**Delaware Narrative Report 2014-15**

The theme for Delaware’s Adult Education was preparation for WIOA implementation. The primary objectives centered on greater understanding and alignment with workforce development strategies; enhanced MIS processes; increased integration of technology; and professional development that supported program staff and benefited students in attaining their goals.

**State Leadership Activities**

*Alignment with Workforce Development Strategies*

During FY15, leadership dollars enabled the ACE Network, Delaware’s Adult Learning Resource Center, to provide 54 different training and workshop events with a total attendance of 637 staff members from adult education programs. The events held ranged in length of time from one-hour webinars to training institutes lasting six days. The professional development trainings consisted of 27 activities related to curriculum with 340 attendees and 18 activities related to NRS/data with 163 attendees and 3 activities related to assessment or policy training with 70 attendees.

In preparing for WIOA implementation, Delaware re-created its writing instruction with the introduction of the new Career Writing Certificate of Attainment (COA) Manual. The goal of the manual is to combine Career and College Readiness standards based writing skills appropriate for each ABE EFL with local job market information resulting in writing samples usable in the real world.

Participants representing all ABE programs attended two full days of training. To ensure easy access for staff and administrators the manual was posted on the ACE Network’s Moodle site. Most of the deliverable portfolio components are available digitally further integrating technology into instruction. As part of the writing process, students complete personal and career inventories, use the DOL job seeker website, and research two careers of personal interest. Each EFL level has specific employment related vocabulary. During the Annual Student and Teacher Summit, a DOL colleague presented a workshop exploring the DOL website and answered teachers’ questions concerning DOL services. Other WIOA focused presentations included teacher workshops on guiding students in the creation of DOL Job Links accounts and gaining access to required information for the writing portfolios.

*Enhanced MIS Processes*

To better monitor program achievement, the state reports on individual program progress and statewide progress towards negotiated performance targets on a quarterly basis.

Before quarterly data reviews, the ACE Network holds webinars and in person chats to discuss program data health and data collection and entry processes to ensure compliance with NRS and state guidelines. These discussions include the following topics: cohort creation, collection, and follow up processes; program assessment processes to align with the state assessment policy and assessment test providers administration process, how to analyze the current student outcomes and the additional outcomes required to be successful in obtaining NRS targets, and the correct entry of all staff, class, and student data.

In preparation for LACES NexGen, the ACE Network held two major workshops in which all programs participated. The ACE Network also worked with LACES staff to customize reports to be embedded into the new interface.

*Increased Technology Integration*

Prior to developing plans for increased student use of technology, Delaware surveyed its students to determine the current familiarity with and accessibility to technology. The survey provided a wealth of information, which will serve as the basis for future technology plans. Some insights provided by the students included:

* Fifty-four percent have experience with computer based testing and 59% of these students have participated in educational computer based testing.
* Eighty percent of felt comfortable using a mouse; however, 84% did not know how many words per minute they could type.
* Over half reported feeling comfortable using a word processing program and about 50% of these students demonstrated knowledge of the most needed skills for successfully using a word processing program.
* Only 33% reported feeling proficient when multi-tasking on a computer with several screens open at once.

Because of this survey, professional development focusing on the increased use of technology in the classroom was presented. Technology trainings included; Using the TI 30/34 Calculator Emulator in Your Classroom; Intro to Vocabulary.com; Infusing Technology into the Classroom; Welcome to Learn Zillion; Technology Integration for Adult Learning Styles. In addition, Delaware collaborated with other state agencies to network resources. We worked with the Division of Library’s Inspiration Spaces (a DDL resource for job seeking services) and with Department of Labor (DOL) Resources for Job Seekers (guided tour of DOL online job seeker resources), and Computer Literacy Basics.

OAASIS, Delaware’s adult learner support group, polled ABE students this year concerning their participation in adult basic education programs.

* Ninety percent reported having access to technology devices outside of the classroom including computers, tablets, and smartphones.
* Over two-thirds reported having the use of a smartphone; while fewer students had access to a desktop, laptop or tablet.
* The primary reason for entering ABE was to get a job or advance within a job.
* Benefits of participating in ABE included increase in critical thinking skills; increase in knowledge of American government; increase in skills to help school age children; and increased skills to attain employment.

**Performance Data Analysis**

Delaware ended FY 15 with a 4.6% unemployment rate, lower than the national average of approximately 5.5%. Job opportunities presented in the following top five areas: (1) Office and Administration; (2) Retail Sales; (3) Food Preparation; (4) Healthcare; and (5) Transportation and Materials Handling. Despite the need to reduce financial obligations, the state legislature continued to level fund community based Adult Education programs.

*Enrollment*

In FY 15, enrollment in Adult Education classes dropped by 12 percent from the previous year. ABE enrollment decreased by 17%; while student participation in ESL increased by 3%. There are several reasons for this decrease: (1) a significant reduction in ABE participation in two of the biggest community ABE programs; (2) reduced prison education participation; and (3) increased employment opportunities in lower skilled jobs due to an improving economy.

