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ABSTRACT

Illinois received one of six 2-year National Institute for Literacy grants to create statewide interagency staff development systems for literacy. After a staff development plan has been developed/implemented, a needs assessment process is developed that entails the following five steps: determine indicators of program quality and develop questions for each, introduce the needs assessment process to program staff, prioritize and select indicators to be addressed, conduct the needs assessment interview(s), and summarize the needs findings and present them to the program(s). Each step was further explained in the following ways: summarizing how it was accomplished in Illinois, identifying "best practices" for implementing it, developing guidelines for implementing the step across agencies, and presenting additional cautions/suggestions regarding its implementation. The needs assessment developed proved to be very successful in many types of programs and groupings of programs in Illinois. (Appendixes constituting approximately 50% of this document contain the following: description of Illinois' system of adult education and literacy and adult staff development, information on key project agencies, overview of project objectives, list of 10 quality indicators for adult education programs in Illinois, sample needs assessment questionnaire, and summary of staff development process.) (MN)

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ED 379 441

ILLINOIS STATE CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ADULT LITERACY STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

ADULT LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

Funded by the National Institute for Literacy
Subcontract from the Illinois Network of Literacy/
Adult Education Resources

THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

PART ONE: THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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INTRODUCTION

In 1993, the National Institute for Literacy awarded six two-year capacity building grants to states that were interested in creating statewide, interagency staff development systems for literacy. While the grantees chose different approaches to building these systems, they shared certain common assumptions--that staff development is essential to program development and better service delivery; that it must be a continuous, integrated process for all staff dealing with adult learners; and that it must be a collaborative interagency effort that involves the staff of all programs providing literacy-related services. One of the first and most demanding tasks for grantees was to develop a systematic way of finding out what kinds of help different staff need statewide in order to serve their clients better.

The Illinois State Capacity Building for Adult Literacy Staff Development Project is one of these six projects nationwide. This publication, *The Needs Assessment Process*, represents the first year's work of the Regional (Northern, Central, and Southern) Illinois State Board of Education, Adult Education and Literacy Section, Adult Education Service Centers. In consultation with fifteen pilot sites distributed geographically throughout Illinois, the regional service center staff outlined and implemented a local needs assessment process. The findings of this successful process are found in this publication.

Though admittedly more work, this process engaged and invigorated all involved. At the local level, staff who had seldom participated in local needs assessments were actively involved. Furthermore, regional service center staff had the opportunity to see and hear first-hand accounts of needs from all staff. With this they gained a better understanding, appreciation, and general sense of local needs.

We invite you to consider using this process. It is a unique planning vehicle to engage staff, identity needs, and improve program delivery.

Dennis Terdy, Director
Adult Learning Resource Center

February, 1995

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I. GRANT OVERVIEW

The Illinois Capacity Building for Adult Literacy Staff Development Project recognized Illinois' long-standing commitment to provide quality services to its adult literacy population (see Appendix 1, Illinois' System of Adult Education and Literacy and Adult Staff Development). The goal of the Illinois Capacity Building for Adult Literacy Staff Development Project was to develop an integrated system of professional development for the state. The Project linked recent state literacy resource center efforts with all Illinois agencies involved in adult literacy-related services through a *staff development process model*.

The Illinois model used the staff development resources of all major adult literacy organizations and an Illinois Interagency (cross-agency) Planning Group (IPG) to provide a unified professional development network for all providers of direct literacy services. The model was accomplished through two main tracks: a state-level (top down) approach to facilitate the coordination of staff development activities and a local level (bottom up) process of assessing staff development needs, providing appropriate staff development, and measuring its effectiveness. Front line and other staff at local pilot sites throughout the state, reflecting diverse program types, field-tested and validated these processes.

The state-level group, the Interagency Planning Group (IPG), was comprised of representatives from the Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (JTPA), Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Employment Securities, Illinois Department of Public Aid, Illinois Office of the Secretary of State, and the Illinois State Board of Education/Adult Education and Literacy Section. In year 1, Illinois' three Adult Education Regional Service Centers (Northern, Central and Southern) implemented the staff development process with the local-level groups, 15 adult education pilot sites around the state who field-tested the process and provided feedback on its use. An additional group of agencies, Associate Staff Development Agencies, assisted the Regional Adult Education Service Centers with all phases of project development (See Appendix 2, Key Project Agencies).

The Project was accomplished through five main objectives (See Appendix 3, IL Capacity Building Project Overview):

1) To develop and implement a cooperative *interagency* staff development plan.
2) To develop and implement a local and statewide staff development *needs assessment* process.
3) To develop and implement a local and statewide *staff development* process.
4) To develop and implement an ongoing evaluation process of staff development using *measures of effectiveness.*
5) To disseminate the results.

This publication addresses only the **needs assessment process** (objective 2). Staff development and measures of effectiveness (objectives 3 and 4) will be addressed in a publication at the end of year 2 of the grant period.

II. THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND STEPS TO DEVELOPMENT

The many types of adult education and literacy providers and the varying sources and levels of funding have an impact on delivery of staff development activities. To be effective, staff development requires ongoing, thorough assessment of staff training needs.

