

DARE TO DREAM

**A Collection of Papers from a Resource Group
of 102 Education and Literacy Professionals**

**prepared for
the National Commission on Adult Literacy**

May 24, 2007

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FOREWORD

The papers collected in this report, *Dare to Dream*, represent the thinking and advice of dozens of literacy and education professionals and adult learners. The collection was developed to help inform the work of the National Commission on Adult Literacy, and was presented to the Commission at its April 17, 2007 meeting.

The papers were developed in response to a one-page question and goals statement (shown on page vii) developed by the Commission's manager and study director. More than 120 individuals were invited to participate in the exercise. Despite the very short response time required for participation, 102 were able to take part. In 10 different groupings, they took part voluntarily under the guidance of Commission-designated group leaders; their input was given through a combination of e-mail and telephone interactions over an intensive two-week period. Following that first phase, the group leaders were then convened in an all-day review and discussion session on February 28th in Washington, D.C.

The resource documents offer a rich menu of thoughtful ideas, insights, cautions, and concrete recommendations. These leaders were challenged to "think outside the box" in envisaging an adult education enterprise that might better reach many millions of adults with high quality service, extending well beyond the 3 million or so presently enrolled in publicly-funded programs.

Suggestions and ideas tend to cluster around several broad themes:

- Make adult education a mainstream education system with strong articulation to postsecondary education and occupational training.
- Articulate clearly that adult education and literacy provides economic benefits to students via workforce preparation and postsecondary education.
- Establish clear goals and a few achievable priorities.
- Treat ESL/immigration as having high importance.
- Ensure teacher quality & elevate status of adult education professionals.
- Improve both the accountability system and assessment tools.
- Make far greater use of technology and distance learning to improve service and expand outreach.
- Adopt and mobilize new approaches to building public awareness and business advocacy -- especially at the state and local levels -- as part of comprehensive planning for education and economic development.
- Strengthen ongoing basic and applied research.
- Differentiate local, state, and federal roles.

The Commission wishes to thank the team of extraordinary people who gave so generously of their time to produce this document. As with most materials developed to help inform the Commission's deliberations, different interpretations of the material are possible and publication does not necessarily reflect conclusions of the Commission. Still, we are pleased to make this *Dare to Dream* resource available as a public service.

Other materials developed for the April 17th meeting have been or will soon be made available. These are a presentation developed by Dennis Jones and Patrick Kelly of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (*Mounting Pressures Facing the U.S. Workforce and the Increasing Need for Adult Education and Literacy*, released on May 21, 2007), a presentation made to the Commission in DVD format by Mark Tucker, president of the National Center for Education and the Economy; and a presentation developed by labor economist Andrew Sum.

A current listing of commissioners, honorary commissioners, and executive staff of the National Commission on Adult Literacy is given on the next page.



Cheryl King
Study Director
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The Commission is managed by the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (1221 Avenue of the Americas – 46th Floor, New York, NY 10020, gspangenberg@caalusa.org). Commission study director Cheryl King operates from a CAAL office in Kentucky (National Commission on Adult Literacy, c/o Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, 115 East 2nd Street, Suite 310, Owensboro, KY 42303, cherylking@caalusa.org). The Commission's principle funders to date are The Dollar General Corporation, Harold W. McGraw, Jr., and The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ADULT LITERACY

David Perdue - Chairman and CEO, Dollar General Corporation (Commission Chair).

Morton Bahr – President Emeritus, Communications Workers of America.

Hon. Gerald Baliles - Director, The Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia; former governor of Virginia.

Bob Bickerton - Senior Associate Commissioner of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Past President National Council of State Directors of Adult Basic Education.

Sherrie Claiborne – Chair, Public Policy, Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE); past president, COABE; president of National Coalition for Literacy.

Marion Crain - Director, Center on Poverty, Work, and Opportunity, University of North Carolina.

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Sharon Darling - President and Founder, National Center for Family Literacy.

Samuel Halperin – Senior Fellow & Founder, American Youth Policy Forum and Institute for Educational Leadership; Director of William T. Grant Foundation studies of non-college-bound youth, “The Forgotten Half;” one of the architects of the original Adult Basic Education Act.

Paul Harrington – President and CEO, Reebok International, Ltd.

George Kessinger – President and CEO, Goodwill Industries International, Inc.

Cheryl D. King (Study Director) -- Former Deputy Secretary and Commissioner of Adult Education and Workforce Development in Kentucky.

Bridget Lamont - Vice Chair, U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science; Past Chair and current member, Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board.

Hon. Ray Marshall - Rapoport Centennial Chair in Economics and Public Affairs, University of Texas (Austin); U.S. Secretary of Labor (Carter); Member, National Skills Standards Board and Advisory Commission on Labor Diplomacy (Clinton); Co-chair, Commission on Skills of the American Workforce and of Commission on Skills of the American Workforce in a Global Economy.

Gail Mellow - President, LaGuardia Community College; On many national higher education boards and commissions; Gubernatorial appointee to New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission; Member, New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and Technology.

Owen Modeland - President, Correctional Education Association (incoming); Superintendent of Schools, Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

Mark Musick - James Quillen Chair, East Tennessee State University; President Emeritus, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB); Chaired Board of National Assessment of Educational Progress under three presidents.

Karen Narasaki - President, Asian American Justice Center; Vice Chair Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; Vice President of Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform; Recipient of award of the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Juan Olivarez – President, Grand Rapids Community College; member, Board of National Institute for Literacy, Member Kent and Allegan (MI) Workforce Development Boards; Gov. Jennifer Granham appointee to Cherry Commission of Higher Education and Economic Growth.

Cam Preus-Braly - Commissioner, Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development; President, National Council on State Directors of Community Colleges; Chair-elect Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education.

Hon. Tom Sawyer – State Senator (OH); former member, U.S. House of Representatives (OH); Author, National Literacy Act of 1991; Former Mayor, Akron, OH; Extensive Congressional role in tracking U.S. and world demographic trends and applying them to policy and program purposes.

Hon. George M. Staples - Director General of U.S. Foreign Service and Assistant Secretary for Human Resources, U.S. Department of State; Former political advisor to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) at NATO in Belgium; Former U.S. ambassador to many countries.

Gail Spangenberg (Project Manager) - President and Founder, Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy; former Vice President and Operating Head, Business Council for Effective Literacy; various philanthropic roles at Ford, Carnegie, and Russell Sage Foundations.

Andrew Sum - Professor of Labor Economics, Director of Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University; National leader in labor market research related to adult literacy.

Robert Wedgeworth – President & CEO, ProLiteracy Worldwide; Former President, American Library Association; A leader in creating the National Coalition for Literacy in its original form.

William White – President and Chairman, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; Leads Mott’s pioneering work in community education. Member, President Ronald Reagan’s Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives; Observer, Carter Center’s Delegation to the Palestinian Elections.

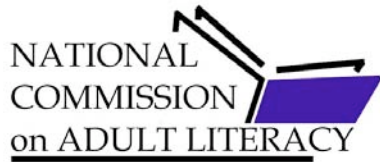
HONORARY COMMISSIONERS

David Baldacci – Author of 13 best-selling novels, translated into 38 languages and sold in more than 80 countries; Playwright; National ambassador for various charities, including the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy; Lawyer, trial and corporate law.

Alfredo G. de los Santos, Jr. – Distinguished Professor, Hispanic Research Center, Arizona State University; Recipient, Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education; Board Member, Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching.

Hon. Ruth Ann Minner – Governor, State of Delaware.

Hon. Richard Riley – Partner, Nelson, Mullins, Riley, and Scarborough; former Secretary of Education (Clinton Administration); Former Governor, South Carolina; Recipient Harold W. McGraw Jr. Education Prize for national leadership.



DARE TO DREAM - Resource Groups

Question -- If we are to serve 30 plus million adults instead of 3 million, and to do this to a high standard of quality, what steps/action would you and your team suggest be taken, and by whom, to achieve the challenge of each of the thematic goals given below? What problems or obstacles, if any, stand in the way? **Response Format:** Please provide a summary of your team responses (no more than one page per goal), and attach a list of persons consulted along with their titles and affiliations.

GOALS

UPGRADING BASIC EDUCATION OF ADULTS FOR CURRENT AND EMERGING JOBS, FURTHER EDUCATION, CIVIC AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, AND SUPPORT OF THEIR CHILDREN'S LEARNING (developing and aligning existing and new delivery system components; providing/developing instructional content, standards, and assessment tools to meet current and future need; and expanding access to millions of undereducated adults of all ages)

CREATING AND REFINING FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION (putting the adult education system on an equal footing with the P-12 and higher education systems through new/revised federal and state legislation and funding – with reference to specific legislative provisions and language)

IMPROVING PUBLIC AWARENESS (changing misconceptions, attitudes, and values of potential learners and the general public about the role and importance of education and specifically adult education and literacy, and about the necessity to learn for life and living in modern society)

ENGAGING BUSINESS AND PHILANTHROPY (to achieve substantially increased funding support and other resources, build a more skilled workforce, and bring legitimacy to adult education and literacy as a professional education system)

1-16-07

Resource Group 1: ROLE OF FEDERAL & STATE POLICY

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General Observations from Group Leader

Interviewees had various perspectives on the goal of serving 30 million adults through the Adult Education¹ (AE) system. A few initial comments concerned the capacity of the system to deal with such large increases; a few interviewees felt that any increases in the program would have to be built up slowly; and one felt that it would be more important to improve the quality of existing services before expanding. Most interviewees felt that the money did not exist to support such a vast expansion, but agreed that an increased investment in the AE system was worth fighting for.

As the policy group, every interviewee raised the issue of clarifying the goals of the Adult Education Act (AEA), given the limited funding and the vast need. Most suggested setting goals around two or three key needs, with economic self-sufficiency and meeting the needs of the immigrant population, being the top choices. However, other interviewees suggested that family literacy and developing higher literacy in general were important goals. This is a key conversation that needs to be held, as there are not enough federal resources to meet the many needs of the various populations. The federal law should be clearly and more tightly focused on specific high priority needs, which, most seem to agree, relate to improving workforce skills. States should then supplement the federal investment and provide services to accommodate other populations.

The other major theme that emerged related to the need for a different concept of AE that does not end with the attainment of a GED, but provides transitions to postsecondary education. Several interviewees said AE needs to be viewed as part of the continuum of learning that ultimately leads to an Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, or even a Master's degree. The notion of career pathways as an organizing concept was suggested by several interviewees, with a particular focus on helping AE participants earn college credit or take college-level classes through dual enrollment arrangements. Most interviewees made at least one comment about the need to change the thinking that the GED is a terminal outcome – it does not prepare people for family wage jobs any longer, and AE participants, like the population in general, must have access to postsecondary education. This was one of the clearest common suggestions made.

Another significant issue that was raised was clarifying the role of AE in providing remediation for AE students, given the amount of remediation provided by community colleges. In many cases, AE and community colleges are duplicating services and/or competing with each other. Having two systems provide similar services results in confusion for clients and potentially wasted resources and needs to be addressed.

¹ For responses of the Federal and State Policy group, the group leader used the term Adult Education to be all inclusive of the various types of services offered, including adult basic education, adult secondary education, English as a Second Language, and family and workplace literacy.

