

US Virgin Islands Adult Education Narrative Report 2014-2015

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.

During the 2014-2015 Program Year, US Virgin Islands Adult Education State Office reviewed policies, submitted outstanding data and reports, collaborated and set levels of expectations for the Local Education Agencies Administrators and Staff. They disseminated information and provided Technical Assistance to Principals and staff for Adult Basic Education (ABE), English Language Learners (ELL)/ English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and Adult Secondary Education (TABE 9, 10) High School level) program for out of school youth ages 16 and older. All Teachers and Principals and Guidance Counselors were expected to contribute to the Career Pathway activities that would lead to employment opportunities for clients.

The overall goal of the Adult Education is to provide a best literacy, numeracy and civics education that will enable the adult learner with greater self-sufficiency and to move closer to Post-Secondary readiness, military service and a viable workforce transition as they prepare to be fully contributing members of the community. The Adult Secondary Education programs continued to educate clients despite having limited resources. Reporting that was done on the local level and did not capture full data activity and efforts for federal reporting purposes but did indicate some progress. Due to the absence of additional AEFLA Grant funding, we were unable to expand services further in significantly measurable ways.

According to the 2010 US Virgin Islands Census which is most recent, VI residents continue to lag behind the nation on many economic indicators. Median household income was tagged at \$37,254.00 and 7% of households received cash public assistance. Incomes are the lowest and unemployment highest among 32% of those who have not completed high school.

Financial constraints continue to hamper the development of new initiatives which serve the local adult education agencies. For a second consecutive year, no additional funds were allocated for the operation of the adult education programs due to the lack of sufficient and or accurate reporting. Additional personnel have been identified to assist with District data and efforts in order to ensure that all areas are reported and are being served.

1. Teachers were also able to participate in College and Career Readiness for seminars in conjunction with the District efforts.
2. Senior Leadership planning team on the District and State Level worked to identify Critical areas for improvement and collaborated with each District and District Superintendent to ensure that better program controls were put in place.
3. Additional audits and reporting of both fiscal records and support documentation encouraged a more prudent and structured approach to financial matters.
4. GED testing was restarted in one District and all program areas were updated to ensure equal, reliable access to testing lab and services.
5. Additional programs were added and advertised at various venues to encourage greater community participation.
6. Leadership met with other Workforce Board Stakeholders and WIOA Partners to ensure greater inclusion in the planning and implementation process.
7. Memorandum of Agreement with Department of Human Services and the VI Department of Education of Adult Education was established to ensure greater access educational services.

In a significant development, the VI Department of Human Services and the VI Department of Education entered into a Memorandum of Agreement to allow students that demonstrated potential for advancement and opportunity to participate in Day Adult Prep courses that would increase their chances of obtaining an Adult Basic Education level or Adult Secondary Status. Principals facilitated the programs and the VI Department of Human Services reimbursed the cost of the education to the VI Department of Education. The program continues and the payments received from the Grant services of Department of Human Services contribute to Adult Education program income.

The Local Educational Agencies have utilized various software enhancements to ensure that students have additional opportunities to achieve. Smart Boards and computer labs have been updated. Online activities have been used to enhance the level of learning in all areas to improve reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics, computer skills, problem solving and civic studies.

Plato Learning was used to assist learner in achieving educational gains. Plato is an online education learning program created by Edmentum. The program allowed students to work at assessed levels for reading and mathematics comprehension as well as prepare for GED Test and college readiness levels.

Program Director's Meetings:

Periodic meetings were video conferenced to encourage the sharing of ideas and collaborate to further ensure the success of the learners. All areas were discussed, and mandates were given and the level of accountability and expectations was raised.

Leadership members were given the opportunity to travel to hear and discuss a variety of issues that pertained to skills gains, programs, and performance measures. Collaborative meetings allowed attendees to more fully understand expectations and ways to problem solve.

2. Performance Data Analyses- Describe any significant findings from the evaluation of your performance data for the reporting period and efforts to improve outcome for the core indicators of performance.

Due to various reasons, performance and financial reporting were not submitted as required. Since then, our Leadership team has worked to ensure that all reports be submitted on time or at a negotiated time certain. This has allowed us to better analyze data, progress and performance of programs and clients. Through these efforts, we have been better able to track educational gains and see where our system was not capturing data correctly.

