Georgia Narrative Report 2013-2014

Introduction

"Creating a Workforce for Georgia and a Future for Families."

Georgia's Office of Adult Education (GOAE) is a division of the Technical College System of Georgia—an entity that also includes Technical Education and Quick Start (the agency's economic development arm). The mission of the GOAE is "To enable every adult learner in Georgia to acquire the necessary basic skills—reading, writing, computation, speaking, and listening—to compete successfully in today's workplace, strengthen family foundations, and exercise full citizenship."

The continued need for strategic, responsive, and comprehensive adult education is evident in the state. Approximately 1.2 million adults over the age of 18 in Georgia's collective 159 counties have less than a high school education. To meet this need in FY 2014, GOAE awarded grants to thirty-two (32) sub-recipients, Service Delivery Areas (SDAs). The SDAs include programs that operated under the direction and management of twenty-four (24) technical colleges, three community-based organizations, one faith-based organization, three school districts (administered by the Georgia Department of Education), and one four-year college (administered by the University System of Georgia). Each SDA is managed independently by a program administrator. During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, Georgia enrolled 47,197 students in adult education courses.

Two major departments of the GOAE are the Instructional Services (IS) component and the Professional Development and Transition Resources (PDTR) component. The seven member IS team provides technical assistance to program administrators and staff, including monitoring of data and reporting processes, and training. The IS team includes the IS Director, four (4) Grant Program Support Coordinators (GPSs), one Technical Coordinator, and an administrative assistant.

The PDTR team includes the Director of Professional Development and Transition Resources, a Professional Development Coordinator, and a Transition Coordinator. The triplicate focus of this team includes programs and initiatives to:
- Design, deliver, track participation, and evaluate training and professional development for program administrators, instructors, and staff members within adult education programs throughout Georgia;
- Provide training and technical assistance to Transition Specialists statewide, to promote awareness of, and access to, postsecondary education options for Georgia's adult learners;
- Identify, implement, track participation, manage and evaluate national initiatives and program pilots.

GOAE takes the lead in creating impactful collaborative relationships with other divisions and sub-components of the Technical College System of Georgia (i.e. the TCSG Office of Technical Education as well divisions within Georgia's technical colleges). GOAE also builds and supports partnerships with the Georgia Office of Workforce Development, the Georgia Department of Labor, the Georgia Board of Regents, well as other service providers that promote workforce development for Georgia's citizens.

Georgia has deliberately and strategically increased the geographic scope of its Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP). The financial and volunteer support provided to Georgia's adult education students through this program is an essential supplement to reaching the goal of a fully literate Georgia.

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.

National Initiatives

The GOAE is actively engaged in contributing to, and remaining informed by, national priorities regarding adult education, policy regulations, and reporting requirements. The staff participates in national forums and professional associations to connect with adult education administrators and leaders from other states, share best practices, and contribute to conversations that inform policy makers. GOAE leadership and staff participated in the following events during FY 2014:

NRS Regional Training: *2013 Regional Training – Myth Busters: The Truth about Adult Education*
The GOAE Assistant Commissioner and Director of Instructional Services attended the July 2013 NRS Regional training session. The workshop was designed to provide states with training on how to use NRS data to address an evaluation or research topic that will inform practice and improve programs.

OCTAE State Directors National Conference 2014: Everybody's Business: Improving Foundation Skills of U.S. Adults
The GOAE Assistant Commissioner attended this conference, designed to provide AE leaders the opportunity to interact with federal partners, senior administration leaders, and other stakeholders on policies related to adult education programs and the publication *Making Skills Everyone's Business.* Sessions included:
- Moving Career Pathways Forward;
- Career and Technical Education: A Partner in Transforming Adult Education; and
- Champions of Change- Meeting the Call to Transform Adult learning

