

Building Blocks in WIOA

Building a foundation takes a team effort. Adult Education, Labor and Vocational Education are in a partnership to help adults gain the academic skills and training to work in today's ever changing global economy. Everyone must become a lifelong learner to keep up with the changes. Basic academic skills, communication skills, and the ability to access the training needed are vital for our participants and us.

Building Block One: Shared Responsibility for Performance

Local adult education programs are working with their community partners to effectively and efficiently support the labor and job training demands of their area. We must forge a market-based, industry-led partnership and integrate economic and workforce development.

As a required partner, adult education must provide expertise about the needs of undereducated adults, including the critical information about issues related to access, participation, learning and goal attainment of individuals with multiple barriers to educational advancement. We must advocate for the universal presence of basic foundation skills in the workforce continuum and communicate the foundation skill needs of employer customers. By creating strong community relations we will ensure an alignment of adult education resources within the local AE and workforce investment regions within our state.

Building Block Two: Creating a Continuum of Services Based on Needs and Customer Satisfaction

Adult education is critical in the one-stop delivery system that links education and training to economic and workforce development efforts. Adult education is a foundation service without which other pieces of the continuum will collapse. Adult educators will offer critical support to all phases of the continuum in the following ways.

Core Services include the outreach, intake, and initial assessment of adults in need of basic skill services. One portion of the intake services includes identifying barriers to participation and providing information and referral to supportive services, such as childcare and transportation. Some adult education programs specialize in partnering with employers to provide basic skills instruction to incumbent workers. Others can provide "bridge" services to newly employed individuals by offering supportive counseling and short term basic skills brush up to enable the individual to retain employment.

Intensive Services provided by adult educators bring expertise in assessment to the participant that is relevant. All adult education programs are required to conduct ongoing assessment of basic literacy skills of adult learners. This includes the determination of an individual's basic literacy skill levels in math, reading and writing and/or English acquisition and further diagnostic testing which is used in instructional programming. Adult education programs are focused on providing instruction geared to an individual's learning goals and includes development of learning skills, communication skills and other work-based skills such as punctuality, personal maintenance, and professional conduct, in the context of basic skills instruction. By providing relevant instruction to adults with employment goals, the adult education program assists in career planning and prepares individuals for work.

Training Services include basic academic skills and literacy services, including workforce and workplace education. Instructional content is designed to be context compatible with the goals of low-literate participants.

Family Literacy instruction emphasizes serving and meeting the needs of SNAP recipients and others preparing to enter employment. Family literacy not only works with the adult to obtain the basic skills necessary to acquire and retain employment but also focuses on early childhood instruction aimed at breaking the cycle of low-literacy and economic dependence.

Building Block Three: Informed Choice

The AE system is built upon a model of strong, informed customer choice. Everyday employers and individuals make an array of choices about how best to invest in education, career paths, training, finding good jobs, and other issues involved in workforce development. The challenge is to obtain excellent information to support the student's ability to make good decisions.

Adult education is built on the philosophical foundation of creating "learner centered" services based on the participants needs and career goals. Adult educators strive to provide low-literate participants with information they need to make good decisions related to the attainment of family sustaining career paths. Customer satisfaction and learner outcomes are critical to helping learners move to the next level of education or into employment.

Building Block Four: Focusing on Accountability and Program Improvement

Performance is a basic foundation to the workforce development system. Programs and providers are measured upon results they achieve and the return on investment of the public dollar. The performance measurement system is one that ensures accountability yet is compatible with a seamless delivery system.

The state performance measures are negotiated with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education. These performance measures are then given to each program as a minimum standard for the program to meet. Using high-quality data collection is vital in establishing and maintaining the performance of each local program and the success of its learners. Coupled with a system of continuous program improvement adult education is a model which reinvents itself as change is required both locally and as federal regulations demand.

Building Block Five: Lifelong Learning through Continuous Acquisition of Skill Enhancements and Knowledge

Connecting the world of business and education through the adoption of more rigorous academic standards and an unfolding strategy between basic foundation skills and occupational skills is the task at hand. The partners of adult education, workforce services, and vocational education have mutually supportive goals for economic and societal success. The underlying goals are:

1. To promote a uniform understanding of the value of basic skills and literacy in securing the economic and social well being and quality of life of our citizens.
2. To increase the participation of private sector partnerships in identifying critical basic skills and shaping the way basic skill services are delivered.
3. To integrate basic skills education into the workforce development continuum.
4. To streamline and organize state and local adult basic education services.
5. To improve the types and ranges of services available to adult learners.