

Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)

**Fiscal Year 2019 Program Quality Review Summative Report**

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# 

# **INTRODUCTION**

In 2017, the Office of Adult Learning and Community Services (ACLS) set out to improve its program monitoring and site visit protocols with the intention of bringing into greater alignment the state adult education performance standards with the new federal performance measures outlined in the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.

In order to achieve the outcomes required by WIOA, ACLS implemented a new theory of action focused on quality. The theory of action states in part that if ACLS aligns the [Indicators of Program Quality (IPQ)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pqrsv/) with WIOA, aligns key documents with the IPQ ([policy manual](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abeprogram/), [open and competitive bid process](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/rfp/)), provides programs quality feedback ([Program Quality Reviews](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pqrsv/)), and delivers high quality professional development (HQPD), then students will make greater educational progress and be better prepared to access college and careers as required by the WIOA performance measures ([Measurable Skills G](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/performance/msg.html)ain).

To this end, ACLS created the Program Quality Team (PQ Team) whose charge was to redesign the former monitoring process and then conduct Program Quality Reviews of all Community Adult Learning Centers (CALC) and Correctional Institutions (CI) that receive funding as part of the Fiscal Year 2019-2022 cycle.

In addition to reviewing literature on how to conduct effective reviews, the PQ Team also looked at adult education monitoring protocols from other states (Florida, New Mexico, Illinois, and Colorado). Further, the PQ Team consulted other units within the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), even to the extent of shadowing other teams on their monitoring visits.

The purpose of the revised Program Quality Review (PQR) is to assess program quality against four key *Indicators* *of Program Quality*.

* Indicator of Program Quality 3-*Career Pathways* *Collaborations*
* Indicator of Program Quality 4-*Curriculum and Instruction*
* Indicator of Program Quality 7-*Organizational Support*
* Indicator of Program Quality 8-*Educational Leadership*

This process is intended to be formative and to assist programs in gaining an understanding of their quality measured against standard benchmarks and, where applicable, acknowledge promising practices.

ACLS uses a set of four ratings and Indicator-specific rubrics to determine the quality of programs at a given point in time. Program Quality Reviews use multiple sources of evidence including interviews, program-developed materials, program data, curriculum, lesson plans, and classroom observations.

Review Teams are comprised of anywhere between two and nine members, depending on program size. In addition to PQ Team members, Review Teams include ACLS program specialists, ACLS leadership, and ACLS Program Quality Review consultants (selected through a Request for Response process). A local MassHire workforce development board representative is also invited to participate in a review.

All Review Team members and ACLS consultants have extensive background knowledge in one or more of the following areas: educational leadership, teaching, curriculum development, adult education research, adult English language learners, digital literacy, and adult education program evaluation. Further, all Review Team members received in-depth training on the protocol, including but not limited to: interview facilitation, evaluation rubrics, classroom observations, collection of evidence, calibration, and report writing.

With the goal of establishing validity and reliability for the collected evidence, Review Teams used the following rubric to determine ratings:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Limited Evidence*** | ***Developing*** | ***Proficient*** | ***Exemplary*** |
| *The program demonstrates little to no evidence; significant concerns are noted.* | *The program demonstrates inconsistent evidence; moderate concerns are noted.* | *The program demonstrates consistent evidence; minor concerns are noted.* | *The program demonstrates consistent evidence; potential exemplar.* |

While Program Quality Reviews are intended to be comprehensive and collect evidence from multiple sources (e.g., students, teachers, program leadership, advisors, document review, and classroom observations), ACLS acknowledges that they reflect a program’s performance at a particular point in time.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and Audience**

The purpose of this report is to highlight promising practices collected in Fiscal Year 2019 that could be replicated in Community Adult Learning Centers (CALC) and Correctional Institutions (CI) adult education programs funded in Massachusetts. The intended audience for this report is Massachusetts adult education program leaders, Massachusetts professional development providers, Massachusetts policy makers, and other stakeholders striving to improve and sustain high quality adult education services.

### **Analysis, Data Sources, and Report Organization**

In Fiscal Year 2019, ACLS conducted a total of 25 Program Quality Reviews (for a detailed list of these programs, see *Appendix A*). The selection of these programs was determined by workforce region and Fiscal Year 2019-Fiscal Year 2022 Open and Competitive proposal scores. This end-of-year-report provides a summary of these programs’ ratings and highlights promising practices.

The primary data sources for this report were the 25 PQR reports. Rating percentages were calculated by dividing the number of programs that received the same rating by 25, the number of total sites visited in Fiscal Year 2019.

The report is organized by four key *Indicators of Program Quality*. For each Indicator the following are provided: a table summarizing the percentage of programs receiving ratings of *Limited Evidence*, *Developing*, *Proficient*, *and Exemplary*; a synopsis intended to summarize the main findings; a data analysis section; and a section on promising practices and areas for improvement.

Each Indicator is rated at the Indicator level. Additionally, *Indicator 4-Curriculum and Instruction* is also rated at the standard level. The rating process for *Indicator 4* provides programs and ACLS with specific information about programs’ performance against each of the standards as well as general, big picture information about programs’ performance against the overall Indicator.

