

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section is an opportunity for applicants to request clarification and pose questions related to the FY2006-FY2010 Multi-Year RFP for Adult Basic Education.

This section is not intended to answer specific program-related questions or to provide advice or guidance regarding individual proposals. Questions will be sorted and posted in accordance with the layout of the RFP.

## **Edited Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Answers**

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### **I. Standard Application**

1. I am planning to collaborate with the local library and a local housing project in order provide additional classes that will sequence with classes held at our main site. Space will be provided by these entities as in kind match but no DOE money will be directly subcontracted to them. Do these entities sign on to schedule C? I assume they require a memorandum of agreement at the very least.

***Answer: Schedule C is used to record the commitment of multiple organizations to pursue a coordinated project outlined in the grant narrative. Signing schedule C indicates that the collaborators have participated in the planning and design of the project and agree to support and participate in the activities outlined in the application. Memoranda of Agreement should be submitted in Appendix D in support of Part III – Required Program Information. Applicants should design their own appendices.***

2. Where can I find my district code?

***Answer: For currently funded DOE programs, the district code is the last four digits of your grant project number. For new applicants coming in under a school system (i.e., LEA), the district code is your LEA code preceded by the number zero. For all other new applicants, this code will be determined at a later date should you be awarded funding.***

3. When answering a question in the RFP, can we give a brief response to keep within the 25-page limit, and then state something like "see Appendix A"? For example, to the question, "Describe how the program design addresses serving the adult learners.....," I might answer by saying that the \_\_\_\_ adult education center is addressing the needs of adult learners by ..... and see Appendix A for further information and explanation. Also we might want to show a flow chart of student services in the appendices. Is this OK to do and will the complete answer including the Appendix be evaluated? OR, are you saying that the only appendix to be included is what you have asked for?

***Answer: Applicants must adhere to the specific requests for information within each of the appendices submitted. Additional or supplemental information that is submitted beyond the information explicitly requested in the RFP will not be considered as part of the application.***

4. What information should be included in Section I, Part A, #1?

***Answer: No information is required from applicants in Section I A1. Applicants should use the chart of need-based points in A1 to respond to Item A2.***

5. Cambridge is listed to be eligible for one program only. Like Boston, the city of Cambridge contributes significant matching funds. Based on the size of the local matching funds, will the Department consider applications for more than one program in Cambridge?

***Answer: The Department will increase the number of eligible grantees from one to two in Cambridge based on the community's significant matching contribution.***

6. This is a repeat question in that I do not recall getting a response. The question is whether the information submitted for section I (Community Needs and Assets) and Section II (Organizational Capacity) has to be repeated for the Program Service Options of the Proposal?

***Answer: Each Program Service Option has a specific set of questions and additional pages for responses are allowed. The responses to these questions should be answered so that the readers have an understanding of your community's assets and needs and your organization's capacity relative to implementing the Program Service Options.***

7. We cannot find Schedule A this year. Is there no longer a form to be used?

***Answer: Do not use Schedule A. Please submit a Memorandum of Agreement in Appendix D to capture sub-contractual agreements.***

8. We are trying to determine the appropriate person to sign as the "Local ABE Advisory Council" on the Statement of Assurances form. We are a multiple collaboration (9 learning centers) and we, the lead agency, have five sites. How should we determine which local advisory council to use? Thank you.

***Answer: The Statement of Assurances requires signatures of the lead agency as the party responsible for implementation of the grant. Therefore, use one of the advisory councils of the lead agency.***

9. Are the appendices included in the 25 page limit or is it just the narrative?

***Answer: The appendices are not part of the 25 page Section I thru Section VI limit. The appendices must be included in the overall proposal pagination.***

10. For program options 1-6 there is a page limit of 15, 12point font. Are there margin limits as well? Can you have 1/2" or less margins top/bottom and side?

***Answer: Each Program Option has a specific page limit. All narrative must be submitted in 12point type and single-spaced. Option 1 Homeless –15 pages; Option 2 Participatory Health – 5 pages; Option 3 Family Literacy – 6 Pages; Option 4***

11. Regarding Appendices:

a. Are current resumes required or optional? If resumes are not required, what must be submitted?

***Appendix B/ current resumes and job descriptions of key personnel are required for proposals 340/345/359/285/563/and 287.***

b. Section II.B.1 of the RFP says, "or provide a chart in appendix B. . ." At the bidders' conference, we were told that the chart could take the place of resumes, so in that case we would submit a chart and job descriptions. Is this answer a change to that information?

***Answer: Applicants may submit the actual resumes of key personnel or a chart summarizing the qualifications of key staff in Appendix B. Job descriptions should be included in all proposals.***

c. Are there appendices that DOE does not want programs to submit with their proposals, e.g. lesson plans, support letters, and reports of achievements?

***Answer: Required appendices are listed in Table 2 of the RFP. Additional materials submitted with the proposal will not be read.***

12. I am wondering, when you say to staple the Part II Budget Detail pages on top of the corresponding Part III Required Program Information, do you mean that they should be only stapled and not also bound, or should be stapled and bound as all the other pages will be bound? Is the intent to have the Part II Budget Detail pages able to be removed from the proposal in which case binding them is not what you have in mind? Please clarify this for me.

***Answer: The Part II Budget Detail and corresponding Narrative should be stapled on top of the corresponding Part III required Program Information pages and bound into the document.***

13. What are the required margins? I could not find any information on that in the proposal.

***DOE did not set required margins for this proposal. The applicant should consider readability when setting their text margins.***

14. Is it ok to bring the grant to DOE instead of mailing it and if so, where should it be Handed in?

***Answer: Proposals addressed to Charlene Collins, Fiscal Liaison ACLS may be hand delivered to DOE Reception by 3 P.M. Monday, January 10, 2005.***

15. Does the whole proposal need to be paginated including detailed budget pages, budget narratives, SMARTT plans and all appendices? If not which parts need to be paginated?

***Answer: The entire proposal needs to be paginated from beginning to end.***

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## II. Regional Allocation

1. The RFP lists the allocations per region but not the maximum amount of a grant award. Is there a maximum grant award for this RFP?

***Answer: There is no minimum or maximum grant award.***

2. One person in our partnership stated that if a community in a region does not apply for ABE, the SDA will distribute the funds to the community via another method. Is that true?

***Answer: DOE Funds distributed through LWIBs/SDAs will be allocated based on the results of the RFP competitive process.***

3. Our Agency currently has programs in two separate locations that are 25 miles apart. I am planning to propose programs for both locations. They will both be collaborations. Should I apply separately for each location?

***Answer: An applicant submitting proposals in more than one SDA needs to submit separate proposals for the services that will be provided in each SDA. An applicant may submit more than one proposal within the same SDA. The Department of Education (DOE) cannot advise an applicant regarding the number of proposals to submit within an SDA.***

4. I noticed that on 10/29/2004 the Table 1 Allocation Chart was "corrected" or "updated" on the RFP website. I also noted that the amount of funding allocated for my region was decreased somewhat from the original Table 1 published last week.

Could you please explain:

- a. Why the regional allocations chart was changed? and
- b. The impact of this change in terms of allocations for different regions?

***Answer: a. The allocation chart that was originally included in the RFP and posted on the web was an incomplete and incorrect working draft. The incorrect chart had no impact on the formula that was used to determine FY 2006 allocations. On October 29, the correct version was posted on the web and inserted into the RFP.***

***b. The FY 2006 allocation formula is based on the FY 2005 funding amount for each region minus 5% of the total with the exception of the Boston region, which had a 10% reduction. The funds subtracted from the regional allocations have been added together to be used as set-aside funds.***

5. Is there a limit as to the amount of grant money an applicant can request? Is there a percentage? Is the sky the limit?

***Answer: This is an open and competitive application and funding request will be based on the program the applicant proposes. The DOE cannot answer program specific questions or provide advice or guidance regarding individual proposals.***

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### III. Set Aside Funds

1. On another issue, please explain "Set-aside Funds". We know what it can be propose a set-aside funded initiative and our program is not funded at the level requested, will we be held to providing it? What is the range/limit for each set-aside area (other than student leadership)?

