**Arkansas Narrative Report 2013-14**

**1. State Leadership Funds:**

***Describe the major activities supported with State Leadership funds during the reporting period and the extent to which these activities helped you in implementing the goals of the State plan. Specifically describe activities related to the implementation of career pathways.***

The Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) is funded through the Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative by the Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division. It was established in 1990 to provide a source for identification, evaluation, and dissemination of materials and information to adult education/literacy programs.

The AALRC is located in Little Rock, Arkansas. The center has seven full-time employees, which include a Director, Professional Development Coordinator, Information Technology Specialist, Disabilities Project Manager, Media Coordinator, Secretary, and Administrative Assistant. State funds support employee salaries while federal funds are used for the fulfillment of our mission.

The AALRC supports the agency goal of “developing a strategic plan for effective delivery of lifelong career development and workforce education” through training opportunities and technical support. During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, training opportunities provided by the AALRC for adult education and literacy councils included: Demystifying AD-HD , AERIS 101, AERIS 201, AERIS for Teachers, Career & College Readiness Mathematics, Language Arts, Integrating Technology, ESL Summer Institute, Best Plus, TABE, Reading Plus, Learning Disabilities 101 & 201, Grant Writing, Excel, Autism, Best Practices fr TABE, Teaching Soft Skills and Higher Order Thinking Skills to Adult Learners, WAGE Workshop, Spring Administrators’ Meeting, and much more.

The AALRC also supports practitioners and trainers through professional development opportunities at state and national conferences. Those include:, AR Association for Continuing and Adult Education & Arkansas Literacy Council, Inc. Conference (AACAE/ALC), Learning Disabilities Association (LDA), Commission on Adult Basic Education Conference (COABE), Hot Springs Institute for Technology, Project Ideal, LINCS Region 2 Regional Resource Center Training, ATIA Conference, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

The AALRC also supports local programs by maintaining a current library of materials, providing research support/information, purchasing/distributing software and materials, and upgrading/redistribution of equipment.

Arkansas requires adult education directors, full-time instructors and counselors to be certified in adult education within four years of initial full-time employment. The AALRC supports this effort by providing tuition reimbursement for these individuals. The AALRC supports the ACE/AED agency goal of “providing and effective communication system that is involved, informative, and interactive,” by holding statewide directors meetings, numerous committee meetings, publishing a statewide newsletter, publishing a directory of literacy services, and maintaining a web-site (http://www.aalrc.org).

**Major Highlights of the Year:**

70 Meetings and Events were attended by the AALRC Staff

**Professional Development**

83 Days were spent providing professional development

69 Different professional development offerings were available

**Lending Library:**

442 Requests from the field were made for library materials

725 Requests were made for assistance with information and/or services

79 New items were acquired for the lending library

**Adult Learning Disabilities:**

21 Requests for instructional strategies from adult educators/literacy providers

105 Requests for assistance with GED accommodation applications

38 Requests from public sector for strategies and referrals

17 Requests from other state agencies for assistance with strategies, referrals, etc.

**Technology:**

507 Requests for assistance with technical support (on-site/telephone/email/remote control program)

**Career Pathways: Accelerating Opportunity**

The Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division partnered with the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges to offer Accelerating Opportunities to four community colleges and adult education programs in the state. Accelerating Opportunity is a community college initiative of Jobs for the Future whose goal is to ensure that more workers have the skills needed to earn credentials that lead to family-sustaining careers. The initiative aims to change how Adult Basic Education is structured and delivered through a collaborative effort in which a basic skills instructor and technical college instructor co-teach and plan the curriculum for low skill level adults in a technical course leading to a certificate credential.

Arkansas is in its second year as an Accelerating Opportunity program. There have been a few challenges within the first year such as recruitment and retention of ABE students, turnover in AO staff, and changes in career pathways programs. The current two year college partnerships and the original respective career pathways program include: ASU-Beebe: Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and Welding; College of the Ouachitas: Medical Office Assistant and Computer Information Systems; Cossatot Community College: Cosmetology and Welding; Mid-South Community College: Machining and Welding.

