

Maryland Adult Education Program Standards



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SECTION I: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT and LEADERSHIP

Program Management is responsible for ensuring that the program structures and procedures are in place to for effective operation of an adult learning program. Program managers need to provide **leadership** which supports instructional excellence, professional development, resource development, community collaborations, and continuous improvement through program accountability.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT 1 -- LEADERSHIP – Effective leaders possess positive interpersonal skills, demonstrate professional behavior, and work towards continuous program improvement. Leaders manage staff, initiate change & development processes, and delegate authority.

Indicators:

- a. Models professional behavior and encourages other staff member to act in a professional manner (e.g., uses and practices a participatory management style that is open to constructive criticism).
- b. Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills (e.g., is approachable and encourages staff input, listens attentively, is fair and consistent, provides helpful feedback, and communicates fully and clearly).
- c. Promotes the program philosophy, goals, and objectives (e.g., considers philosophy, goals and objectives in decision-making).
- d. Encourages active involvement of all staff and stakeholders in the decision-making process (e.g., collaborates with teams before making program changes, and delegates authority and decision-making to appropriate entities while supporting their decisions).
- e. Promotes an environment in which linguistic and cultural differences are valued and appreciated (e.g., provides resources that are bias-free and support multicultural learning, respects/honors diversity in everyday interactions, and seeks staff who represent the diversity of the learner population).
- f. Initiates and facilitates the change process (e.g., keeps current on trends, seeks innovations and supports risk-taking among staff).
- g. Advocates for the development of the field of adult education at all levels (e.g., encourages staff and learners to be advocates for adult education, disseminates information in the community about accomplishments, and actively participates in professional organizations).

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above

Suggestions for more effective leadership
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PROGRAM MANAGEMENT 2 -- INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP – Effective administrators provide instructional leadership by overseeing the educational process and ensuring that the instructional program is serving the needs of the learners and the broader community.

Indicators:

- a. Compiles/Uses various needs assessments to determine staff, learner and community needs (e.g., assures that all stakeholders are involved, uses multiple approaches to gather information, and uses results of assessments for program planning).
- b. Guides the program design to meet the need of the target population (e.g., considers assessment information to determine course offerings, levels, sites, schedules, accommodations, resources, etc.)
- c. Oversees/Coordinates the procedures for intake, orientation, assessment and placement of learners.
- d. Initiates and monitors the process of curriculum development (e.g., guides staff in designing curricula that accommodate diverse learning styles, abilities, levels, and cultures).

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- e. Assures adequate intensity of instruction, schedule flexibility, teacher /learner ratios, and support services to help learners reach goals and make gains within realistic timeframes.
- f. Supports staff in planning instructional programs based on state performance measures, learner data, community and learner needs, demographics, resources, and economic/technological trends.
- g. Supports instructional processes and strategies based on current research in adult learning (e.g., incorporating technology, integrating curriculum with adults’ roles as workers, citizens and family and community members, and supporting individuality of teacher approaches for implementing the curriculum)
- h. Establishes structures and processes that allow instructors to work together to improve teaching and learning and provides a system for instructor accountability.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving instructional leadership

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT 3 -- RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ALLOCATION – Effective administrators manage available resources and seek additional resources to keep the program running efficiently.

Indicators:

- a. Identifies and applies for funding independently or in collaboration with other programs or partners.
- b. Effectively manages and allocates the budget (e.g., ensures that expenditures are allowable and available throughout the fiscal year).
- c. Uses financial resources to support the program’s mission and goals and to foster continuous improvement and accountability (e.g., allocates funds equitably to effective programs/sites based on indicators such as attendance, retention, and outcomes).
- d. Identifies and utilizes resources that enhance the instructional process (e.g., uses resources to integrate technology and provides the necessary professional development for staff; updates equipment; purchases up-to-date texts, references and other materials).
- e. Assures that staff have information related to referral and support services (e.g., specialists in learning disabilities, counseling, assessment, classroom aides, volunteers, etc.)

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving resource management

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT 4 -- HUMAN RESOURCES – Effective supervisors ensure that the processes for recruiting, hiring, training, evaluating, and terminating staff are clearly documented and equitably implemented. Effective administrators model lifelong learning practices and promote continuous professional development for staff.

