

POLICY *to* PERFORMANCE

STATE ABE TRANSITION SYSTEMS REPORT

Transitioning Adults to Opportunity



November 2012

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This report references processes and approaches further outlined in the Policy to Performance Toolkit. To access the Toolkit visit

http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/careerpathways/profile_50

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I. Introduction

Context for the Policy to Performance Project

The recognition that education is central to individuals' economic and social well-being has prompted a multitude of efforts to encourage low-skilled adults to pursue postsecondary education and training. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the American Graduation Initiative heightened awareness about the need for increased opportunities for low-skilled adults to succeed in postsecondary education and obtain employment.

Demonstration projects funded by the U.S. Departments of Education¹, Labor², and Health and Human Services³ have supported local service delivery models for low-skilled adults to develop career pathways, earn certificates and credentials, and obtain high-demand jobs. Foundations also have sponsored demonstration programs that emphasize education as a linchpin in increasing adults' self-sufficiency.⁴ These efforts are building knowledge and experience in providing education and employment services that are tailored to the needs of low-skilled adults.

Local service providers' activities to facilitate low-skilled adults' movement to further education and work have motivated state efforts to provide policies and practices that can guide high-quality transition services. The Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears Initiative was an early effort in which states were assisted in aligning interagency policies to support low-skilled adults' success in postsecondary education and employment.⁵ States such as Illinois, Oregon, and

¹ U.S. Department of Education projects include the ABE Career Connections Project http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/careerpathways/profile_01), the Ready for College: Adult Education Transition Project <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/sectech/factsheet/ready-for-college-adult.html>, and the Adult Education Coordination and Planning Project http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/management/profile_02.

² U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program <http://www.doleta.gov/taacct/> and Green Jobs Demonstration Project <http://www.doleta.gov/pdf/GJIFOnePagersALL.pdf>.

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency (ISIS) project <http://www.projectisis.org/> and the Health Professions Opportunity Grants to Serve TANF and other Low-Income Individuals <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/view/HHS-2010-ACF-OFA-FX-0126/0/html>.

⁴ Illustrative examples are Nellie Mae Foundation's ABE-to-College Transition Project; Lumina Foundation's Achieving the Dream project <http://www.achievingthedream.org/>; Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's Breaking Through initiative <http://www.breakingthroughcc.org>; Ford Foundation's Community College's Bridges to Opportunity http://www.fordfoundation.org/pdfs/library/Bridges_to_Opportunity_for_Underprepared_Adults.pdf; Jobs for the Future's Accelerating Opportunity Initiative www.acceleratingopportunity.org; Open Society Foundations' Points of Entry Project <http://points-of-entry.org>.

⁵ <http://www.shifting-gears.org/>.

Washington have developed their own career pathways initiatives that include the use of policies to promote the implementation of adult basic education transition services.⁶

The U.S. Department of Education's Policy to Performance project was funded in 2009 to build the capacity of state adult basic education (ABE) staff to develop and implement policies and practices that would support an ABE transition system.⁷ Prior to this project, state adult education offices were beginning to work with higher education and workforce development partners in aligning their services and policies to enable individuals to attain postsecondary credentials and earn family-sustaining incomes. However, these efforts varied in approach and intensity. Policy to Performance was designed to provide ABE state staff with strategies and tools they could use in working with their interagency partners to align services and policies that would result in a coherent set of activities that would comprise a state ABE transition system.

Policy to Performance state activities were conducted during the period July 2009 to July 2012. Kratos Learning and its partner, Abt Associates, carried out the project.

Project Goal, Objectives, and Participants

Goal and Objectives

The Policy to Performance project was designed to advance states' activities in systems and policy development to facilitate adults' transition from ABE to postsecondary education, training, and employment. To achieve this goal, the project set the following objectives:

- Assist states in strengthening existing or developing new state ABE transition systems;
- Broaden states' use of data-based policies that enable local adult education programs to assist low-skilled adults in meeting their educational and employment goals;
- Provide technical assistance to participating states on developing and testing policies that support comprehensive and coordinated systems for ABE transition services for low-skilled adults; and

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2011). *Promoting college and career readiness: Bridge programs for low-skill adults*. Washington, D.C.

⁷ State adult education staff funded under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, were the targeted participants for the Policy to Performance project.

- Disseminate policy tools, lessons learned from the project, and other resources to aid all states in developing systems and policies for moving adults along a continuum of postsecondary education, training, and employment services.

The project's approach was to provide a subset of states with targeted technical assistance in testing planning, policy development, and pilot processes for developing and implementing their states' ABE transition systems, with the assumption that Policy to Performance would prepare states to use these processes after the completion of the project. The project's activities also were designed to produce information and products that could be useful to all states in their development of ABE transition systems.

Participants

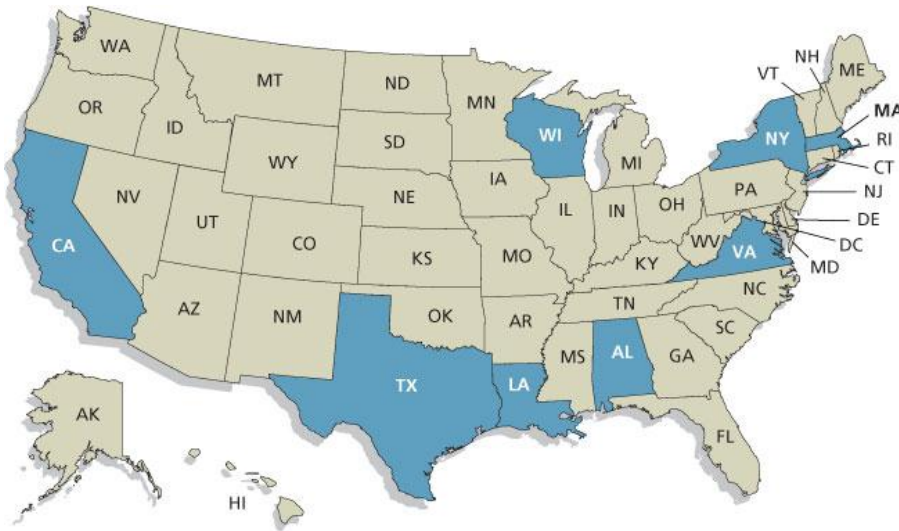
Policy to Performance states were selected through a competitive process. State adult education directors from 13 states and one U.S. Territory submitted applications, in which they described their existing ABE transition activities as well as their goals and proposed activities for the Policy to Performance project. Based on the information that state leaders provided in their applications and in follow-up telephone discussions, eight states were selected to participate. The following criteria were used to select states:

- Status of State's Adult Education Program:
 - Had current activities for preparing ABE learners to transition to postsecondary education or to employment; and
 - Had experienced state-level staff available to participate in the project.
- State's Proposed Policy to Performance Activities:
 - Adult education leadership had a preliminary vision for the state's Policy to Performance project's goals and activities that aligned with the project;
 - Identified current partners that could support a state ABE transition system; and
 - Had existing or planned resources to support a local pilot test of ABE transition policies and practices.

