



FY 2022 – FY 2024 Guidelines for Effective MassSTEP Programs

in

Community Adult Learning Centers

and

Correctional Institutions



Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)

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Introduction

The *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) requires states to provide Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) services.

The term “integrated education and training” refers to a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement (*34 CFR §463.35*). An IET program must include three components:

1. Adult education and literacy activities as described in *34 CFR §463.30*.
2. Workforce preparation activities as described in *34 CFR §463.34*.
3. Workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

In order to meet the requirement that the adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training be integrated, services must be provided concurrently and contextually such that—

1. Within the overall scope of a particular IET program, the adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training:
 - a. Are each of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available, particularly with respect to improving reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency of eligible individuals;
 - b. Occur simultaneously; and
 - c. Use occupationally relevant instructional materials.
2. The IET has a single set of learning objectives that identifies specific adult education content, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training competencies, and the program activities are organized to function cooperatively (*34 CFR §463.35-463.37*).

Programs meet the IET requirement of “for the purpose of educational and career advancement” (*34 CFR §463.38*) by:

1. being aligned with the State's *content standards for adult education* as described in the State's *Combined State Plan*; and
2. having an IET program that is part of a career pathway.

MassSTEP ABE programs must meet these specifications.

The WIOA IELCE program refers to the use of funds provided under section 243 of the Act for education services for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. It delivers educational services as described in [34 CFR §463.33](#) and must be delivered in combination with IET activities. Eligible IELCE programs must provide services that:

1. Include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation; and
2. Are designed to:
 - a. Prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
 - b. Integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program. [34 CFR §463.73](#)

Massachusetts MassSTEP ESOL programs must meet these specifications.

MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL programs are supported by the Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) unit of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL programs also have requirements in addition to the ones stipulated by WIOA. First, the programs must include workforce training that results in participants attaining one or more industry-recognized credentials. Programs must also be able to demonstrate demand for employment in local labor markets and that the targeted occupation or occupational cluster is part of a clearly identified career pathway. Finally, advising, support services, and job placement are required services.

MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL models typically include some level of team teaching in which the adult education instructor and the workforce training instructor co-teach or provide support in each other's classes.

Depending on the program design, MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL services are offered in collaboration with local adult education agencies, *MassHire Workforce Boards*, *Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) schools*, postsecondary education, training providers, employers, and other local stakeholders. Programming must be aligned with local career pathways including those identified with the *Regional Labor Market Blueprints*.

Massachusetts intends to maintain one or more MassSTEP ABE and/or MassSTEP ESOL program in each of the state's 16 local workforce areas. These programs are designed to reduce the amount of time it typically takes for participants to complete an adult education program of study, earn an industry-recognized credential, and enter the

workforce. They are accelerated, intensive models that are for participants who have the availability to attend education and workforce training classes simultaneously. These models are a unique opportunity for adult learners seeking meaningful, self/family-sustaining employment in emerging industries that offer the promise of both career stability and advancement.

In September 2021, the [MassSTEP brand](#) was launched. The brand unified the state's IET and IELCE programs under a single name and purpose. MassSTEP grantees must follow all of the brand's specifications stipulated in the [MassSTEP Brand Standards and Implementation Guide](#).

Program Design

MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL funds must be used in accordance with the *FY 19-FY 23 Massachusetts Policies for Effective Adult Education in Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions* (the *Policies*).

MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL Program designs must include all three IET components: adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training. MassSTEP ESOL models must also include civics education. The MassSTEP ABE components must be of sufficient intensity and quality, particularly with respect to improving reading, writing, mathematics, and high school credential preparation. MassSTEP ESOL components must be of sufficient intensity and quality to prepare English language learners to speak, read, and write English.

The components for both models must also occur simultaneously and function as a single set of learning objectives that are aligned to a specific occupation or occupational cluster. The goal of these models is self/family-sustaining employment in a high-growth industry. Each local MassHire Workforce Board have developed *Local Plan Packages* that identify the local area's priority sectors. MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL models must be aligned to a local area priority sector.

These models are carried out in collaboration with workforce partners. For example, an adult education program may be partner with a local *MassHire Career Center* to deliver workforce preparation activities, and a local *CVTE* school to provide the occupational skills training.

Eligibility

Students enrolled in MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL services must meet the eligibility criteria for adult education services described in the *Policies* (page 14).

Adult Education

Adult Education for MassSTEP ABE models consists of industry-specific, contextualized instruction that is generally at the Pre-ASE or ASE level for MassSTEP ABE and SPL 4 or higher for MassSTEP ESOL.