***Answer: Program design funding including set asides will be awarded as a result of the RFP process. Set aside funds are not included in the Regional Allocations. See Table I of the RFP. There are no limits on the amount of set-aside funds (other than student leadership) that can be requested by a program. However, programs should note that there is a limited amount of set-aside funds.***

2. Is the page limit for the set-asides, 3 pages per set-aside?

***Answer: No. The page limit is three pages total no matter how many set-asides you apply for.***

1. We did not check off student transportation when we sent in the letter of intent. Does this mean that we cannot take students on field trips?

***Answer: The student transportation set aside is intended to support student transportation to and from the program. A program may use unrestricted foundation funds for field trip transportation.***

2. Since child care monies are a set-aside – do the child care workers go on the staff chart?

***Answer: All staff paid with grant funds must appear on the staff chart.***

3. In the past I have purchased bus tokens for class-related student transportation with supply money. I didn't think to check off Student Transportation in our letter of intent but I do want to continue to supply students who can't afford busfare to class with tokens. Should this item (under \$700) be in the set aside category even though I didn't check it off in the letter of intent, or should it be included in supplies as in the

past?

***Answer: Applicants may request set-aside funds for services not checked in the letter of intent. If an applicants requests set-aside funds, they may or may not be awarded.***

4.. In reference to Set Aside Category Space: Is this where programs list rental and utility costs? In the past programs could include rental expenditures under Foundation Funding as unrestricted? Can programs continue to request for unrestricted funds for rental costs?

***Answer: Applicants requesting set aside funds for space must respond to Section VII part A. 1. a and b. Applicants may also choose to use unrestricted foundation funding for rental costs.***

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## **IV. Letter of Intent to Apply**

1. We are a large urban program currently funded by DOE. While our primary service community is the one in which the program is located, we do service a small percentage of residents of surrounding towns because there are no ABE programs there. Additionally, we service students in our evening program from 2 communities that each has a DOE funded program, but have no night classes in ABE. Our questions are as follows:

- When responding to question A. 1. of Section I, do we list only the city that provides us with our cash and in-kind match? Or do we name all the communities that we have been serving? If that is the case, averaging the points assigned should include the 2 communities with DOE funded programs, but no night classes, correct?
- We have had no formal agreements of collaboration with any of these communities. However, they are listed on the ABE Needs Chart as needing to collaborate for funding. The 2 DOE funded programs are in communities that each will qualify to have a program according to the "Distribution Based on Population" column. In order to continue to can we can continue as we do now? Is our proposal strengthened if we do enter into formal collaborative?

***Answer: As stated in the Letter of Intent applicants who propose to site (provide) classes in more than one community should list each community in which the applicant proposes to provide services.***

2. Can one program be included in more than one Letter of Intent?

***Answer: Yes, a program may be included in more than one Letter of Intent. For example, a program could submit a Letter of Intent as a lead agency and be included in another Letter of Intent as a subcontractor.***

3. If an agency intends to submit proposals in different SDAs, should we submit a separate letter of intent for each area or just list the different communities on one letter of intent form?

***Answer: An applicant planning to submit proposals in different SDAs needs to submit a Letter of Intent for each SDA. Funding amounts are allocated through the SDA region.***

4. If we are not yet sure if we are submitting a proposal as a "single organization" or as a "lead of a collaboration" which box do we check on the letter of intent form? If we check "applying as a single organization" will we be able to change our course and actually apply as a "lead agency of a collaboration" and/or vice versa?

***Answer: An applicant in their Letter of Intent may check both applying as a single organization and as the lead agency for a collaboration. A program may be included in more than one Letter of Intent. For***

*example, a program could submit a Letter of Intent as a lead agency and also be included in another Letter of Intent as a subcontractor.*

5. What is your definition of a collaboration? Does it have to be financial in nature? Do non-financial arrangements with other agencies qualify as collaborations? If an agency provides free space or a match does that qualify as a collaboration?

***Answer: For the purpose of this RFP, a collaboration is a working relationship or partnership. A collaboration may be financial but it does not have to be financial.***

6. If our organization is currently receiving funding from DOE in one or more locations, and we are applying this time for funding in a new, different location, is our agency considered a "direct recipient" or a "new applicant" on the letter of intent form?

***Answer: Currently funded programs should apply as direct recipients in their Letter of Intent***

7. For both the letter of intent and the proposal, should the authorized signature come from the Executive Director of an agency, or from the President of the Board of Directors? Does it matter?

***Answer: Documents should be signed in blue ink, by the organization's authorized signatory (e.g., Superintendent, Executive Director, President).***

8. When might the Department release a list of applicants who submitted a letter of intent by region? Also, will we receive information regarding our past performance score prior to submission?

***Answer: The list of organizations that have submitted Letters of Intent to Apply will be posted soon. Past performance scores will be provided to the reading team after proposals are submitted.***

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## **V. Community Adult Learning Centers**

### **Community Assets and Needs**

1. In quoting evidence based research or stating information from Assets and Needs reports, is there a format that should be used? For instance, should an applicant attach a list of all the primary and secondary methods used to collect data for the Assets and Needs report to "Part III - Required Program Information" when answering the first question?

***Answer: The DOE has not set a particular format for responses to the narrative questions. Page 7 of the RFP lists the required appendices. No additional appendices will be accepted.***

2. In describing the community (or communities) an applicant proposes to serve, do they include other communities within their region if they enroll students from those other communities on a "space available" basis?

***Answer: Applicants are to list the communities in which their program/sites are located.***

3. In Part III: Section I: Community Assets and Needs -- B.1 asks for both primary and secondary data sources. Would you kindly clarify what you are seeking here? I assume primary data sought would include information from the census 2000? Would you provide example(s) of secondary data?

*Answer: Primary data is data collected from an original source by the applicant (e.g., interviews, focus groups, email exchanges, surveys). Secondary data is edited data collected by a third party and used by the applicant (e.g. Local Workforce Investment Board Blueprints, Census 2000, internet resources, information from newspapers and television).*

### **Needs Points Value**

1. A particular town within our workforce investment area has been assigned a "needs point value" of 3 given the census data, but local community planning survey data may show a hidden need for ABE/ESOL services. If a provider uses this data to assess and document the need and then applies to provide services in that town, will the DOE value this data equally and consider the application for funding?

*Answer: Applicants have an opportunity to provide a further description of the need in their community in their response to Part III Required Program Information, Section I B.1.*

*Without knowing the quality of the data that the applicant plans to submit, it is impossible to determine its "value." DOE will review all data/documentation within the established page limitations that document the need for ABE services, but such data will not change the need points provided in the ABE Needs Chart Based on Census 2000. Supplemental information not requested and submitted in an appendix will not be considered as part of the application.*

2. Some of our students come from surrounding communities. When we calculate the number of need points to assign to our proposal, do we include surrounding communities?

*Answer: The number of need points to assign is based on the physical location of your program and its site.*

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### **Organization Capacity**

1. Are teachers in the category of "key staff" when including staff resumes and job descriptions in Appendix B?

*Answer: Teachers can be included as "key staff" when responding to RFP Section II B. question #1 (Organizational Capacity). However, it is not necessary to include the resumes of all teachers.*

2. In section II., A., 3. we are asked to describe in narrative form how the larger organization will support the proposed ABE program. For an LEA, should the school system organization be included in the organizational chart or should the chart simply show the organization of the ABE program since we will have already described our support from Central Office?

*Answer: Applicants may submit two organizational charts, if they are part of a larger organization. One chart could reflect the ABE program's position within the larger organization and the second chart could reflect the organization of the ABE program.*

3. Regarding Section I, are we responding to with reference to the parent organization or to the ABE arm of the parent organization. Our program is part of an LEA and often times grants are looking for the capacity of the parent organization to manage the grant. The definition of "organization" is somewhat unclear.

*Answer: If the applicant is part of a larger organization, the applicant should describe how the larger organization would support the proposed ABE program including the fiscal management of the grant. If the applicant is part of an LEA, the applicant should explain how the LEA would support the ABE program.*

*For further clarification, see Question 2 above.*

4. In "Section II. A. 1. Organization Capacity--Provide a brief summary of the organization's history, goals, and key achievements." In reference to goals, do you mean past goals that have been set and achieved or goals that have been set for FY06 as part of the new proposal?

*Answer: An applicant should respond to this question in a manner that will clearly summarize the organization's history, goals, and achievements for the reading team. The purpose of this question is to provide applicants an opportunity to demonstrate their organization's capacity to carry out the program that they are proposing.*

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### **Profile of Proposed Services**

1. Is the formula for program development in the Guidelines for Effective ABE correct? The formula reads to multiply the total number of student instructional hours by 3.5% to determine the amount of funding for program development.