The eight states selected to participate in the Policy to Performance project were Alabama, California, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin (**Figure 1**). Each state formed a Policy to Performance state team that was comprised of staff from the state adult education office and partners from other divisions within the state agency or from other

state agencies. The composition of a state's team was determined by their goals for the project and other transition activities underway in the state. The states' partners included representatives from state agencies—postsecondary education, labor and workforce development, and health and human services; state's workforce investment board; state's adult education technical assistance provider; local ABE providers; related state projects; and private industry (see **Appendix A** for a list of partners for each state).

Figure 1. States Participating in Policy to Performance Project



Overview of Document

The State ABE Transition Systems Report provides information about the activities that were conducted by the Policy to Performance project and the findings from the states' work during the project. Described are the technical assistance activities that the project provided to state participants and the procedures that were used to analyze the information collected during the project. The key components of an ABE transition system, which provided a framework for the states to use in developing their ABE transition systems, are discussed. Also presented are the state demonstration processes that were used to test selected elements of an ABE transition system, as well as examples from the states' implementation of these processes. A key strategy some states used to implement ABE transition policies was to include transition policies and their related practices in the requirements for funding under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act, 1998. The approaches undertaken by Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Virginia in this process are discussed (see Section V. Driving Policy and Practice through WIA, Title II Local Grants). The final section of the report presents the lessons learned from the project and conclusions concerning state transition systems development. **Appendix A** has descriptions of

each of the state's Policy to Performance activities. **Appendix B** contains the Analyzing State Policies and Guidance to Support ABE Transition Form and **Appendix C** has the steps in the Policy Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PPIE[®]) process.

II. Project Activities

The Policy to Performance project involved three key activities: (1) delivering technical assistance to state ABE leaders and their interagency partners to enable them to enhance ABE transition services and policies; (2) disseminating information about the project and resources to assist all states; and (3) analyzing information about the technical assistance that was provided to states and the outcomes from the technical assistance to develop guidance that other state staff could utilize.

Technical Assistance to States

The project's technical assistance was the primary method that the project used to aid states in developing new or enhancing their existing state ABE transition systems. Technical assistance was delivered through the following activities: (1) an initial workshop and three national meetings, (2) two webinars, (3) conference calls with state teams that involved periodic all-state calls and monthly calls with coaches, (4) site visits to selected states, and (5) posting of resources on the project's website. Each state had a designated coach, who was a former adult education state director and who consulted with his/her Policy to Performance state team monthly to provide feedback and address any challenges that states were experiencing. Coaches were led by the project's Director of Technical Assistance, Judith Alamprese, who provided ongoing guidance and support to the coaches through quarterly coaches' calls and by participating in monthly state calls as needed.

The Policy to Performance conceptual model (see **Section III, Key Elements of a State System for ABE Transition**) and the project's planning, development, and evaluation processes (see **Section IV, State Demonstration Processes**) were discussed with state teams during the pre-workshop and national meetings. Project participants were asked to gather information prior to each national meeting, and they worked in teams during the meetings to plan their activities for a state ABE transition system by applying the project's processes to their individual state situations.⁸ State teams developed Policy to Performance Transition Plans after the first national meeting. These plans included states' goals, activities to meet their goals, and the timelines for their activities. Between the national meetings, states were assisted by their coaches in carrying out these plans.

⁸ See Alamprese, J. & Limardo, C. (2012). *Policy to Performance Toolkit*. Alexandria, VA: Kratos Learning for the tools used during the national meetings.
http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/careerpathways/profile_50

The technical assistance for the project was designed to be flexible and meet the individualized needs of the states. The Director of Technical Assistance and the coaches provided information and developed forms and processes that states could use in their Policy to Performance activities. Examples of the technical assistance that the project provided to each state are the following:

- **Alabama:**

- Developed interview protocols for collecting information from ABE directors, ABE instructors, ABE coaches, and career and technical education instructors about their activities in implementing Alabama's College Connections pilot test; and
- Provided assistance in analyzing learners' outcome data from the pilot test.

- **California:**

- Assisted in the development of the Request for Application (RFA) that was used to procure the pilot sites for the project;
- Shared a form that was developed for Louisiana for California's use in reviewing pilot test sites' proposed transition applications;
- Prepared Excel spreadsheet that pilot test sites used to record their quarterly data, which included learners' background characteristics, pre-post assessment scores, the types of services that learners received, participation in college tour, attainment of a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED), outcomes on the California state high school test, and enrollment in postsecondary courses; and
- Provided assistance in reviewing data from the pilot sites.

- **Louisiana:**

- Developed form for analyzing ABE program applications for the state's Policy to Performance pilot test to identify the strengths and limitations of the applicants' transition activities;

- **Massachusetts:**

- Created logic model for Policy to Performance pilot test training;
- Provided advice about adding a learning community component to the pilot test; and
- Provided form for reviewing pilot test sites' proposed transition activities.

- **New York:**
 - Developed survey for state to use in collecting information on local ABE transition activities.

- **Texas:**
 - Provided list of data that pilot sites should collect to document results from ABE-One-Stop cross-referral activities;
 - Revised quarterly reporting form for pilot sites to use in documenting their activities and client outcomes; and
 - Developed interview protocol for state staff to use in conducting interviews with ABE and One-Stop pilot test staff regarding the implementation of the accelerated GED instruction, the delivery of the Integrated Career Awareness instruction, and the cross-agency referral process.

- **Virginia:**
 - Developed documentation log for pilot test sites to use in recording their PluggedIn VA activities; and
 - Reviewed and provided feedback on the PluggedIn VA implementation manual.

