

Section XIII. Coordination of Adult Education / Literacy

The Union County Workforce Development Board has been intrinsically involved in the development of educational and literacy programs, providing the leadership necessary to coordinate them effectively. We are committed to “addressing the needs of individuals to obtain the knowledge and attain the skills necessary to become literate, obtain and maintain employment, and become self-sufficient...”

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.

The Workforce Development Board has reached out to the College to share in the responsibilities in the development and implementation of the Workforce Innovation Business Center located at the Mills at Jersey Gardens Mall, the largest mall in New Jersey and located by Newark Liberty Airport and the ports of

Elizabeth and Newark

The Elizabeth and Plainfield One-Stop Career Centers both offer literacy education in self-paced computer tutorials. Job seekers access to video libraries helping them with career exploration and interviewing techniques.

The WDB will involve Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) partners in the review of literacy goals and examination of progress toward these goals for each cohort served. Cohorts under AEFL are:

1		Beginning ESL Literacy
2		Low Beginning ESL
3	Beginning ABE Literacy	High Beginning ESL
4	Beginning Basic Education	Low Intermediate ESL
5	Low Intermediate Basic Education	High Intermediate ESL
6	High Intermediate Basic Education	Advanced ESL
7	Low Adult Secondary Education	
8	High Adult Secondary Education	

Additionally, the board will participate in employer meetings convened to determine employer needs related to Career Services, Training Services or Educational Services. Employer engagement is the basis for understanding and developing Career Pathways “maps” for Union County WIOA customers.

The WDB will continue to ensure that partner programs and activities will make every effort to engage the job seeker as efficiently and effectively as possible. Partners will be expected to guide all job seekers along their career pathway plan and will maintain progress reports on each customer being served; the Board will work closely with its partners, setting regularly scheduled progress reports about customers’ progress toward established literacy and numeracy outcomes, to ensure the effectiveness of such guidance and counsel. The Board will access and determine selected service offerings each year as we continuously work to provide increasingly innovative and efficient service strategies.

WIOA Title I Counselors will perform the in-depth intake and eligibility functions, literacy and occupational skills assessment and prepare the universal individual employment plans/employment development plans. Based on the outcomes of intake, eligibility, assessments, and employment plan development, WIOA Counselors will refer customers to the appropriate One-Stop partner program.

Literacy Committee

As a matter of practice, our Literacy Committee meets quarterly. The Committee reviews secondary and post-secondary educational programs as they relate to Literacy. The Literacy Committee focuses on assessing, recommending, ensuring implementation and monitoring the Literacy plans and services. However, given the opportunity to update our strategic plan, we have had a few work group meetings facilitated by Group i&i to focus on co-enrollment, IET’s built into job-seeker career pathways, stackable credentials, and assessment.

This is a critical engagement by leading entities in the County engaged in advancing literacy and is in full compliance with SETC Resolution 2017-2, which recommends that Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) develop plans that join together local literacy resources to form a more comprehensive and coordinated local literacy system.

The Union County Literacy committee has met on three occasions to work on significant workforce issues. The primary focus of these meetings addressed:

- Assessment/Testing (Basic Assessment Tools/Procedures, Computer Skill Assessment)
- Career Pathway Models (IET’s)/ Co-Enrollment between Title I and Title II
- Soft Skill Training Curricula

Testing/Assessment. The customer's literacy skill levels are assessed traditionally using the TABE assessment tool. However, the Literacy committee is complying with the state-wide change in assessment tool. Steps for cost-sharing and bulk purchases have been discussed by literacy and Title II consortium partners.

Career Pathway Models (IET's)/Co-Enrollment between Title I and Title II. As stated earlier, a comprehensive training program was instituted over the last three years and a number of trainings completed, including:

Front-Line Worker Professional Development

AJC Staff and ACJ Partner (including Title II Consortium Partner staff attended 5 half-day workshops

- Customer Service
- Motivational Interviewing
- Career Pathways
- Stackable Credentials
- Co-enrollment

AJC Partner Engagement

AJC Staff and ACJ Partner (including Title II Consortium Partner staff attended 3 half-day workshops

- Mapping Workforce Partners and Systems
- Gap Analysis
- Enhancing the Role of Partner Members

Sub-Committee Engagement

WDB Sub-Committee members and AJC/WDB Administrative Staff attended a number of workshops and meetings around the following topics:

- Expanding services supporting youth, literacy and partner engagement
- One-Stop Operator procurement process consultation
- Advancing system-wide process and services improvement

Use of Technology. The Committee recently discusses strategies for reaching into county pockets not participating in literacy services. Examples of strategies presented include the possibility of a television series for students with limited English proficiency, such as *Crossroads Café*; expanding services to students in low-income housing projects, or initiating GED on the Internet for single parents and displaced homemakers unable to easily leave home.