*Answer: No, the formula for program development in the Guidelines is incorrect. The correct formula for program development is to multiply the total number of staff hours by 3.5%.*

2. Please clarify what is meant by "academic ranges" in the Community Adult Learning Center (Basic Proposal) RFP, Section III. D. 4.

*Answer: "Academic ranges" refers to the SPL or GLE levels of students.*

3. Is it required that an applicant propose activities or projects that integrate workforce development for the five-year period of the grant? Does the Memorandum of Agreement with a workforce development partner have to be for five years?

*Answer: The expectation is that applicants will propose projects or activities for FY06 in response to the RFP. Funded projects will be evaluated for effectiveness prior to the end of the fiscal year. Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) should focus on the project that is being proposed for FY06. However, the MOA should reflect a commitment to the partnership that extends beyond one year.*

4. Under Section III, Profile of Services, D4, what do you mean when you say, "Include the percentage of students who have access to technology" and "Identify the academic ranges of the students who have access to technology?"

*Answer: DOE wants to know the percentage of students who have access to technology at your program sites not in their homes, libraries, etc. Academic ranges refer to GLEs and/or SPLs.*

5. Would it be acceptable to reference earlier question responses to in your proposed program narrative should they pertain to the question you are currently composing a response to?

*Answer: The DOE cannot advise a program on matters of style in responding to the narrative questions of the RFP. The applicant should however keep the readers in mind when compiling the narrative.*

6. Can a program offer a GED class only at a location other than where they already have three levels of classes?

***Answer: If a program offers a full sequence of three, additional sections of any level class may be offered providing the class follows the required guidelines. If a program offers a single class at a separate site, it must be able to provide a rationale for offering a particular level of instruction at a separate site***

7. Does Section III, Letter B, #1 require any narrative response? Or is the submission of the required SMARTT elements as listed under this number sufficient?

***Answer: In addition to the electronic submission of the SMARTT Plan, applicants are required to submit hard copies of the elements listed in Section III.B in Appendix C. No additional Narrative is required.***

8. The community we serve can only apply as a collaboration. Two neighboring communities (under 5 miles away, can also apply only as a collaboration). Together, the communities are eligible for a program. The 3 communities recognize our center as the community ALC in the region. Almost all students drive or carpool. Is it mandatory to site classes in the 2 neighboring communities when the existing ALC meets their needs?

***Answer: It is not mandatory to have a site in each community that is part of a collaborative proposal.***

9. We are a program that is sited in four different neighborhoods--with three of the four having full programs with continuum for the different class sequences. My question is regarding the Foundation Unrestricted line, for which "each grantee receives \$8,000 in unrestricted funding." Am I to understand that to mean each applicant receives no more than \$8,000 (unless being funded below \$100,000 or between \$100,000 and \$125,000, or because I have multiple sites in different areas of the city I may request more than the \$8,000 in light of the fact that we operate three (actually four) distinct programs, even though we make one application for funding?

***Answer: Regardless of how many program sites are operated and different communities are served, each grantee is eligible for a maximum of \$8,000 in unrestricted foundation funding. Grantees funded at less than \$125,000 are eligible for additional foundation funding as described in the Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education.***

10. If an applicant represents a collaborative of neighboring programs how is foundation funding handled? Does the collaborative multiply the foundation amounts by the number of programs in the collaborative?

***Answer: For the purpose of this application, the collaborative does not multiply the foundation amount by the number of programs in the collaborative. The applicant should base its budget on the amount of foundation funding assigned to one program. The distribution of funding within the collaboration can be determined by the collaboration.***

11. Now that EDP must be rate-based, can EDP and GED classes share a sequence of 3? In other words, can a sequence be 1. ABE 2. PreASE 3. GED or EDP? Or does EDP need its own sequence? Can EDP meet fewer hours than the other classes in its sequence--for example the ABE and PreASE meet 8 hours per week, the EDP class meets 5 or 6?

***Answer: Programs should not count EDP/ADP classes as part of the sequence of three classes required for ABE programs. Programs must offer at least a sequence of three classes at the same part of the day to allow students with constraints on their schedules to progress through all three levels. ADP/EDP classes may be offered in a sequence of two. ADP/EDP classes do not need to reflect the same program design as ABE and Pre-ASE classes, however, all classes must meet the minimum requirements for frequency, duration, and intensity.***

12. In preparing the class plan, how does a program represent slots shared with Even Start?

***Answer: For the purpose of this application, slots assigned to Even Start should be listed as non-DOE.***

13. How do programs go about funding out stationing staff at the Career Centers i.e. are the funds to be used for out stationing staff part of the rates based funding or is there another means to defray this expense? Who makes the determination with regard to out stationing with the local Career Center? Should **ALL** programs be informed to apply for this funding? Or is this the decision made after the funding recommendations have been made ---therefore no programs should be applying for this pot of money?

***Answer: The out-stationing of ABE staff in career centers is a service option that is the responsibility of ACLS to negotiate and assign, rather than a service option that programs apply for funding through a competitive process. Out-stationed staff represent the ACLS-funded ABE system in a specific region, assisting career center staff to appropriately provide intake, assessment, and referral services to their customers and utilizing the service options available throughout the funded network of ABE programs in the region. Out-stationing is not a competitively bid option, but rather, a negotiated agreement with the understanding and collaboration of all ABE programs in the region. Do not include the cost of out-stationing in your proposal.***

14. Our program has an out-stationed counselor in our Career Center. Currently for '05's program Plan in SMARTT, the salary for this position is listed under "Other" in the Flex Funding column. Where do I put this info in the '06 Program Plan? There is no "Other" category.

***Answer: See Above. Do not include the cost of out-stationing personnel at the Career Center in your proposal.***

15. Are there existing guidelines for workplace education? How can a program get a copy of these?

***Answer: Adult and Community Learning Services will be releasing a Workplace Education RFP in early December. Guidelines for workplace education will be posted with the RFP.***

16. Will the worksite RFP be open to existing worksite programs, or only new programs? Can an existing worksite program apply for a 345 grant?

***Answer: Businesses that have received three or more years of DOE funding are no longer eligible to receive DOE Workplace Education grants. An education provider currently funded in partnership with a business is eligible to apply for future workplace education funding with a new business partner. Applicants for DOE funding must meet the eligibility criteria for the appropriate fund code as provided in the RFP.***

17. Should applicants request a MOA from the Career Centers that outlines the activities the Career Centers agree to provide students/staff or does the MOA between DOE and the Career Centers suffice? Where can the MOAs between DOE and the Career Centers be viewed?

***Answer: The MOA that exists between the Department of Education and the Career Centers outlines the roles and responsibilities of our respective agencies in the implementation of WIA Title II. If the applicant is proposing activities/projects with its local Career Center, a separate MOA between the applicant and the Career Center should be included in the RFP.***

***The MOA between the DOE and the Career Centers is not on the web.***

18. Is there an exact definition of "common planning time". (Section III, D 2)

Thanks

***Answer: “Common planning time” refers to regular, formal meeting time in a program’s schedule that has been set aside for staff to meet to ensure ongoing communication and sharing.***

19. In the guidelines it says: "The sequence of three classes must be part of a continuum that enables students to progress from the most basic level of proficiency to a level sufficient to meaningfully meet their goals." Does this mean we have to have beginner to advanced classes? Or can we have a tightly focused sequence of three levels, e.g. GLE 0-1.9, 2-3.9, & 4-5.9? This matches our population's need & our niche but does not bring them to the GED.

***Answer: The sequence of three classes for ABE must provide instruction from 0-12 GLE, for ESOL the sequence must cover SPL 0-8. A program may propose a “tighter” sequence providing a signed MOA with another DOE Provider completes the sequence***

20. A program has a sequence of 3 ABE classes which range from beginning levels to GED. The program also has an Adult Diploma class. Does the Adult Diploma class need a separate Pre-ASE class to form a separate sequence of 2? Or, can the Pre-ASE class from the sequence of 3 also count toward the sequence of 2 for the Diploma class?