Overall, 59 students were AO participants earning at total of 1,071 credit hours. Of that number, 15 or 34% were ABE students without a high school diploma. While participating in AO, 4 or 27% of ABE students earned their GED and 5 or 33% earned a credential within the first year of the pilot program. Lastly, ABE students earned 87 hours of college credit.

Teams from Arkansas attended the National Conference on Integrated Basic Skills Pathways in Seattle Conference to learn about how to implement the model in Arkansas. The teams were also provided professional development, training and support by Jobs for the Future to ensure that the program is a success in Arkansas.

**2. Performance Data Analyses:**

***Describe any significant findings from the evaluation of your performance data for the reporting period and efforts to improve outcomes for the core indicators of performance.***

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|  |  | Figure 1: **National Averages, Performance** (2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14), and Targets (2013-14)  **ARKANSAS** | | | | | |
| **CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE** | National Average | | 2011-12 Performance | 2012-13 Performance | 2013-14 TARGET | 2013-14 Performance | Change from Target to Performance |
| ABE Beginning Literacy | 44% | | 46% | 51% | 47% | 45% | -2% |
| ABE Beginning Basic | 46% | | 40% | 43% | 42% | 39% | -3% |
| ABE Intermediate Low | 46% | | 41% | 44% | 42% | 40% | -2% |
| ABE Intermediate High | 39% | | 41% | 42% | 42% | 41% | -1% |
| ASE Low | 38% | | 40% | 40% | 41% | 38% | -3% |
| ESL Beginning Literacy | 50% | | 29% | 36% | 32% | 29% | -3% |
| ESL Low Beginning | 54% | | 31% | 27% | 34% | 27% | -7% |
| ESL High Beginning | 54% | | 42% | 38% | 44% | 36% | -8% |
| ESL Low Intermediate | 48% | | 42% | 42% | 45% | 39% | -6% |
| ESL High Intermediate | 43% | | 43% | 33% | 44% | 31% | -13% |
| ESL Advanced | 26% | | 35% | 32% | 36% | 25% | -11% |
| Enter Employment | 45% | | 46% | 41% | 36% | 65% |  |
| Retain Employment | 56% | | 75% | 71% | 62% | 74% |  |
| Obtain a GED | 73% | | 84% | 95% | 69% | 96% |  |
| Enter Post-Secondary/Training | 29% | | 31% | 34% | 32% | 27% |  |
| **AVERAGE** | 47.68% | | 49.05% | 44.60% | 43.2% |  |  |

Arkansas 2013-14 Performance declined in every educational functioning level. However, the follow-up targets showed an increase in each area except enter post-secondary/training. The follow-up targets met include Retain Employment (+12%), Enter Employment (+29%), and Obtain a GED (+27%). The highest increase for the state this year was Enter Employment.

I believe one of the contributing factors for the decline in performance was due to a change in our state funding. In the past, programs were awarded state funding for the number of students who had educational gains, earned GEDs, and entered post-secondary education and the workforce. The maximum number of points a person could earn for educational gains was one point although a student may have progressed in several subject areas. During site visits at local programs, it was discovered that some students became less of a priority in the classroom once a completion had been made. In order to encourage programs to continue working with all students equally, the state changed the funding formula in 2012-13 to award programs for helping students to make multiple educational gains. For example if the dollar value for a point is $300 and student A made five multiple gains during the year, then a program earns $1500 for that student in the area of educational gains. In retrospect, the unintended consequence was a focus on multiple gains for state funding and not necessarily focusing on whether a student had at least completed a level in their lowest subject before earning multiple gains. As a staff, we are going to have to figure out a way to reward programs for their performance, while at the same time, holding them accountable for not meeting their negotiated targets.

The second contributing factor that may have led to the decline in the state’s performance may have been due to the test justification portion of our Assessment Policy. Most programs tested students in math, reading, and language, and entered those scores into our management information system. Although written in the Assessment Policy, teachers were unaware that they could just focus on one or two subject areas. When all three subject scores were entered in the system, the lowest score became the student’s entering Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the year. Instead of focusing on the lowest score, the teacher’s focus may have been on the other subject areas, and if that’s the case, then the program from a federal point of view would not have made a completion for that student by the end of the year.

