

WIA TITLE II “ADULT EDUCATION & FAMILY LITERACY”

MASSACHUSETTS STATE PLAN

July 2000 to June 2004

It is the expectation of the Massachusetts Department of Education (the Department) that the Title II ABE plan that follows will be either incorporated within the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Act Unified Plan (the current draft of which includes Titles I, III and IV) or appended to that plan.

A. Vision and Goals

{The Department has worked intensively in conjunction with the other State agencies contributing to this Unified Five-Year Plan, participating in WIA Steering Committee (and several subcommittees) meetings over the past year and a half to formulate and articulate a clear vision for implementation of the Workforce Investment Act in Massachusetts. The results are summarized in Part “A” of the Massachusetts WIA Unified Plan, a copy of which is provided in Attachment “A” of this draft.}

TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION & FAMILY LITERACY

As the “eligible agency” under WIA Title II, the Massachusetts Department of Education manages our state’s federal and state funded adult basic education services under a broader “Mission for the Education of Adults” that was previously adopted by the state Board of Education:

“To provide each and every adult with opportunities to develop the literacy skills needed to qualify for further education, job training, better employment and to reach his or her full potential as a family member, productive worker and citizen.”

This mission statement is clearly consistent with the vision articulated for this WIA Unified Plan, a vision the Massachusetts Department of Education (the Department) embraces. It is important to note, however, that the vision for the *education* of adults not only encompasses increasing the employability of under-educated and limited English proficient students, but also includes building their capacity as lifelong learners and as contributing family and community members. The Department is charged by the Board of Education and by WIA Title II with supporting these broad purposes for adult basic education (ABE) services in Massachusetts.

GOALS:

- 1.0 Massachusetts will develop a comprehensive, integrated, coordinated and effective delivery system for adult basic education services throughout the Commonwealth.
 - 1.1 All state and regional “investors” in ABE services will achieve a higher level of coordination through formal memoranda of agreement / understanding. (Memoranda of Understanding will be negotiated and signed between the Department and our state’s sixteen local WIBs by the beginning of FY 2001.)
 - 1.2 The Department will provide leadership and support for comprehensive ABE interagency planning through the statewide WIB, the WIA Steering Committee, the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (MFLC), and the Massachusetts Workplace (incumbent worker) Education Committee (MVEC).
 - 1.3 Coordination of services among employment & training, human service and ABE (“Community Adult Learning Centers”) providers will increase through a funded, ongoing process of ABE Community Planning.
- 2.0 Massachusetts will provide for the fulfillment of the basic educational needs of adults in our state by strengthening, sustaining, developing, and expanding the quality of adult basic education services in communities across the Commonwealth.
 - 2.1 The Department will continue to develop resources to systematically expand and extend ABE services until under-educated and limited English proficient adults in every community across the Commonwealth can readily access the services they need and deserve.
 - 2.2 The Department will continue to develop resources in order to strengthen Community Adult Learning Centers until each possesses the solid and effective programmatic and financial foundation needed to serve all students, including students with disabilities, and to attract co-investors from the public and private sectors.
 - 2.3 The Department will work with Community Adult Learning Centers as they integrate and/or collaborate with other community partners in order to provide the full array of services needed by under-educated and limited English proficient adults in each community, including:
 - 2.3.1 Adult literacy through adult secondary education (in English and/or bilingual programs of instruction),
 - 2.3.2 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL),
 - 2.3.3 Family literacy
 - 2.3.4 Workplace education
 - 2.3.5 ABE for the homeless
 - 2.3.6 ABE health education

2.3.7 Commonwealth Literacy Corps volunteer tutoring

2.3.8 Citizenship education

- 3.0 Massachusetts will develop and implement a more accountable system for adult basic education services through the development, refinement and implementation of content, professional and performance standards. The centerpiece of this accountability system will be the integration of the goals that students articulate for pursuing further education when enrolling in a Community Adult Learning Center.
- 3.1 Competition for new ABE grant awards, continuation funding and requests for increased funding will increasingly depend on the performance of programs with respect to student participation, student learning gains and achievement of the goal(s) established by each student.
- 3.2 The Department will work in partnership with Community Adult Learning Centers, practitioners, students, other experts and stakeholders to complete the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks. This partnership will define the “universe of content” that students need to know and what students should be able to do by developing clearly articulated content/learning standards.
- 3.3 The Department will work in partnership with Community Adult Learning Centers, practitioners, students, other experts and stakeholders to identify and/or develop assessments that are aligned with the ABE content/ learning standards.
- 3.4 The Department will work in partnership with Community Adult Learning Centers, practitioners, students, other experts and stakeholders to further develop and refine measures, benchmarks and performance levels related to student participation, student learning gains and achievement of the goal(s) established by each student.
- 4.0 Massachusetts will increase the capacity of adult education practitioners and programs to meet the needs of students and assist practitioners in achieving their priority goals.
- 4.1 The Department will work in partnership with Community Adult Learning Centers, practitioners, teacher trainers, students, higher education, and other stakeholders to identify and implement professional standards for adult educators, including implementation of a new voluntary ABE certification.
- 4.2 The Department will invest federal and state funding toward the continuous improvement of ABE services through such program and professional development initiatives as the “System for Adult Basic Education Support” (SABES) and by providing technical assistance through Department staff.

