New York Narrative Report 2014-15

**State Leadership Funds**

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

State leadership funds supported the following activities: Regional Adult Education Network

(RAEN); adult education program licenses; professional development and technical assistance focused on the National Reporting System, data monitoring and performance accountability, maintenance of the state’s management information system, and; support for the continuation of the National External Diploma Program.

During 2014, a Request for Proposals was developed to fund the RAEN representing seven geographic areas of New York State: Long Island, New York City, Hudson Valley, Capital/North Country, Central/Southern Tier, Finger Lakes, and West. Seven applicants were selected to provide professional development and technical assistance services to funded programs in coordination with ACCES-AEPP.

The RAENs address professional development and technical assistance based on state and regional needs in the areas of learning standards and New York State’s Common Core and College and Career Readiness Standards for new and experienced teachers in Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, English Language Learning (ELL), civics, evidenced-based instructional strategies, high school equivalency preparation, career pathways, and program improvement activities.

During 2014-15 two RAEN Directors, one in New York City and the other in the Central Southern Region, focused on career pathways specifically in the areas of advanced manufacturing and health careers. Using New York State Department of Labor’s career and job statistical data, the two RAEN Directors customized an online resource developed by Portland State University for both upstate counties and boroughs in New York City. This resource provided students with job opportunities and educational resources in preparation for entry level careers and career ladder opportunities in their respective communities.

The New York State Adult Education Programs and Policy (AEPP) Team and the RAEN directors continued to provide coordinated technical assistance to programs that performed below acceptable NRS performance levels. The RAEN directors provided technical assistance to assist programs in identifying areas in need of improvement. The RAEN directors dedicated 90 percent of technical assistance to programs in need of improvement in the seven regions of the state.

Individual Technical Assistance Plans (ITAP) combined with on-site agency visits and program staff discussions provided a framework for technical assistance and appropriate professional development. Each program under review developed a program improvement plan following guidance from the New York State NRS manual (see: [www.adult-education-accountability.org](http://www.adult-education-accountability.org))

Local program improvement committees, required in the Request for Proposals, worked with the RAEN directors to identify data management and related instructional strategies. In 2014-15, the RAEN directors provided on-site assistance to a minimum of 25 programs statewide including the identification of mentors from high performing agencies. In addition, the RAEN continued to provide distance-learning services including interactive teleconferences, Giving Ready Adults a Study Program (GRASP), Skills to Make Adults Ready to Succeed (SMART), and Crossroads Café.

The RAEN plays an active role in coordinating Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Title II grant (previously Workforce Investment Act Title II) recipients with respect to the development of local memoranda of understanding and the development of support to adult education within the local workforce investment areas. The RAENs conducted full day meetings with One Stop partners and adult education providers in each of the RAEN regions.

The second leadership project continued the licensing agreements between Kentucky Educational Television and New York State’s Public Broadcasting Stations (PBS). These licensing agreements included distance learning programs and are ongoing, as these programs provided the curriculum framework for many of New York’s distance-learning (home-study) programs. NYSED contracted with Corstar Communications LLC for Crossroads Café and Life Lines electronic workbooks.

The third leadership project continued to assist local adult education program personnel to identify and define the interrelationships between data and program performance and identify program improvement efforts that can be implemented by the local programs. During 2014-15, other data areas were developed to record agencies’ participation in staff development activities, and make improvements to the fiscal recording options following a recommendation from our internal audit department. These efforts have improved and extended our efforts in accountability. Each year performance report cards are constructed, reviewed and disseminated in coordination with NYSED for each Workforce Investment Act Title II funded program.

The fourth leadership project was a rebid of the National Reporting System (NRS) accountability contract. Under this contract, technical assistance and monitoring are done in consort with NYSED staff and the seven RAEN directors. In addition, this contact provides all the professional development related to accountability and fiscal compliance. This year two new website were launched to support instruction tied to more academically rigorous college and career standards: <www.TeachingtotheCore.org>, and [www.CollectEDNY.org](http://www.CollectEDNY.org).