*Appendix A* provides a list of the CALC and CI programs that received a PQR in Fiscal Year 2019 and Appendix B is a detailed chart of these programs’ ratings in each of the four *Indicators of Program Quality*. In order to preserve confidentiality of specific program ratings, any correlation between *Appendix A* and *Appendix B* has been eliminated.

### **Summary of Findings**

This summary addresses the overall ratings, areas of overall strength, and areas for improvement.

Figure 1 below shows the combined Indicator level ratings of the 25 programs reviewed in Fiscal Year 2019.

***Figure 1***

Figure 2 below shows the combined standard level ratings of *Indicator 4* for the 25 programs reviewed in FY2019.

***Figure 2***

Figure 3 below shows the combined ratings for the four key instructional practices (*student engagement, checking for understanding, scaffolding, and differentiated instruction*) of *Indicator 4.2-Instruction*. ACLS observed a total of 155 classes at the 25 programs visited in Fiscal Year 2019.

***Figure 3***

**Overall Strengths**

Overall, there was one primary area of strength for the programs evaluated in Fiscal Year 2019: *Indicator 7-Organizational Support.*

Regarding *Indicator 7*, 56 percent of programs received a rating of *Proficient*, while the remaining programs were rated *Developing*. In general, programs reviewed in Fiscal Year 2019 have safe, clean, and accessible sites, quality working conditions, and access to quality resources, including technology.

Access to computers and the Internet was evident in the majority of programs. For example, many programs had up-to-date computer labs with high speed connection, mobile carts with Chromebooks for individual class use, and software aligned to the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.* However, integration of digital literacy to enhance student learning varied. Some programs and classrooms had explicit use of technology embedded into their lessons, while other classrooms did not appear to use technology to enhance student learning.

Two programs were highly rated in Fiscal Year 2019, receiving *Proficient* ratings in most of the four key Indicators. These programs had the following systems in place that contributed to their success:

* A focus on career pathways embedded into the program’s culture.
* A culture of collaboration both with partner agencies and within the program.
* Strategic use of data to inform programmatic decisions.

**Overall Areas for Improvement**

Three primary areas for improvement were identified: *Indicator 3-Career Pathways,* *Indicator 4.2-Instruction*, and *Indicator 8.4-Continuous Improvement Process*.

Regarding *Indicator 3-Career Pathway Collaborations*, 23 of the 25 programs received a rating below *Proficient*. While approximately 60 percent of programs had collaborations with workforce and education partners, ACLS found limited evidence of those relationships accelerating students along their career pathways.

Similarly, 23 of 25 programs received a rating below *Proficient* in *Indicator 4.2: Instruction.* Overall, the observed classroom instruction showed limited evidence of the four high-quality instructional look-fors−*student engagement*, *checking for understanding*, *differentiated instruction*, and *scaffolding*−with *differentiated instruction* and *scaffolding* having the highest percentages of *Developing* or *Limited* *Evidence* ratings−86 percent and 75 percent respectively, followed by *checking for understanding* with 72 percent and *student engagement* with 66 percent.

For *Indicator 8.4-Continuous Improvement*, seven programs had a clear continuous improvement process in place and provided opportunities for input from program staff and students.

# **INDICATOR 3: CAREER PATHWAY COLLABORATIONS**

|  |
| --- |
| *The program supports career pathways outlined in Massachusetts’ state plan for a seamless system of education and workforce services aligned with regional employment needs identified in the Local Plan.* |

Review Teams analyzed interview responses, Local Plan Packages, local Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and classroom instruction and curriculum materials to determine each program’s overall rating for *Indicator 3*. In particular, ACLS looked for specific evidence regarding the two standards of this Indicator:

* The program collaborates with local education and workforce systems to jointly advance students, including students who are shared customers, to their next step with regard to education, training, and employment leading to family-sustaining wages.
* The program’s collaborations result in increased options for students in postsecondary education, training, and employment aligned with the regional employment needs identified in the Local Plan.

Figure 4 below shows the overall ratings for *Indicator 3-Career Pathway Collaborations*.

***Figure 4***

### **Indicator 3 Synopsis**

*Programs have in general established collaborations with local education and workforce partners that are aligned to the needs identified in the Local Plan. However, ACLS found limited evidence that those partnerships helped to accelerate students with regard to their next steps after leaving the program.*

*Additionally, there was limited evidence that programs have a system for the identification and referral of shared customers. ACLS rated two programs Exemplary.*

### **Indicator 3 Data Analysis**

Approximately 70 percent of programs have collaborations with local workforce and education partners aligned with the priority industries identified in the Local Plan Package. Notably, the majority of programs benefitted from their partnerships with Transition to College programs at local community colleges. Some Community Adult Learning Centers were in the initial phase of developing partnerships, but ACLS found promising efforts to be under way. Other newly-funded Community Adult Learning Centers were focused on start-up procedures and staff onboarding.

ACLS found that the adult education staff at only eight programs appeared to be aware of the program’s WIOA collaborations, and teachers in particular were aware of their role in these collaborations in only half of those eight sites. Further, students at only six programs were able to identify local opportunities for further education and employment.

Teachers in only four programs effectively and systematically include student career pathways into their instruction. Additionally, teachers in five other programs embed students’ career pathways into their instruction; however, these appeared to be individual efforts and not a coordinated and systematized approach.