- **Wisconsin:**
 - Provided strategic advice on processes for developing standardized criteria for assessing learners' demonstration of competencies for the expanded option for the high School equivalency diploma.

Dissemination of Information

An ongoing activity of Policy to Performance was the dissemination of information about the project's design and technical assistance. Project staff members led presentations at national and state conferences throughout the course of the project to share information about the project's activities, discuss the key components of an ABE transition system, and share strategies from project states. These venues were the National College Transition Network Conference (NCTN) in November 2010, the New York State Postsecondary Summit in November 2010, the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) national conference in April 2012, and a panel session at the 2012 National Meeting for Adult Education State Directors. Project staff also maintained booths that showcased the Policy to Performance project at the NCTN conference in

2011, the COABE conference in 2012, and at the 2012 National Meeting for Adult Education State Directors. Additionally, the Noteworthy News listserv provided updates on the project and highlighted new resources that were added to the online resource collection.

Data Analysis

Multiple sources of information and data were analyzed as part of Policy to Performance to assess the progress of the states in achieving their goals for the project and in determining the types of activities undertaken by states during the project and the outcomes from these activities. At the beginning of the project, each state prepared a Policy to Performance Transition Plan that delineated their goals, planned activities, and timeline for developing their ABE transition systems. As conditions in the states changed during the project, the possible effects of these conditions on the states' project activities were discussed during the coaches' monthly calls. The coaches' monthly calls with their states were documented and these call records were a primary source of information about the states' ongoing Policy to Performance activities. In March 2012, state participants also were asked to complete an Analyzing State Policies and Guidance to Support ABE Transition Form (see **Appendix B**) about the status of their state transition policies in terms of whether state policies had been developed, were operational, or were being planned. States updated their plans in June 2012.

Throughout the project, states submitted transition-related documents that were sources of information about states' outcomes from the project. These documents included:

- State strategic plans or frameworks that describe a state's vision and goals for its ABE system and the activities that will be supported related to goals—e.g., Virginia⁹ and Massachusetts;¹⁰
- “White paper” justifying a new high school diploma option—e.g., Wisconsin's expanded option for a high school equivalency diploma;
- Request for Application for pilot test activities—e.g., California, Massachusetts, and Louisiana; and

⁹ Virginia Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Literacy (2012). *Advancing work force readiness: Adult education and literacy for 21st century Virginia—A strategic plan for 2012-2017*. Richmond, VA.

¹⁰ Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (2010). *Facing the future: Strategic framework for adult basic education: 2010-2015*. Malden, MA.

- Request for Application for Workforce Investment Act, Title II grants—e.g., Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Virginia.

While some of these documents were a direct result of the Policy to Performance project (i.e., RFA for pilot test activities), most were prepared as part of other activities in the state but contained information about transition policies or practices that were prompted by Policy to Performance.

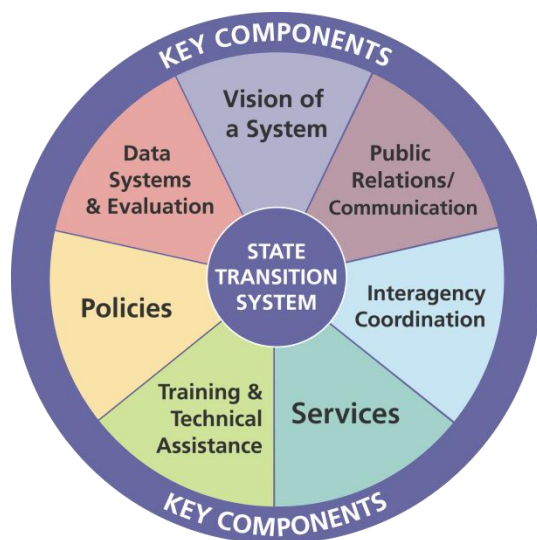
The data from the information sources were reviewed, codified, and analyzed. The states' Transition Plans were examined to determine the extent to which states' goals were carried out. The coaches' call records were codified according to the type of technical assistance that was offered to states and states' activities related to the technical assistance that had been provided. The states' policy analysis forms were analyzed to identify the areas in which state transition policies existed or were developed, and the areas in which there were gaps in policies. The documents submitted by the states were reviewed to determine the ways in which transition policies or practices were included in the documents. The results from these reviews and analyses were used in preparing this report.

III. Key Elements of a State System for ABE Transition

Definitions of Key Elements

The project’s approach to technical assistance was to use conceptual models as well as planning, development, and evaluation processes to direct the targeted technical assistance that was given to project states. A model of the key components of an ABE state transition system guided the states’ systems and policy development (**Figure 2**).¹¹

Figure 2. The Key Elements of a State ABE Transition System



The definitions of the state ABE transition system key components are:

- **Vision of an ABE Transition System**—Strategy or direction and long-term goals for the operation of a state’s ABE transition system.
- **Public Relations/Communication**—Messaging and ongoing communication with stakeholders and constituents about ABE transition system purposes, benefits, activities, and outcomes.

¹¹ The key components were derived from the following literature: Alamprese, J.A. (2009). *Shared goals, common ground: State and local coordination and planning to strengthen adult basic education services—final report*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates; Chernus, K. & Fowler, D. (September 2009). *Integrating curriculum: Lessons for adult education from career and technical education*. Washington, DC: MPR Associates; Inc. Jenkins, D. (2006). *Career pathways: Aligning public resources to support individual and regional economic advancement in the knowledge economy*. New York, NY: Workforce Strategy Center; and MPR Associates, Inc. (2007). *Adult basic education to community colleges transitions symposium: Proceedings report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