Indicators:

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- a. Documents and implements fair procedures for recruiting, hiring, and orienting staff (includes written job descriptions, standardized interviewing protocols and selection criteria, a complete orientation process, etc.).
- b. Establishes a fair performance review process for staff (e.g., procedures, timelines, and criteria are understood by all parties).
- c. Recognizes when staff are not performing effectively, provides guidance and support to enable staff to gain skills needed, and when necessary, follows required procedures and due process leading to termination.
- d. Assures that staff receive written information (e.g., staff handbook) related to rights and responsibilities, legal requirements related to compliance, emergency contact information, etc.
- e. Keeps up-to-date with research on instructional practices, management and leadership, as well as on effective practices for professional development.
- f. Assures that staff have access to project managers/coordinators and are aware of new opportunities.
- g. Collaboratively designs a staff development program based on staff needs assessments, conversations, current research/trends or new mandates.
- h. Encourages and guides staff in outlining individual professional development plans based on their own strengths/weaknesses and on program goals/initiatives.
- i. Supports professional development by providing information about opportunities, stipends, release time or other supports that allow staff (and volunteers) to engage in activities that focus on learner and program improvement.
- j. Promotes a variety of professional development strategies (e.g., access to journals and subscriptions, training workshops, institutes, inquiry research, and observation and feedback with mentors or peer-coaches).
- k. Encourages and promotes professional development related to technology.
- l. Encourages and promotes professional development related to special populations (e.g., adults with learning or physical disabilities, limited English skills, or facing other barriers to participation).

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving human resource management

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT 5 -- MONITORING AND REPORTING – Administrators systematically monitor and evaluate staff, program design and procedures, and learner progress. Strong programs have documented procedures in place for collecting, documenting and reporting data, which is used for program improvement and accountability.

Indicators:

- a. Develops and implements a program monitoring and review process that is ongoing, participatory and designed to assess program strengths and areas for improvement.
- b. Involves representative staff in the monitoring and review process and in data collection.
- c. Provides and promotes training for data collection and input to ensure accuracy of outcome data (e.g., staff development includes data collection and reporting policies/procedures).
- d. Assures that assessments are consistent among staff and are linked to instruction (e.g., equivalent assessment for instructional staff teaching same levels and courses)
- e. Includes process for collecting, documenting, and reporting secondary and optional measures in accordance with legislation (e.g., data related to education, employment, household/family data, public assistance, etc.)

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- f. Monitors attendance, retention and learner gains on regular basis (i.e., uses data to determine the effectiveness of instruction, curriculum, materials, schedules, accommodations, etc.)
- g. Ensures that programs are inclusive of and suitable for students with special language and learning needs.
- h. Sets annual targets for classroom and program improvements taking into consideration learner and staff feedback and performance outcomes.
- i. Fulfills legal and program requirements for compliance, record keeping and reporting (e.g., maintains confidentiality, limits access to staff and learner files/records, meets deadlines, etc.).
- j. Analyzes information, identifies dissemination strategies, and reports program outcomes and evaluation data for various audiences.
- k. Ensures data is accessible (in a timely manner,) to staff, learners, community members, and other stakeholders through printed reports, web pages, and other media.
- l. Monitors expenditures and fiscal reporting on a regular basis.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving program monitoring and reporting

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT 6 -- COMMUNITY COLLABORATION – Effective administrators build relationships with the larger community to improve the delivery of services. They work collaboratively to increase resources, provide services for learners, and advocate for the adult education community.

Indicators:

- a. Maintains ongoing outreach, publicity and recruitment activities to promote the program and secure funding, community expertise, equipment and other resources.
- b. Establishes partnerships and alliances with other agencies to expand the understanding of adult education, assess needs, enhance resources, and improve services (agencies could include businesses, higher education and training institutions, childcare or health centers, employment and job training centers, community-based organizations, libraries, schools, etc).
- c. Seeks and shares information about learner/client benefits and potential funding opportunities with other organizations.
- d. Informs the community and staff about relevant legal requirements (e.g., accessibility or accommodations for special needs and those with limited English proficiency).
- e. Shares information about available resources (e.g., community resource guides, referral centers, and web-based information).