Three programs of the 25 showed evidence of established systems for shared customers, and an additional two programs showed progress in this area. Other programs reported that their local MassHire Career Center was not fully operational at the time of the visit, a factor that prevented them from building any type of collaboration.

***Career Pathways Collaborations: Overall Promising Practices***

* The program has a system for referral with the local MassHire Career Center and tracking of shared customers. There is strong collaboration between the regional outstationing coordinator/career navigator and the program’s staff.
* The program’s support of career pathways is appropriately focused on the region’s priorities identified in the Local Plan.
* Collaborations with WIOA partners have resulted in the advancement of students toward post-secondary education/training and/or employment.
* Teachers are significantly involved in their students’ career pathways and meet with the program’s advisors on a weekly basis to discuss students’ career pathways and progress towards their career and academic goals.
* The program incorporates work readiness knowledge and skills into its curriculum with student input.
* Students are well-informed of training and educational opportunities and can give examples of such opportunities in the area.
* Program’s advisor(s) have substantial knowledge of partner agencies and methods for making referrals. Students in the advanced level class are provided intensive advising services meeting individually one-on-one with an advisor every three to four weeks. Students develop a *Plan A, B*, and *C* so that they have alternative options if their first choice does not materialize. Due to these efforts, students were able to articulate their education and career goals as well as other options provided by the program and local partners.
* Through career center-sponsored events, students have been successful in obtaining employment. Students in the highest level classes are placed in college, training programs, and jobs.
* The program collaborates with a variety of local education and workforce systems to jointly advance students, including students who are shared customers[[1]](#footnote-1) , to their next step with regard to education, training, and employment leading to a family-sustaining wage. For example, it has a collaboration with a local community college program for Early Education Teacher Training. Students enter internships and can transfer into a three-credit course at the local community college where their training will lead to a certificate. Additionally, the local community college offers credentials for Front Desk Business, where one adult education student is currently enrolled, and Medical Office Support training, which has led to three students obtaining jobs.
* The program has a strong partnership with a local Vocational Technical High School using a co-teaching model with one teacher from both programs.
* The program refers students to a local vocational school for EKG training, Phlebotomy, Medical Administrative Assistant, and Pharmacy Tech. The Red Cross provides an additional health care partnership for Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training.
* Students have the opportunity to enroll in an entrepreneurship program with a local partner that supports small business development. The adult education program refers approximately two to three students per year, and the program also provides mentorship to students.

***Career Pathway Collaborations: Overall Areas for Improvement***

Programs do not have a systematic approach to increasing options for students in postsecondary education, training and employment leading to family-sustaining wages:

* Teachers have limited knowledge of the program’s collaborations with the local education and workforce systems and do not connect their students’ career pathways to instruction.
* When collaborations are in place, there is limited evidence that they lead to career pathway opportunities for students and/or program staff who struggle to articulate how it supports the career pathways outlined in the Local Plan.
* Program staff demonstrate an awareness of the program’s collaborations with the local partners, but few can articulate this role or have different interpretations of it.
* Some teachers take individual initiatives to connect students’ career pathways to instruction and conduct class field trips, but these are isolated efforts and are not evidence of overall program services aligned with regional employment needs identified in the Local Plan.
* Students’ advancement to next steps is defined only as advancement through the program’s ESOL/ABE levels, and does not include pursuing post-secondary education and/or training.
* Students are not aware of employment options and are unable to identify any education and/or training programs in the local area.
* The program has no process in place for the identification and referral of shared customers.
* Although there may be processes for connecting with the local career center, there was limited evidence that these processes have increased students’ career outcomes.
* Instruction is focused on pathways in a broad sense (e.g., general job search activities, general interview tips, test-taking skills, et cetera).
* Only a few students can identify ways, beyond learning English, in which the program and local partners provide options for achieving future college and career goals.
* Understanding of the collaborations with WIOA partners is limited to the program director or the advisor.
* Priority career clusters in the region are not successfully communicated to program staff and, as a result, specific labor skills and expectations are not reflected in the curriculum.
* Collaborations with WIOA partners is identified as collaborations with higher education institutions such as local community colleges.
* Correct understanding of the *shared customers* concept is inconsistent among program staff.
* The program leadership’s vision for a successful collaboration with WIOA partners is not consistently communicated to all staff resulting in staff members having different understandings of what their role and expectations in this collaboration are.
* English language acquisition and career pathways are approached in a dichotomous manner.
* Program advisors’ meetings with students are focused more on social services and less on concrete steps to identify and achieve students’ short- and long-term education and career goals.

# **INDICATOR 4: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

|  |
| --- |
| *The program delivers high quality standards-based instruction that meets the academic needs of all students.* |

ACLS analyzed interview responses, classroom instruction, lesson plans, and curricular materials to determine each program’s ratings for *Indicator 4*. ACLS looked for evidence in the four standards of this Indicator:

* Curriculum and instruction are aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRSAE) and the Massachusetts ESOL Frameworks.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Instruction is based on research and evidence-based practices and high expectations for all students.
* Digital Literacy enhances curriculum and instruction.
* Formative and summative assessments are used to evaluate and modify instruction.

