

Louisiana Narrative Report 2013-2014

Introduction:

The adult education vision in Louisiana is built on the notion of recasting the expectations of our most important natural resource - our people. The adult education mission in Louisiana is to prepare our students with the skills necessary to compete for family sustainable employment and be contributing members in their communities. This mission is driven by a focus on providing a strong literacy foundation that is embedded in college and career readiness standards. The 600,000 working age adults in Louisiana without a high school credential need an opportunity to obtain the skills necessary to achieve a better life. By placing the responsibility for adult education with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), creating clear pathways into and through career and technical education programs that lead to life-sustaining jobs, Louisiana has radically changed its adult education delivery model and can now substantially increase the number of people who are part of the middle class.

As a symbol of this vision, the Louisiana adult education program has been re-named "WorkReady U." With a renewed set of expectations and a vastly different culture, adult education in Louisiana is no longer just about obtaining a high school equivalency diploma, but acquiring the means to improved life circumstances resulting from gaining the skills that lead to quality jobs. The state has redesigned the organizational, operational, and financial models of the state adult education delivery system in order to build upon the diverse resources of the LCTCS and its varied partners. The primary emphasis of WorkReady U in Louisiana is to provide highest quality adult educational services to our undereducated and underemployed citizens. These comprehensive foundational services provide opportunity toward self-sufficiency by providing high quality basic skills instruction, in addition to secondary credential attainment and transitional services that lead to a seamless matriculation to post-secondary enrollment, technical skill mastery, and industry recognized credentialing leading to family sustainable employment.

The WorkReady U vision and mission for adult education delivery in Louisiana was fully implemented through continuation grants which allowed the established provider network to strengthen and expand services throughout the state. Additionally, Louisiana underwent a full OCTAE monitoring visit in May 2012 that further defined adult education delivery services in the State during the 2013-2014 program year by addressing three (3) findings, in addition to taking into consideration the recommendations that resulted from the visit through our Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The further institutionalization of the WorkReady U philosophy and the implementation of the CAP during the 2013-2014 academic year resulted in a new performance baseline for adult education services in Louisiana and allowed for Louisiana to successfully close out the CAP process. While, statewide enrollment for FY 2013-2014 slightly declined from the previous year, overall performance increased. The enrollment decrease represents a convergence of key factors that were anticipated as a result of the WorkReady U plan implementation and strict adherence to the CAP:

- *Increase in the number of managed enrollment providers*
- *Adjustment to age demographics of enrolled students*
- *Adjustment to the new assessment policy*

A commitment to excellence by the LCTCS and its WorkReady U provider network to deliver

quality adult education and literacy services that are highly accountable and embedded in best practices research to the citizens of Louisiana remains strong as evident by an increase in the 2013-2014 performance data from the previous year. This commitment is further evident in Louisiana's academic performance data on Table 4B. This solid foundation will be built upon as WorkReady U continues its quest to build the Louisiana of tomorrow through comprehensive adult basic education delivery that affords students the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed.

State Leadership Funds:

The adult education delivery network in Louisiana, WorkReady U, continued to work with local stakeholders and other partnering agencies to facilitate new methods of service delivery, increase secondary credential attainment opportunities, expand instructional content and delivery techniques to include college and career readiness standards, utilize technology to enhance educational opportunities, transition from career pathway pilot initiatives to embedded 'Train to Attain' career pathway programs, in addition to fully implementing the WorkReady U vision and mission. Building capacity in Louisiana adult education programs focuses on the following four areas: connecting assessment and accountability; developing new models for service delivery and outreach; expanding the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning; and developing professionalism of personnel.

During FY 2013-2014, Louisiana Leadership funds were dedicated to compliance with regard to closing out Louisiana's CAP and monitoring Policy, challenging status quo, upgrading the technology infrastructure, and supporting the instructional needs of local providers as they fully implemented the WorkReady U vision and mission that is embedded in college and career readiness standards. The apex of this effort was the support of the Regional Resource Centers which are designed to be epicenters of a three pronged approach to professional development delivery activities throughout Louisiana. Leadership funds in FY 2013-2014 were also utilized to support adult education innovation grants, technology grants, and professional development in instructional practices using manipulatives and hands-on/real life activities that supported College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) and English as a Second Language (ESL).