GOAL 1: Upgrading Basic Education

Interviewees raised several key questions about how the AE system is prepared to serve a vastly expanded number of adults. Conversation centered on the need to provide more intensive services in more structured settings to ensure better outcomes, before expanding, especially if the expectation of transitioning to postsecondary education is a reality. Comments related to the limitations of the AE system, saying that it is more focused on building programs than in serving adults. Comments were made that AE services could be more comprehensive and provide supports more effectively, they could be located in various community organizations and held at a range of convenient times, and they could partner more closely with other systems (e.g. after school providers or community-based organizations). Interviewees also suggested that the AE system develop a better process to assess the education and training needs of adults to determine the level of support and services needed. An adult who reads at a fourth grade level needs very different interventions than an adult who reads at the eighth grade level and the educational strategies should be tailored to their needs.

Another important issue with regard to the quality of the system is the intensity of services provided to students and the amount of time students spend in instruction. Research has shown that more intensive, supportive, and structured programs result in stronger outcomes. Yet, much of adult education is organized as drop-in with little consistency, follow-up, and ongoing support to ensure the learner is making adequate progress on a regular, on-going basis. Attention needs to be focused on ensuring a sufficient number of contact hours based on the literacy needs of each adult, probably much higher than now often happens.

Interviewees raised issues regarding AE teachers and the need to professionalize the field (with full-time teachers), to improve teacher content knowledge in math and reading comprehension, and to perhaps require credentialing. Leadership, particularly at the state level, was a concern as there has been a lot of turnover in leadership, and it is unclear where future leaders are being trained. Limited state budgets hamper efforts to help local programs learn about the most effective research and practices to serve adults and prepare them for higher levels of education. Developing a cadre of bilingual adult education teachers was recommended, as well as working more closely with colleges of education to improve teacher education for adult education teachers.

Other comments dealt with improving the types of assessment tools that could be more closely aligned across various systems. For example, AE students may pass the GED or TABE at a high level and presume they are prepared to do college-level work, only to discover they need to take remedial courses. If the assessments used by the AE system were more closely aligned to postsecondary entrance requirements, students would have a clearer understanding of their skills and abilities and would be able to make smoother transitions to higher levels of education and training.

Lastly, many interviewees discussed the need to create new forms of integrated learning (Washington State's IBEST program is a model) that help students learn both literacy and occupational skills at the same time, as opposed to learning them in a sequence, thereby shortening the time needed to gain valuable employability skills. This would require the AE system, community colleges, and other employment training providers to work more closely together to develop integrated curriculum and instruction and help teachers team teach.

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation

The issue of placement of the AEA received quite a bit of attention. Most interviewees felt that the ideal situation would be for the AEA to be a stand-alone piece of legislation; however, one interviewee felt that Congress was adamantly opposed to this, and therefore it is not an option. While interviewees wanted the AEA to be independent of other laws and systems, they recognized the need for tight connections with other systems, most particularly the postsecondary education system (community colleges), given the workforce development priority. Interviewees felt that effective collaboration could occur across systems and that it would be helpful to clarify how the AE system could contribute to helping other programs reach literacy goals as well as how literacy activities can be integrated into other acts and programs, e.g. early childhood development.

Interviewees generally felt that both federal and state policy should set broad goals for achieving literacy and other outcomes. For example, several interviewees suggested creating goals in the AEA to increase postsecondary enrollment and completion and to provide increased opportunities for dual enrollment. Several also suggested the importance of having a clearly defined overarching state policy calling for a literate population. Because most interviewees felt the AE system was not viewed as an integral part of the education and training system, statements of these larger goals would be important.

There were various key funding issues raised by interviewees. First, several interviewees suggested that state funding for AE be based on an entitlement structure, rather than a discretionary allotment. This would mean that every student in the AE system would be guaranteed a certain Average Daily Attendance allotment, similar to what exists in the K-12 system. Some interviewees suggested this be a weighted formula to take into account the amount of time that students participate in AE classes. A similar suggestion was to guarantee a public education through grade 14 for every adult, similar to what exists in California.

Another key funding issue related to the availability of federal financial aid (mainly Pell Grants) for AE students who either take remedial classes at community colleges or who take dual enrollment classes. Because most AE students are less than half-time, they are not eligible for Pell grants, and there is no federal support for students who take only one class. Another issue is the disparity between systems regarding remediation. Students can enter the AE system and get remedial help for free, but if they take remedial courses at a community college, they must pay tuition and if they use their Pell grants to do so, they reduce the dollars available for higher level classes later on.

One interviewee suggested awarding AE funding collaboratively at the community level to a group of providers that serve adult populations, including K-12 education, postsecondary education, community-based organizations, employment, and after school providers.

Interviewees agreed that flexibility in the AEA is a positive feature and should be kept and expanded. This was particularly important with regard to combining funding from various streams to deal with the needs of students.

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness

Most of the interviewees felt that the AE system had low or poor visibility with policy leaders, particularly at the national level. One person referred to the AE system as a “poor step-child.” At the national level, there is a lack of “champions” who carry the case for the AEA forward, as had

been the case in the past, when Members of Congress such as Reps. Bill Goodling and Tom Sawyer and Sen. Paul Simon were strong advocates for adult education. At the state level, several interviewees indicated that they conducted intentional outreach to state policy leaders, such as governors, legislators, and their aides, to better inform them of the value and contributions of AE. Advocates or AE providers not only invited these groups to visit their programs, but organized meetings to showcase the contributions of AE to the state or regional economy. Having AE alumni recount their experiences and positive outcomes with the system was also a popular strategy. Most interviewees felt that the positive PART rating from the Office of Management and Budget would be helpful in making a case for more support of AE.

Several interviewees discussed state marketing or messaging campaigns that were designed to increase the public support and awareness of AE. Many of these marketing campaigns were designed to highlight a key issue, generally economic and workforce competitiveness, and how AE contributes to increasing the skill levels of the state's population. One public awareness campaign in Kentucky centered on increasing the number of adults with GEDs who attend postsecondary education. This message had an impact on increasing awareness of how the AE system helped to improve the pipeline. Most interviewees agreed that a message focused on developing economic self-sufficiency would be more compelling, but a few said the notion of developing literacy across the spectrum was equally important. Several said an effective message was one that told how literacy contributes to solving many social issues. Several interviewees also said that framing the issue of having to deal with 30-90 million adults with low literacy skills was too overwhelming of a number and was not an effective communication strategy.

Other comments on public awareness related to using data, research, and independent voices (think tanks or research organizations) to help make the case for AE; using data to demonstrate a positive return on investment from AE, particularly for employers; ensuring high quality programs as a strategy to build public support; and getting other sectors, particularly business, but also increasingly the health and medical sectors, to speak out in support of AE and literacy activities.

GOAL 4: Engaging Business and Philanthropy

Few policy directions emerged regarding engagement of business and philanthropy. However, a few comments could have policy implications. Several interviewees felt that the business community had not shown much interest in being providers of AE services (e.g. workplace literacy) and that in order to keep business engaged, stronger incentives would need to be put in place, but most felt that it was more helpful to have business advocate for AE, rather than be a provider of services. There was little discussion of the role of philanthropists, except with one suggestion that they be a catalyst for innovation (i.e. supporting new program models or integrated delivery of services).

Resource Group 2: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

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GOAL #1: Upgrading Basic Education

Most members of this group confess that they do not know much about the structure, operation, effectiveness, or leadership of the Adult Education (AE) system, and of the ESL component in particular. They believe this suggests a disconnect of AE from the rest of the educational system – that AE is a marginalized “third priority” service. Most members do not believe they are qualified to identify specific changes that should be made in AE program design, but they believe they can specify the outcomes that the AE system should have.

Most members of the group believe the AE system should be designed to focus primarily on labor market benefits, and in particular job readiness, rather than learning gains or life skills for their own sake. This means its major goal should be preparation of students for success in vocational certificate programs and higher levels of postsecondary education. With regard to vocational programs they emphasized that these should be “high end,” demanding programs that lead to certificates widely recognized by employers and professions. Members believe attainment of the GED and increased levels of basic skills proficiency as measured by standardized tests are not adequate measures of preparation for further education and job readiness, and the GED should not be considered the terminal goal of AE. In all of its aspects, the AE system must be organized to “articulate up” to the recognized pipelines for educational advancement through postsecondary academic and vocational programs, so that (for example) the exit criteria for AE meet the entry requirements for college. AE must “break down the silos” within the educational community to create a unified system for these purposes. Members believe community colleges are probably best positioned to achieve these goals, because they already have the components required under one roof. Members concede that very low-level learners need “survival” basic skills instruction for health and safety reasons, but the AE system should be designed to “mainstream” even these learners into postsecondary programs.

This will require major changes in the expectations and AE providers and students. Both should realize that the goals of industrial certification and post-secondary education are attainable and are the major purpose of AE programs. The curriculum should be designed to articulate with further education from the bottom to the top. For example, workplace materials and skills should be more commonly used as the content of instruction, and career awareness as well as college skills (such as study skills, test-taking, and time management) should permeate the curriculum. There should be far more (and continuing) orientation and counseling as well as “wrap around” supportive services that allow students to overcoming barriers to participation in AE programs and further education – importantly by building bridges to other programs and agencies that offer these services.

One or more members suggested that: AE requires increased professionalization of the AE workforce (higher standards for teachers, more and better training programs, more full time teachers), increased use of technology both as a means and an end of instruction, use of more workplace-relevant assessment systems, such as WorkKeys, ensuring that classrooms do not look like school rooms, and possibly charging for advanced AE services.

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation

Most members believe the federal government and states must adopt the vision of AE as part of the unified pipeline for workforce preparation articulated in Goal #1, and adapt their policies to make it a reality. They must see AE as a mainstream educational system and strengthen articulations. Neither the federal government nor most states have this vision. Kentucky and Ohio were repeatedly cited as examples “success stories” of states where the vision has been adopted and implemented. It must be implemented in a systematic, sustained way, rather than through fragile demonstration programs.

An important goal of policy at the federal and state levels must be “breaking down silos” between AE and other forms of education in terms of funding, entry/exit requirements, faculty, curricula, and facilities. One or more members suggested the following measures. Federal/state regulations that stand in the way of mingling AE and vocational education funds, and that prevent AE from serving students above the GED level should be eliminated. Restrictions on “co-enrollment” of

AE students in other programs should be dropped. Funding should be earmarked for transition programs. The resources of the welfare, child services and other systems to provide supportive services should be made available to AE students. Welfare systems and WIB's must become more supportive of the attainment of postsecondary goals and lifelong learning for AE students and others.

Adult education will require additional federal and state funding to achieve these more ambitious goals. That funding should be earmarked for programs and states that implement policies which will achieve workforce goals. But additional funding will not be forthcoming unless the AE system makes the case for AE in terms of economic benefits via workforce preparation and post-secondary transitions. This case cannot be made in general terms. It must be made in terms of designing specific service systems that will meet clearly defined workforce goals, and it must be strongly supported by data that indicate both need and success. Most members of this group were pessimistic about the receptivity of DOE to this case in any form. Many suggested that the case can probably better be made at the state and local level as a part of economic development planning – because it can be made in more concrete terms at those levels. The need for better data and more relevant metrics of success in AE was stressed. AE must have its “facts in order.” But, in the end, improving the system will be the best argument for additional funds. Several members suggested that the federal role in AE should be to provide “venture capital” for improvement, and the state role should be to design and support better programs.

Most members indicated that a major barrier to improving policy is that there is (as far as they know) no strong, effective, professional leadership in the AE field – no organizations or individuals able to make the case for system and policy change – to demand a place at the policy table. Only one member could name even one adult education leadership organization (except CAAL, due to this survey). Political leaders (such as governors) have occasionally served as AE leaders, but the AE field must develop much stronger leadership of its own.