Although needs assessments are common throughout adult education programs, there is great diversity in their frequency and variety. Often, however, they are perfunctory or only used to identify a single session workshop or conference topic. The use of these single sessions workshops reflects the nature of adult education staffing, e.g. 87% part time nationally (*Annual Performance and Statistical Report,* U.S. Department of Education, Adult Education and Literacy, FY 1993) and program diversity and funding issues. Furthermore, minimal staff development infrastructure and splintered staff responsibilities create even greater difficulties in determining the staff development needs of administrators, counselors, caseworkers, and other front-line literacy workers.

Rubin and Hansen (1980) noted that systematic needs assessments are essential. They found that the revealed needs should be analyzed and translated into goals or desired training outcomes and prioritized. Research has shown that written surveys are a frequent form of needs assessment. Evaluation data from workshops is an additional source of identifying needs. Other forms of needs assessment include discussion at administrator meetings, discussion at regular, local program meetings and written surveys at local levels (Pelavin Associates, Inc., *Study of ABE/ESL Instructor Training Approaches,* August, 1991).

Although the 1991 Pelavin Study identified this variety of methods used to secure input for the identification of local staff development topics, the majority of decisions for staff development are reached through a "top down" design whereby the administration frequently identifies topics and designs the training program.

To promote larger scale staff involvement, the Illinois Capacity Building Grant Project developed an *adult literacy needs assessment process* which was sensitive to the varied settings, staffings, and issues of adult literacy programs. Further, those most affected by the staff development program--teachers, students, volunteers, counselors, and administrators--had a strong role and voice in identifying the needs on which activities were based.

The needs assessment process developed has five key steps. These following steps can guide programs or interagency groups wishing to implement this needs assessment process:

1: Determine indicators of program quality and develop questions for each
2: Introduce the needs assessment process to program staff
3: Prioritize and select indicators to be addressed
4: Conduct the needs assessment interview(s)
5: Summarize the needs findings and present them to the program(s)

Each of these five steps are further explained using the following sections:

a. IL Capacity Project/What We Did in Illinois
b. Best Practices/How-to
c. Interagency Use
d. Cautions/Suggestions

Step 1: Develop "indicators of program quality" that reflect the goals of the program and questions for each.

IL Capacity Project/What We Did in Illinois

Illinois has adopted, with some modifications, the *National Model Indicators of Program Quality for Adult Education Programs.* As these *Indicators of Quality for Adult Education Programs in Illinois* were already a basis for looking at quality in Illinois adult education programs, they served as the IL Capacity Building Project framework (see Appendix 4). Specific questions were developed to reflect each indicator. These needs assessment questions broke down the indicator into components for indepth analysis of how the program executes the tasks in this area, what specifically is done, and who is involved. The purpose of the needs assessment questions was to provide guidelines to generate discussion among staff. That is, the questions were not designed for written responses; rather, the interviewers used them to elicit discussion on the issue and to keep the discussion focused (see Appendix 5, Sample of needs assessment questionnaire).

As an example, the "Recruitment" indicator reads "Program successfully recruits the populations in the community identified in the Adult Education Act as needing services." The questions under the "Recruitment" indicator then asked what methods are used to recruit students, the number recruited under each method, and effectiveness of each method (rated from 1 to 5). These questions led to a more detailed discussion of these methods, that is, why they did or did not work. From this, staff development planning proceeded with the program staff developing their goals for recruitment, determining what they needed to do to meet those goals, and what steps and/or staff development they needed.

Best Practices/How-to

- Determine the *indicators of quality* or goals of your program. These indicators should delineate the key elements of your program (e.g. educational gains, client services, coordination with other agencies, retention, staff training). For each indicator, develop a short statement reflecting what its outcome or goal would be. In the same example as above, Illinois' indicator for "Recruitment" reads "Program successfully recruits the populations in the community identified in the Adult Education Act as needing services." In this example, if no guidelines are set to evaluate "successfully," then the needs assessment questions should elicit the criteria the program uses to establish success.

- Develop questions to elicit information on each indicator. Using recruitment again as the example, ask how recruitment is done, who is involved, how they are trained, what materials are used, how the staff would rank effectiveness of the activities, and what is particularly successful and what needs improvement. Ranking effectiveness is especially important as this information will become baseline data to compare with the effects of the staff development implemented.

  Each indicator needs only a few discussion-generating questions; four to six are adequate. Some questions should be open-ended enough to stimulate discussion about issues from varied perspectives. The questions are to be used to guide the discussion but need not be addressed in order, rather the questions should follow the natural flow of the discussion.

Interagency Use

- If an interagency group (cross-agency) will participate, educational agency indicators can be used or, alternately, the critical issue(s) of the group in working with the literacy needs of clients/students can provide the indicator areas. These may center around how interagency staff determines clients' literacy needs, what literacy services are appropriate and available in the community, and what referral mechanisms are in place and how effective they are.

- Interagency indicators used should be decided upon or developed by representatives from all the agencies to be involved. If generating new indicators, they can focus on problem areas the agencies are experiencing in working with common clients. The decision on indicators can be determined at a preliminary facilitated meeting. A representative interagency group can be designated to develop the questions. However, it could be possible that one individual or one agency will need to take responsibility to develop the final indicators and questionnaire and to then seek review by all other agencies. Again, the indicator and questionnaire development need not become a "science." Rather, the intent of the indicators is to provide general goals and the questions to serve as a catalyst for discussion.