Inadvertently, some of the local data was being reported to local records and did not fully allow us to demonstrate in the Federal Tables the full capacity of performance which was being reflected as low or no gains. With more complete reporting, our skills gains should be higher.

Our Leadership has also reached out to Correctional Facilities to assess the status of the programs and ways to assist. The institutional efforts did not yield significant educational gains. An informal approach was conducted and few students remained generally interested but did not earn them meritorious credit toward a certificate. Record keeping was also suspended. Today, the Correctional Facilities reached out and have worked to engage in discussions and to prepare for additional formal instruction service the prison population.

Additional plans are in the works to integrate additional opportunities for the prison population which will give Adult Education additional opportunities to reach those who are willing to participate or newly release and are willing to continue the education process.

The Adult Education State Office hosted new TABE Certification training for Staff members Territory wide who participated in training to fully ensure that clients accurately tested and placed into the most suitable levels. Follow up training was also provided to Test Administrators. This was done to ensure that students are accurately tested and placed in classes that are befitting the aptitude of the learner's ability.

Program Visitation: Program visitation funding in each District was made available to ensure that staff was able to view program best practices and to interact with Leadership to verify that every opportunity was being made to achieve educational gains.

The greatest challenge continues to be that students do not complete the program year. Student transiency still continues to be a major issue for the Adult Education learners. Based on surveys recently conducted, wrap around services, access to child care and class hours still continue to be a challenge for working students who are parents. Principals, Guidance Counselor and Staff were encouraged to call learners and encourage attendance and assist where possible.

Evidence of attendance, pre and post testing, and educational gains recorded were made a priority in both Districts. Information entered in MIS System was monitored for sufficiency and areas under reported were discussed with Agency and Division of Planning, Research and Evaluation.

An additional problem continues to be language barriers. Several participants, especially in our Day Adult Program continue to meet challenges with speaking variations of Creole` languages. The staff continues to operate on a limited basis with those who are proficient and are able to assist.

Adult Education Website updates and announcements:

GED Announcements are made periodically to Administration, staff and related personnel to encourage achievement among staff and testers. These and other activities boost morale and encourage achievement in every way. The plan is to work toward a full periodic newsletter to further chronical the achievements of Learners, Teachers and related personnel.

Successful students have been asked to participate in sharing their stories to encourage other learners to join the program or to complete the process.

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 training activities. Describe efforts to develop or advance career pathway systems that included career and technical education, post-secondary education, employers, and economic and workforce development. Included 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 One Stop System and an estimate of the AEFLA funds being used to support activities and services through the One Stop delivery system.

Plans to integrate into a One Stop System have been written into Adult Education System from its last publishing. A pathway toward working with the local Workforce Development and Business System is in place. However, with the advent of the WIOA in place, forces are now truly coming together to implement policy and move toward a more seamless operation. Sector strategies have been in place and discussions have been had on the possibility of one central building location. Since that is no longer an actual requirement and with capabilities of technology, WIOA integration can more easily become a reality.

The Virgin Islands Department of Labor has also encouraged Adult Education to use available jobs data and Labor Market information to determine where additional time and funding may be expended.

The Virgin Islands One Stop Workforce development Center has discussed plans in place to engage employers identified based on Demand Markets identified by the Bureau of Economic Research.

DEMAND OCCUPATION LIST

Provided by the Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research 2014

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Administrative Staff Program Managers/Administrators

Security Guards

ALLIED HEALTH

Nursing

Home Health Care Attendants Child Day Care Attendants Healthcare Technicians

CONSTRUCTION TRADES

Electricians Carpenters Masons Welders Plumbers

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Program Analysts Information Systems Operators

Fiber Optic Installers/Technicians Network/Computer System Administrators

LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY

Office Managers Front Desk Clerks

Food & Beverage Service Marine Service Workers

RETAIL

Retail Clerks & Managers

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

Heavy Equipment Operators Warehouse Clerks & Logisticians

Due to limited funding in 2014, the Career Pathways program integration was not expanded enough and this is where we need to focus our efforts in order to help clients understand the connection between an education and advancement in the workforce. With the integration of the America's Job Center for the Department of Labor and its expertise, the labor

force infusion from the Department of Human Services and the guidance of the Workforce Development Board, we see a way forward with further development.

