

Guidelines for Effective ABE Transition

To

Community Colleges Programs

These guidelines were developed with input from the field as well as from other state and national resources.

The guidelines are divided into five categories:

- Eligibility
- Community College Requirements
- Student Services
- Staff Development
- Administration

The **Eligibility** section defines the eligible participants. The **Community College Requirement** section defines what is required in the Memoranda of Agreement. The **Student Services** section focuses on program design for classes, outreach and recruitment, intake, orientation, placement, curriculum and instruction, instructional materials, educational counseling/ADA coordination, retention, countable outcomes (student articulated goals), assessment, and follow-up. The **Staff Development** section focuses on the guidelines that a program must follow for professional development of staff. The **Administration** section focuses on the components of effective program management.

Participant Eligibility

To be considered for acceptance into an Adult Basic Education (ABE) Transition to Community Colleges Program, participants must have a minimum score of 500 on the Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test (MAPT) for Reading; and a minimum score of 400 on the MAPT for Math. No fewer than 80 % of the program's participants must have been previously enrolled in a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) funded Community Adult Learning Center (CALC). All participants must be able to participate in postsecondary level academic classes conducted in English. Participants who are non-native English speakers must have a Student Performance Level (SPL) of 8 or better as determined by the BEST Plus Assessment Test.

Community College Requirements

For a community college to participate in the ABE Transition to Community Colleges Program, the college must provide a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that addresses the following areas:

- Students enrolled in the program will have access to all college services including but not limited to Student Services, Financial Aid, and Student Activities.
- Students enrolled in the program will be issued college identification cards.
- The college will designate a College Administrator to be a member of the ABE Transition to Community Colleges Program Advisory Board.
- The college will ensure the continued support and integration of the Transition staff into the college community, e.g., appointment to faculty committees, attendance at college meetings, and technology connection as part of the college.

Also the community college must have a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of four (4) Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with ESE-funded Community Adult Learning Centers. The

college must provide for academic skills training at the Community Adult Learning Centers, and staffing and curricula should be coordinated between the college and the Community Adult Learning Centers. The following areas must be addressed in the MOA:

- Types and location of the various components of the program, i.e., counseling, academic classes, workshops, and seminars.
- Identification of the key contacts at both the community adult learning center and community college.
- Type, level and goals of academic skills training to be provided – must be in the reading, writing, or math areas.
- Staff responsible for providing academic skills training at the community adult learning centers.
- Fiscal agreement reflecting that no less than 10% of the total grant will support program activities at the partnering community adult learning centers.

Student Services

Program Design for Instructional Services

Supported by research and verified by practitioners, the cohort model is the most effective model for student persistence. Therefore, Transition Programs must offer at least one course, seminar or workshop series to the cohort of students at the community college site.

- Programs should identify students as being part of the ABE Transition to Community College Programs within the college community, (e.g., specific workshops and cohort for tutoring services or speakers).
- Programs should work with other college programs, such as Academic Support or Student Services, to ensure that the student is getting the most appropriate and supportive services possible at the college.

Frequency/Duration/Intensity

- Programs must provide services of sufficient frequency, duration, and intensity to enable students to reach their goals.
- Programs must ensure that students have the academic levels in reading, writing, and math as measured by the College Placement Test (CPT) needed to enter the higher level Developmental Courses or to access credit-bearing college courses after completing the ABE Transition to Community Colleges Program.
- Programs must provide classes for a minimum of one semester per year.
- Programs may offer either a one or two semester design with options for continuing in a program up to three semesters.
- Programs must identify the completion requirements and the time frame expected of a student to successfully finish the program.

Number of Students

Programs must serve no fewer than **twelve (12)** per semester.

Outreach and Recruitment

Programs must employ a variety of outreach and recruitment strategies in order to ensure that eligible students, those most in need of transition to college services, are aware of the program's services. These strategies must include developing a referral relationship with partnering Community Adult Learning Centers and GED Testing Centers.

Intake

- Programs must have a formal process in place for conducting student intake.
- Programs must capture the information that is required on the ESE Intake and Goal Form.
- Programs must 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 follow up.

Orientation

- Programs must provide all students with a timely orientation to program requirements.
- Programs must ensure that all students understand the information provided at orientation.

