**Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)**

**To**: Program Directors, Adult Basic Education Teachers

**Cc:** ACLS Staff, SABES Staff

**From**: Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, Adult Education State Director

**Re:** Teaching The Skills That Matter Academies

**Date**: May 25, 2021

## **Introduction**

“Another new ACLS initiative! When will I have time to fit this into my already busy schedule?”

Fear not! This is not yet another add-on. Nor is it a requirement to toss what you have been doing and try on new strategies. This is a unique opportunity to integrate a suite of relevant and rigorous instructional resources into your existing repertoire -- including high-quality lesson plans!

Research shows that the most important factor in student achievement is high quality teaching. To be most effective, teachers need to engage in professional development, expand their knowledge, sharpen their skills, and engage in collegial sharing and reflective practice. Research also shows that educator PD paired with coaching and careful instructional planning are more likely to lead to student outcomes.

If your students need:

* Transferrable **skills** that will help them succeed in the 21st century workplace such as:
* Adaptability and Willingness to Learn, Communication
* Critical Thinking
* Interpersonal Skills
* Navigating Systems
* Problem-Solving
* Processing and Analyzing Information
* Respecting Differences and Diversity
* Self-Awareness
* Instruction focused on **topics** relevant to their lives:
  + Civics Education
  + Digital Literacy
  + Workforce Preparation
  + Financial Literacy
  + Health Literacy

and

* **Instructional approaches** that blend academic skills and meaningful, relevant content through:
  + problem-based learning
  + project-based learning, and
  + integrated and contextualized instruction,

then **Teaching the Skills that Matter** is the right fit for you.

[**Teaching the Skills that Matter (TSTM)**](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education) in adult education is an OCTAE-funded project with American Institute for Research (AIR) designed to support states and WIOA-funded grantees in teaching critical content while improving instruction. TSTM trains teachers to integrate the [skills](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education) that matter to adult students using [approaches](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education)that work across critical [topics](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education) **(e.g., digital literacy, civics, workforce preparation).** Using the project's tools and training, teachers can teach the transferable skills students need in these critical contexts.

Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) is pleased to offer two types of TSTM professional development opportunities designed to increase the rigor in curriculum and instruction:

* Option 1: TSTM Academy
* Option 2: TSTM Train-the-Trainer Academy

**TSTM Statewide Support At-a-Glance**

| **Key Elements** | **Option 1: TSTM Academy** | **Option 2: TSTM Train-the-Trainer Academy** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Eligibility | All CALC and AECI eligible to apply | Teachers of any level and content area from ACLS-funded programs (CALC, AECI) |
| Priority | Depending on the # of applications, priority may be given to:   * Programs with low MSG performance * Programs with low PQR ratings in curriculum and instruction | Teachers from ACLS-funded programs |
| Number per year | Two different programs selected per year | One cohort of twenty teachers per year |
| Start and end dates | 10 months   * Start: September 2021 * End: June 2022 | 10 months   * Start: September 2021 * End: June 2022 |
| Hours per month | Approximately 10 hours | Approximately 10 hours |
| Financial support | $35,000 budget increase per program per year | Teacher project hours paid through budget increase to their program |
| Type of PD | Intensive customized TSTM PD based on program’s specific needs | TSTM train-the-trainer PD |
| Application information | Application must be submitted in [WizeHive](https://webportalapp.com/webform/fy22-tstmacademy-optionone) by program leader | Application must be submitted in [WizeHive](https://webportalapp.com/webform/fy22-tstmtttacademy-optiontwo) by individual teachers |
| **Note: Teachers cannot participate in option 1 and option 2.** | |

## **Option 1-TSTM Academy**

This professional development opportunity **offers ten months of intensive and collegial curriculum and instructional training and support** in the main tenets of the TSTM framework and is designed to provide the resources that result in implementation of rigorous, relevant, and engaging curriculum and instructional supports using the [TSTM toolkit](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education).