Cautions/Suggestions

1. Be sure the purpose of choosing, developing, and using specific indicators is clear and agreeable to all parties.

2. Questions should not be so detailed as to make the interview arduous and time consuming. Questions should be open-ended enough to elicit discussion-type answers as much as possible. Though tabulation-type answers (e.g. number of students successfully passing the GED test) should be included for the significant data they provide, even these type questions should lead into valuative discussions.

A good problem identification tool. Rend Lake College

The instrument forced staff to look at staff development activities that had been routinely conducted over a period of years. John Logan College

The process allowed staff to become active participants in the needs assessment process. Moraine Valley Community College

Step 2: Introduce the needs assessment to program or interagency staff

IL Capacity Project/What We Did in Illinois

Various methods were used by each regional service center to introduce programs to the needs assessment process. What follows is a compilation of the variety of methods used.

- Once programs agreed to participate in the process, the program administrator received a letter giving a brief overview of the process, including an overview of the quality indicators. The letter also contained an explanation of the need for participation from all staff (or representatives from each staff category) and suggestions for inviting staff from other agencies.

- In some cases an introductory meeting was held with program administrators, and sometimes staff, to explain the process. However, where an initial meeting was not feasible, an introduction period was included on the day of the interview. This reduced the time for the interview phase which, in some cases, necessitated one or more additional sessions. Time commitment was a key issue in the success of this process, and programs were made aware that sufficient staff time was needed. Interviews ranged from 1 1/2 to 5 hours.

Best Practices/How-to

Any party or parties interested in initiating this process (e.g. regional staff development service center personnel, the area literacy program administrators, or any other agency administrators) can hold a general meeting for individuals and programs who may be interested in learning about the needs assessment process. Once programs have expressed an interest in using the process, some or all of the following steps can be implemented by the designated lead agency or agencies:

- Send an introductory overview letter to program administrators.

- If possible, an introductory meeting should be held with administrators and staff

representatives to personally explain the process and the use of quality indicators. Program expectations and desired outcomes can be discussed and all questions can be answered at this time. As each step will build on the next, the process needs a very thorough explanation to ensure it begins properly. An important finding and recommendation is that at this meeting the program administrators include all staff or representatives from various staff positions or from other agencies. If this meeting is not feasible, allow extra time on the day of the interview to accomplish these objectives.

Interagency Use

If an interagency approach is used, staff from all agencies must be included in the steps above. The introductory meeting can address individual program and common program issues and concerns. Again, the time needed to implement this process can be a problem, especially for agency personnel invited from outside of the literacy program. However, the initial phase is critical to a common understanding of the goals and procedures and can also help programs decide if they will, in fact, participate.

Cautions/Suggestions

1. An introduction and explanation of the process cannot be too thorough. Participants must understand the process, their role within it, and what accomplishments are expected. Misunderstanding of these issues can limit or skew results and limit participants' buy-in of the process.

2. The introduction should include a global view of the needs assessment process. This should include the purpose of this process, specific, potential uses and benefits of the process and what will be done with the information generated, the staff development phase with options for delivery, and how effectiveness of the staff development will be measured.

> *The introductory letter, handouts, and phone conversations with the service center staff helped explain the process.* John Logan College
>
> *We would have improved the process by involving more of the instructors to get a true picture.* John Logan College

Step 3: Prioritize and select indicators to be addressed.

IL Capacity Project/What We Did in Illinois

Various methods were used in prioritizing the program quality indicators. These included 1) the administrator choosing the indicators to be addressed, 2) the administrator narrowing the indicators down and then staff prioritizing those remaining, 3) a memo sent to instructors listing the quality indicators and asking for a ranking, and 4) ranking the indicators during the actual interview session. However, since involvement and diversity of viewpoints are key components, each of these methods could be improved through greater staff input. In the case of the memo, a preliminary indepth explanation of the process, the indicators, and the goals for the program should be included.

Best Practices/How-to

- Once the indicators of program quality are developed, the program determines how it will prioritize/rank the indicators. The indicators should be prioritized by staff members' perceptions of the areas of greatest need for improvement or evaluation. This is a critical element; each staff member must clearly understand the criteria for the ranking of indicators or else individuals will be using different approaches to the task. For example, some may be ranking by the area they feel is most important to running the program rather than the area they feel needs most immediate attention. Staff should also be encouraged to look beyond their own content areas to view the program as a whole.

- As many staff members as possible should be included in the prioritization process. Each staff member and each category of staff should be represented. All staff should assist with prioritization even if they do not participate in the actual needs assessment interview. As each individual and each staff category has a different perspective on program and individual needs, the results will be skewed unless all opinions are included.

- Prioritizing indicators can become a staff development activity in itself. A discussion of the quality indicators, their relative importance to individuals, and program areas in need of improvement can be very enlightening for staff and administrators. Many staff are not normally involved in broad-based discussions on program goals and improvement; administrators may feel they know the program well and may be surprised by staff input on issues.

The ideal method for prioritizing the indicators would be:

- hold a general staff discussion on the indicators and program needs;

- complete a confidential prioritizing/ranking process, most easily through a written ranking of indicators. The ranking should be done after the discussion meeting to allow staff time to reflect on the discussion information and formulate their own views.