Statewide Initiatives

GOAE's state professional development plan and technical assistance platform are based upon a statewide needs assessment. Instructional Services provides direct assistance to

program leaders and teachers regarding program management, teaching practices, curricula development, as well as reporting. The PDTR unit obtained input from program leaders, adult educators (part and full time), and program support staff members (part and full time). The multi-faceted survey solicited input on various topic areas from both the ABE/ASE and ESL/EL Civics perspectives. Topics included gaps in preparation for the 2014 GED Test; technology use in the classroom; and learner engagement and motivation. The results provided the foundation for the following:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
Members of the GOAE provided technical assistance via emails, phone calls, teleconferences, meetings and on-site visits during FY 2013-2014. Technical assistance is the primary responsibility of the IS team. The four Grant Program Support GPS Coordinators worked within assigned geographic regions to assist local programs address identified concerns such as performance improvement, instructional matters, student assessment, data collection & reporting, and recruitment & retention.

New Program – Columbus Technical College
Columbus Technical College replaced Muscogee County Schools as a local provider in FY 2013-2014. IS staff members worked very closely with the college's president and program administrator to ensure a smooth transition and an understanding of grant requirements on the part of the organization in areas such as financial management and data reporting.

Data Management
Georgia's data management system, GALIS (Georgia Adult Learners Information System), continued to be a valuable tool for local programs and the state office to monitor program performance and accountability. In addition to the required NRS reports, the data system has reports for edit checks, attendance, comparisons of data between fiscal years, etc. GALIS was updated in FY 2013-2014 with additional post-testing reports, "ABE/ASE Students with 40/30 hours and No Post-test" and "ESL and GAIN Students with 60 Hours and No Post-test," which enabled local programs to better identify students who are eligible to be post-tested.

GOAE provided GALIS New User Training twice during the fiscal year. Additionally, the agency continued the advanced training for local Data Managers via a two-day event focused on using GALIS for recruitment and retention, data analysis, and the opportunity to give feedback to GOAE on desired GALIS improvements. IS staff also introduced a new resource to program data managers: Educational Gain Calculation Tool. The tool is an Excel spreadsheet that helps programs break down educational gain benchmarks into achievable numbers.

Monitoring and Evaluation
Continuous data monitoring, site visits and on-site reviews were utilized to identify areas in which technical assistance was needed for program improvement. Specific attention was given to those programs with low performance data; targeted technical assistance was

provided to help improve program outcomes. Three methods were used to provide monitoring and evaluation of program improvement activities.

1. Monitoring Visits – IS team members established a monitoring schedule for all programs. Lower-performing programs experienced an increased number of visitations as compared to other programs. While making site-visits, team members met with program administrators and/or staff, observed classroom instruction, toured facilities, and met with stakeholders.
2. On-Site Program Reviews – GOAE continued its contract with the University of Georgia to provide logistical support and facilitation of the On-Site Program Review process. Five programs were identified from the state's monitoring cycle schedule and were evaluated on the quality of instruction, adherence to policies and procedures, and the overall quality of program administration. A formal written report was provided, and each program was asked to respond to areas that needed improvement.
3. Mid-Year Program Performance Report – In January, GOAE provided a Mid-Year Performance and Comparison Report to each local program. The report included year-to-date performance for each of the core outcome measures as compared to the state average and the negotiated percentage. Comparisons to the prior year were given for NRS enrollment, state enrollment, and number of students with a post-test. Local programs were asked to develop written action plans to address areas in need of improvement.

Technical Trainings for NRS and Assessment
In an effort to reach more local program personnel, GOAE offered online NRS Training in FY 2013-2014. By placing training online, local programs had resources available to them as they hired new personnel or needed to train existing personnel. In all, four tutorials were offered - The National Reporting System: Foundations; The Intake Assessment Form; Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual; and NRS Updates and Reminders.

Other resources (e.g. walk-through videos that provided step-by-step instructions for using Khan Academy; USA Learns with students in the classroom or at-a-distance), were made available to meet demand from local program personnel. Assessment training sessions for BEST Plus, BEST Literacy, and TABE Online took place several times during the fiscal year. A number of customized trainings were provided at the request of local programs, as well.

