is available to all staff, not just those who are new to Adult Education. While not widely used, it remains available for interested staff and they are appreciative of the opportunity and indicate that the visit was advantageous to their position in AE.

Newsletter: The state office publishes and on-line, and paper on request, newsletter each month emphasizing state news/guidelines, best practices, tips, tech ideas, reminders, and success stories from the various programs. The newsletter is published electronically and features articles from the State Office and submissions from local program offices.

LINCS: A member of the Nebraska Department of Education, Adult Education Office attended the LINCS (Literacy Information and Communication System) meeting in St. Louis, MO June 2-4, 2013. At this meeting the Nebraska Plan for professional development was presented and networking with representatives of other states in region three of LINCS. This meeting allowed for dissemination to local programs of material available through the LINCS website. It is essential that more Nebraska AE staff utilize the excellent resources available to them through LINCS.

II. 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.

NRS 101, 102, 103, 104, etc.: As reported last year, NRS 101 was a pilot training session in fall 2011 at Northeast Community College in Norfolk. The AE program director was very concerned about the poor performance on EFL movement from the previous year. The state director conducted the daylong training, reviewing program accountability, NRS, performance standards, intensity and duration, goal setting, and using AIMS reports for program improvement. About a month later, a webinar was held for the program's teachers for instruction in using AIMS reports to aid in the tracking of student progress. A follow-up meeting was held in July 2012. The program saw a substantial increase – from an average of 36% for EFL movement in PY 2010 to an average of 70% for EFL movement in PY 2011. This past year, their EFL movement advanced to 102% and their overall performance was 106%. While the AE staff indicated that the trainings have been very helpful, half the battle was getting both administrators and instructors “on board” with studying their program's and their individual teacher's data and to want to work and make changes toward continuous program improvement. Now, the NRS training is pretty much set for the last week in July, right before the new quarter's classes begin.

During the 2012 - 2013 program year, two NRS 101 trainings were held at the community college with the highest enrollment in the state. It was evident that a number of program policies and guidelines were not being followed; the six-hour workshop proved to be too short for all to get the “total picture” and probably too late in the program year. The new director is very receptive to improving program performance and there may likely be a follow-up session to the first. Another program had a very abbreviated training, just one hour, which did little more than confuse the new staff...a repeat and a longer one at that, is critical for this program. A teacher training activity for three programs located geographically close was held in the spring. One program saw immediate program improvement and the other two saw minimal improvement.

OVAE staff visited Nebraska for a monitoring visit five fiscal years ago. While no compliance issues were found, there were five recommendations for the Nebraska program. One may question why we continue to report on the recommendations since it has been five fiscal years...we do feel that we continue to and need to continue to improve upon these areas as we strive for “continuous program improvement”. The progress made during the 2012 - 2013 program year includes:

Recommendation 1: NDE should complete the functionality of the Adult Information Management System (AIMS).

The AIMS system continues to make improvements based upon new federal NRS guidelines/requirements and suggestions from the field. We continually review existing tables and how they can be revised/created to improve performance and assist the local AE programs in doing so. We see a steady increase in the number of AE instructors who use AIMS to monitor their classes' performance; instructors cannot change any AIMS data, but they can contact their local program director/AIMS input person about any discrepancies they may find, and/or they are welcome to make suggestions for improvement/new reports. Some comment that the information in AIMS is not “timely”. As a result, a number of programs have required teachers to submit student data/testing information, etc. every two weeks instead of once a month. A few more instructor reports were added and there are now breakdowns of EL/Civics students' information and

reporting. However, there are still some programs that do not utilize the reports for program management as intended.

Along with the local program's monthly report of student activity and achievement, there is now a report that each local program submits monthly. It gives the state performance standards for the current program year, the local program's performance, and the overall percentage of performance/standard for each standard. Programs are able to identify areas where performance is good and likewise, those areas where performance needs improvement.

Some concerns that bear repeating to local programs throughout the year:

1. The required separation of students after 90 days of non-attendance – there is an AIMS report for this, but many local programs do not maintain the timely separations throughout the year.
2. Re-post testing – after an appropriate number of contact hours, students need to be re-post tested, whether or not an EFL gain was made when the first post-test was given. And, post-testing is not just for the required subject area; other subject areas also need to be re-assessed to show student growth and to assist the teacher in planning the next steps for the students' educational plans.
3. A previous month's data is to be entered by the last day of the next month.
4. Teacher discretion is encouraged if a minimum number of contact hours have passed and the teacher does not feel that the student is ready to re-test. However, questions are posed when the hours between testing may be in the hundreds of hours...