B. One-Stop Delivery System

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The Massachusetts Department of Education (the Department) has been an active participant in all meetings related to planning for the transition of our pre-existing career center system to address the new expectations established by WIA. The Department, as the “eligible agency” for Title II, is the “required partner” with the one stop career centers. The Department is already working with the Chief Elected Official in each region to select appropriate Title II representatives to the WIB for the Department in each region.

With respect to “core services,” the Department, working with the statewide WIA Steering Committee, has determined the following are most relevant to the Title II ABE program: (a) intake, (b) initial educational assessment, and (c) referral. The Department is committed to negotiating “Memoranda of Understanding” with each of the sixteen WIBs to ensure these core services are coordinated with and available through the career centers. The Department will offer to provide both funding and staff support to accomplish this goal. Under WIA, Title II is expected to provide its proportionate share to the support of career centers. Under Title II, the Department is required to invest the vast majority of its Title II allocation in direct instructional services. The Department funds Title II ABE programs using the “ABE Rates System” which was developed and refined throughout the 1990’s. The ABE Rates identify the resources needed by ABE programs to conduct intake, initial assessment and referral services. The Department will use the ABE Rates as a reference point in negotiating the resources it will commit to support these MOUs. Further, the Department’s goal is to include the state funded portion of its ABE services in these MOUs, a substantial commitment since our state ABE appropriation is 425% of what we receive from our federal Title II allocation. The Department will make this decision on a region by region basis, based upon the success of MOU negotiations and subsequent performance.

C. Plan Development and Implementation

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c) Describe the process that will be used for public participation and comment with respect to the AEFLA portion of the unified plan. (§224(b)(9))

The Massachusetts Department of Education (the Department) began its preparations for this new state plan during state FY 1998 and launched the public participation process last fiscal year, i.e., state FY 1999 (7/1/98 – 6/30/99). Throughout FY 1999, the Department convened and worked with three broad based task forces:

- ❖ ABE Program & Funding Criteria
- ❖ ABE Performance Standards
- ❖ ABE Certification

Applications to serve on these task forces were solicited from the widest possible range of interested stakeholders. From the hundreds of applications received, sixty-four individuals (primarily ABE practitioners) were appointed to serve, and they received a modest stipend to support the high level of participation required. Several interim reports and two final reports (“ABE Program & Funding Criteria” and “ABE Performance Standards;” Certification continues to meet) were distributed from each task force to: all known ABE provider agencies; SABES centers (the state literacy resource centers in Massachusetts); Regional Employment Board (“WIB”) directors; SDA Directors; Career Center Directors; and, to all state level members of the WIA Steering Committee. These reports were also posted to the Department’s “Adult & Community Learning Services” WEB site for review and comment by the public at large. All recommendations from the “Program & Funding Criteria Task Force” were approved by the Department and incorporated in the open and competitive multi-year ABE RFP to which applicants have recently submitted their proposals. It is important to note that the Department took the additional step of involving the WIBs in the review of the criteria leading to the RFP as well as the scoring and ranking of these applications. 15 of 16 WIBs joined the Department as equal partners in a process in which we appointed two readers each to the review teams. The Department also accepted the “guiding principles” for the development of ABE performance standards submitted by the “ABE Performance Standards Task Force.” As recommended by that task force, we will be convening an ongoing “ABE Performance Standards Working Group” early in state FY 2001 (which begins 7/1/00) and continuing, most likely, throughout the current WIA authorization period.

The draft Title II plan has also been circulated among the same diverse groups of stakeholders as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the Governor’s office, and it has been posted to our WEB site for review and comment.

Copies of the task force final reports and related comments on this plan are included in Appendix A. If comments are received from Governor Cellucci on the Title II components of this plan, they will be forwarded immediately to the Secretary of Education’s attention as per §224(d).

D. Needs Assessment

b) Objectively assess the adult education and literacy needs of individuals including an assessment of those most in need and hardest to serve, including low income students, individuals with disabilities, single parents, displaced homemakers, and individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement (including individuals with limited English

proficiency, criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals.) (§224(b)(10), §225)

The Massachusetts Department of Education assesses the basic educational needs of individuals and populations by:

- analyzing census data (unfortunately, most data related to educational achievement has not been updated by the Census since 1990);
- extrapolating National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) findings to the specific characteristics of our state; and by
- inventorying the number of adults ages 18 and older and families overall in each of the 351 communities in the Commonwealth according to a wide range of educational, economic and social characteristics.

The 1990 Census identified 908,718 (21.6% of) Massachusetts adults who are 18 years of age or older who lack a high school credential. Another 156,297 Massachusetts adults self-reported that they communicate in English “Not Well” or “Not At All.” Please note that this population is generally acknowledged to have been seriously under-counted by the 1990 Census.

When we apply the NALS findings to Massachusetts (which has a higher than average level of educational attainment), we find that an estimated 877,000 (19% of) adults do not possess functional literacy and that another 1,162,000 (25%) are literate, but lack the level of skills expected of a high school graduate. [Refer to “Estimating Total Need for ABE Services in Massachusetts” in Appendix B.]

However, we find significant variations in the profile of needs and assets as we look from community to community. This is why the Department, working with the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium, developed individual profiles of needs and assets for every one of the 351 cities and towns across the Commonwealth. These profiles include indicators of individual and family need and the assets communities have available to respond to these needs with respect to education, employment, poverty, social and key health characteristics. [Refer to samples of community “Needs Profiles” and “Assets Profiles” and a summary chart of the 351 cities and towns organized regionally that are included in Appendix B.]