***Answer: Adult Diploma/External Diploma classes are an exception to the rates based Sequence of Three Rule. ADP/EDP classes may be offered as a sequence of two. However, programs should not count classes offered in an ABE program as part of the sequence of classes required for an ADP/EDP sequence.***

21. During the current 5 year funding we have had a GED class as a part of our class plan funded by the WIB in association with the local career center. May we include indirect funded classes as part of our class plan FY2006 proposal?

***Answer: Applicants may only assign DOE direct funds in the proposal and SMARTT program plan. Classes that have been funded in the past through the WIB/Career Centers can be included in your program design. However, they should be assigned DOE direct funds in the proposal and in the SMARTT program plan. The recommendation to the Department and Board of Education of the assignment of indirect funds will occur as part of the regional allocation process which is done by the reading teams.***

22. We are thinking of proposing 42 weeks of classes per year--two 17-week cycles and one summer cycle of 8-weeks duration. Is this allowable? I understand we would NOT have to test for educational gain during the shorter summer cycle. What if we made the summer cycle a little longer, say 9 or 10 weeks, and reduce the regular cycles to 16 weeks each? Would DOE allow such a configuration??

***Answer: The applicant’s plan should meet the ACLS Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education, which requires a minimum of 32 weeks instruction.***

23. a. On p. 7 of the reference materials it states that a match is required for non-rate based classes? Is this a different match beyond the match budget that we are required to do?

b. On p. 11 of the SMARTT Plan User Guide it says in the top par. re the DOE Direct Summary that the bottom line must match last year's request. Since there is nothing else saying that we cannot ask for a different amount from last year is this correct?

c. In our request for refunding, the individuals responsible for ADA and PD coordination are already on the staff plan in other roles. Do they need to be on the plan twice to reflect their additional roles or can that be addressed in the narrative and in the way that their hours are allocated in the staff plan?

***Answer a: Match for non- rates classes is included in the overall grant match. Applicants should complete one Schedule B that documents matching funds and a narrative that describes the amount and source/s of the matching funds.***

***Answer b: The bottom line of the Direct Summary Sheet should reflect the total amount requested in the proposal***

***Answer c: The hours assigned to an individual for Program Development and ADA coordination should appear in the staff chart line designated for that individual providing the rate of pay is the same for all duties. If the rate of pay for the different roles is different, the individual needs to be entered on the staff plan once for each pay rate.***

24. We are planning to collaborate with seven different organizations - 2 for educational services for lower level learners, 1 for child care services, 1 for housing search, and 3 for workforce development activities. Do we need one memorandum of agreement that has all the partners listed with signatures, or do we need 7 separate ones? Three of the collaborators are already tenant partners with our agency.

***Answer: Memoranda of Agreement specific to each organization/partner's contribution should be submitted in Appendix D. In most cases these would be individual contract agreements with the individual partners.***

25. Do the sequence of classes (levels I, II & III) have to occur specifically during the am classes and sequence of classes (levels I, II & III) for pm classes, or could the sequence of classes (levels I, II & III) be offered at least between am and pm classes on the same day?

***Answer: According to the Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education: Programs must offer at least a sequence of three classes at the same part of the day (morning, afternoon, or evening); this enables students with constraints on their schedule (E.g., they work, have school age children, etc.) to progress through all three levels. The sequence of three classes must be part of a continuum that enables students to progress from the most basic level of proficiency to a level sufficient to meaningfully meet their goals.***

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## **Non-Rate Based Classes**

1. I have a program with three levels of ABE/GED classes at one of the campuses of a community college. Would I be able to apply for a "fast-track" GED class at a different campus? Also, would I be able to apply for a "fast-track" GED class as a collaboration with another agency in a town where I don't have a DOE-funded three-class sequence and the agency doesn't either based on my DOE-funded program mentioned above. Thank you.

***Answer: Non-rate based classes must be part of the program design of a Community Adult Learning Center. Programs cannot design a site with only non-rate based classes.***

2. Is there a limit to the number of supplemental classes you can offer? I have a large program with several sites.

***Answer: In Community Adult Learning Centers, a maximum of 20% of the instructional funding can be used to support non-rates based classes.***

3. If we propose to do a stand-alone non-rates based Spanish GED class, can we use the official Spanish GED practice test as the pre & posttest?

***Answer: Programs cannot use the official Spanish GED practice tests for pre and post testing because it does not give results in Grade Level Equivalents (GLE).***

4. There appears to be no section with questions to address the narrative for the non-rate based classes. Is a narrative required?

***Answer: Non- rates classes are part of program design and should be addressed in Section III.***

5. I am interested in adding drop-in classes at a new location for FY'06 and need to have this (new) site added to my working plan. What additional information will you need?

**Answer: All non-rate based classes including drop-in classes (supplemental or stand-alone) must be offered as part of the core program and be offered at the adult learning center site.**

6. Is there a limit to the length (weeks) of the Fast Track Program – (minimum or maximum)?

**Answer: According to the Guidelines, the GED Content Area classes should be of sufficient duration but not less than 12 hours to ensure that students can achieve their goals. The applicant should provide a rationale for its proposed program design including frequency and duration of services.**

7. We are interested in offering a GED class in Spanish. We are concerned about assessing our students, should we offer the class. The *TABE Espanol*, only has one form. Would an exception be made (could the same form be used for pre and post testing) or would we need to use still another assessment?

**Answer: If this class is taught in Spanish, then it is considered a Literacy for Speakers of Other Languages (formerly known as Native Language Literacy) class. In that case, the program can administer an assessment of its choice; generally for Spanish speaking students, the options are the SABE or the TABE en Espanol, neither of which are ideal. As you correctly note, the TABE en Espanol has only one form, so one option is to administer both pre- and post-test with the same (one) form. The TABE en Espanol is the regular versions of the TABE Levels E and M, nothing higher, so it isn't a very reliable measure for students working on their GED. The only other option is to use the SABE, but that was designed to be used for grades 1-8, and only has one test form as well. A group of Literacy for Speakers of Other Languages practitioners will be looking for an alternative assessment for students in these classes this coming spring, and I hope we can locate a better assessment tool as a result.**

Should a Pre-EDP class be assigned funding detail code 345-EDP or 345-State ABE  
**Answer: The class funding details that can be selected are:**

**345 State ABE (core ABE/ESOL)**

**345 Integrated ABE/Workforce Development**

**345 Pre-Literacy ESOL**

**345 EDP/ADP**

**345 Homeless**

**see page 6 in Program Plan User Guide all rate based classes must be selected correctly - therefore the user needs to select 345 EDP/ADP (all non rate based classes are 345 State ABE)**

8. Do we need a class description for our citizenship course. narrative ? we have it in our present program.

**Answer: Non-rates classes would be described in the Profile of Proposed Services and how the proposed class meets the needs of the target population.**

9. Can non-rates classes have a projected enrollment of 8 without documentation of special needs?

**Answer: The program determines and sets the projected enrollment for non-rates classes.**

10. Can we include EDP as a drop in Stand Alone Non Rate Based Class?

**EDP/ADP classes are rate based and according to the guidelines must have a fixed schedule, meet a minimum of 32 weeks, and have a fixed number of slots, and may be offered as a sequence of two.**

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## **Past Performance**

1. When looking at past performance, including attendance and other data for rates based classes, are the same criteria used for Homeless ABE classes as for Core ABE classes? What are the criteria used when looking at Homeless ABE classes?

***Answer: When reviewing past performance, DOE will not be looking at just homeless services but at the core services provided by an agency. Criteria for Program Service Option 1 – ABE for the Homeless are outlined in the RFP 2006-2010.***

2. If an agency currently operates programs at more than one location, will performance points be assigned in aggregate (combining multi projects points) or will separate points be assigned for each project/SDA location?

***Answer: An applicant will be assigned performance points based on the aggregate performance of its sites.***

3. If an agency is a current grantee and proposes services in a new SDA, will the new, proposed program inherit the agency's performance points from its other locations or will the new proposal be evaluated on past performance using the "new bidder criteria"?

***Answer: An applicant's assigned past performance points will be used in each SDA in which the applicant submits a proposal.***

4. Will a subcontractor's performance be included in the calculation of performance points for a current grantee or will each organization stand on its own individual performance?