*Indicator 4* is rated at both the Indicator and standard level. Figure 5 below shows the *Indicator 4* rating percentages for the programs reviewed in Fiscal Year 2019.

***Figure 5***

### **Indicator 4 Synopsis**

*All of the 25 programs received an overall rating of Developing for Indicator 4-Curriculum and Instruction. ACLS found limited evidence of research-based instructional strategies (student engagement, checking for understanding, differentiated instruction, scaffolding) being used consistently in classrooms. Additionally, the majority of staff seemed unfamiliar with the instructional shifts of English Language Arts (ELA) and/or Mathematics from the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRSAE) and were unable to effectively articulate how they are reflected in the program’s instruction.*

### **Indicator 4 Data Analysis**

Although the majority of the submitted curriculum scope and sequences/curriculum units showed evidence of full/partial alignment to the CCRSAE and the Massachusetts ESOL Frameworks, staff at most of the programs visited in Fiscal Year 2019 could not articulate how the curriculum was implemented in the classroom instruction. Additionally, a few programs’ curriculum had materials which seemed inappropriate for adult learners, primarily for beginner level ESOL students and low level ABE students (e.g. grade school textbooks and worksheets).

The ratings for *Standard 4.2* were informed by evidence collected from staff and student interview responses, class observations, and curriculum document review. Four percent of the programs reviewed in Fiscal Year 2019 received a rating of *Proficient* for *Standard 4.2*, 68 percent were rated *Developing,* and 28 percent were rated *Limited Evidence.*

Regarding *Standard 4.3-Digital Literacy*, the majority of sites provided staff and students with sufficient access to up-to-date technology. However, 76 percent of programs received a rating of *Developing* for this standard because technology was not used in a systematic way to build digital literacy skills and enhance learning.

Based on classroom observations, interview responses, and a review of submitted curricular material, ACLS found that 12 percent of programs demonstrated effective use of formative and summative assessments to a level that warranted a rating of *Proficient*. Approximately 76 percent of programs received a rating of *Developing* for this standard because of limited evidence of effective assessments in the classroom instruction and/or curricular materials, as well as limited use of assessment results to modify instruction, identify student learning needs, and determine appropriate student interventions.

#### **Standard 4.1-Curriculum Aligned to Standards**

***Curriculum: Overall Promising Practices***

* Curriculum is aligned to the CCRSAE and is comprehensive in detailing both content and language goals and instructional activities.
* Program leadership is familiar with the CCRSAE, including the shifts.
* Teachers are knowledgeable about the shifts and provide examples of how they apply them in the instruction.
* Curricular units are aligned thematically and are relevant to adult learners.
* Unit topics relate to the region’s priority industries (e.g., healthcare).
* Introduction to the program’s curriculum provides a clear explanation for the intention of the curriculum and its purpose, the expectations of teachers for assessing student learning and ways in which the curriculum is evaluated to determine future revisions.
* Each level in the scope and sequence has a career theme, academic writing component, and academic reading component.

***Curriculum: Overall Areas for Improvement***

* Inconsistent curriculum alignment to the CCRSAE/MA ESOL Frameworks.
* Although curriculum and lesson plans are fully aligned to CCRSAE/MA ESOL Frameworks, alignment was only partial in the observed instruction.
* Heavy reliance on textbooks instead of a curriculum.
* Curriculum unit goals and unit outcomes are inconsistent.
* Several components of the curriculum are missing (e.g., purpose of unit and assessment).
* Unclear evidence or lack of evidence of vertical alignment to move students to the next level.
* Curriculum is aligned to the CCRSAE and designed to build content knowledge while developing skills, however exit criteria for one level do not connect with the entry criteria for the next level.
* Curriculum unit goals read like activities and not like measurable goals.
* Number of learning and language objectives and standards to be addressed in units varies widely across levels and classes.
* Equal time is allocated to each unit of study irrespective of the complexity of unit goals.
* Program leadership and instructional staff described full alignment of the curriculum to the CCRSAE, but document review showed only partial alignment.
* Lesson plans do not identify standards to be taught explicitly or show a lack of understanding of lesson alignment to standards (e.g., a writing standard identified for a lesson that included no substantive writing).
* Lesson objectives are partially aligned to the program’s curriculum.
* There is little evidence of how programs balance a curriculum primarily focused on life skills with the need stated in the CCRSAE to “focus not only on English language arts, but also on literacy across the disciplines of sciences, social studies, and technical subjects.”

#### **Standard 4.2-Instruction**

***Instruction: Overall Promising Practices***

* Teachers and program leaders are knowledgeable about the CCRSAE shifts and lesson plans and observed instruction reflect implementation of the shifts.
* Lesson planning is guided by the backward design model and is rooted in second language acquisition theories.
* Rigor is incorporated into both the curriculum and classroom instruction and is heavily focused on academic writing.
* Higher levels focus on using Google documents, complex texts, citing sources, Modern Language Association (MLA) style, research projects, and use of job search tools.
* Instruction is primarily focused on next steps.
* Questions typically asked in job interviews are incorporated into daily lessons at all levels.
* Higher-level classes use actual college textbooks to help students prepare for college.