- **Interagency Coordination**—Coordinated efforts between state ABE office and other state offices, public organizations, and private entities concerning ABE transition policies and services; ABE state office’s work with local ABE service providers to facilitate their coordination with other local public and private entities regarding ABE transition.
- **Services**—Processes, procedures, and materials for the delivery of adult learner assessment, instruction, and support services that facilitate learners’ transition from adult basic education to postsecondary education, training, and employment. These services are:
 - Assessments to place learners into services; measure learners’ pre-post gains; and document learners’ attainment of certificates and credentials;
 - Accelerated ABE academic instruction;
 - Integrated ABE and occupational instruction;
 - Career and college awareness and planning;
 - Advising and counseling services;
 - Support services; and
 - Postsecondary education and employment referral processes.
- **Training and Technical Assistance**—Provision of professional development and technical support to local ABE staff for their:
 - Development and implementation of ABE transition services;
 - Establishment of working relationships with partners to support transition activities; and
 - Implementation of ABE transition policies.
- **Policies**—Plans or courses of action to guide ABE programs’ activities in carrying out interagency coordination; delivering instruction to facilitate transition; providing advising, support, and transition referral services; participating in training and technical assistance; providing financial support to learners; and collecting, analyzing, and reporting data.
- **Data Systems and Evaluation**— State data systems for gathering and tracking:
 - ABE learners’ participation in transition services offered by ABE program and partners;

- ABE learners' basic skill pre-post gains and other outcomes from participation in transition services;
- ABE learners' enrollment in postsecondary courses and training programs; and
- ABE learners' attainment of postsecondary certificates, credentials, and degrees.

Evaluation activities involve the collection and analysis of data to assess the:

- Quality of the implementation of transition services;
- Effects of transition policies on the delivery of transition services; and
- Learner and program outcomes from transition services.

Use of Transition System Key Elements to Guide the Policy to Performance Project

Guidance Provided to States

The model of key components provided Policy to Performance states with approaches for developing a vision that specified states' long-term goals for an ABE transition system.

Information about developing ongoing communication with policymakers, practitioners, business and industry, and other stakeholders was provided to project states about how to position their activities and obtain commitment for implementing transition policies and practices. Interagency coordination was emphasized as an important process for states to use in aligning policies, services, technical assistance, and data systems to guide local implementation of ABE transition activities. State teams were given strategies to use in forming, sustaining, and expanding partnerships to support states' ABE transition systems.

A critical component of an ABE transition system is the services that local programs provide to assist low-skilled adults to move from ABE to a next step. Policy to Performance states were encouraged to consider a range of services for preparing adults to succeed in postsecondary education, training, and employment. These services included learner assessment, accelerated ABE academic instruction, integrated ABE and occupational instruction, career and college awareness activities, advising and support services, and education and employment transition referral processes. Local implementation of transition services generally require professional development, and state project participants were given guidance on the types of training and technical assistance that local program staff would need to carry out their transition services. In most Policy to Performance states, local programs were asked to design their own transition services based on broad guidelines that the state adult education office had specified. In one

project state, local programs were asked to replicate a transition model that had been developed in the state. The technical assistance the project offered to states addressed the implementation of transition services as well as coordination with local partners.

The quality of states' data systems for tracking adult learners' performance and their evaluation processes for assessing the quality and outcomes of services have become a focus with the implementation of state ABE transition systems. The long-term goal for project states was to have longitudinal databases in which learner outcomes could be tracked from adult education to postsecondary completion and employment. During the project, most states made progress with their longitudinal data systems, which often involved coordination between agency divisions in the development process. The collection and analysis of data to evaluate the quality of ABE transition services and the outcomes from these services were new processes for states, and the Policy to Performance project provided assistance to state participants in specifying the outcomes that should be tracked, the types of data to collect to assess outcomes, and the measures to use in collecting data.

The key focus of the Policy to Performance project was the development and implementation of state policies to support ABE transition to postsecondary education and employment. For the purposes of this project, public policy was defined as a course or plan of action designed to influence and effect adults' advancement from participation in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, Title II-funded ABE services to postsecondary education, training, and employment.¹² Policy was categorized as either formal or informal. Examples of formal policy are a state statute, state law, state regulation, or state agency memorandum. Informal policy, sometimes referred to as "guidance," includes a course of action presented in a state's Adult Education State Plan, state adult education policy brief, or state policy manual. Other examples of informal state policy are the conditions for service delivery that are delineated in a local adult education program's state grant, the requirements for services defined in a state's RFA for local adult education services, and the requirements for instruction defined in a state's adult education content standards. In the project, states were asked to develop new or enhance existing policies that could facilitate the services or activities related to the key components of an ABE transition system described above.

¹² Derived from Birkland, T.A. (2005). *An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts, and models of public policy making*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

States' Use of Key Components

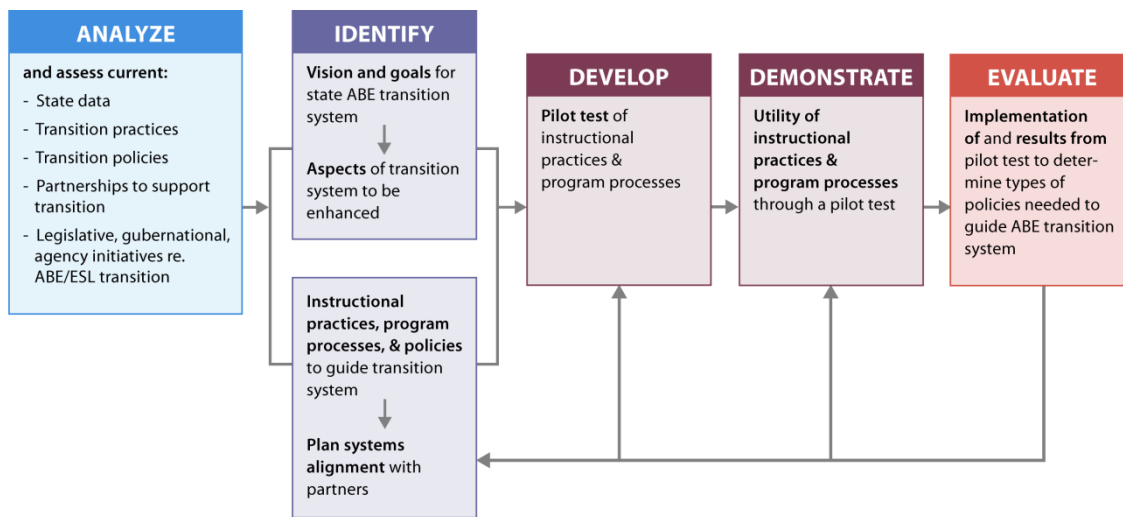
Project states used the information about the key components of an ABE transition system to assess their current ABE transition system activities, identify gaps in their activities, and plan new activities that would enhance their state transition system (see **Section IV, State Demonstration Processes**). Two states drew from the ABE transition components framework in specifying transition services for local ABE providers. California's Policy to Performance team developed a model of transition services that was based on the project's key components and laid out a vision for local ABE providers' transition services. Policy to Performance pilot test applicants in California were asked to describe the services that they would provide in the pilot test based on the transition services model. In Massachusetts, the Policy to Performance state team developed guidance about the types of transition services that pilot sites should implement which incorporated the project's key components and guided the early planning of pilot sites' transition services.