This opportunity will run for a period of three years (September 2021 through June 2023). **Each year**, **two adult education programs** will be selected to participate for a period of ten months (September to June). The selected programs will receive **a budget increase of $35,000** to pay participating staff and for other eligible TSTM-related costs.

All CALC and AECI programs may apply. Depending on the number of applications received, ACLS may give priority to programs that did not meet their FY2019 measurable skill gains (MSG) target or to programs that received a *limited* *evidence* or *developing* rating in the Curriculum and Instruction Indicator of Program Quality (IPQ) as a result of a Program Quality Review (PQR) visit.

Selected programs must commit to participating in a rigorous, ten-month professional development opportunity **led by two of the Massachusetts TSTM lead coaches.** Interested programs must submit an application in WizeHive at this link: <https://webportalapp.com/webform/fy22-tstmacademy-optionone>

**Application deadline is June 30, 2021.**

For questions, please contact Dana Varzan-Parker, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Policy Coordinator, at [dana-varzan-parker@mass.gov](mailto:dana-varzan-parker@mass.gov).

**Goals**

* Teacher Goals
  + Create consistent teacher knowledge base on the core components of TSTM
  + Increase instructional rigor by adopting and adapting TSTM at all instructional levels
  + Integrate TSTM in the program’s curriculum
* Program Capacity Goals
  + Build capacity for TSTM teacher collaboration leadership
  + Enhance reflection and continuous professional learning
* Student Outcome Goals
  + Increase student attendance and engagement
  + Increase student MSG outcomes

**Key Activities**

* Pre-training:
  + Close reading of the materials in the TSTM toolkit (e.g., lesson plans, issue briefs)
* Training:
  + 9 two-hour virtual monthly meetings with TSTM coaches
  + 1 two-hour virtual instructional webinar
* Post-training:
  + Adaptation and teaching of the lessons in the TSTM toolkit
  + Observations of TSTM lessons by TSTM coaches
  + Feedback on classroom instruction from TSTM coaches
  + Customized support for integrating TSTM in the program’s curriculum
  + Discussion in the online professional learning community (PLC)
* End-of-year presentation of TSTM lessons learned and artifacts (e.g., lesson plans and materials, lesson recordings)
* A commitment to infuse TSTM across the program

**Time commitment**

* September-June (ten months)\*
* Approximately 10 hours per month:
  + 2 hours for monthly meeting with TSTM coaches
  + 2 hours to participate in PLC
  + 6 hours for material reading, lesson planning, and other TSTM related activities as needed

\*Programs with an approved class plan that ends before June must contact Dana Varzan-Parker for details before applying.

**Expected composition of selected programs’ teams**

* ESOL teachers (see paragraph below)
* ABE teachers (see paragraph below)
* Program director (strongly recommended but not required)

The applicant may include up to 25 teachers in this project. Depending on the size of the program, this could be all the teachers or a subset of teachers (e.g., all ESOL or all ABE teachers). Programs that propose selective participation of teaching staff must ensure that the participating team includes teachers representative of all levels and services offered at the program (i.e., ESOL and ABE if the program serves both). Programs whose teams do not represent all levels and services must provide a rationale in their application.

**Key responsibilities of participating program staff**

* **Teachers:**
* Participate in 9 two-hour monthly meetings and 1 two-hour training webinar
* Read materials from the TSTM toolkit
* Teach a limited number of TSTM lessons from the TSTM toolkit
* Be active in monthly meetings and the professional learning community
* Share lesson plans and materials related to TSTM in the PLC and the designated LMS
* Occasionally record TSTM classes and share the recordings in the PLC and designated LMS
* Participate in the end-of-year celebration of TSTM lessons learned and artifacts
* Disseminate practices learned in the training (e.g., via workshop/webinars, ACLS Directors’ Meeting, Network conference)
* **Program Director and/or Program Coordinator and/or Curriculum Coordinator:**
* Participate in 1 two-hour training webinar
* Familiarize themselves with parts of the TSTM toolkit
* Oversee and support TSTM integration efforts throughout the program’s curriculum and instruction
  + Promote the learning, growth, and success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes TSTM the central focus of curriculum and instruction
  + Ensure an effective learning environment and dedicated resources to implement TSTM as appropriate
  + Promote the success of all staff participating in TSTM by nurturing and sustaining a program culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for TSTM participants