GOAE introduced Technically Speaking, a series of teleconferences that allowed program administrators, ABE/ASE teachers, and ESL & EL/C teachers a chance to present promising practices to their peers around the state, ask questions of each other, and share experiences. Nine unique teleconferences were held throughout the fiscal year. Some topics included, Successful Retention in ESL & EL/Civics; Using Data to Manage Classrooms Effectively; and Getting to know your Staff through Visitation and Monitoring.

Teachers' Academy and Fall Adult Education Conference
GOAE provided two state-wide professional development activities to over 550 instructors and their respective program administrators. The Teachers' Academy offered intense training workshops that focused on the three key components the statewide survey revealed as a gap for instructors: Math, Social Studies and Writing. The Fall Adult Education Conference provided a track solely dedicated to content relevant to the 2014 GED exam as well tracks that focused on ESL/EL Civics and Transition. Sessions in these tracks included: Building a Foundation for Career Pathway Implementation and Coaching Tools for Increasing Motivation and Success.

EAGLE Leadership Event
EAGLE (Exceptional Adult Georgian in Literacy Education) honors students who have demonstrated achievement in adult education classes. For over twenty years, this program has provided a lens through which adult learners can be honored and a focus on their pursuit of excellence can be recognized. As an ambassador, the EAGLE delegates are charged with representing Adult Education across the state of Georgia.

2014 GED Webinar Series
GOAE continued its 2014 GED® Webinar Series to prepare program administrators and adult educators for the changes with the new 2014 GED test. The entire series, designed to build awareness around the new exam, spanned five months and included seven modules. While part one of the series was delivered the previous fiscal year, this fiscal year incorporated the conclusion of the series. Part two of this series included webinars for each of the four GED content components: Reasoning Through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies. Each module utilized its own workbook, collection of handouts, and mastery test.

2014 GED Blitzes
The GED Webinar Series was followed up with a series of regionally delivered, face to face, deep dive training sessions that allowed instructors the opportunity to further build their competencies and knowledge of the 2014 GED test. Instructional strategies, classroom activities, content emphasis and subject-matter knowledge were the core blocks used to design the blitzes. The training focused two areas of focus:
- Changes instructors needed to make to restructure classroom content and delivery methods to better align with college- and career-readiness standards;
- A drill down on mathematics and language arts.

Spring Mini-Conferences
Due to the positive reception and feedback obtained from the 2014 GED Blitzes, GOAE designed and implemented two regional mini-conferences. The two-day conferences provided instructors and program administrators an opportunity to explore the specified content for an extended amount of time and to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and the instructional strategies needed to make programmatic changes. Sessions focused on the following areas: mathematics, social studies, language arts, use of data for decision making, and classroom management.

Transition Resources
During FY 13-14, GOAE continued to focus on student success by supporting the Transition Specialist in every program by:

- Providing professional development through a specific track at the Fall Adult Education Conference;
- Providing ongoing technical assistance through desk monitoring and face to face site visits;
- Implementing the Transition to Postsecondary and Workforce Program Improvement Tool and the Office of Adult Education Transition Services Monthly Activity Log.

ESL Summit
The Fall ESL Summit provided professional development for 150 lead educators and instructors during two intensive days of speakers and workshops. Workshop session topics included: creating a student focused classroom, leveraging online instruction to enhance lessons, contextualizing instruction by incorporating life events and scenarios, adapting and creating customized instructional materials for the ESL classroom and working with low-schooled learners.

Program Administrator Professional Development
GOAE Program Administrators participated in ongoing professional development throughout the fiscal year. These sessions were designed and delivered to provide ongoing governance and leadership in the areas of program improvement, data management and overall leadership development. The sessions in FY 13-14 included specific training in the area of 2014 GED test preparation, so that program leaders were fully aware of the construct and impact of the 2014 GED test and the changes required of instructors in order to gain program success.

