Adult Basic and Literacy Education

Announcement of Fund Availability
and
Request for Proposal Overview

Fiscal Year 2010

Submission Deadline
May 15, 2009

Ohio Board of Regents
30 E. Broad Street, 36th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Background

Ohio Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) is a program within the Division of Academic Affairs and System Integration under the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents. With the recent transfer of ABLE and the Adult Workforce Education (AWE) programs from the Ohio Department of Education to the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, work is underway to align educational services to assist adult learners in their completion of education and employment goals.

For Ohio to prosper and grow, more adults must acquire the skills that prepare them for success in employment and postsecondary education. Census data (2000) indicate that almost 1.3 million (18%) Ohioans 18 and over have less than a high school education. Many lack the basic literacy skills necessary to effectively comprehend and use written materials for everyday activities. Other facts to consider include:

- 9% of Ohioans lack Basic Prose Literacy Skills - a skill level category in which adults range from being unable to read and understand any written information to being able only to locate easily identifiable information in short, commonplace prose text in English, but nothing more advanced. (Source: NAAL: Indirect County and State Estimates of the Percentage of Adults at the Lowest Level of Literacy for 1992 and 2003)
- Ohio ranks 38th in the percentage of adults (ages 25 to 64) with an associate degree, and 37th in the percentage with a bachelor’s degree.*
- With three out of four current Ohio workers expected to be working in 2020, it is important to provide high-quality education and training opportunities for the state’s adult population.*
- Adult workers, particularly low-income workers, face many well-documented barriers to credential achievement.*

*Source: Ohio Labor Market Information (LMI), Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Given the number of Ohioans without basic literacy skills or credentials to succeed in postsecondary education or new economy jobs, adult education is crucial in helping Ohio meet the challenge of an underprepared workforce. For Ohio to be competitive in regional, national and international economies, Ohioans must have options to prepare for higher academic and literacy skills, to obtain a GED and to transition to postsecondary education and training.

A Key Strategy in the Chancellor’s Strategic Plan for Higher Education is the development of a network of adult education programs focused on helping adults become college ready. The ABLE network will offer adults a variety of options – on and off college campuses – and in a variety of formats – including online or distance
learning. The ABLE path to college assists in expanding opportunities, adding convenience and helping adult students save real dollars.

Source: Strategic Plan for Higher Education: 2008-2017, Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents

**Fund Availability and Grant Period**

To achieve the goals mentioned above, the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents (the Chancellor) announces the availability of state and federal funds for the provision of adult basic and literacy education services. Required components are adult literacy services including basic skills, adult secondary education/GED preparation, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Transitions (employment and postsecondary). Optional components are family literacy, workplace literacy, distance education and corrections education. For a definition of required and optional components, see pages 6 – 10.

Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) instructional funds are authorized to serve adults who have less than a twelfth grade education or its functional equivalent and who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance (age 18 in Ohio). Grantees will maintain a strong commitment to serving individuals who are most in need of adult education services, including those who are low-income, disabled or have minimal literacy skills.

For purposes of this program, the term direct instructional services means basic educational services and activities designed to increase an adult’s ability to read, write and speak in the English language, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society.

Subject to confirmation and receipt of the federal grant award for Adult Education and Family Literacy, Title II, Workforce Investment Act (PL 105-220), and state General Revenue Fund appropriations, Fiscal Year 2010 funds are planned for use during the July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010 project period. The estimated amount to be awarded is **$17.3 million**. Funds for grant awards will be allocated regionally based on Census information about individuals without a secondary credential. Grantees will be selected based upon factors identified in the application including past effectiveness in providing adult literacy services, cost efficiencies, service levels, and other criteria. In FY 2011, the funding formula will be determined by a combination of base and performance funding if current grantees are extended an additional year. If federal legislation is reauthorized, a competitive grant process may be conducted to determine new grantees.