***Answer: A subcontractor's past performance will be included in the calculation of past performance points if the subcontractor is included in the current grantee's proposal. If a subcontractor applies as a new grantee, past performance points will be assigned based on that individual organization's past performance.***

5. Will we receive information regarding our past performance score prior to submission?

***Answer: Past performance scores will be provided to the reading team after proposals are submitted.***

6. Are we to attach a hard copy of performance data from Smartt re o narrative required?

***Answer: Currently funded applicants are not required to submit past performance data or a narrative for Section IV part A.***

7. In order to give readers a clear picture of the meaning of the educational gains data, DOE needs to sort by assessment used. Here is an example of why: At our main site we used REEP for many low level students in FY04, more than the previous year FY03. Our gains with that group of students went WAY down, because REEP doesn't show gains as well, especially at those low levels, and because writing doesn't improve as fast as oral skills. At our pilot site where BEST Plus was used in FY04, the gains went WAY UP from the year before, across the board. In both of these situations, there was no substantial change in the student body, the teachers, the curriculum, the school policies, etc, just in the assessment used!

Here are my questions about this:

- 1) Can we be assured that readers will see data from all sites of a program?
- 2) Can we be assured that readers will get a complete explanation of what these statistics actually mean and the pitfalls of looking at an aggregate number and making a judgment from it?
- 3) Can we be assured that the outcome data will be sorted by assessment, so that readers can understand that different assessments show different levels of gain?

***Answer questions 1-3: Proposal readers will not directly consider educational gain assessment data from any applicant. The past record of an applicant's educational gain will be provided to reading teams in the form of past performance points. Therefore, proposal readers will not be engaged in assigning past performance points, nor will they be engaged in reviewing an applicant's educational gain assessment data.***

8. Under Section IV. of Part III Required Program Information Who supplies the data for our past performance? No narrative is necessary, but who supplies the data?

**Answer: The DOE will assign past performance points based on SMARTT data collected in FY03 and FY04 specific to class attendance, average attended hours, percent of students pre and post tested, literacy gains, and attainment of student articulated goals.**

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## **Evaluation/Continuous Improvement**

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### **EL/Civics**

1. If my program is interested in applying for Civics Education (Section VI), do we have to offer a sequence of three?

*Answer: Applicants for EL/Civics do not have to offer a sequence of three EL/Civics classes.*

2. Can you explain why Section VI will be scored separately and why this score will not be counted toward the 100 points? Is this initiative still a priority of the MA DOE?

*Answer: Section VI is scored separately as funding for EL/Civics programs comes from a designated federal funding stream. ACLS is required to track and report on EL/Civics funds to the federal government. EL/Civics is presented in the RFP as an option for applicants who intend to incorporate civics into their ESOL program.*

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### **Budget**

1. For our most recent refunding we submitted a combined request & budget narrative on Excel, which our PS found easy to read. Can we do the same for the new proposal or should we submit a separate match narrative?

*Answer: Budget Narratives and Match narratives must be submitted as separate documents to facilitate the reading of the proposal*

2. Do I have to submit a match narrative?

*Answer: Yes, all applicants must submit a match narrative as part of the grant application package along with Schedule B.*

3. In the space calculation formula, we understand number of square feet and cost per square foot, but could you please explain the "percent of usage of the space by the program." Is this based on time of use? If this is so, is this based on the percent of 24 hours day? Is it based on school business hours (however, we use the building during off hours). Furthermore, our school department uses their own formula to calculate rental costs. Is it possible to use their formula instead?

*Answer: If the program has exclusive use of the space then the "percent of usage of the space by the program" is 100% and the applicant can request up to 50% of the cost of the space. However, if the program does not have exclusive use of the space the "percent of usage of the space by the program" is*

*the portion of the total space that is used by the applicant for DOE funded programs. It is not based on hours per day. Applicants should use the DOE formula to calculate rental costs.*

3. Should I submit a separate budget narrative for each program service option that I apply for?

***Answer: Yes, submit a separate budget narrative for each program service option. However, applicants only need to complete one detailed budget page section that reflects the total grant request.***

4. Should I submit separate budget narratives for sub-contractors?

***Answer: Yes, submit separate budget narratives for sub-contractors. However, applicants only need to complete one detailed budget page section that reflects the total grant request.***

5. We are on agency with three sites. We were designated to receive \$4,000 per site, but are currently receiving a total of \$10,000 in Community Planning funds. Our new application will include 4 sites. Should we include in the budget \$4,000 per site, for a total of \$16,000, or is there a maximum of \$10,250.

***Answer: For the purpose of this grant, the maximum an applicant may apply for is \$10,250.***

6. In addition to the Program Service Options, are separate budget narratives also required for the non-rate based classes and/or the set-asides (childcare and student leadership)?

***Answer: Funds used for non-rates classes should be identified in the budget narrative to support the full detail budget submitted. Programs applying for set aside money must also submit an additional budget narrative that provides details of the proposed expenditures, including hourly rates, weekly personnel time commitments, etc. for the requested grant.***

7. On the DOE website, it has a page that has “updates for multi-year request for proposals for ABE programs” and on this page, it contains a list of how the proposal should be assembled. Under Part II, this information mentions that the budget detail pages should include, among other things, a budget narrative. But then in Part III, Required Program Information, Section VIII Budget, the instructions state that applicants must submit a budget narrative. For clarification, does this mean that in this section of the narrative (Section VIII) we reference the budget and budget narrative in Part II, or do we include a second budget narrative in the pages of our Part III narrative? If so, do we include the **\*same\*** budget narrative as in Part II, or do we summarize this narrative?

***Answer: Submit the budget detail pages and narrative as Part II. In Section VIII, you can reference that the budget detail pages and narrative are in Part II. You do not need to include two sets of budget information.***

8. Is the Budget Narrative included in the page limits for the narrative response, or is it considered a separate submission?

***Answer: The Budget Narrative is not included in the page limits for the narrative response.***

9. On the DOE website, it has a page that has “updates for multi-year request for proposals for ABE programs” and on this page, it contains a list of how the proposal should be assembled. Under Part II, this information mentions that the budget detail pages should include, among other things, a budget narrative. But then in Part III, Required Program Information, Section VIII Budget, the instructions state that applicants must submit a budget narrative. For clarification, does this mean that in this section of the narrative (Section VIII) we reference the budget and budget narrative in Part II, or do we include a second budget narrative in the pages of our Part III narrative? If so, do we include the **same** budget narrative as in Part II, or do we summarize this narrative?

***Answer: The Budget Narrative should be included with the Budget Detail Pages in Section II.***

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10. It's my understanding that including fringe benefit percentage affects the final salary analysis. If several staff members in the grant receive fringe benefits, but we aren't charging the fringe to the grant OR using the fringe as a match, should the % be included in the staffing chart?

**Answer: Benefits paid by non-DOE sources should be entered into the Non-DOE Benefits-Non DOE Funding Screen. The only editable field on this screen is the benefits. Once the benefit rate is entered, the amount for benefits is calculated. Entering non-DOE paid benefits impacts the salary analysis. For clarity, the applicant could explain that the fringe benefit rate was entered to give a complete picture of the staff benefit package and then explain in the budget or match budget narrative that the fringe benefits are not part of the match.**

11. If a program which is also applying for Fund Code 340/345/359 is submitting a Program Service Option (ABE for the Homeless, Participatory Health Ed, Family Literacy or Volunteer Tutoring Component) should the Part 111 Required Program Information be included between: Section V11 (Requests for Set-Aside Funds...) and Section V111 (Budget)? If a program which is also applying for Fund Code 285/563 is submitting a Program Service Option (Participatory Health Ed) should the Part 111 Required Program Information be included between: Section V1 (Requests for Set-Aside Funds...) and Section V11 (Budget)?

**Answer: As each Program Service Option requires submission of additional information and will be scored separately, the materials for these options should be inserted between the Basic Proposal Package and the Appendices.**

12. Do program service options need separate budgets and/or budget narratives?

**Answer: Program Service Options must include a separate budget narrative that provides details of the proposed expenditures, including hourly rates, weekly personnel time commitments etc. for the funds requested for the option. All Program Service Option expenditures must also be incorporated into the detailed budget and budget narrative for the Community Adult Learning Center.**

13. Our program is applying for Program Service Option 2. Should the requested \$ amount for this option be included in the program overall budget (in the detailed budget pages and the narrative), or should it have its own detailed budget pages and narrative? I am not sure on that. If Service Option 2 has a separate budget and narrative, then the total grant amount the program is applying for will be a sum of the two budgets? Please clarify.