***Student Engagement***

* Teachers ask open-ended questions that probe and extend students’ thinking.
* Teachers pace the lesson appropriately and provide appropriate wait time for students to answer questions.
* Teachers use time effectively to allow all students meaningful participation.
* Students work in pairs/small groups with clearly assigned roles, problem solve collaboratively, and hold each other accountable.
* Materials are engaging and relevant to adult learners.

***Checking for Understanding***

* Teachers use cold calls and on-the-spot formative assessment techniques (e.g. teachers explicitly call on more quiet learners).
* Teachers ask open-ended questions and ask students to provide a rationale for their answers.
* Teachers redirect students by turning a statement into a question until all students get the correct answer.
* Students have opportunities to reflect on their reasoning/learning.

***Scaffolding***

* Teachers use the gradual release of responsibility model effectively.
* Teachers provide clear guidelines and expectations for each activity, define student roles in group work, pose questions, ask for clarifications, redirect students if the answer is incorrect, and provide more cues if answer is still incorrect.
* There is clear evidence of established and solid group work routines.

***Differentiated Instruction***

* Student groups are based on formative assessment data.
* Students struggle productively and experience academic rigor.
* Lesson plans and program’s curriculum show evidence of differentiation instruction strategies.
* Materials are presented in multiple ways.
* Teachers adjust their questions to students’ specific levels of readiness.
* Teachers use volunteer classroom assistants effectively to support students’ varied educational needs.

***Instruction: Overall Areas for Improvement***

* Program staff cannot articulate the CCRSAE instructional shifts and/or what research and evidence-based practices ground their instruction.
* Program staff refer to instructional materials as “evidence-based practices.”
* Program staff are knowledgeable about the CCRSAE shifts and/or mention some evidence-based practices, but the observed instruction and lesson plans do not reflect evidence of these practices.
* Program staff provide examples of educational theories and research but are unable to articulate how these are applied to their instruction.
* The program’s curriculum mentions evidence-based practices, but program leaders and teachers are unable to articulate these practices.
* Although teachers state they have high expectations for all students, classroom observations identify few supports to help all students meet these expectations.
* Staff do not set high expectations for all students regarding rigor of materials and instruction.

***Student Engagement***

* Instruction is teacher-centered or lecture style.
* Students have limited opportunities to talk and do not have opportunities to work in groups/pairs.
* Lesson materials are too difficult or too easy.
* Students are unclear on how to proceed with an activity.
* Students ask for assistance and receive no guidance.
* The pace of the lesson is very slow.
* Student compliance is equated with student engagement.
* Although the activities seem entertaining, students have no opportunity to practice language or the activities are not related to the lesson objectives.
* Materials are not relevant to adult learners.
* Teachers do not provide appropriate wait time to allow students to respond to questions.

***Checking for Understanding***

* Teachers ask *yes/no* questions to check for understanding.
* Feedback, when provided, does not invite or guide revision.
* Students seem lost or confused and do not understand instructions.
* Lesson content is not academically rigorous.
* There are frequently missed opportunities for providing feedback.
* Teachers do not use strategies to determine which students are struggling.
* Teachers only solicit answers from the class as a whole.
* Students follow directions, but it is unclear if they demonstrate understanding of the lesson.
* Teachers provide corrections and do not provide learners with strategies to help them find the correct answer.
* Teachers’ primary objective appears to be focused on going through all materials, without checking for understanding along the way.

***Scaffolding***

* There is incomplete application of the gradual release of responsibility model which results in students being unprepared to complete the task independently.
* Although students work in groups, they are not provided with enough supports to ensure effective group work. Instruction is teacher-led, worksheet-based, and students do not interact with one another.
* Teachers pose questions to class but answer the questions themselves, with no release of responsibility to students.
* Teachers direct students to an activity without modeling or providing instructions and the objectives are unclear.
* There is limited evidence of deliberate planning of the lesson.

***Differentiated Instruction***

* Overreliance on whole-class instruction.
* Limited to no evidence of deliberate strategic student grouping.
* Little to no differentiation of materials and activities to meet students’ varied educational needs (e.g., the entire class is given the same workbook pages and articles to read).
* Students who complete a task have nothing to work on while other students are still working on the task.
* Student grouping is based on where students are seated and not on level or ability.
* Lesson materials seem too challenging for some students and teachers do not provide those students with any scaffold or differentiated instruction.

#### **Standard 4.3-Digital Literacy**

***Digital Literacy: Overall Promising Practices***

* Technology is consistently used to complete assignments designed to build students’ digital literacy skills and enhance learning.
* The program director makes digital literacy a priority. For example:
* Program leadership worked with a consultant to research and identify technology skills for students at each level and incorporated these skills into the curriculum.
* The program created a “digital literacy camp” for students during the summer and a supplemental digital literacy class during the school year; each class has its own website.
* Students communicate with teachers via email or an online platform; Google classroom is used; students use *Quizlet* once a week.
* Program leadership makes proficiency in technology use a requirement for new hires. Applicants are required to conduct demo lessons. All teachers submit lesson plans to the director weekly which are reviewed to ensure they include a digital literacy component.
* The program has a digital literacy curriculum scope and sequence.
* The computer teacher has a strong relationship with the teachers and co-plans instruction to ensure digital literacy is a component in each lesson.
* Students produce a school newspaper/newsletter.