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving community collaborations

SECTION II: RECRUITMENT, INTAKE & ORIENTATION

Recruitment, Orientation and Intake is an on-going process that brings adults into a program, helps them determine appropriate services and then gets them started. **Recruitment** is a directed effort to promote the program and to generate inquiries and applicants. Recruitment is similar to marketing – attracting the target population to the programs/services that they need.

Orientation is not a “one-time” event – it’s a process that begins with recruitment, intake and assessment, and then continues in the classroom and throughout the program. Orientation helps participants understand the (1) services offered, (2) procedures for enrolling, (3) expectations, and (4) rights and responsibilities.

Intake is closely related to Orientation and may not even be a separate event. During intake, decisions are made and forms are filled out. Ideally intake is conducted by a case manager or intake specialist who “walks” an individual (or small group) through a process – assessment testing and screening, identifying learner goals, and completing all the necessary paperwork. Intake information is critical in making placement decisions.

RECRUITMENT STANDARD – Recruitment efforts target individuals in the community who need/want to improve their skills, to obtain diplomas/certificates, to pursue additional education and training, to participate in their children’s education, and to enhance their employment potential. When effective, information about programs and services actually reaches the adult learners in a manner that is fully comprehensible.

Indicators:

- a. Recruitment materials are readily available in places where the target population is likely to notice them (e.g., Social and Community Service offices, “One-Stop Centers, schools/libraries, churches, newspapers, laundromats, shopping centers, clinics, “hang outs”, housing complexes, and flyers/brochures in the mail, websites, etc.)
- b. Recruitment materials can be easily understood (i.e., language, print and visuals are in style and level that target population can understand – consider Braille and audio presentations)
- c. Messages are culturally and linguistically appropriate (i.e., stakeholders have reviewed and vetted the materials and approaches for appropriateness and accessibility; materials are in languages represented in community)
- d. Processes to recruit the “hardest to serve” are in place.
- e. A variety of strategies are used (e.g., personal contacts, learner-to-learner referrals, broadcast media, community outreach activities, etc.)
- f. Referral structure is in place and leads to enrollments (e.g., partners can describe local program services, have signed referral agreements, and are making referrals).
- g. First contact is “learner friendly” (e.g., print materials have contact information, helpful telephone contact, office is easy to find, initial reception and environment is welcoming, etc.)
- h. Recruitment information provides a clear sense of the real life benefits for participants.
- i. Enrollment statistics reflect the needs revealed by the community/ethnicity demographics.
- j. Education opportunities are offered throughout the community at locations that are accessible/visible to the target population.
- k. Education opportunities are scheduled throughout the day, evening, week and year and based on a survey of the target population.
- l. Recruitment process is updated to meet changing demographics (program uses data from census, schools, LWIB and registration forms to identify changes and the need to update/revise recruitment strategies or materials).

SECTION II: RECRUITMENT, INTAKE & ORIENTATION

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving recruitment

ORIENTATION STANDARD – Orientation provides information that learners need to make individually appropriate choices. Effective orientation clarifies the benefit of participation and guides learners in articulating their goals and determining their readiness, needs and commitment.

Indicators:

- a. Program offerings and assessment/intake processes are explained individually (e.g., individually through recruitment strategies, during initial visit/call, by intake staff/case managers or instructors).
- b. Program offerings and assessment/intake process is explained to groups (e.g., as part of outreach, during a welcome + orientation meeting).
- c. Information on legal rights and responsibilities for participants and staff is provided. (e.g., accommodations for special learning needs, non-discriminatory practices, fees, building use, etc.).
- d. Policies are made clear (e.g., attendance, materials, technology use, waiting lists, restrictions on food/smoking/children/guests, etc.).
- e. Expectations for staff and participants are clearly articulated and shared (i.e., all staff and participants can state the expectations as well as the policies, rights and responsibilities).
- f. Information related to support services and other programs is made available in multiple formats (e.g., print flyers, personal referrals, meeting with on-site case managers or support staff, etc.)
- g. Essential information is provided in culturally and linguistically appropriate forms (e.g., in languages represented by a significant number of participants, sign language, Braille, etc.)
- h. Program handbook, including orientation information, is available and given to all staff and participants.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving orientation.