Goal 1: To connect assessment and accountability

State Leadership funds were utilized to promote assessment policy awareness, professional development for data quality, policy compliance monitoring, in addition to added focus on using data for decisions, retention techniques, and overall best-practices instructional delivery.

Accountability in adult education in Louisiana is framed by WIA and the National Reporting System (NRS)—the federal and state mandate to disaggregate and report on data relevant to adult education. To meet the requirements of interagency reporting of student outcome factors and the National Reporting System, State Leadership funds were used, in part, to purchase LiteracyPro LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System). The LiteracyPro LACES web-based data collection/management software is used by all federally-funded adult education programs in the State of Louisiana.

The following are activities and initiatives used to connect assessment and accountability in Louisiana as referenced in the State Plan for Title II of WIA.

- The LCTCS adopted a performance-based funding formula for adult education that is aligned to performance indicators with the NRS and WorkReady U desired outcomes.
- Louisiana continues its commitment to reach the “harder to teach” adult learners who are most in need of foundational skills by targeting federal funds to students working below an 8.9 grade level equivalent. During the fiscal year, approximately 79% of the students served were ABE level students (NRS Table 1&3).
- The LCTCS’s monitoring procedures included analysis of data and program performance through monthly data submissions and data desk reviews. Based upon desk reviews, state staff may request local data documentation according to a risk assessment determination. Follow-up onsite visits were conducted when warranted.
- During 2013-2014, Louisiana’s onsite monitoring instrument and philosophy utilized a risk-assessment model that incorporates six vital modules - data, recruitment/retention, classroom activities, records/reports, partnerships, and finance in an effort to model the USDE/OCTAE instrument and place emphasis on what is valued and consistent with the WorkReady U blueprint. Onsite visits included an examination of student files, student attendance records, and program data submitted through the statewide data management system. Monitoring reports are prepared after each onsite monitoring visit. Sites that are non-compliant/have findings will receive recommendations for program improvements. Programs are given 30 days to prepare and submit a written plan of action describing the plan of resolution for the non-compliant/findings noted in the report. State staff are assigned to ensure all plans are adhered to and non-compliance addressed.
- Technical assistance was ongoing to all projects, with a focus on modeling special interest and follow-up given to sites with indicated findings and low performance outcomes. Future funding may be impacted for sub-grantees who fail to meet corrective compliance measures or continue to perform poorly.

During FY 13-14, WRU instituted new procedures in regards to providing technical assistance to programs. The three procedures included: performance target negotiations, development of a risk assessment model and enhancing the quarterly review process. Program performance negotiations jointly analyzed individual program data and established baseline performance goals for the fiscal year. The risk assessment model was used to identify programs with low performance data and guided the State in providing targeted technical assistance. Enhanced quarterly reviews included a red, yellow, green risk analysis that ranked and highlighted performance in NRS core measures, target population and adherence to the assessment policy. This system was put in place to help both WRU and program staff identify areas for improvement, technical assistance, and professional development.

- The LCTCS Internal Audit Division conducted onsite fiscal monitoring during FY 2013-2014. Based upon fiscal desk audits which examined program budgets and reimbursement claims, a risk assessment was determined. Onsite visits were scheduled with identified recipients to determine if expenses were reasonable, allocable, and allowable as required by Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, LA Title 34 and LCTCS Board Policies.

Goal 2: To develop new models for service delivery and outreach

The Louisiana Adult Education Program student demographics for FY 2013-2014 consisted of 79% adult basic education (ABE) students, 12% adult secondary education (ASE), and 9% English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) students (Louisiana 2012-2013 NRS Tables 1&3). The state funding formula for adult education incorporates a financial incentive to recruit new students with literacy levels from 0-8.9 grade levels and ESL students as the skills gap continues to widen. Louisiana is at a cross road. As the economy rebounds and the skills gap widens in the workforce, WorkReady U is committed to serving all undereducated and underemployed citizens to meet the growing workforce needs and provide opportunity to family sustainable employment.