FY 2014 Operations Meeting
The Operations Meeting provided Program Administrators an overview of updated program policies and procedures, grant management expectations and instructional best practices for the upcoming year. The FY14 meeting included a full day session on Budget Management. This included technology tools that could be used to support budget management, the importance of being a team player with the various budget partners found across their organizations, and the importance of knowing the rules of budgeting, tracking and monitoring.

Budget Management Workshop and Meeting with the Vice-Presidents of Administration (VPA) Peer Group Meeting
Due to the success of the budget management and fiscal ownership workshop held at the Operations meeting, a subsequent joint budget and fiscal management meeting was held with Adult Education Program Administrators and VPs of Administration from each college.

Program Administrator Academy on Instructional Leadership
During the Adult Education Fall Conference, Program Administrators attended a one-and-a- half day workshop designed around their role as instructional leaders for their

programs. Topics included: constructively supporting change; leadership styles; adult educator core competencies; using data to inform decision making; providing feedback to instructors through classroom observations; and program preparation for the 2014 GED test.

Program Management Workshop
Program Administrators received a day of specialized leadership development training focused on the role of an Instructional Leader as a change agent during the EAGLE Leadership event. This training included an overview of the impending changes forecasted for Adult Education, an eight step process for leading change, and a review of leadership styles with emphasis on the appropriate settings in which to use each.

<u>**Special Initiatives**</u>
Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP)
With the Certified Literate Community Program, a community establishes an independent non-profit collaborative that mobilizes local resources to address the twin problems of limited funding and recruiting adult students in greater numbers. This business-education-government partnership makes literacy a community-wide commitment that has helped children, families and workers improve their literacy levels. The partnerships have resulted in successful public awareness campaigns and fund development. Eighty-six counties and 2 cities have been certified by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia as CLCPs. Forty-nine counties and 1 city are CLCP Participants (first level of certification) and 37 counties and 1 city are Certified Literate Communities (second level of certification). CLCP Participants are currently working towards a collective goal of serving 225,332 individuals. The Certified Literate Communities made the commitment to serve 202,477, and served 257,365. They continue to add to that number each year. Every CLC exceeded their goal and most did it in less than 10 years. Annually, CLCPs now secure over $2.4 million for their programs and an additional $2.5 million in in-kind resources. Collectively, 1,612 CLCP volunteers donated 41,365 hours of service and 382 tutors provided 49,260 hours of volunteer tutoring. CLCPs sponsored over 270 literacy awareness events including 77 health literacy and 11 financial literacy awareness programs.

Community Outreach Efforts
In an effort to increase community support and advocacy for adult education, several projects are implemented on an annual basis. A Legislative Literacy Honor Roll recognized 9 congressional and state legislators for their work on behalf of literacy. A letter writing campaign resulted in 8,244 letters, the majority written by adult education students, to legislators about the role adult education plays in their lives, their local communities and the state. A Day at the Georgia State Capitol in February convened over 100 adult education advocates, providers and students to meet with legislators to discuss issues facing adult education. A CLCP Literacy Honor Roll recognized 13 literacy champions throughout the state. Five advocacy training workshops were presented.

TCSG Spring Leadership Summit
Program Administrators participated in the TCSG system-wide Spring Leadership Summit. This event allowed them the chance to network across TCSG as a whole, and to receive

updates about the organization from senior leadership team members. In addition to the scheduled programming, breakout sessions and peer group meetings allowed for the program administrators to focus on issues and receive updates from peers across the system-wide organization.

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.

Georgia has steadily increased the number of local programs meeting the negotiated educational gain benchmarks over the last three years. In 2013-2014, more than half of the programs (17 out of 32) met or exceeded the benchmarks in every educational functioning level where they reported students. Four additional programs met in all areas except one.

In the on-going effort to "treasure what we measure," the GOAE honored local programs for achievements in a variety of areas, as a part of the Georgia Adult Education Fall Conference. Awards were presented to programs for meeting all educational gain benchmarks, growth in enrollment and educational gain outcomes, increased service to ESL populations, highest number of citizenships awarded, and greatest use of volunteers.