An ongoing Community Planning needs/assets inventory process is also now built into each ABE grant in the required initial design phase of the program. Over the multi-year performance period for the ABE grant award, a strategic plan must be submitted and reviewed prior to the implementation of new/expanded services. Grantees are expected to secure a meaningful level of collaboration with all agencies and institutions that have business with or that service the targeted populations. The grantee must engage in planning for target populations that include the entire range of individuals needing ABE services in their community, regardless of the specific service type of their agency’s historical specialization. The grantee must also bring together all stakeholders in

a community-wide plan that comprehensively identifies the need, assesses and coordinates resources, and plans the development of further services to meet the community's entire range of needs. On completion of these stages, the ABE community planning process results in a five year strategic plan to comprehensively meet the needs of the under-educated and limited English proficient populations within the community. Future increases in funding will be targeted in response to these strategic plans.

E. State and Local Governance

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By state law (The Education Reform Act of 1993), the Massachusetts Department of Education serves as the state's lead agency for adult basic education services and is designated as the "eligible agency" under WIA Title II.

F. Program Funding

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i) Describe how the eligible agency will fund local activities in accordance with the considerations described in §231(e) and the other requirements of Title II of WIA. (§224(b))

ii) Describe the process to show that public notice was given of the availability of Federal funds to eligible recipients and the procedures for submitting applications to the State, including approximate time frames for the notice and receipt of applications. (§231(c))

iii) Describe how the eligible agency will use funds made available under §222(a)(2) for State leadership activities. (§223(a))

iv) Describe the steps the eligible agency will take to ensure direct and equitable access, as required in §231(c). (§224(b)(12))

Requests for Proposals (RFPs) may be issued in a consolidated format covering several initiatives or singly by initiative, and they may be for continuation or start-up grants. Each package contains a comprehensive description of the project being funded including the funding source (federal, state or both), a description of how funds can be used, eligibility requirements, and required program information that must be provided to meet federal and state guidelines. The RFP package (which is also posted to the Department's ABE website) offers detailed instructions on how to complete the application and budgetary forms and provides the names and telephone numbers of persons to contact for assistance. Continuation ("multi-year") projects are only funded if the project has demonstrated satisfactory performance and has submitted up-to-date statistical and financial reports. Cooperative arrangements and coordination of activities are addressed in the grant application narrative and budget pages.

The Department combines its federal allocation, with a much higher level of funding appropriated by the state, in order to provide an integrated purchase of ABE instructional services. All federal requirements are met in this integrated process. The Department awards not less than 82.5% of its Title II allocation for grants to local programs to provide ABE instructional services, not more than 10% of which is awarded to programs for incarcerated adults.

In awarding grants or contracts under this section, the Massachusetts Department of Education shall consider the following requirements from WIA Title II:

1. The degree to which the eligible provider will establish measurable goals;
2. The past effectiveness of an eligible provider in improving the literacy skills of adults and families, and after the 1-year period beginning with the adoption of an eligible agency's performance measures under Sec. 212 of AEFLA, the success of an eligible provider receiving funding under this subtitle in meeting or exceeding such performance measures, especially with respect to those adults with lower levels of literacy;
3. The commitment of the eligible provider to serve individuals in the community who are most in need of literacy services, including individuals who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills;
4. Whether or not the program is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains; and whether it uses instructional practices such as phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension, that research has proven to be effective in teaching individuals to read;
5. Whether the activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice;
6. Whether the activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers;
7. Whether the activities provide learning in real life contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
8. Whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators;
9. Whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, post-secondary educational institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies;
10. Whether the activities offer flexible schedules and support services (such as child care and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;
11. Whether the activities maintain a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the eligible agency performance measures;

12. Whether the local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs (Sec. 231) (e).

Public notice was provided two months prior, and again two weeks prior to release of the RFP in November 1999, via publications in major newspapers across the state, through mailings to all known providers of adult basic education services, and through postings to the Department's ABE WEB page. Applicants were provided with a full three months to respond to the ABE RFP, with proposals due to the Department on 25 February 2000. In addition, in-depth trainings (4 days in length) were made openly available and provided in five regions across the state to both experienced and newly interested applicants. These trainings covered in-depth the policies and procedures that would be involved in responding to the RFP. In addition, the Department provided ten technical assistance sessions in early December and posted answers to every question received from potential applicants through February on our WEB site. In fact, all interested applicants were advised to continuously check this WEB site because this would be the ONLY venue to find answers to questions after the technical assistance sessions were completed, thereby ensuring open and equitable access to all information.

This same RFP process included almost \$2 million in both federal (§222(a)(2)) and state funding to re-bid the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES), the ABE program and professional development provider for Massachusetts ABE programs and practitioners. This funding will also be used to support Department staff who provide technical and technology assistance to our funded providers of adult education and literacy activities. Federal funding for these purposes will not exceed 12.5% of the Title II allocation.

Massachusetts has provided "direct and equitable access" to ABE funding for almost three decades and, as a result, has the most diverse provider network in the nation. All notices of funding availability are widely and publicly posted (as noted above) and the Department's commitment to "direct and equitable access" is expressly documented in the RFP. We anticipate that the successful applicants in the current competition will continue to reflect that diversity, not only in numbers of agency types represented, but in the distribution of dollars as well. These include: community-based/non-profit organizations; school districts; libraries and other municipal organizations; correctional agencies; volunteer literacy organizations; higher education institutions including colleges and community colleges; public housing authorities; other qualified non-profit institutions who demonstrate the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families; and consortia of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above.

