

RHODE ISLAND NARRATIVE REPORT 2011-2012

I. Leadership Activities

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Adult Education office supported its local providers in achieving the state plan goals in 2011-2012 through several leadership activities largely offered through the RI Professional Development (PD) Center. Programs also received technical support and training directly from adult education state staff members. This customized support had the added goal of ensuring that programs would input and analyze quality data to meet NRS guidelines.

The PD Center has supported funded programs in meeting state goals by:

1. Coordinating and/or offering a series of state-wide initiatives, utilizing national consultants, and the cohort training model, as appropriate
2. Providing customized PD assistance to programs and staff
3. Engaging in systemic multi-year planning around a clear, long-range vision for systems improvement

Outcomes – July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012:

- Provided 3,427 PD workshop contact hours (participants x hours)
- Enrolled 756 participants from over 60 programs in 114 workshops and trainings
- Provided on-site consultation or professional development for 16 of the 36 RIDE-funded adult education programs in the state

2011-2012 Priority Areas/State Goals Addressed:

This was the second year of RIDE's five year RFP, funding programs in any of the three main priority areas (with 12 sub-priority areas). A few of these were new initiatives, requiring professional development and technical assistance:

Implementing a Rigorous ASE and Transitions to College Curriculum:

- The curriculum was developed collaboratively between Community College and AE Instructors, aligned with the Common Core Standards, and facilitated by the PD Center staff, consisting of 1/3 face-to-face instruction, 1/3 distance learning, and 1/3 independent work.
- The monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) of the 6 funded programs was joined by two other programs who wanted to increase their learners' transitions and successes in post-secondary education and training. The PLC facilitation was shared by the PD Center Director and the Transition to College and Careers Coordinator.

Student Leadership:

- The student-run organization, Students Taking Action Now with Determination (STAND), located at Tri-Town CAP had PD Center staff as active members of STAND's Advisory Board. They contributed to workshop content development, resources, planning for the bi-annual conference and the Student Satisfaction Survey Trainings.

Development of Implementation Plan for AE Practitioner Preparation and Credentialing:

- Finalized a draft of the RI Practitioner Standards for Instruction. These will be the basis for self-assessment and PD planning. The future may hold credentialing requirements from RIDE, or alignment with OVAE's model Instructional Standards. The RI Standards will lay the groundwork with practitioners for future developments.

Comprehensive Community-based Classroom ABE and ESOL Professional Development:

- Reading and Emerging Literacy has been the focus of the PD Center's work with these programs
- The 65 STAR-trained practitioners from 22 programs were invited to join a STAR PLC, with the intent of supporting true implementation of the model.
- Another focus of PD was the Common Core State Standards, and their alignment with the new GED® and CASAS assessments. Two statewide workshops were presented, with follow-up presentations to several programs at their staff meetings.
- Emerging Literacy is a concern in the adoption of the CCSS, as they begin with Kindergarten level.
- ESOL Transitions is the other focus of PD with these programs: sharing the research and practices which highlight how to address the problem of drop-out students at the ESOL-ABE transition point.

Statewide Adult Education Conference:

- On May 26, 2012, 208 practitioners and students attended, and 26 workshops were offered.
- Evaluations were collected from all the workshops, with a post-survey conducted online for feedback on the entire conference.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC's):

- PLC's for Directors, ESOL, Job Developers, Tutors, Case Managers, and ASE/Transitions have involved 116 practitioners in job-specific monthly sharing meetings. These sessions were enhanced in 2011-2012 to include specific instructional components.

Workforce Development Workshops:

- Staff has additionally presented five workshops – open to all agencies – to improve their practices in the area of workforce development. 44 practitioners participated in these workshops.
- Industry Partners and Business representatives continued to contribute to the Soft Skills Advisory Committee, which advises the WFD Office of the PD Center
- Also see “Building Capacity in Workforce Development” below for more details.

Standardized Assessment Trainings:

- The PDC organized, recruited and sponsored trainings for BEST Plus, CASAS and EDP assessments, all of which are RIDE approved or required

New Practitioner Orientations:

- Offered in the Fall and Spring, with programs now sending their new practitioners as part of their orientation. This session is also a RIDE requirement.