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness

Members of the group viewed the answer to this question as an extension of the answers to Questions #1 and #2. The AE field must develop strong leadership that will make the case for AE as essential for economic development to the public and elites. Members observed that this is a propitious time to make that case. The publication of “Tough Choices or Tough Times” and “America’s Perfect Storm” has raised awareness of the importance of education for the American economy. Although neither report adequately addresses AE, they provide the opportunity for AE advocates to “join the bandwagon” by making their case in economic development terms. At some point, it may be possible for skillful leadership to use concerns about immigration as arguments for more adequate ESL funding.

Most members were dubious about the feasibility of selling AE to the general public by advertising campaigns or other measures, although one member emphasized the value of individual success stories and celebrity endorsements. Most members believe that AE is more likely to be sold to the public through a “top down” process via elites, as part of economic development initiatives. In this context, public awareness can probably best be increased at the state and local level where leaders can make the need for specific forms of economic development and educational improvement (including AE) in concrete terms. Some members also emphasized that public awareness of the importance of post-secondary education is already growing (as witnessed by the growth of community college enrollments). Public awareness that AE can be a pathway to college may help to build support.

Members observed that community college leaders might be well positioned to raise the awareness of AE and serve as policy advocates at the local level. But they also observed that there is a “crowding out” effect in terms of the many demands on colleges, and on the overall education system. Hence, AE leaders or others will have to persuade colleges to take a leadership role by making the connection to their other functions.

Most members did not think that repeated citations of the number of adults “in need” of AE are very effective by themselves in raising public awareness, because people do not understand the implications of these numbers or the fact that there is an AE system to respond to the needs. Also, these numbers create a sad story. To raise public awareness, AE must “emphasize the positive” in terms of specific programs and plans for what it does and can achieve. As one member observed, “Never let bad news travel alone” without “good news” story to accompany it.

Importantly, all of the members of this group expressed support for adult education and indicated that their organizations would like to be supportive of it. But most members indicated that they and their organizations do not know how to be supportive. They do not know enough about AE to understand how they can help and believe that the AE field must reach out to them.

GOAL 4: Engaging Business and Philanthropy

In general, most members of the group believe that framing AE as an economic development/workforce issue should increase the chances that business leaders will support it. But the case must be made to business leaders in a clear, concise form that explains their bottom line interest. Although many business leaders will issue generalized “endorsements” of AE, these are of limited value. If business leaders are to make a more substantial contribution, they must be asked to provide specific types of short-term support on specific issues that will not consume large amounts of their time or resources.

Some members of the group suggested that it would be helpful if one or more CEO’s of large companies were willing to serve as leaders/spokesmen for AE, and/or if a national business leadership council for AE was formed. This could add weight to AE on policy issues, particularly at the national level. The companies most likely to be supportive are those who see AE to be in their self-interest – mostly service and retail sector companies who employ low-skilled workers and who believe those workers need to increase their skills to be better employees. However, national CEO’s will have to be recruited by other CEO’s, and AE advocates will have to make a clear and compelling case to them in economic terms. This means that appeals to CEO’s will require the AE system itself to develop an economic development focus and be able to demonstrate with facts and figures that it can succeed in improving the workforce.

On the whole, most members believe that business support for AE can be most effectively mobilized at the state and local levels, as part of comprehensive education/economic development initiatives. They point to the example of Kentucky to illustrate this point. In addition, business support can be very specialized – for example, support of local hospitals for improving the basic skills of healthcare workers. AE leaders should search for these special opportunities and try to build on them up to the corporate level – for example using the interest of a local hospital to generate interest on the part of the hospital chain that owns it.

With regard to philanthropy, members noted that the interests of large, national foundations in education are fairly targeted and hard to influence. At present, most are primarily interested in K-12 education, although there is a growing interest in community colleges. The most that AE

advocates can do is to try to link AE to the existing interests of foundations, but this is often difficult to achieve. It may be more promising to build linkages with foundations whose interests are outside the education field – such as those concerned with health care and technology. Several members observed that the most promising approach might be to build relationships with the numerous small foundations that focus on state and local giving. Many of these have fairly broad program guidelines and might be enlisted to support aspects of AE in their areas. Members remarked that the KnowledgeWorks Foundation has played a key role in workforce development (including adult education) initiatives in Ohio, and one member reported that local foundations are starting to play a large role in New England, where some provide college scholarships for AE completers.

Resource Group 3: STUDENT PERSPECTIVES
(former adult literacy students)

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GOAL 1 : Upgrading Basic Education

When this question was posed to **Group 1**, a strong consensus was reached: The field of Adult Education needs to address the issues of shame and low self esteem that often accompany the adult learner throughout his/her life. The recommendations were:

- Programs should offer trained counselors to assist adult learners in addressing their feelings of shame and inadequacy.
- Provide workshops to build self esteem.

Another area of discussion focused on the need for alumni of adult education programs to be working in their programs:

- Students on staff help considerably with retention of new adult learners in their programs.
- Students on staff help with recruitment of new adult learners.

A third area of discussion focused on family involvement.

- Programs need to offer more activities for the family as a whole to be involved with.
- Former adult learners need to be comfortable with reading to their children and helping with homework.

The last area that was addressed dealt with the feelings that adult learners are being “over tested”. Adult learners understand the need for evaluation as a way of measuring progress; however, the overall consensus was that there is too much testing and not enough teaching. Also, these tests lead to feelings of apprehension and fear.

When this question was posed to ESL **Group 2**, their areas of concern were different. Their primary focus was on improving the services that already exist.

- Faculty members that are multi-lingual.
- Guidance counselors that are multi-lingual and who have life experience in other countries.
- A support system so that when problems are identified, students will have a resource to go to for problem solving.
- Safe, reliable child care for day laborers.
- More student mentors and students teaching other adult learners.
- More financial aid and someone to guide them through the financial aid/scholarship process.

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation

Both groups found this area to be the hardest to address, as this process is foreign to most laypeople. The strongest feelings came from Group 1. The group felt that the strongest way to “win over” their legislators was to remind them that parents are the FIRST and most important teachers of their children. By supporting adult basic education, you are supporting the foundation for the next generation.

- Adult learners need to be talking to their legislators!
- Provide adult basic education programs in the schools themselves.
- The schools should serve as a resource to find ABE services for those parents who need help.

The other issue for discussion was the need for adult learners to participate in various advisory boards.

- Have adult learners sit on their school boards.
- Develop a learner advisory board for the US Department of Education.
- Have adult learners available for consultation in matters dealing with adult basic education.

ESL Group 2 gave the following recommendations:

- ESL students who have completed higher education in their respective countries, need to be able to receive credit for those degrees. For example, an accountant trained in Mexico, should be able to undergo an evaluation so that he/she can practice as an accountant in the United States.
- We need to educate the younger generation of ESL students about the importance of getting an education. An education now means higher earning potential in the future.
- There needs to be financial assistance so that these workers don't have to choose between being able to feed their family vs. completing and adult basic education/ESL class.
- Increase funding for ESL classes.

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness

Before you can educate the public, you have to first start by educating those in the field of adult basic education itself. What we mean by that is that we need to emphasize how important adult learners are to the improvement of our society.

We need to stop the propaganda against those in adult basic ed. For example, we need to erase the myths that adult learners are: “poisoning our families because we can't read a medicine bottle”; the economy is down because “we can't contribute to society” and “all adult learners are on welfare”.

We need adult learners to be the face of their own public relations campaign. Adult learners are hard working Americans, holding down jobs, paying taxes and taking care of their families. Adult learners are active members of their respective communities.

The rules in our society have changed. In the past, it was not uncommon for working Americans to leave high school before graduation and to not have high levels of reading and writing skills. These people were still able to find decent paying jobs to support their families. That does not exist in today's economy. Adult learners are being left behind.

- We need to show our society that adult learners are hard working Americans, perhaps your favorite butcher for the past 30 years.
- We need to demonstrate that adult learners are our brothers and sisters, our mothers and fathers.
- We need to enlist well known public figures to help bring attention to the issue of adult literacy.

Group 2 felt that more media messages need to be provided in a variety of different languages, to reach more ESL students. They also felt that flyers that advertise ESL classes need to be published in more languages and more resources needed to be devoted to helping people find these programs.

GOAL 4. Engaging Business and Philanthropy

Group 1 had the following recommendations to engage business and philanthropy:

- Tax deductions would be provided to small businesses that support adult education programs either financially, or by encouraging their employees who need assistance to enroll in adult basic education classes.
- Encourage large corporations that are actively involved in adult literacy issues (such as Dollar General and Verizon), to recruit other large corporations to provide financial assistance.
- Remind businesses that their employees are a valuable asset and that by supporting those in adult education, they are directly affecting their business success and profits.

Group 2 made the following suggestions:

- Encourage representatives from various corporations to come into the programs, meet the adult learners first hand and share their knowledge and skills with the adult learners.
- Question businesses about the types of jobs they are trying to fill. The adult education programs could offer certificates of completion which would help adult learners land these jobs.
- Expand adult basic education services to incorporate various job training skills such as computer literacy.

Resource Group 4: JOB/OCCUPATIONAL READINESS (A)

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GOAL 1: Upgrading Basic Education

Several common points were expressed. Most agreed that since there are not enough resources to do everything, priorities need to be established. The first priority should be to help people to obtain the language and basic skills necessary for economic success – especially the low literate head of the household. The second priority should be to link basic education to postsecondary education with pathways to continue lifelong learning.

Improving adult literacy is a complex issue that needs a much more coordinated approach among literacy providers, libraries, United Way and non-profit agencies, community colleges, school districts, WIB's, employers, and labor. These entities need to develop a common language, share resources, and work together to form effective regional coalitions.

The term “adult literacy” has to be redefined. Traditionally, it means a person who did not complete high school and underperforms in the job market with a lack of basic skills. The definition should be expanded to include those with one to two years of college and who don't have needed basic skills. Jobs have changed dramatically and it is not enough if people can read

or write at a nominal level. If we are to expand from 3 million to 30 million, there needs to be more money invested to make headway.

One participant said a whole new approach should be taken to shift the entire system from a supplier-driven to a demand-driven model. A new accountability system needs to be implemented that links literacy with economic outcomes rather than grade level increases as the measure.

To reach workers, relevant programs must be offered at worksites either at lunch, or before or after work. These programs should be easy to access and set up. An incentive program for both the worker and business to participate would kick-start this initiative.

Most agreed there needs to be a universal assessment tool to monitor adult learners. We must get a real handle on what skills people have and don't have. The Department of Education should take the lead in developing and disseminating this tool. The capability to track what works and doesn't work is important to serving more people. With a good assessment tool, businesses, educators and government can see results and numbers to prove success or failure.

There has to be more emphasis on ESL, as most of the new immigrants have lower skills. Step one is achieving proficiency in the English language. This is a huge national issue.

Instructors should be credentialed to enhance the quality of training. Standards of instruction and delivery need to be made more universal.

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation

Almost all agreed there are not sufficient federal funds. To change that, the connection between workforce development and economic development needs to be further demonstrated and reinforced with policy leaders.

While it may seem obvious, literacy funds should be linked with the individual's success in getting into the workforce or improving a person's job. The way funds are presently allocated is twisted and forces the gaming of state funds. Funding needs to be applied to increase a person's foundational skills to enhance their participation in downstream educational programs. Presently, many people are not ready for the training they receive. They need to be prepared for the training to be successful. The concept of lifelong learning needs to be more pervasive.

