

Massachusetts Policies for Effective Adult Basic Education

in
Community Adult Learning Centers
and
Correctional Institutions



Adult and Community Learning Services
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148-4906
www.doe.mass.edu/acls

FY 2015
Updated 3/29/16

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Mission.....	5
Strategic Goals.....	5
The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).....	7

PROGRAM DESIGN

Rate-Based Classes.....	10
Fluid Class Slots.....	10
Sequence of Three.....	10
Exceptions to the Sequence of Three.....	10
Intensity and Duration.....	11
Student/Teacher Ratio and Class Size.....	11
Program Planning and Teacher Class Preparation (Prep) Time.....	11
Non-ESE Fee-Based Classes.....	12
Agencies Operating Both Grant-Funded and Fee-Based Programs.....	12
Waitlist.....	12
Non-rate Based Classes.....	13
Supplemental Non-rate Based Classes.....	13
Stand-Alone Non-rate Based Classes.....	13
Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).....	13
Collaboration.....	14
Student Populations.....	14
Programs Whose Primary Population is Homeless.....	14
Family Literacy and Family Engagement.....	14
Volunteer Tutoring.....	16
Community Planning.....	16
Technology.....	17
Program and Staff Development.....	17
Program and Staff Development Planning.....	17
Staff Development Hours.....	17
Administration.....	18
Full-Time Equivalency (FTE).....	18
Administrative Costs.....	18
Indirect Costs.....	18
Indirect Costs of Sub-Contractors.....	19
Types of Funding.....	19
Supplemental Funding.....	19
Space.....	19
Foundation Funding.....	19
Unrestricted Funding.....	19
Funding Restriction.....	19

STUDENT SERVICES

Student Eligibility.....	20
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).....	20
Student Outreach and Recruitment.....	20
Student Intake.....	20
Student Placement.....	21
Student Orientation.....	21
Advising.....	21
Student Goals.....	21

NRS Cohort Follow Up.....	22
Education and Career Planning.....	22
High School Equivalency (HSE) Assessment and Credential	22
Additional Services.....	22
Student Leadership.....	23
Childcare	23
Transportation.....	23
Outstationing.....	23
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP	
Educational Leadership.....	24
Staffing.....	25
Recruitment and Hiring.....	25
Staff Orientation.....	26
Mandated Reporting of Abuse	26
Rural Staff Travel.....	26
CURRICULUM and ASSESSMENT	
Curriculum	28
Curriculum Requirements	28
Curriculum Development	28
Instructional Requirements	29
Assessment.....	29
Assessments for ABE classes:.....	29
Assessments for ESOL classes:.....	29
Administration of Required Assessments	30
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	
Continuous Improvement Planning	31
Professional Development (PD).....	31
Reporting PD	31
SMARTT New User and Refresher/Updates and Cognos Trainings.....	31
Directors' Meeting	31
Program Design Training.....	32
Indicators of Program Quality	32
Monitoring Visits.....	32
ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS	
Program Governance	33
Match	33
Required Matching Contribution and Maintenance of Effort (MOE).....	33
Claiming Classes as Match	34
Claiming Volunteers as Match.....	34
Claiming Equipment as Match.....	34
Fiscal Responsibilities	34
Requests for Funds.....	35
Unexpended Funds.....	35
Amendments	35
Financial Audit.....	35
Equipment Inventory	36
Equipment.....	36
Obsolete Equipment	36
Data.....	36
Fiscal and Data Reporting.....	36
Attendance.....	36
Data Lock-Out.....	36
Data Lock-out Schedule	37

Federal NRS Cohort Outcome Measures	37
Automatic Exit Schedule.....	37
Data Entry	38
Record Keeping	38
ACCOUNTABILITY and ASSISTANCE	
Accountability and Assistance	39
Underperformance	39
Framework for Accountability and Assistance.....	40
Programs in Correctional Institutions	41
Appendix A	42
ADDENDUM	
The Adult Basic Education System	45
The National Reporting System.....	46
Accountability.....	47
Advising.....	47
Amendments	47
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).....	48
Assessment.....	48
Community Planning	48
Content Standards	49
Curriculum.....	49
Data.....	49
Timely Entry	50
Quality Measures.....	50
Audits	50
Desk Reviews.....	50
Enrollment: Open and Managed	50
Family Literacy and Family Engagement.....	51
Family Literacy	51
Family Engagement.....	51
Family Literacy Contextualized Curriculum.....	52
Family Literacy and Engagement Resources	52
Homelessness.....	53
Indirect Costs	53
Open and Competitive Process	54
Orienting Students	54
Professional Development (PD).....	55
SABES	55
Professional Standards.....	56
Program and Staff Development.....	56
Retention	57
Site Visits.....	57
Staff Compensation.....	57
STudent Achievement in Reading (STAR)	58
Student Leadership Development	58
Targeted Intervention.....	59
The Rates System (The Rates).....	59
Trainings	60
SMARTT and Cognos.....	60
Workplace Education.....	60

Adult Basic Education (ABE) in Massachusetts consists of individual but related entities working together to create a strong, unified, and effective system for adult learners seeking greater opportunities for themselves, their families, and their communities.

This system is guided by a mission adopted by the Board of Education in 1993 and three strategic goals that were developed through input from practitioners, workforce development and other stakeholders, and students.

Mission

The Massachusetts ABE system exists to provide each and every adult with opportunities to develop literacy skills needed to qualify for further education, job training, and better employment, and to reach his/her full potential as a family member, productive worker, and citizen.

Strategic Goals

Ensure That Adults Needing Basic Education Have Access to Services

- Increase program intensity and student seats for adults wanting to improve their education,
- Provide additional support for programs reaching diverse populations, and
- Expand service delivery options.

Increase System Effectiveness and Quality

- Continue to build a standards-based service system,
- Increase regulatory flexibility to enable programs to meet local and regional needs, and
- Seek opportunities to support innovative programming that better serves adult learners.

Prepare Students for Success in Their Next Steps: In College and Further Training, at Work, and in the Community

- Strengthen and contextualize student-centered curriculum,
- Expand student access to support services, and
- Ensure that students gain the academic skills needed to succeed in their next steps.

*Facing the Future: Massachusetts Strategic Framework for Adult Basic Education*¹

The Massachusetts ABE system is effective because of the determined effort and commitment of approximately 100 providers operating community adult learning centers (CALCs) housed in local educational agencies, community based organizations, community colleges, libraries, and correctional facilities; statewide and regional volunteer organizations; staff and students; the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE, the state agency authorized to administer federal and state adult education funds); the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES, the Professional Development system); and

¹ For a complete copy of this document, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/sp/FacingTheFuture.pdf>.

representative groups including the Massachusetts ABE Directors' Council, local workforce investment boards, community colleges, and others. For more information on the Massachusetts ABE system, see the Introduction in the Addendum.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA), which revises and reauthorizes the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998* (WIA). The law supports innovative strategies to keep pace with changing economic conditions and seeks to improve coordination between four core federal programs that support employment services, workforce development, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation activities.

The core programs consist of:

- 1) **Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth**
administered by the Department of Labor (DOL) under Title I;
- 2) **Adult Education and Literacy**
administered by the Department of Education (ED) under Title II;
- 3) **Wagner-Peyser Act employment services**
administered by DOL under Title III; and
- 4) **Vocational Rehabilitation Act**
administered by ED under Title IV.

The law includes eight components related to the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of Title II, which provides foundation skills and English literacy instruction to nearly 1.8 million individuals each year.

1. **A Unified State Plan**

WIOA requires states to prepare a single plan for the core programs that includes the strategic vision and goals of the state and the operational elements that support the four-year strategy. The plan specifies how the state intends to:

- align content standards for adult education with state-adopted academic standards;
- fund local activities using the considerations for grants and contracts, programs for corrections education, English literacy and civics education, and integrated education and training;
- use funds to carry out state leadership activities; and
- assess the quality of adult education providers.

2. **Common Performance Measures across Core Programs**

WIOA includes primary indicators of performance that will be negotiated with each state by the Secretaries of Education and Labor as part of the state plan. Performance measures include:

- percentage of program participants in unsubsidized employment;
- median earnings;
- percentage of participants who obtain a postsecondary credential or diploma;
- participants achieving measurable skill gains; and
- effectiveness in serving employers.

3. **Alignment between Adult Education, Postsecondary Education, and Employers**

WIOA recognizes that the core purpose of adult education is to prepare individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce. The Act expands this purpose of adult education to emphasize activities that:

- increase an individual’s ability to transition to postsecondary education and obtain employment;
- promote the integration of adult education with occupational education and training, as well as development of career pathways systems;
- use funds for “integrated education and training” and “workforce preparation activities”;
- encourage integrated English literacy and civics education programs to provide workforce training; and
- support collaboration with employers.

4. **Educational and Career Advancement for Incarcerated Individuals**

WIOA encourages a range of education and job training activities to promote successful reentry and reduce recidivism by:

- increasing the percentage of funding for States to use for correctional education to not more than 20 percent; and
- allowing funds to be used for integrated education and training, career pathways, concurrent enrollment, peer tutoring, and transition to re-entry initiatives and other services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

5. **High-quality Adult Education Delivery System**

The Act establishes considerations states are to use in awarding grants and contracts to local program providers, including but not limited to:

- an increased emphasis on alignment of activities with regional needs identified in local plans;
- serving individuals with disabilities;
- instructional activities based on rigorous research;
- effective use of technology;
- activities that promote integrated education and training; and
- coordination with education, training, employers, and social service providers to promote career pathways.

6. **Professional Development Opportunities and Innovative Models**

To enhance adult education programs, WIOA adds required leadership activities to be supported with state leadership funds. WIOA encourages activities to support alignment among core programs to implement the State plan strategy, including the development of career pathways; establishment of high quality professional development programs to improve instruction; technical assistance based on rigorous research; and evaluation and dissemination of information about promising practices within the state.

States may also use funds for several allowable activities related to instructional technology, models for integrated education and training and career pathways, and support to eligible providers in achieving performance goals.

7. **Quality Improvement of Adult Education Programs**

WIOA is committed to ensuring that resources support activities that better prepare adult students for postsecondary and career success. WIOA reserves two percent of AEFLA funds (not to exceed \$15 million) to carry out national leadership activities.

The Act requires the Secretary to support four mandatory technical assistance activities, including support for implementing the new common performance measures; conducting rigorous research and evaluations; and carrying out an independent evaluation of adult education and literacy activities every four years.

8. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE)

WIOA reinforces support for IEL/CE programs through codification and enhanced services for individuals to effectively participate in education, work, and civic opportunities. After reserving funds for national leadership activities, 12% of AEFLA funds will be used to carry out the IEL/CE program.

IEL/CE programs should be designed to:

- prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place them in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
- integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the program.

For more information about WIOA, see <http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA>, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/wioa-reauthorization.html>, and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/wioa.html>.

The Massachusetts Legislature is another important entity of the ABE system, providing funding for the delivery and improvement of adult education services to the state's network of organizations. The Legislature provides funding which, together with funding authorized by Congress, constitutes the system's annual ABE budget.

When developing a program design, ACLS recommends using this manual along with the *Program Plan Reference Materials* and *SMARTT Technical Manual for Program Planning*, which can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smarrt/>.

Rate-Based Classes

What happens in the classroom is the foundation of program design, and the first step toward building this foundation is setting up rate-based classes.

Rate-based classes are classes that have a fixed schedule, meet minimum requirements for intensity and duration, have a specific number of seats or slots, and the eligible cost of which is determined by an established rate per student instructional hour.

Rate-based classes must consist of at least one sequence of three levels of instruction (e.g., Adult Basic Education, Pre-Adult Secondary Education, Adult Secondary Education; or Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced English for Speakers of Other Languages).

For more information about the Rates System and rate-based classes, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smarrt/>.

Fluid Class Slots

A program's approved design includes a designated number of student seats or slots (e.g., a program with three levels of ABE may plan on serving 15 students in the lowest level and 20 students in each of the two upper levels, for a total of 55 ABE slots in the program).

Programs may exceed the approved number of slots within a service type by 20% without approval from ACLS (e.g., a program with 55 approved ABE slots may enroll up to 66 students).

Programs are not bound by the slots per class as originally approved. Programs may flexibly assign and reassign slots across the classes *within* a service type (i.e., ABE or ESOL) as students progress and new students enroll. However, to ensure that the services originally approved are maintained, slots must not be exchanged *between* service types (e.g., a program with 55 approved ABE slots and 60 approved ESOL slots cannot decrease slots in ABE to reallocate them to ESOL).

Sequence of Three

To facilitate student progress through levels, all levels in the sequence must be offered at the same part of the day (morning, afternoon, or evening), although not necessarily on the same day or at the same hour. This sequence enables students with constraints on their schedules (e.g., work, school-aged children) to progress through the sequence.