IV. State Demonstration Processes

AIDDE[®] and PPIE[®] Planning Processes

Two planning processes were used to facilitate Policy to Performance states' ABE transition system development or enhancement. The **Analyze, Identify, Develop, Demonstrate, and Evaluate (AIDDE[®])** planning process provided project states with steps to organize their overall state ABE transition system. Project states used the AIDDE[®] process in analyzing the current status of their ABE transition system components (**Figure 3**), identifying the gaps between an ideal ABE transition system and their current transition activities, determining their vision for their state's ABE transition system, and specifying their goals for the project in moving toward a more comprehensive and coordinated ABE transition system.¹³

Figure 3. AIDDE[®] Process for Planning ABE Transition System



The AIDDE[®] process helped states to develop a pilot test to demonstrate ABE transition interventions—defined as instructional practices and/or program processes—that states wanted to evaluate as a step in the policy development process. The pilot test was a preliminary evaluation of ABE transition interventions to assist states in determining the types of policies they would need to develop to guide local programs in offering transition services to low-skilled adults.

¹³ Alamprese, J.A. (2006). *Initial AIDDE[®] Workshop Manual*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates Inc.

The second process used in the project was the **Policy Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PPIE[®])** process for state transition policies in adult education (see **Appendix C**).¹⁴ The PPIE[®] process led states in planning the types of data-based policies that they would implement to guide their state transition systems. The final step in the PPIE[®] process is to evaluate the outcomes from the use of the policies to assess whether the policies are achieving what was intended through the implementation of practices and processes associated with the policies.

The AIDDE[®] and PPIE[®] processes worked together to facilitate states' work on their ABE transition systems. The AIDDE[®] planning process assisted state staff in building a foundation for systems development. State staff analyzed information about their current transition activities and identified new transition services and processes to be developed and tested to support a transition system. The PPIE[®] process focused on identifying and testing transition policies that would guide their transition system activities. The two processes provided the tools that states could use to develop, implement, evaluate, and refine their ABE transition systems.¹⁵

States' Use of Planning Processes

The states used the AIDDE[®] and PPIE[®] planning processes to analyze their current activities in carrying out the key components of a ABE transition system, identify the gaps between their current activities and an ideal transition system, and plan and implement a pilot test to assess new transition practices that would be used to develop transition policies.

Analyzing Current Data and Practices

While most state leaders had a general understanding of the types of transition practices that ABE providers were implementing at the beginning of the Policy to Performance project, this knowledge was more likely to be based on informal reporting from providers rather than from the systematic collection of information. As state leaders began to analyze their current transition practices as part of their Policy to Performance planning, they realized they needed to gather more systematic information about ABE providers' current activities in order to identify the types of transition services that could be strengthened in the Policy to Performance project and to establish a baseline for current activities that they could use in measuring progress over time. In New York, a variety of transition practices were being implemented by local providers,

¹⁴ Alamprese, J.A. (2009). *State policy development: Tips and tools for writing policy and guidance*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates Inc.

¹⁵ See Alamprese, J. & Limardo, C. (2012). *Policy to Performance Toolkit*. Alexandria, VA: Kratos Learning for the tools used during the national meetings http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/careerpathways/profile_50

some of whom were not funded under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. The state's Policy to Performance liaison conducted site visits to non-Title II-funded transition programs to gather information about the types of transition services that were being carried out in these programs. The state's Policy to Performance team used this information to develop an initial understanding of the range of transition practices being delivered in the state and to guide the development of a survey that the state would administer to all Title II-funded ABE providers about their transition activities. In Wisconsin, the state's Policy to Performance staff reviewed the outcome data for the state's existing options for a high school equivalency diploma and found that the current options were not being used with as many individuals as was expected. In light of work that the state was conducting as part of their Shifting Gears grant from the Joyce Foundation,¹⁶ the decision was made to propose an expanded option for the high school equivalency diploma. The expanded option would have additional requirements for college and career awareness that were expected to increase the appeal of the diploma option to potential participants and would more readily facilitate learners' transition to postsecondary education.

Conducting Gaps Analysis to Identify Transition Practices

After analyzing their current data and activities, project states identified the gaps between their current practices and the key components of state ABE transition system to identify new transition practices to test. The process of identifying gaps between current transition practices and an ideal transition model to determine the types of new practices that should be implemented was a new process for most states. Some states were able to build from existing activities to support this component of their Policy to Performance work. In Massachusetts, the state adult education staff were aware of the extent to which local providers offered advising and counseling as part of their ABE transition activities, and providers had identified the need for increased advising activities in their transition services. To identify potential new advising practices, the state adult education office commissioned a review of counseling and advising services. The results from this review were used to develop guidelines for the transition practices that were to be implemented in the state's Policy to Performance pilot test. In Texas, one focus of the Policy to Performance project was to increase the cross referral of clients between ABE programs and the One Stop. To facilitate ABE learners' success in accessing One-Stop services, the state ABE team selected the use of the National College Transition Network's Integrated Career Awareness course that had been piloted tested in the state as the course for the Policy to Performance pilot test.

¹⁶ <http://www.shifting-gears.org/>

Implementing a Pilot Test

Once states selected the transition practices to pilot test, the Policy to Performance ABE state staff were to develop a pilot test to assess the utility of the transition practices and to guide the development of policies for transition services. Six of the Policy to Performance states conducted pilot tests during the timeline for the project. New York had designed its pilot test, but was not able to implement it due to reductions in state funding. Wisconsin designed a pilot test of its expanded option for the high School equivalency diploma, but was delayed in implementation and is planning to conduct the pilot in the coming months.