G. Activities to be Funded

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d) Describe the Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities the State will provide within the following categories: (§224(b)(2), §231(b))

- **Adult Education and Literacy services, including workplace literacy services**
- **Family literacy services**
- **English literacy services.**

Listed below are the programs currently available to eligible agencies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts providing services and/or instruction in Adult Education and Literacy Services, Family Literacy Services, Workplace Education, and English Literacy programs.

- 1) Community Adult Learning Programs - Adult Basic Education (including literacy through adult secondary education in English and/or bilingual settings, and English for speakers of other languages) grants establish free access for educationally disadvantaged adults, age 16 and older, for adult basic education services in their geographic or ethnic communities in the sixteen Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) across the Commonwealth. These services are supported in a common process using both federal and state ABE funding.
- 2) ABE Comprehensive Health Education - ABE Comprehensive Health Education Projects are designed to incorporate health content, curricula, and community health partnerships into instructional activities for ABE students at DOE funded ABE and ESOL instructional programs. (Through FY 2000, supported separately through state funding. Starting FY 2001, this will be integrated within Community Adult Learning Programs using both federal and state funding.)
- 3) Adult Education for the Homeless - The Adult Education for the Homeless Program funds the establishment of long-term collaborations between adult learning centers and adult education for the homeless projects at shelters across the Commonwealth. These projects assist homeless adults in their efforts to achieve basic education and literacy skills and self-sufficiency in a stable, safe and secure environment. (Through FY 2000, supported separately through state funding. Starting FY 2001, this will be integrated within Community Adult Learning Programs using both federal and state funding.)
- 4) Family Literacy Challenge Grants – State-funded Family Literacy Challenge Grants promote and support families by supporting collaborations between providers of educational and family support services with an expectation of

increasing local financial commitment. The goal is to institutionalize family literacy services within communities using primarily local resources. (Through FY 2000, supported separately through state funding. Starting FY 2001, this will be integrated within Community Adult Learning Programs using both federal and state funding.)

- 5) Even Start Family Literacy - Federal Even Start Family Literacy funds are used to improve the educational opportunities of Massachusetts families by integrating early childhood education, adult education, and parenting activities into projects that build on existing community resources.
- 6) Volunteer Tutoring Services - The Volunteer Tutoring Services Program funds support projects delivering adult basic education services. Most volunteers provide instruction that supplements ABE and literacy study in regular programs in the “Commonwealth Literacy Corps” initiative. Others provide services to learners for whom participation in classroom-based adult basic education services is impossible or unsuitable. (Through FY 2000, Commonwealth Literacy Corps services were supported separately through state and federal funding. Starting FY 2001, this will be integrated within Community Adult Learning Programs using both federal and state funding.)
- 7) Educational Programs for the Incarcerated - The Educational Programs for the Incarcerated Program uses both state and federal funds for projects designed to establish free access in correctional institutions to adult basic education services for offenders age 16 and older. Services enhance the ability of institutionalized persons to read, write, and speak English and to compute and solve mathematical problems at a level of proficiency sufficient for them to function in society and develop their potential as individuals and citizens upon release from the correctional facility or institution.
- 8) Workplace Education Program - The Workplace Education Program funds eligible agencies that provide instructional services in basic literacy, numeracy, and English for speakers of other languages to incumbent workers who lack the basic skills in English expected of a high school graduate. Services are provided through partnerships among businesses, workers, labor organizations, and adult education providers. Projects are supported with a combination of primarily state and local matching resources for up to three years at which point programs are expected to institutionalize these services and continue with local and/or private funds. (Through FY 2000, Workplace Education has been supported separately through state funding. Starting FY 2001, this separate competition will continue, however, funding will also be available/integrated within the Community Adult Learning Programs using both federal and state funding.)
- 9) ABE Curriculum and Professional Development Project – These grants support ABE providers across the Commonwealth in their work assessing

how ABE Curriculum Frameworks currently being introduced in the State can be used to strengthen curricula in the eligible agency's program. Grant moneys are also used to train practitioners in how to develop curricula using the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks. The project offers an opportunity for programs to work with curriculum development experts to enhance program effectiveness and bring ABE services up to the standards demanded by today's lifelong learners.

- 10) Supplemental Technology Grants for ABE Programs - The Massachusetts Department of Education primarily provides state funds to ABE programs to assist educators in making more strategic and effective use of current and emerging technologies. Upon approval of a local technology plan, the funds help pay for a technology coordinator for each eligible agency and for hardware and software that will enable programs to connect to the System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology (SMARTT). This system is currently being developed for programs to submit comprehensive error-free statistical data on performance directly to the Department via the Internet.
- 11) ABE Distance Learning Pilot Project - The ABE Distance Learning Pilot Project is promoting the use of video, computer assisted instruction, and telecommunications to overcome barriers to participation in ABE instruction caused by situations such as distance, waiting lists, or conflicting family/work schedules. The program supports up to four regional sites or "hubs" where specially trained teaching and counseling staff work in a regional "classroom without walls." ABE learners receive core content of the curriculum through video and computer networks. (Currently supported 100% through state funding.)
- 12) ABE Mentoring Project - The ABE Mentoring Program funds ABE programs to serve as mentors and provide specialized technical assistance to adult basic education programs funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education, particularly those placed on probation (due to under-performance) and newly established programs. (Currently supported 100% through state funding.)
- 13) System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) - The SABES Program provides funding for five Regional Support Centers (RSCs) which, in coordination with a Central Support Center (CRC) and under the direction of the Department, provide locally accessible training opportunities and resources for staff, program, and leadership development for adult basic education providers in Massachusetts. The SABES Program enables the Commonwealth to carry out state leadership activities effectively and efficiently for ABE programs through intensive technical assistance and regional and statewide training programs.