The sequence of classes must comprise a continuum that spans Grade Level Equivalent (GLE) 0-12 and/or Student Performance Level (SPL) 0-6.

Exceptions to the Sequence of Three

The required continuum of instructional levels may be provided by a single applicant or through collaboration between two or more agencies. Exceptions include:

1. Correctional facilities may offer a minimum of a sequence of two classes;

2. Adult Diploma programs may be offered as either one class or a sequence of two classes;
3. Family Literacy classes are not required to offer a sequence; and
4. CALCs that meet the following conditions may offer a minimum of a sequence of two classes:
 - primary population is homeless adults;
 - rural program;
 - pre-literacy ESOL students;² and
 - classes offered in July and August.

Intensity and Duration

Programs must provide services of enough frequency, duration, and intensity to enable students to reach their goals and to make learning gains. ACLS defines intensity as offering classes for at least nine hours per week. However, the minimum number of weekly instructional hours required for funding is five.

Because research shows that, depending on the student's educational level, it will take on average 152 to 173 hours of instruction to advance one educational level, ACLS requires programs to offer a minimum of 150 hours of instruction annually and strongly encourages programs to offer multiple 150 to 175 hour cycles throughout the year through a minimum of 32 weeks and up to a maximum of 48 weeks per year. ACLS strongly encourages programs to offer 12 to 20 hours of instruction per week.

Student/Teacher Ratio and Class Size

Classes must be large enough for students to benefit from group activities, group discussions, and peer support and small enough for students to receive individual attention. Therefore, programs must be cost effective and offer classes of no fewer than 13 students per teacher, with two exceptions: Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) and Beginning Literacy ABE classes.

Program Planning and Teacher Class Preparation (Prep) Time

The program's annual schedule must include two to four planning weeks either before or after classes begin, or during breaks between semesters, and the program must budget for this time. It is also necessary to include in teacher contracts either paid time for class prep and benefits or compensation at a higher contact hourly rate.³ Paid prep time is not required when the hourly rate paid meets or exceeds the contact hourly rate.

Funding for rate-based classes includes support for:

- one hour of preparation time for every two hours of teaching (ongoing throughout the year); and
- four weeks of paid time for direct service staff to devote to issues of program/curriculum

² Pre-literacy ESOL learners must have access to ESOL classes either on-site or through collaboration documented by a memorandum of agreement with an ESE-funded program.

³ The Contact Hourly Rate is a function of fringe benefits and paid class preparation time being incorporated into salary rates. The Contact Hourly Rate is calculated by totaling the teaching hours and paid hours for class preparation, then multiplying this figure by the hourly rate, factoring in the fringe benefit rate, and dividing the result by the total teaching hours. For more information, see *the Program Plan Reference Materials manual* at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smarrt/>.

planning and development during weeks that classes are not in session.

The paid prep-to-teaching time ratio must be within the range of 1:1 to 1:4 or one hour of preparation time for every one to four hours of teaching.

Non-ESE Fee-Based Classes

If the program operates a fee-based program that provides similar services (e.g., services or instruction in adult education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, or family literacy), it must ensure that:

- enrollment will be non-discriminatory, specifically, students will not be directed to either the grant-funded or fee-based program on the basis of skill level or anticipated time to reach goals; and
- the resources charged to the ESE-funded program, both personnel and non-personnel, will support only the students enrolled in the grant program, and that any services provided to fee-paying students will not be charged to the ESE grant.

Fee income from these programs cannot be used as match for the ESE-funded program.

Agencies Operating Both Grant-Funded and Fee-Based Programs

Personnel funded by a grant must dedicate grant-funded time to work under that grant and to provide services to students funded by that grant. Administrators must inform staff what portion of their time is funded by the ESE grant and for how many hours per week they must provide services to grant-funded clients.

For non-personnel resources charged to the ESE grant, the agency must provide a rationale for how costs are charged to the grant and for how costs are allocated across programs that use the resources.

When space is shared between the ABE grant-funded program and programs supported through fees, foundation grants, or other funding sources, only the percent of space and percent of time that the space is used by the ABE grant-funded program may be charged to the ABE grant.

The agency must maintain separate auditable financial records which adequately identify the source and the application of individual grant funds and which include source documentation (i.e., time and attendance records, payrolls, contracts, purchase orders, checks, paid bills).

Waitlist

To protect students from avoidable interruptions in their learning, programs must provide students the ability to transfer to another program or to a Distance Learning Instructional Hub without returning to a waitlist when students move, change jobs, are released from correctional settings, or lose access to a class for any reason.

ACLS requires programs to maintain an active waitlist for applicants who are unable to enroll in instructional classes due to capacity constraints. Students placed on the waitlist must be contacted at least annually to determine whether they are still interested in services. ACLS requires programs to submit a "Waitlist Update" in the System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology (SMARTT) by December 1 each year, attesting that waitlist information is up-to-date and accurate.

Non-rate Based Classes

Non-rate based classes are not subject to the minimum intensity and duration requirements of rate-based classes, nor do they require a sequence of three. They are subject to different minimum student-to-teacher ratios. Following are the program design requirements for non-rate based classes:

- Learners must be eligible to receive adult education services;
- Learners must be pre-and post-tested;
- Classes must have an enrollment of a minimum of 10 learners; and
- Classes must be cost-effective.

There are two types of non-rate based classes: *Supplemental* and *Stand-Alone*.

For more information about non-rate based classes, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smarrt/>.

Supplemental Non-rate Based Classes

The purpose of supplemental non-rate based classes is to provide complementary or supplemental instruction to students enrolled in a rate-based class.

Following are the program design requirements specific to supplemental non-rate based classes:

- Students must be currently enrolled in rate-based classes, with the following exception: a minimum of 75% of learners in a citizenship class must be enrolled in rate-based classes;
- Students from different level classes within the sequence of the required rate-based classes may be enrolled in the same non-rate based class where appropriate (i.e., the supplemental non-rate based class could be multi-level);
- Instruction is directly connected to activities in the rate-based classes; and
- Instruction may be offered for fewer than five hours a week.

Stand-Alone Non-rate Based Classes

The purpose of stand-alone non-rate based classes is to provide instruction to targeted populations who may or may not be enrolled in a rate-based class.

Following are the program design requirements specific to stand-alone non-rate based classes:

- Must be offered for a minimum of five hours per week and be of sufficient duration (i.e., 10-12 week cycles) to ensure that students achieve their goals; and
- Are held to the same policy requirements (e.g., goal setting, assessment) as ESE-funded rate-based classes.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

An MOA is a document describing agreement between the grantee and another organization working together to deliver adult education services. The purpose of the MOA is to formalize and clarify the expectations of the grantee and partnering program.

Programs that include a collaboration of two or more must have an MOA signed by all parties and renewed annually. Agencies with subcontracts must also have an MOA between the lead agency and the subcontract that is renewed annually. MOAs must meet the requirements outlined in Appendix A.

Collaboration

Programs are allowed but not required to collaborate with other providers to permit each provider to respond to students' needs and expand access to services (e.g., family literacy, career pathways). Programs must consider:

- Curriculum coordination among agencies to ensure an instructional continuum that includes agreed-upon benchmarks for a seamless transition from one level to another;
- Public transportation in the communities where collaborating programs exist;
- MOA that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner; and
- Cost-effectiveness and duplication of services; while there is no cap on the number of programs per community, communities with multiple providers may choose to collaborate to increase cost-effectiveness and avoid duplication of services.

Student Populations

Programs Whose Primary Population is Homeless

ACLS supports programs that provide homeless adults with the opportunity to access a seamless continuum of instructional and support services.

If at least 90% of a program's enrollment is homeless adults, then the program:

- must maintain an enrollment of a minimum of 10 learners per class; and
- is exempt from the Massachusetts state performance standards.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/performance/>.

Family Literacy and Family Engagement

Programs may provide family literacy and/or family engagement services⁴ to help adult learners who are parents⁵ achieve their goals as parents as well as their goals as learners, workers, and community members. Programs can integrate family literacy and/or family engagement in their program design and/or community planning using these options:

- rate-based classes;
- non-rate based classes;
- contextualized curriculum;
- family education plans for students who are parents; and
- family and community engagement as a community planning activity.

Rate-based Classes

Programs bringing parents together in adult education classes highly focused on their needs, goals, and interests as parents should select "Family Literacy" as the class focus. These family literacy rate-based classes must serve adult learners who are parents with similar instructional needs.

Classes may be provided at the adult education center or in other locations in the community

⁴ See Addendum for definitions of family literacy and family engagement.

⁵ Parents are defined as primary care givers which may include extended family members or other adults who either reside with the child or play a primary role in the child's life.

such as a school or community based organization. Instruction should include curriculum contextualized to the needs, goals, and interests of the parents enrolled making use of, among other things, authentic materials used in schools and early care and education programs in the community.

Non-rate Based Classes

Family literacy non-rate based classes must serve adult learners who are parents enrolled in a rate-based class. Programs that select “Family Literacy” as the focus of a rate-based class may provide non-rate based classes. Programs that provide ABE or ESOL classes but do not select “Family Literacy” as a focus of a rate-based class may also provide non-rate based classes. There are three options for supplemental non-rate based classes:

- Parent Education/Support helps parents understand child development and actively partner with their child’s teacher;
- Parent/Child Interactive Time provides opportunities for positive interaction between parents and children to model effective practices that can be extended into the home and community; and
- Family Engagement provides a combination of Parent Education/Support and Parent/Child Interactive Time.

Consideration should be made to group parents with children of similar ages to facilitate the provision of age appropriate information and activities.

Classes may be provided at the adult education center or in other locations in the community such as a school or a community based organization.

Programs are encouraged to collaborate and coordinate with schools, early childhood programs, and/or and social service agencies in the community to help plan, develop curriculum for, and conduct non-rate based classes.

Contextualized Curriculum

Programs should provide contextualized curriculum in rate-based classes with a family literacy focus. Programs may also provide family literacy contextualized curriculum in other rate-based classes to meet the goals of students who are parents.

Family Education Plans for Students who are Parents

The family education plan is a tool used to reflect the process of setting short- and long-term goals related to parents’ roles as learners, workers, community members, and parents. The plan, a fluid document regularly updated to reflect goal achievement and set new goals, is jointly developed between the parent and staff. For policy related to family education plans, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/ecp/PolicyClarification.pdf>.

Family and Community Engagement as a Community Planning Activity

Included in each CALC grant is foundation funding which supports community planning activities including leading or participating in a community planning partnership. A community planning partnership may choose Family and Community Engagement as either one of a variety of activities or as its primary focus. In either case, the purpose is to promote effective involvement of parents and the community in supporting success of children and schools. Partnerships with this focus should include the local district or one or more individual schools and may include other stakeholders such as early education and care providers.

Volunteer Tutoring

Programs receiving supplementary funding to support a volunteer component must identify a Volunteer Coordinator responsible for implementing processes for tutor screening, referral, orientation, training, placement, ongoing supervision, and support.

	One Program		More than One Program or Site	
Coordinator's Time	0.25 FTE	0.50 FTE	0.75 FTE	1.0 FTE
Active Volunteers	No fewer than 12	No fewer than 24	No fewer than 36	No fewer than 48
Active Matches	No fewer than 20	No fewer than 35	No fewer than 50	No fewer than 65

Matches are student/tutor pairs that can be any of the following combinations:

- Tutor and one or more enrolled students working together *outside* of class time;
- Tutor serving as an in-class assistant to many students; or
- Tutor and one or more enrolled students working together *during* class time.

When volunteers tutor more than one student, each pairing is considered a separate match (e.g., Tutor A with Student B is one match; Tutor A with Student C is a second match).

Volunteers must be matched with students who are enrolled in ESE-funded classroom-based programs, with one exception: any volunteer who has been tutoring an enrolled student may continue to tutor that student when he/she is no longer enrolled, as long as the student is still working towards his/her goals. A minimum of 85% of the tutor matches must be with students actively enrolled in an ESE-funded class.

Volunteers are required to make a minimum service commitment of six months. However, exceptions may be allowed for short-term placements (e.g., a college student volunteering for a semester). Short-term placements are defined as 30 or more hours of volunteer service in less than six months.

Volunteers must receive a minimum of 12 hours of initial training. Programs must maintain documentation of tutor participation in initial and in-service training.

Programs with a volunteer component must maintain records of hours provided by volunteers. Programs must track the number of students served by volunteers and the number of individual student instructional hours as a result of tutoring.