There were three approaches to states' pilot testing of transition practices in terms of the level of specificity or prescription of the ABE transition practices that sites were to test. The first approach was to replicate an existing transition practice according to specific guidelines. For the Policy to Performance project, Virginia conducted a replication of its PluggedIn VA model. The model has four components: a) GED curriculum and Career Readiness Certificate, (b) professional soft skills, (c) digital literacy skills, and (d) 21st century skills. With funding from the Ford Foundation, two PluggedIn VA pilot sites were supported in Southwest Virginia, and expanded the number of PluggedIn sites in that area. The two new pilot sites were asked to implement the components of the PluggedIn VA model as designed. The state ABE technical assistance provider and an ABE program director who was a member of the design team of the PluggedIn VA model provided technical assistance about the PluggedIn VA model's design and implementation guidelines to the two pilot sites. The state ABE staff also specified the types of data that the pilot sites would collect. The replication pilot test reinforced the need for a PluggedIn VA implementation manual, which was developed and will be used to train future PluggedIn VA replication sites.

The second approach to pilot testing was to ask sites to adapt an existing transition model. In contrast to the replication approach, in the model adaptation approach guidance is provided about the use of the components of an existing model, but flexibility is allowed in the implementation of the model's specified services. Alabama and Texas used this approach. Alabama pilot tested a Middle College model with the ABE population. The state's Policy to Performance state team identified three ABE sites to participate in the pilot test and provided directions about the components of a Middle College that the sites should implement. This guidance was to accelerate GED instruction and enroll pilot participants concurrently in GED instruction and entry-level, postsecondary career and technical education courses. A third component of the

Middle College adapted model was developed during the first year of the pilot. This component, which was the use of an ABE coach to provide career guidance to GED learners, was added during the second phase of the pilot test. While the state team had planned to provide technical assistance to the three pilots in a workshop, a group meeting was not possible due to funding constraints. Rather state staff provided technical assistance to the individual pilot sites regarding the key components of the Middle College model. State staff also gave pilot sites guidelines about the types of data to collect. In Texas, The Policy to Performance state team selected three sites to adapt services to accelerate learners' attainment of a GED and prepare them to participate in training and assistance provided by the One-Stop Centers. The state team provided pilot sites with guidelines about the type of accelerated GED instruction they were to deliver. The sites were trained to use National College Transition Network's Integrated Career Awareness course and were given flexibility in adapting the career awareness curriculum.

The third approach for pilot testing in the Policy to Performance project was to specify the key ABE transition services that pilot sites were to implement but to give sites flexibility in developing the activities for these services. California, Louisiana, and Massachusetts used this approach. These states issued an RFA for their Policy to Performance pilot sites, which had general guidelines for the key ABE transition services that pilot sites were to implement. These services varied by state, but generally included interagency coordination, accelerated learning, and contextualized ABE and occupational instruction, career and college readiness, advising, and support services. In California's RFA, comprehensive support services were highlighted as a key practice the pilot sites were to implement. Massachusetts' RFA focused on contextualized instruction, counseling and advising, and college and career readiness. While pilot sites had requirements for the types of ABE transition services they were to implement, they were given flexibility in their design of their services. The RFA also specified the types of data that pilot sites were to collect, which were the data that ABE programs report for their WIA, Title II participants. California's RFA specified additional data that pilot sites should collect, including the types of transition services that pilot site participants received and outcomes such as participants' scores on the California high school examination.

Developing Policies

Policy is considered a linchpin to successful transition systems implementation in ABE. There are three main approaches to developing policies to guide the implementation of transition services. The first is to develop data-based transition policies by using the ABE transition practices that are pilot tested in a state's initiative as the foundation for creating states' transition policies. In this approach, states begin by focusing on ABE transition practices that are believed to be effective in facilitating low-skilled adults' transition to postsecondary education and training. The state conducts a pilot test of the transition practices and analyzes data from the pilot test to determine which practices have initial positive outcome data. The practices with the strongest data are used as the basis for developing broad policies that can guide the implementation of transition practices. For example, the results from the pilot testing of transition services in a state transition initiative can be used to develop state guidance in the form of criteria for the ABE transition services that must be included in local providers' applications to the state for ABE funding.

A second approach for transition policy development is to begin with an existing transition policy and to modify the policy based on the pilot testing of new stipulations for a policy. An example is Wisconsin's development of a new high school equivalency diploma option, which incorporates some stipulations from the existing diploma options but also includes new stipulations that will be tested.

A third approach is to create new transition policies that are not associated with current practices. This approach is used when conditions or problems arise for which there is no existing policy or practice. An example is to develop a new policy for state financial aid for ABE learners in a state that did not have existing state options for ABE learner financial aid.

The Policy to Performance approach to policy development was to use the PPIE[®] process for state transition policies in adult education that involved the first approach described above. As states began their participation in the project and analyzed their current transition practices and policies, it was evident that seven of the states had existing transition practices or areas of practices that they wanted to test in the project. The eighth state—Wisconsin—came to the project with the goal of developing an expanded option for one of the state's existing high school equivalency diploma options. None of the states began the project without a broad understanding of transition practices. However, most of the states had few transition-specific policies at the beginning of the project. Along with the states' inventory of their existing

policies, the Policy to Performance technical assistance team provided examples of other states' ABE transition policies for the project states to consider. In the end, rather than use existing policies, the project states opted to develop or identify new policies to develop their state ABE transition system.

Given the Policy to Performance states' activities regarding transition practices and policies at the project's inception, the policy development approach used in the project was to guide states in creating data-driven transition policies through the pilot testing of transition practices. The PPIE[®] process was used to assist states in determining the types of data-based policies that could be implemented to guide their state transition systems and to evaluate the use of these policies to determine whether they were effective in directing ABE transition activities.

During the timeline for the Policy to Performance project, California, Louisiana, and Virginia were able to begin to use the results from their pilot tests of transition practices to inform policy development. California's pilot test focused on the delivery of comprehensive support services to ABE learners, and pilot sites were given a list of the type of support services that they were to offer to learners. Pilot sites reported quarterly about the types of support services that ABE learners' received, their attendance, Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) pre-and post-test scores, and learners' receipt of a GED or high school diploma. State staff are analyzing the data from pilot sites' implementation of three quarters of transition support services to assess whether changes should be made in the requirements for the provision of support services during the second year of the pilot test. They will examine the relationship between the types of services that pilot site learners received, their persistence, and their outcomes. Based on the initial findings from the pilot sites, state ABE staff have identified areas of guidance that will be incorporated into the next WIA, Title II Request for Application for ABE services. ABE providers will be asked to establish formal relationships with postsecondary institutions and the payment points for performance funding related to continuing participation in education will be broadened.