***Digital Literacy: Overall Areas for Improvement***

* Despite being well-equipped with up-to-date computers, programs do not have a systematic approach to ensure technology is consistently used to build all students’ digital literacy skills and to enhance learning; teachers use the lab randomly and infrequently.
* Technology is not used for the purpose of developing students’ digital literacy skills to enhance learning. For example:
* Digital literacy is referenced in the curriculum but there is limited evidence that it is used to enhance instruction.
* Lesson plans do not show evidence of effective digital media use.
* Technology is used inconsistently across program levels.
* Technology is not used to construct and build knowledge.
* Teachers use the computer lab to build students’ skills in using a mouse, practice typing, produc~~e~~ résumés, and complete online applications, but not to build students digital literacy skills to enhance learning.
* There is limited evidence of digital literacy use in the program’s curriculum.
* Not all students have routine, regular, and frequent access to the technology resources available (e.g., evening students may not have access to the computer lab before or after class, compared to daytime students).
* Students report using the computer during class mainly for typing.
* Use of technology in the classroom does not go beyond the use of projectors to present the agenda for the day.
* Teachers project information on the board, sometimes typing in student responses, thus giving students minimal opportunity to actively engage in technology use.

#### **Standard 4.4-Assessment**

***Assessment: Overall Promising Practices***

* Programs have a systematic approach to assessment. For example:
* All teachers use an *Assessment Analysis Tool* where they record their reflections of formative assessments they used in the class, submit it to the director, and communicate with the director on the effectiveness of their assessments.
* Staff regularly design and use a variety of formative assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, identify learning needs and determine appropriate targeted student interventions.
* Teachers have exit skill checklists and create differentiated stations based on formative assessment results.
* The program’s curriculum and lesson plans have assessments that measure the listed objectives.
* The student handbook references expected outcomes for each level.

***Assessment: Overall Areas for Improvement***

* Formative and summative assessment is limited in scope, is not systematic, and only occasionally relies on the analysis of results to inform and modify instruction. For example:
* Document review and classroom observations show an uneven application of formative and summative assessments.
* Although several staff were able to provide examples of summative and formative assessments (e.g., NRS assessments, *Accuplacer*, quizzes, peer reviews, exit tickets, *Socrative*, *Quizlet*, projects, *GED* pre-tests, *HiSET* practice tests, *STAR* reading assessment, *IXL Math*, *Rosetta* *Stone*, informal activities such as observation of student group work, listening to students’ use of specific vocabulary, listening to students answering comprehension questions), it is unclear how instruction is modified and what student interventions were used as a result of these assessments.
* Only some lesson plans include assessment.
* Checking for understanding is inconsistent in the classes observed, ranging from proficient practices to ineffective practices such as *yes/no* questions (e.g., “Do you understand?”, “Does anyone have any questions?”, “Does it make sense?”).
* The program produces quarterly student progress reports that include summative assessment results, but there is no indication that these assessment results connect with instruction.
* Teacher observation of students’ work is the only strategy to determine the extent to which students had met the lesson objectives.
* Although staff state they adapt instruction based on ongoing formal and informal assessments, class observations provide minimal evidence of instruction being modified based on students’ strengths and needs.
* Assessment results are used to determine class levels and to evaluate learning gains, but are not analyzed and shared with teachers to make informed decisions about the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning.
* Although staff report examples of formative and summative assessment use, students report feeling frustrated in certain classes, “having to sit around and wait,” having to do “self-teaching,” or feeling “completely lost,” not knowing what the expectations are for moving on to the next level.

# **INDICATOR 7: ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

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| *The agency/institution (e.g., Community-Based Organization, Local Education Agency, Community College, and Correctional Institution) actively builds and supports the capacity of the program and maintains quality working conditions to ensure its success.* |

ACLS analyzed interview responses, the program’s physical space, and submitted job descriptions to determine each site’s overall rating for *Indicator 7*. ACLS looked for evidence in the five standards of this Indicator as follows:

* The program operates at a site that meets all city, state, and federal accessibility and safety requirements.
* The program provides regionally competitive salaries, benefits, and opportunities for full-time employment. In addition, the program compensates all job responsibilities including paid prep time for teachers.
* The program provides career growth opportunities and rewards experience, education, and/or licensure.
* The program has organizational leadership that establishes minimum qualifications and maintains high standards for program leadership. The agency/institution provides in-depth training and on-going support to staff in leadership roles, including acting or interim staff.
* The program has classrooms that are suitable for adults and are conducive to learning, dedicated advising space that is private and secure, and up to date technology that is readily available for all staff and students.

Figure 6 below shows the *Indicator 7* rating percentages for the programs reviewed in Fiscal Year 2019.

***Figure 6***

### **Indicator 7 Synopsis**

*Indicator 7 illustrates that over half of the programs rated Proficient and the other half rated Developing. Although most programs provided clean and adequate facilities, programs rated Developing showed limited on-going educational support for the adult education program leadership from the parent agency/institution.*

### **Indicator 7 Data Analysis**

The majority of the 25 programs visited in Fiscal Year 2019 appeared to be safe and accessible with classrooms that were clean, appropriate for adult learners, and conducive to learning. Quality resources were available in most programs, with up-to-date technology materials aligned to the CCRSAE. Additionally, the vast majority of program leaders have the required qualifications to serve as educational leaders per ACLS policies.