Of the **$17.3 million** available, up to **$150,000.00** will be set-a-side to support Distance Education Hubs. Another set-a-side of up to **$1.23 million** representing 10% of the available federal instructional grant dollars will be awarded to applicants that have
corrections education components. (Sec. 222 WIA, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act)

The Chancellor will endeavor to award grants to provide adult basic and literacy education services in every Ohio Economic Development Region (EDR) and county. Applicants may apply to provide services in more than one EDR. In the case of regions and/or counties without competitive proposals or if the Chancellor determines an application(s) for an area is not fundable, the Chancellor reserves the right to reissue the RFP for a particular service area.

As Ohio builds a 21st Century education system, ABLE providers are integral to the system's effectiveness. Collaborations among providers are critical to building this system. Of special interest are collaborations in which ABLE programs work closely with institutions of higher education to transition adults into postsecondary education.

To increase efficiency and to avoid duplication of services in a certain target service area, applicants may choose one of two funding options. Under Option 1, there is one fiscal agent which contracts the services of other agencies that perhaps previously served as independent grantees. The application must reflect the services for the targeted area for all of the following components: Adult Basic Education (ABE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult Secondary Education (ASE)/General Educational Development (GED) and Transitions. The application must have a signature of a Superintendent/President/CEO for each partner.

Under Option 2, the Applicant (fiscal agent) provides all required services for the proposed targeted area which includes the required components: ABE, ESOL (see note below), ASE/GED, and Transitions. In addition, the applying agency can form agreements with other agencies to provide the optional components. These agreements should be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] or in the case of Distance Education a Partnership agreement that would be provided by the Hub applicant. The application must include each MOU or Partnership agreement that applies for the optional components.

Note: Applicants may consider the following circumstances based on the number of ESOL eligible adults in the counties in the proposed service area.

1. If an applying agency has 500 or more adults eligible for ESOL services in any county in the proposed service area, the agency must provide an ESOL Component.

2. If the applying agency has fewer than 500 adults eligible for ESOL services in each county in the proposed service area, the agency may choose to provide the ESOL Component. However, the agency has the option to request an exemption from providing the ESOL Component. If an agency is requesting an exemption, the application must include supporting data and a strong rationale for not providing services. If an exemption is requested, the agency is encouraged to
refer students or form agreements with other agencies that provide the ESOL Component. [If requesting an exemption, provide the information requested on page 6 of the grant – ESOL Component —Request for Exemption.]

Selected applicants shall comply with the Ohio Performance Accountability System (OPAS) Manual as updated annually; the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; all state and federal assurances; and the Application Guidelines.

Interested applicants may acquaint themselves with the Ohio ABLE System by going to www.uso.edu/network/workforce/rfps.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include local education agencies and public and private nonprofit agencies including community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness, volunteer literacy organizations of demonstrated effectiveness, institutions of higher education, libraries, public housing authorities, and other nonprofit agencies with the ability to provide literacy education services to adults and families. Community-based organizations and nonprofit institutions include non-profit faith-based organizations.

Private nonprofit applicants must have secured tax exempt status as authorized by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and certified by the Internal Revenue Service. This requirement applies at the direct award level and any potential subcontract level for the provision of direct instructional services.

Eligible Students

Applicants shall be willing to serve all eligible students. Pursuant to Title II of the Workforce Investment Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, eligible students are those individuals who live or work in Ohio and who:

- have attained 16 years of age;
- are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law (18 in Ohio); and who
  - lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individual to function effectively in society;
  - do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
  - unable to speak, read or write the English language.

*See the ABLE Student Eligibility Policy (www.uso.edu/network/workforce/rfps).
In addition, eligible family literacy participants shall meet the eligibility requirements for participation in adult education as stated above. The ABLE program defines a Family Literacy Component as an initiative that involves all of the following:

- Adult basic and literacy education instruction for parents and/or caregivers
- Educational activities for their children
- Parenting instruction
- Parent and child together (PACT) activities.

ABLE funds may be used to support adult basic and literacy education services for parents and, in some instances, parenting instruction. ABLE funds may not be used to support child education or PACT activities. See page 8 for more details on family literacy.