In addition, New York’s HSE data base ASISTS was expanded through, the creation of new, more robust teacher- and site-level reports that display performance metrics such as attendance, achievement gains, HSE diagnostics and other outcomes.

The fifth leadership project funded is of the National External Diploma Program (NEDP), a nontraditional experiential adult learning assessment program which serves as an alternative pathway to high school credentialing. The New York State Education Department has contracted with Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) to provide this assessment program that allows adult education students in New York to demonstrate their transferable skills for which a local high school diploma is awarded. The four components are diagnostics, generalized assessment, post-task assessment, and portfolio review and graduation. NEDP has updated the number of competencies to measure 21st century skills and the total program is being aligned to Common Core/College and Career Readiness Standards. Currently there are 26 programs in New York State; however, the goal is to increase programming to 35 agencies. During 2014-15 a process continued to add NEDP to the NYSED Commissioner’s Regulations as another pathway to a New York State High School Equivalency diploma. The inclusion of web-based training and instruction in 2014-15 supported the expansion of NEDP programming.

**Performance Data Analyses**

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

New York State infuses data in all aspects of managing adult education programs. Each one of the 155 local programs maintained their student data and submitted performance data through New York's online management information system. NYSED regional staff, the seven RAEN directors, along with the Accountability Specialist review individual program data quarterly. These data reviews initiate strategies for program improvement. The majority of technical assistance and troubleshooting is provided through a combination of conference calls, webinars, and desk monitoring thereby reducing travel for on-site consultations and data monitoring.

In program year 2014-2015, there were several trends identified within the program data collected. There was an evident decline in student enrollment which is expected with flat funding and increasing expenses. The most significant drop in enrollment was the students enrolled in NRS Levels 4, 5, and 6 of Adult Basic Education. In general, programs are serving fewer students however; the learners’ outcomes have exhibited a three point gain over the previous year. This program year, the combined overall educational gain for ABE, ASE, and ESL is 61 percent.

New York continues to experience fewer students taking the high school equivalency test. While the TASC test has been in place since January 2014, High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation programs continue to work with students to overcome apprehension related to the new test and the increased rigor of the test content. As teachers improve their own capacity for the integration of the Common Core/College and Career Readiness Standards, their students are more prepared to sit for the HSE test. To support former GED® testers with a successful completion of the HSE, NYSED has extended the Grandfathering of previous passing test scores on the GED® battery previously used as the test of record leading to a NYS HSE.

The decrease in student enrollment in HSE preparation classes continues to be impacted by an overall improved job market in New York. As a result of these influences, New York’s total student enrollment has decreased 3.5 percent from the previous program year.

The final evaluation of local program data focused on newly opened Literacy Zones (www.NYS-Education-Literacy-Zones.org). New York currently funds 49 Literacy Zones (LZ) located in impoverished communities across the state. A total of 19,947 adults were served under the Literacy Zone initiative and an additional 11,800 students sought case management services from the LZ and were referred to priority partner agencies for services and critical needs. These students present with severe barriers to a learning commitment and therefore receive intense support from the case managers, a requirement in each of the Literacy Zones. As a result, the students meeting NRS criteria logged over 120 contact hours per student and demonstrated 58 percent educational gain. This result is seven percent above the NYS benchmark of 51 percent.

Beyond NRS outcomes, literacy zones reported over 30,000 additional outcomes in each of the ten pathways out of poverty. New York will continue to track the data associated with this Literacy Zone population.

New York did not meet the federal target for educational gain for only one educational functioning level, Adult Secondary Education. While the local programs continue their commitment toward the collection, recording, and reporting of data, the mitigating circumstances surrounding the new high school equivalency test impacted the educational gain attainment in this educational functioning level. Through desktop monitoring and the use of Individual Technical Assistance Plans (ITAP), NYSED staff, the NRS Accountability Specialist, and RAEN Directors, NYSED continued to identify and monitor programs in need of improvement. Underperforming programs received technical support based on needs reflected in their data. The effectiveness of this ITAP process is evidenced in the consistent statewide performance.