Placement

- Programs must use the required MAPT for initial/primary assessment in both reading and math.
- Programs must also use the CPT in the reading and math areas to determine the level of academic skill classes or developmental classes the student needs. If CPT scores indicate placement in the lowest level of the college's reading and or math development courses, the student must be enrolled at the Community Adult Learning Centers where services will be provided through the collaboration.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Curriculum development and instruction should be designed to support students in the acquisition of the skills and abilities needed to successfully transfer into a credit-bearing college class, program or work, and contribute to students' progress toward achieving their goals.
- Students' goals and objectives must be incorporated into the curriculum, shaping and updating it as students' needs change.
- The curricula and associated materials must reflect the diverse educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the students served as well as those of the broader community.
- Curricula should incorporate "authentic" real-life contexts that are responsive to the needs, skills, goals and interests of adult students in their roles as college students, family members, members of the community and lifelong learners.
- Instructors must integrate appropriate use of a variety of tools and technologies, e.g., audio-visual, computers, video, and calculators.

Integration of ABE and Workforce Development

In order to assist the many adult learners who have also identified employment-related goal e.g., getting a job, getting a better job, increasing earnings, or advancing in current job, the integration of ABE and workforce development is encouraged. Workforce development partners include but are not limited to: Career Centers; Local Workforce Investment Boards;

businesses; unions; the Department of Transitional Assistance; and skills training programs. Programs may provide services that integrate ABE Transition to Community Colleges Programs and workforce development:

- Transition programs may coordinate or integrate services with a workforce development partner and/or initiative.
- Transition programs may provide instructional services that align with employment related outcomes.

Role and Responsibilities of an Educational Counselor

Programs must have a designated Educational Counselor to provide, coordinate and document all counseling, and to provide learners with support services and guidance to assist them in meeting their educational goals. The Educational Counselor must also coordinate and work with the individual at both the Community Adult Learning Center and the college to ensure that the academic classes are meeting his/her needs for improvement and higher skill levels needed for college work.

Retention

Programs must employ a variety of strategies to promote student retention in order to ensure that students participate in the program long enough to reach their goals.

Countable Outcomes/Goals

Programs must have a student goal-setting process as follows:

- Goal setting should be done with a staff member who is likely to have an ongoing relationship with the student, e.g., counselors, and teachers.
- Goals must be determined by the student and negotiated with the counselor and/or director of the program.
- Student goals must inform instruction and be incorporated into a program's curriculum development process.
- Student goals must be revisited on a regular basis.
- The attainment of a student's goal(s) must be documented according to the Countable Outcomes policy. Refer to [Countable Outcomes Manual](#)

Assessment

Programs must follow ACLS Assessment Policy and Procedures.

- All staff administering and scoring assessments must have successfully completed training to appropriately administer and score the state-required tests and have certificates on file at their program site.
- Programs must conduct pre- and post-assessments for at least 70% of eligible students annually using designated DESE assessment procedures and policies.
- Refer to the [Assessment Policy and Procedures Manual](#)

Follow-up

Programs must use effective processes quarterly to follow up with students and former students to ascertain goal changes and achievements.

- Programs must establish protocols for follow-up services and assign staff to this function.
- Follow-up via the survey method of achievement of the following goals is required:

- Entered a certificate program at the community college.
- Entered a postsecondary education program, as a student in either the community college or other institution – may be part-time.
- Entered an employment-training program above the entry level.

Staff Development

2.5% of each staff member’s time (or 12 hours, whichever is greater) must be used for staff/professional development activities. This applies to both full and part-time staff. For example, a full time staff member working 40 hours/week throughout the year receives support for and is required to complete 52 hours of professional development each year.

Administration

ABE Transition to Community Colleges Programs must have administrative policies and procedures in place to ensure efficient and effective service delivery and to guarantee fiscal accountability.

Documentation of Services

Programs must maintain accurate documentation for all required and agreed-to services.

- An updated ABE Transition to Community Colleges Program staffing chart or equivalent documentation must be maintained on site to provide accurate details of how staff resources are assigned to all essential program functions. All staff must have a copy of the chart (absent confidential information) so that they fully understand what is expected of them and their colleagues.
- Programs must be able to demonstrate that required functions, e.g., counseling, staff development, are provided according to the approved budget.
- Programmatic and fiscal data collection and reporting systems are official records. Falsification of any required documentation or report may be grounds for immediate termination of the grant, return of grant funds and/or prosecution.
- Programs must maintain both programmatic and fiscal records for seven years.

Required Reporting

Programs must submit timely and accurate reports.

- Programs must input data at least monthly into the SMARTT database.
- Failure to submit/transmit timely and accurate reports will result in a suspension of further payments until ESE receives accurate and complete reports.