- 14) Young Adults with Learning Disabilities (YALD) - Using federal special education funding, the YALD Program funds projects and programs to develop the capacity of adult basic education programs and practitioners in the areas of assessment, instructional strategies, and curriculum modification. These projects are designed to increase the capacity of ABE programs to meet the needs of young adults, ages 16-21, with learning disabilities.

H. Coordination and Non-Duplication of Services

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- c) Describe how the Adult Education and Family Literacy activities that will be carried out with any funds received under AEFLA will be integrated with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities in the State or outlying area served by the eligible agency. (§224(b)(11))**

ABE Community Planning is a requirement of all programs applying for funds from the Massachusetts Department of Education (the Department). (See also Section F, above.) The purpose of the Community Planning initiative is to ensure that:

- The needs of all under-educated and/or limited English proficient constituencies are accounted for and that strategic plans are developed to identify how and when every such constituency will ultimately be served;
- Every organization with an interest in and the potential for supporting services to these populations is included in such planning, and that protocols are established to coordinate these services;
- Students benefit from the broadest possible array of educational, employment and training, health and human services available and which so many adults need in order to successfully pursue their goals and aspirations; and
- Adult basic education takes its place as a key ingredient in each organization's, community's and region's plans to improve the quality of life for its citizenry.

Within the ABE open and competitive grant process, applicants are required to:

- conduct an initial profile of assets and needs;
- document the formation of an ABE working group that will constitute the core of the community's ABE Community Planning Partnership;
- commit to and carry out all requirements of ABE community planning over the coming five years if they succeed in obtaining a multi-year ABE grant from the Department.

As described in section B, the Department will also be negotiating Memoranda of Understanding with each of the state's sixteen local WIBs to provide for the support of career centers and increased coordination the state's systems of ABE providers with the state's employment and training providers. The joint review of ABE multi-year proposals by the Department with the WIBs and SDAs also lays the foundation for a higher degree of coordination and collaboration; approximately 12% of the funding awarded in each region will be provided through a subcontract with the SDA (or, in the future, likely through the career center). We expect this coordination will ultimately lead to an increased number of programs using integrated education and training approaches to providing services to adults with employment related goals.

I. Special Populations and Other Groups

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- **Low income students (§ 224(b)(10)(A))**
- **Individuals with disabilities (§224(b)(10)(B))**
- **Single parents and displaced homemakers (§224(b)(10)(C))**
- **Individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including individuals with limited English proficiency (§224(b)(10)(D))**
- **Criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals (§225)**

Educationally Disadvantaged - The Commonwealth of Massachusetts identifies low-income adult learners who are educationally disadvantaged as part of the MFLC Community Needs Profile described in Section B.1. Planning, development, and delivery of ABE and literacy services for this population are included in the ongoing needs/assets inventory process built into each ABE grant in the required Community Planning/Partnership phase also described above in Section I.

Individuals with Disabilities – All programs funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education Adult and Community Learning Services cluster are required to have a trained Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator on staff; additional funding is provided by the Department to support this function. The responsibilities of the Coordinator are to identify and procure appropriate services for individuals with disabilities - either through program design or referral to an appropriate service provider. Disabled individuals are identified in three ways: through observation by program staff, by self-disclosure, or as a result of an historical record received from another service agency. Services to individuals with disabilities include provision for reasonable accommodations, classroom intervention and/or referral for specialized services. They are provided to all learners identified as having physical and/or cognitive barriers to participation in the ABE/ESOL services in which they are enrolled. The Young

Adults with Learning Disabilities (YALD) project and the New England Literacy Resource Center Learning Disabilities project both ensure that:

- staff are well prepared to work with disabled adults,
- coordination between ABE programs and agencies serving the disabled are established and strengthened, and
- a common policy framework is developed so that disabled adults receive all intended benefits from these publicly supported services.

Single Parents and Displaced Homemakers - Identification of single parents and displaced homemakers in need of ABE/ESOL services is accomplished as part of the MFLC Community Needs Profile described in Section 2.1 of this document. Serving this population is a priority for Massachusetts Family Literacy providers.

Individuals with Multiple Barriers to Educational Enhancement - Individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including individuals with limited English proficiency, are identified through an analysis of census data and recommended intake procedures, as well as through use of the MFLC. The Department will be especially careful to implement performance standards that set high standards, but which also acknowledge the time and challenges in making measurable progress with adults with multiple barriers to success. No steps will be taken that encourage or support “creaming,” i.e., enrolling only adults with an easy path to successful completion. Half of all Department supported services provided through Community Adult Learning Centers are for limited English proficient adults. The Department is working with programs to provide for more successful transitions for these adults to ABE, occupational training and higher education.

