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800-321-9511

IL. Online AEFL Provider Locator
http://www.ilcco.net/adulted
Introduction to Illinois Adult Education
“Creating Pathways for Adult Learners”

I. Mission and Vision of Illinois Adult Education

The mission and vision of adult education is to provide every individual in Illinois access to Adult Education and Literacy services. In Illinois, more than 1.8 million adults have less than 12 grades of formal education, approximately 2.6 million Illinois residents speak a language other than English in their home, and more than 552,000 immigrants reside in Illinois. With these staggering statistics it is important that services are available throughout Illinois that prepare adult learners to succeed.

The Illinois Community College Board is the state agency responsible for governing the Adult Education system in Illinois. The agency is also the coordinating agency for 39 community college districts in Illinois. The Illinois Community College Board seeks to prepare adult learners to compete for jobs of the present and the future. It is necessary to build a system that is education, training and workforce focused.

As stated in the Illinois Community College Board Adult Education Strategic Plan, “We envision adult education as the foundation of a career pathways system that prepares adult learners for economic self-sufficiency. To achieve this vision, we will partner with adult education learners and key stakeholders to provide a clear direction, quality instruction and targeted support for achieving learner goals through further education, occupational training, and/or sustaining employment.”
http://www.iccb.org/pdf/adulted/Adult_Education_Strategic_Plan_11-12-09_Final.pdf

To achieve the goals of the five year Strategic Plan, it is important that instruction is designed to meet the needs of adult learners while providing instruction that ensures a successful transition to postsecondary education and pathway employment. The Adult Education system should strive to meet these goals by:

- Aligning Assessment, Curricula and Instructional practices to prepare adults for education and employment.
- Providing comprehensive Support Services designed to reduce barriers and smooth the transition within programs as well as to other educational and employment opportunities.
- Ensuring a system that has High Quality Teaching and Professional Development which leads to better outcomes in the classroom.
- Forming Partnerships to design and deliver services that will meet the needs of students.
- Continuing to expand and strengthen the use of **Research, Data and Accountability** in improving programs and services offered to students.
- Incorporating career pathway programs into the overall **Program Design** to promote interest in career pathways employment or further education.

## II. Program Priority: Establish A Career Pathway System

To develop and establish a career pathway system that is inclusive of all eligible students and populations, the adult education system must partner with a variety of individuals and institutions, including but not limited to key stakeholders, business and industry, advocacy groups, the broader workforce community, education, and social service organizations. The Strategic Plan for Adult Education states that "adult education cannot accomplish this alone."

To provide a clear direction, quality instruction, and targeted support for accelerated achievement of learner goals through further education, occupational training, and employment, it will take multiple partners to ensure the pathway system is responsive to the needs of adult learners and the workforce.

This manual is designed to provide adult education providers funded through the Illinois Community College Board with pertinent policies and procedures necessary in successfully operating an Adult Education program in the State of Illinois. This document also contains specific information related to both state and federal adult education policies as well as process and procedural information to ensure compliance.

The following sections will highlight important information regarding Adult Education in Illinois.

## III. Purpose of Title II – Workforce Investment Act – Adult Education and Family Literacy

The federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act is encompassed in Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. The act created a new partnership among localities, states, and the federal government to provide for adult education and family literacy services. Federal funds authorized under the act are available to programs for the following purposes:

- To assist adults in becoming literate
- To assist adults in obtaining knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency
- To assist adults in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in their children’s education
- To assist adults in completing their secondary school education

The eligible population is adults who have attained 16 years of age; who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who:

- lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individuals to function effectively in society;
- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.
IV. Priority Populations

The Illinois Community College Board is committed to serving the populations that are most in need of the services. The strategies for the delivery of instructional services should target the following populations:

- Low income and low-skilled adults
- Individuals with disabilities
- Single parents, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients, and displaced homemakers
- Unemployed, underemployed, and those not in the labor force who demonstrate a deficiency in basic skills
- Individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including individuals with limited English proficiency

V. Adult Education Competitive Process – Request for Proposal

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) published and distributed broadly a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the spring of 2012. In addition, the ICCB held bidder’s conferences throughout the state to answer questions related to the application process. The RFP and Bidder’s FAQs were also published and can be found on the ICCB website at [http://www.iccb.org/rfp.competitivegrant.html](http://www.iccb.org/rfp.competitivegrant.html).