There is rarely a state-sponsored training where AIMS, performance standards, NRS, and continuous program improvement are not a topic of discussion.

Recommendation 2: NDE should promptly select a new English language learning (ELL) assessment for reporting educational gain in the NRS.

This was the fourth year that we used the BEST Plus assessment statewide; the State Office, BEST Plus trainers, and test administrators anxiously awaited the announcement as to whether the assessment would be approved by OVAE. Speculation about having to find a new ESL tool was met with both dread and apprehension since it would be a labor intensive and expensive venture. New administrator and Recalibration trainings for test administrators took place throughout the year. Recalibration has been a concern for some test administrators and while discussions were held regarding additional on-line and/or webinar trainings, they did not fully materialize in PY 2013; the taping should be taking place in PY 2014 (see next page). BEST Plus administrators will then be able to access training at home and at their convenience.

There has been a certain amount of "displeasure" with BEST Plus when students are not making EFL gains and some AE staff blame the assessment. Of course, its predecessor, the BEST test, almost guaranteed EFL gain – many of the students had the questions memorized! The State Office and the three BEST Plus Trainers have made steps to hopefully remedy or at least improve this situation.

In the past a new BEST Plus test administrator could go up to a year between the initial training and the Recalibration which can lead to lapsing into "bad testing habits", especially those administrators who do not give the test on a regular basis. In an attempt to solve the problem of new testers going into Recalibration with very little actual testing experience, the State Office has met with the three BEST Plus trainers three times during the program year to address issues pertaining to BEST Plus test administration. The trainers are taking three major steps in an effort to alleviate this problem. The first of which is a process called Verification. Verification is similar to Recalibration but is the second step in the new administrator process

in which the newly trained test administrators return for a second session with the trainer within sixty days of the initial training. This allows for review, questions, and a test of administration procedures, especially in the scoring of the three assessment sections. The first Verification took place this past summer and the results were quite promising as the rate of success of the new administrators was considerable higher than in the past with a year delay before Recalibration. Verification is now a part of the new administrator training process.

The second step that the trainers took is to establish a dedicated email account where test administrators can send questions or comments to the trainers. The email address is nebraskabp@gmail.com. The trainers alternate each month to answer the emails. While this has not been utilized as much as desired, it is hoped that more will begin to take advantage of this service for BEST Plus administrators.

The third step, which has been in its planning stages during this program year, will be coming in the spring of 2014. It is a series of 18 videos in which the trainers will cover various aspects of the BEST Plus test. These short vignettes will be single-concept videos and will be made available on a website so that only certified BEST Plus testers may review periodically to refresh their skills. The trainers will be meeting in January and February 2014 to complete the videos.

In addition, local Program Directors have determined that there needs to be more oral communication skills practiced in the classroom so that ESL students can feel more relaxed and less stressed when taking a post-test. Time will tell if this practice will improve upon BEST Plus post-tests.

Recommendation 3: NDE is currently revising the State's assessment policy. The policy should incorporate existing policies and procedures pertaining to the new ELL test NDE selects.

The assessment policies have not been revised since July 2011. The changes involved the required number of hours required for post-testing with TABE for the different EFLs. The assessment policy is shared with AE staff at various professional activities and local programs are required to share assessment guidelines with all their individual staff members. A separate distance education policy was written and approved by OVAE in PR 2011.

With increased use of USA Learns and i-pathways for supplemental classroom, the changes in the GED tests, and an increased emphasis on CCR, it is time to re-visit and update the assessment policy.

Recommendation 4: NDE should develop strategies to improve the accuracy of goal setting related to employment, high school completion, and postsecondary education.

With the incorporation of the new NRS core goals automatic determination on July 1, 2012, the goal setting process for NRS has changed dramatically. But, this year, as in the past, AE staff is constantly reminded, through staff development activities, meetings and written guidance, the importance of appropriate goal setting. This is definitely an area that needs constant reinforcement with our staff. Our difficulty now is to convince staff, partner agencies, and students of the need for students to remain in the program until they are really ready for post-secondary education and/or employment. This is a paradigm shift that needs constant introduction and reinforcement, and some progress is being made, but it is slow. A small number of AE programs offer specific reading/writing and math classes for those who intend to apply for college entrance upon successful completion of the GED tests. During the past year or so, we have had more community colleges in the state interested in recruiting our GED grads to their institutions, which is good, but we want them to enter college without having to pay for developmental classes.

Recommendation 5: NDE should work with its local programs to strengthen the relationships between the programs and their local One-Stops.