Community Planning

The Department requires programs to participate in a community planning partnership. Given that communities have different needs and circumstances, there are four options:

- **Single Focus Community Planning:** These partnerships, supported since the initiation of ABE community planning, involve convening a variety of stakeholders with a single focus on ABE. They may be convened by one or more CALC in a community or region;
- **Multi-Focus Community Planning:** These partnerships, developed between programs and community stakeholders, involve the participation of CALCs in a community-wide partnership not exclusively focused on ABE;

- **Family and Community Engagement:** To promote the effective involvement of parents and the community in supporting the success of children and schools, these partnerships include a local school or district and may include other stakeholders, such as early education and care providers, in the development of specific goals and outcomes related to children’s academic achievement; and
- **College and Career Readiness:** These partnerships can play a significant role in the successful transition of ABE students to college, further training, and career. Community planning allows programs to work in partnership with college, training, and workforce partners for the purpose of helping students achieve their college and career related goals.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/cp/>.

Technology

Programs are expected to incorporate a variety of tools and technologies into the classroom to support learning. Programs must also identify a Technology Coordinator, whose primary responsibility (in the hours funded for this purpose) is to provide support to staff and students in effectively utilizing a variety of technologies (e.g., audio-visual, computers, video, tablets, smart phones) as appropriate for instruction, communication, and administration.

Program and Staff Development

Program and Staff Development Planning

Program development activities must focus on the infrastructure that comprises the systems or components that make up the program. Included in each grant is foundation funding to support a Program and Staff Development Facilitator (P/SDF). With support from the director, the P/SDF guides the process of aligning staff members’ professional development (PD) goals with the program’s goals for continuous improvement.

The P/SDF is responsible for sharing information about PD opportunities with staff and for developing a system to track hours spent on PD activities.

Annually, each staff member must:

- Assess his/her need for PD;
- Work with the P/SDF and/or director to set and prioritize goals;
- Create an individual PD plan with assistance from the P/SDF;
- Engage in the selected staff development activities; and
- Document and evaluate staff development effort and activity.

Staff Development Hours

ACLS grants provide funding to support PD activities for every staff member in an amount equal to 2.5% of each full-time and part-time staff member’s time or 12 hours, whichever is greater.

For example, a full time staff member working 40 hours per week throughout the year generates support for 52 hours of PD annually (40 hours per week x 52 weeks per year = 2080 hours; 2.5% of 2080 hours = 52 hours).

A part-time staff person working nine hours per week for 38 weeks would generate 8.5 professional hours at 2.5%; however, the minimum generated for any position is 12 hours. Therefore, the program would receive funding to support 12 hours of PD time for this part-time position.

Programs may use unrestricted funding to support additional PD. Directors are allowed to pool PD hours funded by the grant and then allocate those hours to staff members based on assessment of individual knowledge, experience, expertise, and need.

Programs must assure that:

- each staff person has an individual PD plan that aligns with the program's goals;
- each staff person participates in at least 12 paid hours of PD annually, in addition to the *Foundations for New Staff* course required in the first year of hire (For more information, see Staff Orientation);
- grant-supported PD hours above the minimum of 12 hours per individual must be distributed among program staff based on the need to improve student outcomes and support program improvement goals;
- total PD hours generated by the Rates System are utilized to compensate staff for time spent participating in PD and to secure substitute teachers; and
- PD activities are reported in SMARTT.

Programs must keep a record of PD hours for each staff member but the method for calculating those hours are at the discretion of the program. The hours entered into SMARTT must be based on program policy for paid PD.

Administration

Full-Time Equivalency (FTE)

Programs must base FTE calculations on the agency's definition. FTE for non-public school programs is calculated by dividing the employee's paid hours/year by the number of annual hours that the agency defines as full time (i.e., actual paid hours/week times paid weeks/year divided by agency definition of full-time hours/week times 52 weeks).

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are expenses incurred in the day-to-day operations of an organization that are not directly tied to a specific function. Administrative expenses are linked to the organization as a whole as opposed to expenses that are directly related to services. Programs cannot spend more than 25% on administrative costs, including indirect costs.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are expenses that can be attributed to the running of a program but cannot reasonably be assigned a direct cost. An organization that wishes to charge indirect costs must apply to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education annually.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/procedure/default.html>.

Indirect Costs of Sub-Contractors

When the direct grant recipient and the subcontractor both have approved indirect cost rates, both agencies may charge the grant. However, the total dollar amount charged for indirect costs must not exceed the maximum amount for which the direct grantee is eligible.

When the direct grant recipient has an approved indirect cost rate, but the subcontractor does not, the subcontractor may charge the same indirect cost rate as long as the dollar amount of the total indirect does not exceed the maximum dollar amount for which the direct grantee is eligible.

When the subcontractor has an approved indirect cost rate, but the direct grant recipient does not, the subcontractor cannot claim indirect. Subcontracts are bound by the maximum amount the direct grant recipient can charge under the grantee's approved indirect rate.

Types of Funding

Supplemental Funding

Applicants for CALC grants are eligible to apply for supplemental funding for certain student services and operational costs not included in the Rates System (e.g., volunteer tutoring components, student leadership projects, space, childcare, student transportation, rural staff travel). Supplemental funding also covers costs related to certain activities that CALCs will bear in some years (e.g., technology upgrades, participation in certain intensive PD, participation in distance learning). The supplemental funding opportunities described are available to CALCs only; however, adult basic education programs in correctional institutions (ABECIs) are eligible to apply for supplemental funding to cover the costs of a half-time education reintegration counselor.

Space

The Department will support up to 50% of the cost of space used for ESE-funded CALCs. Costs must be within the Department's usage of space formula.

Foundation Funding

Programs are awarded a fixed amount of funds allocated to specific job functions that strengthen the foundation and quality of services (e.g., Community Planner, Technology Coordinator, ADA Coordinator, Program and Staff Development Coordinator). The funds must not exceed the fixed amount allocated to each job function.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smarrt/>.

Unrestricted Funding

Included in each grant award is funding that the program may use at its discretion to provide additional support to any functions that comply with adult education policies (e.g., program may elect to use some funds to provide instruction, counseling, community planning, administration hours).

Funding Restriction

High School Equivalency Assessment fees must not be charged to ESE grants. Questions about what expenses are allowable should be directed to the ACLS program specialist.

Student Eligibility

In order to be eligible for services, students must:

- be at least 16 years of age; and
- not be enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law, and either:
 - lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individual to function effectively in society;
 - not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and not have achieved an equivalent level of education; or
 - be unable to speak, read, or write the English language.⁶

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA places affirmative duties on public and private entities to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access and have equal opportunities to participate in public services provided by ABE programs. Starting in FY15, this ADA-related assurance is part of the Statement of Assurances that programs submit to ACLS annually.

As a provider of services to the public, each ESE-funded program is obligated to make available reasonable access to services. To ensure that programs are responsive to learners with disabilities, the federal ADA places requirements on programs; one of which is to designate an ADA Coordinator whose primary role is to ensure that the program is in compliance with ADA.

For more information, see <http://www.ada.gov/>.

Student Outreach and Recruitment

Programs are expected to use a variety of outreach and recruitment strategies to ensure that adults, including those most in need of literacy, are aware of program services.

Student Intake

Programs must have a formal process in place for conducting student intake. The SMARTT intake form captures demographic, contact, education, employment, household, scheduling, and accommodation information. Information on this form must be entered in SMARTT for every student enrolled. The form can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smartt/>.

The program must also determine the most appropriate method for gathering information based on the student's skills and comfort level. The Department requires programs to ask each student, in a neutral manner, to provide his/her social security number and to sign a release of information form for the purpose of goal/outcome follow up.

⁶New eligibility requirements per WIOA will be forthcoming. To view the eligibility requirements, see <https://beta.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>.

ACLS will make available a distilled version of this policy once OCTAE provides more guidance on WIOA.

Student Placement

Programs are required to administer placement tests to ensure that students are enrolled in the most appropriate instructional/class level. For more information, see the Curriculum and Assessment section of this document.

Student Orientation

ACLS requires programs to provide students with an orientation within 30 days of enrollment and must ensure that students, including limited English proficient students, understand the information provided.

The program must provide each student with a handbook that explains program policies (e.g., attendance, absenteeism, grievance procedures, education and career advising, other student support services, course offerings, severe weather protocol, fire drill instructions, drug and alcohol use, expectations for staff and student behavior, other program-specific information).

Advising

Programs are required to have an advisor who provides support services to meet students' needs. The program may designate more than one primary advisor to meet students' diverse needs (e.g., day/evening, ABE/ESOL). However, at least one staff person must have advising as his/her primary function.

Advising must be available at times that accommodate students' schedules, and there must be a posted schedule listing times that advising is available. Multi-site⁷ programs must provide advising services to enrolled students at each site.

If the advising role is combined with other duties (e.g., intake, assessment, data entry), additional hours must be provided to support these duties.

Student Goals

Programs must have an authentic and documented process for assisting students to identify, monitor, and achieve goals. Goal setting must be done with a staff member who has an ongoing relationship with the student (e.g., advisors, teachers). Goals must inform instruction and be incorporated into a program's curriculum development process.

Programs must establish protocols for follow up and assign specific staff to this function. Goal follow up can be accomplished with a survey or through data matching. A survey must be used for students who either did not provide a social security number (SSN) or did not sign a release of information form. The attainment of students' goals must be documented according to state requirements and retained at the program for seven years for auditing purposes.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smarrt>.

⁷ ACLS defines "multi-site" as one lead agency with two or more sites. A site is defined by the presence of administrative, instructional, and advising services at each location.

NRS Cohort Follow Up

Follow up for federally required National Reporting System (NRS) outcomes (e.g., postsecondary education cohort, employment cohort measures) can be accomplished with a survey or through data matching. Programs must establish protocols for follow up and assign specific staff to this function. A survey must be used for students who either did not provide a social security number (SSN) or did not sign a release of information form for the employment cohorts and for those who did not sign a release of information form for the enter postsecondary/training cohort. For the obtaining a secondary credential cohort, all students are data matched.

For more information about the NRS cohorts, see the *NRS Implementation Guidelines* at <http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/ImplementationGuidelines.pdf>.

Education and Career Planning

The Department requires programs to engage students in education and career planning (ECP), and education and career plans are required to capture ECP that occurs.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/ecp/>.

High School Equivalency (HSE) Assessment and Credential

Many programs provide preparation for the high school equivalency assessment. Programs that provide such services must be familiar with:

- Massachusetts high school equivalency assessment policies, found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hse/>; and
- the website where students register for the high school equivalency assessment, found at <http://www.hiset.ets.org>.

Additional Services

CALCs are eligible to receive funding to provide additional services to students. For more information, see the following:

- Adult Career Pathways (ACP), <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/acp/>;
- Distance Learning (DL), <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/dl/>;
- Family Literacy, see Addendum;
- Student Achievement in Reading (STAR), see Addendum;
- Transition to Community College, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/cc/default.html>; and
- Workplace Education, see Addendum and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/workplace/>.

Student Leadership⁸

The purpose of student leadership funding is to support student participation in program development and/or community service projects around issues central to students. Programs must provide training, support, and guidance, and must also pay students for their time on the project.

Programs are encouraged to develop and support student leadership through the creation of teams and activities and to provide training in leadership and other skills needed to complete a program or project. Teams are comprised of learners working with a facilitator. Programs must assign one or more facilitators to provide leadership training and/or serve as a liaison between student leaders and resource agencies in the community.

Student leadership team members must be enrolled in rates-based classes, and integration of team-researched topics into program curricula is encouraged.

Funds must be used for personnel and non-personnel costs, including student stipends, to support projects and/or activities that create opportunities for student leadership development (e.g., planning, evaluation, governance, curriculum development, mentoring, outreach, public relations).

Childcare

Programs receiving childcare funds must use the funds for a portion of personnel and/or non-personnel costs related to the provision of clean, safe, and age-appropriate childcare during hours when parents are in class. Cash payments to students whether in advance or as a reimbursement are not allowed.

Transportation

Transportation funds must be used to cover student transportation to and from the program. Allowable costs include public transportation passes; modest lease/purchase costs on agency vans/mini-buses; agency vehicle insurance; and/or personnel costs for a driver. Documentation regarding use of funds (e.g., vehicle-use log, signed log for receipt of passes with the cost of the pass) is required. Cash payments to students whether in advance or as a reimbursement are not allowed.

Outstationing

Outstationing is the presence of one or more advisors at local One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs) for a set number of hours each week to assist with intake, assessment, and referral of potential students who have a need for adult education and for whom a referral to an adult education program is appropriate.

⁸ Supplemental funds are awarded every five years through an open and competitive application process.

Educational Leadership

Within the first 12 months of employment, every director must complete a *New Directors' Orientation*, offered annually by ACLS; programs are strongly encouraged to also send coordinators and assistant directors.