Brown University/ Genesis Center student training:

- Brown students interested in working in ESOL programs receive training and introduction to the field, and then observe/assist at Genesis Center (a local adult education program) for a year, while attending regular seminars to support their work. If interested, the following year they teach/tutor in community classrooms

Learning to Achieve:

- Two practitioners attended this Learning Disabilities training through LINCS, and then worked with the LD Advisory Committee to disseminate the information to every AE program

Select Examples of Customized Assistance:

Department of Corrections (DOC) – continued to work closely with DOC educational staff to analyze their student data, examine appropriate teaching strategies, and observe and give feedback on their practices

Rhode Island Indian Council – worked with the leadership, and then the staff as they transitioned their GED program into an in-house model

International Institute RI – worked with the staff to discuss the upcoming NRS changes, as well to introduce the Common Core State Standards

Ed Exchange – reviewed student data and implications for intervention strategies, as well as outlined upcoming changes in NRS and CCSS

RIC Outreach – discussed how to share their I-BEST-like practices with other programs in RI: developing a PD model for workshops and site visits

Systemic Multi-year Planning

One critical component of an effective statewide system is multi-year planning around a clear long-range vision for improvement. The PD Center staff has continued in its role of advocating for support for adult education in its facilitation of, or participation in, multi-year planning processes with state and AE program staff, focused on both content and delivery. These inter-related areas of planning include:

- **Building Capacity for Workforce Development within Adult Education Programs:** This project has focused on assessing the adult education system's capacity for successful workforce development strategies, and addressing gaps in the system. The gap addressed was on system information and access: leading to the development of an adult education web portal project which will support the career pathways system in the state, as well as the individual adult learner. Funding for this project was secured through a Statewide Longitudinal Data System grant.
- **Learning Disabilities/Low Level ABE:** PD Center staff participates in and facilitates the LD Advisory Council, which is working with RIDE to develop a long term Action Plan that will supply resources and professional development to programs as they meet RIDE's Guidance on ADA Compliance, as well as the general need to serve these learners more effectively.
- **Adult Education Bulletins:** A PD Center staff member compiles and emails these newsletters to 500+ practitioners bi-weekly.
- **Professional Development Council contributes to Strategic Planning:** The PD Council is represented by 10 adult education programs from around the state and three funders, and it advises the PD Center in its work and development of an annual Workplan. The subcommittees of the PD Council work on a Needs Assessments of the field, the statewide Adult Education Conference, and input into the newly developing systems of AE Professional Development in the state. The PD

Council also assisted in the PD Center's securing of a new three-year contract with RIDE, and in the location of a new fiscal agent and physical home at the WestBay Collaborative: <http://www.westbaycollaborative.org/>

In conclusion, the PD Center continues to provide high quality professional development opportunities for Rhode Island's adult education community, and to bring stakeholders together to begin to identify and address challenges. The PD Center continues to be a dynamic, responsive organization that can meet the future demands of the emerging system of workforce development and adult education in the state.

II. EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

During program year PY2011-2012, Rhode Island funded 36 agencies with a combination of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funds and associated state and local matching sources. These agencies served 6,345 eligible adult learners (i.e., learners with 12 or more hours of instruction), an increase of more than 300 students (five percent) compared to PY2010-2011. Of these adult learners 2,715, or 43% of all participants, were placed at entry in Adult Basic Education levels, 447 (7%) in Adult Secondary Education levels, and 3,183 (50%) in ESL programs. This shows an increase in the number of students who are placing into the ABE levels, a decrease in ASE and a slight increase in ESL. On average, eligible participants attended 121 hours of instruction, which is down slightly from the previous year.

In addition to average and total student hours, pre- and post-testing rates have remained high. Compared to PY2005-2006 when the post-test rate was only 42.5%, in PY2011-2012 it was 73%, up from 71% in 2010-2011. The separation rate for PY2011-2012 was 33% percent, equal to last year, but still better compared to 40% in PY2009-2010. This is approaching the state's goal to decrease the separation rate to thirty percent.

As for effectiveness, Rhode Island was able to meet and exceed most of the core indicators of performance. From NRS Table 4, 48% of all students made educational functioning level gains in PY2011-2012, an increase of 1 percentage point from last year. Learning gains have improved consistently since accurate data became available in 2006 when completion rates overall equaled only 23% compared to 48% now. During the previous six years, the average gains were, in chronological order, 23%, 29%, 36%, 42%, 43%, and 47%.