Criminal Offenders in Correctional Institutions and Other Institutionalized Individuals - The Massachusetts Department of Education funds programs in almost every correctional institution across the Commonwealth to establish free access to adult basic education services for criminal offenders age 16 or older. The Department also funds the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium and community planning outreach to agencies and programs (e.g. the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Mental Rehabilitation) that serve adults in institutional settings. Services are designed to enhance institutionalized individuals’ ability to read, write, and speak English and to compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function in society upon release. In addition, the Department funds institutions to establish long-term collaborations between adult learning centers and adult education for the homeless projects at shelters across the Commonwealth. It is the goal of these collaborations to provide the target population with basic skills sufficient to aid in their efforts to end their homelessness.

J. Professional Development and System Improvement

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An initial description of the Massachusetts System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) is included section G, Title II, #13.

Background – A significant portion of State leadership activities and resources are assigned to the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES). SABES was established by MADOE in 1990 (with Section 343 funding of the Adult Education Act). The SABES program provides funding for five Regional Support Centers (RSCs) in coordination with a Central Resource Center (CRC) under the direction of the MADOE. SABES provides comprehensive training and technical assistance for adult education and literacy providers. These services are delivered through the five RSCs located at community colleges across the state. RSC staff members assist ABE service providers and programs in determining their training needs. The SABES RSC personnel then develop a variety of training opportunities to meet those needs. Training opportunities might include consultation, workshops, mini-courses, institutes, study circles, mentoring, peer coaching, teacher research projects, as well as other training activities. In collaboration with the five RSCs, a SABES Central Resource Center in downtown Boston coordinates the development of statewide activities and provides technical assistance to the RSCs. The Department is working with SABES to develop and provide more thematic and indepth trainings, particularly in areas that are relevant to the professional standards that will be included in the soon to be implemented Massachusetts ABE Certification.

New England Literacy Resource Center - Together, the SABES centers comprise Massachusetts' participation in the New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC), a collaboration among the literacy resource centers of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. The mission of the NELRC is to strengthen adult literacy services in New England through sharing and collaborative special projects among State Literacy Resource Centers, adult literacy practitioners and policy-makers in the six New England States.

Other Program and Professional Development Activities - Although the SABES network provides the greatest portion of professional development to programs across the state through the funding and guidance received from the Department, the Department's ABE Program Specialists are also responsible for providing technical assistance to their programs. This is in addition to conducting monitoring visits and program evaluations. A comprehensive analysis of data collected through the SMARTT database system provides a means to track performance indicators for each eligible provider and allows everyone involved in oversight and program development activities to keep abreast of program needs. The Department also establishes an annual budget for each ABE Program Specialist in support of her/his professional development.

K. Performance Accountability

c) TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION & FAMILY LITERACY

- i) include a description of how the eligible agency will evaluate annually the effectiveness of the Adult Education and Family Literacy activities, such as a comprehensive performance accountability system, based on the performance measures in §212.**
- ii) identify levels of performance for the core indicators of performance described in §212(b)(2)(A) for the first three program years covered by the plan (§212(b)(3)(A)(ii)), and any additional indicators selected by the eligible agency (§212(b)(2)(B)).**
- iii) describe how such performance measures will be used to ensure the improvement of Adult Education and Family Literacy activities in the State or outlying area (§224(b)(4)).**

Program Reviews - The Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) cluster of the Massachusetts Department of Education conducts, at a minimum, an annual desk review of 100% of the funded programs, and at the most comprehensive level, an annual Program Specifications Review (PSR) of funded Adult Education and Literacy Programs. Both processes include a thorough review of data developed through the Department's WEB based student level database and program management system, "SMARTT ABE" ("System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology for ABE"). For the PSR, ABE Program Specialists identify programs that are on probation and programs that have not previously been reviewed during the current five-year funding cycle. The Programs Specialists annually conduct Program Specifications Reviews of 20% of the programs receiving federal funds and 20% of the state funded programs. The PSR involves a minimum of a two-day site visit, interviews with the program director, program coordinators, teachers, students, and the advisory council. The PSR report form contains a checklist based on goals for programs and indicators of program quality developed from the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. The form is completed by the reviewer and sent to ACLS supervisors for critical review and analysis. After review, a copy of the PSR is sent to the program for comment and response. ACLS includes recommendations for an action plan, and a follow-up action plan meeting is scheduled which includes, if applicable, the regional SABES coordinator. A final report is then prepared and filed with the program's records to be used in planning for program improvement as well as subsequent funding and refunding decisions.

Guidelines and Performance Standards - A comprehensive set of guidelines and performance standards for programs is used to establish clear standards for provision of student services, for program and staff development, and for administration of the program. (See appendix item C, the Massachusetts Department of Education Guidelines for Adult Basic Education.) Programs use

this document, which is also distributed electronically, to prepare an individual planning document for each program year. The planning document lists classes proposed, educational class levels, contact hours per year, slots by funding category as well as total slots per class, and the ABE rate for each class which is determined by total slots per class. The planning document determines the cost to run the classes proposed and indicates whether the amount funded is adequate to cover the proposed classes. The planning document, once approved, is the basis for analysis of actual services as compared to proposed services. Program Specialists review the original planning document submitted by each program, and reported data is monitored during the funding year to determine the degree to which the approved services are being implemented and successfully delivered.