Programs must provide for sufficient administration and leadership to ensure a standards-based, high quality program that prepares students for college and careers. An entity operating a grant of \$100,000 must commit a minimum of 15 hours per week for the educational leader to:

- incorporate strategies into the program design that support students' progression to higher performance levels within the program, postsecondary education, job training, and/or employment leading to family sustaining wages;
- employ strategies and activities designed to create a program culture that engages students at all levels in thinking about college and careers;
- ensure that staff meet professional standards in the areas of mathematics/numeracy, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and those for reading and writing. For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pd/>;
- ensure that each staff member has a PD plan aligned with program goals;
- provide staff supervision, including regular staff evaluations (minimally annually) and classroom observations with written feedback and follow up⁹;
- lead the development of a program-wide curriculum, and ensure its alignment with standards and benchmarks in the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education* and the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English for Speakers of Other Languages*¹⁰;
- ensure that curricula coordinate the program's instructional levels, incorporate student goals, are contextualized to issues of concern to students, are aligned with assessments, and are designed to move students toward their next instructional level or to exit the program and continue along a career pathway;
- ensure that curricula and instructional methodologies for mathematics/numeracy, reading, writing, and second language acquisition are based on a solid foundation of research and effective practice, including research in adult learning and development as well as research in content-specific andragogy;
- ensure that current and appropriate technologies are incorporated into curricula and instruction;
- using the Indicators of Program Quality, work with staff to develop systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the program, and promote the use of data for continuous improvement planning¹¹;

⁹ The program director may conduct staff evaluations, classroom observations, and provide written feedback, or may assign a qualified staff person to do so.

¹⁰ For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/frameworks.html>.

¹¹ *The Indicators of ABE Program Quality* and *the Performance Standards for Community Adult Learning Centers and ABE Programs in Correctional Institutions* provide the standards, and Cognos provides data to inform the evaluation process.

- engage in collaborations and partnerships to enlist resources in supporting students' progression to postsecondary education, job training, and/or employment leading to family sustaining wages;
- provide fiscal oversight and ensure that expenditures are allowable and that allocated funds are available throughout the fiscal year;
- remain current with trends in the field and information from ACLS. Share this information with staff; and
- ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

Staffing

Recruitment and Hiring

ACLS requires programs to pay staff salaries no less than what the Rates System supports, within a range of flexibility (3%). This applies to staff hours paid on the grant (Direct), as well as hours paid from another source used to meet match requirements (Match).

ACLS requires programs to submit an organizational chart that includes the larger agency of which it is a part as well as the entire adult education program. If, during the multiyear funding period, the organizational structure changes from that submitted with the proposal, the program must notify the Department and submit an updated organizational chart.

Programs must have written personnel and administrative policies and procedures in place to ensure efficient and effective service delivery and to guarantee fiscal accountability.

Current job descriptions must be maintained for each job category. The job descriptions and minimum requirements approved by ACLS must apply throughout the multi-year period. If the program determines that a job description or its minimum qualifications needs adjusting, ACLS must be notified in writing. Minimum requirements originally approved may not be lessened without prior Departmental approval.

An updated SMARTT Staff Plan or equivalent documentation must be maintained on site to provide accurate details of how staff resources are assigned to essential program functions.

A time and effort record for each staff person must be maintained that reflects appropriate alignment among the hours worked on the grant, the hours in the budget, and the payroll.

Programs must ensure a fair and equitable process to hire highly qualified staff. The hiring process/protocols must be documented in a handbook or relevant program documentation.

Programs with staff members on several ESE-funded grants must ensure that the total of those staff members' hours does not exceed 1 FTE.

If a program employee ceases employment (e.g., resignation, retirement, termination), directly charged lump sum compensated absence payments to the grant are not allowable for federal or state grants.¹²

¹²For more information on the federal regulations, refer to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circular A-87, Attachment B, Section 8, part d (3) http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a087_2004#8 or to OMB circular A-122, Attachment B, Section 8, part k (2) (a) http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a122_2004/#b8.

Staff Orientation

Programs must offer each new staff person an orientation that includes the program’s philosophy, policies, procedures, and an overview of ACLS requirements. Additionally, staff must receive a policies and procedures handbook that addresses absenteeism, travel reimbursement, benefits, ADA information, grievance procedures, performance appraisal information, expectations for behavior, and PD.

ACLS requires administrators and direct service staff to complete the 5-hour online course, *Foundations for New Staff: Overview of the ABE Field*, with two exceptions:

1. a new staff member who possesses a certificate of completion from having taken the course or its predecessor, the *New Staff Orientation (NSO)*, through employment at a prior job; and
2. a new administrator with experience in the ESE-funded ABE system (e.g., in a different role).

Direct service staff members are required to complete *Foundations for New Staff: Overview of the ABE Field* within the first 12 months of employment. However, since directors must complete the *ACLS New Directors’ Orientation* in their first 12 months, those directors who also need to complete *Foundations* have up to 18 months to do so. Data entry staff and other non-direct service staff are encouraged but not required to attend.

Mandated Reporting of Abuse

Adult education staff are considered mandated reporters and are required by law to report cases of suspected abuse. Mandated reporters:

- include public and private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or adjustment counselors, psychologists, attendance officers, social workers, day care providers, health care professionals, and court and public safety officials;
- are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a report; non-mandated reporters are also protected providing the report was made in “good faith”;
- are protected from retaliation, and identities will be kept confidential; and
- who fail to file a report are subject to a fine of up to \$1000.

Age	0-18 years old	18-59 years old	60+ years old
Population	Children	Disabled Adults	Elderly
Reporting Agency	Department of Children and Families	Disabled Persons Protection Commission	Executive Office of Elder Affairs
Statute	51A	19C	19A Updated 9/21/15

Rural Staff Travel

Programs with multiple sites serving rural communities may apply to receive supplemental funds (above the allocation in the Rates System) to cover additional costs (e.g., mileage, tolls, parking) related to staff travel to required meetings. Documentation regarding the use of transportation funds is required. A community is designated as rural if the community resides in a county with a

population density of less than 750 people per square mile and the community has a population density of less than 750 people per square mile. Cash payments to staff for travel are not allowed.

Curriculum

The adult education system is built on standards to which curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned. Standards identify what learners need to know and be able to do to be successful in the workplace, in college, and in the community.

Programs are required to use the following standards:

- *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRS&A);* and
- *Massachusetts Adult Education Curriculum Framework for ESOL.*

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/frameworks.html>

Curriculum Requirements

Programs are required to document and use a program-wide curriculum for ABE and/or ESOL, depending on the service type the program offers. Program directors are responsible for ensuring that teachers use the curriculum as the basis for instruction. The curriculum must be reviewed at least annually to ensure that it meets the needs of the learners and is aligned with current standards and relevant instructional and assessment methods.

When services are provided by collaboration, all agencies must comply with curriculum and instructional policies and ensure alignment across levels and sites.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/policy.html>

Curriculum Development

The curriculum development process consists of design, implementation, evaluation, and review to achieve program and student outcomes. Curricula must include the following minimum components:

- A program overview;
- Guidance for teachers;
- A scope and sequence;
- Thematic units; and
- Lesson plans.



Included in the Rates System is paid time for teachers for regular and ongoing preparation for the purpose of developing and reviewing curricula materials including a scope and sequence, thematic units, and lesson plans.

Curricula must bring students from the lowest to the highest levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g., SPL 0 through SPL 7, GLE 0 through GLE 12). The transition from one academic level to the next must be documented in a scope and sequence.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/resources.html>.

Instructional Requirements

Instruction must:

- be based in current research and effective practice;
- draw from multiple sources (e.g., realia, internet, workbooks, student writings); and
- incorporate authentic, real-life contexts responsive to student needs, goals, and interests.

Instructional strategies must engage learners, help them think critically, and accommodate their learning needs, interests, and levels of readiness; therefore, teachers must:

- use a variety of tools and technologies (e.g., video, tablets, smart phones, social media) to support learning;
- create an atmosphere that promotes classroom participation in which learners are supported to move beyond their comfort zone; and
- model and reinforce ways that learners can master material through effort and perseverance.

Assessment

There are two main goals of assessment: 1) to provide data to inform instruction, which in turn helps students reach their goals, and 2) to hold programs accountable to performance standards.

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) uses state aggregate assessment data to hold states accountable to standards for system improvement. The USED requires states to use valid, reliable, and standardized assessments to report learner gains. The following summative¹³ assessments have been approved for use by adult education programs in Massachusetts.

Assessments for ABE classes:

- The Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test (MAPT) for Reading and Math
- TABE Forms 9/10, Levels L, E, M, D, and A for Reading, Math, and Language

Assessments for ESOL classes:

- BEST Plus for Speaking and Listening
- CLAS-E for Reading
- CLAS-E for Writing

Each of the above assessments has its own policy and procedure manual, found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/>.

For more information, see *Required Assessments to Report Learner Educational Gain*, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/>.

ACLS uses aggregate student assessment data for system improvement. Programs must follow assessment policies to ensure that testing is reliable and valid and data is captured systematically:

- For the purpose of ABE class placement, ACLS allows programs the flexibility to administer any assessment other than MAPT (e.g., TABE Locator, TABE Survey), since MAPT was not designed for class placement;

¹³ For definitions of summative and formative assessments, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/>.

- For the purpose of ESOL class placement, ACLS allows programs the flexibility to administer any assessment appropriate for English language learners; and
- For the purpose of capturing annual student learner gains, programs are required to test students using one of the approved, standardized assessments at least twice per year: a pre-test within two to four weeks of placement and a post-test after 65 hours¹⁴ of instruction¹⁵ and before June 30.

Administration of Required Assessments

Assessments must be administered and scored according to test instructions. If staff make changes to administration or scoring (e.g., giving test directions differently or diverging from a rubric when scoring), then test scores lose their validity.

Before staff administer assessments, they must successfully complete required assessment trainings. Trainings are offered by SABES and can be found on the SABES calendar. Participants must keep a copy of their certificate of administration and/or scoring at the program.

The BEST Plus and the CLAS-E Writing assessments have annual recertification requirements. These performance-based assessments require a scorer to evaluate student oral proficiency and writing ability using a standardized rubric. The recertification requirements ensure that scorers statewide are administering the test consistently.

For more information, see *Training and Recertification Requirements for Massachusetts ABE Required Assessments* at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/>.

To ensure that programs implement the above assessment policies, programs are required to have a written process for administering and scoring assessments. Upon request, programs must be able to demonstrate that this process is followed.

In addition to the above summative assessments, programs are required to administer ongoing, classroom-based formative assessments (e.g., writing exercises, dictation, portfolios, presentations) to determine if students have mastered what has been taught. This assessment data also informs instruction.

For more information, on required assessments to report learner gain, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/news/fy15gain.html>.

¹⁴ Since there are times when students stop or drop out, programs have the flexibility of administering a post-test after 65 hours of instruction. However, if the program gives three assessments in a fiscal year, a student's first and last assessment scores are used to determine learner gains.

¹⁵ ABE for Correctional Institutions may test students after 40 hours of instruction.

Continuous Improvement Planning

The goal of continuous improvement planning is to ensure the program is providing high-quality services to students. ACLS requires programs to engage annually in a planning process for continuous improvement. Programs are required to document this process. Guidance for this process can be found in the [Planning for Program Improvement manual](#) on the SABES website.

Programs are required to submit a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) to their ACLS Program Specialist in the fall of each year. In the *Planning for Program Improvement* manual, there is a sample CIP template that programs can use; however, this template is not required. Programs can create their own template.

Any program that has not met one or two of the performance standards must address how it plans to improve its performance relative to those standards in the CIP (e.g., if a program has a 64% attendance rate, then it has not met the attendance performance standard, and at least one goal in the program's action plan must address improving attendance). However, if that same program has a 75% pre- and post-test rate, it meets the standard, and therefore it is not necessary for the program to address the pre- and post-test standard in its plan.

If a program has not met three or more of the performance standards, the program must contact its Program Specialist to negotiate which performance standards will be addressed in the CIP.

A program that has met all of the performance standards is required to submit a CIP annually to address the areas of improvement identified through its planning and evaluation process.

Professional Development (PD)

ACLS requires that programs allocate time for staff to participate in PD. ACLS defines PD as a structured learning activity that is designed to strengthen the skills and/or knowledge needed by individual practitioners to perform effectively in their program staff role. Examples of staff development activities include single- or multi-session face-to-face or distance learning trainings, peer coaching, research study circles, teacher research, PD institutes, and visits to other programs to learn new practices.

Reporting PD

All PD activities must be reported in SMARTT. ACLS-sponsored trainings, such as the *New Directors' Orientation*, are entered into SMARTT by ACLS. SABES centers, likewise, enter SABES-sponsored activities. Programs are responsible for entering all other staff PD.