**Nondiscrimination Policy**

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the applicant shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, age, and/or national origin in its adult education and literacy programs, activities, employment or admission policies and practices.

All grantees must meet assurances that address serving adults with special needs, including learning disabilities. Funded programs will complete an online Learning Disability Policy and Planning Guide that addresses twelve (12) policy statements. This program guide will be updated annually, if needed. For more information, go to [http://www.ouliteracycenter.org/ld-guide/login.php](http://www.ouliteracycenter.org/ld-guide/login.php)

**Definition of Component Services and Service Area**

Ohio’s component services for Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) are defined as adult literacy services that include basic skills, GED preparation/adult secondary education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, family literacy, workplace literacy, corrections education, distance education and transitions. Instruction in life skills, employability skills and computer literacy may be integrated into academic instruction and/or as stand alone for eligible students also receiving academic skills through these funds.

Successful applicants will provide instructional services year round. Services must be of sufficient intensity and duration to achieve substantial learning gains as described by the Core Indicators of Performance.
All applicants must provide required components; however, other component services, such as corrections education, may be needed in a service delivery area and should be addressed through partnerships or a consortium application.

Every provider shall operate one or more sites in the Economic Development Region to meet the unique learning needs of its residents. Fiscal agents shall provide services only in the counties for which they have been approved. (State requirement)

Adult education providers shall not charge students for instructional or other services covered by state and federal adult education funds.

**Required Component Services**

Applicants must specify how they will design and deliver an adult basic and literacy education program that will result in student attainment of specified student performance goals. Three major strategies address the required ABLE components. Those strategies are:

- **Strategy 1**: Improve basic skills performance and GED attainment of ABE/ASE students
- **Strategy 2**: Improve listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of ESOL
- **Strategy 3**: Assist students to obtain and retain employment and to transition to postsecondary education/training.

Applicants must complete a series of action steps for each strategy that will be pursued. Applicants proposing to serve ABE and/or ASE students should complete Strategy 1. If ESOL students will be served, Strategy 2 needs to be completed. **All applicants must complete Strategy 3** which addresses the critical need to prepare students to transition to postsecondary education and employment. The Strategies and Action Steps are attached as Appendix C of the Guidance Document.

It should be remembered that all Applicants must propose serving ABE, ASE, and ESOL students unless fewer than 500 adults in the proposed service area are eligible for ESOL services. In this case, the program may decide to request an exemption.

In addition to the required ABLE services, an Applicant may also propose to offer one or more optional components independently or in partnership with another Applicant. The components are discussed briefly below.

**Basic Skills.** All programs must provide a program of instruction designed for adults who have minimal or no skills up to a level of 8.9 grade level equivalence in reading, writing, speaking problem solving or computation at a level necessary to function in society, in the workplace or in the family.
Students completing this program component would be able to achieve a Basic Skills Stackable Certificate as evidenced by scores on required assessment instruments. Programs must be able to provide students with this certificate (now in pilot - “Stackable” Certificates Early Adopters).

**Advanced Skills - Adult Secondary Education/GED Preparation.** All programs must provide a program of instruction designed for adults who have some literacy skills and can function in everyday life but who are not proficient in reading, writing, speaking, problem solving or computation or do not have a high school credential/GED. Students receiving ASE/GED instructional services would work from a 9.0 grade level equivalence up to 12.9. Students with a high school credential may be served if they score below a 12.9 grade level as evidenced by results from required assessments. Students completing this program component would be able to achieve an Advanced Skills Stackable Certificate as evidenced by scores on required assessment instruments. Programs must be able to provide students with this certificate (now in pilot - “Stackable” Certificates Early Adopters)

**English for Speakers of Other Languages.** All programs must provide a program of instruction designed to assist individuals of limited English proficiency to achieve competence in the English language. Instruction is geared to adult who want to become more fluent in English, pass U.S. citizenship tests, progress to GED preparation and work on job-seeking skills.