**Integration with Other Programs**

**Describe how the eligible agency has integrated activities funded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities. Describe efforts to develop or advance career pathways 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 Local Workforce Investment Boards, adult education’s involvement on the State Workforce Investment Board, the provision of core and other services through the One stop system and an estimate of the Title II funds being used to support activities and services through the One-stop delivery system.**

For the past sixteen years ,NYSED and the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) have worked collaboratively to implement the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) for New York State and during 2014-15 have work to plan the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA). The New York State Commissioner of Education represents WIA Title II on the State Workforce Investment Board. New York State has 33 local workforce investment boards. Each local workforce investment board has a Title II representative identified by NYSED and recommended to the county elected official for approval. The Title II designee represents NYSED at local negotiations meetings with the local workforce investment boards. NYSED works closely with the local Title II designee to develop and approve the local Memorandum of Understandings for each of the workforce investment boards.

A program in Central New York collaborates with the local community college and facilitates pathways for the adult education students to enroll in training programs including LPN,CNA,and Home Health Aid. The students are encouraged to work with the local Workforce Solutions at the One Stop for job searching and skill development.

Many WIA Title II funded agencies have bridge programs with career and technological education in the areas of health care, welding, culinary, heating ventilation and air conditioning. These programs have intensive case management, career preparation and guidance.

In New York City, an Integrated Basic Skills Training program in the areas of health care has been developed at the New York City CUNY Community College system. The program has been developed for low level applicants, ESL students in career and technology education, and ESL language development. The contextualized content is embedded with college advisement and case management.

A rural program in the Adirondack Mountains works with two other neighboring One Stop regions to implement **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Stamps) for the rural area. These WIA title II students, who are have the most barriers receive career counselling, literacy activities, HSE preparation, job skills training and employment and retention services.**

**In addition to the cooperative services between the adult education program and the One Stop**

**Center, the adult education program provides all the TABE testing for the One Stop partners.**

**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 programs receiving EL/C grants and an estimate of the number of adult learners served.**

New York State has the nation’s greatest linguistic and cultural diversity. In 2014, according to the US Census Bureau, the foreign-born population of New York State was 4,465,469. In 2013, the New York State Education Department issued a Request for Proposal for Workforce Investment Act Title II for English Language/Civics Education programs and 24 successful applicants proposed to identify, recruit, and educate immigrants in English language acquisition and civics education. Approximately 59,155 students are enrolled in English literacy classes and of those; 16,746 students are in English Language/Civics Education programs. The majority of New York States’ immigrant population resides in the New York City area, although foreign-born populations are increasing in other regions of the state. In the five boroughs of New York City, nearly 47 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home. To reach the non-native English speakers, the diversity of the grant awardees included nationality-specific community based organizations, public schools, BOCES, the City University of New York , and three public library systems in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

In New York City, students at programs funded with WIA Title II EL/Civics engage in a variety of educational activities approved by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), including multi-level history/ civics lessons. Teachers also use USCIS practice citizenship interviews, clarify confusing concepts and help students develop their literacy /language skills.

Another English Language/ Civics program at the Brooklyn Public Library works closely with the Immigration Justice Corps and offers free legal services to immigrants and assists them with documentation.

A program in the Mohawk Valley offers a six week Citizenship preparation course that focuses on the application, interview and English/Civics test as provided by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. During the school year the ESL portion of the classes integrate EL/Civics with field trips to local public services, government buildings including the library, post office, city hall and department of labor workforce solutions. ESL conversational classes cover topics on how to call professional government offices, voting in local, state and national elections, and public school enrollment. Community partners visit classes from agencies such as the Board of Elections, New York State Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, local bank and medical agencies.

The El/Civics program in Buffalo, second largest city in New York State incorporates the court system in the classes by setting up mock trials where students play the roles of victim, accused, prosecutor, defense attorney, judge and jury. Teachers provide real-life court case topics to prepare for the mock trials. Another topic teachers address is taxes. Using pay stubs and cash receipts as a teaching tool, students learn about local, state, and federal taxes. In addition to conversation classes on these topics, students take field trips to the federal post office, library, City Hall and attend City Council meetings to see the local democracy process.