SMARTT New User and Refresher/Updates and Cognos Trainings

Programs must send two staff members who have regular SMARTT responsibilities to required SMARTT and Cognos trainings, including refresher/update trainings as needed to stay current.

Directors' Meeting

The annual ACLS Directors' Meeting provides opportunities for directors to learn about policy updates. Programs are required to send two representatives to this meeting.

Program Design Training

The application process for both new and continuation ABE funding from ESE requires the applicant to develop a program plan in SMARTT. The purpose of the *ABE Program Design* training is to enable participants to develop a program in SMARTT consistent with the *Massachusetts Policies for Effective ABE*. Directors and other staff who may be required to enter program plans into SMARTT (e.g., site coordinators, assistant directors) must complete this multi-day training within the first 12 months of hire.

Indicators of Program Quality

In order to provide instructional and support services that meet the needs of students, programs must provide the foundation of a well-run organization. The operation of a program requires attention to planning, implementation, and the development and maintenance of a system of accountability; organized efforts aimed at program improvement; and creation of long-term stability. In response to the National Literacy Act of 1991, and in collaboration with the field, Massachusetts developed *Indicators of Program Quality* (IPQs), that describe conditions in effective programs in the following areas: curriculum development, implementation, and instructional methods; educational progress; instructional support services; community linkages; program continuous improvement planning; professional development; and program management, leadership, and accountability.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abeprogram/>.

Monitoring Visits

ACLS conducts multi-day monitoring visits to a subset of programs each year. The IPQs provide the framework for the monitoring with additional criteria provided by the *Massachusetts Policies for Effective ABE*.

As part of the monitoring visit, a team from ACLS, and wherever possible a representative from the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) or One-Stop Career Center, interviews administrators, teachers, advisors, and students and reviews program processes and documents. To prepare for monitoring visits, programs are encouraged to use *the Program Self Evaluation and ACLS Monitoring Tool* as a self assessment: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abeprogram/>.

Following the monitoring visit, a report is sent to the program identifying commendations (i.e., promising practices), recommendations (i.e., areas for improvement that are not compliance issues), and findings (i.e., areas of non-compliance). Programs must develop an action plan to address areas of non-compliance with the assistance of SABES.

Program Governance

Programs must provide documented accountability to an active governing board which has decision making authority, including fiduciary responsibility for the organization, and whose membership is different from and not related to the program's operating staff. In the case of public agencies, the Board and related protocol requirements are fulfilled by public oversight bodies (e.g., school committees).

In the case of private, non-profit organizations, the Board must be significantly independent of the director and ensure proper and adequate review and approval of the program's expenditure of funds. The Board must have documented protocols for hiring and evaluating the executive director, and for checks and balances on the director's policy and decision making authority (e.g., procedures must specify at what amount checks must be co-signed by a member of the Board).

Each year an authorized signatory of the program must submit a signed statement of assurances¹⁶ which assures compliance to Department policies. Non-compliance may be cause for the withholding of grant funds.

Programs must ensure that the person responsible for fiscal management is knowledgeable about the following resources and the policies included within them:

Grants Management Procedural Manual

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/procedure/manual.html>

Grants Management Forms

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/procedure/default.html>

Match

Required Matching Contribution and Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

Programs must provide a fully auditable matching contribution equal to at least 20% of the grant. In the case of a continuation grant, the matching contribution must equal at least 20% of the grant or the amount contributed in the previous year, whichever is greater (i.e., the matching share committed in year one of a multi-year grant cycle cannot be reduced without the Department's written approval). This is referred to as maintenance of effort (MOE). Grant applications and budget forms must identify the source of matching funds. Matching resources must:

- Support the core instructional program. Funds that support any portion of the continuum of services are good examples of match that support the core instructional program (e.g., local adult education appropriations from cities, towns, local educational agencies);
- Consist of directly allocable costs; and
- Be fully documented and auditable.

¹⁶ For a copy of the Statement, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2015/340-345/StatementAssurances.pdf>

Claiming Classes as Match

Classes claimed as match must meet program design requirements for rates-based and non-rates based classes.

Claiming Volunteers as Match

The value of volunteers who are providing tutoring services and the services provided by non-instructional volunteers may be claimed as match with the following stipulations. The value of volunteer hours that are claimed as match should be set at \$15/hour; the value of non-instructional volunteer hours (e.g., for clerical support) that are claimed as match should be based on the standard hourly rate for a given position at an agency, not to exceed \$15/hour. ESE limits the value of volunteer time that may be applied to the matching contribution requirement to 5% of the grant, not to exceed \$20,000. This limit does not apply to Primary Instruction by Volunteers programs.

Claiming Equipment as Match

Equipment used solely by the adult education program: The cost of equipment used solely for an adult basic education program may be used as a matching expense if it was not purchased with ESE funds.

Shared equipment: The cost of equipment used by the adult education program and other programs in the agency may be applied as match if the agency has a cost allocation plan to identify each allocated service and defines the method used to appropriately distribute the costs on a reasonable and consistent basis.

Eligible equipment that meets the criteria above may be applied to the matching contribution requirement in one of two ways: the cost of the equipment may be applied as match for one year of the grant; and the cost of the equipment may be pro-rated over two or more years, with the pro-rated value serving as the match for two or more respective years.

Fiscal Responsibilities

Recipients of state and federal grants are responsible for ensuring that grants are managed with sound fiscal systems and procedures that meet applicable state and federal requirements. Grant funds may not be used to pay for expenses that have been paid for by any other local, state, federal, or private award. The program:

- Is responsible for effective management of the grant, including all funds committed to subcontractors;
- Must have appropriate accounting systems in place to track expenditures, including responsibility for monitoring subcontracts and ensuring that all grant funds are expended as articulated in the Memorandum of Agreement between partners;
- Must maintain a time and effort record for each staff person that reflects appropriate alignment among the hours worked on the grant, the hours allocated in the program plan, and the payroll;
- Must notify ACLS if there is a change in the program's spending plan. If a program believes that funds may be unspent during the program year, the program must notify ACLS as soon as it knows that funds are anticipated to be unexpended. The program will be asked to submit an amendment to decrease the award by the unspent amount as soon

as possible but no later than a deadline agreed upon with the Program Specialist. Early notification of unexpended funds allows the Department sufficient time to reallocate those funds to meet other needs; and

- Must submit required fiscal reports by the deadline established by the Department unless the program acquires a prior written waiver. Failure to submit timely and accurate reports may result in a suspension of further payments.

Requests for Funds

Programs are required to monitor expenditures carefully, and draw down funds as needed to ensure that state funds are expended regularly and in full by the close of each fiscal year. This process is done online.

Unexpended Funds

It is particularly important to monitor expenses on state grants to ensure that funds are used within the fiscal year. State regulations provide no flexibility for use of funds after June 30. Unexpended funds above \$1.00 must be returned with the final financial report (FR-1) each year. For more information, see the *Grants Management Procedural Manual* at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/procedure/manual.html>.

Amendments

Amendments to approved grants are required when there is any:

- significant change in program objectives;
- increase or decrease in the total amount of the grant; or
- increase in a line item that exceeds \$100 or 10% of the line (whichever is greater), or exceeds \$10,000.

When it is determined that an amendment is required, the program must fill out the standard amendment form (Form AM1), attach revised budget detail pages and narrative and submit it to the ACLS Program Specialist.

The maximum number of amendments to any grant may not exceed two. Exceptions to this limit may be allowed based on sufficient justification as determined by the appropriate and responsible approving authority in the Department.

In order to allow time for amendments to be processed by ESE, programs must submit amendments at least 30 days prior to the desired change and/or 30 days before the end of the fiscal year.

Financial Audit

Private non-profit organizations are required to submit annually to the Department a copy of the applying agency's latest completed audit report, issued by an independent certified public accountant.

Excepted from this requirement are state and local entities whose audits the Department accesses directly, (e.g., state colleges, community colleges, universities, state and county correctional facilities, local educational authorities, city- or town-operated public libraries).

Equipment Inventory

Programs must maintain and update annually, an inventory of equipment purchased with grant funds include: computers, copiers, furniture, and other major items purchased. The inventory list should include:

- Model and serial or other identifying number;
- Source of the property (e.g., grant number, agreement number);
- Acquisition date and cost; and
- Location and condition of the equipment prior to disposal.

While equipment items may be discarded or disposed of, equipment databases or inventory lists must be kept for not less than 15 years.

Programs that have usable equipment purchased with grant funding, which will no longer be used on behalf of an ESE-funded program, must notify ACLS. The reallocation of usable equipment is at the discretion of the Department. (Note: Date of disposal and sale price, including the method used to determine fair market value, if applicable, must be added to the equipment inventory.)

Equipment

Obsolete Equipment

Equipment may be considered obsolete depending on type (e.g., a computer older than four years). Some office equipment (e.g., fax machines, copy machines, projectors) may be considered obsolete after five years, while furniture and other large items (e.g., desks, file cabinets, vehicles) may be considered obsolete after 10 years. Equipment purchase records (e.g., requisitions, packing slips, invoices) must be retained for seven years. When a program is in possession of such equipment, the program may dispose of it and delete it from the inventory.

Data

Fiscal and Data Reporting

Programs must submit timely reports including the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and various fiscal reports such as the *Standard Application for Grants and Budget Detail Pages*, *Requests for Funds*, the annual *Final Financial Report*, and an annual audit report. Failure to submit timely and accurate reports may result in a suspension of further payments until ESE receives accurate and complete reports.

Attendance

For reporting purposes, ACLS defines class attendance as: the time that a student is physically present in the classroom on the date and at the time the class occurs.

Data Lock-Out

Programs must enter data into SMARTT at least monthly. To accommodate extenuating circumstances, the Department allows a maximum of one additional month before the SMARTT system is locked so that no additional data can be entered for that month. See the box below for the data lock-out schedule.

Data Lock-out Schedule

<u>Monthly Attendance</u>	<u>Month/Day Data Entry Closed</u>
July, August, September	November 30
October	December 31
November	January 31
December	February 28
January	March 31
February	April 30
March	May 31
April	June 30
May	July 31
June	August 31

Federal NRS Cohort Outcome Measures

The NRS uses a cohort model to track federally required outcomes (e.g., postsecondary education cohorts, employment cohorts). Once the program documents in SMARTT that a student is no longer participating, that student officially becomes part of a cohort based on certain characteristics (e.g., have a job/do not have a job; have a high school equivalency credential/do not have a high school equivalency credential). To ensure accurate reporting, programs must exit a student from SMARTT when staff determine that the student is no longer participating. However, when both of the following occur, SMARTT will *automatically* exit a student from the program:

- 1) No attendance was recorded for that student during the three most recent months which have been “locked out” from data entry, and
- 2) No attendance has yet been entered for that student during the current two month period for which data entry is allowed.

Automatic Exit Schedule

Automatic Exit Schedule	Month of Last Attendance	No Attendance in These Months	System Assigned Exit Date
December 1	June	July – November	June 30
January 15	July	August – December	July 31
February 15	August	September – January	August 31
March 15	September	October – February	September 30
April 15	October	November – March	October 31
May 15	November	December – April	November 30
June 15	December	January – May	December 31
July 15	January	February – June	June 30
August 15	February	March – June	June 30
September 15	March	April – June	June 30

Data Entry

To ensure ongoing and accurate data entry, programs are required to maintain a minimum of two staff proficient in using SMARTT and Cognos. Temporary unavailability of a primary data entry person due to illness or staff turnover does not excuse the requirement to keep data current. Therefore, it is in the program's best interest to ensure that both individuals trained to enter data maintain their ability by entering data regularly and/or have more than two people trained.

For more information on SMARTT data entry, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smartt/>.

Record Keeping

Programs must be able to account for all funds.

The program must be able to demonstrate that required functions are provided according to the approved budget. A time and effort record must be maintained for each person on the budget that reflects appropriate alignment among the hours worked on the grant, the hours in the budget, and the payroll.

Student records, governing board records, and fiscal records must be maintained for seven years. Equipment databases or inventory lists must be kept for not less than 15 years.

Falsification of required documentation may be grounds for termination of the grant, return of grant funds, and/or prosecution.

Accountability and Assistance

ACLS's state performance accountability system includes multiple measures. At the center of the accountability system are the Massachusetts adult education performance standards, which have been informed by statistical analysis of multiple years of data in the following areas:

- Attendance
- Average Attended Hours
- Pre/post Assessment
- Learner Gains
- Goal Setting
- Learner Gains as measured by Educational Functioning Levels (EFL)

Each performance standard includes a range of points for a possible total of 25 points per year for CALCs. Based on the program's total number of points earned in a fiscal year, each program is assigned to one of four tiers once final data have been released in the following fiscal year.