After successful participation in the Design Phase of the Jobs for the Future (JFF), Accelerating Opportunity: A Breaking Through Initiative, Louisiana was awarded a three year implementation grant in addition to numerous Trade Adjustment (TAACCT) grants at our colleges. These initiatives reinforce the WorkReady U vision in Louisiana, to change the way adult basic education is delivered by positioning adult students to gain access to postsecondary credentials through career pathways, so they can seize the opportunity to earn family-sustaining wages and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. As we utilize these philanthropic and grant funds to explore alternative instructional delivery techniques and best-practices transitional service offerings identified in the Policy to Performance (P2P) initiative, Louisiana State Leadership funds are utilized to solidify basic literacy instructional delivery practices in an effort to establish a strong foundational pipeline of well-prepared adult learners. These efforts are designed to prepare students to meet their full potential, while at the same time, creating the workforce pipeline our state demands through basic skills mastery that leads to some form of post-secondary training and ends with family sustainable employment.

Goal 3: To expand the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning

LCTCS's WorkReady U strives to improve upon and expand the opportunities that are available to adult education providers and students by offering multiple outlets for the increased use of technology in the classroom, including distance learning.

- LCTCS Online offers unlimited potential to assist the Louisiana provider network meet the goals and outcomes of WorkReady U. Through its non-credit delivery portal, plans continue to utilize LCTCS Online as a multifaceted tool to assist with the delivery of professional development activities centered around statewide strands, assist in foundational skills instructional delivery options for the provider network that reinforce concepts taught during face-to-face instruction, support transition activities, and provide opportunities to adult learners to become college and career ready.

- WorkReady U providers were encouraged to compete for innovation grants and were awarded technology grants to further explore the limitless potential of technology in the educational space.

Goal 4: Professionalism of Personnel

Louisiana had 65 local administrators/ support staff, 445 adult education instructors, 161 instructional assistants, 4 counselors, and 19 unpaid volunteers in FY 2013-2014 (Louisiana NRS Table 7).

WorkReady U continued its commitment to excellence by offering professional development activities during FY 2013-2014 to ensure professional growth opportunities were offered to support the State Plan and the WorkReady U vision and mission. WorkReady U state staff continued its quest to offer the highest quality professional development opportunities by consulting with national professional development experts and convening a state task force in order to streamline and focus professional development efforts on areas of value to the system - data, recruitment & retention, classroom activities, records/reports, and partnerships. As a result of a professional development task force recommendation, LA Federal Leadership funds were utilized to support Regional Resource Centers. The established centers provide regionally appropriate trainings, resources, and mentorship opportunities throughout Louisiana. The Regional Resource Centers provide on-site meeting rooms, resource libraries, and leadership to guide research-based adult education best practices.

During FY 2013-2014, sub-grantees were awarded additional federal funds earmarked for professional development activities including conference participation. WorkReady U continues to strive to shift the mindset and culture of both adult education and postsecondary institutions through consistent, clear messaging delivered over time and in multiple contexts. In 2013, adult education and technical/community college instructors and administrators attended the same annual statewide professional conferences sponsored by the LCTCS and the LA Association for Public, Community and Adult Education (LAPCAE). Both conferences provided a unified means of communicating the WorkReady U vision to participants and emphasized the importance of integrating basic skills remediation and work skills.

Regional Resource Center (RRC) Opportunities:

WorkReady U took a proactive approach to keeping up with national trends by provided three unique professional development (PD) opportunities. Each training provided select participants with an intensive yearlong sustained model of PD that incorporated the traditional face-to-face workshop with online work, hands-on activities, real-life applications, and peer communities. The outcome of which produced a cadre of instructors well-versed in math, ELA, and ESL instruction. These individuals who were given the opportunity to spend an entire year focusing on subject-specific issues will share their knowledge with others in the state through redelivery of best practices/lessons learned at the Regional Resource Centers and state conferences. Through an application process, instructors were able to participate in the following three activities:

- **Adult Numeracy Instruction-Professional Development (ANI-PD)** involved practitioners from the across the state in an intensive, professional development program aimed at improving math instruction.
- **Effective and Efficient English/Language Arts Institute** provided a professional development opportunity for adult education reading/writing instructors. Instructors worked throughout the year to deepen their reading/writing content knowledge while practicing new instructional strategies.
- **Meeting English Learners' Needs with Standards-based Differentiated** provided professional development to EL-Civics instructors in a three-part, intensive professional development experience, The trainings addressed current issues in the education of English language learners, including integration of College and Career Readiness Standards into ESL instruction and using differentiated instruction successfully in classrooms with learners at varied levels of proficiency.