The data from Table 4 indicate that eight out of the eleven negotiated educational level performance targets were exceeded. The remaining three levels were extremely close to the targets – within only one or two percentage points. The levels that did not meet the proposed targets were ASE Low (33% out of 35%), ESL Beginning Literacy (59% out of 60%), and ESL Low Intermediate (48% out of 49%). This has been a current trend for Rhode Island to exceed in the majority of educational level targets and to miss only a few by a very slim margin. This year, for the first time in many years, Rhode Island met the ESL Advanced level target which has been consistently a difficult target

to reach. It could be that the CASAS score range is too wide in this level for even the most advanced ESL students to achieve an educational gain.

The table below presents actual performance in PY2011-2012 and compares it with the performance targets negotiated with OVAE. The last column in the table indicates the difference in percentage points between targeted performance and actual performance. When reviewing the data, it is important to note that considerable progress was made on almost all measures. In addition, it is important to point out that high performance results were achieved for students in the lowest ABE levels. *All four ABE levels and all six ESL levels met or exceeded the most current national averages available.* Only ASE Low was lower than the latest national average. The ESL portion of Rhode Island's enrollment continues to increase and now comprises half of the total student enrollment.

As for the follow-up outcome measures, Entering Postsecondary Education/Training and Retained Employment were the two targets that were exceeded. Obtaining a High School Diploma/GED and Entering Employment did not meet the negotiated targets. It is possible that due to the economic downturn and high unemployment in Rhode Island, more adult students are turning to higher education as it becomes more difficult to find employment, and students who are employed at entry (many ESL students) are retaining their jobs longer. Also due to the poor job market, far fewer students set either of the employment goals during PY2011-2012.

Measure	2011-2012 Performance	Proposed 2011-2012 Targets	Performance Results
ABE Beginning Literacy	50%	36%	+14
ABE Beginning	56%	43%	+13
ABE Low Intermediate	53%	48%	+5
ABE High Intermediate	45%	41%	+4
ASE Low	33%	35%	-2
ESL Beginning Literacy	59%	60%	-1
ESL Low Beginning	66%	60%	+6
ESL High Beginning	62%	60%	+2
ESL Low Intermediate	48%	49%	-1
ESL High Intermediate	45%	42%	+3
ESL Advanced	24%	23%	+1
HS Diploma/GED	66%	75%	-9
Entered Postsecondary Education/Training	53%	40%	+13
Entered Employment	39%	44%	-5
Retained Employment	62%	44%	+18

To further improve performance, Rhode Island will continue to conduct regular data audit reviews, quarterly desk reviews, an annual performance review of local program performance, and targeted on-site monitoring focusing on compliance issues for high-risk programs identified through desk reviews. In addition, Rhode Island will continue its three-stage process of progressive discipline and associated technical assistance and

turnaround expectations for low-performing programs. The state has also fully implemented a performance-based funding formula which has contributed to individual programs striving for higher performance results.

III. INTEGRATION OF ADULT EDUCATION UNDER WIA TITLE II WITH OTHER ADULT EDUCATION, CAREER DEVELOPMENT, AND EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

In order to ensure that adult learners have access to comprehensive educational and support services necessary to further their goals of higher education and employment, the Rhode Island Department of Education has prioritized the successful integration of activities sponsored under of WIA Title II Adult Education with other relevant multiple education, career development and employment and training initiatives including the following:

One-Stop Career Centers:

There are two Local Workforce Investment Boards in Rhode Island. The state director of adult education is a member of Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston and attends the bi-monthly meetings. The state director's supervisor is a member and active participant in the other LWIB, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island. The Commissioner of the Rhode Island Department of Education is a member of the State Workforce Investment Board, the Governor's Workforce Board.

NetWORKri is Rhode Island's One-Stop Career Center System and includes a partnership of professional education organizations including the Rhode Island Department of Education. In 2011-2012 there were five netWORKri Centers in Rhode Island including; Providence, Cranston, Newport, Wakefield, and Woonsocket. Each offers a wide array of employment and training services, including job referral, employment and career counseling, peer support groups, aptitude testing, resume writing, and information on the labor market. These sites also offer resources devoted to self-directed basic skills remediation, primarily with individuals who require basic skills improvement as a prerequisite for entrance into an occupational skills training.

