*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Adult Education Program Directors |
| **From:** | Toby Maguire |
| **Date:** | June 7, 2023 |
| **Subject:** | FY24 LACES Data Collection/Entry and Other Updates |

This memo summarizes the content of my Directors’ Meeting session, “Filling the Gaps: Data Collection Requirements for FY24” that provided context for and previewed several changes to data collection and entry requirements. While many of the updates will require additional data entry, I hope you will agree that programs, and, more importantly, our students will benefit from systemic changes attributable to the availability of more robust data.

1. **STAFF RECORDS**

The [University of Massachusetts Amherst Donahue Institute](https://donahue.umass.edu/) (UMDI) has been collaborating with ACLS since FY22 to evaluate the adult education system, providing technical assistance to ACLS, and making recommendations to help us achieve our goal of an equitable and high-quality data system that leads to student outcomes. Interviews and surveys indicate that there is continual turnover in the adult education workforce, yet this cannot be substantiated with LACES data. This turbulence undermines student achievement. Therefore, ACLS has committed to professionalizing and stabilizing our workforce over the course of the funding cycle to ensure that our students receive the quality education that they deserve.

As program staff are acutely aware, we must understand the complex relationships between compensation, retention, experience, and other variables. Unfortunately, we lack data because LACES staff records have required only the minimal information needed to meet federal reporting requirements. Moreover, few programs exit staff who have left which means there is little evidence of turnover. To address these issues, ACLS has taken the following steps:

* First, we asked LiteracyPro Systems (LPS) to **expand the staff intake screen** with a few additional required fields, such as highest degree earned, years of related experience, and the same race and ethnicity fields that are required in the student record. LPS estimates that the staff intake will be updated by August or September.
* Second, the status of all active **LACES staff records will change to left effective June 30**. Then programs will make “active” only those who are working during FY24. This will provide ACLS and UMDI with a baseline for retention analysis.
* Third, you will be **required to enter LACES IDs** for everyone have entered into the **GEM$** staff roster. This will make it possible to align the two data sources.

1. **CLASS INTAKE**

**The revised class intake will have additional required fields** that include target enrollment, general level (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and GLE/SPL ranges, instructor, content (e.g., math, ELA, ESOL, MassSTEP Training), instructional mode(s). You will enter the number and schedule of in-person and virtual face-to-face class hours, the number of weekly planned online proxy hours whether teacher verification or online product (e.g., Burlington English, KET FastForward). The FY24 attendance card will be modified to capture all types of instructional hours.

ACLS requested these modifications because programs created a plethora of flexible and creative options for students in response to the pandemic. You are offering a wide variety of class structures with various combinations of in-person, synchronous remote, and asynchronous remote instruction. The new class intake and attendance card will be flexible enough to capture the various models.

Education officials, legislators, and AE program directors routinely ask about the effectiveness of remote instruction compared to in-person or online products. Unfortunately, we haven’t collected the necessary data to respond. I’m looking forward to having more robust data to share at future Directors’ Meetings.

The new intake will be available in September. However, you can and should create your FY24 classes using the current functionality. We’ll let you know when the new fields are available, and you will need to backfill any missing information. I hope to have a mockup to share in August.

1. **WAITLIST**

There is a great deal of interest in understanding the demand for adult education, which, fortunately, has contributed to significantly increased state appropriations throughout the funding cycle. Unfortunately, those of us who look closely at and respond to requests for waitlist data have little confidence in the quality of the data in LACES. Despite the seemingly high demand, our system, overall, is under-enrolled, which is difficult to explain to our champions in the legislature. In order to better address demand and allocate resources, we must maintain accurate records.

Here are the changes to LACES that will be coming out this summer:

* There will be a **new Waitlist Date field**. This will make it easier to track students who were enrolled, left, and applied to return.
* We are **adding schedule** (morning, afternoon, evening, weekend) and instructional mode (in-person and remote) **preferences.**
* As many of you requested, in addition to the schedule and mode preferences, **we reduced the required fields from twelve to seven**.