Programs that fall into the lowest tier of performance, Tier 4, are considered to be underperforming and are at risk of losing funding. Tier 4 programs receive official ACLS written notification of their status as well as the availability of technical assistance. Specifically, Tier 4 programs are referred for Targeted Intervention (TI) services from the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES), in consultation with ACLS.

Note: Homeless, Distance Learning, Transition to Community College, Primary Instruction by Volunteers, and Workplace Education programs are exempt from the accountability policy described herein.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/performance/>.

Underperformance

The first performance data in a multi-year funding cycle is available in the fall of Year 2. At that time, Tier 4 programs are identified and referred for TI services. In the first year of TI, an initial meeting is held at the program with ACLS, SABES, and program staff in attendance. The authorized signatory (or designee) will be invited to the meeting to ensure that the grantee understands the performance issues and is aware that future funding is at risk. A plan is developed by the program and SABES to address the areas of low performance. SABES ensures that the program receives relevant and high quality training and technical assistance as the program implements its plan.

The second time a program falls into Tier 4, the program will be designated as chronically underperforming. Program representatives will be required to meet with the ABE State Director. After this meeting, a decision will be made as to whether defunding will be initiated.

If a program falls into Tier 4 for a third time, defunding procedures will be initiated automatically, and a competitive RFP will be prepared to solicit a new provider to serve that city, town, or region.

Framework for Accountability and Assistance

Degree of program autonomy increases as a program moves into higher tiers.

Tier	Points Earned	ABE Program / Local Provider Role	State (ACLS) and SABES Role
1	23-25	All programs review performance data and participate in continuous improvement planning, using the Indicators of Program Quality to guide their planning. Program has responsibility for planning, and for making use of available resources such as information about promising practices, self-assessment tools, etc.	ACLS provides performance data for every program in Tiers 1 through 4; conducts desk reviews and site visits for all programs. Provides voluntary access to promising practices and self-assessment tools. At the highest tiers of performance, ACLS provides guidelines; few regulations.
2	19-22	Programs use performance data in Cognos and other data to revise continuous improvement plans. Use ACLS-recommended self-assessment tool(s) to evaluate program implementation of the Indicators of Program Quality.	Above, plus ACLS may suggest assistance, PD opportunities, etc.
3	15-18	Programs use performance data in Cognos and other data to self-monitor performance. Use ACLS self-assessment tool to evaluate program implementation of the Indicators of Program Quality. Request assistance from SABES and/or ACLS as needed.	Above, plus assistance. ACLS may give priority for assistance from SABES.
4	0-14	Program collaborates with SABES and ACLS on an Intervention/Improvement Plan; uses it to develop intervention strategies and benchmarks for improvement.	Require intervention. At the lowest tiers of performance, ACLS' relationship with the program is much closer. Tier 4 programs are prioritized for technical assistance from SABES and have more requirements.

Degree of ACLS involvement increases as a program moves into lower tiers.

Programs in Correctional Institutions

Recognizing the uniqueness of adult basic education in correctional institutions (ABECI), ACLS has worked with programs in these settings to develop performance standards that reflect the educational opportunities provided in correctional settings. These include:

- Attendance;
- Pre/post Assessment;
- Learner Gains;
- Goal Setting; and
- Learner Gains as measured by Educational Functioning Levels (EFL).

The performance standards for ABECIs include all of the standards for CALCs except average attended hours. This results in a maximum of 16 performance points per year.

Appendix A

Guidelines for Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) Between ABE Grant Recipients and Partnering Organizations

The memorandum of agreement (MOA) is a written document describing the agreement between the grantee and another organization working together to deliver services. The purpose of the MOA is to formalize and clarify the expectations of the grantee and partnering program.

All parties must commit to fulfilling the requirements outlined in the signed Statement of Assurances and the *Massachusetts Policies for Effective ABE*. The MOA must be revisited annually: one original must be signed and dated by all partners and submitted to ACLS; however, with approval from the Program Specialist, the MOA may be updated at any time through written agreement of each partner.

The grantee is legally responsible for effective management of the entire grant, including any funds committed to a partner to purchase student services. The grantee is responsible for having appropriate accounting systems in place to monitor contractual services and ensure that all grant funds are fully expended as articulated in the MOA and in a timely manner. The grantee is required to notify ESE as soon as possible if funds may be unspent, including funds assigned to a partner. If the grantee anticipates that there will be unexpended funds by any partner, the grantee will be asked to amend the grant as soon as possible so that the funds can be reallocated.

Required components of the MOA include an articulation of the following:

- purpose of the MOA
- description of the roles and responsibilities of staff of each partnering organization
- if the partner is offering instructional services, a detailed description of those services (number and type of classes) as reflected in the SMARTT program plan
- description of the scope of work, including expected results
- duration of agreement articulating the beginning and end date
- financial obligations of each partner, (e.g., contracted partner understands that lead agency must be provided with an expenditure report per line item at a minimum of three times per year and must submit invoices monthly)
- assurance that contracted partner will notify the grantee and the Department as soon as possible of any funds anticipated to be unexpended by the close of the grant period. (This early notification and return of unexpended funds allows the Department sufficient time to reallocate those funds.)
- description of the accounting systems the grantee will use to monitor contractual services and ensure that all grant funds are fully expended as articulated in the MOA and in a timely manner
- assurance that the grantee understands that it is required to report and return to the state any and all funds unexpended by the close of the grant period, whether or not it recovers unexpended contracted funds from contracted partners
- schedule for review of MOA at a minimum three times per year: beginning, midyear, and end of year

- articulation of grounds for termination of the MOA, for example:

“This agreement may be terminated by either of the partners upon written notice delivered to the other party at least 30 days prior to intended date of termination. The grantee must terminate the agreement with the partner organization if its activities are not delivered as described in the MOA. The partner organization will be paid by the grantee for only the portion of the work completed.”

Other examples for MOAs might include the following:

- referral of students from one program to another;
- description of any SMARTT requirements including timeliness of data entry;
- referral of tutors to grantee;
- review of Cognos data for planning purposes; and/or
- responsibility to review ACLS mailings and comply with policy changes.

ADDENDUM

The Adult Basic Education System

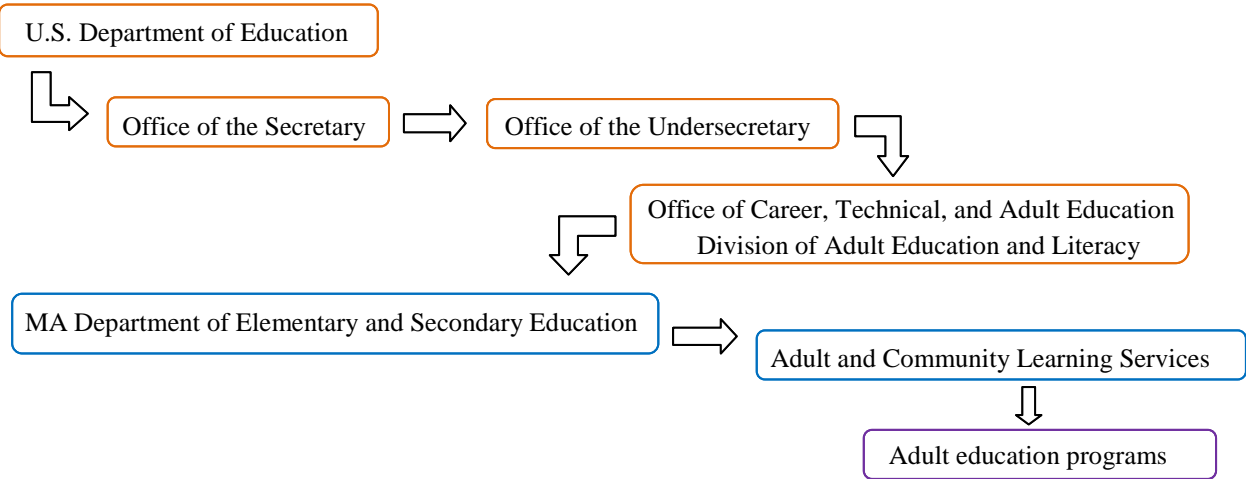
The Massachusetts ABE system includes a network of programs across the state that offer instruction ranging from basic literacy and numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to high school equivalency and college and career readiness.

Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), a unit within the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), is charged with implementing the mission and goals of the ABE system, managing its resources, setting standards, overseeing performance, and providing support to programs.

Resources that support the Massachusetts ABE system include:

- state and federal funding;
- local matching resources;
- the Massachusetts ABE Rates System;
- standards for programs, teachers, and students;
- a PD system: the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) and other PD opportunities;
- a professional license for adult education instructors;
- planning and reporting systems, SMARTT and Cognos; and
- staff to provide guidance and technical assistance. Each funded program is assigned a Program Specialist, a liaison between the program and the Department. Additional staff provide expertise in curriculum, assessment, college and career readiness, PD, family literacy, and high school equivalency assessment.

Together with 49 states and 6 territories, we form a national system of education under the U.S. Department of Education. The organizational chart below identifies the federal and state agencies that make up this system.



The National Reporting System

The Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) developed a National Reporting System (NRS) for federally funded/state administered adult education programs as the accountability system by which programs report student outcomes. NRS is managed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in Washington, D.C. The NRS includes:

- student measures to describe adult education students, program participation, and assessment of the impact of instruction,
- methodologies for collecting the measures,
- reporting forms and procedures, and
- training and technical assistance activities to assist states in collecting the measures.

The NRS tracks five measures to determine what is working well and where improvement can be made. Under federal law, states are required annually to submit a report on progress towards these measures. For more information, see: <http://www.nrsweb.org/>.

1. Educational Gain;
2. Enter Employment;
3. Retain Employment;
4. Obtain a Secondary Credential; and
5. Enter Postsecondary Education.

This table demonstrates how the NRS functions at the federal, state, and local levels.

FEDERAL LEVEL		
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION		
Develop framework and measures for the NRS	Provide training, technical assistance, quality control of state data collection efforts	Maintain a database on the performance of adult education nationally and by state
STATE LEVEL		
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION		
Establish policy, provide guidance, and train staff	Select, collect, and report on outcomes and use them for program improvement	Provide staff development and technical assistance to programs
Ensure data is valid, reliable, and of high quality		
LOCAL LEVEL		
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS		
Collect and maintain high quality data	Follow state policy for assessing students and conducting follow up	Use data for program improvement to support effective adult learning

Accountability

The ABE system uses performance standards to identify where the system is doing well and where it needs improvement. This is the function of system feedback. Feedback systems can be used at organizational and system levels to increase awareness and improve performance.

Student assessments, verification of student goal achievement, classroom observations, teacher evaluations, program monitoring visits, and student surveys are feedback systems that inform programs and the system about performance. Both the state and local programs use Cognos reports and other data to evaluate program performance and guide improvement planning.

Advising

One of the primary roles of the advisor is to assist students with education and career planning to develop, monitor, and fulfill an individual education and career plan that aligns a student's interests, and abilities with a career, and outlines the steps needed to prepare for that career.

Advising may also involve:

- Assisting each student to identify, monitor, and achieve his/her educational and career goals;
- Monitoring the student's progress toward his/her goals, providing support to reach those goals, and following up on goal achievement after the student leaves the program;
- Assisting students with transition to concurrent and/or next steps in their education and career training experience; this includes maintaining a working relationship with area workforce development and community college partners;
- Maintaining confidential records of advising notes and activities; and
- Providing referrals to other community resources/agencies to enhance academic supports and address barriers to participation. Referrals for academic supports may include study skills courses, basic skills classes, and introduction to computers. Referrals to address barriers may include childcare, transportation, domestic violence, housing, food/fuel assistance, and mental health issues.

Amendments

The maximum number of amendments to any grant each year must not exceed two; exceptions to this limit may be allowed based on sufficient justification as determined by the Department.

After the amendment request is submitted, it goes through several stages of review: first, the ACLS Program Specialist conducts a programmatic and technical review and forwards it to an ACLS supervisor for signature. The amendment is then forwarded to an authorized fiscal representative of the Department for review and signature. When the amendment is technically correct, the revised budget is entered in the Department's Grant Management system and the amendment is filed in the project folder.

To ensure proper processing, amendments need to be submitted at least 30 days prior to the desired change and/or 30 days before the end of the grant's fiscal performance period.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA is a comprehensive federal civil rights law that was enacted on July 26, 1990 to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are not violated through the use of discriminatory practices in employment, public services, public accommodations, and communications.

The [New England ADA Center](#) is one of ten regional ADA centers comprising the [ADA National Network](#). Since 1991, this network has provided information, guidance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act, tailored to meet the needs of business, government and individuals at local, regional and national levels. The center is not a regulatory agency, but a helpful resource supporting the ADA's mission to "make it possible for everyone with a disability to live a life of freedom and equality."