Performance Data Analyses:

The Louisiana Adult Education Program, WorkReady U, served nearly 30,000 undereducated and underemployed citizens in FY 2013-2014 with 22,506 students participating in basic skill instruction (Louisiana NRS Tables 4&12). Data reveals that 50% of those who participated in adult literacy services during the FY 2013-2014 program year completed or advanced an educational functioning level (Louisiana NRS Table 4), with 83% of those students advancing more than one functioning level. Additionally, performance outcome measures improved in all but one basic skills educational functioning levels (EFL) with the one outlier maintaining its performance percentage.

The total amount of federal and state funds expended by LCTCS and local programs was \$12,574,424.90 this amount includes Federal Funds of \$7,953,051.54 and \$4,621,373.36 of State Funds for 2013-2014.

The total number of participants served statewide across all groups and at all levels was 29,971. In FY 2013-2014, the total number of student attendance hours was 2,212.814 (NRS table 4), which equates to the following:

average cost per adult education student.....	\$419.55
cost per contact hour.....	\$5.68

Administering the adult education program statewide were five full-time professional staff members. The professional background of these staff members ranges from K-12 and adult education teaching experience to higher education administration experience. Staff members have participated in professional development activities including NRS Workshops and OCTAE-sponsored meetings.

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System maintained a presence in state-level meetings of agencies (both within and without the System) relating to adult education. Close

alignments also were maintained with the Department of Corrections, the Workforce Commission, Workforce Investment Council, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Louisiana Board of Regents and the Department of Education.

In 2013-2014, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System expended federal funding at the following levels (including carry-over federal funds from prior year):

State Leadership.....	\$572,476.19
Administration	\$396,133.03
Basic Grant to Local Providers	\$6,984,442.32
Total	\$7,953,051.54

After a thorough review of the 2013-2014 adult education performance data, it is clear that the full implementation of the WRU philosophy, NRS secondary measure co-hort populations, and the Louisiana’s new assessment policy that requires strict adherence to Test Publisher’s Guidelines impacted 2013-2014 targeted performance outcomes in enrollment, retention, ESL performance, high school equivalency attainment and post-secondary co-hort enrollment. As new local programs further got established in their communities and as Louisiana’s seasoned programs altered their managed enrollment instruction cycles and service schedules in order to adhere to the new assessment policy, disruption to traditional adult education instructional and student services occurred throughout Louisiana. Furthermore, WorkReady U’s career pathway model adversely affects the NRS post-secondary enrollment and high school equivalency cohorts, as these students are not labeled exited from the program but have successfully accomplished both measures.

However, as Table 4B reflects, Louisiana and the WorkReady U implementation is on the correct path with regard to classroom management and high quality instruction. Furthermore, as the preliminary findings indicate on the secondary outcomes calculated on Table 5, WorkReady U is better assisting the undereducated and underemployed citizens of Louisiana to realize opportunity at a greater rate and in an accelerated timeframe compared to previous years. These two indicators suggest that WorkReady U is significantly contributing to building the Louisiana of tomorrow by contributing to the formation of a highly skilled workforce.

Additionally, the collaborative efforts of the Louisiana Department of Education and the LCTCS continues its trend downward of the percentage of 16-18 year olds that are being served in adult education. Through clearer defined state mandatory attendance laws and more diverse alternative programs being offered in the K-12 system, Louisiana is working hard to address the dropout rate. Louisiana is also committed to ensure all individuals that are undereducated and underemployed have an opportunity to receive basic skill remediation and an opportunity toward self-sufficiency as evidenced by Table 3 that reflects 88% of the students served were Adult Basic Education or English-as-a-Second Language learners. This long-term commitment is yet another measure that WorkReady U and its mission is dedicated to building the Louisiana of tomorrow by providing comprehensive adult educational services to Louisiana’s most at-risk citizens.

Integration with other Programs:

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) has supported the integration of activities sponsored under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) in multiple areas relative to adult education, career development, and employment and training activities.

Many local adult education programs used their federal funds, in addition to the state allocation, to provide instructional activities at the One-Stop Centers. In each of the 18 Workforce Investment Areas an adult education director is responsible for continued communication with the local Workforce Investment Board. This coordination and communication provides opportunities for the director to attend WIB meetings and to serve as a conduit for the exchange of information. LCTCS leadership participate in all appropriate committee and board activities with regard to the State agencies responsible for Workforce, Corrections, Higher Education, and Economic Development.