Pre-Adult Secondary Education (Pre-ASE)

The goal of pre-ASE services is to improve students' skills in preparation for higher levels of instruction. Curricula include reading, writing, speaking and listening, science, history/social studies, and mathematics skills aligned to the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education* (i.e., reflective of the shifts and mathematical practices described in the Curriculum and Instruction chapter of the *Policies*) and necessary for functioning at levels comparable to students in the fourth through eighth grade. MassSTEP ABE Pre-ASE instruction must be industry-specific and targeted to a specific occupation and/or occupational cluster (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, information technology).

Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and High School Equivalency (HSE) Preparation

The goal of ASE services is to enable students to earn the Massachusetts HSE credential in order to successfully transition into and succeed in postsecondary education, training, and employment. Curricula should be contextualized to the academic demands of HSE assessments and include reading, writing, science, history/social studies, and mathematics skills aligned to the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education* (i.e., reflective of the shifts and mathematical practices described in the Curriculum and Instruction chapter of the *Policies*) and necessary for functioning at levels comparable to students in the ninth through twelfth grade. (Note: Programs have the option of embedding science and history/social studies vocabulary and concepts in ELA and mathematics curricula or offering separate classes for science and history/social studies.)

Programs are required to be familiar with the:

- Massachusetts HSE assessment policies posted at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hse>;
- Academic requirements of the Massachusetts HSE assessments; and
- Websites where students register for the HSE assessments (i.e., <https://ged.com/> and <http://hiset.ets.org/>).

HSE assessment fees must not be charged to AE grants. Programs should address questions about allowable expenses to their assigned ACLS program specialist (PS). Like MassSTEP ABE Pre-ASE, ASE instruction must be contextualized to a specific occupation and/or occupational cluster.

Adult Diploma Program (ADP)

An ADP is a sequence of classes and/or academic tasks, the goal of which is for students to earn an accredited, verifiable high school credential issued by a high school or local school district in order to successfully transition into and succeed in postsecondary education, training, and employment. The school district approves the ADP curricula, determines the process for earning the credential, and may impose additional eligibility requirements beyond those established by ACLS. Because the credential earned is a high school diploma, students must comply with Massachusetts state laws regarding the Competency Determination standard.

For more information on the Competency Determination standard, see <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>.

Programs have the option of supporting an ADP to provide an alternative to the HiSET[®] or GED[®] as a path to a high school diploma. ADPs are required to partner with their local school districts for approval of curricula and credentialing options.

For more information on the ADP, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hse/adp/>.

MassSTEP ABE

The MassSTEP ABE model combines pre-ASE and ASE instruction, occupational skills training, and workforce preparation activities concurrently and contextually to increase students' educational and career advancement. In this service delivery model, a variety of team-teaching strategies are used to deliver the curriculum. Students in need of a high school credential must earn one by the conclusion of the program. Upon completion, it is intended that students will have obtained one or more industry-recognized credentials and will be employable or go on to more advanced training in their chosen career pathway.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Services

The goal of ESOL services is to prepare adult English learners to speak, read, and write English. ESOL curriculum and instruction must be contextualized to students' academic and career needs, aligned to the *Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education (MA ELPS)*. Services must be designed to reach all learners regardless of their level of readiness, previous schooling, or learning differences.

MassSTEP ESOL

The MassSTEP ESOL model combines ESOL instruction, civics education, occupational skills training, and workforce preparation activities concurrently and contextually to increase ESOL students' educational and career advancement. Like

MassSTEP ABE models, a variety of team-teaching strategies should be employed to deliver the curriculum. Upon completion, it is intended that students will have obtained one or more industry-recognized credentials and will be employable or go on to more advanced training in their chosen career pathway.

Workforce Preparation Activities

As defined in WIOA, these are “activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education” (*34 CFR § 463.33*). Workforce Preparation Activities can be delivered as a unique class, within the Pre-ASE, ASE, or ESOL classes, or as a series of workshops throughout a program of study.

Workforce Training

In Massachusetts, Workforce Training for MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL services is occupational skills training. WIOA defines occupational skills training as “an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Occupational skills training includes training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area. Such training must:

1. Be outcome-oriented and focused on an occupational goal specified in the individual service strategy;
2. Be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet occupational goal; and
3. Result in attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential (*20 CFR § 688.120*).”

Occupational skills training may also include work-based learning activities, such as job shadowing, employer mentorship, and internships.

ACLS encourages partnerships with *CVTE schools* on the delivery of workforce training. In these partnerships, programs make use of a school’s vocational facilities after school, in the evening, and on Saturdays. Programs can also hire CVTE staff as instructors or consultants.

Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks

The *Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks* were adopted by the Department in June 2014. Programs developing industry-based contextualized curricula may find it helpful to review them. They include

standards in multiple strands representing all aspects of the industries that students in the CVTE program are preparing to enter. The strands are:

- 1: Safety and Health Knowledge and Skills
- 2: Technical Knowledge and Skills
- 3: Embedded Academic Knowledge and Skills
- 4: Employability and Career Readiness Knowledge and Skills
- 5: Management and Entrepreneurship Knowledge and Skills
- 6: Technological Knowledge and Skills

In an effort to support integration of academic and technical content, the Frameworks also include crosswalks to the relevant standards in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. Each Framework also contains an Industry-Recognized Credentials section.

Industry-Recognized Credentials

Students receiving at least one Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) is a requirement for MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL funding. An IRC is a credential that is sought or accepted by employers within an industry or sector as a recognized, preferred, or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or advancement purposes, and where appropriate, is endorsed by a recognized trade association or organization representing a significant part of the industry or sector. (Note: Some industry recognized certificates related to general safety and hygiene (e.g., OSHA 10, First Aid/CPR) are not considered to be postsecondary credentials).

Civics Education

Civics education classes introduce students to civics-related content and provide them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in their daily lives while building their English language and literacy skills. These classes include contextualized instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and U.S. history and government to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to become active and informed parents, workers, and community members.

Advising and Support Services

MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL programs are required to provide advising and support services to all students. Programs must also provide career development guidance that supports students with goal setting specific to the model's career pathway. In addition, programs must be prepared to deliver proactive support strategies designed to mitigate barriers to participation and develop participants' capacity for persistence.

At a minimum, advising services must address:

- Development of career pathways that allow students to make informed decisions regarding postsecondary education, training, and/or employment;
- Barriers to participation by referring students to outside social service agencies; and
- Collaboration among advisors and instructors to create a culture of student self-efficacy and persistence.

To assist program staff with enhancing advising services, the *SABES Program Support PD Center* developed *Effective Practices Aligned with Indicator of Program Quality (IPQ) #6*. This document aligns with the Advising and Support Services *Indicator of Program Quality* and includes examples of effective practices for each of its standards. ACLS encourages programs to use the guide to review and evaluate current advising and support services policies and practices.

Student Success

Student success both during and after the program depends on routine analysis and monitoring of student progress conducted in consultation with teachers, advisors, partners, and students, to make improvements.

Required Assessments

Students enrolled ACLS requires that programs comply with the statewide assessment policies in **the** *Policies*.

Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) and Performance Accountability

Currently ACLS has created one state performance standard: Measurable Skills Gain (MSG). MSG also applies to MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL programs (for more information on MSG, see *Policies*). ACLS is developing credential attainment and employment performance measures for MassSTEP programs. Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 will be used to gather and analyze data. The intent is to have MassSTEP performance measures in place for FY 2024.

Employment Outcomes

The intent of MassSTEP programs is to accelerate employment outcomes for participants in high-demand industries that can lead to a family sustaining wage. All MassSTEP Programs must have one or more employer partners that are actively involved in program design, curriculum development and delivery, and employment assistance. ACLS requires programs to submit employer letters demonstrating demand for the model's occupations. Programs are encouraged to contact their MassHire Workforce Boards for assistance with connecting with employers who have high labor needs.

Monitoring

ACLS has developed a unified and systematic approach to program quality reviews and site visits conducted by program specialists. An ACLS Program Quality Review (PQR) Team has been formed whose charge is to ensure a transparent and uniform approach to program quality reviews and site visits. The PQR Team will employ a systematic and coordinated method of gathering data collection to ensure processes are fair and objective. MassSTEP services will be included in PQR visits.

Professional Development

MassSTEP professional development is provided by the *SABES Program Support PD Center* housed at World Education, Inc. Please visit their webpage for a list of annual offerings.

Resources

Program Design

- **SABES Program Support PD Center**

<http://www.sabes.org/pd-center/program-support-pd-center>

The SABES Program Support PD Center provides guidance to support career pathways programs and service delivery on topics such as: promising MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL models; strengthening WIOA partnerships; integrating career awareness; identifying on-ramps to high demand industry sectors; and workplace education.

- **Career Pathways Toolkit: An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development**

https://careerpathways.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/10/20/10/11/Enhanced_Career_Pathways_Toolkit

A state level toolkit that defines the major elements of career pathways development. Embedded and writeable worksheets for each of the toolkit's elements are included.