This is an area that really is not where we would like it to be. Periodically, state staff meets with DOL staff to discuss our common concerns and to brainstorm about possible remedies/solutions. AE has invited Career Center staff to join with us at the Directors' meetings and to present at various trainings and/or meetings. See Part III of this report for some additional information about a new Partner Council initiated by the Department of Labor.

Local Monitoring and Evaluation: Our local monitoring and evaluation activities have not changed during this program year. They include:

1. Application process for local program funding provides the opportunity for directors to evaluate the previous year's successes and identify areas needing improvement as they plan for the next year's activities. It is a time to take an appraisal of what is working and what can be done to improve the program and see increased student performance.
2. At the close of the program year, each program completes an evaluation form for the year. They examine the year's goals; assess accomplishments and also those areas that were not successful. They evaluate the performance standards and their attainment or lack of attainment toward the state's performance goals.
3. Two years ago, the AE professional assistant spent a great deal of time researching NDE and other states' RFP budget and reimbursement claim forms. This effort resulted in new computerized budget pages for both the proposal and claims processes. The new forms were a much-needed component; all programs appreciated the introduction of the new computerized forms. Now programs include the documentation for all claims submitted, yet the process has been simplified and updated. Some minor revisions and updates have been made to the process. The local programs continue to comment about the new claim forms and what an improvement they are, and we totally agree with that statement!
4. State staff also conducts desk audits on reports submitted throughout the year. This affords the opportunity for the State Office to keep current with the local program activities and finances.
5. On-site visits/evaluations are the best avenue by which we can see classes and visit with instructional staff. Our goal is to support them in their work and make recommendations or commendations as we travel throughout the state.

PY 2013 Program Data

The state's overall program performance was 97%, an increase of 17% over the previous program year. EFL movement was 93%, compared to 75% in PY 2011.

However, in comparing the individual EFL standards, it was discouraging when no EFL performance was greater than in the previous fiscal year; two were the same as last year and nine were 1-3% less. Low adult secondary was down 5%, which should be one of the easier EFL movements to accomplish. It is interesting to note that, with the automatic goal setting for the four core goals, three of the four outcomes were over 100%, with GED® completions reported at 90%. Evidently, the "guestimates" we made for the first year of the automatic goal setting were good ones.

This is the second year that local programs were allowed to collect a registration fee from students. While programs could use the monies for instructional expenses only, the major reason for the registration fee was to increase students' retention rate, thinking that the idea of having to spend \$20-\$25 to enroll, it would be an incentive to "put more effort" into finishing the program...that hypotheses obviously proved wrong.

TRENDS IN ACCOMPLISHMENT									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
ABE Beginning Literacy	47	46	25	37	44	30	26	41	40
ABE Beginning Basic Education	37	40	30	31	37	23	28	34	33
ABE Intermediate Low	34	38	28	31	35	22	24	30	30
ABE Intermediate High	34	35	25	28	33	21	23	27	25
ASE Low	39	42	31	31	35	19	22	25	20
ESL Beginning Literacy	39	43	50	46	44	21	23	23	22
ESL Beginning	35	39	39	46	50	33	37	41	38
			35	48	45	37	33	36	35
ESL Intermediate Low	43	50	36	43	48	29	31	36	33
ESL Intermediate High	40	53	37	42	47	26	28	30	30
ESL Low Advanced	34	30	29	43	43	27	25	30	27
ESL Advanced									
Placement in Unsubsidized Employment	34	41	45	37	43	45	40	45	39
Retention in Unsubsidized Employment	74	62	77	74	63	65	47	65	60
High School Completion	64	64	58	55	60	50	59	49	19
Placement in Postsecondary Education/Training	40	59	47	31	31	40	33	36	53

NEBRASKA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS – FY 2013			
Performance Measures	Negotiated State Standard	Actual State Performance	Percent Achieved
ABE Beginning Literacy	33	40	121%
ABE Beginning Basic Education	32	33	103%
ABE Intermediate Low	35	30	86%
ABE Intermediate High	25	25	100%
ASE Low	25	20	80%
ESL Beginning Literacy	34	22	65%
ESL Beginning Low	39	38	97%
ESL Beginning High	41	35	85%
ESL Intermediate Low	37	33	89%
ESL Intermediate High	31	30	97%
ESL Advanced	27	27	100% (93% average for EFL movement)
Placement in Unsubsidized Employment	30	39	130%
Retention in Unsubsidized Employment	57	60	105%
High School Completion	18	19	106%
Placement in Postsecondary Education/Training	59	53	90%
OVERALL AVERAGE			97%

Statewide, total enrollment (+12 and -12 hour students) shrunk by almost 500 students from PY 2011 to PY 2012, with 686 fewer +12 hour students. This is definitely not the desired direction and the state and local programs need to take a good, long look at this to try and determine how this happened. With the 8.6% decrease in the number of +12 hour students, we also saw a 12.9 % percent decrease in contact hours for

this group. We wonder if the student count will increase from July 1 - December 31, 2013, with the push to finish the 2002 GED® test series. Sometimes it is very difficult to predict the ebb and flow of student counts, EFL movement, and core goal completions from year to year. Obviously the economic times and personal/family dynamics play a major part.