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INTAKE STANDARD -- Intake is closely linked to Orientation and Assessment. During intake essential information is collected and considered to help make placement decisions. Information is then documented and recorded in Literacy Work Information System (LWIS)

Indicators: Registration/Enrollment forms should include

- a. Full name, complete address, telephone number(s), gender, race/ethnicity, date of birth, social security number, and for non-US born people, native country and language.
- b. Employment status
- c. Family information – number of children (0-5 years, 6-13 years, 14-21 years)
- d. Educational background
- e. Entry Status (e.g., Community Corrections, Disabled, Displaced Homemaker/Worker, Even Start, Family Literacy, Homeless, Immigrant/Refugee, Institutionalized, One-Stop Referral, Single Parent, TANF recipient, etc.)
- f. Primary Goal in general terms – Education; HS diploma/credit; Economic
- g. Secondary Goal in general terms
- h. Additional Goals stated more specifically.
- i. Placement or Screening test information
- j. Placement Level – class, site, instructor

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving intake.

SECTION III: ASSESSMENT – CURRICULUM—INSTRUCTION

Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction should be viewed as an integrated process – we can't have one without the others. **Assessment** is both a formal and informal process that guides educational planning among stakeholders – learners, educators, employers, community leaders, and service providers. We start with *assessment to identify the necessary skills and goals for adult learners* and to design the appropriate courses, curricula, schedules, and locations to help learners meet their needs as adults in the community, in the workplace and within the family.

Curricula are designed for learners -- they outline the objectives and skills that learners need to meet their goals, to develop necessary skills, to move from one level to another, and to transfer their learning from the classroom to life. Keeping learners engaged in learning often depends on how well we have assessed learner needs and designed effective programs and meaningful curricula. *The curriculum is our roadmap or guide to instruction.*

For many people **Instruction** is the heart of learning. Successful instructors use the results of assessment and local course curriculum to design lesson plans and activities that stimulate adults to become lifelong learners. Instructors help adult learners gain the skills, knowledge and attitudes to be successful participants in our rapidly changing world.

ASSESSMENT STANDARD 1 – Formal testing and assessment is an integral component for all adult education programs. Standardized procedures are federally-mandated for program accountability.

Indicators:

- h. Program has written policy and procedures for Pre- and Post-Testing.
- i. Appropriate, valid and reliable state-approved tests are administered and policies are align with state guidelines.
- j. Staff is trained to administer and interpret tests.
- k. Tests/Screening tools are used to determine appropriate learning plan or instructional level.
- l. Tests and other assessment information are used to monitor and document progress.
- m. Tests and other assessment information are used to determine level gain.
- n. Tests and other assessment information are shared with learners.
- o. Tests and other assessment information are shared with instructors/advisors.
- p. Tests and other assessment information are recorded in Literacy Works Information System (LWIS).

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving formal assessment and testing.

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ASSESSMENT STANDARD 2 – Multiple assessment tools and strategies are used to gather information and to guide program design and curriculum development.

Indicators:

- a. Learners participate in the identification of the skills they need, and the articulation of their learning goals (e.g., life skills or skills for parenting, for the workplace, for using technology, etc.).
- b. Social, public service, faith-based, and community-based organizations contribute to identifying the “necessary skills” for adult learners in the community.

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- c. Workers, employers, and employment service providers/trainers contribute to identifying the “necessary skills” for the workforce.
- d. Education partners contribute to identifying the “necessary skills” for adult learners.
- e. Locations/schedules for educational programs are determined through a survey of the target population.
- f. Necessary support services are identified through a survey of the target population.
- g. Testing and screening information of “necessary skills” is used to plan course offerings.
- h. Testing and screening information of “necessary skills” is used to outline curricula for each course/level.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving assessment for program design and curriculum development.



ASSESSMENT STANDARD 3 – Multiple and on-going assessments are used to guide and gauge instruction.