These steps assure that all staff understand the indicators and what criteria will be used to rank them. In addition, a discussion on the indicators and program operation will start the analysis process.

Interagency Use

Discussing and prioritizing indicators can be more complicated if you are working within an interagency group. For this reason, a preliminary planning session among interagency administrators can get the process off to a good start. In this preliminary planning meeting, the methods used to prioritize the indicators can be decided upon. Possibilities might include a discussion meeting at each individual agency, a meeting with representatives from each agency that will report back to their own agency staff, or a combined indicator prioritizing and needs assessment interview session. Though a preliminary planning phase is ideal, time may be limited. This Project found that most of a day, with time judiciously used, will be sufficient to accomplish a combined indicator selection/needs assessment interview.

Cautions/Suggestions

1. The caution again is that this process takes time. Even though time is always in short supply, allow enough to be sure the indicator explanation and selection is not rushed.

2. Allow complaints and negative reactions to the process to be expressed, e.g. time problems, purpose of this seems remote, etc. Address them directly and positively, asking for possible strategies or solutions, or else staff members could inhibit further progress in the process.

> *The indicators were logically organized and gave us an opportunity to really focus*
> *on our needs and prioritizing them. They invited dialogue between departments.*
> Rend Lake College

Step 4: Conduct the needs assessment interview.

IL Capacity Project/What We Did in Illinois

Interviews were conducted with 16 pilot sites throughout Illinois. These sites included community colleges, educational service regions, and community based organizations. The instrument used was a questionnaire based on the Illinois Indicators of Program Quality. The format of these questions was open-ended with some specific listings or tabulations requested (e.g. number of students advancing to the next level). In some cases, participants reviewed the questions ahead of time; in other cases, not.

In the majority of sites, two service center staff participated: one to facilitate the interview and one to record responses. In a few sites only one service center staff was present. On one site the service center staff member did both facilitation and recording, but the finding was that performing both functions was nearly impossible. What worked somewhat better on another site was facilitation by the service center staff member and recording by a program person. However, that program staff member could not then participate fully.

Following the interview the two service center staff collaborated on the follow-up summary and analysis of staff development needs. A single interviewer, even with a program recorder, had no such collaboration available. Therefore, the best practice is to have two staff members conduct the interview, one as a facilitator and one as a recorder. They can then collaborate on the follow-up summary and analysis.

Service center staff were neutral facilitators as they had no direct connection to the program. However, they knew the programs and had indepth knowledge of adult education/literacy program elements. This neutrality helped assure that the facilitator did not lead the discussion in a personal direction, that the facilitator did not have a vested interest in the outcome of the discussion, and that the participants knew they themselves were controlling the outcome and direction of the discussion. Knowledge of the program(s) ensured that the facilitator was aware of issues and able to ask appropriate questions.

The facilitators' role was to ask the interview questions and additional probing questions, where appropriate, to elicit more response. They also synthesized discussion for clarification or summary, kept the discussion on track and moving forward, and ensured that all opinions were brought out and all staff heard. The facilitators strove to develop an informal, non-threatening, open environment. To accomplish this, it was important for the facilitators to be flexible enough to go where the participants led, as long as the discussion remained focused and productive.

The interviews varied in length from one and one-half to five hours. One to three indicators were completed during the session(s). The longest interview did not necessarily cover more indicators.

Best Practices/How-to

- Designate a time when all or most staff will be available for the interview and schedule sufficient time. Starting and ending times should be established and adhered to; going over the ending time should be avoided unless the response to continue is unanimous and overwhelming. A second session may be necessary and should be scheduled at this time.

- The selection of the facilitator and recorder should be done with care. The facilitator should be a relatively neutral party and have limited vested interest in the outcomes. Good listening and synthesizing skills are necessary along with knowledge of the programs and the ability to advance discussions.

- If possible, the participants should have had a chance to review the interview questions ahead of time. They can then have thought through some of the issues or compiled information for discussion.

Process Recommendations:

The facilitator should begin by explaining the process and goals or anticipated outcomes. All remaining questions and concerns should be addressed at this time. Explain any discussion rules or particular methods of discussion that will be used, i.e. brainstorming, rotation system. The facilitator will then begin the process by asking the interview questions, taking care to assure that all participants are heard.

Good facilitation skills are critical to this process. The group should be kept moving forward and not unnecessarily sidetracked. The facilitator should be listening and then synthesizing the discussion at appropriate points. The synthesizing provides a summary check that the facilitator and participants are hearing the same issues and ideas before moving on.

At the completion of the interview, the facilitator should summarize the major issues and key points of the discussion in order to assure he/she has accurately understood each point. The next steps in the process (interviewing staff summarizes needs; translates needs into possible staff development activities; presents this information to staff for discussion; and considers what measures the program will use to evaluate staff development results) should be explained or discussed at this point.

Interagency Use

Staff from each agency should be sufficiently and appropriately represented; however, too many participants will make the process unwieldy and counterproductive. If the group exceeds a reasonably manageable number (10-18 is ideal), consider dividing the group in two.

The facilitator should preferably be neutral, i.e. not a program staff member, but should have sufficient knowledge of the role and functions of each agency.