ABLE funds may not be used to provide instruction in other languages.

Students completing this program component would be able to achieve an ESOL Skills Stackable Certificate, if needed, as evidenced by scores on required assessment instruments. Programs must be able to provide students with this certificate (now in development stage).

**Transitions Services.** All programs must complete Strategy 3 of the grant, which addresses activities to help students transition to postsecondary education and employment. Applicants should consult the ABLE Transitions Framework in Appendix D of the Guidance Document and refer to the components of the framework when describing the transition activities that will be pursued. All ABLE programs must play a major role in helping students move beyond ABE and the GED, but the exact activities to be undertaken will vary depending on level of students to be served.

The ABLE Transitions Framework describes two categories that are important in assisting students’ success in postsecondary education and employment. These include an instructional component and support services. All elements of the model must be addressed by applicant agencies and/or through partnerships with other agencies, including postsecondary education institutions.

Collaborations between and among ABLE programs and institutions of higher education will make transitions more effective. Special consideration will be given to ABLE
programs that show evidence of strong partnerships (sharing physical locations, offering classes on a college campus, sharing personnel/Board members, etc.).

**Optional Components**

Applicants also proposing to offer the optional components of Family Literacy, Workplace Literacy, Distance Education, and/or Corrections Education must answer the appropriate questions within the grant related to those components.

**Family Literacy.** All ABLE programs are encouraged to offer instructional activities that enrich the parental role of adult learners. However, the ABLE program defines a Family Literacy Component as an initiative that involves all of the following:

- Adult basic and literacy education instruction for parents and/or caregivers)
- Educational activities for their children
- Parenting instruction
- Parent and child together (PACT) activities

ABLE funds may be used to support adult basic and literacy education services for parents and, in some instances, parenting instruction. ABLE funds **may not** be used to support child education or PACT activities.

Applicants approved to operate a Family Literacy component would report on one or both of the following outcomes in addition to the other ABLE outcomes:

- Increased involvement of parents and primary caregivers in child’s school and education (Minimum performance level=50%)
- Increased involvement in child’s literacy related activities (Minimum performance level=75%)

**Workplace Literacy.** Workplace Literacy is defined as education services offered in collaboration with business, industry, government and/or labor for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce through improvement of literacy skills. To be designated as pursuing a Workplace Literacy component, an applicant needs to have a program conducted in a setting provided by the workers’ employer and designed to assist incumbent workers to strengthen their basic skills.

**Corrections Education.** A Correctional Education component involves a partnership with a jail, reformatory, work farm, detention center, halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center or other similar institution designed for the confinements or rehabilitation of criminals. Funding will be limited to partnerships that involve learners who are likely to leave the correctional institution **within five years of receiving ABLE services.**
Projections for students to be served should be reasonable and in line with dollars requested. As a point of reference, the FY 2008 statewide per student cost is $548.00.

**Distance Education.** Ohio’s Distance Education Policy offers two options for providing a distance education component. The first is a “Program Only” component in which a program is approved to offer distance education to students in its own program.

The second is a “Distance Hub” component in which a program experienced in offering distance education within its ABLE program and/or as a Hub can be approved to offer distance instruction to its own students and to students referred to it by other ABLE funded programs.

Applicants to be Distance Hubs may request a base funding amount of $10,000 and an additional amount of $50 per estimated number of referred students to be served. The number of referred distance students served by an approved Hub will be evaluated in the ninth month of a grant (March). If 75% of distance enrollment has not been achieved at that time, the ABLE program’s budget for distance will be reduced accordingly.

The Ohio ABLE Program has set aside a maximum of $150,000 to fund between four and six ABE/ASE Distance Hubs and one to three ESOL Hubs. A single program may apply to be both an ABE/ASE and an ESOL Hub. In that instance, base funding could be for both and ABE/ASE and an ESOL Hub.