The following examples demonstrate the broad-based collaboration RIDE grantees engaged in with the RI one-stop careers centers:

- Participation in the bi-annual netWORKri job fairs to connect Rhode Island businesses with experienced, trained clients.
- Provision of instructors for 4-6 hours, 3-5 days per week including weekends
- Provision of instructor and materials while netWORKri provides students and physical classroom space
- Ongoing client referral to job training providers at netWORKri
- Provision of mentoring and support to netWORKri clients including use of facility and computers

Rhode Island Works:

Adult Education developed and implemented a program for welfare clients with significant barriers to employment including skills below the sixth grade level and limited or no work experience. This program was created as part of critical reforms to the State's welfare program and is administered by the state director of adult education in conjunction with the Department of Human Services. This includes an intensive 30-hour per week education, work-readiness, and training program for parents at low literacy (6th grade or below) or limited English language proficiency levels and with limited work experience that represent significant barriers to employment. Participation is for a maximum of six months in this program. In 2011-2012, 327 students were enrolled in the RI Works program with RIDE grantees. The focus is on integrated programming that combines education, training, and work readiness and exposure activities tied to jobs in critical sectors. Technical, hands-on training opportunities tied to adult education services for welfare clients with skills below the sixth grade have been developed.

The RIDE grantees in this program have developed strong partnerships with job skills or technical training providers who can successfully prepare low-skilled adults with little or no work experience for jobs or tasks related to occupations and career pathways in Rhode Island's critical employment sectors, in particular, health care and hospitality.

Prisoner Re-entry/Recidivism Reduction Project:

Prisoner re-entry committee work began in Rhode Island in 2006 under the Governor's executive order and a process to re-engage in this collaborative work was implemented in 2011 to provide policy direction. The mission of the RI Governor's Reentry Committee is to promote successful transition, reduce recidivism and to improve practices that create obstacles to successful reentry. The committee is comprised of government entities including the departments of Education, Corrections, Labor and Training, Higher Education, Health and Human Services and Housing, faith and community-based organizations, and other stakeholders.

The committee is currently charged with coordinating a statewide reentry system that will implement a holistic, evidence-based approach that begins at the point of contact with the criminal justice system and includes education, families, health services, alcohol and other drug treatment, job training, mentorship and housing assistance. Key partnerships and initiatives are emerging in Rhode Island as a result of this initiative. Several local communities have formed county-based multi-disciplinary collaborative teams to examine offender transition and reentry from the local community perspective, and to strengthen and build community partnerships and services to enhance community safety through a more effective system of policies and services for returning offenders.

The Rhode Island Department of Education is engaging in a process to more closely align the other correction training programs with the comprehensive education strategy within the Department of Correction's Education Unit to create more responsive and supportive educational programs for incarcerated adults. A process is also in place to develop a coordinated continuum of services and intervention plans specifically in the

area of employment and education with a special emphasis on vocational training, job readiness and employment goals.

Interagency Demonstration Project:

The Governor's Workforce Board of Rhode Island, Rhode Island's State Workforce Investment Board provided some discretionary funding for all public agencies to work together and create a research-/data- and demand-driven workforce development model in one regional labor economy. Aquidneck Island was chosen as the region for demonstration. The Aquidneck Island Interagency Demonstration Project (a.k.a. the Newport Skills Alliance) has been fully operational since January 2009. The initiative has brought together many regional employers, educators, trainers, human service providers, government agency representatives and community and faith-based organizations focusing on creating demand-driven workforce development solutions for Newport County. Currently directed and managed by East Bay Community Action Program, the Newport Skills Alliance operates using a co-investment model. It is funded by a variety of funding partners which include Rhode Island Department of Education, Rhode Island Foundation and Newport Community Development Block Grant. This past year, the primary activities focused on getting adults ready for careers in the long-term health care and hospitality industry. Seventeen (17) students graduated from two long-term health care on-ramp training programs, sixteen (16) completed hospitality training and many have found employment in their fields of interest.