Since it may be difficult to convene an interagency group a second time, care should be taken to pace the session to accomplish as much as possible in one meeting. The facilitator's role in focusing and moving the discussion and keeping it on track are key. However, if an additional meeting(s) is needed, flexibility is necessary for any follow-up scheduled, i.e. smaller representative groups may participate, shorter time periods scheduled, rotating sites for meetings, etc.

Cautions/Suggestions

1. Facilitators should be prepared to further the discussion with open-ended, probing questions, such as "Why did you select this indicator?" or "What are your staff development needs in this area?"

2. A program representative should introduce the facilitator, explain who he/she is, and explain why he/she has been given that role.

3. Programs and agencies must buy into the entire process, start to finish, for the interview to have real value. If participants feel nothing will result from their input on needs, they will not be committed to the process.

4. Too many questions from the facilitator can seem like an interrogation. The facilitator should allow discussion and practice active listening to gain more indepth responses.

5. If the session goes too long, the participants may weary of the process. When the energy level wanes, or the discussion begins to repeat itself, take a break or begin concluding the session.

6. Facilitators should not assume understanding of an answer. Probing or detail questions can help clarify a response that may be ambiguous.

> *Much information was yielded in a short period of time; this says a lot for the process.* Venice-Lincoln Technical
>
> *The process created a staff cohesiveness that didn't exist before.* Lakeview Learning Center

Step 5: Summarize the needs findings and present them to the program(s)

IL Capacity Project/What We Did in Illinois

Following the needs assessment interview(s), the service center facilitator and the recorder (or facilitator alone) reviewed notes taken during the interview and listed all needs identified. These needs were then combined to form common groups. From these compiled needs, the service center developed possible options for types of staff development activities that could address this need. For example, an identified need might be addressed by workshops, small groups technical assistance, individual self study, development of tools or instruments for program use, etc.

Once the staff development options were listed, possible staff development providers were suggested. In Illinois, these consisted mainly of the regional service centers or the Associate Staff Development Agencies who formed a part of the Il Capacity Project network. However, other agencies not in the network were also included if appropriate. Finally, suggestions were given as to various ways to measure whether the staff development addressed the need identified (measures of effectiveness).

All this information was typed into chart form for presentation to the pilot programs (see Appendix 6, Needs Assessment Summary Example). Pilot programs then either received this information by mail with a follow-up visit or call, or it was presented at a follow-up meeting.

This information was presented to programs as a starting point for discussion. The programs reviewed the needs identified to determine if they agreed with the summary and, if not, made changes accordingly. Programs at this time also reviewed the staff development options and suggestions for measures of effectiveness. In some cases, programs began the actual planning of activities with designation of program staff to initiate and set-up activities. Some programs also took the initiative and established in-house staff development activities to meet their identified needs.

Best Practices/How-to

- Good notes need to taken at the needs assessment interview to insure an accurate and complete account of the issues covered. All issues discussed should be included in the final written summary, but combined under appropriate topic groupings. Record these issues as closely as possible to how they were presented at the interview. Any changes or clarifications should be done by the program on their review of the document.

- Summaries should be in written form so programs have a complete document to review and to share and discuss with staff on their own schedule. A writing will also insure that no issues are forgotten or neglected.

Interagency Use

Interagency needs assessment interviews may lead to identification of common needs, small group needs, and individual agency needs. The summary should be written to easily identify and reflect all these types of needs.

Comments/Suggestions

1. This summary sheet becomes a permanent, long-term road map for the program's use in planning and staff development.

2. This summary should be flexible--it should be adapted and changed as needed.

3. Tape recorded interviews were found to be distracting and unnecessary if interview notes were summarized shortly after the interview session.

> *The process enabled us to take a hard look at our program.* Lakeview Learning Center
>
> *The process has a fairly comprehensive scope. A longer term approach is therefore more effective.* Rend Lake College

III. CONCLUSION

This needs assessment process proved to be very successful in many types of programs, and groupings of programs, in Illinois. Its flexibility and adaptability to varied program contexts are unquestionably its strengths.

The benefits of this process to programs have included:

1) It was often the first time entire faculties, as a unit, were asked to participate in such indepth program discussions. Staff and administrators were pleased with both the indepth needs they discovered and identified, and the amount of information they discovered about each other's views and goals. In addition, most groups left the initial interview meeting with a positive feeling about working with their colleagues toward a common program mission.

2) The needs assessment process identified areas of need and also areas of *successful* practices.

3) This process guided programs to closely examine the way they did or did not use local resources and to explore more efficient and effective ways to use these resources.

4) Some programs used the results of the needs assessment to approach funders with specific projects and used the needs assessment data to support these requests.

5) This process allowed part-time instructors to become a major part of the program and to see all the interrelated pieces.

6) This process allowed staff from all agencies involved to begin tapping into the new or previously established interagency connections.

IV. NEXT STEPS

From the needs assessment information, the program or interagency group begins short and long-term staff and program development planning. They determine what activities will be implemented, the timeline for each, and who will conduct the staff development. The Illinois Capacity project developed a "Directory of Staff/Program Development" that served as a reference of Illinois Capacity Project staff development agencies with topic areas and services they provide.

Measures of effectiveness are determined before staff development is conducted. The measures reflect the goals of the needs addressed--what does the project want to see as a successful result(s) of the staff development. Baseline data is developed or compiled to show the program's present position in the needs area. Once staff development is delivered and progress is made, the same baseline data is again collected or compiled to determine if the goals were met.