Soft Skills. The Board and Literacy Committee have discussed the expansion of soft-skills training and have looked to possible standardization of county-wide use of soft-skills curricula. The cornerstone of soft-skills training has rested within the Union County College's WIB Center offering of 40 hours of pre-occupational

training, soft skill training. The board is examining whether this training can be run concurrently and how it might be incorporated into general curricula of our training community.

Oversight

In compliance with the required role of Oversight of Performance, the Board will review monthly performance measure reports which shall at a minimum consist of the core indicators of performance described in Sec. 212 (b)(2)(A):

- Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills;
- Placement in, retention in, or completion of, postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment, or career advancement;
- Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

The WIOA Act, specifically, SEC. 116. PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM defines the specific performance accountability measures that apply across the core programs to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas (for core programs described in subtitle B) in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by those programs.

Evaluation criteria shall include:

- “(I) the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- (II) the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- (III) the median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- (IV) the percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (subject to clause (iii)), during participation in or within one year after exiting from the program;
- (V) the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.”

Reports detailing these five (5) sub-categories of Title II performance are currently supplied on a monthly basis. The WDB will review these reports and will direct attention to areas that require specific corrective action.

The external providers offer a full range of basic literacy and ESL programs and services to One-Stop customers from one-on-one tutoring to classroom instruction. Referrals flow in both directions from the One-Stop to the literacy providers and in the reverse direction for eligibility determination, and a funding grant.

The local literacy system has two tiers. The first tier is comprised of approved literacy programs operated by local educational agencies, community organizations, and private schools. Most of these providers receive NJDOE or WIA funds, and some receive funds from both sources

Within this network outside of the One-Stop system, there are referring organization and provider organizations. An example of this is the Elizabeth Library. The library is a referring agency, sending people to approved literacy providers. Although the library is an affiliated One-Stop Partner, they do not refer potential customers to the One-Stop system for literacy or any other employment-related services.

Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) Plus Consortium

ABLE PLUS will deliver free Adult Basic Skills, HSE preparation, ESL and ESL Civics programs that support the development of adults:

- to become literate and to obtain the critical knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency
- to become full partners in the emotional and educational development of their children
- to complete secondary school education, and to obtain the Basic English language skills needed for Civics and Community Involvement.

With funding under this WIA Title II program, **ABLE PLUS** will service 1,104 individuals and will work as a partner with the Union County Workforce Development Board, the Union County One-Stop Career Centers and all partners to prepare additional eligible individuals for the HSE exam, occupational training, and post-secondary education. Additionally, the Consortium is in an ongoing process of developing and implementing transitioning services and career pathways that provide ABLE PLUS participants clear connections to post-secondary education, occupational training, and employment.

Consortium Partners

The Consortium for **ABLE PLUS** consists of the Union County One-Stop System/Workforce Development Board, four **core** service-providing partners, and a network of supportive service-providers who will contribute referrals, outreach, and support for special populations in addition to other needed support services such as child care and transportation. The **ABLE PLUS** Consortium core service-providers are:

- Union County College (Lead Applicant and Fiscal Agent)
- Urban Workforce Advantage
- Elizabeth Board of Education
- Literacy NJ Union County Program

The consortium provides literacy and numeracy instruction as well as English as a Second language in several locations throughout the County. The supporting partners include but are not limited to:

- Union County Workforce Development Board
- Union County One-Stop Career Centers – Workforce Learning Links
- Union County Vocational Technical Schools
- Jefferson Park Ministries
- Community Coordinated Child Care of Union County (4Cs)
- Community Access
- Union County Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Catholic Community Services
- PROCEED, Inc.
- Local Labor Unions (i.e., Welding Manufacturing, Health Care)

The four Consortium partners will implement educational activities at locations throughout the County of Union, including sites in Elizabeth, Plainfield, and all 22 of Union County's public libraries through an array of schedules. With such an extensive network of locations and variety of schedules, access will be assured for each in need of these educational services. In addition, the **ABLE PLUS** Consortium has solidified its assessment and referral processes with the Union County One-Stop Career Centers in both Plainfield and Elizabeth to ensure residents throughout the County will be provided HSE preparation services.