Here are the **changes to waitlist policy and LACES effective July 1, 2023**. Programs must:

* Have a written waitlist policy that is shared with all applicants. The policy must include the conditions under which a person is removed from the waitlist.
* Attempt to contact all applicants (i.e., everyone with a status of waitlist) at least twice per year. Using the [email and text messaging feature](https://sites.google.com/literacypro.com/emailandtextmessaging/home) in LACES will simplify compliance with this requirement.
* Record all efforts to contact and enroll applicants using the waitlist contact history.
* Complete the full LACES intake as soon as possible.

ACLS and the SABES Program Support PD Center are collaborating to support the development of program processes to manage waitlists and to leverage the Adult Literacy Hotline to help programs with enrollment

1. **DESK REVIEW**

The desk review process will remain the same as it was in FY23. Program directors and their PSs will meet in November, January, March, and May to review LACES data.

There will be a separate desk review search that will show the number of people waiting for over two years, between one and two years, and under a year. It will also show the number of contact attempts based on the waitlist contact history.

1. **DATA AUDITS**

Using a risk analysis that includes current and prior year LACES data (e.g., posttest rates, timeliness of data entry, duplicate student records, incomplete student records), ACLS will rank and identify grantees for data audits. We will develop and share our audit procedures over the summer and fall.

1. **SPANISH ABE (formerly Spanish HSE)**

There are several programs that provide ABE instruction in Spanish to prepare students for further education and training and to earn a Spanish High School Equivalency credential. These students will be considered **ABE enrollments** for the purposes of funding, enrollment targets, and data collection. Programs that offer Spanish ABE classes must:

* Provide instruction in all levels of academic content (i.e., basic skills through adult secondary education) in Spanish**. Curriculum should be aligned to the CCRSAE** to the maximum extent possible.
* Enroll Spanish ABE participants in ESOL services. ESOL curriculum should be aligned to the MA ELPS.
* Assess these students with the MAPT-CCR **or** the TABE Literacy **or** a Massachusetts NRS approved ESOL test.

These changes will result in revised enrollment targets for a limited number of programs. I will reach out to affected programs in the coming weeks.

Programs offering Spanish ABE will have to take an additional step in LACES. I will post these instructions on the [LACES page](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/laces/default.html) of the ACLS website.

1. **MISCELLANEOUS**
   * LiteracyPro will run [fiscal year summaries](https://sites.google.com/a/literacypro.com/release-notes-laces/2023-6-0#:~:text=The%20FY%20(fiscal,less%20than%20before.) nightly starting mid-June which means that your NRS tables will be up to date every morning. You can still run the summaries after you enter data if you want to see the impact right away.
   * We added ADP as a Service option and moved Workplace Education to Secondary Service.
   * Many LACES users shared that the desk review employment search results were confusing. The updated version will simply provide year-to-date numbers and rates for the three indicators. For example:
     + If you run the search between July 1 and the end of September:
       - The 4th quarter after exit will show the recorded employment status for the participant who exited five and six quarters before. (i.e., the first six months of the prior calendar year).
       - The 2nd quarter after exit will show the employment status and median earnings of participants who exited three and four quarters earlier (i.e., the 1st and 2nd quarters of the previous fiscal year).
     + If you run the search between October 1 and the end of December:
       - The 4th quarter after exit will show the recorded employment status for the participant who exited five, six, and seven quarters before. (i.e., the first nine months of the prior calendar year).
       - The 2nd quarter after exit will show the employment status and median earnings of participants who exited three, four, and five quarters earlier (i.e., the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters of the previous fiscal year).
     + If you run the search between January 1 and the end of June:
       - The 4th quarter after exit will show the recorded employment status for the participant who exited during the prior calendar year.
       - The 2nd quarter after exit will show the employment status and median earnings of participants who exited anytime during the previous fiscal year.

To the program directors and staff who participated in our Spanish ABE and waitlist webinars and the Directors’ Meeting, thank you for your feedback and suggestions.

Contact your program specialist or me if you have any questions or concerns. Have a great summer.