**Answer: Program Service Options must include a separate budget narrative that provides details of the proposed expenditures, including hourly rates, weekly personnel time commitments etc. for the funds requested for the option. All Program Service Option expenditures must also be incorporated into the detailed budget and budget narrative for the Community Adult Learning Center.**

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## Matching Funds

1. If a program's host agency picks up the director's salary as part of the match to that grant, do these hours count toward the administrative hours in the prototype for the grant, or does that give the program the flexibility to assign another staff these hours?

**Answer: The DOE allows up to 25% of the total amount of the rate based and flex services funding to support administrative costs. Foundation and set aside funding are not included in the 25% cap. There are no percentage limits on administrative costs in matching funds. However, if administrative costs supported by the match are exceptionally high, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the applicant to meet the student/teacher ratios and other direct service guidelines.**

2. For programs that are applying for any of the four options:

Under the info for each option, Schedule B is listed as a required form. Does this mean that we enter any match funds from this option into the general Schedule B, or do we have to do a separate Schedule B for each option. Are you expecting a discreet 20% match for each option, or are you looking for a total match amount to match the total grant request amount

***Answer: Applicants must provide matching funds for 20% of the their total budget request. Applicants should complete one Schedule B that documents matching funds.***

3. I understand that if our FY04 match was more than 20%, we need to maintain the exact amount of money as match. Question: If we are increasing the size of our request for money, does the match need to increase also, or should it stay the same amount as it was last year (assuming that it is still more than 20% of the grant request.)

***Answer: The matching share in year one of the FY2006-FY2010 cycle for an organization that operated a DOE funded ABE program during the funding cycle FY2000-FY2005, must be the greater of the organization's maintenance of effort or 20% of the new grant award.***

4. A program's Match wants to fund the salary of a teacher at approx \$10, 000. I thought they would reflect this by splitting the slots in the class between DOE and Non-DOE. When we do this the Staff plan gets close to the Match contribution but is off by about \$400. Will this be a problem if their personnel cost for this staff in the budget is not exactly in synch w/ the Match \$\$ reflected in the Staff plan?

***Answer: The RFP asks applicants to explain the match in the narrative. It is hard to split slots and get an exact funding amount. Many times a program will use the exact figure and then use the additional for another match category. The program needs to figure this out. (For example they might list \$9,600 for the teacher and \$400 for something else if they want to contribute exactly \$10,000). This is not a technical question for the techs and is something usually worked out at final funding time.***

5. Flex/Set-Aside/Foundation Services:

Must matching dollars be listed under Non-DOE Costs Column?

**Answer: Matching dollars are entered in Schedule B, Column B Applicant's contribution. Matching funds are non- DOE funds.**

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## **ABE for the Homeless – Program Service Option 1**

1. I am wondering about how we can continue to offer what our homeless clients need if classes have to be rates based. I'd like to tell you what we need and ask if you can see a way for us to do it under this RFP. Thanks

What we need:

We have quite a few ESOL students who are homeless, and they do well in regular classes. I would guess we have between 10 and 15 at any one time. Could we call charge one whole class, with 10 or 12 slots, to homeless ed, even though the students would not all be in that class, they would be in classes at the level they need. (In other words we would have ten to twelve slots for homeless but they would not all be in one class - we don't know what class they would be in because it is always a different combination)

Another thing we need:

We have currently a class for ABE students, which usually has about four or five people in it. This is currently a non-rates based class, and it is individualized instruction. We would not be able to fill that class with 10 people because there are not that many who are able to manage the one-on-one academics. But these clients are also not ready to commit to our regular classes, with our attendance policy. (Some do work up to moving into regular classes after being in this class for a while, but the attendance and the social

rigors of being in a class room with 10 strangers is often too challenging for our clients when they start at CLC).

When it says rates based, I am sure it means that class size has to be correct for the rates. Could there be a smaller class size allowed for homeless education? I ask this because we usually have a high school or GED grad from that class every year, and the benefits of this class are more far reaching than just the diplomas. I would hate for us to have to end this class.

***Answer: According to the Revised Guidelines for Effective ABE, Homeless Programs must maintain an active enrollment of a minimum of seven adult learners per class and funds must be used to provide rates based classes for homeless adults.***

2. The ABE for the Homeless SMARTT Program Design has moved to a rate-based basis. When is it appropriate to use class sequence models of 1, 2 (rural), and 3?

***Answer: As stated in the Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education, ABE programs for the homeless may offer multi-level classes; however, ABE for the homeless providers must insure that homeless adults have access to a seamless continuum of ABE services. The full continuum of services may be made available either through collaboration with a Community Adult Learning Center or provided by the grantee.***

3. The ABE RFP indicates that the Homeless Ed. Program Service Option can be applied for separately (from the ABE grant). If this is the case, if an organization applied for Homeless Ed. funding independently and was awarded a grant, would it satisfy DOE's standard for the number of programs awarded in a region, if funds were not awarded for the regular ABE Basic Program?

***Answer: Grants awarded to programs that provide ABE for the Homeless services and do not operate a Community Adult Learning Center will count towards the number of programs funded in a community. However, the Department of Education reserves the right to fund more programs in a community than noted in the number of eligible grantees in a community chart.***

4. Will homeless students in rates based classes for the homeless be expected to maintain the same attendance percentage as students in other classes who are not homeless, or will the homeless attendance be separated out in SMARTT reports?

***Answer: The Performance Standards Committee, a small group of practitioners working with ACLS to develop program performance standards, has acknowledged that programs serving different populations (e.g. homeless adults, incarcerated adults) should not be expected to maintain the same attendance percentage as students in Community Adult Learning Center classes.***

5. In the RFP it is said that we must make the class for the Homeless rate based and there must be a minimum of seven slots. Currently we receive \$11,000 for this class. If we follow the new guidelines it will increase our request by over \$20,000 ! Would it be allowable to ask for slots instead of a separate class to stay with reasonable closeness ? This is a continuing collaboration between a Learning Center and a Homeless Advocacy group.

***Answer: In this open and competitive grant, all homeless classes are rates based and generate a rates based cost. However, homeless adults may be enrolled in classes that are funded by Fund Code 340, 345, and 359 that are not designated as ABE for the Homeless classes.***

6. I was informed at the training that homeless programs are not eligible for Community Planning money. Can you please specify what foundation funding homeless programs are eligible for and how much?  
thanks,

***Answer: A homeless program that applies as the lead agency is eligible to receive the same foundation funding available to Community Adult Learning Centers, according to the conditions and limitations provided in the Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education.***

7. Please detail the standards that homeless ABE/ESOL programs will need to meet in order to fulfill the rates based requirement.

***Answer: ABE/ESOL programs for the homeless must meet all the requirements outlined in the Guidelines for Effective ABE for this program service option. Performance Standards for ABE for the Homeless programs are not yet developed.***

8. In the Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education under the Program Service Options/ABE for the Homeless section, the program design specifications state the following:

Adult Basic Education for the Homeless Program may offer multi-level classes, and Funds must be used to provide rate-based classes to homeless adults.

Rates Based classes require a sequence of three classes ...enabling "students to progress from the most basic level of proficiency to a level sufficient to meaningfully meet their goals". Does the statement that ABE for the Homeless Programs may offer multi-level classes mean that the rate based requirement can be met in a single classroom session that "offers students the ability to progress from the most basic level of proficiency to a level sufficient to meet their goals"?

***Answer: The Guidelines for Adult Basic Education allow flexibility to rates based Homeless Classes. Adult Basic Education for the Homeless may be offered in multi-level classes providing all students have access to the level of education needed to meet their goals.***

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## **Participatory Health Education – Program Service Option 2**

1. We are submitting a proposal for Program Service Option 2- Participatory Health Education. I am not clear on how information for this option should be entered into SMARTT, on page 6 of the RFP the "Fy2006 Request for Proposal Forms Checklist" indicates there are no "SMARTT Elements" necessary as part of the forms required. On page 7 it indicates that a "SMARTT Plan" is necessary.