A highlight of the collaborative work of these agencies during FY 2013-2014 was the use of 2011 Incentive funds. These funds were utilized to support strategic efforts to scale up comprehensive career pathways for adult learners statewide. The Train to Attain career pathways are embedded in regionally appropriate labor market data that possess stackable/portable credentials tied to national certifications and job readiness skills. Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and Louisiana Economic Development/ Louisiana FastStart (LED) assist in identifying the labor market demands and desired skill sets/credentials; WorkReady U and LCTCS colleges build career pathways and offer foundational skills, resulting in LWC and LCTCS colleges assisting completers secure internships, apprenticeship, and/or employment. All partners work collectively to foster business and industry partnerships to guide and support the process.

English Literacy/ Civics Programs:

Seven (7) grantees received EL/Civics allocations based upon proven adult educational services and prior year success in providing both English language instruction and civics instruction. The total number of EL/Civics education students served by the seven (7) sub-grantees in 2013-2014 was 1,434 which reflects a 47.5% enrollment increase from the previous year. There was a 50.2% increase in the number of students with 12 hours as well. The number of students post-tested and the number of students completing a level also increased from the previous year while those being tested outside of the testing policy decreased to less than 5%.

Below are snapshots of two successful programs which provided services with English Language/Civics Education Funds:

East Baton Rouge Parish School System

The East Baton Rouge (EBR) Parish School System's EL/Civics program experienced growth in 2013-2014 prompting them to add instructors and classes to accommodate the growing need in the community. By reaching out to the community and offering classes to meet the needs of the population where they lived, not only was the program able to serve more but also reach 100% of the benchmarks in this area. The next phase of growth for the EBR program is to foster transitions to postsecondary training and/or sustainable employment for adult education and

EL/Civics students.

Delgado Community College

The Delgado Community College (DCC) EL/Civics program has grown tremendously since its inception in 2012-2013 serving 99 students to serving 702 students in 2013-14 and is predicting even greater success and growth in the coming years. Part of the success has to do with the model that has evolved over time to a managed enrollment system of delivery offering year-round classes throughout the Greater New Orleans Region. The other key to success has been the holistic approach to implementing various instructional methods to help English Language Learners achieve proficient use of the English language in a variety of natural settings including education, professional, civic, and social environments.

Secondary School Credential and Equivalencies:

Louisiana ran an RFP in 2013 to select a traditional high school equivalency assessment tool that met Louisiana's needs and requirements. The result of the RFP was unanimously selection of the HiSET test from ETS. In order to complete the High School Equivalency Test successfully in Louisiana and earn a credential through the traditional high school equivalency assessment portal, a student must earn the minimum standard score approved by the governing body of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. This minimum standard is guided by the High School Equivalency Test provider's recommendation and the HiSET Governing Board. Additionally, students participating in a 'Train to Attain' career pathway may also earn a Louisiana High School Equivalency Diploma upon completion and satisfactory review of a portfolio encompassing both college-level career courses and foundational skills courses and competencies earned during their dual enrollment.

A Louisiana high school equivalency diploma is issued from the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) after the student has successfully completed the High School Equivalency Test or the portfolio review process demonstrating evidence of college-level career class proficiency and foundational skills mastery. A student who has earned a Louisiana High School Equivalency Diploma issued by the LCTCS is considered a Louisiana high school graduate in every respect.

Adult Education Standards:

Louisiana made great strides in FY 2013-2014 toward implementing adult education college and career readiness (CCR) standards. Statewide professional development occurred throughout the year to inform, unpack, and build lessons around the CCR standards. The strategic approach of attempting to understand the CCR standards prior to officially adopting the standards allowed momentum to build resulting in the adult education field solicitation of the state office for official adoption of the CCR standards, which was accomplished in FY 2014-2015.

A team of ten from the WRU network including state staff, instructors, and supervisors received hands-on training at the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for Adult Education: Implementation Institute. The institute brought together expert coaches in literacy and mathematics to provide training and individualized support to teams of educators on how implementation of CCR standards would impact instruction and curriculum.