Union County College continues to be a full partner of the Workforce Innovation Business Center, and as **One-Stop Partners**, Union County College, and the Consortium continue to benefit from the long history of collaboration with the Union County One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) system. Participants close to being ready to take their HSE can be recruited from the OSCC **Workforce Learning Links**, from the partners and local community-based and faith-based

organizations. A One-Stop representative has been assigned to attend all grant development meetings and all ABLE PLUS Consortium Monthly Meetings to maintain the strong linkage and collaboration between the OSCC, WDB and Consortium partners.

The significant responsibilities of the partnership between the Consortium and the OSCC support the assessment and referral process for the One-Stop Career Center and the ABLE PLUS Consortium.

The referral process elements are:

- The Union County One-Stop Career Center will refer to ABLE PLUS Consortium from the *Workforce Learning Links Centers* eligible participants who score below 4th-grade reading level and participants who want HSE preparation and have taken the Official HSE practice test and scored 8.9 and above on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).
- The Workforce Learning Link (WLL) is an initiative in partnership with the NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development (LWD) to help job seekers with instruction in reading, writing, and math, communication, financial literacy, job search, employability, and life-skills. Using the computer, the Workforce Learning Link provides interactive training services that allow participants to learn at their own pace.

The programs provide a wide range of self-paced learning opportunities in ESL, basic skills, pre-GED, and GED literacy, life, and workplace skills. The Workforce Learning Link (WLL) is open to anyone who needs to improve their skills. It doesn't matter if you have a job or collecting unemployment. The instructor will get you started and help you with the computer if you need it.

Various levels of literacy services are available including ESL beginner to advanced, Learning Links intermediate level, and WFNJ beginner level. Title II covers literacy ABE through ASC advanced, citizenship and civic education, career exploration, and college and career readiness. Also included are resume writing, introduction to Career Connections and NJ Can. Counseling and assessment are provided to keep customers aware of their options as they progress.

Customers are referred back to the One-Stop Career Center and continue to work with their counselor when they have accomplished their goals. The Individual Service Strategy document is updated to reflect short-term and long-term goals.

- The ABLE PLUS Consortium will refer students eligible for One-Stop Career Center services who score between 5.0 and 8.0 on the TABE for pre-HSE

preparation educational services.

- Referral forms will provide TABE scores and educational recommendations for each participant.
- ABLE PLUS students will also be included in all OSCC educational and job-related activities (i.e., job fairs, college fairs, positive recruitments).

This referral and recruitment process for each partner has been instrumental in informing the community of ABLE PLUS Consortium and the OSCC services, but shall be memorialized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Partners continually reach out to churches, community agencies and community-based organizations and disseminate information on the program to them. This leads to the enormous popularity of the program, and an extensive waiting list has existed for more than 15 years. In order to meet this demand and meet the needs of all residents, all Consortium Partners implement convenient schedules at multiple locations throughout the County.

The **Union County One-Stop Career Center** is a supportive partner and source of guidance and resources in the development of **viable career pathways** for participating students. All clients referred to the One-Stop System are scheduled for group orientations that will provide a menu of One-Stop Career Center resources and services that expand the WIOA Title II activities. OSCC prescreen individuals for eligibility for and make referrals to appropriate services including those provided under **ABLE PLUS**.

The Union County College Center for Economic and Workforce Development (**CEWD**) remains the lead applicant and fiscal agent for ABLE PLUS.