After submitting the state’s Assessment Policy (2014-15), questions were raised by the Accountability Team on the Test Justification section. As a result, during our Fall 2014 Administrators’ meeting, we spent time discussing the changes in the Assessment Policy and provided hard and electronic copies of the Assessment Policy to all of our providers. Unfortunately, it is too late to do anything about our performance for the 2013-14 year, but hopefully, we can make better strides in this current year.

The third factor that may have led to the decline in the state’s performance is due to our overall retention of students. Forty-five (45%) of enrolled students were separated before completing a level during the 2013-14 program year. Students cannot make academic progress if they are no longer coming to the adult education centers for instruction.

Another factor that may have contributed to our decline in performance is the state’s low post-test rate. During the 2013-14 program year, the state’s posttest rate was 50%. According to our Assessment Policy at the time, the post-test rate should have at least been 60%. Some students have been actively coming to the adult education programs and literacy councils receiving instruction and meeting the number of hours required for post-testing, however, they were not post tested for one reason or another. To address this issue, we have increased the posttest rate to 65%, sent out a mass e-mail to the state on the new expectations, and have included it as a training topic during our Fall 2014 Administrators’ meeting. Again, unfortunately, the 2013-14 year is in the past, but we are hoping to see different results by the end of the 2014-15 program year.

Each year during the Spring Administrators’ meeting, the state’s previous year performance measures are shared with local providers and compared to the national average. An explanation is provided on how the core indicators are negotiated and the number of students who needed to show educational gains in order for the state to meet or exceed the performance measures. Lastly, we share the 2013-14 Negotiated Targets with providers and explain their responsibility in helping us to reach the targets.

Another criterion we use to evaluate how effective programs are in meeting performance goals is by looking at a program’s Effective and Efficiency (E&E) score. The E&E calculation is based on the number of students enrolled and uses “weighting” to give fair weight to each student with a goal. Programs are required to meet or exceed 80% of the state’s negotiated core indicators of performance. A program that fails to meet E&E the first year must meet with its program advisor and develop a written improvement plan aimed at the program attaining E&E status which will be submitted to the Adult Education Division within 30 days following the review conference. Programs that do not meet or exceed 80% of performance benchmarks for a second consecutive year will be assigned a state technical assistance team to assist the program in addressing its deficiencies and developing a program improvement plan. Programs not meeting or exceeding 80% of performance benchmarks for three consecutive years will be submitted to the State Board of Career Education for appropriate action prior to continuation of funding.

**3. Integration with Other Programs:**

***Describe how you have integrated activities funded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities. Describe your efforts to develop or advance career pathway systems that include career and technical education, postsecondary education, employers, and economic and workforce development. Include a description of how your agency is being represented on the State and Local Workforce Investment Boards, the provision of core and other services through the One-Stop system and an estimate of the AEFLA funds being used to support activities and services through the One-Stop delivery system.***

The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ACDE/AED) responds to both the employer and the potential employee to help enhance the local workforce skills through its Arkansas Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) program. The WAGE program is designed to ensure that unemployed and underemployed Arkansans have the academic skills necessary for success in the workplace. WAGE™ places business and industry at the center of an effort to redefine basic skills required by today’s workplace. WAGE™ includes 112 basic skill competencies identified in the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and deemed essential by the nation’s and Arkansas’s employers. As part of WAGE™, educators perform literacy task analyses (LTA) for participating businesses and industries and use the results to determine what basic skills are necessary for competent job performance, particularly in areas that significantly impact production, profit and safety. For an adult education program to become WAGE-certified, it must have a WAGE™ advisory committee that must consist of more than 50 percent business and industry members. The local WAGE™ advisory committee chairperson must also be from business and industry.