One participant mentioned the need to transition funding from a supply-side to a demand-driven model. The federal government's role should change from funding providers to providing accountability for training. This means the enactment of national and state level employer training tax credits that are paid based on results. Furthering the Lifetime Learning Tax Credit makes sense, with not only the tax credit portion moving from 20% to 50% of the first \$10,000 spent, and also that if a tax credit isn't applicable that it can function in a similar manner to the Earned Income Tax Credit. Both tax credits should allow for the innovation of technology. This includes creating programs to make possible training on the job, at home, in libraries, etc and for the employer to monitor progress of employee training. Also, a national training technology fund should be established to improve the delivery of basic skills training, ESL, etc.

Efforts need to be stepped up, as there is a looming crisis with the retirement of the baby boomer generation. One participant indicated the average age of the Philadelphia water system employees is over 50 years. The average age of the nurses in area hospitals is in the mid-40's.

Tying the expenses of prisons, welfare, social security and Medicaid to the problem of low literacy is one way to help policy leaders understand the impact it has on our society and spotlight what happens when family literacy services are not available or effective.

Community colleges alone can't meet developmental needs of people. People shouldn't have to use higher ed benefits for developmental courses they require.

Champions need to be groomed from existing legislators for the cause to get to a higher level. There doesn't seem to be an incentive for government officials to advocate for this group of people because many of the benefiting group can't advocate for themselves and may not be seen as voters.

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness

The public needs to know that this is a crucial issue for America's future competitiveness. There is a lack of awareness of how serious and widespread adult illiteracy is. Even if they do know that is a problem, people don't know what to do about it. Coordinated awareness campaigns need to be created at the local, state and national levels.

The big picture needs to be reframed. People need to understand how education is connected to society. We must show that advancing skills will equal higher wages, improve productivity, better economic prospects, more taxes paid and many government services (such as prisons, TANF, etc) may be reduced with better education. It like the oil filter ad that says "you can pay me now, or you can pay me later."

Effective and coordinated awareness campaigns must be made at the local, state and national levels. People need to see how the dots are connected and how they can help.

A campaign targeted toward employers should be initiated to help them understand their role. Other targeted audiences should include churches, not for profits, professional associations, and business and industry partners.

GOAL 4: Engaging Business and Philanthropy

Business and philanthropy are two vital segments that can help raise the bar on what needs to be done, however several people felt it is ultimately the government's responsibility to deal with this issue.

Philanthropy can jump start the issue by funding studies and programs to test new ideas. They can play a valuable role with development of progressive programs and innovations that would not otherwise occur. They can help advance policy innovation and the coordination of productive partnerships among adult and postsecondary education providers, businesses, human service, workforce, and other economic development systems.

Philanthropy can play another important leadership role to encourage the development of strong boards for their funded literacy initiatives. The issue of workplace literacy should be a topic for national meetings of foundations that fund education and economic development programs.

Productive partnerships need to be crafted and encouraged between business, labor, philanthropy and government. Businesses need to see themselves as part of the educational system. For this to happen, it must be proven that these programs work for their needs and are relevant for current and future economic conditions. Company success stories need to be trumpeted. Results like increased productivity and reduced turnover should be demonstrated. It needs to make economic success. There are a number of case studies that are available to use for this.

Several opinions were expressed on how to better engage with businesses. Many businesses frequently lament that it is harder to get quality people in the door. In many cases, they see people with the lack of basic work skills such as being on time, having a reasonable work ethic, ability to work as part of a team, able to pass a drug test, etc. Many of the educational parts should have been taken care of with earlier education efforts. Many businesses work hard to screen the very best fit for their needs. Most offer in-house training in some way, but don't know where to go to access services.

One respondent said that most literacy programs are run by educators, not business-type people. They need to run their agencies like a business and be more results oriented in a way that resonated with businesses. A corporation wants to fund a program that is well organized, successful and willing to build relationships with them. Also, programs need to be more creative and open to ideas to gain support from businesses. Literacy program providers need to remember that businesses are there to make money. Providers need to determine what their program can do for their business supporters that will add value and enhance profitability.

Plans need to be encouraged to get more small and medium businesses to involve adult learners while at the workplace, either during lunch or before or after work. This would increase the number of adult learners served. Businesses need for their workers to improve their reading levels. An incentive program for both workers and businesses to participate would kick-start this initiative. The program should be easy to access and set up.

Business association leadership can help address the issue. Efforts by national associations like the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other associations are needed to get their members engaged in the issue and with practical solutions. This should occur at the state and local level too.

There is a need for relevant, useful and meaningful research. This research should not only identify strategies that work, but also-and perhaps more importantly-to implement, scale up and maintain effective programs.

Resource Group 5: LEARNING COMMUNITIES

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GOAL 1: Upgrading Basic Education

- Develop short and long term goals to guarantee continued momentum for the next 20 years or more.
- Explain, in plain English, exactly why it is essential to upgrade basic education for adults and how upgraded services will have directly and positively have an impact on the job market, the economy, and nation.
- Highlight showcase model programs in these areas that demonstrate impact.
- Engage businesses in conversations in order to identify current employment challenges.
- Explore (with the business community) innovative training approaches, including how to 'retrain workers.'
- Support adult participation in adult education by providing basic services, including childcare and transportation.
- Emphasize that technology is the library's 'calling card'. Libraries are not effectively using technology to reach and serve adult learners. Libraries have to promote this asset.

Group Leader Comments: All of the participants agreed that it was important to collaborate with businesses in order to develop effective and necessary programs for adults entering and advancing in the workforce. They also noted the importance of ‘explaining in plain English’ how and why adult education benefits the community, the nation, and the economy. The need to ‘explain’ adult education was a recurring theme throughout the conversations.

The service model for public librarians has always been based on individual interactions and personal reference interviews. A primary concern of the outreach librarian was identifying innovative ways to provide access to high quality materials and effective services for *all* library patrons regardless of reading level or language. From this perspective, upgrading basic education includes leveraging technology coupled with providing essential and basic support services for learners including childcare and transportation.

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation.

- Re-examine the National Literacy Act in order to understand ‘why it fell flat’. Much of the legislation was ‘watered down’ after it was passed. Adult education seems to ‘get lost’ in WIA. WIA is a stumbling block.
- Develop contacts and champions in the Senate and House.
- Federal legislation is fragmented.
- Legislation differs significantly from state to state.
- **Libraries and the E-Rate**
 - The E-rate provides discounts to public libraries and to public and private K-12 schools on telecommunications services, Internet access, and some closely related costs, such as inside wiring. The discounts range from 20% to 90% with the deepest discounts going to those communities with the greatest need
 - The E-rate has played a pivotal role in helping libraries connect their users to the Internet. Today, more than 95% of our nation's libraries offer Internet access to the public.
 - With more than \$350 million in discounts since 1998, the E-rate has helped change the public library's information technology landscape.
- **School Library Media Specialist and No Child Left Behind**
 - NCLB was designed to bring the lowest performers ‘up to basic grade level’. The legislation was not designed to move the educational needle and improve the overall performance of K-12 students.
 - Currently, NCLB requires that all ‘core area teachers’ be ‘highly qualified. (ALA’s Washington Office is advocating for NCLB to require that School Library Media Specialists also be considered ‘highly qualified’. NCLB funding formulas do not include books and materials that support reading and learning.)

Group Leader Comments: The Even Start Association commented on the fragmentation of the federal legislation regarding family literacy and Even Start. My primary conversations were with individuals and organizations providing direct or semi-direct services. Their responses indicated

that legislation had little impact on their daily work although it did have an impact on their funding and the funding of their partners. These individuals noted that it was important to have literacy champions in the House and Senate and an effective and visible National Institute for Literacy. One participant suggested revisiting the National Literacy Act to better understand why it ‘fell flat’. Another commented that immigration was a ‘looming’ social and political issue.

ALA, the American Association of School Librarians, and local libraries are regularly affected by federal and state legislation and public policy. ALA’s Washington Office oversees legislative issues that have an impact on libraries of all kinds: public, academic, school, and special (EPA, for example).

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness

- Develop a multi-pronged, well thought-out public awareness campaign that is supported by business, philanthropy, and education. “It’s all about marketing.”
- - Formulate a clear message about the programs, services, learner accomplishments, and the effectiveness of adult education.
 - Stay on message.
 - Deliver the same message on national, state, and local level.
 - Develop a PR campaign that includes and is promoted by the states and includes local programs and adult learners.
 - Recruit learners, leaders, and advocates to get the message out.
- Get the ‘heart of America’ engaged in the issue.
- For librarians, public awareness needs to translate into professional awareness.
 - Librarians must acknowledge and ‘own’ literacy.
 - Librarians must ‘de-stigmatize’ adults who don’t read.
 - Libraries and librarians have to ‘change the framework’ and move beyond the notion of ‘literacy’. (In libraries ‘literacy’ is code for ‘people who are not smart’.)

Group Leader Comments: Group members agreed on the almost critical need for a broad-based, well thought-out, long term public awareness campaign. They suggested that the field change the framework and the language in order to ‘de-stigmatize’ learners. Participants stated that a major PR campaign needed to be developed and promoted by national literacy organizations. The public librarian in our group provided a slightly different point of view. She strongly felt that librarians (members of her own profession) needed to translate public awareness into professional awareness – the library profession needed to acknowledge and ‘own’ literacy.

GOAL 4: Engaging Business and Philanthropy

- The business world and the philanthropic community must understand why adult education needs a funding increase. They must also understand and appreciate the important of educating and training adults (parents and caregivers), as well as their children.

- Adult education and family literacy needs a champion with ‘deep pockets’ and a long term commitment.
- CEOs should be talking with their peers (other CEOs) about the economic importance and effectiveness of adult education.
- Leaders in the foundation community should get together to lead public awareness and advocacy efforts.

Group Leader Comments: Responses to this goal tended to overlap the other three. The participants suggested: that corporations and foundations work with their peers; that the field clearly articulate and deliver an adult education and family literacy message; and that national literacy organizations and representatives from business and philanthropy collaboratively develop and implement an effective and comprehensive public awareness campaign.

Resource Group 6: JOBS/OCCUPATIONAL READINESS (B)

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GOAL 1: Upgrading Basic Education

The strategies listed below were offered by this Resource Group as having moderate to great potential in meeting this goal.

- Adult education needs to be student-goal driven. This means a system of delivery that defines student goals, determines education needs relative to these goals, and develops a plan to build the skills necessary to meet goals. It must also build a practice-based professional development system to assure that staffs have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to support this adult learning.
- An adult education system should be not only goal-directed and just-in-time, but also one providing programs that adults can readily access in their daily lives.
- Salaries, benefits, and other working conditions for adult educators must be upgraded in order to build a professional (paid and volunteer) workforce capable of providing quality, goal-directed educational services.
- Governments must greatly increase federal and federal/state matching funding for adult literacy programs, identifying literacy as an investment rather than just an expenditure. ***In most states, the state investment is small compared to federal funding. Example: six states account for 80% of total state matching.***
- With greater funding support, literacy offerings could be expanded, especially early morning and late afternoon and evening classes, through K-12 and community college systems.
- It is critical that basic literacy and occupational skills be combined more in future offerings, making greater use of Job Corps and Career Center resources along with greatly enhanced funding. Tying workplace basic education programs into the community adult education system further benefits individuals by allowing them to continue their workplace education seamlessly even when it is not available in the workplace. This is especially important in rural and remote communities.
- Adult education practitioners need to play an active role within their one-stop centers. To ensure that adult education is not an invisible partner, practitioners should become active in the decision-making structure to the extent possible.
- Successful programs provide a mix of services, including job search, education, and job training. Adult education must recognize the range of needs, skills, life circumstances, and talents among unemployed adults. Then design programs that mix vocational literacy and ESL with skills and job training opportunities that offer incremental steps to employment, education and stability.
- Likewise, educators must become aware of their local labor market and how that information can be used in the classroom to customize learning to meet the requirements of available jobs.