III. INTEGRATION OF ACTIVITIES SPONSORED UNDER TITLE II WITH THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PARTNERS AND ONE-STOP CENTERS

The Nebraska Department of Labor took the initiative to lead the formation of the Nebraska Partner Council in CY 2013. The Partner Council represents program stakeholders in the Nebraska Workforce System model. The purpose is to strengthen cross agency partnerships that focus on workforce solutions to ensure subpopulations are being afforded quality work opportunities and employers have a diverse and ready workforce. The partners are essentially those that are identified as partners in the 1998 WIA legislation.

The state and local programs have sponsored workshops to familiarize AE staff with Career Pathways (Career Education) and NEworks, an online resource for both job seekers and employers. It also contains labor market information. Both offer wonderful assistance for our AE students wanting a job. Career Pathways, while initially developed for K-12, also has a section for adults. Both resources are free, but getting teachers to include these subjects/websites in their curriculum is not as easy as it might seem. More emphasis will be placed on these and related resources in the next year.

Collaborations vary throughout the state. Some Career Centers pay for AE instructors; others do not. Some request rent; others provide classroom space for free. During 2012-2013, federal AE funds spent in support of classes held in the Career Centers totaled \$45,267.83. Of this amount, \$2,296.74 was for supervisory and other non-instructional costs; \$563.26 was for rent; and \$42,407.83 was expended for instructional costs.

Some examples of cooperative efforts with the Career Centers continue to be: reciprocal referrals and presentations to the other program's staff and clients; serve on the other program's advisory committee; some Career Centers do pay GED testing fees for some fast track students; and the Career Center in one community pays the AE instructor's salary and other class costs. One local program director continues to serve on a regional Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and Youth Council. New this year is the Youth Readiness Program, a six week intensive program to help young people get their GED® credential and be ready for work within this time frame. WFD pays for all the costs associated with this program and an individual can re-enroll if he/she has not completed within the six week time period.

A great service to Adult Education is the data matching services from the Department of Labor for AE's employment related core goals. The staff person is wonderful to work with and the cost is very minimal, usually less than \$25 annually.

The Commissioner of Education serves as the Department's representative on the State WIB. Both AE state staff and DOL staff have worked together to provide additional demographic and employment information for Nebraska Appleseed, which is advocating increased recognition of Adult Education and a need for increased state funding.

It is fair to say that increasing our collaboration with DOL is a continuous goal.

IV. EL/CIVICS FUNDING REPORT

Nebraska's EL/Civics program served 812 (+12) hour students in PY 2013, a slight increase in comparison to last program year (765). There are six AE programs providing EL/Civics courses in multiple communities. When 40% of our total student population is ESL/EL/Civics students, these are the programs where we typically have waiting lists. Most of the EL/Civics classes have managed enrollment and if you miss a certain number of times, you are "out" and your name goes to the bottom of the waiting lists...thus, dropout rates in these classes are low.

Each year, more programs are incorporating technology into the EL/Civics classrooms. The introduction of technology into the classroom, especially in the use of *USA Learns* has been a very useful addition to EL/Civics (an ESL) classrooms. It is being used primarily as a supplemental part to classroom instruction; not a great number of these students have access to computers at home and they often need assistance in use of the computer. But, that is slowly changing, too. Many parents have indicated an interest in the technology that their children are using in the public schools. In addition, many of the AE programs are now getting the online version of *News for You*, a resource for current events written at lower academic levels. Teachers are also finding that the Internet is full of additional learning resources for their classes and adult students.

Around the state there continues to be extensive use of *Step Forward* and other Oxford University Press materials, the *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit* by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, an increased use of employment materials, and a large variety of other print and hands-on learning tools for students. New this year to the list of favorites in EL/Civics classes are: *Voices of Freedom*, by Pearson Longman, and *Easy English News*. One instructor reports that she uses her *Netflix* account to show documentaries to her students and afterward, they have a classroom discussion on the topic(s) of the documentary.