The top twenty five businesses that Adult Education can engage in tandem with the Workforce Development Board and the VI Department of Labor can be found that the link listed below:

https://www.vidolviews.org/admin/gsipub/htmlarea/uploads/The%20Top%2025%20Largest%20Employers%202014_4.pdf

Program training have already been identified to offer additional guidance as they demonstrated their effectiveness previously with similar programs.

Plans to give Teachers, Administrators, related Staff training on topics that are not limited to the following:

1. Managing workloads of adults and related strategies such as chunking and scheduling
2. Learning to build flexibility into schedules as an opportunity permits.
3. Accessing available wrap around services to include career assessments, counseling, participating in case management, identification of child care opportunity if available, financial aid and job placement
4. Identified community “Bridge “programs for out of school youth along with Adult Education activities
5. Building to Post-Secondary Education or additional Skills training
6. Cost Sharing opportunities available throughout the community partners such as Department of Labor or Department of Human Services
7. Any public private funding sources
8. Financial Aid
9. Employment tuition reimbursement opportunities

With additional funding in place, additional Teachers who specialize in Career pathway Courses could bridge the divide by offering services to the Adult Education program in order to bridge the divide.

The Adult Education Principals, State Directors, and Program Manager have met with identified Core Partners for: Title I Adult, youth and dislocated Workers, Title III Wagner Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Providers for TANF, SNAP and other related

programs within Health and Human Services and have worked to contribute to the plan at its infancy. Through meetings, feedback, assessment mapping, strategy sessions, we were able to learn much about the general functions of each Division and how we would work together as an optimum unit without physically being in one building. Through the use of technology and WIOA certified software, each Agency would be able to integrate present platforms through to a uniform software data center to record general data for clients to serve them in a most efficient way.

In addition to our software links and extension services, personnel will spend a portion of the day working physically with the America's Job Center to ensure that information is disseminated about services offered through brick and mortar and online, information distribution and any remaining data collection to be transferred. Designated persons from the State and District Staff will collaborate to track client's progress, to ensure that they are tested either at the America's Job Center or an Adult Education Center and placed to begin the process. They will assist with ensuring that clients are directed to any wrap around services that will aid in the removal of barriers to entry.

Our identified Partners will work with us to review and ensure best practices in customer assistance, accessing services, making inventories of education and training opportunities available, labor market information, initial eligibility determination processes, or vocational education programs available.

Previous cost estimates were requested as follows:

The Virgin Islands requested that the US Department of Labor One-Stop Implementation Grant funding at the level of \$1.3 million to be allocated as quoted:

- Year One: \$500,000.00 will facilitate our local system building efforts to include staff training, marketing, and the design of our Automated One Stop System.
- Year Two: \$400,000.00 will focus on brining the Partners in and begin implementation of our Automated System.
- Year Three: \$400,000.00 to complete implementation of the automation and open two One Stop Centers

The focus for WIOA and Adult Education in 2014 however, has shifted to humanizing the process more, modifying and or expanding existing infrastructure as clients participating at various level of the America's Job Center will allow us to work for efficiently to serve clients.

Some of the goals stated is that all staff will continue to have opportunities to develop core competencies in order to develop and adapt necessary curricula to enable territory wide training via traditional methods, expert consultants and other means. Continuous training session would occur in Years 1-3 for Staff.

The Adult Education State Plan calls for the continued development of partnerships with the private sector and to work with businesses and industry

associations, foundations and other private sector entities to increase the access of employers to One Stop services through marketing, networking and outreach as well as improved service delivery. The VI Workforce Development Board has worked with us to put together a plan forward to ensure that services are delivered and clients realize educational and career skills gains.

Our State Director, representatives of the Core Partner Agencies, as well as the State Workforce Board have continuous collaborative sessions to improve on goals set and is a continuous process.

Other Programs:

The Legislature of the Virgin Islands has provided in the past years supplemental funding especially in the Adult Secondary programs in each District which has proven invaluable. Many successful students have gone on to the workforce, military, as well as Post-Secondary endeavors. Additional funding has been set aside to provide tuition reimbursement to our top performing students. The Legislature has been very supportive in finding ways to keep Adult Education programs available Territory wide. However, any additional funding not passed on causes the program to sump in its ability to extend to sub grantees who are able to modify and further develop Programs of Study within the community. This is a critical area that is in need to revamping. Major not for profit organizations although they erred in the past in the process of providing services, they remain ready to modify and use additional infrastructure human capital in creative ways to deliver critical Adult Education services at the source of the needs of the community.