IV. Successful activities and services supported with EL Civics funds

Ten Rhode Island programs were funded with WIA Title II EL Civics Funds in 2011-2012, serving a total of 512 students. Data collected on these students indicate that they received 41,147 instructional hours, with 213 or 42% completing an educational functioning level, and 182 or 36% completing a level and advancing one or more levels. Also, we have been informed by our programs that 82 EL Civics students passed the U.S. Naturalization Exam in program year 2011-2012.

A review of program reports indicates that EL Civics students engaged in a variety of civic- related activities that empowered them to become active members of their communities. These activities ranged from student leadership initiatives to project-based learning, skill building workshops and community-based field trips with instructional activities taking place both in and out of the classroom.

Themes addressed in EL Civics activities for 2011-2012 included environmental topics, US and RI state government and history, rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the naturalization process. Students developed skills in many areas while engaged in EL Civics programming, including reading and writing, speaking and listening, critical thinking, public speaking, assertiveness, research, and technology. Additionally, many of the programs have forged partnerships with local community based organizations with the dual purpose of educating students on important issues of concern to them as community members as well as teaching them how to navigate complex social systems.

Following are representative examples of successful EL Civics activities and services in Rhode Island adult basic education programs for 2011-2012:

EL Civics Supported Activities and Services at RIFLI

Staff from the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative took students on a series of community/neighborhood field trips including the fire department and several retail locations as part of a project based learning series on safety and civics engagement. The program heavily integrated technology with instruction so that students were able to participate in on-line learning where they watched successful and unsuccessful interviews as well as practiced the “100 Questions” contained in the Citizenship Test. Other contextualized instruction included preparing students to testify regarding adult education funding at state budget hearings as well as having students practice completing a voter registration form.

EFA’s Student Leadership Model

In English for Action’s classrooms, students are engaged in contextualized instruction on civic participation and work on skills to become active and informed community members. EL Civics funds were used to partially fund their specialty class, which focuses on women’s leadership. In the program “Facilitating Change,” learners were trained and assisted in the classrooms from 6-10 hours per week. Each semester one or two Assistant Facilitating Change participants could work with a Lead Facilitator who met with them on a regular basis to mentor and train them. Facilitating Change participants then joined the classrooms to support the contextualized EL Civics instruction taking place there.

The program reflected the same values of participatory education that guide all of EFA’s programs. Facilitating Change participants both learned from the Lead Facilitator with whom they are paired, and offered extra help with language learning to learners engaged in EL Civics programs. By meeting regularly with their mentor Lead Facilitator, Facilitating Change participants further built their own English language skills and learned how to develop a curriculum, plan a lesson, and facilitate an EL Civics class. Facilitating Change participants also attended EFA’s orientations and trainings.

EL Civics Programming at Progreso Latino

EL Civics is a major focus for the Progreso Latino Program, where they have created a well-rounded comprehensive learning experience for their EL Civics learners. The program has shared the following description of program components for 2011-2012:

Content

The curriculum covers core elements of citizenship preparation that help students understand their individual rights and responsibilities, the rule of law, US history, and the role of representative government in the US. Targeted ESOL instruction is very important to help the ESOL intermediate/advanced learners to sharpen their skills for the test.

Strategy: applied and technology enabled learning

Educational strategies include the use of games, informal interviews, mock tests, pairing of students to check for understanding and the inclusion of former successful students to help lower student anxiety. Practitioners utilize pre/post mock tests in order to gauge student skill gaps and help learners to target their self-learning. All students are invited to participate in an educational forum and mock interview provided in collaboration with immigration officials from the local citizenship office. All learners are also exposed to the very rich electronic resources available for free on the United States Citizenship Immigration Services website. A mock citizenship interview video is also available for students to view.

Assessment

In addition to the required standardized assessment, the EL Civics Instructor uses mock interviews, including a written and oral component.

Special services

In addition to citizenship preparation classes that include intensive English language instruction, students are provided professional assistance in preparing their citizenship applications with (Immigration authorized) case workers. Students needing individualized attention are paired with trained tutors beyond class time.

Extra curricula

Several EL Civics students engaged in the development of a student spearheaded newsletter. EL Civics activities were highlighted in this newsletter.