***Answer: The checklist on page 6 is incorrect where it states NO SMARTT elements. Some parts of SMARTT must be entered for program service options. The flex foundation page is required for all program service options and the staff plan is required if there any staffing proposed.***

2. Am I correct in stating that the "Health Education" supplementary non-rates based class option is separate from the Participatory Health Education component? Do I need to put a separate class into SMARTT for this component

***Answer: The program can propose this Health Education" supplementary non-rates based class option as part of the core funding or as part of the Program Service Option 2-Participatory Health Education.***

3. My understanding is that the only SMARTT data enter for this component is dollar amount for Participatory Health Component in the "Flex Services" portion of the "Flex/Set-Aside/Foundation Services" page on SMARTT. I would then submit a separate budget narrative for this program option detailing expenditures

***Answer: The amount entered in the flex foundation page is the entire amount requested for this program service option.***

4. Do I put the facilitator on the staff plan?

***Answer: All staff for this program service option needs to be entered on the staff plan. Students who receive stipends are NOT entered on the staff plan.***

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### **Family Literacy – Program Service Option 3**

1. Are home visits a required component of the Family Literacy Program Service Option?

***Answer: No, home visits are not a required component. ACLS money cannot be used to fund home visits.***

2. We would like some clarification re family literacy in the new RFP. It is my understanding that Family Literacy funding can be used only for parenting education, interactive literacy activities and a coordinator to carry out these activities and that these activities are non-rate based. Is it correct that family literacy funds cannot be used to fund ABE/GED classes for the parents but that this must now be done as part of the regular program continuum and be rate based? Can childcare be paid out of the family literacy funds or does that come out of the set aside funds?

***Answer: It is correct that family literacy funds cannot be used to fund ABE/GED classes. ABE/GED classes for parents can be funded with Community Adult Learning Center funds. Childcare should be requested through the set aside funds.***

3. Can the Literacy activities under this contract be coordinated with an existing Even Start Program?

***Answer: Fund Code 340, 345, and 359 cannot be used to supplement an existing Even Start Program. Funds for Program Option 3 must be used to coordinate the collaboration between partnering organizations in order to support the integration of existing family literacy components into a comprehensive and unified family literacy program that targets the adults and families enrolled in services supported by Fund Codes 340, 345, and 359.***

4. Under flex services, if we are seeking funding under program services Option 3, Family Literacy, is it only the coordinator's salary that is listed there? What about the cost of workshops, supplies, etc.?

***Answer: The budget narrative for Program Service Option 3 must provide the details of all the proposed expenses. Expenditures described in the Option 3 budget narrative must be incorporated into the budget for the Community Adult Learning Center. On the Summary Sheet, list the Family Literacy Coordinator under flex services.***

5. If an adult education center is already operating an Even Start Program, can they apply for the Program Service Option 3 - Family Literacy?

***Answer: An existing Community Adult Learning Center may apply for Program Service Option 3 - Family Literacy, but Program Service Option #3 funds may not be used to support Even Start program components. Funds for Program Service Option 3 must be used to coordinate the collaboration between partnering organizations in order to support the integration of existing family literacy components into a comprehensive and unified family literacy program that targets the adults and families enrolled in services supported by Fund Codes 340, 345, and 359. Parents cannot be enrolled in both Even Start and in classes supported by Fund Codes 340, 345, and 359. Only parents enrolled in classes supported by Fund Codes 340, 345, and 359 can be enrolled in non-rate based classes (Parenting Education, Interactive Literacy) supported by Fund Codes 340, 345, and 359.***

6. We would like to collaborate our ABE Basic Services program with the local Even Start program through Option 3 (Family Literacy). Question 3 under the Family Literacy section of the FAQs says that "Funds Cod 340, 345 and 359 cannot be used to supplement an existing Even Start Program....." Our plan is to have the Even Start program provide the parenting education and parent/child together time for parents enrolled in our ABE/ESOL program, and paid for by the Option 3 grant. Is this allowable?

**Answer: Applicants may not use ACLS grant funds from one fund code to pay for services provided under other ACLS fund codes. For the purposes of Program Service Option 3 – Family Literacy, Community Adult Learning Center applicants may not use funds from codes 340/345/359 to purchase services from an Even Start program (fund code 304).**

7. In the family literacy option 3 section of the RFP, PreK through grade 2 OR public school is supported. Would a public school that services grades 1 through 5 also qualify?

**Answer: Applicants for Program Service Option 3 – Family Literacy may propose to coordinate services with a grade 1 through 5 public school providing that children of the parents served are in grades Pre-K through grade 2.**

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#### **Volunteer Tutor Component – Program Service Option 4**

1. Our volunteer program is in an area with one Community Learning Center with six sites covering 90 miles. There is a need, and our program has supplied tutors in addition to the .50 FTE of 24 - 35 requirement. My question is that since we service more than one site of a Community Learning Center could we qualify for a .75FTE coordinator?

**Answer: The formula for the Volunteer Coordinator's time is based on the number of programs (not sites) that utilize volunteers. Applicants should base their proposals on the chart in the RFP.**

2. My plan for FY06 is to have for the entire year a total of 40 volunteers (no fewer than 24 at any one time). Of the 40, I anticipate that 30 will have only one assignment (generally as in-class assistants) and that 10 will either have a) two individual in-class assistant assignment or b) one in-class assistant assignment plus a "match" working with a student who needs extra help in addition to his/her class assignment.

a. In-class assistants w/ just one assignment: 30 (unduplicated individuals)

b. In-class assistants w/ multiple in-class assignments

in-class assignments #1 5

in-class assignments #2 5

c. Individual/small group matches: 5

(These vols might have other assignments as well)

The total of all encounters would be 45

I use "encounters" because I think "match" is being used in two different ways.

It seems to me that the Volunteer Plan is not set up to capture this information. Please tell me how to proceed. Thank you!

*Answer: Enter the number of proposed volunteers (24) in the current screen since there is a minimum requirement and then explain in the narrative how they meet the "match/encounter" requirement. The applicant should enter the number of volunteer that will be active monthly. ACLS can revise the screen later if necessary.*

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## **SMARTT**

1. I've found that when I try to input the hours for match staff on the Non-DOE Staff Plan the following things occur:

1. The FTE calculates in the Staff Development column
2. The Staff Development calculates in the Vacation column

In the past we were asked to indicate how match hours were used and I'm wondering if it's a spreadsheet glitch or have I missed something.

*Answer: Technical questions concerning SMARTT should be posed to one of the SABES Regional Tech Coordinators.*

2. Although located in the same region, and because of the distance and difference in communities, I am submitting two separate proposals. Since we currently have DOE funding, and our SMARTT program plan is combined, I have to enter the proposed program plan the same way. This is further complicated because we will be collaborating with another DOE provider at one of the locations. How can I submit the SMARTT data so that each program is viewed separately, and eligible for community planning, set-aside, unrestricted funds, etc. ?

*Answer: A separate project and site needs to be set up for each submission. See the Program Plan User Guide – page 3 Section 2.1. IF CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE TO THE PROJECT AND SITE STRUCTURE IN SMARTT, E-MAIL ROBERT CHIRWA AT [RCHIRWA@DOE.MASS.EDU](mailto:RCHIRWA@DOE.MASS.EDU)*

3. We anticipate collaborating with a new agency and adding classes at an additional location, within our organization. When completing the class plan, do we have to have these new sites added to SMARTT or can we just account for the new sites in our narrative?

*Answer: The applicant will need to add new sites in SMARTT to accommodate its proposed program plan. Please E-MAIL ROBERT CHIRWA AT [RCHIRWA@DOE.MASS.EDU](mailto:RCHIRWA@DOE.MASS.EDU) to make changes in the project or site structure in your SMARTT program plan.*

4. Page 11 of the RFP 06 Program Planning User guide section #10 Summary Sheet = DOE Direct funding states "The bottom line must match your current award". Does this mean that we cannot request additional funds or that we cannot collaborate with another program. If the "bottom line" needs to stay the same and then we feel like we can't "expand" and then they won't be able to collaborate. Our collaborating partner is a "Program not currently funded" and did not submit a letter of intent. Please clarify.

*Answer: The Program Planning User's Guide should read that the bottom line of your summary sheet should match your grant request. It does not prohibit a program from requesting an increase in funding in the RFP.*

5. On the Admin Cost Worksheet, what does the category OTHER include? I have looked in the Smartt User Guide and in Program Planning, but it still isn't clear what that category includes.