Indicators:

- a. Standardized test and other assessments are used to identify specific or “discrete” skill needs for individual learners (e.g., math, reading, writing, ESL, technology, etc.)
- b. Learners who show signs of possible learning disabilities are screened, referred, and accommodated.
- c. Learners are actively involved in assessing/determining their learning goals and skill development needs. (i.e., creating “Individualized Learning Plans”)
- d. Learning plans are available to learners and instructors.
- e. Learners can articulate learning goals, discuss their progress and identify future steps toward meeting goals.
- f. Education staff can state how learner goals are being addressed in planning and implementing program.
- g. Formal and informal assessment results are used to modify instruction, determine content/assignments, and to plan activities that promote the “transfer of learning skills”.
- h. Learning plans are reviewed and updated to document progress and changes.
- i. Assessment strategies are varied (e.g., performance-based assessment, portfolios, checklists, learner reflection logs, journals, informal tests, etc.)
- j. Rubrics and other assessments are consistent among staff teaching the same subject and level.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving assessment as a guide to instruction



CURRICULUM STANDARD 1 – Curricula exist for each program and level of instruction (ABE, Pre-GED, GED, ESL, Family Literacy, etc.). Curriculum includes skills that meet Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

Indicators: Curricula might include...

- a. Entry and exit criteria for each level.
- b. Clearly defined and measurable learner outcomes/objectives based on needs assessment.
- c. Outline of skills learners need to accomplish objectives (e.g., reading, math, and negotiation skills needed to “purchase a car”.)

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- d. Suggestions for contextualizing learning and for teaching multilevel groups.
- e. Suggestions for recycling/sequencing skills.
- f. Strategies/Resources for accommodating learners with special needs.
- g. Suggestions for materials/resources that are up-to-date, relevant to adults, culturally-sensitive, bias-free, etc.
- h. Activities to apply learning outside the classroom and to transfer skills to other contexts (e.g., for roles as members of families, communities and the workforce).
- i. Suggestions for the assessment of skills learned.
- j. WIA – basic educational skills necessary for literate functioning at work, home and in the community.
- k. WIA – skills to find, maintain, and progress on the job.
- l. WIA – skills to further ones education/training.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving curriculum content.

CURRICULUM STANDARD 2 – Curriculum guides instruction and is updated periodically through an assessment process.

Indicators:

- a. Instructional staff have copies of appropriate curriculum.
- b. Curriculum is aligned with the mission statement/goals of the program.
- c. Curriculum can be used in a variety of settings (e.g., technology-assisted, distance-learning model, with tutors, in workplace, with family literacy, etc.)
- d. Staff update and refine the curriculum based on needs assessment, program goals, research, etc.
- e. Curriculum is flexible enough to allow for innovation and individualization.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improvements in curriculum use.

SECTION III: ASSESSMENT – CURRICULUM—INSTRUCTION

INSTRUCTION STANDARD 1 – Well-designed lesson plans maximize opportunities for learning.

Indicators: Lesson plans include....

- a. Clearly defined objectives (based on curriculum and learner needs)
- b. Activities that prepare learners for real-life tasks (e.g., are contextualized and use authentic materials)
- c. The use of technology and the development of computer literacy skills
- d. Activities for Motivation, Presentation, Practice and Application.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving lesson planning

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INSTRUCTION STANDARD 2 – Instructor applies principles of adult learning and promotes the development of lifelong learning skills.

Indicators: Instructor....

- a. Acknowledges and builds upon the adult learners’ experiences, skills and knowledge.
- b. Creates a non-threatening environment and promotes mutual respect.
- c. Provides relevant content and activities that prepare learners for real-life tasks (e.g., contextualized activities using authentic materials).
- d. Incorporates the use of technology and computer literacy skill development.
- e. Uses activities and resources that are sensitive to culture, race, age, gender, ability, etc.
- f. Can access or make referrals to support services (e.g., learning disability screening, counseling and assessment services, community services for employment or childcare, tutors, etc).

g. *Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.*

Suggestions for improvements which will enhance adult learning
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INSTRUCTION STANDARD 3 – Instructional activities incorporate a variety of methods to address a range of learner needs

Indicators:

- a. Information/skills are presented and practiced with a variety of modalities and types of materials (e.g., verbal, visual, auditory, tactile, etc.).
- b. Activities appeal to a variety of learning styles (e.g., abstract and concrete as well as active and reflective)
- c. Use of interactive approaches such as cooperative and project-based learning, role-plays, problem-posing, critical incidents, etc.
- d. Activities and approaches incorporate the development of skills for critical thinking, team-building, decision-making, computer literacy, and lifelong learning/study.
- e. Optional activities are provided for multilevel classes.
- f. Appropriate accommodations are made for learners with disabilities and special needs (including assistive technologies, when needed)

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above. Suggestions for improvement to address differences in learning

SECTION IV: RETENTION, TRANSITION and SUPPORT SERVICES

Retention essentially means keeping learners engaged in the learning program long enough to meet their goals and to gain skills. To do so, programs need to continuously seek learner feedback and monitor the program design and instruction to be sure needs are being met. And since ‘lifelong’ learning is critical for success, programs must also build in strategies to help learners transition into other programs.