More information on these elements of the staff development process will be compiled at in a publication at the end of year 2 of the IL Capacity Building Project grant.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

ILLINOIS' SYSTEM OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY AND ADULT STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Adult Education and Literacy. The State of Illinois has a long-standing commitment to providing quality literacy services through a strong staff development support system. In the late 1960's, the *Illinois State Board of Education* began the administration of adult education which has expanded to more than 100 agencies, including school districts, community colleges, and community based organizations, providing adult education and literacy programs during Fiscal Year (FY) 1995.

Similarly, in 1986 the Illinois *Secretary of State and State Librarian* initiated funding for volunteer state literacy programs. In FY95 over 100 community-based organizations, libraries, volunteer-affiliated organizations, and education agencies received funding. In addition, since 1990, this office has granted funds to businesses who wish to improve the basic skills of their employees. Federal library dollars were initially granted to Illinois in FY93 to coordinate family literacy projects between funded libraries, adult education programs, and child at-risk programs.

Currently, Illinois uses an *Area Planning Council* network to coordinate the delivery of all subregional (local) literacy services. Area Planning Councils were created by statute effective October 15, 1982, "within the boundaries of each community college district" to "provide for the development and coordination of adult education programs in the area." The statute further requires than an Adult Education plan for each area be submitted annually to the Illinois State Board of Education which, in consultation with the Illinois Community College Board, it then evaluates. The approved plans serve as the operating plan for the delivery and funding of adult education services in each area, and collectively in the state, for the subsequent year.

As a result, Area Planning Councils have not only strengthened the development and coordination among the Department of Public Aid, Department of Children and Family Services, and other groups, but there is considerable coordination of services of these agencies with adult education programs and students.

Relationships, thus developed in many areas, demonstrated a readiness for shared activities in assessment of staff needs and the development of plans for staff development and professional growth across organizational or agency "boundaries."

Since 1984, when Governor Thompson appointed the *Illinois Literacy Council*, agencies involved in literacy and adult education have also been working on communication issues, coordination issues including common definitions, movement toward common reporting forms, and cross-agency staff development activities from the top down. In 1990, Secretary of State established an *Interagency Coordinating Committee* of the Illinois Literacy Council to meet on a regular basis (at least four times a year) to expand on these coordination efforts. One of the

first activities of this committee was submitting a joint proposal to the National Institute for Literacy to promote interagency use of distance technology. Although the project was not funded, the agencies found a new sense of commonality in their approach to literacy.

Adult Staff Development. The *Illinois State Board of Education, Adult Education and Literacy Section,* has supported a comprehensive staff development system since 1975. This system began with a statewide adult English as a second language service center and one year later expanded with regional adult education service centers. Currently supported by Federal 353 funding, this system includes *three regional adult service centers* in the northern, central, and southern regions, a statewide adult English as a second language service center, and a grant to the *Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center.* Several thousand practitioners, volunteers, and other adult literacy staff are served by these centers annually.

These *regional service centers* serve as models of staff development throughout the United States. Their focus has included staff development and local program development in areas including assessment, basic instruction on literacy, GED instruction, ESL instruction, serving adults with learning disabilities, the use of technology in the classroom, and resource development.

In the last several years, these regional centers have expanded their focus to include training and program development in the areas of family and workplace literacy. The regional centers continue to train a wide variety of program personnel including teachers, counselors, administrators, volunteers, and other staff.

Until recently, the centers primarily served the adult education programs in their respective regions. However, they have been expanding their efforts to include non-funded literacy providers, employers, and others through staff development activities and special interest meetings. In addition, the centers themselves have begun more extensive collaboration evidenced by increased cross-regional staff development planning, training, and consultations.

The goal of establishing a core of common goals, values, and priorities for staff development was applied to the development of the *Illinois Network of Literacy/Adult Education Resources,* Illinois' State Resource Center funded by the National Literacy Act. The Network is administered by the Governor's Office and operated by the Secretary of State Literacy Office on behalf of those state agencies which had been working together on the Illinois Literacy Council and its Interagency Coordinating Committee. In addition to those state agencies, the Network has also incorporated the state Literacy Volunteers of America and Laubauch affiliates, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center, the regional Adult Education Service Centers, and the Illinois Community College Board-Centers of Excellence. Activities of the Network are determined by recommendations of the technical assistance providers and agency subcommittees to the Executive Committee. Executive Committee members include the Secretary of State Literacy Office, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois State Library, and the Adult Learning Resource Center, the main subcontractor for the Illinois Capacity Building Project.

There are several interagency staff development activities already underway. An annual information, recruitment, and referral conference attended by staff from the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Community College Board, the Department of Public Aid, and the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (Administrator of Illinois' JTPA program). In addition, for 11 years an annual Partnerships for Literacy Conference has been sponsored by the Secretary of State Literacy Office and the Illinois State Board of Education. However, starting in FY95 the Partnership Conference was divided into two conferences: a family literacy and a workplace literacy conference. Special effort has been made by the agencies participating in this project to attend these conferences and make presentations about their agency services to and goals for literacy and adult education providers. The Illinois Department of Public Aid, the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and the Department of Corrections have become integral parts of this staff development activity. In these short-term activities, the groundwork for the longer-term, more comprehensive interagency staff development has been established.