The reduction in ABE participation was due to new leadership in one program and to new “alternative” adult education programming arising in the area. Though the validity of the credentials being offered by the new entity is questionable since it is neither federal or state regulated, students are enrolling in the hopes of gaining a secondary credential “quickly”.

Prison Education participation was decreased due to a reconstruction project limiting educational space; changing of treatment services scheduling; and teacher vacancy based on the availability of DOC Initial Training.

Employment opportunities in healthcare, patient care and facility maintenance has increased. These job openings have postponed the need for higher math, reading and writing skills. While lower skilled adults understand that increased skills lead to better jobs, the lure of a “job today” can outweigh future considerations. In Delaware, there seems to be a pattern of available high skilled jobs and low skilled jobs. However, there is a lack of “transitional” or middle skilled jobs into which lower skilled workers can transition with additional education and/or training.

In providing ESL services, there was an increase in the number of students entering at the ESL Beginning Literacy, ESL Low and High Beginning and ESL Low Intermediate educational functioning levels over last year in a majority of programs. Enrollment decreased in the remaining EFLs.

*Performance Target Achievements*

* *Educational Functioning Level Completions*

Delaware Adult Education met or exceeded target performances in 6 out of 11 educational functioning levels. In the remaining five EFLs, Delaware was within 7% of achieving the state targets. The ABE Intermediate High and Low EFLs missed their targets by 68 and 56 students respectively. ESL Beginning Literacy was 28 students short of its proposed target; while ESL Low Beginning and ABE Beginning Basic missed their targets by 10 and 8 students respectively. Average attendance increased slightly from an average of 85 to 87 hours. The average hours of attendance remained the same in FY 15 as in FY 14.

Average ABE student attendance was 91 hours and average ESL attendance was 77. These numbers cover a hidden reality, though. Programs reported a higher number of students transitioning from ESL to ABE services in FY 15. However, many dropped out after entering ABE classes. Programs reported that smaller classes and more support services might assist English Language Learners in persisting for longer periods. Programs also noted a larger diversity of students entering adult education classes. The number of Middle Eastern students has increased in one of Delaware’s three counties forcing teachers to be cognizant of different cultural norms when developing lessons and promoting class interactions.

* *Core Completions*

Delaware attained three of its four core performance targets. Delaware did not meet its employment core goal, attaining an actual performance of 35% compared to the target of 40%. Some possible reasons for this performance could be the increased number of students entering a training program and the number of ELL students whose employment

cannot be monitored by the Delaware Department of Labor. Delaware attained a 73% retention performance level, eight percent points higher than the target goal of 65%. Delaware’s ABE collaboration with DOL remains supportive to DOL clients in need of a secondary credential prior to accessing further skills training or promotions within their field.

Delaware’s 96% actual performance in the secondary credential core performance measurement exceeded the target of 88%.

Delaware also exceeded its target of 20% in the entered post-secondary performance measurement with a 34% actual performance rate. Adult learners are finding that better paying jobs require different and higher level skill sets that can only be attained by continued education. The Department of Labor is offering training but its capacity to fulfill client needs remains limited. In addition, some ELL students are not eligible for DDOL training due to their legal status in this country.

**Integration with Other Programs**

Integration of services to maximize return on investment were enhanced in 2015. Through collaboration with various state agencies, adult education was able to support employment and training objectives; statewide career development plans; and post incarceration reentry goals.

* ABE classes located at One Stop Centers continue to be some of the most attended classes operating throughout the state. ABE classes are currently operating at three One Stop sites with plans for classes at the fourth center in 2016 when the Dover One Stop Center finalizes its move to a larger facility. The Departments of Education and Labor and the Workforce Investment Board collaboratively funded these classes sharing the costs for space, furniture, salaries, instructional materials and assessments. At these sites, DOL refers clients to these classes in preparation for further DOL training, employment or job promotion. ABE providers at actual One Stop Centers are using approximately $15,000 of AEFLA funds. Instructors at ABE classes not co-located at One Stop Centers inform students of and refer students to DOL services. Use of the DOL website and its resources are integrated into classroom instruction.

Prison Education programs continue to work with DOL At-Risk Youth funded programs in monitoring the progress of young offenders who have been remanded to Level 5 prisons.

* FY 15 evidenced some progress in the development of Career Pathways. Adult Education was a partner represented on the Strategic Planning Committee of the Workforce Investment Board as Delaware determines which pathways are most appropriate based on employment data. This year an Information Technology Pathway was mapped out based on employment data indicating a consistent need for workers in this area. While this field is considered a highly skilled occupation, it is hoped that the increased use of technology in the classroom and the integration of career exploration topics into writing instruction will entice more learners to consider this career option.

In addition, Adult Education is working with local adult education programs offering vocational programming through Perkins and Blue Collar funding to provide transitions from ABE classes into vocational trainings. Currently we are exploring pathways in the healthcare field. Adult Education has also met with Delaware Technical and Community College to facilitate transition for prison education students who participated in vocational training while incarcerated and who are being released to their communities. AEFLA funded community college ABE programs also developed transitions for ABE students to enter vocational training programs offered by the college and funded through state and/or federal monies.