Community WAGE™ alliance members include the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Economic Development, the Workforce Investment Boards and other local economic development agencies and boards, postsecondary educational providers, chambers of commerce, employment training and placement agencies, local businesses and industries, and county and city governments. A WAGE™ student who successfully completes the program earns a state-issued certificate in one or more of six areas: Bank Teller, Clerical, Customer Service I and II, Employability, and Industrial. For the 2013-14 program year, 1,517 WAGE™ certificates were awarded.

**Bank Teller**: 85; **Clerical**: 82; **Customer Service** **I**: 187; **Customer Service II**: 131; **Employability Skills**: 658

**Industrial**: 369

Some WAGE™ centers are located in area one-stop career development centers. The ADCE/AED is an active partner in the comprehensive one-stop career development center movement in Arkansas. Twenty out of 51 adult education programs are located within workforce centers or have a satellite program located there, and all of the adult education programs across the state provide services to one-stop participants. These services include the assessment of participants’ basic academic and computer skills and the education of those participants to increase their skills when needed. Adult education programs also assist one-stop centers through resource sharing and, in a few cases, through the payment of rent and utilities. Several WAGE™ centers are also located in one-stop centers.

Adult education is represented on the local Workforce Investment Boards by at least one member in each of the ten regional workforce areas. In some cases, this is a local adult education provider, director, or president of a local two-year technical or community college.

The ADCE/AED in conjunction with the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Transitional Employment Board, and the Southern Good Faith Fund collaborated to develop the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative. This is an initiative to improve earnings and educational attainment of low-income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-eligible adults in Arkansas. It encourages and assists those adults to gain the requisite skills to earn a marketable employability credential for immediate entry into a job or to enter college and complete a degree in order to sustain a better quality of life.

The original Career Pathways Initiative in Arkansas was developed at an adult education WAGE™ program located at a two-year college. This pilot was funded with a grant from the ADCE/AED and services were provided from the local adult education program’s funding. Expansion of the initiative to other two-year college campuses has been supported with TANF funding. Local partnerships between adult education programs and Career Pathway programs are close and supportive, especially with adult education programs located on college campuses.

For several years, the ADCE/AED operated the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program through a contract with the Arkansas Department of Human Services. This program is exclusively intended for non-exempt work registrants who wish to participate in the program on a volunteer basis. This program is currently operating with Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the Arkansas Department of Human Services and local adult education programs. The Employment and Training Arkansas State Plan is approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

The *Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate* involves collaboration between ADCE/AED, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Arkansas Workforce Centers, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and the Arkansas Department of Education, with the governor signing the official Arkansas CRC certificates. Adult education programs provide basic skills improvement through regular adult education services as well as the Key Train software. Several adult education centers also provide the WorkKeys assessment which an individual must pass to receive an Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate. Recently, this initiative has begun offering the Platinum CRC, which takes higher skill levels to earn. It is hoped that this move will increase the number of people who come to adult education to improve their skills in order to earn this credential.

Further evidence of collaboration is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOUS) between the Arkansas Department of Career Education and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education to match data on employment and postsecondary enrollment for NRS reports annually. In addition, to further strengthen our alliance with Department of Workforce Services (DWS), under a state funded initiative, the Microsoft IT Academy is being used to service the staff and participants of both DWS and Adult Education. The Microsoft IT Academy allows individuals to become certified in the components of the Microsoft Office Suite. This collaboration between DWS and ADCE with the implementation of the academy has strengthened our alliance for additional partnerships in the future. Most adult education programs provide the instruction for Microsoft Office and both agencies provide testing.

Collaboration between the ADCE/AED and the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) helps adult education students with disabilities through referrals to adult education programs for instruction and testing and referrals from adult education programs to ARS for diagnosis of students after thorough screening. In addition, one program provides basic skills instruction at the residential Arkansas Career and Technical Institute run by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services for students with disabilities. During Adult Education’s Fall and Spring Administrators’’ meeting, a staff member from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services speaks to adult education providers about services for students as well as other programs that support student success.