APPENDIX 2

KEY PROJECT AGENCIES

Illinois Network of Literacy/Adult Education Resources (Secretary of State's Literacy Office)

This is Illinois' State Literacy Resource Center. A variety of state level agencies, local adult education programs, and staff development agencies comprise the various working committees of this resource network. Many of this project's activities will be coordinated through this center's committees. The Illinois Capacity Building Project is funded through the Illinois Network of Literacy.

Adult Learning Resource Center

The Adult Learning Resource Center is the main sub-contractor of the Illinois Capacity Building Grant. It is responsible for monitoring all project objectives and fiscal reporting.

Interagency Planning Group (IPG)

This group will consist of state level organizations including the Illinois Department of Public Aid, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Corrections, Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (administrator of JTPA funding), Even Start and other agencies working with children at risk, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

This group in its role on the State Literacy Resource Center and as the Interagency Planning Group (IPG) for this project will provide input into the development of this project's objectives. In addition, the final goal will be the improved integration of all adult literacy-related staff development in the state.

Staff Development Agencies (Illinois' Regional Adult Education Service Centers)

These are comprised of the 3 Regional (Northern, Central and Southern) Adult Education Service Centers. They are responsible for the primary implementation of this project's objectives and will initiate all regional activities related to the project. In addition, they will have the responsibility of regionally addressing this project's objectives.

Associate Staff Development Agencies

These agencies are comprised of Literacy Volunteers of America-Illinois, Literacy, Inc. (Laubach-Illinois), the Illinois Community College Board Centers for Excellence, the Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center, and the Illinois ESL Adult Education Service Center. They will assist the Primary Staff Development Agencies in the development of the Needs Assessment Process, the Comprehensive Staff Development Process, and the Staff Development Evaluation Process.

Local Pilot Sites

Five to six local adult education and literacy programs have been identified in each of the 3 adult regions in the state. These diverse adult literacy programs will serve as pilot sites for the Needs Assessment, Staff Development, and Evaluation processes to be developed by this project.

APPENDIX 2 (Continued)

Key Project Agencies

Illinois Network of Literacy/Adult Education Resources
(Secretary of State Literacy Office)
Springfield, IL
- Judith Rake

Adult Learning Resource Center
Des Plaines, IL
- Dennis Terdy

Interagency Planning Group (IPG)

Department Of Commerce and Community Affairs
Springfield, IL
- Tom Cavanagh

Illinois State Board of Education, Adult Education & Literacy Section
Springfield, IL
- Dan Miller

Illinois Department of Public Aid
Springfield, IL
- Dan Mount

Department of Employment Securities
Springfield, IL
- Lyle Neumann

Illinois Department of Corrections
Springfield, IL
- John Castro

Illinois Community College Board
Springfield, IL
- Beverly Waldrop

Secretary of State Literacy Office
Springfield, IL
- Judith Rake

Staff Development Agencies
(Illinois' Regional Adult Education Service Centers)

Adult Education Service Center of Northern Illinois
Adult Learning Resource Center
Des Plaines, IL
- Dennis Terdy

Central Illinois Adult Education Service Center
Western Illinois University
Macomb, IL
•Bonnie Smith

Southern Illinois Adult Education Service Center
Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville
Edwardsville, IL
•Duane Rankin

Associate Staff Development Agencies

Illinois Community College Board
Springfield, IL
•Beverly Waldrop

Illinois ESL Adult Education Service Center
Adult Learning Resource Center
Des Plaines, IL
•Dennis Terdy

Illinois Literacy, Inc.
Peoria, IL
•Marjorie Kroehler

Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center
Champaign, IL
•Suzanne Knell

Illinois State Board of Education/Adult Education & Literacy Section
Springfield, IL
•Roz Petrilli

Literacy Volunteers of America-Illinois Inc.
Chicago, IL
•Dorothy Miaso

Local Pilot Sites

Northern Region

Kishwaukee College - Adult Education Program
Malta, IL
•Evelina Cichy

Lakeview Learning Center/Truman College
Chicago, IL
•Armando Mata

Literacy Chicago
Chicago, IL
- Donna Grant

Moraine Valley Community College
Palos Hill, IL
- Phil Bobich

Rockford School District 205 - Roosevelt Adult Education Program
Rockford, IL
- Peter Paris

Central Region

Black Hawk College Adult Education
East Moline, IL
- Linda Fairweather

Lincoln Correctional Center Adult Education Program
Lincoln, IL
- Jim Chrisman

Mattoon Area Adult Education Center
Mattoon, IL
- Al Sherline

Peoria Adult Education Center
Peoria, IL
- Frank Bethel

Carl Sandburg Community College Adult Learning Center
Galesburg, IL
- Lorraine Shockley

Southern Region

John A. Logan College
Carterville, IL
- Phil Minnis

Rend Lake College
Ina, IL
- Barbara Bauernfeind

St. Clair County Educational Service Region
Belleville, IL
- Pat Hunsacker

Shawnee Community College
Ullin, IL
- Tim Bellamey

Venice-Lincoln Technical Center
Venice, IL
•Louis Williams

Project Evaluators

Edward Jones
Graduate School of Education
George Mason University
Fairfax, Va

Patricia Keeton
Basic Skills and Foreign - Born Program
Howard Community College
Columbia, MD