**Answer: The category OTHER on the Administrative Cost Worksheet in SMARTT includes administrative costs from line eight "Other Expenses" found in the RFP document "Part II Project Expenditures – Detail Information." Applicants use this document, which includes eight categories of costs, to itemize a proposed detail budget.**

6. Our employees pay 10% of the total fringe benefits and the city pays the rest (90%). The employee makes \$57,547 per year and her health insurance cost is \$13,980 per year. She pays \$1,398 and the city pays \$12,582. How do I calculate the fringe % for SMARTT?

**Answer: The fringe benefit percent should be calculated based on the employer's contribution and does not include the employee's contribution. In this case, the fringe benefit percent is determined by dividing the employer's contribution of \$12,582 by the salary of \$57,547, which is equal to 21%. If this is matching funds, the 21% should be entered in the non-DOE staff chart. See the SMARTT User's Guide, p.14.**

7. I am constructing the DOE funded staffing chart. I am also constructing the non-DOE staffing chart which reflects positions covered by our match. One position on the Non Doe chart does counseling. These hours along with the counseling hours on the DOE funded staffing chart compute to the required 2.5%. However, the fact that hours from both charts meet the requirements for counseling does not show on the charts. Where will it be evident to readers that my program meets the 2.5% counseling requirement?

**Answer: Proposal readers will be advised to combine the counseling hours on both the DOE and Non DOE staff plans in order to verify the counseling component.**

8. Here is a question that you may be able to answer for us. When we are printing out the large SMARTT pages ((e.g. staff plan for the RFP submission, should we:

- just print the printable versions (they come out in 4 pages and have to be cut and taped together) or should we
- copy them into Excel and format them, so they come out on one or two pages, in quite small print, but no scotch taping is involved?

**Answer: Use the print version for submission. We don't want any errors that could occur in copying to Excel, reformatting, etc.**

**(FYI – ACLS will print staff plans on legal size paper for the readers)**

9. We are planning to run one class for 45 weeks. On the SMARTT class plan, we list 38 of the weeks on one line and the remaining 7 weeks on a separate line for the "summer" class. We will have 10 students in the class and assume that the same students will be in class the full 45 weeks. The Class Plan however, shows a total of 20 students. But then on the Program Prototype it shows the total number of students as 10, which is what we want. Is there a problem that the Class Plan shows it differently? If so, what do we do?

**Answer: The prototype only counts slots in classes that run between 9/1 and 11/15 since students enrolled in summer classes are enrolled in fall classes since a program must offer a student at least 32 weeks of service. See page 11 of user guide. The class plan needs to show number of slots per class. The slots are calculated from the total DOE Direct Slots in the rate based class plan. We are counting only slots for classes that are held between 9/1 and 11/15 so as not to count duplicate slots for summer, semester or trimester classes.**

10. When you input the information into the staff plan for part time teachers the F.T.E. shows up as -1. How do you get the number to match the hours that the individual works as you do for the full time employees by selecting a category? For example a full time teacher shows as 36 weeks times 35 hours /wk or 1260 hours. a part time teacher shows as -1.

**Answer: The default is -1 for the definition for full time until the user selects a number. The program plan for staff reported above still shows "select one" which means the space has been left blank. Once a**

*number is selected the FTE will appear. If the number needed is not in the dropdown box, the program needs to read the user guide on page 8 which explains how to request a number to be added to the dropdown list.*

*"If the full time definition for your agency does not appear in the dropdown box, please e-mail Robert Chirwa at rchirwa@doe.mass.edu to have the number added."*

11. Is the program planning module working as intended in the way it calculates the salary analysis?

*Answer: Yes, the staff salary analysis is working as designed. It looks at DOE funding allocated for salaries to determine how the program is using DOE funds compared to funding supported in the rates.*

12. If the answer to question #1 is yes, how should a program fill in the staffing chart so that the salary analysis is accurate? Should I put the total benefit rate in the DOE staffing chart, but do the budgets with the rate charged to the DOE grant, explaining that in the budget narrative?

*Answer: Programs must enter benefits according to the funding source that pays for the benefit package. Programs should not enter incorrect information to adjust the staff salary analysis. If the staff salary analysis for a program is under what the rates support after taking into account the allowable range, then the program has 3 options: (1) increase the hourly rate (2) increase the benefit rate paid by DOE funding (3) increase the prep hours.*

13. If the service options classes are rates-based, do you include them in your regular class plan?

*Answer: All rates based and non-rates based classes must be entered into the SMARTT Program Plan.*

14. For the past five year funding cycle, flex/foundation funded the cost of sign language interpreters (contractual/consulting) in order for Jackson Mann Community Center to provide adult learning services to the deaf. When accessing the flex/foundation worksheet, there is no line for "Other". The lines are limited to the new service options and set-asides only. Is this an omission in the flex/foundation form or is DOE no longer funding this type of service or is there another worksheet in the SMARTT design to accommodate this need?

*Answer: For the purpose of this RFP refer to page 7 of the SMARTT Program Planning for FY06 User Guide section 5 for instructions on Flex/Set-Aside/Foundation Funding. Applicants may use Unrestricted Foundation Funding for costs not covered by designated funding streams.*

15. How do I calculate the administrative cost for a director and site coordinator? Should I use 70% of their salaries and the fringe benefits they receive, or can I count the administration hours listed in the staff SMARTT plan and multiply those by their rate? Do I have a choice?

*Answer: Programs have the option to use either the 70% calculation or the actual administration hours listed in the SMARTT Plan.*

16. When we include the SMARTT components in the Appendix, do you want hard copies of all of the listed components, even if they don't apply to our program? For example, if we don't have any non-DOE funding, do you still want us to include non-DOE SMARTT sheet printouts, even though they will be blank?

*Answer: Submit hard copies of all SMARTT components listed, mark those that do not apply to the applicant's program as NA.*

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## **Rate Based Expenses**

1. Our Grant Administrator is telling me there is no such rule at the DOE that computers should be replaced after 4 years. (It was my understanding there was--that they are deemed "obsolete" after 4 years.) He is further saying that because our computers are purchased with Match funds (to our ABE grant) that such a rule--if it did exist--wouldn't apply to our computers any ways. Would you please clarify.

***Answer: The DOE Rates provide \$50/slot for computer replacement. It is not required that programs replace computers every four years rather rate based funding supports \$50/slot for ongoing computer replacement. The purpose of supporting computer replacement costs is to enable programs to update and/or replace equipment on a regular basis and keep pace with advances in technology.***

2. On page 3 of the Mass DOE Reference Materials for Program Planning RFP06 one finds a list of *Rates per Student Slot* based on class sizes and levels. Can you explain how the rate per student slot is calculated and the relationship the rate per student slot has to the rate based personnel and non-personnel expenses? For example is the total cost of the program when divided by the student slots and hours of service supposed to equal the *Rate per Student Slot*?

***Answer: The Adult Basic Education Rate is a system of funding that is used to support the guidelines for effective ABE programs. The rate incorporates all the costs associated with the “musts” found in the Guidelines for Effective ABE (posted on the ACLS web site) and is dependent on the teacher to student ratio for the class. The rate or costs per student hour is established by ACLS. Costs not supported by the rates are funded through flex and foundation funding, set asides, unrestricted, and match.***

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## **Guidelines for Effective ABE**

1. Can you tell me more about the Payne/Washington Screening that is referenced in the Guidelines for Effective ABE?

***Answer: The Payne/Washington Learning Needs Screening is a tool that screens for learning disabilities. It is not a diagnostic tool and should not be used to determine the existence of a disability. You don't need a license to administer it. A teacher or counselor can administer it. It takes approximately 30 minutes to administer.***

***The Learning Needs Screening is free and can be accessed on line at [http://www.ncwd-youth.info/assets/guides/assessment/sample\\_forms/learning\\_needs\\_screening\\_tool.pdf](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/assets/guides/assessment/sample_forms/learning_needs_screening_tool.pdf)***

2. Who can do the Individual Education Plan (IEP) referenced in the Guidelines for Effective ABE?

***Answer: The IEP referred to in the guidelines is the formal IEP conducted by a school system.***

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## **Miscellaneous**

1 What is the future of the External/Adult Diploma Programs?

***Answer: ACLS is working to ensure that the ADP/EDP can remain an option for adults.***

2. Community Planning:

What is the Community Planning \$ amount for Boston based programs?

***Answer: Boston applicants will be allowed \$4,100 for Community Planning***