Transition activities assist learners to connect their adult education experiences to real life outcomes that are individually appropriate. In addition, programs can help learners stay engaged by providing access to a wide range of **Support Services**.

RETENTION STANDARD 1 – Program supports retention through enrollment processes and schedules that reflect the demands on adult learners as well as providing sufficient “opportunities to learn”.

Indicators:

- q. Program offers sufficient instruction and intensity of services for learners to progress toward goals as quickly as possible.
- r. Classes/Services are scheduled during the day, afternoon, early evening, night, on the weekend, and throughout the summer.
- s. Technology-Assisted and Distance Learning alternatives are offered to support learners who cannot participate in regularly scheduled classes.
- t. Schedule adjustments are made when necessary (e.g., for seasonal and shift workers, “stay home parents”, etc.)
- u. Modified enrollments or “staggered start dates” minimize waiting lists and allow for multiple program entry points.
- v. Cooperative & Project-based Learning, Learner Advisory Boards and other strategies are used to develop learning communities.
- w. Learning contracts are encouraged and Individualized Learning Plans are updated regularly.
- x. Retention rate is monitored periodically to identify necessary adjustments (e.g., within a site/class/level)
- y. Program goals for retention are updated as part of annual continuous improvement plan.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving retention

RETENTION STANDARD 2 -- Program increases retention rates so that more participants can meet their goals and gain necessary skills.

Indicators:

- a. Attendance policy is clearly stated and reinforced.
- b. Attendance is formally monitored so that program adjustments can be made (e.g., schedules, locations, courses, levels, staff, etc.)
- c. Learners with irregular attendance are contacted to find out if they need support services to remove barriers (e.g., transportation, childcare, health or social services, etc.).
- d. Native language support assistance is offered.

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- e. Special needs of the learning/physically disabled participants are documented and appropriate accommodations are made.
- f. Learner and Staff feedback is solicited regularly and is used to make appropriate adjustments and accommodations.
- g. Learner progress is recognized and rewarded.
- h. Learner certificates document successful attainment of skills.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving retention rates



TRANSITION STANDARD – “Transition to next steps” and toward meeting long term goals must be integrated into every component of a program.

Indicators:

- a. Recruitment/Marketing materials stimulate lifelong learning by identifying authentic, real-life outcomes for the learners (e.g., “High School Graduates earn higher wages”).
- b. Assessment process documents needs and helps learners identify short and long term goals.
- c. Curriculum and instruction help learners develop skills directly related to goals and next steps (e.g., gaining workplace skills, advancing from Beginning/Intermediate levels into ASE, GED, EDP, Vocational or moving into “credit-bearing courses”, etc.)
- d. Individualized learning plans are updated continually – learners note their progress and identify “next steps”.
- e. GED practice tests and GED Test applications are available through the program or through a coordinated referral.
- f. Information related to higher education and other training opportunities is made available for native speakers of English and for those coming from other countries.
- g. Staff are trained on strategies to help learners bridge into next step opportunities.
- h. Collaborations with employers, training centers and institutions of higher learning are “real” (e.g., through written agreements, field trips/guest speakers, documented career ladders, etc.)
- i. Program conducts follow-up surveys of learners to identify successful transition strategies and lifelong learning opportunities that can be built into the curriculum/program.
- j. Program documents the number of learners who successfully transition to work or post-secondary education/training.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving transition links.



SUPPORT SERVICES STANDARD – The program provides access to a variety of services, directly or through referrals to cooperating agencies.

Indicators:

- a. Case management-like model ensures that learners needs have been adequately assessed to determine a learning plan that is realistic for the individual within the scope of the program.