In Louisiana, the Policy to Performance state team gathered information about pilot sites' implementation of transition services during site visits that the state ABE staff conducted to each site and in pilot site meetings that were convened during state conferences. During their conversations with pilot site staff, state staff learned about the transition activities that were working well, the challenges that pilot sites were addressing, and the areas in which further technical assistance is needed to support the delivery of transition services. Areas in which

further guidance will be developed to support transition services are the provision of wrap-around support services to learners, coordination of advising services between ABE and postsecondary staff, and organizing regional ABE services to support transition to further education and employment.

In Virginia, implementation data were collected through pilot sites' completion of documentation logs, visits to the pilot sites, and telephone conference calls. The initial findings from the pilot sites' implementation data suggested that additional professional development is needed to prepare ABE programs to implement the key components of the PluggedIn VA model, since many of the components require ABE programs to coordinate with local agencies and businesses. This finding was used in developing an implementation manual for PluggedIn VA that will specify further requirements for coordination. The results regarding learners' transition outcomes will be examined when data become available.

The states in which Policy to Performance pilot tests were still underway at the time of the project's completion were continuing to collect data about the transition practices that were being pilot tested. As part of the project's technical assistance, these states were given guidance about methods for analyzing results from their pilot test and using these results to specify transition policies.

V. Driving Policy and Practice through WIA, Title II Local Grants

One strategy that states employed in the Policy to Performance project to specify ABE transition policies was to embed requirements for ABE transition services in their Requests for Applications (RFA) for local ABE program services. States used the RFA process to select Policy to Performance project pilot sites that could test ABE transition policies and accompanying practices. They also used the RFA process to stipulate the conditions for the delivery of ABE services under WIA, Title II in the re-competition of Title II local services. A variety of factors influenced states' approach to developing RFAs that delineated the transition practices which ABE providers were to implement. These included states' work with ABE transition prior to the project and organizational changes that occurred during the project. Described in this section are the experiences of Massachusetts, Virginia, and Louisiana in developing an RFP during the project that required the use of ABE transition practices as a step in building an ABE state transition system.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) staff began the Policy to Performance project with a number of activities underway to strengthen the state's adult basic education services and move toward an ABE transition system. Through a series of state task forces, ACLS staff were engaged in discussions with state partners and ABE providers about the priorities for enhancing ABE services, the local coordination that was needed to implement ABE transition services, and the types of instructional, advising, and support services that could facilitate ABE learners' successful transition to postsecondary education and training. The state's early work in ABE transition formed the base for the activities that the Policy to Performance state team conducted during the project, particularly in specifying the critical components of ABE transition services.

Developing a Base for Policy to Performance Project. During 2008-2009, the Nellie Mae Foundation provided funding to ACLS to convene the Bridges to Success Task Force on the Transition to Postsecondary Education for Adult Learners. The Bridges to Success Task Force included representatives from ACLS, the Massachusetts Departments of Higher Education, Labor and Workforce Development and Transitional Assistance, Executive Office of Community Colleges, and the Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-state agency that supports

the work of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce development. Based on information that was gathered in a review of the literature and through interviews with stakeholders and informants from other states, the Bridges to Success Task Force identified barriers that constrained low-skilled adults' access to postsecondary education and developed a five-year action plan to address these barriers. The action plan specified policy objectives in three areas: (1) state-level ABE goals and program standards, (2) systems coordination, and (3) funding for transition services. To ensure that task force members would continue to work together to implement the action plan, the State Policy Task Force revised a Memorandum of Understanding that specified that the partners would continue their participation as activities moved forward.

During the same period, ACLS led the development of a strategic planning process that included an online survey with over 4,000 learner respondents and over 600 practitioner respondents. Additionally, over the course of two years, ACLS held three meetings in each of the state's five regions that included representatives of the ABE system, the workforce development system, youth programs, and human service providers. The result was a five-year strategic framework for ABE, *Facing the Future: Massachusetts Strategic Framework for Adult Basic Education*.¹⁷ Three goals were identified in this Framework: (1) ensure access to services, (2) increase the effectiveness and quality of the ABE system, and (3) supports learners in their next steps. A final phase of the process was to convene an ABE Strategic Plan Task Force that was charged with providing guidance on the implementation of the Framework. The Task Force focused on the following priorities: (1) increase the intensity of ABE services, (2) strengthen ABE instruction and the capacity of ABE instructors, (3) increase ABE program flexibility, and (4) expand ABE learners' access to counseling.

Another activity that preceded the Policy to Performance project was the Adult Basic Education Transition to Community College initiative, which was aimed at providing services within community colleges to enable ABE learners to transition to and complete postsecondary education. Twelve community colleges were funded to implement transition services, which included using cohort strategies such as learners' enrollment in a common course, ongoing group advising, and study groups. These transition programs offered semester-long *College for Success* and *Technology for College* courses and had designated education advisors. They also developed and maintained individual education and career plans for learners to ensure that they received the services that they needed.

¹⁷ Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (2010). *Facing the future: Strategic framework for adult basic education: 2010-2015*. Malden, MA.

The various task forces provided ACLS staff with opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships as well as to identify and develop new partnerships that could support a state transition system. The task forces also were venues to examine the types of policies that could strengthen the adult basic education system and expand services to include a focus on ABE transition. ACLS's early work with the Bridges to Success Task Force and the Adult Basic Education Transition to Community College initiative enabled state staff to begin to consider the key services that that would be needed to support ABE learners in transitioning to postsecondary education and to involve a wide range of stakeholders in discussions about these services.

Policy to Performance Activities. The Bridges to Success Task Force was coming to a close at the time that the Policy to Performance project began. Given the work of the Bridges to Success Task Force and the goals of the Policy to Performance project, the task force was transformed into the Policy to Performance Task Force and additional members were added over time. This group met monthly and guided the activities of the Policy to Performance project in Massachusetts. A key focus of the Policy to Performance project was to stimulate regional coordination of services that can facilitate ABE learners' transition to postsecondary education and employment. To address this goal, the Policy to Performance Task Force convened a statewide summit in June 2011 with support from the Boston Foundation and the Executive Office of the Community Colleges. Representatives from adult education programs, community colleges, One-Stop Career Centers, and Workforce Investment Boards from each of the 16 local workforce board regions met to discuss how each entity could contribute to low-skilled adults' college and career readiness and the types of career pathways that were currently available. The regional groups determined the ways in which they could improve career pathways for learners within their region and designed an action plan for enhancing services.