Potential sub grantees in the community have demonstrated that they can operated as a bridge to support Adult Education in its efforts to reach new learners with low or no marketable skills.

The Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research has produced and published on the website of the VI Department of Labor its Labor Market Statistics and information that will be integrated into additional Adult Education narratives and WIOA Adult Education Title II reports. The availability of this information readily is extremely cost effective to our Department. This will allow us to focus on pilot projects and bridge programs that can assist clients in meeting their goals.

Employer contacts are not initiated at the state level but we can assist through the new partnerships of the Workforce Development Board and local AE Principals. The Adult Education District programs have put plans and implemented classes at various levels and at varying times to continue to accommodate working clients. An additional goal continues to be to find ways to accommodate the Creole community.

Performance Standards:

Due to our inability to readily capture an accurate count in our designated Adult Education System our numbers were reflected as among the lowest. However, after further investigations with the Division of Planning, Research and Evaluation and the District Division for MIS Management, we were able to uncover that additional students in the Adult Education programs were being entered into our local MIS System and were not included in the Federal Tables for NRS reporting. At least 300 additional students Territory-wide were excluded from the initial count. Credit was not accurately given for graduates and those that experienced educational gains and advancement. We have since made provision for especially in the areas of Adult Secondary Education to designate a person to perform data entry into the Adult Education MIS System. The current NRS Tables do not represent the true picture of the efforts being made locally throughout the VI DE Education Adult Education Division. As adjustments are made, we expect to see percentage raise significantly.

ESL/ELL programs were not adequately set during 2014 due to incomplete process for TABE pre and post testing. This has since been rectified by having representatives from the National Office issue or update certification and programs in order to be officially recognized territory wide.

Correctional Facilities: Performance Standards in the Justice System was also at a minimal informal level. They have also revamped communication and efforts to improve delivery of instruction. They have joined forces with the local Department of Labor to provide pathways to skills and Adult Educations and have revamped an in house educational program that will also depend on the support of Adult Education. Currently, individuals designated by the courts and monitored are allowed to participate in Day Adult Education programs, GED testing and

English Literacy/Civics Program:

The Virgin Islands Department of Education served over 300 hundred learners in its combined program Territory wide with English and Civics Classes. Students that cleared the minimum requirement of (+12) hours and more for the past year were included in the assessment. The instruction was offered at various levels and throughout communities in each District. All teachers taught across curriculum to incorporate elements of English and along with citizenship and government. In 2010 Adult Education adapted Common Core Standards and College and Career Readiness for Adult Education. These documents continue to be the guide of the educational program and upcoming trainings opportunities which will reinforce structure basis of curriculum.

Visual Aids and technology readily available in many of the classrooms can facilitate much of the learning. Pictures and sound and speech recognition can also assist those with English as Second Language. Teachers have been observed using technological aids in classroom to enhance English/Civics, Math and Science and were able to demonstrate concepts at varying levels of competency.

Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies

The Adult Secondary Education program is the hallmark program that bridges the divide for persons to complete their education as adults. It is a source of pride and hope for many persons in the community. We have witnessed persons achieve through these programs in each District and move on to the military, Skill Centers, the workforce, and Post-Secondary studies. The curriculum is modeled to mirror one in place for the Public Schools of the Territory that has been Nationally Accredited.

Students complete their courses and 20+ Credits to receive their High School diplomas or prepare and take the GED Test (145 on each of the computer test modules) which is requirement for the issuance of the diploma.

Adult Education Standards

The Adult Education Standards are governed by The Adopted Common Core State Standards which were adopted in 2010 by the Territory. Adult Education is also governed by the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. The Virgin Islands Department of Education has mandated that Adult Education students be guided by the same Standards as high School graduates for k12. Professional development will be provided to ensure that the high level adapted continues to be integrated into the programs to ensure quality instruction.

Future Plans for Adult Education:

As part of the continuation of Adult Education Assessment reach and scope,