Adult education practitioners must also be made aware of the implications of transitioning... not only to post-secondary education, but transitioning to work as well.

- Link ABE with workforce learning and credentials so that undereducated adults earn both at the same time. Providing the opportunity for undereducated adults to earn both an education credential and a workforce credential at the same time offers a significant bonus for both the individual employee and the employer.
- In localities, build on existing programs and coalitions of community groups and organizations, unions, businesses, elected officials, and foundations to create career ladders with multiple pathways for individuals. Learners can then move from literacy/ESL through GED through employment training and post secondary education. It is imperative for adult education practitioners to more fully understand their roles as workforce development partners, rather than adult education providers.
- Increasing the opportunities for adults to improve their basic skills in the workplace is another strategy for making basic education programs accessible to individuals. Many adults find workplace education programs that are actually offered at their workplace to be especially convenient for access. ***The importance of this kind of access is verified by research indicating that time and money are by far the biggest obstacles to participation in basic skills programs.***
- Programs should utilize/develop program and instructional standards and curriculums based on business and industry standards. They should use valid and reliable assessments specifically designed to reflect industry standards, content standards and competencies, and provide meaningful reporting of assessment results that inform instruction and document skills to learners and employers. ***The current National Reporting System does not support this documentation. In fact, many workplace education participants (and their learning outcomes) are not even reported to the federal program office.***

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation

The strategies listed below were identified as having moderate to great potential for meeting this goal.

- More state-level initiatives should be created and fully funded, with resource centers and seed money to support work-related basic education (similar to those developed in Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, among other states).
- Legislators and decision makers at federal and state levels of government need to be made aware of the evidence of the economic and social benefits to individuals, organizations, and the country that derive from improving access to adult basic education before they will act to change the legislation.
- The other side of motivating change is letting legislators and decision makers in government know the risks and drawbacks of not addressing the issue, of leaving the status quo in place and not addressing the low basic skills of adults in the labor force.
- Legislation and regulation should provide for part-time working students enrolled in either non-credit job training programs (including computer training) or credit courses at colleges to be eligible for federal and state financial aid programs, including grants and loans.

- The National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Program, funded from 1989 through 1996, had a major influence in the development of workplace education programs and systems. ***For example, of the seven states funded to develop statewide systems, six still provide significant support for these programs.*** Congress should revive these demonstration grants, to address new and evolving issues, such as the computerization of records in hospitals, which puts workers with low literacy, low computer literacy at risk of losing their jobs.
- Additional funding is needed for training and technical assistance to support educational providers in delivering targeted curriculum and instruction that better meet the needs of workers and employers.
- Legislative provisions are needed to create stronger linkages and collaborations with the Workforce Investment Act partners, creating incentives for regional economic development plans that include a strong educational component.
- Legislation must be refined to address the need for all states to document learners who obtained employment and retained employment and increased earnings by requiring data matching with state base wage files.
- Governments should provide tax incentives for work-based literacy offerings by employers.
- Governments must re-energize advocacy for work-related learning. Veteran workforce educators should be re-connected, and newcomers welcomed into a major advocacy effort. This effort needs to be well-informed about past and recent work in the field. ***Unfortunately, the major vehicles for dissemination of this work (ERIC, national conferences, National Diffusion Network) are no longer supported at the national level.***

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness

The strategies listed below were identified as having moderate to good potential for meeting this goal.

- Evidence should be marshaled to show that adult education has real benefits and that it is important enough to enough people that it ought to be viewed as a system with associated systemic supports, including infrastructure and resources.
- “Adult literacy” is not the best term for our use because people’s mind set (employers, in particular) regarding the term “literacy” is too narrow. Also, to many, the term “literacy” has a somewhat negative connotation. A better term would be something similar to “adult continuing education” since it should apply to all adults.
- Raising public awareness of the potential benefits of improving basic skills will help to turn public opinion away from the stigmas associated with literacy and basic skills education and to accept the reality that basic skills are necessary in today’s knowledge-based economy.
- Adult education organizations must make a concerted effort to reach out to all businesses and their employees in the nation with targeted information on adult education and literacy and its impact on the bottom line.

- Leadership must keep in the public eye the statistics on low-skills adults, and the costs to health care, the education of children, the economy, the workplace, and community.
- The key, overarching messages are that the ability of individuals to compete for jobs in the labor market, for businesses to compete in their industry, and for the country to compete globally are all severely restricted by low basic skills.
- Programs should work with national and state organizations (VALUE-the adult learner organization, COABE, CAAL among others) to document and profile the experiences of working adults who contribute to our economy, yet struggle with low literacy skills.

GOAL 4: Engaging Business and Philanthropy

The strategies listed below were identified as having moderate to great potential for meeting this goal.

- Whenever adult education demonstrates that it is clearly connected to individuals' ability to support themselves and their families through productive, creative work, and to strengthen the bonds of families and communities, then business and philanthropy is more than willing to join us in the enterprise.
- Raising awareness of the real economic impacts of hiring workers with low basic skills would motivate businesses to increase their financial support for basic adult education.
- Decision-makers in organizations need to see the connections between improved basic skills of their workforce and the corresponding rise in organizational capacity, performance, and productivity before they will invest in adult basic skills initiatives.
- Governments should fund studies to verify the return-on-investment, and then share findings with employers. Adult educators can then speak to employers in terms they understand and that have meaning to them.
- Businesses and their associations should endorse and support successful efforts to build a more skilled workforce at the local level.
- Adult education practitioners should use the “champions” of adult education in their communities to bring recognition to the field. This “champion” can take many forms: the individual promoted at work after attending an adult education class, the company with an on-site GED class, the Chamber of Commerce that donates funds to buy new books.
- Practitioners should take the time to research the impact of their services on the community, so that they have evidence to support their success. In ideal situations, this impact can be reflected by the return-on-investment that business can show when participating in workplace education programs.
- ***Care needs to be taken to assure that workers are not fired or otherwise harmed by assessments of basic skills.***

Recasting Above Responses by Major Theme

Professionalize Adult Education

Adult education needs to be student-goal driven. This means a system of delivery that defines student goals, determines education needs relative to these goals, and develops a plan to build the skills necessary to meet goals. It must also build a practice-based professional development system to assure that staffs have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to support this adult learning.

Salaries, benefits, and other working conditions for adult educators must be upgraded in order to build a professional (paid and volunteer) workforce capable of providing quality, goal-directed educational services.

Programs should utilize/develop program and instructional standards and curriculums based on business and industry standards. They should use valid and reliable assessments specifically designed to reflect industry standards, content standards and competencies, and provide meaningful reporting of assessment results that inform instruction and document skills to learners and employers. ***The current National Reporting System does not support this documentation. In fact, many workplace education participants (and their learning outcomes) are not even reported to the federal program office.***

Increase Access

An adult education system should be not only goal-directed and just-in-time, but also one providing programs that adults can readily access in their daily lives.

With greater funding support, literacy offerings could be expanded, especially early morning and late afternoon and evening classes, through K-12 and community college systems.

Increasing the opportunities for adults to improve their basic skills in the workplace is another strategy for making basic education programs accessible to individuals. Many adults find workplace education programs that are actually offered at their workplace to be especially convenient for access. ***The importance of this kind of access is verified by research indicating that time and money are by far the biggest obstacles to participation in basic skills programs.***

Legislation and regulation should provide for part-time working students enrolled in either non-credit job training programs (including computer training) or credit courses at colleges to be eligible for federal and state financial aid programs, including grants and loans.

Develop to Scale

Governments must greatly increase federal and federal/state matching funding for adult literacy programs, identifying literacy as an investment rather than just an expenditure. ***In most states, the state investment is small compared to federal funding. Example: six states account for 80% of total state matching.***

More state-level initiatives should be created and fully funded, with resource centers and seed money to support work-related basic education (similar to those developed in Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, among other states).

The National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Program, funded from 1989 through 1996, had a major influence in the development of workplace education programs and systems. ***For example, of the seven states funded to develop statewide systems, six still provide significant support for these programs.*** Congress should revive these demonstration grants, to address new and evolving issues, such as the computerization of records in hospitals, which puts workers with low literacy, low computer literacy at risk of losing their jobs.

Additional funding is needed for training and technical assistance to support educational providers in delivering targeted curriculum and instruction that better meet the needs of workers and employers.

Governments should provide tax incentives for work-based literacy offerings by employers.

Governments must re-energize advocacy for work-related learning. Veteran workforce educators should be re-connected, and newcomers welcomed into a major advocacy effort. This effort needs to be well-informed about past and recent work in the field. *Unfortunately, the major vehicles for dissemination of this work (ERIC, national conferences, National Diffusion Network) are no longer supported at the national level.*

Businesses and their associations should endorse and support successful efforts to build a more skilled workforce at the local level.

Partnerships

It is critical that basic literacy and occupational skills be combined more in future offerings, making greater use of Job Corps and Career Center resources along with greatly enhanced funding. Tying workplace basic education programs into the community adult education system further benefits individuals by allowing them to continue their workplace education seamlessly even when it is not available in the workplace. This is especially important in rural and remote communities.

Adult education practitioners need to play an active role within their one-stop centers. To ensure that adult education is not an invisible partner, practitioners should become active in the decision-making structure to the extent possible.

Successful programs provide a mix of services, including job search, education, and job training. Adult education must recognize the range of needs, skills, life circumstances, and talents among unemployed adults. Then design programs that mix vocational literacy and ESL with skills and job training opportunities that offer incremental steps to employment, education and stability.

Likewise, educators must become aware of their local labor market and how that information can be used in the classroom to customize learning to meet the requirements of available jobs. Adult education practitioners must also be made aware of the implications of transitioning...not only to post-secondary education, but transitioning to work as well.

Link ABE with workforce learning and credentials so that undereducated adults earn both at the same time. Providing the opportunity for undereducated adults to earn both an education credential and a workforce credential at the same time offers a significant bonus for both the individual employee and the employer.

In localities, build on existing programs and coalitions of community groups and organizations, unions, businesses, elected officials, and foundations to create career ladders with multiple pathways for individuals. Learners can then move from literacy/ESL through GED through employment training and post secondary education. It is imperative for adult education practitioners to more fully understand their roles as workforce development partners, rather than adult education providers.

Whenever adult education demonstrates that it is clearly connected to individuals' ability to support themselves and their families through productive, creative work, and to strengthen the bonds of families and communities, then business and philanthropy is more than willing to join us in the enterprise.

Return on investment

Legislators and decision makers at federal and state levels of government need to be made aware of the evidence of the economic and social benefits to individuals, organizations, and the country that derive from improving access to adult basic education before they will act to change the legislation.

Legislation must be refined to address the need for all states to document learners who obtained employment and retained employment and increased earnings by requiring data matching with state base wage files.

Evidence should be marshaled to show that adult education has real benefits and that it is important enough to enough people that it ought to be viewed as a system with associated systemic supports, including infrastructure and resources.

Raising public awareness of the potential benefits of improving basic skills will help to turn public opinion away from the stigmas associated with literacy and basic skills education and to accept the reality that basic skills are necessary in today's knowledge-based economy.

Decision-makers in organizations need to see the connections between improved basic skills of their workforce and the corresponding rise in organizational capacity, performance, and productivity before they will invest in adult basic skills initiatives.

Governments should fund studies to verify the return-on-investment, and then share findings with employers. Adult educators can then speak to employers in terms they understand and that have meaning to them.