Regarding quality working conditions, approximately 75 percent of the programs compensate staff for all professional development activities, meetings, and lesson preparation at a salary rate that meets or exceeds the minimum stipulated by ACLS policies. However, adult education leaders in less than half of the programs receive on-going support from their parent agency or institution relating to their role specifically as a leader of an educational program.

***Organizational Capacity: Overall Promising Practices***

* Several agencies offer a range of trainings to ensure a safe and accessible environment such as: partnering with Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, CPR and First Aid trained staff, Crisis Prevention Intervention Training, active shooter training, security team on site, and a safety committee.
* For medical safety, student registration includes a routine question about whether the applicant is on any medication, has seizures or allergies.
* Programs offer all students an orientation that explains expectations on respecting people of different cultures, what to do if problems arise, and issues related to harassment.
* Staff have been trained on protocols for what to do if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) representatives visit.
* Students receive college identification cards allowing them to access services available to students throughout the campus including the tutoring and career centers, student disability office, college counseling, and the college library.
* Agencies provide additional benefits such as: 401K, commuter benefits, flexible-spending account for healthcare, life insurance, sick-time and paid holidays for both full-time and part-time staff, opportunity for wage increase at the time of annual evaluation, and health benefits for staff who work 24 hours per week.
* Agency combines part-time positions in order tooffer full-time positions.
* After 1,000 hours of service, the parent agency contributes 12 percent towards retirement for eligible employees.
* Staff have opportunity to evaluate supervisors.
* Advisors are provided with cell phones to facilitate easier communication with students.
* Local fire and police departments offer “friendly officer” workshops to help new immigrants understand their roles.
* Director worked with local college in revising its ESOL credit courses, enabling the program to build stronger connections within the larger organization.

***Organizational Capacity: Overall Areas for Improvement***

* Program directors are unfamiliar with their region’s Local Plan, thus not being able to offer students any connection to classroom instruction and curriculum aligned to the Local Plan.
* Several agencies are able to offer support by allowing the director to participate in any professional development they identified, however, many directors themselves do not appear to be receiving adequate support relating to educational leadership, particularly if they do not have a background in education, second language acquisition, or educational administration.
* Some programs did not have clearly defined roles for professional staff relating to next steps.

# **INDICATOR 8: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

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| *The program’s leadership ensures that the vision for academic success is shared by staff and students and that the program engages in a continuous improvement planning process with the goal of improving student outcomes.* |

The Review Team analyzed interview responses, teacher evaluations, professional development plans, and continuous improvement plans to determine each program’s overall rating for *Indicator 8*. ACLSlooked for evidence in the four standards of this Indicator:

* Program leadership provides on-going supervision for all staff which includes regular supervision meetings, and an annual evaluation. Teachers receive regular classroom observations with written feedback and follow-up that lead to improved teaching practice and student outcomes.
* Program leadership makes informed decisions for providing professional development to staff based on student outcome data and program needs.
* Program leadership collects and analyzes a variety of program and regional data to inform decisions about program planning and evaluation.
* Program leadership ensures the program’s continuous improvement planning process involves all stakeholders, including students, and incorporates their feedback, reflections, and recommendations for improvement.

Figure 7 below shows the Indicator 8 rating percentages for the programs reviewed during Fiscal Year 2019.

***Figure 7***

### **Indicator 8 Synopsis**

*The majority of programs were rated Developing, with three programs rated Proficient and five rated Limited Evidence. Although most program leaders provide regular supervision and evaluation to staff, there is limited evidence that this process led to improved teaching practices and/or student outcomes. Slightly more than half of the programs visited use a variety of data to inform planning and evaluation decisions. However, the majority of programs did not appear to have a continuous improvement planning process that includes staff and student input.*

### **Indicator 8 Data Analysis**

Although 90 percent of program leaders provided regular supervision and evaluation to staff, only six programs demonstrated evidence that supervision led to improved teaching practices. Further, while many staff attended professional development activities, staff professional development goals at only thirty-six percent of the programs seemed to be specifically aligned with the program’s continuous improvement goals.

Seven programs provided evidence of a clear process in place for gathering staff and student feedback for program improvement and for documenting continuous improvement goals in the form of a continuous improvement plan. Approximately 60 percent of programs collect, analyze, and effectively use a variety of program and regional data to inform planning and evaluation decisions.

Further, four programs appeared to have effective systems in place to ensure a vision for academic success that is shared by staff and students.