Required Trainings and Meetings

- System for Managing Accountability and Results through Technology (SMARTT) is a required training.
- Programs must have a minimum of one staff proficient in the SMARTT system.
- Programs must send one staff member to required SMARTT trainings.
- Programs must send one representative to the annual ABE Directors’ meeting in the fall.
- Programs must send one representative to ACLS sponsored meetings for Transitions Programs.

Program Planning

Programs must have a formal process in place for soliciting and incorporating student, staff, and Advisory Council input into program planning and evaluation.

- Programs must have an established process for collecting and using data to assist with daily operations, program planning, and continuous improvement.
- Programs are encouraged to have regularly scheduled staff meetings.

ABE Transition to Community Colleges Advisory Council

Programs must have an advisory council to provide input and information on those areas that affect the day-to-day operation and future planning of the program. The make-up of the council must include representatives from the following areas:

- College Administration (as indicated in the MOA)
- ESE-funded Community Adult Learning Center staff members
- Participants – present and/or past
- Representative from local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) or regional WIB
- Representative of program staff
- Other(s) as deemed appropriate by Program Administrator

Community Planning

Transitions Programs are required to participate in a community planning partnership led by an ESE-funded Community Adult Learning Center. If the community college also administers a Community Adult Learning Center grant and leads an ABE Community Partnership, the Transitions Program must be part of that partnership.

Programs must be part of a community planning partnership that is working towards the following goals:

- To ensure that the needs of all undereducated constituencies are accounted for, and that strategic plans are developed that identify how and when each constituency 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, and health and human services that students may need in order to successfully pursue their goals and aspirations.
- To ensure that adult basic education takes its place as a key ingredient in every organization, community, and regions' plans to improve the quality of life.

Fiscal Responsibilities

Grantees must operate programs using sound fiscal procedures that meet all state and federal requirements.

- Non-governmental grantees must submit an annual audit report to the ACLS grants liaison that segregates ESE adult education grants in a separate fund.
- The grant recipient will not use the award funds to pay for expenses that have been paid for by any other local, state, federal, or private award.
- Fiscal reports must be submitted by the deadline established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education unless the grant recipient acquires a prior written waiver. Failure to submit/transmit timely and accurate reports will result in a

suspension of further payments until the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education receives accurate and complete reports. Grants Information is available at <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/procedure/default.html>

Matching Funds:

Programs must provide fully auditable matching resources equal to at least 20% of the initial grant award for each year of the multi-year grant.

- The match must be fully documented, auditable and comprised of only directly allocable costs. Match cannot include indirect costs.
- The cost of equipment used solely for the Transition Program may be used as a matching expense in one of two ways. First, the cost of the equipment may be used as match for one year of the grant. Second, 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.

Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

Programs must meet the maintenance of effort requirement.

- The matching share of the funding must be a minimum of 20% of the grant award.
- The MOE/matching share committed in year one of a multi-year grant cannot be reduced without the Department's written approval.

Administrative Costs and Indirect Costs

Grantees shall NOT commit more than 25% of grant funds to administrative costs, including Indirect costs.

- Agencies with an ESE-approved indirect cost rate shall not receive more than a 5% indirect rate for adult education programs.
- Agencies with an approved federal indirect cost rate shall not receive more than an 8% indirect rate for adult education programs.
- The total of direct and indirect costs may NOT exceed your total grant award.
- In lieu of charging for indirect costs, grantees that provide an appropriate and detailed allocation of agency wide costs to programs may receive ESE approval to include them as direct costs.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

The required MOA with partnering Community Adult Learning Centers must include:

- a description of how grant funds will be allocated among the partnering organizations;
- a description of the roles and responsibilities of each partnering organization;
- an outline of the decision-making protocols; and
- protocols for terminating the partnership(s).

No Charges to Students

Programs must ensure that adults enrolled in ABE Transition to College Programs shall NOT be charged tuition, fees or any other charges or be required to purchase any books or materials for services funded by the grant.

Mandated Reporters of Abuse

All ABE and ESOL practitioners 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, court and public safety officials.
- Mandated reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a report. Non-mandated reporters are also protected, provided that the report was made in "good faith."
- Mandated reporters are protected from retaliation, and identities will be kept confidential.
- Mandated reporters who fail to file a report are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.
- The following table outlines the age, population, reporting agency and statute information for ABE mandated reporters:

AGE:	0 – 18 years old	18 – 59 years old	60+
Population:	Children	Disabled Adults	Elderly
Reporting Agency	Department of Social Services	Disabled Persons Protection Commission	Executive Office of Elderly Affairs
Statute	51A	19C	19A

Acknowledgement of Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Funding

Grant recipients must identify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as the entity supporting the delivery of services in any official correspondence, brochures, and publications.