As mentioned previously, ADCE/AED works collaboratively with Arkansas Community Colleges (formerly Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges) to provide opportunities for students to earn stackable technical certificates as well as an Arkansas high school diploma through the Accelerating Opportunities initiative. Currently, four community colleges each provide two career pathways through which students prepare for high-skill, in-demand careers that high skill, that provide family sustaining wages.

**4. English Literacy/Civics (EL/C):**

**Program Describe the activities and services supported with EL/C funds, including the number of programs receiving EL/C grants and an estimate of the number of adult learners served.**

***A*. *Number of Programs Receiving EL/C grants and number of adult learners served***

During the 2013-14 Fiscal Year, ADCE/AED awarded EL/Civics grants to eleven local programs, including eight adult education centers and three literacy councils. There were 4,052 ESL adult learners enrolled, a 15% increase over last year’s.

***B. Describe successful activities and services supported with EL/Civics funds in the following areas:***

**a. Rights and Responsibilities of citizenship**

There are many different examples of how the rights and responsibilities of citizenship are explained to students. For example, one local program focused on encouraging students to vote. School elections, special elections, primary elections, and general elections were discussed. Qualifications for voting were explained, registration cards were made available, registration locations were identified and types of voting were described. Students were shown how citizens have a voice in local, state and national governments. Copies of Voting 101: A Pocket Guide to Voting in the Natural State were given to students. Voter registration forms continue to be available in both Spanish and English for all students.

In another local adult education center, the curriculum is focused on citizenship. Included in the curriculum is discussion and also defining terms such as: freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, the right to vote, the right to hold a government job, the right to run for an elected office and the freedom to pursue “life liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The curriculum also covers the Constitution of the United States of America, the Bill of Rights, and the Preamble.

Other topics include: responsibilities of a U.S. Citizen – which also includes discussion and defining what it means to: support and defend the Constitution, participate in the democratic process, respect and obey federal state and local laws, respect the rights, beliefs and opinions of others, staying informed of the issues affecting our communities, paying income and other federal, state, and local taxes, serving on a jury when called upon, obtaining documents such as driver’s licenses, defending the U.S. in time of need and the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America. Students are taught that with each right given, there is an important responsibility. By serving on a jury, obeying the laws, and paying their taxes, they too can benefit from all the freedoms this country has to offer. With freedom of speech, they should voice their opinion, stay current with the issues of their community and vote. The programs reach out to the immigrant community and have helped many students to not only gain citizenship, but also registering to vote and obtaining a passport. Many students who have received their citizenship still participate in ESL classes to improve their English skills.

**b. Naturalization procedures**

To assist students with the naturalization process, local programs have helped many students. Many teachers have completed professional development in relation to the naturalization process. Below are more examples of the work that has been done to help English language learners:

Several programs help students in the steps for completing the naturalization process. Students are offered assistance with the completion and submission of the INS N-400 application form. Learners are expected to become well-versed in the 100 civics questions, the application segment of the interview, the reading test and the writing test. In addition to completing the necessary forms, students used citizenship booklets to practice their English reading, speaking, and writing skills. Students participated in mock interviews to help them feel comfortable and relaxed with the interview portion of the citizenship process. Students are given one-on-one tutoring as needed.

**c. Civic participation**

Students were taught about U.S. currency and learned about important forms of identification including birth certificates, resident alien cards, driver’s licenses, social security cards and passports. Important dates and national holidays throughout the year provided opportunities to integrate U.S. history and civics lessons. Students were encouraged to become familiar with the local, state, and national government by educating themselves about political candidates and issues that affect them. Students attended a health fair at the local elementary school where they received information on health and nutrition. Students also wrote an essay on “Why do I want to be a US citizen?” Students were also taught that through freedom of the press they can let their voices be heard by writing to newspapers or through social media outlets or blogs. Also, citizenship teachers participate in Nation Voter Registration Day and Constitution Day where they involve students in various activities.

Guest speakers visited several adult education centers and met with the ESL students to provide a list of resources available within the community. These resources ranged from assistance with medical care, information on local food banks, assistance with housing, utilities and counseling services. The students were given a comprehensive list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of available resources within our community.