## **Option 2-TSTM Train-the-Trainer Academy**

This professional development opportunity **offers ten months of intensive instructional training and support** in the main tenets of the TSTM framework and is designed **to train a cohort of teachers** who in turn will train other teachers in their organizations to integrate the [skills](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education) that matter, using three instructional [approaches](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education) across critical [topics](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education) **(e.g., digital literacy, civics, workforce preparation)** using the [TSTM toolkit](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/civics-education).

This opportunity will run for a period of three years (September 2021 through June 2023). **Each year**, **one cohort of 20 teachers** from various adult education programswill be selected to participate for a period of ten months (September to June). The selected teachers will be paid to participate in the training and for other eligible TSTM-related costs.

Teachers of any levels and subject areas from CALC or AECI programs may apply.

Selected teachers must commit to participating in a rigorous, ten-month professional development opportunity **led by two of the Massachusetts TSTM lead coaches.** Interested teachers must submit an application in WizeHive at this link: <https://webportalapp.com/webform/fy22-tstmtttacademy-optiontwo> .

**Application deadline is June 30, 2021.**

For questions, please contact Dana Varzan-Parker, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Policy Coordinator, at [dana-varzan-parker@mass.gov](mailto:dana-varzan-parker@mass.gov).

**Goals**

* Teacher Goals
  + Create consistent teacher knowledge base on the core components of TSTM
  + Increase instructional rigor by adopting and adapting TSTM at all instructional levels
  + Integrate TSTM in the program’s curriculum
* Program Capacity Goals
  + Build capacity for TSTM teacher collaboration leadership
  + Enhance reflection and continuous professional learning
* Student Outcome Goals
  + Increase student attendance and engagement
  + Increase student MSG outcomes

**Key Activities**

* Pre-training:
  + Close reading of the materials in the TSTM toolkit (e.g., lesson plans, issue briefs)
* Training
  + 9 two-hour virtual monthly meetings with TSTM coaches
  + 1 two-hour virtual instructional webinar
* Post-training:
  + Adaptation and teaching of the lessons in the TSTM toolkit
  + Observations of TSTM lessons by TSTM coaches
  + Feedback on classroom instruction from TSTM coaches
  + Discussion in the online professional learning community (PLC)
* End-of-year presentation of TSTM lessons learned and artifacts (e.g., lesson plans and materials, lesson recordings)

**Time commitment**

* September-June (ten months)
* Approximately 10 hours per month:
  + 2 hours for monthly meeting with TSTM coaches
  + 2 hours to participate in PLC
  + 6 hours for material reading, lesson planning, and other TSTM related activities as needed

**Eligibility**

* Teach in an ACLS-funded program (e.g., community colleges, community-based organizations, school districts, correctional institutions)
* Currently teach at least one ongoing class (of any level) in ESOL, adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), high school equivalency (HSE), or integrated English literacy and civics education (IELCE)
* Have class(es) with consistent, stable enrollment

**Preferred Qualifications**

* Flexible, reflective, and highly motivated
* Receptive to feedback on teaching practice
* Desire to seek continuous improvement
* Strong communication and presentation skills

**Key responsibilities of participating teachers**

* Participate in 9 two-hour monthly meetings and 1 two-hour training webinar
* Read materials from the TSTM toolkit
* Teach a limited number of TSTM lessons from the TSTM toolkit
* Be active in monthly meetings and the professional learning community
* Share lesson plans and materials related to TSTM in the PLC and the designated LMS
* Occasionally record TSTM classes and share the recordings in the PLC and designated LMS
* Participate in the end-of-year celebration of TSTM lessons learned and artifacts
* Disseminate practices learned in the training (e.g., via workshop/webinars, ACLS Directors’ Meeting, Network conference)
* Commit to training fellow teachers at their program in TSTM in the next school year