Practitioners should take the time to research the impact of their services on the community, so that they have evidence to support their success. In ideal situations, this impact can be reflected by the return-on-investment that business can show when participating in workplace education programs.

Care needs to be taken to assure that workers are not fired or otherwise harmed by assessments of basic skills.

Return on non-investment

The other side of motivating change is letting legislators and decision makers in government know the risks and drawbacks of not addressing the issue, of leaving the status quo in place and not addressing the low basic skills of adults in the labor force.

Leadership must keep in the public eye the statistics on low-skills adults, and the costs to health care, the education of children, the economy, the workplace, and community.

The key, overarching messages are that the ability of individuals to compete for jobs in the labor market, for businesses to compete in their industry, and for the country to compete globally are all severely restricted by low basic skills.

Programs should work with national and state organizations (VALUE-the adult learner organization, COABE, CAAL among others) to document and profile the experiences of working adults who contribute to our economy, yet struggle with low literacy skills.

Raising awareness of the real economic impacts of hiring workers with low basic skills would motivate businesses to increase their financial support for basic adult education.

Getting Their Attention

“Adult literacy” is not the best term for our use because people’s mind set (employers, in particular) regarding the term “literacy” is too narrow. Also, to many, the term “literacy” has a somewhat negative connotation. A better term would be something similar to “adult continuing education” since it should apply to all adults.

Adult education organizations must make a concerted effort to reach out to all businesses and their employees in the nation with targeted information on adult education and literacy and its impact on the bottom line.

Adult education practitioners should use the “champions” of adult education in their communities to bring recognition to the field. This “champion” can take many forms: the individual promoted at work after attending an adult education class, the company with an on-site GED class, the Chamber of Commerce that donates funds to buy new books.

From the Cutting Room Floor

We need to invest in assessments that focus on applied performance in these skill areas, to determine whether learners not only have the requisite knowledge and skills – but can use them.

Create a lifelong learning block grant for which cities, states, educational institutions, workplaces, and other community institutions could apply, and include an accountability system for the block grant.

At the national level, support the Lifelong Learning Accounts Act of 2007 to establish a federal LiLA demonstration program for up to 200,000 workers in up to 10 states.

Extend the federal and state funding for adult education beyond GED to fund college preparation classes for adults who need help in passing entrance exams and acquiring college.

Resource Group 7: TECHNOLOGY/MEDIA/DISTANCE LEARNING

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GOAL 1: UPGRADING BASIC EDUCATION

Upgrading the basic education of adults for current and emerging jobs, postsecondary education, civic and community participation, and support of their children’s learning will require a fundamental paradigm shift in the way adult basic education and services are currently provided in our country. In order to make that shift, we need to move from a “place-based strategy” to a “consumer-centered solution” that takes full advantage of new web-based products and communications systems to allow adult learners unimpeded access to services and tools.

Technology is not new and should not be thought of as separate from learning; it is already working as an integral part of adult education. When talking about technology, we should distinguish between programming (content) and distribution (delivery platform). Evolving forms of distribution lead to more options for programming and how it is used. Some programming is designed for self-viewing, some is designed to be viewed with a teacher. Some is designed as a complete course, some is used as supplemental material.

The infrastructure to support the use of technology in adult education, such as broadband access, has improved greatly over the past ten years. Access to online learning is increasing at a dramatic rate for those with the greatest need. Innovations in technology, along with increased access, suggest that many adult education resources could be provided more efficiently. Many new devices with educational potential, such as smart phones and PDAs, are becoming widely available. Technology-supported adult education should be *portable, plentiful, and personal*. Learning technology should be as ubiquitous as ATMs—wherever, whenever. Technology-based learning needs to be accessible, affordable, fluid, adult, dignified, fun, easy to use, as well as practical and contextualized within topics that are meaningful to adults (e.g., getting a better job). Technology-based learning can be “private” (a safe place to make mistakes) but can also be tracked by an instructor. It should adapt to the learner’s level and progress. It can be interactive, media rich, unmediated, or used in combination with instructor support.

Problems /Obstacles

- Although technology resources are becoming increasingly available, they are still not available to everyone in need.
- Technology-based resources are not always easy to use by the target audience.
- There are not enough of quality technology-based curriculum materials available.

- Standards for adult education vary across the country making the development of new curriculum and delivery platforms a challenge.
- Many adult education instructors are not adequately trained to integrate technology in their instruction.
- Content needs to be accessible and not unduly restricted by copyright, while still providing a mechanism to pay content publishers.
- Many adults cannot attend traditional programs or simply prefer to work independently to improve their skills, yet they still need support.
- There is currently inadequate funding for adult education.

Steps

- Survey existing technology-based curricula to see what we are missing. There are many resources that have been developed locally which may have national application.
- While exploring new platforms, continue to develop video content for television. TV is still most the accessible medium, available to nearly everyone. Video check out is popular in many places, particularly for English language learners. Public television stations, such as the Workforce Skills Adult Literacy (WSAL) group, along with other producers, can play a key role in this. For example, WSAL is working to get support from Congress for additional dollars for instructional technology—including producing new content.
- Curriculum developers should explore how handheld devices can deliver adult literacy instruction, how to write appropriate curriculum for those platforms, and whether or not current curriculum could be repurposed for new platforms. Mobile phones and other portable learning devices are already being used in K-12 in the U.S. and elsewhere. In the U.K., South Africa, and Australia there are experiments with using mobile phones for out-of-school young adults and other adults.
- Continue development of “hybrid” or “blended” learning that combines instruction using technology and media with face-to-face learning. The technology can serve as a conduit between the instructor and learner and may increase a program’s capacity to serve learners.
- Continue and strengthen the role of libraries as place where adults go to learn. Libraries play a crucial role in providing access and helping self-study adult learners. That role should be supported by making sure that libraries have a full array of technology-based learning resources and also have personnel who are able to support adult learners with a well-designed learning process that helps them accomplish their stated goals.
- Develop a national adult education “web portal” which would allow learners to work independently or with support from an instructor. The portal should be interactive and personalized with “tools” that adult learners can utilize (e.g., career information and preparation, skills inventories, and just-in-time learning). It should be capable of providing a learner assessment and tracking learner progress. A portal could be made up of “learning objects” that are portable and can be integrated in course management systems and transferable to other platforms. It should allow for and encourage local adaptation and link to

other content-rich providers; and it should direct learners to regional, state, institutional and local community programs and resources. Such a portal will require resources to maintain and update the online curricula. The portal could also be a training resource for teachers, tutors, counselors and homework helpers. Such a model could also be a useful supplemental learning resource for those who attend classes. (An adult education portal is currently under development at Portland State University.)

- Prepare a cadre of educators to effectively utilize technology tools. A “certificate in instructional design” could be developed which would help identify key competencies.
- Continue and expand online professional development. Online delivery is the key to professional development, particularly given the number of part-time teachers in the field. Online professional development is already playing an important role as we know from the work of Project IDEAL (www.projectideal.org) and the Southern Regional Education Board (www.sreb.org).
- Provide adequate pay to recruit and retain for adult education instructors who are skilled users of technology and skilled teachers. Consider pay differential pay to attract good teachers to rural and hard to serve areas where technology might play an even more important role.

GOAL 2. CREATING AND REFINING FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

Much of the group discussion on this topic centered around the issues of how adult education is structured and funded in this country. These issues not only impact technology and media, but adult education as a whole.

Problems /Obstacles

- Adult education is not administered the same way in every state.
- Much of the public policy that impacts adult education is at the state level.
- Adult learning seems to take a back seat to K-12 with focus on the GED and no further.
- Adult education funding is not the drop in the bucket but “the mist above the bucket” – i.e., adult education is not taken seriously.
- There needs to be system for crediting programs which serve distance learners.
- There is not adequate financial incentive for private companies to develop new resources specifically for the adult education market.
- There are many adult education champions but not a concerted effort.

Steps

- Provide the quantity and consistency of funds (federal and state) needed to make a truly lasting impact on adult literacy.

- Invest in both technology and infrastructure of adult education programs at the federal and state level.
- Make technology access more affordable for adult education through extension of the federal “E-rate.”
- Develop a national policy that reflects the relationship between low literacy and economic development, and the tax burden of low literacy through increased expenditures for health care and underemployment.
- Make a federal investment to expand the scale of workplace basic skills—including federal funding to help companies create workplace basic skills/ESOL-blended learning models with some face-to-face classes or tutorials, and some online classes and/or asynchronous learning.
- Develop a system that credits schools for serving distance learners—not strictly seat-based. Focus more on what you learn rather than how you learn. Move away from concept of seat-time.
- Cultivate partnerships within the educational community, including K-12 schools, post-secondary institutions and the business community.
- Develop a national discussion on adult education as a catalyst for change at the state level.

GOAL 3. IMPROVING PUBLIC AWARENESS

The discussion of public awareness focused on three areas: convincing individuals of the importance of improving their literacy; making the case to legislators on the need to improve adult literacy nationally; and educating the public about the depth and impact that low literacy has in this country. While raising public awareness, we need to make sure that adequate resources are in place to meet the resulting increase in demand for services.

Steps:

- Make the case to individual learners why improved literacy matters—through radio, commercial television, and public information. The most effective messages show role models of people who have done it. We can motivate and encourage adults through the media and refer them to available resources. At the local level, we need to be sure that the message includes where to find local programs.
- Market adult education like Coca Cola. (“Hooked on Phonics” is a good example of increasing public awareness through mass media.)
- Demystify technology for potential learners and build a common language among providers of service that is understandable to the public. No assumptions should be made about the understanding of technology, access, and knowledge gaps among the public.
- Make adult literacy a cause célèbre. Consider working with the Ad Council to get the message out.

- Keep trying to get this issue higher on the agenda of newspaper groups, television news channels, etc., so that it acquires enough heat to become a major part of the national political debate and an issue which affects voting.
- Get the message out that adult literacy learning is part of a continuum, from K-12 on up, and address any public perception that the K-12 system is to blame for lack of adult literacy.
- Show legislators the numbers of people in their districts without high school diplomas and the impact it will have if that changes.
- Provoke a public debate by comparing adult literacy in the U.S. with other countries.

GOAL 4. ENGAGING BUSINESS AND PHILANTHROPY

The group discussed the importance to businesses community of having an educated workforce and the sense of corporate responsibility among some companies. Two companies represented in the group, Verizon and IBM, have made major commitments to technology and literacy. Verizon has recently launched “The Verizon Literacy Network” (<http://literacynetwork.verizon.org>), which focuses on quality, delivery, curriculum, and best practices, that span across the lifetime. Verizon is also developing new content and techniques in multiple media for teachers, learners, program managers, and volunteers through a variety of platforms. An example of IBM’s commitment to technology and literacy is its Reading Companion initiative (www.readingcompanion.org)—a web-based tool that helps readers through text, audio, and voice recognition.

Adult education providers should work with the business community to identify skills needed in the workplace. These skill could be incorporated into technology-based learning resources, such as a national web portal.

Resource Group 8: CORRECTIONS EDUCATION

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GOAL 1: Upgrading Basic Education

Adults needing basic education are more highly concentrated in the nation’s jails and prisons than in the general population. About 41% have not completed high school or its equivalent. In addition, this population has a higher incidence of learning disabilities, mental health issues and substance abuse that impact learning and skill development. Women are the now the fastest growing demographic. Within five years or less, over 90% return to their communities in need of employment and stable housing. The importance of high quality corrections education programs cannot be overstated.