**d. U.S. history and government**

Students in U.S. Citizenship courses are exposed to lessons that focus on the nation’s history since the arrival of the first Europeans, the three branches of government, the presidents, state and local maps and important documents such as the Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the United States. Also addressed and rehearsed in these classes were the Pledge of Allegiance, the Star-Spangled Banner and the U.S. Oath of Allegiance. In ESL Science and Social Studies classes, students were given the opportunity to improve their content knowledge in United States History. Students were presented with lessons tailored to improve their English vocabulary, as well as assist them in obtaining content knowledge.

A virtual tour was given of the Capitol and the Arkansas State Capitol. In this tour, students met the governor of Arkansas and visited the State Capitol building and toured its grounds with historically significant monuments in Little Rock, Arkansas. These monuments helped them relive important historical events from the Revolutionary War until today. Students felt shock as they marched up the steps of Central High with “The Little Rock Nine” experiencing the terror of facing angry mobs. Students also viewed the monuments in memory of the soldiers who fought in all of the American wars.

**e.** **Describe any other activities or successes you wish to report on.**

Many adult education centers have helped ESL students with various forms and applications from government websites on deferment, information on acquiring identification cards, and participated in job fairs, etc.

Field trips to various sites have proved to be beneficial for students. These trips enable students to learn firsthand about public programs, services and events in their communities. During field trips to different college campuses, students were able to become familiar with the various campuses, felt as they were part of the student body, became more aware of career and educational programs available to them and gained the confidence to pursue college enrollment. During these trips, students also met with academic and career advisors, received presentations from the admissions and financial aid offices and also participated in students activities such as International Education Week.

Many Adult Education programs sponsor celebrations that honor student achievement. Certificates for attendance and certificates for achievement are among the awards given to students. Celebrations of achievement often include food, music and other entertainment. These celebrations are part of each adult education program’s retention strategy.

Many ESL students used computer software to produce letters to their children’s teachers. The students learned to use the internet to access various computer programs and services. Students were also taught how to write a letter in their native language and then using translation software to convert the letter to English. They learned how to read maps and how the highway system is organized in the United States, i.e. odd numbers run north-south and even numbers run east-west. They also learned about the banking process and the various options available at banks, such as check writing, direct deposit and service fees incurred for various reasons, etc. These activities are beneficial for students and adult education providers alike.

**5. Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies:**

***Describe your state’s policies related to how it awards a secondary school diploma or its equivalent to individuals who are no longer enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law. Include state recognized tests that are used to award the diploma as well as other criteria that may be recognized, such as competency-based or credit-based methods*.**

The Arkansas Department of Career Education awards a high school equivalency diploma called the ***Arkansas High School Diploma*** to those individuals who take and pass the GED® test. Policies for administering the GED® test in Arkansas are approved by the State Board of Career Education.

The test is developed and distributed by the national GED Testing Service. The GED® test is a nationally recognized high school equivalency program that is aligned with current career and college-readiness expectations, encompasses basic technology skills and connects GED® test-takers to career and higher education opportunities. Individuals receiving an ***Arkansas High School Diploma*** must attain a minimum standard score of 150 on each of the four subtests and a total score of 600 on the GED® test. This regulation is established in accordance with the GED Testing Service®.

The GED® test may be administered to eligible test-takers only. Individuals must be at least sixteen years of age and not currently enrolled in an accredited high school. Only persons who do not have a standard high school diploma are eligible to take the GED® test. Under no circumstances may the GED® test be administered to persons less than 16 years of age. Test-takers must present proof of positive identification that shows name, date of birth, address, signature and photograph. Valid drivers’ licenses, passports, military, or other forms of government-issued (national and foreign) identification that shows required information are all acceptable forms of identification, unless there is reason to question their authenticity. Test-takers must be legal residents of Arkansas. The term “legal resident” has been clarified by the Arkansas Department of Career Education to mean a person who spends most of his/her time in Arkansas, who pays property taxes, or who possesses a valid Arkansas driver’s license.