Adult Education is a member of the Workforce Investment Board’s strategic planning committee and the Secretary of Education is the representative for both Perkins and Adult Education on the Board.

* Adult Education’s partnership with the Departments of Health and Social Services, Labor, Correction, and Housing in the Governor’s Reentry Project continued through the I-Adapt (Individual Assessment, Discharge and Planning Team) Process. Based upon information gathered last summer in the Criminal Justice Council’s Recidivism Report, it appears that those participating in I-Adapt services including adult education are experiencing lower rates of re-incarceration than those offenders not participating in the project.
  + Of the total number of I-Adapt participants to date:
    - 1,225 participated in the Prison ABE Program in Level 5 facilities
      * 307 attained their GED
      * 130 attained their diploma
      * 234 completed at least one prison college course
    - Prison Education supervisors meet once a month with DOL, DHSS, DSHA and DOC representatives to review exiting offenders’ needs and to refer them to community services.
    - DOC and Adult Education continue to meet regularly to enhance educational opportunities within the facilities, e.g. extending educational hours, providing additional services to students with special needs, and developing new vocational/academic opportunities

* Adult Education continued to work with K12 administrators to provide information on available adult education services. All Adult Education programs operating within a local educational agency now have websites outlining program services. Two LEAs are operating family literacy programs that provide services to adult learners and to children in early elementary school grades.

**EL/Civics**

In FY15, seven Delaware Adult Education programs received EL Civics funding. EL Civics students participated in the Financial Literacy Project that focused on common areas of need based upon data collected from last year’s project. The most common financial concerns for students were saving money, banking services, shopping, insurance, budgeting, credit cards, and identity theft. While each program embedded financial activities in the ESOL/EL Civics class instruction, the statewide focus for this project was a partnership with $tand By Me®, part of the Delaware Financial Empowerment Partnership. This organization offers free support to Delawareans who want to understand more about their money, make good financial decisions, and learn about choices for savings and loans. In this partnership EL Civics programming was able to provide students with a personal financial coach and a toolkit to navigate the challenges of establishing personal financial security.

The number of adult learners who participated in in the Financial Literacy projects across the seven programs was 870 students. $tand By Me® coaches traveled statewide to make group presentations to entire classes, and met with students individually to coach them on personal finance. At two programs, which also provide Family Literacy programming, children and entire families participated in financial learning activities including smart shopping and saving money. Another great benefit of the partnership is that $tand By Me® was able to provide bilingual coaches where needed to reach as many students as possible.

As a result of this second year of collaboration with $tand By Me®, financial literacy instruction was revised to target specific student concerns while integrating basic financial concepts in a context familiar to ELL students.

**Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies**

Adult learners in Delaware who attain passing scores on the GED® are awarded a state recognized secondary credential. This credential is not considered an equivalency diploma. Currently, the state is only issuing secondary credentials based on the 2014 GED® Exam. However, State Code was changed in spring 2014 to allow other assessments, in addition to the GED®, to be the basis for issuing a state recognized secondary credential. Applications for vendors to serve as an additional secondary credential assessment were requested earlier this year. ETS was the only applicant. The information from the application was shared with DDOE’s Learning and Assessment Workgroup who reviewed the application and made recommendations. The workgroup’s recommendations will be shared with the Secretary of Education in 2016 for final decision.

**Adult Education Standards**

Delaware has adopted the Career and College Readiness Standards. We are currently in the third year of fully implementing the standards. In FY 15, Delaware focused on providing adult education instructors with the understandings and resources necessary for student success. These efforts included:

* Professional development and technical assistance to adult educators in CCR English Language Arts instruction (Reading, Writing, Language, Speaking & Listening), with a focus on secondary credential assessment preparation.

During FY15, Delaware adult educators received Language Arts professional development in the areas of Reading, Writing, Language, and Speaking and Listening based on the CCR during four workshops. During the DAACE Summit, a Science and Social Studies for ABE and GED® workshop was offered. During the Summer Academy, two writing workshops were offered and one Reading workshop.

* Professional development and sustained support to adult educators in algebra readiness instruction.

Three Math professional development workshops were presented to provide algebra readiness instruction training based on CCR Math Standards. A workshop focused on CCR standards, specifically quantitative and qualitative problem-solving skills was presented during the Annual Summit and two additional CCR Math based workshops were presented during the summer academies.

* Implementation of the Career Transition Certificate of Attainment Writing Portfolios statewide.

COA Writing Portfolios that include college and career awareness activities were implemented in all ABE programs this fiscal year. In the summer of 2014, the Career Transition COA Manual, which is aligned to the Career and College Readiness Writing Standards at all EFLs, was introduced. In 2015 professional development, focusing on the Career COA Writing Manual was presented. This workshop presented the rationale, content, resources and submission processes for the writing portfolios to ABE instructors. All writing submissions were submitted to the state for review. This process ensured that CCR standards were being understood and taught correctly in the classroom and that COA activities were appropriate to student goals and aligned with DOL workforce resources. Programs that had more than three COA submissions returned for revision were provided with technical assistance either by phone or in one-on-one meetings.