**Performance Measures**

A program’s effectiveness will be determined annually by evaluating the success of its students in achieving Core Indicators of Performance. The Core Indicators of Performance (CIP) Minimum Performance Levels are negotiated by the Chancellor with the U.S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education in conjunction with the National Reporting System (NRS) on an annual basis. Performance measures for FY 2010 have not yet been finalized. Applicants should use the CIP measures for FY 2009 as a basis for their proposal with the understanding that these measures will be revised for FY 2010.

Helpful links include:

Ohio’s Core Indicators of Performance [www.uso.edu/network/workforce/rfps](http://www.uso.edu/network/workforce/rfps).
Technology and Reporting Requirements

The Applicant agency is responsible for providing technical support to the adult education program as needed to ensure security of information, computer access for staff and students and for state and federal grant requirements.

Computer equipment purchased with grant funds must meet minimum technology standards. These can be found in the Guidance Document, Appendix E. Applicants must have at least one site with technology and connectivity to offer curriculum and related learning products available on the Internet.

Applicants offering distance education must meet state guidelines as described in the grant and must be approved by the state to offer this component.

The applicant shall adhere to all grant data collection and reporting requirements as described in the Assurances and Ohio’s Performance Accountability System Manual. Reporting requirements for approved programs will include Quarterly and Annual Performance Reports and other reports as needed. The Chancellor will provide software, forms and instructions for each report. Approval of plans and budget for selected projects beyond this grant year will be contingent upon, but not limited to, the submission of complete, timely and accurate reports.

The applicant shall have a designated computer for reporting through ABLELink. See Appendix E of the Guidance Document for Technology Requirements.

Fiscal

Funds for grant awards will be allocated regionally based on Census information about individuals without a secondary credential. Grantees will be selected based upon factors identified in the application including past effectiveness in providing adult literacy services, cost efficiencies, service levels and other criteria. In FY 2011 the funding formula will be determined by a combination of base and performance funding if current grantees are extended an additional year. If federal legislation is reauthorized, a competitive grant process may be conducted to determine new grantees.

Subject to confirmation and receipt of the federal grant award for AEFLA, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act and state General Revenue Fund appropriations, an estimated $17.3 million will be awarded. Applicants should consider the state’s average cost per student ($548), funds available from other sources, and services to be offered when requesting funding amounts. Successful applicants will be required to submit
revised budget worksheets and other related forms after funding levels are determined by state and federal fund sources.

Funds received under this grant shall be used to supplement and not supplant funds already available to the applicant from other sources for purposes authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy grant program.

The grantee will repay any funds that have been finally determined through federal or state audit resolution processes to have been questioned costs or disallowed costs or otherwise not properly accounted for, and further agrees to pay any collection fees that may subsequently be imposed by the federal and/or state government.

The applicant shall retain all records of financial transactions and accounts relating to this grant for a period of five years and shall make such records available for inspection and audit by the Chancellor’s ABLE staff members or an authorized representative of the Chancellor.

A **maximum** of 15 percent of the total allocation may be used for administrative purposes. (State requirement) Applicant Agencies serving as the fiscal agents for Option 1- the Consortium Model – must be aware that the 15 percent cap for Administrative costs include any and all administrative costs from the other agencies in the consortium.

Examples of some administrative costs include:

- Director’s salary including benefits
- Fiscal salary, benefits, services
- Rent
- Administrative operational costs
- Custodial or security services
- Professional development

**Facilities**

Fiscal agents shall ensure that:

- All instructional facilities and services shall be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- All facilities shall have appropriate exterior and interior signage clearly identifying the adult education programs. (State Requirement)
- All students have a safe, age-appropriate and student-friendly learning environment that is in good condition and properly maintained and has adequate space and equipment. Students shall not be required or permitted to receive grant-funded services in buildings or surroundings that are dangerous, unsanitary
or hazardous to the student’s health and safety. Adult education centers should be in locations that are easily accessible and have adequate parking and/or access to public transportation. If it is determined through a site visit that a facility does not meet requirements, the fiscal agent may be asked to relocate the service to a more appropriate location or correct deficiencies. (State Requirement)

Additional information can be found in the Indicators of Program Quality at www.uso.edu/network/workforce/rfps.