The Corrections Resource Group agreed that one of the biggest obstacles to building and sustaining high quality programs is unstable funding at the federal, state and local levels that does not keep pace with the increasing need. Lack of adequate funding in the larger adult education field has resulted in over 80% part-time instructors, which limits the potential for increased professionalization of the field. Therefore, increased funding is the largest barrier to implementing the recommendations below to meet the challenge of the first goal.

1. Corrections education programs need to be vitally connected at the federal, state and local levels to the larger adult education community and communities of learning. For the field to be recognized on a par with other areas of education increased professional standards must be established.

- Require instructors to have professional teaching credentials, preferably in adult education. As one participant put it, “We need a professional staff delivering a professional product.” Professional standards are needed to gain the respect of the public and the students. Another member cited the example of proposed changes in an iteration of the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. One version included language similar to the *No Child Left Behind* “highly qualified teacher” standard. In response to this anticipated requirement, one state designed a five-course literacy endorsement for instructors. However, when the language was pulled from the bill, so was the endorsement program.
- Require relevant continuing education so instructors are able to remain current in best practices and content specialties, especially related to teaching adults with learning disabilities and other special needs.

2. Continue funding research in adult basic education to identify best practices across all contexts of instruction (i.e., family literacy, workplace literacy, corrections education, and community or school-based programs.) These research findings must be translated into practice at the program level. An example of a powerful paradigm for effective reading instruction is the Adult Reading Components Study by NSCALL. For these findings to benefit learners, implementation models must be incorporated into trainings funded for local program administrators and instructors.

3. Explore the use of technology to extend learning access for adult learners. One group member strongly recommended a “detached, critical” approach be taken to evaluating the use computer-assisted or online instruction with lower level students. Research is needed to identify best practices for integrating computer-aided and/or online instruction into adult basic education and to determine which students are best served by this method. Cost-savings efforts to replace instructors with computers may be ill advised. As the internet increasingly becomes a major means of delivering educational materials and online courses, correctional facilities need to be pressed to identify secure or low-risk ways of making this resource available to corrections students. Some group members especially recommended that avenues be sought to provide online access to postsecondary courses to inmates.

4. State and federal leadership is needed to promote and support adoption of common definitions, outcome measures and skill level descriptions in order to describe inmates’ education needs and to report student progress in terms other than completion of a GED. The Resource Group had widely varying levels of knowledge of the adult basic skill levels and measures included in the National Reporting System, the accountability system used by Title II adult education programs. The Correction Education Data Network (CEDN) project is another national data collection effort not widely known about or used. In 2004, a Corrections Education Data Guidebook was published with guidance from twelve corrections administrators and data managers, in order to build consensus around common language for gathering and reporting corrections education data nationally. Adoption of the common data definitions is voluntary and use of Guidebook is to help states strengthen their data management systems for improved reporting to policymakers and to improve the quality of national research. The recommendation of the Resource Group is to continue support and awareness of this project and the voluntary use of the Corrections Education Data Guidebook. To avoid the development of a parallel adult education database, one member recommends integration of components of the National Reporting System such as the skill level definitions to allow for comparative reporting of outcomes and descriptions of students’ functioning levels.

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation

Correctional education is often a “harder sell” for legislators than other adult education programs. However, the corrections population must be recognized as part of the larger adult education community needing basic education services. As one participant said, “If education is important in the community, it’s important in corrections.” With this in mind, the Corrections Group makes the following recommendations:

1. A minimum level of set-aside funding for corrections programs should be designated in any federal adult education and family literacy legislation. In the current federal adult education legislation **up to** ten percent of state funds may support correctional programs. This is a potential decline from the earlier adult education act that **required** a ten percent set-aside for corrections. The corrections population must be seen as an integral part of the larger community.

2. Each state should have a legislative commitment to provide basic education for incarcerated adults through completion of the GED. In 2002, twenty-two states had mandatory education requirements, and of those only ten required completion of the GED. State legislation acknowledges the legitimacy and need for services and allows for more stable funding, even though the allocation is relatively low in some states. As part of the legislation, states should have a funded administrative position responsible for the education budget and oversight of the corrections education programs to ensure funds are used to support education services and are not diverted to other local institution operational needs as is typical without this level of control.

3. Two legislative changes would extend the continuum of educational and training opportunities to inmates beyond the GED for postsecondary education or job training. These opportunities provide greater motivation for students to complete the GED and provide the job specific skills or further education needed to enhance employment options or continued education after release.

- The first recommended change is to restore Pell Grant eligibility for inmates. Although inmates (or the educational programs in which they were enrolled) were awarded less than one percent of all Pell Grant dollars, the political “tough on crime” climate at the time overruled what could arguably be demonstrated an effective investment in crime prevention. Research is consistent in showing an even greater reduction in recidivism for those with some postsecondary education than those with only basic education. Inmates need access to a continuum of educational services.
- The second recommended legislative change is to extend the age eligibility for the Grants to the States for Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth from 25 years to 35 years of age. Currently this wisely targets the high risk, violent youth most likely to re-offend. Large numbers of 25 to 35 year-old inmates have limited relevant job skills that reduce the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community after release. These inmates also on average have many remaining years to be productively involved in the workforce if adequately prepared.

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness

There is a public perception that providing education and other programming to those incarcerated is being “soft on crime” and/or not a worthy investment of public funds. Research demonstrates otherwise.

Public awareness and informational campaigns for adult literacy must include corrections education and focus on the following key messages:

- Over ninety-percent of those incarcerated will one day be returning to the communities. (About 650,000 prisoners are released each year to their communities from state and federal prisons.) Are they better prepared to reintegrate with families, into employment and community life than when they entered prison? Without education and job training interventions to increase employability options, undereducated ex-offenders are a greater risk to the community and less able to become self-sustaining.
- Providing education services is cost effective. Studies by several states have demonstrated that costs for adult basic education and especially vocational training programs result in a positive return on investment. That is, those who participate in an education program have a lower rate of recidivism than those who do not. This results in lower incarceration costs that

exceed the cost of providing the education program. The details vary, but published return on investment rates are between \$1.50 and \$2.

- Educating incarcerated parents of children better prepares and motivates them to support their own children's education. Increasing intergenerational literacy reduces the risk for multigenerational involvement in crime.
- A significant segment of the needed workforce is now or has been incarcerated. Seven million, or one out of every 32 adults in the U.S. is either incarcerated, on parole or probation. Workforce development within corrections that provides basic academic and job skill development is also economic development for the community.

GOAL 4: Engaging Business and Philanthropy

Obvious connections with business and corrections are corrections industries, work-based training and apprenticeship programs where outside business relationships are integral to the program. Greater coordination and alignment of these work-based programs with a basic skills component would add greater value and legitimacy for the basic skills student.

One member suggested that the future of adult basic education is in workplace literacy. Direct connections between skill development, completion of a GED and job-related training and certification is important when offenders are expected to find employment soon after release. Corrections educators should engage employers and businesses in development of workplace literacy curriculum to align basic skill requirements with workplace standards, such as the Manufacturing National Skills Standards.

A common concern expressed among the group was the importance of identifying appropriate job training options for inmates unable to complete a GED due to limited skills. Job development activities for these inmates with businesses that have employment opportunities for jobs that require less than GED level skills would greatly assist these offenders in re-entry.

Philanthropic organizations may be interested in funding family literacy models for correctional facilities for both men and women and their children as a strategy to reduce intergenerational crime and support family reunification.

Resource Group 9: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

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GOAL 1: Upgrading Basic Education

- Need for adult education system that is on par with K12/Higher Ed., but does not mirror those systems. Adult education is its own animal, and should remain as such.
- “Checkerboard” of programs – delivery through a variety of programs such as CBOs, community colleges, libraries, workforce centers, etc.
- Collaboration among programs is essential; key to building and enhancing current network. Important element: looking at which programs are best at providing which services. Who does what best? Also, where do different types of providers fit in system? *Challenge:* Collaborations very helpful, but they bloom and wither at different times. Incentives for meaningful, sustained collaboration needed. Funding sometimes serves as disincentive for collaboration (e.g. tied to attendance numbers only, disparate sources, etc.) *Challenge:* Clarifying who is responsible for program improvement, professional development, different student populations.

Resources needed for:

- Programs (classrooms, materials, etc.)
- Support services for students such as child care, transportation, etc.
- Program improvement & professional development (two are interconnected, yet distinct. Both should be paid and professional.) *Challenge:* Program improvement often not systematic

Program Improvement

- Full-time instructors essential – more are needed.
- Credentialing of instructors – Range of ways to demonstrate qualifications; system should be flexible to integrate everyone but measure credentials on par with other professionals within the same program/overall system. *Challenge:* No consensus in the field on issue of certification of instructors.
- More dissemination of information on successful programs needed (not only whole program models, but program elements)
- Leadership development for both educators and learners. *Challenge:* Start-up programs in communities often lack support for growth or sustainability, so such programs often come and go.

- Assessments – Current assessment system for adult ESL is inadequate; a battery of inexpensive and reliable assessments that measure all language skills is needed. *Challenge:* Not enough time on task for students to demonstrate progress. Assessments should be on teaching towards success. Assessments now being used that require certain number of hours, yet transient students do not reach threshold before leaving or when assessment is used.

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation

Focus of policy

- Allow adequate time for language acquisition. Should move away from unrealistic expectations and outcomes. Move away from “quick fix” mentality.
- Not equating adult literacy with English language literacy. Advocacy for first language literacy & native language development.
- ESL should not just be in the “workforce” context, as it reduces language learning to job preparation. Areas of adult education, including adult ESL, should each be on par with workforce development.
- Accountability should mean more than testing and paperwork. Structures are dictated by assessments and accountability. Accountability needs to be redefined as not just testing and tied to workplace/jobs, but also learning gains.

Funding

- *Challenge:* Funding for programs tied to level gains – accountability based budgeting is problematic. Level gains are measured on a 1-year basis – more longitudinal data is needed.
- (What you can do is prescribed by funders – half the time is paperwork. Cyclical funding periods create burden.)
- Too little funding for development and implementation of innovative models, and too little resources for dissemination. Demonstration projects aren’t allowed to have a long life; they need to be mainstreamed as new approaches. This is an issue of policy, institutional management, and resources.
- High quality ESL can be costly. Targeted investments need in teacher training and dissemination of information.
- ESL should be distinct public funding line item and have separate appropriations. ESL and ABE are very different, and funds should be separated.
- Many separate funding streams often go to ESL services – way to streamline?

Specific policy issues

- ESL related to immigration policy, however should not get caught up in debate over who should be provided services. More important to look at overall national interests in terms of education/language policy and where ESL specifically fits in. (New dynamic as states implement immigration policies that impact programs.)

- State regulations that are not aligned well dictate different procedures and tests. Whole assessment system needs to be looked at.
- Interaction/communication among programs. For examples, referrals from state job placement to ESL providers.
- One-stops – funding doesn't follow students. Title I of WIA written with “quick fix” mentality. Policies that connect one-stops to ESL providers need to be changed.
- Administrators at upper levels should have training/experience in ESL.
- Native language literacy should be allowable with public funds, as well as bridge support.
- Go back to separate National Literacy Act.

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness

- Realities and nuances of second language acquisition largely not understood by public. Great misunderstanding on how long it takes to develop English fluency.
- Lack of appreciation of immigrants/ESL learners – they are not a burden on the country.
- Political realities – conflicting ideas: immigrants should speak English, but funding not in place for services. *Challenge*: classes that focus on native language development are politically unpopular.