***Educational Leadership: Overall Promising Practices***

* Several programs utilize student leadership groups and surveys to employ changes in programming such as new classes in citizenship, conversation, and preparing to get a driver’s license.
* Programs maintain contact with recent graduates soliciting feedback and challenges in their next steps. (e.g., how to use business emails).
* Growth objectives for students are cited in lesson plans to better connect students to work and next steps.
* Several programs are integrating the CALM curriculum into programming, ESOL classes include math instruction, and participating in *Mathematizing ESOL.*
* Review of data-informed programmatic decisions (e.g., seeking funding for the students identified as homeless and agencies offering services to the immigrant population).
* A few programs offer more full-time positions to professional staff such as teachers and advisors, thus allowing staff needed time to follow up on individual students and data projects. This also contributed to staff retention.
* Teachers are supported with CCRSAE aligned curriculum and instruction in weekly individual support meetings.
* A classroom observation process that includes the following:
  + A pre-observation and goal-setting conversation.
  + A well-designed and comprehensive rubric.
  + A follow-up meeting where the teacher is provided a detailed constructive summary of the observation that contains areas of strength, challenge, and guidance for next steps.
* The program has an active Board of Directors consisting of volunteers that meet monthly to review program details and help guide program work. Members of the Board and program staff have worked together on a *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)* analysis related to project planning.
* Board and staff engage in a retreat to develop a three year strategic plan, which is facilitated by an outside consultant.

***Educational Leadership: Overall Areas for Improvement***

* Programs provided little evidence that supervision leads to improved teaching practices and student outcomes.
* Observation forms used do not appear to provide feedback to teachers that would give specific recommendations for improvement on classroom instruction or relating to the lesson plan itself.
* Programs do not use regional data to help inform programming or connect to curriculum content and classroom instruction.
* Programs do not have a documented improvement plan, thus impacting staff understanding of the overall program goals; professional staff were focused on individual goals that had little/no connection to the program’s overall improvement goals.

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Programs are encouraged to use the promising practices and areas for improvement listed in this report as a guide for reflection and continuous improvement. Program directors can contact their ACLS program specialist and/or SABES to discuss strategies for addressing those *Indicators* in need of improvement.

# **APPENDIX A-Fiscal Year 2019 Program Quality Reviews**

1. Ascentria Community Services
2. Asian American Civics Association
3. Berkshire Community College
4. Bristol Community College-Attleboro
5. Bristol County Jail and House of Correction
6. Bunker Hill Community College-Boston Consortium
7. Cape Cod Community College
8. Catholic Charities-El Centro del Cardenal
9. Catholic Charities-Haitian Multi-Service Center
10. Community Action, Inc.
11. Center for New Americans
12. Clinton Public Schools
13. Hampshire Sheriff’s Office Jail and House of Correction
14. Hudson Public Schools
15. International Institute of Greater Lawrence
16. Massasoit Community College
17. Middlesex Community College
18. New Bedford Public Schools
19. Pathways Lynn
20. Randolph Community Partnership
21. Rockland Public Schools
22. SER Jobs for Progress
23. Training Resources of America-Quincy
24. Training Resources of America-Springfield
25. YMCA International Learning Center, Woburn

# **APPENDIX B-Fiscal Year 2019 Ratings**

***Note****: In order to preserve confidentiality of specific program ratings, there is no correlation between Appendix A and Appendix B.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Program*** | ***Indicator 3*** | ***Indicator 4*** | ***Indicator 4.1*** | ***Indicator 4.2*** | ***Indicator 4.3*** | ***Indicator 4.4*** | ***Indicator 7*** | ***Indicator 8*** |
| Program A | D | D | P | LE | D | LE | P | D |
| Program B | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Program C | D | D | D | LE | LE | D | D | LE |
| Program D | D | D | D | D | D | D | P | D |
| Program E | D | D | P | P | D | D | P | D |
| Program F | E | D | P | D | D | P | P | P |
| Program G | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Program H | E | D | P | D | P | D | P | P |
| Program I | D | D | D | D | D | D | P | D |
| Program J | D | D | D | D | D | P | D | D |
| Program K | D | D | P | D | D | D | D | D |
| Program L | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Program M | LE | D | P | D | D | LE | P | LE |
| Program N | D | D | P | D | P | D | P | D |
| Program O | D | D | D | D | P | LE | D | LE |
| Program P | LE | D | LE | D | LE | D | D | LE |
| Program Q | D | D | D | LE | P | D | D | D |
| Program R | D | D | D | D | D | D | P | D |
| Program S | LE | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Program T | D | D | D | LE | D | D | P | D |
| Program U | D | D | E | D | D | D | P | D |
| Program V | LE | D | D | LE | D | D | D | LE |
| Program W | D | D | D | D | D | P | P | P |
| Program X | D | D | D | LE | D | D | P | LE |
| Program Y | D | D | D | LE | D | D | P | P |

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1. A *shared customer* is a student who is enrolled in more than one core partner program at any time during a fiscal year (i.e., a student who is co-enrolled and a student who is sequentially enrolled). Examples of shared customers who enroll in more than one core partner program include but are not limited to: ABE/ESOL students enrolled by OSCC and receiving career center services leading to employment, ABE/ESOL students ages 16-24 and enrolled in Title I out-of-school youth programs, ABE/ESOL students and recipients of Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and/or Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) services, ABE/ESOL students who exit ABE services and then enroll in a training program funded by a core partner. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Massachusetts ESOL Frameworks were replaced with the Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards (MA ELPS) in April, 2019. The MA ELPS integrate standards from the MA ESOL Frameworks (2005), the CCRSAE, and the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)