In that role CEWD will continue to:

- Coordinate all planning for the delivery of programs and services across the consortium
- Maintain mutual accountability
- Collect data from Consortium Partners, analyze the data, and report to the State agency all fiscal and program data across the Consortium according to the schedule and timelines determined by the State
- Provide any additional leadership and management support as necessary and requested by the Partner agencies
- Involve all Partners in project activities, meetings, and discussions
- Coordinate any professional development activities as required by the State
- Develop articulation agreements with consortium members which outline all partner responsibilities
- Coordinate activities for partners to deliver job search and family literacy activities (i.e., job fairs, school trips, financial aid workshops, publish job

- opportunities weekly)
- Monitor and support the development of student transitional activities among the partners
- Serve as a single point of contact for the LWD
- Participate in State-sponsored activities as requested by the State agency which includes monthly meetings of all grantees
- Review all LACES generated information and provide support for training in LACES.

The Core Service Providers have set out their roles and responsibilities in detail in the attached Memorandums of Understanding. The Consortium will serve 1,104 students. Each provider's role is as follows:

Union County College

CEWD will provide instruction for adults in **all** of the 12 educational functioning levels, ABS/HSE, ESL, and ESL Civics at two locations that include Union County College's two campuses in Elizabeth and Plainfield. Union County College will serve **683** ABE, ESL, and ESL/Civics participants.

Urban Workforce Advantage

Urban Workforce Advantage will provide ESL and ESL Civics instruction for *foreign-born* adults ages 16 and up. Instruction will be provided at one site in Elizabeth, on Broad Street in the center of Elizabeth. Urban Workforce Advantage will serve a total of **207** ESL and ESL/Civics clients.

Elizabeth Board of Education

The Elizabeth Board of Education will provide Adult Education and ESL, at the Elizabeth High School in Elizabeth. The Elizabeth Board of Education will serve a total of **80** Adult Basic Education clients.

Literacy New Jersey Union County Program

Literacy Volunteers of Union County serves adults needing Adult Literacy and ESL Civics education in locations throughout Union County. Tutoring sessions take place in all 22 of Union County's public libraries. This enables tutors and learners a wide choice of hours and locations for their lessons. Literacy Volunteers, Union County Program, will serve a total of **105** ABE and ESL Civics clients.

Recruitment of Welfare Population

Welfare-recipients have **priority status** for services. According to the New Jersey Department of Human Services, (April 2012), there are 1,524 families in Union County receiving *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families* (TANF) benefits, and

another 1,683 “employable” individuals receiving General Assistance (GA). Participants reside throughout the County, and there are services available for them that are accessible no matter where they live.

Special Needs Populations

Special consideration is made for recruiting and serving special needs clients through the *Union County Division of Developmental Disabilities*, Union County Division of Vocational and Rehabilitation Services (One Stop Partner), community-based organizations, and local school districts. Also, for those students who require extensive accommodation, CEWD, and the Partners work with their respective agencies to develop a plan to assure that the needs of this population are met.

The College and Partners can address the needs of the:

- Physically Challenged
- Learning Disabled
- Visual and Audio Impaired

Union County College works with County, State, and Federal organizations to assist students in the learning environment so that these educational services can be relevant for all eligible participants.

TAAACT

Union County College is a partner in some TAAACT consortium grants (Manufacturing and Health Care) is the administrator of an Opportunity4Jersey grant (Welding), a partner in LINC's consortium grant (TLD, Supply Chain), Smart Start, and is a Talent Development Center for Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution.

National Credentials

ABLE PLUS participants enrolled in these grants earn national credentials and are more competitive in the local and area job markets. These grants are supported by local and area employers who are eager to hire completing participants.
Stackable Credentials

Through these grants, participants have opportunities to earn stackable credentials, to participate in integrated education and training programs and receive wrap-around support services.

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S-29a Strengthen connections between adult education, postsecondary education, and workforce will be strengthened including expanded use of stackable credentials with co-enrollment with WIOA Title I programs. (Aligned with Goal 1-Career Pathways / Credential Attainment with Goal 4-Expanded Access)

S-29b Continue providing literature, guidance, and training to the Literacy Consortium staff and Committee to further progress in integrating all workforce programs, especially Title I and Title II.

S-30c The WDB will look to establishing specific policies regarding the sharing of testing resources and the implementation of system-wide assessment.

S-30 Accelerate achievement of diplomas and credentials through increasing capacity and coordination. (Aligned with Goal 6-Evaluation / Oversight)