Core Indicators of Performance - The Massachusetts Department of Education has identified three domains of performance: student participation, education gains and achievement of student articulated goals, i.e., “outcomes.” Thresholds for measures will be developed in close consultation with the field and will reflect system-wide and targeted population averages. Consistent with the required primary core measures stipulated by WIA Title II, programs are provided with guidelines on the following performance outcomes:

1. Educational Progress - For all students who enroll in MADOE funded adult education classes, educational progress will be measured by the percentage of students who complete a grade level equivalent (ABE-ASE) or student performance level (SPL – for ESOL). For federal reporting purposes, the Department will report the percentage of students who complete a federal educational level or reach the individual stated goal and leave the program, or who will complete the federal level and move to a higher level.
2. Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education or Vocational Training - Of the students enrolled in adult education classes at the ASE or Advanced ESOL levels, progress will be measured by the number of students who identify “enroll in post secondary education” as a goal, and the percentage who achieve that goal.
3. Of the students enrolled in adult education classes at the ASE or Advanced ESOL levels, progress will be measured by the number of students who identify “enroll in vocational training” as a goal, and the percentage who achieve that goal.
4. Employment / Job Advancement - Of the students enrolled in adult education classes who identify “gain employment” or “advance in job” as their goal, progress will be measured by the percentage who achieve one or both of these goals.

5. Obtain High School Diploma or Equivalent - Of the students enrolled in adult education classes at the ASE level, the percentage that obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent (GED).

Additional Indicators to be developed - MADOE will determine which, if any, of the following additional indicators will be developed to provide USDOE with levels of performance data in the future. Thresholds for measures are still being developed based on system-wide and targeted population averages. In the statements below, performance threshold measurements are preceded by a blank line. These statements of measures are provided solely to communicate the types of additional performance indicators Massachusetts is considering. The Department will work with ABE programs, practitioners and other stakeholders in an indepth and ongoing process to determine how best to measure and ultimately establish benchmarks in performance related to our students as workers, members of families and communities, and as lifelong learners. The final measures and levels of performance will likely differ from the following list.

- (a) Level ("Class") Completion: The percent of students who completed at least one grade level equivalent or SPL within the program year.
- (b) High School / GED Diploma: The percent of students lacking a high school credential at the ASE level who received at least ____ hours or ____ weeks of instruction and who attained a High School or GED diploma within ____ months of their enrollment in classes.
- (c) Vocational Training & Enrollment in Post Secondary Education: The percent of all students at the ASE, Pre-ASE and SPL levels 5 to 10, with at least ____ hours or ____ weeks of instruction and with a goal of "enrolling in vocational training and/or post secondary education," who do so within ____ months of their enrollment in classes.
- (d) Gain Employment, Job Advancement, Perform New Job Requirements:
- (e) The percent of all students with at least ____ hours or ____ weeks of instruction with the goal "gain employment" who do so within ____ months of their enrollment in classes.
- (f) The percent of employed students with at least ____ hours or ____ weeks of instruction whose wages increase by at least ____% within ____ months of their enrollment in classes.
- (g) Customer Satisfaction: The percent of all students who express satisfaction with the progress they have made in the program.
- (h) Read More to Child, Increase Parent-Child Interaction, Help Child with Homework and Support (Public) School: The percent of all students with at least ____ hours or ____ weeks of instruction and with the goal to "increase reading and/or homework assistance with a child" who report doing so during their enrollment in classes.
- (i) Obtained U.S. Citizenship: The percent of students at the intermediate or advanced levels with at least ____ hours or ____ weeks of instruction with the

- goal “obtain U.S. citizenship” who do so within ___ year(s) of their enrollment in classes.
- (j) Register to Vote: The percent of students with at least ___ hours or ___ weeks of instruction with the goal “register to vote” who do so while enrolled in classes.
- (k) Engage in Preventive Health Practices: The percent of students with at least ___ hours or ___ weeks of instruction with the goal “improve preventive health practices” who report doing so while enrolled in classes.

Level of AEFLA Performance for First Three Years

Educational Progress – Based on the past three years of performance trends of the students enrolled in adult education classes, we anticipate a 5%, 4% and 3% increase in each year. The percentages of students who will complete the federal educational level or reach the individual stated goal and leave the program, or who will complete the federal level and move to a higher level are predicted starting at 20% for Beginning Literacy ABE, Beginning Literacy ESOL Beginning ABE and Beginning ESOL in FY 99.

Proficiency Level	FY 99 (20%)	FY 00 +5% (21.5%)	FY 01 +4% (22.8%)	FY 02 +3% (24%)
Beg. Literacy ABE	126	132	137	141
Beg. Literacy ESOL	819	860	894	920
Beg. ABE	498	523	544	560
Beg. ESOL	<u>843</u>	<u>885</u>	<u>920</u>	<u>947</u>
Totals	2395	2400	2495	2568

The percentages of students who will complete the federal educational level or reach the individual stated goal and leave the program, or who will complete the federal level and move to a higher level are predicted starting at 25% in FY 99 for the remaining ABE/ASE and ESOL levels.