In the Hudson Valley region an English Language/Civics program has encouraged the use of technology to expand the teaching of civics education. Students use a laptop lab where they experience programs such as Rosetta Stone, Citizenship programs, and Focus on Grammar. The agency has developed its own Citizenship curriculum that uses websites and on line activities to support United States civics lessons.

**Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies**

**Describe the 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 diploma as well as the criteria that may be recognized, such as competency based or credit-based methods.**

The New York State Education Department provides two pathways to a New York State High School Equivalency diploma: successfully passing a High School Equivalency (HSE) test. ( Test Assessing Secondary Completion – TASC™) or successfully completing 24 credits of college level courses.

Eligibility in New York dictates that candidates must be State residents for at least 30 days and be 19 years of age or older. Candidates who are 17 or 18 years of age may be eligible if they: are enrolled in an Alternative High School Equivalency Preparation Program (AHSEP), are members of a high school class which has graduated, have been out of school for a year, are residents of a correctional facility or drug rehabilitation center, were accepted into the armed forces or institution of higher education, were home schooled, or were foreign born and have lived in the United States for less than 12 months. Candidates who are 16 years of age may be eligible if they are in an AHSEP program or were accepted into the armed forces or an institution of higher education. Beginning on December 4, 2015, home schooled candidates who are 16 years of age are also eligible to take the HSE test in New York.

In November of 2012 NYSED conducted an RFP to choose a vendor to provide a high school equivalency exam that is available on both computer and paper, available at existing test centers, and phases in Common Core State Standards. In March of 2013, the Commissioner announced that the winning bidder was CTB/McGraw Hill for a new HSE test called the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™). The TASC is the only High School Equivalency test currently offered in NYS and is available in both English and Spanish. New York continues to provide the HSE test at no cost to all eligible New York State residents.

With the transition from the GED® test (offered in NYS prior to January 1, 2014) to the TASC™ (offered in NYS beginning in January 2014), the NYSED Board of Regents authorized the acceptance of up to four GED® passing subtest scores (from the years 2002-2013) to count towards passing the corresponding subtest scores on the TASC™ in the years 2014-2015.

The 24 college credit pathway requires candidates to demonstrate that they have completed 24 semester hours as follows: six in English/Language Arts, three in mathematics, three in natural sciences, three in social sciences, three hours in humanities, and six in any other courses within the registered degree or certificate program.

Although it is not currently issued as a State High School Equivalency Diploma, the New York State Education Department provides funds for the competency based assessment program known as the National External Diploma Program (NEDP). The program’s emphasis is on experience and self-directed learning whereby candidates undergo evaluations demonstrating mastery of 70 competencies as well as demonstrate an occupation or specialized skill. While graduates of the NEDP program achieve a NYS Local High School Diploma issued by a local district, the Board of Regents is considering this program as a third possible pathway to a NYS High School Equivalency Diploma.

**Adult Education Standards**

**Describe the State’s progress toward implementation of adult education college and career readiness (CCR) standards, including whether the 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 implemented by all local programs. Describe how the state is supporting the use of standards by local programs and State leadership funds are being used to support implementation.**

The NYS Board of Regents has charged adult education instruction to be fully aligned with CCR rigorous academic standards by 2017. This year, CUNY trained over 62 Master Teachers from adult education programs in each of the seven regions in math and ELA. Phase one was a foundational institute, followed by a dedicated math institute and an institute teaching ELA in the context of social studies. A phase 3 math institute and an ELA institute in the context of science will follow. Each RAEN center will use the Master Teachers to turn key training in their region. The objective is to reach 5,500 teachers and volunteers. This will be supplemented by a peer teacher review of exemplary instructional resources.

While NYSED has invested in the academic common core standards development with WIA Title II funded programs, NYSED has also invested in coordinating adult education programs with postsecondary institutions and the NYS Department of Labor through the inclusion of the College and Career Readiness Standards. Adult Education programs are strongly encouraged to include critical skills and knowledge expected and required for success in colleges, technical training programs and employment.