**Bidders’ Videoconference**

The RFPs will be discussed during a “Bidders’ Videoconference.” The Bidders’ Videoconference provides an opportunity to review and discuss the RFPs, as well as provide proposing agencies and organizations the chance to ask questions about the RFPs and process.

Additional information about the RFPs, as well as information on how to register for the Bidders’ Videoconference can be found at www.uso.edu/network/workforce/rfps.

**Preparing and Submitting the Application**

The Chancellor asks agencies interested in applying for ABLE funding to complete and submit an "Intent to Apply” as well as the “Request for Grant Readers” forms (both documents can be found at www.uso.edu/network/workforce/rfps.) These documents are due at the Ohio Board of Regents by May 1, 2009. All Applicants are required to submit the name and contact information for at least one potential grant reader. The dates for the grant reading activities to take place in Columbus, Ohio, are May 26, 2009 (EL/Civics Grant) and May 28, 2009 and May 29, 2009 (ABLE Instructional Grant).

Applications must be typed and double-spaced, with 12-point in Times New Roman or Arial and one-inch margins.

The submitted application will consist of the following section:

- Part A: General Information
- Part B: Enrollment Trends and Projections
- Part C: Needs Assessment
- Part D: Program Components
- Part E: Program Capacity and Effectiveness
- Part F: Program Design
- Part G: Budget Narrative and Budget Grid
- Part H: Program Personnel
- Part I: Instructional Sites
- Part J: Assurances
Use the Grant Checklist to ensure you have completed all required sections of the application.

**Application Deadline**
To assist with grant reading, please submit an original and three copies of the completed application. The application must be received by the Chancellor’s staff at 30 E. Broad St., 36th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215, by 5:00 p.m. May 15, 2009. No faxed, emailed applications or those applications on disk will be accepted.

**This is a competitive grant application process; therefore, no late applications will be accepted or considered.**

If you do not receive email notification of receipt of your application materials within three days of submission, please contact Sharon Brannon at SBrannon@regents.state.oh.us or at 614-466-5015.

**Process for Proposal Review**
Proposals will be evaluated by a review panel selected by the State ABLE Program using an established point rating system. Review of proposals will be based on the completion of the requested information in the narrative as well as completion of required forms.

The respondent/grantee agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the conduct of the work hereunder.

The Chancellor reserves the right to fund any proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to require new proposals from interested parties, to reject any or all proposals responding to this RFP, or to re-issue the RFP if it is determined that it is in the best interests of the State of Ohio. Issuing this RFP does not bind the State to making an award. The Chancellor’s staff administers the RFP. The Chancellor reserves the right to adjust the dates for this RFP for whatever reasons are deemed appropriate.

All costs incurred in preparation of a proposal shall be borne by the applicant institutions including lead applicants and collaborating partners. Proposal preparation costs are not recoverable under an award. The State of Ohio shall not contribute in any way to recovering the costs of proposal preparation. In addition, the applications with strong local commitment will be assessed higher because of this local commitment.
The funding decisions of the Chancellor are final. All lead applicants will be notified in writing whether their proposal(s) meet the requirements specified in the RFP and, therefore, whether their proposals will be submitted to the Chancellor for funding consideration. Lead applicants also will be notified of the outcome of their application(s) at the conclusion of the review process. If requested, lead applicants must attend the public meeting when proposals are discussed and subsequently considered for funding.

The respondent understands that the information provided herein is intended solely to assist the respondent in submittal preparation. To the best of the Chancellor’s knowledge, the information provided is accurate. However, the Chancellor does not warrant such accuracy, and any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this solicitation. Interested parties bear the sole responsibility of obtaining the necessary information to submit a qualifying proposal. The Chancellor retains the right to modify or withdrawal this solicitation at any. By submitting a proposal, responders expressly agree to these terms.