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- b. Program provides a list or brochures of local agencies that can provide additional support services (e.g., childcare, transportation, employment counseling, legal advice, personal/family counseling, assessment of learning disabilities, interpreters/translators, etc.)
- c. Classes are offered in locations where other services are also offered (e.g., childcare, counseling, employment services, etc.)
- d. Program hires or contracts support service staff directly.
- e. Program has staff or established contacts with service providers/specialists in the areas of learning disabilities and other handicapping conditions.
- f. Program has an active list of experts for referrals and consultation for staff and learners (e.g., interpreters for less commonly spoken languages, counselors for a range of personal and family concerns, specialists for hearing/speech/learning disabilities, etc.).
- g. Program brings “guest speakers and local experts” into the program to interact with learners/staff, and, thereby enhances awareness and strengthens networks).
- h. Program facilitates learners being able to actually visit public/private agencies, support services, and other resource locations.
- i. Native language support is offered through translated documents or by bilingual staff.
- j. Employment and Educational counseling is offered by trained staff, and is ideally part of Orientation and Intake.
- k. Learners can access computers to find information and to identify local resources.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving support services.

SECTION V: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is an essential part of a program for all staff. Quality professional development is not limited to pre-service and in-service training – it’s an ongoing process that offers multiple opportunities for staff to continue learning and developing skills. Effective professional development programs are based on the needs of the program, individual staff members, and on solid research and practices that support the program’s mission and goals.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD 1– The program has a clearly articulated professional development component that reflects the principles of adult learning and promotes continuous improvement.

Indicators:

- m. Orientation is provided to all staff on the goals/mission of the program, as well as administrative procedures.
- n. Pre-Service training models adult learning theory and methodology, builds on the knowledge and experience of staff, creates a supportive environment, appeals to a variety of learning styles, and provides opportunities for staff to demonstrate the application of skills they will be using.
- o. Professional development options for the year are identified through a “needs assessment” survey, informal discussions and solid research.
- p. In-Service and Professional Development activities are based on staff needs and provide for a variety of ways to learn.
- q. Pre and In-Service training focus on “specific needs” (e.g., integrating technology, assessing skills for EDP, state-mandated tests, strategies for developing reading/writing/communication skills, preparing for “X” test, teaching a multilevel class, accommodating for disabilities, etc.)
- r. All staff receive training and support related to state performance measures, cross-cultural communication, non-discriminatory practices, accommodating disabled participants, legal rights and responsibilities, etc.
- s. Staff are provided training in how to use local curriculum and resources.
- t. Expenses for professional development are included in the program budget (e.g., stipends, conference/workshop fees, professional subscriptions, mini-grants, mentoring/coaching costs, trainer fees, travel expenses, etc.)
- u. Staff observations and evaluations document the skills gained or goals met through professional development (i.e., “seeing the impact of professional development”)
- v. Educational and administrative staff are encouraged to collaborate with other programs and staff (e.g., with support personnel, employment services and employers, post-secondary programs, social and community service organizations, etc.)
- w. Learner/Participant input is solicited (e.g., focus groups, satisfaction surveys, advisory councils) to identify areas for enhancing staff development.
- x. Program recognizes staff for professional development activities (e.g., documents in personnel files, provides incentives such as ceremonies/celebrations, highlights in local newsletter, etc.)
- y. Program documents the relationship between staff needs assessment, professional development offerings, participation in professional development activities, AND the impact observed.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving the Professional Development process/model

SECTION V: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD 2 – Program provides opportunities for educational staff to expand their knowledge of current trends, “best practices”, and research in the field.

Indicators:

- a. All instructors are encouraged or required to develop a “personal professional development plan” each year.
- b. Newsletters and electronic postings are disseminated on a regular basis to all staff at all sites.
- c. Information related to conferences, workshops, and other professional development activities is made available to all staff.
- d. Staff are encouraged to actively participate in their personal professional development – being members of professional associations, attending events, making presentations, delivering workshops, writing articles, conducting inquiry research, joining discussion circles, researching etc.
- e. Peer-coaching and mentoring relationships are promoted.
- f. Professional Development plans provide for sufficient focus on topic area to promote change.
- g. Instructional staff are paid or reimbursed for professional development (e.g., administrative leave, registration and material fees, travel costs, substitutes for mentor/peer observers, etc.)
- h. Local resource center provides access to journals, newsletters, instructional materials, computers with Internet access, software, curricula, assessment tools, and lesson plans.

Evidence of program strengths related to indicators above.

Suggestions for improving personal professional development