Prior to taking the Official GED® test, test-takers must pass the official GED Ready™ Test (practice test) with minimum scores established by the Adult Education Division/GED Testing Office of the Arkansas Department of Career Education. This test must be administered through an approved adult education program or a GED Testing Center™.

Policies for the “Minimum Age for Adult Education Enrollment” and “Attendance for Sixteen (16) and Seventeen (17) Year Old Students” were approved by the State Board of Vocational Education on November 14, 1994 currently the State Board of Career Education. The approval of these policies granted permission for the sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year olds to enroll in adult education programs after having met certain provisions. This policy is also in accordance with Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201 which allows school districts to provide waivers to this requirement, provided adult education rules and regulations are met by individuals aged 16 and 17 who wish to enroll in adult education classes or take the Official GED® test. Arkansas GED® Testing policies for sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year olds follow state law and procedures/regulations established by the GED Testing Service.

Students enrolled in private or parochial schools who desire to take the GED® test must provide a letter from the principal or administration of the institution to verify enrollment. Home school students wishing to test without enrolling in Adult Education must provide to the test center a notarized copy of the notice of intent to home school submitted to the superintendent of the local school district.

GED® Testing Programs and/or Test Centers are evaluated and monitored by the Arkansas GED Administrator™ using a GED® Site Visit Form that was developed in accordance with the policies established in the Policies and Procedures Manual for the GED® test.

**6. Adult Education Standards:**

***Describe your state’s progress toward implementation of adult education college and career readiness (CCR) standards, including whether your state has formally adopted a validated set of CCR standards. Describe how the state has determined the standards to be representative of CCR and the timeline by which such standards will be or have been implemented by all local programs. Describe how the state is supporting the use of standards by local programs and State Leadership funds that are being used to support implementation.***

The Arkansas Department of Career Education’s Adult Education Division has adopted the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE)’s College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for Adult Education by Susan Pimentel. The state adopted the standards that were recommended by OCTAE. A task force was created to focus on the CCR standards and the updated high school equivalency test, the online GED® assessment. The Task Force was comprised of program directors, resource center personnel, teachers and state staff. On May 22, July 10, and July 11, 2014, the task force met and developed a plan to assist teachers in meeting CCR Standards. The framework was sent out to the field in draft mode on October 16, 2014.

The group discussed some of the barriers that teachers faced when preparing students for college and career readiness. The state of Arkansas uses the GED® as a high school equivalency assessment, which has been updated and now is computer based. At the time, there was no standard curriculum teachers could use to inform instruction. Many teachers simply used textbooks and workbooks that have worked for them in the past. In addition, teachers did not feel they had adequate resources to get students prepared for the new GED®. The team decided to create the Arkansas Framework for College and Career Readiness committees and included a curriculum, textbook review, and professional development committee.

From this initial meeting, a subcommittee was formed, and meetings were scheduled twice a month to discuss the research and progress towards a framework that could be used statewide. The CCR standards were studied as well as the Common Core State Standards that have been adopted by the Arkansas Department of Education, for k-12 schools. The task force consisted of approximately 18 people, which included five state staff members, two professional development members, four adult education directors and seven adult education teachers. Various task force members researched frameworks and curriculum guides created by other states to find the best practices. Some of the Common Core Standards from other states examined included Kentucky, New York, Georgia and Florida. Each CCR standard was examined closely and the committee held a two-day “retreat” where activities and resources were aligned with each standard. Task force members searched through online and printed curriculum to provide examples of each of the skills that students needed to master at each level. The task force decided to address sample activities and the framework for grade levels 6.0 – 12.9 during the initial phase of this project. Once the framework was completed, the task force set a date for the lower levels to be completed after the document was sent out to all of the programs in the state so that teachers could begin using the tool and provide feedback.

Leadership funds were used to support the task force meetings. This included the initial task force meeting held in Little Rock, Arkansas at the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center, several online and conference call meetings and the retreat. Participants drove in from various parts of Arkansas and focused solely on the framework during the two day retreat. State office technical assistance was also provided to support the project. The framework was presented as a break-out session at the State Fall Administrators’ Meeting and participants were given the opportunity to provide additional input.