National leadership

- National, independent leadership in adult ESL is needed. National adult ed organizations focused more on ABE/GED; much more robust organization that is independent of government needed to take on range of issues of ESL.
- Collaborations with immigrant advocacy groups (Immigrant advocacy groups slow to take up issue – pressure needed for more of their involvement.)
- Funding and resources needed for public awareness/education.
- Research on the benefits of adult education for both individuals and the large community/society – impact of participation. (Specific focus on ESL/language issue.)
- Greater dissemination of information will help raise public awareness

Research findings in needed areas can help shape public awareness. Research needed in:

- Success of adult English-only classes vs. native-language support. Currently difficult to document due to the revolving door of students. English-only literacy classes sometimes prevent access for students (i.e. language barrier.)
- Native language literacy is an important basis for ESL acquisition and more research should be done looking at the need for and efficacy of Native language literacy as a precursor to ESL acquisition.

- Student attention/retention – research needed on progress with transient students.
- Longitudinal research is needed: where do students end up? What is known is put to little use. How can programs be designed so they are put to best use?
- Extra-curricular learning. Breaking away from notion that all learning happens in the classroom; concept of embedded literacy – workplace, CBOs, etc.
- Impact of full-time/part-time instructors.
- Issue of young English language learners being “warehoused” in adult education.
- Lot of assumptions of population – research needed as to who population is in terms of education and language background.

GOAL 4: Engaging Business and Philanthropy

- Employers often looking to offer classes, but concern over long-term need/duration.
- Opportunity to engage business and philanthropies. Adult ESL not on the radar of national foundations; investments critically needed.
- Employers are concerned about the issues, but unwilling to make the long-term investment, as it is seen as a public sector responsibility.
- Greater dissemination of information on workplace programs will help with engaging business.
- Business and philanthropy should have a role in fostering/supporting collaborations among providers.
- Local business and employers should be part of local collaborative systems.
- Support from business and philanthropy.
- Public awareness campaign.
- National voice/organization for adult ESL – umbrella group sponsoring advocacy, research, networking, etc.
- Support for research in critically needed areas.
- *Challenge:* Manner in which idea can be packaged and sold to foundations/philanthropies? Concern about conflicting interest with employers/corporate funding.

Four general comments from the group

- The group felt that it was important that the goal in the “Dare to Dream” document was framed in terms of many types of program content – not only focused on workforce development.

- Important to point out that ESL is not a “separate” issue, but in fact impacts all areas, including themes of all the different resource groups.
- ESL distinctly different than ABE/GED; second language acquisition employs different methodologies and has different pedagogy. Because of the greater variety of learners’ educational and linguistic backgrounds, learning situations, and second language acquisition times, ESL is often more complex than ABE/GED. (Because adult ESL is grouped with ABE/GED, its distinct needs and challenges are often overlooked and taken for granted.)
- The notes from the resource group are a compilation of the groups comments and feedback, but are not necessarily all points of consensus

Resource Group 10: RESEARCH

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GOAL 1: Upgrading Basic Education

Steps:

- Establish a structure to provide differentiated instruction for 5 populations: (1) weak readers and those with learning disabilities need structured program; (2) mid-level readers need diagnostic assessment and instruction to match; (3) GED-level students need vocabulary, study skills, and job/college counseling; (4) new immigrants need all levels of English instruction; (5) youth need instruction that motivates them. At the same time, focus on the whole learner: culture, race, educational background, goals.

- Conceive of participation as connection to a program, not attendance. Establish a delivery system (entirely different from current system) that allows adult students to learn in different ways and contexts: self-study, study with tutor or peers, study in classes, distance education (online, hand-held, etc.). The goal of this system is to support much longer learning trajectories and to create human and other resources (web sites, materials) to support learners as they move in and out of one learning context or program into another. Consider workers and post-secondary students as our learners, too, and support them in their own contexts, rather than “front-loading” all basic skills into adult education. Create “learning managers” or “advisors” in programs to assist adult learners to plan and manage their learning to meet their own goals. Sponsor action research by 4-5 programs in different regions to develop and evaluate models of this delivery system.
- Develop certificates for adult students that are transportable across states and provide real information to employers about the skills students have mastered.
- Increase the value of adult literacy teaching jobs. Solve the working condition problems of adult literacy teachers: low salary, limited hours, no benefits, etc. No matter how much professional development can provide, we won’t get the quality of teachers we need, nor have them stay for long, unless we provide decent jobs. Develop career ladders and offer university-based pre-service training.
- Establish a minimum per student cost that covers adequate student support services, adequate teacher working conditions (including prep time and paid professional development time), and adequate intensity of instruction through more full-time teachers. This will undoubtedly be much higher than the per student cost now.
- Provide core training to all teachers in all states that focuses on the basics: how to teach reading/writing/math, lesson planning, and curriculum development using both direct instruction and contextualized instruction.
- Encourage state directors to be more directive and have a strategy for using state leadership money to systematically upgrade quality in their state through professional development and program improvement resources.
- Make education in prisons a responsibility of the state education department, and make the U.S. DOE take responsibility for education in federal prisons.
- Support the development of literacy services specifically for young parents and mothers.

Obstacles:

- Difficult to provide differentiated instruction in programs outside of urban areas.
- Changing our field’s perception that more money would fix the current system: we need a new type of delivery system.
- Changing the accountability system to “count” progress within a different delivery system: self-study, study with tutor or peers, and study on-line, in addition to classroom-based study.
- Develop for and with the field a broader vision to solve the problem of serving 30 million, not just high quality for 3 million.

- Federal government’s reluctance to require states to support adequate pay and conditions for teachers.

GOAL 2: Creating and Refining Federal and State Legislation

Steps:

- Establish policies that allow adult literacy programs to offer intensive, integrated adult literacy instruction that fits into specific career paths and further education (e.g., basic skills integrated with health care industry training, leading to enrollment in a post-secondary health care program).
- Fix the funding and regulation policies to support child care in all programs for anyone who needs it.
- “Equal footing with 9-12” is OK for overall funding and support for professional teachers in adult literacy, but other aspects of our system should be seen as unique and not equal to 9-12.
- Change legislation that separates adult education from post-secondary; e.g., change the difference in status between developmental education and adult education, eligibility for Pell grants, etc.
- Align the accountability system to match a new delivery system that “counts” participation as connection to program and “counts” studying on own, at home, through distance education or other venues the same as seat time in classes.
- Mandate that accountability systems count progress for learners over multiple years, not just within one academic year
- Make accountability the responsibility of each state, rather than the federal government, and change the nature of the accountability system from following EACH student to following a random sample of programs and students, which would allow for more careful testing, better data and a small burden on programs. Ensure that the accountability system captures progress in literacy practices, not just literacy proficiencies.
- Restore full research funding specifically for adult learning and literacy.
- Enlist the support of businesses to help us make our case and demand that U.S. and state legislatures fund services.
- Fund youth who drop out of high school and come into adult education at the same level they would be funded if they were still in school. Create legislation that allows high school dropouts to “capture” the funds that otherwise would have been spent on their formal education until age 19, 20 or 21, and allow the individual to use those funds for basic education later in life, with a set of policies similar to the GI bill, not vouchers.

Obstacles:

- The federal government’s mindset about accountability, which requires testing ALL students.
- With changing leadership at the state level, either new directors need much more training in how to be directive and have a strong strategic plan in their state OR (and perhaps better) USDOE should regularize the basic administrative requirements so that a state director doesn’t need as long to get routine for the “bread and butter” issues. If states get clear directions from OVAE about how to handle paperwork, then it would lighten up the state directors’ load to become leaders.
- Changing political landscape sometimes devalues research for adult education, sometimes supports it.

GOAL 3: Improving Public Awareness**Steps:**

- Focus on building awareness of the college-educated people: people who don’t read well have great skills in other areas, great parents, good at math, etc.
- House all programs either in community colleges or community centers that offer a range of services and classes, so that adult literacy is seen as either part of college, or as part of adult learning that all adults in a community do.
- Stress that support for adult literacy is not about supporting a particular group of people but about support for the type of economy, country and world we want to live in.
- Use the messages in *America’s Perfect Storm*. Develop materials based on these messages for local program directors to use to make local businesses and legislatures aware of the economic competitive issues. Set the expectations that this IS part of program directors’ jobs.
- Start a national effort to find those 5-10 key business leaders who aren’t yet, but should be, frightened about lack of competitiveness because of limited literacy skills in the workforce. Then, work intensively with those business leaders to have them build the awareness of their fellow business colleagues.
- Find non-PR ways of building public’s consciousness of the adult literacy situation, through novels, creative writing, art, music, etc.
- Express to OVAE and NIFL the field’s insistence that raising public awareness be part of their work. Ask them directly, “what have you done for us in the field”? “What is your vision?”
- Differentiate clearly between campaigns designed to encourage and motivate adult learners to seek services, and campaigns designed to raise the general public’s awareness of who adult learners are and what they need.
- Remind employers that adult literacy is the “applied knowledge” they say they want their workers to have: not academic knowledge but applied knowledge in soft skills such as problem solving, collaboration, etc.

Obstacles:

- Too many messages out there already.
- Balance between building a strong case and not portraying adult learners from a deficit perspective.

GOAL 4: Engaging Business and Philanthropy**Steps:**

- Encourage employers to support employees “in kind”: paid hours off of work to study.
- Train teachers who teach in workplaces in the same way that non-workplace adult literacy teachers are trained: core training in instruction, lesson planning, curriculum development, etc/
- Create a model for businesses to support the new delivery system (discussed above), not more workplace education; i.e., suggest that businesses release employees to do community service a few hours a month through infrastructure (Learner Web) where these employees could mentor or tutor adult learners “just in time”, either face-to-face or on the web.
- Create an image of lifelong learning for all ages of the workforce, since most of us will be working for the next 20 years. Follow the lead of younger age workers who are used to picking up new skills around technology: continual learning at all ages regardless of literacy skills.
- Sell “Literacy Bonds” through a credible national organization and/or through community banks and credit unions; build a mass movement to buy the bonds in support of adult literacy services

Obstacles:

- Businesses don’t listen to our educational expertise but instead get us to plan less efficient programs just so that we can get the funding.
- Fear in our field of business driving their own agenda within the content of adult learning; fear of being “in bed” with big business.

Specific Group Suggestions about Research

- Research funding should be budgeted as a minimum percentage of the funding for service delivery, but should NOT come out of the service delivery line item but rather out of research monies set aside for education.
- Establish and research a model program that differentiates instruction according to the five populations of adult learners: structured program for beginners; appropriate instruction for mid-level group; transition help for GED students; ESOL instruction; specific instruction for youth.
- Establish and research model or demonstration systems of a new delivery system that focuses on learning in a broader range of contexts (self-study, study with tutor or peers, classroom-based study,

and online study/distance education). Look at learner outcomes, types of community support needed, training needs for learning managers, etc.

- Fund more longitudinal research, either directly focused on adult literacy or focused on adult literacy as part of other major studies (birth cohort studies, health studies, etc.) Ensure that the new longitudinal study of 100,000 American families (following whole family from child's birth, \$35 billion for 25 years) includes data about lifelong learning.
- Conduct research on what incentives for studying will appeal to a wide range of adult learners. Specifically, investigate how to best serve the growing adult Hispanic population, by researching their motivations, culture, perception of education, etc. What are the issues related to their learning?
- Sponsor research on the amount of core training and types of working conditions that are related to higher-quality teaching and retention of teachers.
- Sponsor research about the strategies emerging in other countries (e.g., Australia's distance education, Mexico's photo-novellas, workforce credentials in Australia and New Zealand).
- Every few years, give an applied literacy test (like ones used in NALS and NAAL), along with NAEP, to 12th grade students, so that we have a measure of applied literacy skills along with academic proficiency.