- **Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)**

<http://www.clasp.org/>

A national, nonpartisan, anti-poverty nonprofit advancing policy solutions for low-income people.

- **Center for Occupational Development (CORD)**

<http://www.cord.org/>

An agency that provides educational tools and programs that empower faculty to prepare students for success in postsecondary education and careers. Its *National Career Pathways Network* assists its members in planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving Career Pathways programs across the country. Through conferences, workshops, and publications, NCPN facilitates the exchange of promising practices.

Adult Education

- **Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy (ISAL), et. al**

The *Developing Basic Skills Curriculum for an IET: A Guide for the Pathways to Employment Program* offers resources and tools to help plan, design, and implement the adult education component of an IET curriculum.

Workforce Preparation Activities

- **Academic, Career, and Employability Skills Transitions ACES-Transitions Integration Framework (ACES-TIF)**
<http://atlasabe.org/resources/aces>
 The goal of ACES is to help programs provide contextualized instruction integrating postsecondary education and training readiness, employability skills, and career readiness at all levels.
- **The Employability Skills Framework**
<https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/employability-skills-framework>
 Developed by RTI International in partnership with the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education, the Employability Skills Framework consists of nine skills organized in three categories: Applied Knowledge, Effective Relationships, and Workplace Skills. A facilitator’s guide and other resources can be found at: <https://ccrscenter.org/technical-assistance-networks/professional-learning-modules/integrating-employability-skills>.
- **North Star Digital Literacy**
<https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/standards>
 Assessments that define the basic skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online. Self-guided modules are included.

Workforce Training

- **careeronestop Certification Finder**
<https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-certifications.aspx>
 Online industry-recognized certification database sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- **Chapter 74 Career/Vocational Technical Education Directory**
<https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11238>
 Directory of the Massachusetts Chapter 74-approved Career/Vocational Technical Education programs.

Civics Education

- **EL/Civics Online**
<https://www.elcivics.com/>
 A series of online lessons on U.S. history, government, citizenship, geography, and culture.

Advising

- **Appreciative Advising**
<http://www.appreciativeadvising.net>

Website on Appreciative Advising, the collaborative practice of helping students optimize their educational experiences and achieve college and career goals.

- **MassHire Career Information System**

www.masscis.intocareers.org

Developed by the MassHire Department of Career Services, a free statewide career information system for students and staff that includes educational and career information to help adults make well-informed career decisions.

- **Occupational Outlook Handbook**

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

Prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, this resource provides detailed information about employment projections and other occupation information.

- **O*NET**

www.onetcenter.org

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training occupation site that utilizes current national data with information on career ladders. This site also includes the O*NET Work Importance Locator which is a work values assessment.

Appendix A: Sample Schedules

Advanced Manufacturing MassSTEP ABE Schedule

January – May

	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM	Contextualized GED	Contextualized GED	Contextualized GED	Contextualized GED
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Workforce Preparation	Workforce Preparation	Workforce Preparation	Workforce Preparation
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30 PM – 2:30 PM	Machinist Class	Machinist Class	Machinist Class	Machinist Class

Vacation weeks: February 19th and April 23rd.

Health Care MassSTEP ESOL Program

September – December

	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Contextualized ESOL	Contextualized Math	Contextualized ESOL
8:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Workforce Preparation	Workforce Preparation	Workforce Preparation

	<i>Saturday</i>
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Certified Nursing Assistant
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM	Lunch
12:30 PM – 3:00 PM	Certified Nursing Assistant

No school Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Weekend

Culinary Arts MassSTEP ESOL Program

September – December

	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Contextualized ESOL	Contextualized Math	Contextualized ESOL	ServSafe/OSHA 10
6:00 PM – 6:30 PM	Dinner Break	Dinner Break	Dinner Break	Dinner Break
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM	Workforce Training	Workforce Preparation	Workforce Training	Workforce Training

Workforce Training Topics: Culinary Arts Safety Knowledge and Skills (Week 1), Fundamentals of Food Service Operations (Week 2), Knife Skills (Weeks 3-4), Soups, Stocks, and Sauces (Week 5-6), Cooking Methods (Weeks 7-8), Grains, Legumes, and Starches (Weeks 9-10), Meat, Seafood and Poultry (Weeks 11-12), Fundamentals of Baking (Weeks 13-14)

Workforce Preparation Topics: Starting a Business (Weeks 1-2), Managing a Business (Weeks 3-4), Marketing a Business (Week 5), Customer Service, Communication, Teamwork, Conflict Resolution, Accepting Direction and Constructive Criticism