During a competitive year, to be considered for funding, applicants must:

- Be an Eligible Applicant, as listed below
  - Local educational agencies (LEAs)
  - Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) of demonstrated effectiveness
  - Volunteer Literacy Organizations of demonstrated effectiveness
  - Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)
  - Public or Private nonprofit agencies
  - Libraries
  - Public-housing authorities
  - Non-profit institutions that are described previously and have the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families
  - Consortia of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described previously
- Respond to the Request for Proposal by the due date
- Complete all required portions of the application
- Meet all deadlines and other elements as specified in the Request for Proposal
- Meet all eligibility requirements

The Illinois Community College Board has the discretion to issue a competitive RFP or a continuation plan in a given year. Due to the delay in the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, the ICCB may issue a continuation plan each year until a new law is enacted. To be considered for funding in a continuation year, applicants must:

- Be a currently funded provider
- Submit the continuation application by the due date
Complete the application requirements
Funding is contingent upon the continuing applicant’s satisfactory performance in the preceding year and sufficient appropriation of funds

VI. Program Considerations

The past effectiveness of an eligible applicant in improving the literacy skills of adults and families is a strong factor in the delivery of adult education instruction and supportive services. The ICCB will consider the success of a funded provider in meeting or exceeding such performance measures as identified by the Federal National Reporting System (NRS). The ICCB also recognizes the need to build a career pathway system for adult learners that will enhance education and employment opportunities. In order to accomplish this, the program/applicants must consider the following considerations as outlined in federal law.

1. The commitment of the eligible applicant to serve individuals in the community who are most in need of literacy services, including individuals who have low income and minimal literacy skills.
2. The program is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains.
3. The program uses instructional practices and activities that research has proven to be effective in teaching individuals to read.
4. The program activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice.
5. The program activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers.
6. The program activities provide learning in real-life contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
7. The program is staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, support staff and administrators.
8. The program activities and cooperative agreements coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs and social service agencies. Priority consideration will be given to those respondents who, through a consortium of providers or as sole entity, administer comprehensive programs to meet the diverse needs of adult learners.
9. The program offers flexible schedules and supportive services (such as child care and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.
10. The program maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the Illinois Community College Board performance measures.
11. The local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English Literacy programs.
12. The proposed budget is consistent with the eligible provider’s activities, is cost efficient within administrative guidelines and places emphasis on serving the target populations.
VII. Adult Education Advisory Council

Public Act 91-0830 provides for governance of Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), stating the agency “shall establish an advisory council consisting of all categories of eligible providers; agency partners, such as the State Board of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the Secretary of State literacy program; and other stakeholders to identify, deliberate, and make recommendations to the State Board on adult education policy and priorities.”

The 30 members of the advisory council are appointed by the ICCB, and include representation from all provider types including community based organizations, community college, public schools/Regional Offices of Education; the Department of Corrections, members from stakeholder groups, required state agency partners, professional development, and professional associations. The chair of the advisory council is also appointed by the ICCB.

The council meets quarterly to identify, deliberate, and make recommendations to the ICCB on AEFL policies and priorities. Council members are assigned to specific committees to address issues as identified by the ICCB and/or as outlined in the Strategic Plan for Adult Education.

Meeting minutes are posted to the ICCB website at: http://www.iccb.org/advisorycouncil.html following approval by the advisory council.

VIII. Federal and State Reporting

Illinois State Plan - Federal

As required in Title II of the Workforce Investment Act – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, a State Plan for outlining services supported with federal funds must be submitted to the United States Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) by April 1 of each year.

The Illinois State Adult Education Plan provides a description of planned activities for the next fiscal year. The Plan summarizes:

- the need for Adult Education in Illinois,
- the eligible population and those most in need of services,
- how equitable access to funding is achieved,
- allowable Adult Education activities,
- procedures for funding providers,
- evaluation of literacy activities,
- provision of services to persons in correctional facilities,
- integrated activities with the one-stop career centers (Illinois Employment and Training Centers), and
- proposed leadership and professional development activities.

Each year the State Plan is revised to reflect changes in the above activities for the next fiscal year. Also included in the revisions are the yearly negotiated performance targets for Adult Education, including educational gains, GED®/secondary completions, retained employment, obtained employment, and
transition to postsecondary education or vocational training. As required, a copy of the revised State Plan is provided to the Governor’s Office for comments. Upon approval by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education, the Illinois State Plan is posted to the ICCB website: http://www.iccb.org/pdf/adulted/publications_reports/FY13StatePlan.pdf.

**National Reporting System – Federal**

Each year the federal government requires all states to submit an annual report for the Adult Education State-administered formula grant program. All reports are due on or before December 31 following the end of the most recent fiscal year. The required annual reports include:

- Statistical (performance) report,
- Financial status reports,
- Narrative report,
- Data quality checklist (with improvement plan, if needed),
- Data quality checklist certification, and
- Assessment policy.

In the spring of each year, federal performance targets for all eleven educational functioning levels and the four core outcome measures are negotiated with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

**Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly – State**

Each year the Illinois Community College Board is required to submit a report on adult education activities to the Governor and General Assembly. This report is due on or before March 1st of each year and details adult education activities from the preceding fiscal year. The annual report includes the following:

- a summary of adult education needs and programs;
- the number of students;
- the number of credit hours or units of instruction;
- the total adult education costs;
- state reimbursement for adult basic, adult secondary and vocational skills programs;
- the criteria used for program approval; and
- any other recommendations and program highlights.

This report is posted to the ICCB website at: http://www.iccb.org/aefl.pub.reports.html.