For more information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq9805.html>,
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/disability.html>
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/disability/default.html>.

Assessment

*"The ultimate user of assessment information...is the learner."*¹⁷

A teacher's approach to assessment begins with knowing about learner progress to adapt instruction to meet learner needs; this can be done in a variety of ways (e.g., classroom discussions, observation, student work).



Assessment provides information to be used as feedback: for teachers to modify instruction and for learners to modify learning. Such assessment becomes formative when data is used to adapt instruction to meet student needs. While assessment **of** learning provides evidence of learner gain, assessment **for** learning serves to help students learn more. Both types of assessment are paramount to student motivation and success.

Community Planning

The Department requires programs to participate in a community planning partnership that is working to achieve the following purposes:

- To ensure that the needs of all undereducated and/or limited English proficient adults are accounted for, and that strategic plans are developed that identify how and when these adult learners will ultimately be served;
- To ensure that every organization with an interest in, and the potential for, supporting services to these populations is included in such planning, and that protocols are established to coordinate these services;
- To ensure that students benefit from the broadest possible array of education, employment and training that so many students need in order to successfully pursue their goals and aspirations; and
- To ensure that adult basic education takes its place as a key ingredient in every community's plans to improve the quality of life for its residents.

¹⁷ Black, P. and William, D. (1998) *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment*.

Included in each grant award is foundation funding which supports community planning activities. Programs in Correctional Institutions receive funding to participate in the community planning partnership in the primary community to which inmates are discharged.

Over time, programs' community planning capacity has grown and community planning has become a valuable resource that helps them connect their students with next step training, workforce development, and community college options.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/cp/>.

Content Standards

To understand how curriculum and instruction in the Massachusetts ABE system is informed by standards, it is necessary to focus on the standards for students (i.e., content standards).

Content standards address the question, "What do adult learners need to know and be able to do to function successfully in their roles as parents/family members, workers, citizens, and life-long learners?" Programs are required to use the following content standards to inform curriculum development:

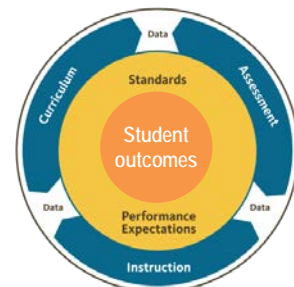
- *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*
<http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>
- *ESOL Curriculum Frameworks*
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/>
- *Life Sciences Framework*
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/frameworks.html>

Curriculum

Standards-Based Education and Curriculum

Standards-based education has become the organizing principle and driving force behind most federal, state, and local education policy in the United States, and Massachusetts is no exception. The Massachusetts ABE System has standards for program quality, program performance, and opportunity to learn criteria, data quality, curricular content, professional practice, and PD.

Massachusetts' goal for ABE is to ensure access to a system that is effective in preparing students to be successful in their next steps, with a focus on college and careers. To meet this goal, Massachusetts has engaged in a multi-year strategy to gradually increase academic rigor to strengthen English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and ESOL instruction.



Data

Program performance, measured against state standards with data entered in SMARTT, has a significant impact on both a program's success in competing for funds and on whether its funding is continued throughout a multi-year funding cycle. Accordingly, the quality of this data across the state must be consistent and accurate. The Department relies on three main strategies for ensuring data quality: timely data entry, each program's assurance that data quality measures are in place, and data audits.

Timely Entry

A key principle for assuring data quality is to ensure that data is reported in a timely manner according to a fixed, regular schedule. If the time lag for reporting data is too long, the likelihood of missing, and possibly inaccurate, data increases.

Quality Measures

The data collected at the program and reported in SMARTT are official records and, as such, must be accurate, valid, and reliable. Each state is required by the federal government to attest annually that it has policies and procedures in place to ensure the quality of the state's data.

The Department requires a signed assurance from each funded program to confirm that policies and procedures are in place to ensure the quality of the local data submitted in SMARTT. This assurance is provided by completing a “Data Quality Checklist,” and submitting it at the end of the fiscal year, when the data is being rolled over to the new fiscal year.

Audits

To further ensure that the data reported in SMARTT is accurate, the Department conducts data audits on a selected subset of programs each year. Any submission of data/information that can reasonably be determined to be known by the recipient, or that should have been known by the program, to be false is grounds for immediate termination of the grant and the return of all grant funds related to the falsified data/information.

Desk Reviews

ACLS Program Specialists (PS) conduct monthly desk reviews as part of the accountability system. These reviews focus on data in SMARTT and Cognos related to the achievement of the performance standards as well as information about non-rates based classes and volunteer components. The PS will contact programs when data is missing, not up to date, and/or indicates program performance below standard.

Enrollment: Open and Managed

*"Access is a critical goal, but access without quality is an empty promise."*¹⁸ The emphasis on learner gains and other outcomes creates a need to balance access with student persistence and success.

Some programs enroll students on a continuous basis throughout the year. This flexible, open-entry enrollment provides immediate access and lessens the time a student has to wait for services. However, this continuous exit from and entry into the program makes it difficult for teachers to teach effectively and consequently for students to achieve learner gains and other outcomes.

¹⁸ *Facing the Future: Massachusetts Strategic Framework for Adult Basic Education*

Other programs implement managed enrollment. For example, a program may offer classes for a specific length of time or cycle (e.g., 10 weeks, one semester) and enroll students only at the beginning of that cycle.

Programs can implement managed enrollment for a class, several classes, or the entire program. Programs can also vary the intensity and duration of classes according to factors including average length of student retention, student and teacher recommendation, and funding requirements.

Family Literacy and Family Engagement

Research tells us that when schools develop strong working relationships with families and community partners in order to support students' academic progress and social and emotional well-being, the result is better educational and developmental outcomes for children.

ACLS supports the provision of adult education and family literacy services to parents who lack the skills and abilities expected of a high school graduate so they can develop their own literacy while reinforcing the skills they need to fulfill the role of partners in their child's education.

Family Literacy

The term family literacy does not have a universally accepted definition. For our purposes, family literacy:

... enables parents to improve their educational skills to be more effective in their role as partners in their child's education while they develop the basic educational skills that enable them to make self-identified changes in their lives to fulfill their personal goals as learners, workers, and community members. Family literacy may include parent education and support and parent and child interactive time which support parents in creating a literate home environment and integrating literacy related activities in their daily family routines.¹⁹

Family Engagement

For our purposes, family engagement is:

- A shared responsibility where schools and community organizations commit to engaging families in meaningful and culturally respectful ways and where families actively support their child's learning and development;
- Continuous across a student's life, beginning in infancy and extending through college and career preparation programs; and
- Carried out everywhere that children learn including homes, early childhood education programs, schools, after-school programs, faith-based institutions, playgrounds, and community settings.

¹⁹ The perspectives of the Family Literacy Commission of the International Reading Association, for example, are reflected in a definition focused on the ways families use literacy in their daily lives: Family literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in the community. Sometimes, family literacy occurs naturally during the routines of daily living and helps adults and children "get things done." These events might include using drawings or writings to share ideas; composing notes or letters to communicate messages; making lists; reading and following directions or sharing stories and ideas through conversation, reading, and writing. Family literacy may be initiated purposefully by a parent or may occur spontaneously as parents and children go about the business of their daily lives. Family literacy activities may also reflect the ethnic, racial, or cultural heritage of the families involved. (Morrow, Paratore, & Tracey, 1994).

Family Literacy Contextualized Curriculum

Programs providing a rate-based family literacy class or a non-rate based class in Parent Education/Support might consider topics/activities such as those listed below:

- Inform parents of the powerful role they play in their child’s education and literacy development and the research that supports this. Emphasize the importance of parent participation in parent-teacher conferences, meeting with teachers throughout the school year, possibly volunteering in the classroom, and engaging in literacy activities at home and in the community;
- Provide sessions on parent generated topics to support parents in achieving their family goals. These may include but are not limited to sessions on child health and well-being, nutrition, child rearing and discipline, language acquisition, and developmental milestones;
- Build the skills of parents to help them actively partner with their child’s teachers by teaching them strategies and evidence-based practices for school readiness and reading. Provide opportunities for parents to model and use strategies with their child; and
- Invite school staff (e.g., school nurse, guidance counselor, teacher) to speak with parents and provide information about how the district or individual schools function. This may include but is not limited to the use of authentic materials such as letters to parents, trip permission slips, report cards, and MCAS reports.

Programs providing a rate-based family literacy class or a non-rate based class in Parent/Child Interactive Time might consider topics/activities such as those noted below:

- Inform parents how activities and strategies support their child’s language and literacy development;
- Provide parents a variety of roles to support their child’s learning and engagement such as conversing, observing, directing or leading;
- Provide activities and strategies including literacy kits to support parents in extending interactive literacy at home and ways they can make literacy a part of their daily routines; and
- Partnerships with schools, early childhood providers, and community/social service agencies can support the content and provision of programming.

Programs providing a rate-based family literacy class or a non-rate based class in Family Engagement may provide a combination of Parent Education/Support and Parent/Child Interactive Time.

Family Literacy and Engagement Resources

While there are many high quality resources for family learning, programs planning to provide family literacy or family engagement services for the first time may wish to visit the Family Resources and Educator Resources web pages at the *National Center for Families Learning*.

<http://www.familieslearning.org/family-resources.htm>

<http://www.familieslearning.org/educator-resources.htm>

Homelessness

ACLS policies related to adult education for homeless adults use the definition of "homeless" as defined in legislation. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition for "homeless" or "homeless individual" or "homeless person" includes:

- an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
- an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is
 - a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
 - an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

The term "homeless" or "homeless individual" does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of the Congress or a state law. For more information, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/homeless.

Indirect Costs

The Audit and Compliance unit of the Department issues indirect cost rates for ESE grants. To be approved, programs must submit an *Annual Application for Indirect Cost Rate* along with a current audit report and be current in the filing of Final Reports (FR1) for prior grants awarded by the Department. For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/procedure/default.html>.

Programs with an approved indirect cost rate from the federal government must include a copy of their current approval letter. The maximum federal indirect cost rate that may be charged to adult education grants is 8%. Programs that obtain a state ESE-approved indirect cost rate shall receive no more than 5%.

The indirect cost rate is applied to the sum of the direct costs excluding equipment (i.e., budget expenditures from line items 1 through 8). The total of direct and indirect costs may not exceed the total grant award.

An agency with an approved indirect cost rate may apply the difference between the approved rate and the amount charged to the grant to its required match.

- For example, an organization with a federally approved rate of 15% may charge to the adult education grant a maximum of 8% for indirect costs. The 7% difference between the federally approved rate and the ESE maximum could be applied to match.
- In another example, an agency may be eligible to charge an indirect rate of 8% to the grant, but may opt to charge only 5% in order to apply a larger portion of the grant to direct program costs. In that case, the difference between the eligible amount and the amount charged may be applied to match.

In lieu of charging for indirect costs, programs that provide an appropriate and detailed allocation of agency-wide costs may receive ESE approval to include them as direct costs.

Open and Competitive Process

By law, adult education grants are issued on a competitive basis in the first year of a multi-year funding cycle, and on a continuation basis subject to satisfactory performance and allocation of funds in subsequent years. Competitive grants are open to applicants that meet eligibility criteria listed in the Request for Proposals (RFP) and approved by the Commissioner of Education based on an objective assessment of their merits. Adult education grants are usually re-bid every five years, but circumstances such as the timing of federal legislation may result in longer or shorter funding cycles.

Applicants propose a program design and budget based primarily on the combined costs of classes and supplemental services and the need for foundation funding. Through the grant review and funding process, all, some, or none of the proposed services may be recommended for funding. Upon approval of grant recommendations by the ESE commissioner, the approved grant award becomes the applicant's contract with the state. This contract is renewable in each year of the funding cycle.

In each subsequent year during the funding cycle, grantees again submit a program design for ACLS approval. The Department supports adjustments in the program design in order to remain responsive to changes in the community. Changes to the budget, plan, leadership, minimum staffing requirements, and location must be approved in advance, in writing, by the ACLS program specialist.

If the needs of the community change during the funding cycle, the program is encouraged to adjust the previous year's program design accordingly with prior ACLS approval. The program director should discuss the community's changing needs and the proposed changes to the program design with the ACLS program specialist to address questions, concerns, or requirements before submitting the revised plan.

Orienting Students

Various studies on adult student persistence reveal that approximately 50 percent of the adults who enroll in classes drop out in the first six to ten weeks, and that anywhere from 50 to 95 percent of adults entering literacy programs drop out before reaching their goals²⁰.

Those students who do persist cite having supportive relationships, being goal-oriented and determined, and their own self-efficacy as positive influences on their persistence. Orientation activities can help students think through what they need to do to be successful, brainstorm solutions to problems they might encounter while enrolled, and get acclimated to the program.