Proficiency Level	FY99 (25%)	FY00 +5% (26.2%)	FY01 +4% (27.2%)	FY02 +3% (28%)
Int. ABE	691	725	754	776
ASE	1,206	1,266	1,316	1,355
Int. ESOL	886	930	967	996
Adv. ESOL	<u>527</u>	<u>553</u>	<u>575</u>	<u>592</u>
Totals	3310	3,474	3,612	3,719

Of the students enrolled in adult education classes at the ASE or Advanced ESOL levels who identify “enroll in post secondary education” as a goal, we anticipate a 5%, 4%, and 3% increase each year in the percentage of students achieving that goal:

FY99	7.2%	or	101
FY00	7.5%	or	106
FY01	7.8%	or	110
FY02	8.0%	or	113

Of the students enrolled in adult education classes at the ASE or Advanced ESOL levels who identify “enroll in vocational training” as a goal, we anticipate a 5%, 4% and 3% increase each year in the percentage of students achieving that goal:

FY99	6.2%	or	27
FY00	6.5%	or	28
FY01	6.7%	or	29
FY02	6.9%	or	30

Of the students enrolled in adult education classes at the ASE or Advanced ESOL levels who identify “enroll in vocational training” or “enroll in post-secondary education” as a goal, we anticipate a 5%, 4% and 3% increase each year in the percentage of students achieving that goal:

FY99	7.0%	or	128
FY00	7.3%	or	134
FY01	7.6%	or	139
FY02	7.8%	or	143

Note: The aggregate count indicated in 2c above may reflect duplication of some students’ achievements when students are enrolled in both ABE and ESOL classes.

Of the students enrolled in adult education classes who identify "gain employment, advance in job, or perform new job requirements," we anticipate a 5%, 4% and 3% increase each year in the percentage of students achieving one or more of these goals:

	Gain Employment			Advance in Job		
FY99	12%	or	695	11.0%	or	524
FY00	12.6%	or	730	11.5 %	or	550
FY01	13.1%	or	759	11.9%	or	572
FY02	13.5%	or	782	12.3%	or	589

Note: The Massachusetts unemployment rate has been at historically low levels (below the national average) for all three years for which this benchmark was set.

Any significant increase in this rate will necessitate renegotiations of these anticipated levels of performance.

Of the students enrolled in adult education classes at the ASE level, we anticipate a 5%, 4%, and 3% increase each year in the percentage of students who obtain a high school diploma or the equivalent (GED):

FY99	24.0%	or	497
FY00	25.2%	or	522
FY01	26.2%	or	543
FY02	27.0%	or	559

In preparing proposed levels of performance, the Massachusetts Department of Education considers adjusted levels of performance for programs at the statewide level. The Department takes into account factors including the characteristics of participants who enter the programs and the services to be provided. Also taken into consideration is the extent to which the levels of performance promote continuous improvement in performance by eligible agencies in order to ensure maximum benefit to participants and maximum return for state and federal funds invested.

L. Data Collection

TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION & FAMILY LITERACY

System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology

The Adult and Community Learning Services Cluster of the Massachusetts Department of Education (the Department) has implemented a new Internet-based system for collecting data from Adult Education and Literacy programs across the Commonwealth. The SMARTT ABE (System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology for ABE) database was developed by ACLS to track performance and help programs comply with the ACLS guidelines. The system was developed on the Internet (WWW) and allows programs to submit statistical data on performance directly to the Department without needing to pay the substantial time and money costs of managing the programs/“executables” and the data at the local level. The SMARTT system is currently undergoing major upgrading to increase functionality and to provide reporting and management functions in a much more timely and accurate manner. The system is accessible to multiple users from any location 7 days a week, 22 hours per day. The new system also allows users to define additional fields to enter site specific programmatic data, making the system more responsive to individual program needs.

The new SMARTT program has several crosschecks that prevent entry of data that does not comply with ACLS guidelines for enrollment, scheduling, staffing,

performance and other critical data. The SMARTT system makes information available at several levels. A user can access Agency information, including personnel and grants data, and move further into the program's operations to project level, site level, staffing information, class lists, schedules, enrollment, and student information. The SMARTT system allows for monitoring of individual student progress through a program as well as assessment of program performance and effectiveness. The standard will be for Community Adult Learning Centers to enter data on a weekly basis with the Department providing monthly feedback to programs that appear to be falling behind. The reporting system is designed to compare year-to-date performance with the program's approved service plan. This enables problems in the implementation of services and/or in performance to be identified early and for appropriate responses to be developed in a timely manner. The system tracks volunteer participation at the class level as well as by individual, one-on-one matches, and it allows the user to match volunteers with students by several criteria. Volunteer attendance can be reported by such activities as travel, tutoring, prep time, and administrative duties. SMARTT provides all data needed to report on core, secondary and additional measures. It also collects data that will enable the Department, working with the field, to establish performance benchmarks that are tailored to the different needs and circumstances of population sub-groups. This is a very important capability if we are to meet our goal of establishing performance levels that set high expectations without creating "perverse incentives" such as the tendency to avoid enrolling students functioning at low levels of literacy and/or with multiple barriers to success.

Access to all information, however, is provided on a "need to know" basis. The Department contracted with WEB security firms/experts to ensure that all transmissions and access points are as secure as WEB credit card sales, banking and other highly secure transactions.

M. Corrective Action

TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION & FAMILY LITERACY

Programs that fall below the minimum levels of performance adopted by the Department of Education (the Department) are notified and a program improvement plan is negotiated with an ABE Program Specialist. Additional resources and support may be made available through SABES and/or mini-grants from the Department.

Programs that fall below the minimum levels of performance for two consecutive years are placed on "probation." A formal corrective action plan is executed between the Department and the local program. Significant progress in addressing deficiencies within the subsequent program year enables the Department to continue multi-year funding. In the absence of meaningful progress, the Department may reduce or terminate the multi-year grant award.