APPENDIX 3

ILLINOIS CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ADULT LITERACY STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE 1

Interagency Planning Group quarterly meetings
- coordination steps planned
- progress of local pilot site initiatives reviewed

↓

National Institute for Literacy Academy-Project Work Plan begun

↓

Interagency Planning Group - Work Plan finalized and approved

↓

Interagency Planning Group - coordinated calendar and activities implemented

OBJECTIVE 2

Needs Assessment Questionnaire developed using indicators of Quality for Adult Education Programs in Illinois

↓

Local pilot site invited interagency representatives to participate in needs assessment interview

↓

Local pilot sites prioritized Indicators according to greatest staff development need

↓

Facilitated needs assessment interview conducted with pilot and interagency staffs by Service Centers (using Indicator questionnaire)

OBJECTIVES 3 AND 4

Service Center summarized responses in writing by needs identified, suggestions for staff development to meet needs, possible service provider, and suggested ways to measure effectiveness

↓

Pilot site and Service Center consultant met to finalize staff development plan

↓

Selected measured of effectiveness tabulated, collected or analyzed <u>before</u> staff development

↓

Staff development activity(ies) implemented

↓

Measures of effectiveness tabulated, collected or analyzed <u>after</u> staff development

↓

Process continued with additional staff development or new Indicators addressed

APPENDIX 4

Indicators of Quality for Adult Education Programs in Illinois

Indicator 1: **Institutional Support**

Administrative agency demonstrates a commitment to providing quality adult education services.

Indicator 2: **Support Services**

Program identifies students' needs for support services and makes services available to students directly or through referral to other educational and service agencies with which the program coordinates.

Indicator 3: **Program Planning**

Program has a planning process that is ongoing and participatory, guided by evaluation and based on a written plan that considers community demographics, needs, resources, economic and technological trends, and is implemented to its fullest extent.

Indicator 4: **Program Coordination**

Program includes coordination with other service providers.

Indicator 5: **Curriculum and Instruction**

Instructional program has appropriate curricula and a variety of methods to meet diverse student learning needs.

Indicator 6: **Staffing and Staff Development**

Program has an ongoing process to select, develop and retain staff that considers the specific needs of its students, offers training in the skills necessary to provide quality instruction, and includes opportunities for practice and systematic follow-up.

Indicator 7: **Recruitment**

Program successfully recruits the population in the community identified in the Adult Education Act as needing services.

Indicator 8: **Retention**

Students remain in the program long enough to meet their educational goals.

Indicator 9: **Educational Gains/Demonstrating Progress**

Learners demonstrate progress toward attainment of basic skills and competencies that support their educational needs.

Indicator 10: **Educational Gains/Learner Advancement**

Learners advance in the instructional program or complete program educational requirements that allow them to meet their goals, continue their education or training, or become employed.

APPENDIX 5

SAMPLE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

RECRUITMENT

Indicator 7: Program successfully recruits volunteers staff.

Program successfully recruits the populations in the community identified in the Adult Education Act as needing services (i.e. priority to those least educated and most in need).

VOLUNTEERS:

1. Does your program use volunteers? In what ways?

2. How do you recruit volunteers?

Types of recruitment activities you use	Estimated yearly number of volunteers recruited by this method	Rate effectiveness from 1 (low) to 5 (high) If ineffective, why?

4. What other recruitment methods have you used? Comment on the effectiveness of each.

5. Does your parent institution recruit volunteers for your program? How significant is institutional recruitment to your volunteer recruitment?

6. What other recruitment methods would you like to try?

7. Does your program have any joint recruitment efforts with other community agencies? List those agencies and methods. Could these joint agency efforts be improved? How? If you have not used joint recruitment methods, would you like to? Explain.

STUDENTS:

1. Who are your targeted populations? How do you determine if your recruitment efforts have reached these populations?

2. How do you recruit students?

Types of recruitment activities you use	Estimated yearly # of students enrolled by this method/population targeted	Rate effectiveness from 1 (low) to 5 (high) If ineffective, why?

3. Does your parent institution recruit students for your program? How? How significant is this recruitment to your program enrollment?

4. Does your program have any joint recruitment efforts with other community agencies? List those agencies and methods. Could these joint agency efforts be improved? How? If you have not used joint recruitment methods, would you like to? Explain.

5. What other recruitment methods would you like to try?

ILLINOIS CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT
Summary of Staff Development Process

Pilot Program *(Interagency Connection)*	Indicators Completed	Need(s) Identified	Proposed Staff Development Activity	Proposed Measures of Effectiveness Options	Staff Development Activity/Date	Measures of Effectiveness Used
	9. Ed. gains	Formalize non-standardized classroom testing system. Develop written criteria for student level advancement. Develop system to record concrete evidence of progress.	Series of workshops/ follow-up on portfolio assessment, field testing, then selection of methods by consensus.	Survey present classroom testing methods and criteria used for student advancement. Conduct post survey.	. Portfolios/competency workshop August 5 . Follow-up discussion on field testing, Oct. 4 . Competency checklist developed/ field tested	Pre survey on assessment measure used and rank of effectiveness. Post survey on effectiveness of new competency.

APPENDIX 6

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