Programs should provide enough information so that potential students can make an informed decision about enrolling. Orientation should be explicit about what students will gain by participation and the time requirements and commitment needed. Orientation might also include information from the research on the economic value of the high school equivalency credential, http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/pasourcebook_outcomes.pdf.

²⁰ As reported in Comings et al, *Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes*, National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 1999.

Professional Development (PD)



We know that teachers are key to helping students achieve learner gains and reach job-related, life-related, and education-related goals. We know too that many teachers come to ABE with varied experience or training, and while they may have strong content knowledge, they may lack formal training in teaching adults (i.e., andragogy). Others come with diverse backgrounds and a great deal of experience in working with adults but may not have mastery of content they teach or formal training in how to teach it. Part-time instructors teaching at multiple sites at various times of the week can become isolated and lack the opportunity for collegial exchange to learn from one another.

Many activities can be considered staff development including online PD, peer coaching, study circles, research, courses and institutes, and visiting programs to learn new practices.

SABES is Massachusetts' system of statewide PD centers that provide high quality, research-based PD and support to ESE-funded programs. The main purpose of SABES is to assist programs and practitioners in addressing the Department's overarching goal of preparing students for success in next steps within the context of college and career readiness. SABES consists of eight statewide PD centers and two statewide support centers as follows:

SABES Center	Location
English Language Arts	Quinsigamond Community College
English for Speakers of Other Languages	Holyoke Community College Quinsigamond Community College
Mathematics and Adult Numeracy	Technical Education Research Centers (TERC)
Educational Leadership and Strengthening ABE Programs	Quinsigamond Community College Holyoke Community College
ABE Distance Learning and Technology Support	Quinsigamond Community College
Education and Career Planning	World Education, Inc.
Massachusetts ABE Assessments	Bristol Community College
SMARTT and Cognos	Holyoke Community College
Coordination Support	World Education
Communication Support	Education Development Center

For more information, see <http://www.sabes.org/>.

Professional Standards

Professional standards for teachers describe what teachers need to know and be able to do. Massachusetts has three sets of Professional Standards:

1. **The Subject Matter Knowledge Requirements** outline what adult education teachers need to know and be able to do in order to teach reading, writing, math, and English language to adult students.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pd/>

2. **The Professional Standards for Adult Basic Education Teachers** cover more generic areas of teaching (e.g., Understanding the Adult Learner; Diversity and Equity; Instructional Design; Learner Assessment; Professionalism). These standards reflect the expectation that teachers need knowledge of adult learning theory, learning disabilities, persistence strategies, an appreciation of diversity, and that they are able to contextualize curriculum, use assessments for placement and to inform instruction, create an environment conducive to learning, develop employment readiness skills, and pursue PD.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pd/>

3. **Professional Standards for ESOL Teachers** assist educators in meeting learner needs, ultimately resulting in successful English language learning. The ESOL Professional Standards outline what teachers of English language learners need to know and be able to do. The standards were informed by research into prevailing theories of, and methods in, second language acquisition and applied linguistics. These standards provide guidance and support to ESOL teachers, assisting them in meeting the needs of their students.

For more information, see

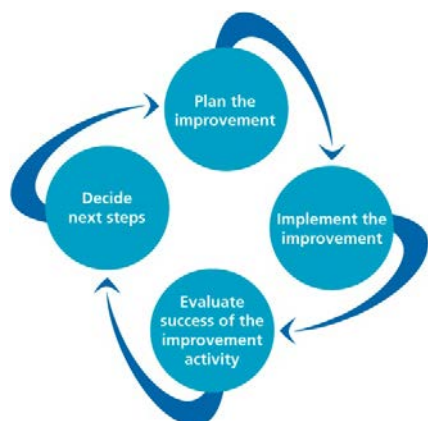
The Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult English Speakers of Other Languages at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pd/ESOLstandards.pdf>.

Program and Staff Development

Every program benefits from efforts to improve systems as well as individual staff members' skills and knowledge. A structured process, however, is needed to help the program and the individual staff manage these efforts to ensure that they are working toward a common goal or purpose. The full impact of the program and staff development efforts can best be achieved when the two are joined systematically. A program with a planning process in place is better able to respond to changing community needs and demographics, new initiatives, trends in technology, and staff turnover. Key steps in the continuous improvement planning process include:

- Assess program needs/strengths: look at each component and the interrelationship of components within the program (e.g. intake, orientation, curriculum development, instruction, assessment, advising, follow-up);
- Define and prioritize goals for program improvement, based on needs;
- Develop a continuous improvement (action/work) plan to meet goal(s) that incorporate individual staff development plans;

- Engage in activities to implement the plan in order to meet those goals and document these efforts; and
- Evaluate efforts and progress.



Planning for continuous program improvement should incorporate a process for collecting and using data to assess program needs and strengths and identify goals, to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan, revise the plan, and modify goals or identify new goals. At a minimum, the plan must include a staff review of the program's performance in relation to the Performance Standards and student assessment data.

The value of the planning process depends on the extent to which the documented plan is shared and discussed with staff.

Programs should have regularly scheduled staff meetings that

allow for the maximum possible participation of both full- and part-time staff in collaboratively reviewing and analyzing data, uncovering implications, drawing conclusions, and making decisions regarding program and classroom practice.

Retention

Research tells us that the factors students mention most as supporting persistence are a goal orientation (i.e., having specific goals as a reason for entering programs); personal relationships outside the program, including support of families, friends, and community groups; relationships inside the program, with teachers and students; and self-efficacy (i.e., their own belief that they can achieve goals and the determination to do so).

Programs are encouraged to offer supports, such as transportation and child care, and to develop collaborations and a system for referring students to services that are better equipped to help with barriers to persistence. A student may drop or stop out from classroom instruction but may be able to continue with a tutor or as a Distance Learning student.

Site Visits

Program Specialists visit programs at least once a year. One of the primary purposes of a site visit is to follow up and provide technical assistance in support of the program's implementation of its continuous improvement plan.

Staff Compensation

Staff are recorded on the budget and in SMARTT as follows:

- **Administrator (A):** Directors, Coordinators, any other staff who have overall supervising and administrative responsibilities
- **Professional (P):** Teachers, Advisors, Technology Coordinators, Program and Staff Development Facilitators, Community Planners, ADA Coordinators, Volunteer Tutoring Coordinators, Education Reintegration Counselors
- **Support (S):** Data Entry Staff, Clerical Staff, Support Staff

S If the Department determines that an agency is paying staff within any category more than 3% below what the Rates provide, the grant award will be lowered by the difference between what the Rates provide and what the program pays. To allow flexibility to offer some pay range with a job type, this is applied at the level of the *job category* (A, P, or S), rather than at the level of the *individual staff person*.

Compensation for teachers is calculated using a contact hourly rate by totaling the teaching hours and paid hours for class preparation, then multiplying this figure by the hourly rate, factoring in the fringe benefit rate, and dividing the result by the total teaching hours.

The Rates System supports three weeks of vacation per year for every grant funded staff person, pro-rated for part-time staff. If the program implements a policy of paying vacation time to part-time employees, vacation time may be paid from the grant for part-time, grant-funded staff based on the proportion of actual time worked on the grant compared to their full-time counterparts.



Student Achievement in Reading (STAR)

STAR is a national PD program focused on building reading skills of intermediate level (GLE 4.0-8.9) adult learners. This evidence-based approach is supported by research which found that mid-level learners struggle with one or more reading components: alphabetic, fluency, vocabulary, and/or comprehension. STAR requires teachers to use diagnostic assessments to identify learner strengths and weaknesses and target reading instruction accordingly.

CALCs and ABECIs with at least one Grade Level Equivalent (GLE) 4.0-8.9 class will participate, subject to annual appropriations, in the STAR project. Each year, up to 10 programs will be selected to participate. Participation includes six full days of training for the director and at least one teacher and implementation of the STAR model. Pending program performance and legislative appropriation, two years of support will be provided to implement the model; after which programs will be expected to continue implementation without additional funding.

For more information, see <http://www.startoolkit.org/about/>.

Student Leadership Development

Massachusetts has a long tradition of support for student leadership development through many venues including student health teams and community projects. Student leadership projects are an effective medium for contextualizing education, as students:

- research a topic of interest that is relevant in the program or community,
- teach other students about the topic,
- make and distribute brochures,
- develop and conduct surveys,
- participate in or facilitate informational fairs,
- arrange for related community activities or services at the program, and
- document and take action around community issues.

The power in student leadership teams is the purpose and focus around an issue of real concern, with the intention of making a change that has visible results.

Participation in such projects is transformational for learners and staff; along with the highly motivating personal growth that comes from being involved and being supported in projects

about real issues, student leaders develop new knowledge, skills, and awareness. While reading, writing, math, and technology skills are enhanced through student leadership projects, learners also develop communication, research, and presentation skills, and they develop knowledge about the economic and political environment surrounding community issues.

Targeted Intervention

ACLS has created a framework for accountability and assistance that mirrors ESE's accountability framework and is based on quantitative data and technical assistance or Targeted Intervention (TI) for underperforming programs. This framework provides a system for categorizing programs according to performance and assisting underperforming programs.

ACLS identifies programs for TI based on the framework, program performance data, feedback from ACLS program specialists, and other relevant information. ACLS publicizes the framework for accountability and assistance and provides information about the TI assistance that is made available to programs through SABES in venues such as regional meetings, the New Directors' Orientation, and the Directors' Meeting.

ACLS identifies Tier 4 programs annually based on performance data that is generally available in late September, and prioritizes Tier 4 programs for referral to SABES for TI. All programs that fall into Tier 4 must have the opportunity for assistance.

As resources allow, ACLS may also refer Tier 3 programs for TI, in consideration of such factors as a program's performance over recent past years, staffing changes, and monitoring or site visit findings about a program's alignment with the *Massachusetts Indicators of ABE Program Quality* and/or the *Massachusetts Policies for Effective ABE*.

After programs are notified, ACLS and SABES staff work with each other and with program staff according to established TI protocols. Continuing TI services may be offered to programs moving out of Tier 4 dependent on available resources.

The Rates System (The Rates)

The Rates System is the funding structure which generates the cost of a program's design based primarily on the total costs of classes. The Rates embed fundamental supports for learners and those who teach them; these supports are required elements of program design:

- A sequence of classes that provides instruction across grade levels;
- Instructional services of sufficient intensity and duration to help students develop the skills needed to transition to postsecondary education, training, and employment that provides a family-sustaining wage;
- A student-to-teacher ratio that defines class size to ensure effective learning environments;
- Pre-enrollment services, such as outreach, intake, orientation, and placement;
- Well-qualified and effective teachers who have mastery of the subjects they teach;
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with state standards;
- Access to advising; and
- Access to materials, technology, and other resources.

Within the Rates, there are two types of classes: rate-based classes, calculated on an established cost per student instructional hour and non-rate based classes, for which the cost is determined by the program.

The Department's rate per student instructional hour incorporates the costs associated with serving students (e.g., minimum salary rates and benefits for staff, class preparation time, class materials, advising, time for staff to plan, program and staff development, administration) and is determined by the teacher-to-student ratio for that class.

For more information about the Rates, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smardt/>.

Trainings

SMARTT and Cognos

Program performance, measured against state standards with data entered in SMARTT, has a significant impact on both a program's success in competing for funds and whether funding is continued throughout a multi-year cycle.

The *SMARTT New User* workshop, provided throughout the year by the SABES Center for Using SMARTT and Cognos provides hands-on introduction to SMARTT. The *New User* training provides an introduction to SMARTT including how SMARTT is used for accountability and program management; this training is required for new users of the SMARTT system. Cognos workshops cover accessing, filtering, and exporting SMARTT data and creating reports.

Workplace Education

Workplace education grants provide funding and support to education providers, in partnership with businesses and labor organizations, to meet current and escalating skill demands on the incumbent workforce. Grants for workplace education are awarded to eligible programs to provide instructional services in basic literacy, numeracy, computer skills, and ESOL. Projects are supported with a combination of state and local matching resources for a period of three years.

Providing educational services for adults at their workplace has many benefits including:

- 1) accommodations to adults' busy schedules;
- 2) contextualized instruction to meet the specific needs of the industry; and
- 3) retention of employment and/or job advancement.

Workplace education programs are funded in two phases. In Phase I, the partnership collaboratively plans for an educational program by conducting a workplace needs analysis.

Partnerships having completed a successful planning process are eligible for multi-year implementation grants (Phase II). This phase supports the following activities:

- governance through a planning and evaluation team, comprised of representatives from the business, education, and labor;
- classroom instruction; and
- curriculum documented and contextualized to the needs of the worker, students, the business, and the labor union.

For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/workplace/>.