Improvement Plans
In FY 2013-2014, Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) were required of three programs which were out of compliance with some state and/or federal policies. GOAE provided technical assistance throughout the corrective process, and by the end of the year, the three programs were able to correct the identified issues and end their respective CAP.

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) was required for one grantee that had not met most of the NRS educational gain benchmarks during the prior fiscal year. The PIP included specific action steps that addressed student retention, post-testing and assessment, data analysis, training and professional development.

Core Follow-up Measures
Georgia is still adapting to the change in the core follow-up measures. A significant hurdle was to develop an understanding of the cohorts and the follow-up data matches with all of our local program staff members. One of the challenges with the postsecondary measure is how to hold programs accountable for meeting the state benchmark when so much of their cohort consists of ESL students with foreign degrees and little- to- no interest in postsecondary education.

> 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 GOAE continued to implement the Accelerating Opportunity grant with the rollout of all eight participating colleges in FY 13-14. This grant provides Adult Education students the opportunity to be dually enrolled in both adult education and technical education classes simultaneously. The students enrolled in this program were guided into specific career pathways that have been vetted by industry, Economic Development, Department of Labor and Workforce Development partners. The pathways are designed to provide the students with industry and college-recognized credentials, a GED credential and a career pathway that leads to a beginning wage of $9.00 per hour. This program also provides students with wraparound support services such as book grants, transportation vouchers, childcare resources and counseling services—many of which are provided by community partners.

Additionally, a number of the state's local programs contributed to collaborative efforts by providing services at local One-Stop Centers. Services included intake/orientation (for adult education services), ABE/ASE instruction, and transition resources. GOAE also provides technical assistance to local Transition Specialists within the local programs.

> 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. (Only states receiving EL/C funds should respond to question #4).**

EL/C funds were awarded to 17 adult education programs around the state that used the funds to provide quality instruction in English Literacy and citizenship skills. The grantees included 12 technical colleges, two community-based organizations, one faith-based organization, and two school systems. Through these programs, 4,759 students were served for 12 or more hours in EL/C classes. EL/C outcomes reported by the programs indicated that 284 students achieved citizenship skills and 61 students achieved U.S. Citizenship.

GOAE provided quality professional development regarding ESL and EL/C during the Georgia Adult Education Fall Conference. Sessions for ESL and EL/C included, Turning Learning on its Head: Three Reasons to Flip your ESL Classroom; Integrating Language and

Content Instruction for Adult English Language Learners; Making the Transition: Culturally Responsive Teaching for Teaching for Adult English Learners with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education; and Career and Educational Pathways for the Adult ESL Classroom.

GOAE provided assessment training for *BEST Plus* and *BEST Literacy*. This included:
- 5 BEST Plus Test Administrator sessions (6 hours each), 43 participants;
- 2 BEST Plus Scoring Refresher trainings (4 hours each), 17 participants; and
- 2 BEST Literacy Administration and Scoring trainings (3 hours each), 18 participants.

In an effort to add to the number of EL/C providers in Metro Atlanta, GOAE hosted an open competition in the spring of 2014 for FY 2014-2015 EL/C funding. A new grant application was designed specifically for the EL/C application. GOAE also held a special technical assistance workshop for the EL/C grant application, so that potential applicants could learn more about the program and ask questions.

<u>Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies</u>
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 state of Georgia awards the General Education Diploma to students who have successfully completed all content areas of the GED test.

<u>Adult Education Standards</u>
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 GOAE has worked to integrate the college and career readiness standards into the ongoing 2014 GED training, as the new test is built upon these standards. As a past participant in Standards in Action, a team of Georgia instructors worked to unpack and repack current curricula to reflect the adult education standards. The GOAE PDTR team is working to build a repository of CCRS based activities to support these changes. GOAE has also offered extensive training in lesson plan development and classroom management that incorporates standards. This training will be ongoing.