Another outcome from the summit was the strengthening of the relationship between ACLS and the Executive Office of the Community Colleges. The Community Colleges' office played an instrumental role in the summit, and the presidents from five of the community colleges participated in the event. A recommendation from the summit was to align curriculum to facilitate the work of adult education program instructors and community college faculty in providing services and learning opportunities to assist adults make a successful transition to postsecondary education.

The recommendations from the summit and other related ACLS initiatives supported the need to test coordinated ABE transition services. A key activity in the Policy to Performance project

was to conduct a local pilot test of the ABE transition services that the state envisioned would be central to the state's ABE transition system. The Policy to Performance state team developed the framework for the project's pilot test and ACLS staff partnered with the Commonwealth Corporation in carrying out the pilot test. While the original plan was to procure pilot sites during 2011, the process was delayed due to changes in funding. An RFA was developed to procure the pilot test sites that included the types of transition services which the pilot sites were to implement. These services were contextualized instruction, career and college readiness, and advising and support services. Pilot participants also are required to form learning communities to support learners' participation. The specification of the services for the pilot test RFA drew from the previous Adult Basic Education Transition to Community College initiative and from other task force activities that were formed to examine career and college awareness instruction and processes for advising and counseling. Initially two pilot sites were to be funded, but resources were made available to support eight pilot sites. These sites are funded for the period April 2012 to June 2013.

Concurrent with planning the pilot test, ACLS began to develop the RFA for the re-competition of WIA, Title II funds in the state. ACLS's original plan for the project was to use the results from the Policy to Performance pilot test to inform the guidelines for transition services that would be included in the RFA for Title II funding. However, the delay in the implementation of the pilot test meant that ACLS had to move ahead in developing the RFAs for funding local adult basic education services as well as the RFA for the Adult Basic Education Transition to Community College program for FY 2013. The RFA for the Community College program extends a previously funded program in which community colleges are funded to integrate the ABE Transition to Community College Program into the college and provide it with financial and other supports. The colleges also are to integrate both learners and staff of the transition program into the mainstream of the colleges' activities. For FY 2013, three RFAs were developed to support adult basic education services under WIA, Title II and state adult education funds. These RFAs were for funding Community Adult Learning Centers, Adult Career Pathways, and Adult Basic Education Programs in Correctional Institutions. All of the RFAs require that grantees provide high quality services of sufficient intensity and duration to assist adults to develop the academic and other college and career readiness skills need to achieve their goals. As a result of the work of the past several years, a policy was issued that all Community Adult Learning Centers develop an individualized education and career plan with each learner. Additionally, the RFAs for the Adult Learning Centers and Career Pathways require grantees to

establish partnerships to facilitate transition and support services as an initial step in building a foundation for ABE transition services. While these grants are building an infrastructure for ABE transition, the Policy to Performance pilot tests, the Career Pathways, and the ABE Transition to Community College Programs will enable multiple ABE programs to be involved in testing specific strategies to increase the number of adult learners that successfully access and succeed in postsecondary education. The results from grant activities will provide guidance to ACLS for the delineation of the transition services that should be included in future WIA, Title II and state adult education grants.

In 2011, the Massachusetts Community Colleges were awarded a U. S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grants Program grant aimed at supporting changes in the delivery of services in order to increase the success of low-skilled adults in completing postsecondary education. A significant strategy supported by this grant is the development and alignment of curriculum between the adult basic education system and the developmental education departments in community colleges. This three-year project will result in curriculum contextualized to three key industry sectors and will provide professional development to build the capacity of adult basic education instructors and college faculty to develop and teach contextualized curriculum.

Virginia

Virginia's Policy to Performance was aimed at replicating the state's PluggedIn VA model that was operating in one site at the time the project began. PluggedIn VA has four components of services that are aimed at providing low-skilled adults with the basic skills, digital literacy skills, soft skills, and occupational credentials to obtain employment in high-demand occupations. PluggedIn VA provides participants with a six-month, intensive course in which participants earn a GED, a Career Readiness Certificate, Microsoft Certifications, industry certifications, and community college credit. With funding from the Ford Foundation, adult education programs in Southwest Virginia added two additional PluggedIn VA pilot sites. The expansion of PluggedIn VA was supported by local businesses that had identified the need to develop better-skilled workers to meet labor market demands. The state's governor also emphasized the need for public-private partnerships, and PluggedIn VA's component of employer engagement was viewed as a mechanism for addressing this need. The confluence of these factors prompted the adult education office to undertake a further test of PluggedIn VA through the Policy to Performance project.

During the course of the Policy to Performance project, the state adult education office prepared a strategic plan that positioned adult education as part of the state's career pathways system. In January 2012, the state adult education office issued a new RFP for WIA, Title II adult education services that was designed to move the adult basic education system to a regional service delivery model. The RFP required applicants to form partnerships with employers and the local workforce delivery system, and to assist adult learners in setting employment-related goals. This guidance in the RFP was designed to promote the integration of ABE transition activities into the operation of local ABE services as a step toward the statewide implementation of the PluggedIn VA model.

Other events have facilitated the integration of ABE transition into the state's adult education system. In 2011, the Virginia Community College System was awarded a U. S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grants Program grant. This grant has provided an opportunity for the state adult education office to work with the community college system, which funded career navigators who are expected to work with local adult education providers. The partnership between adult education and higher education will enable the agency staff to examine the implications of the PluggedIn VA model for the state's middle college program. PluggedIn VA now has a line item in the governor's budget that provides funding for planning, start-up, and maintenance PluggedIn VA grants in the state's eight adult education regions. The collection and analysis of data from the PluggedIn VA pilots will enable the state adult education office to provide further guidance on the implementation of PluggedIn VA's service components.

Louisiana

During the early months of Louisiana's participation in the Policy to Performance project, the administration of the state adult education program changed from the Louisiana Department of Education to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). With this shift came a new direction for adult education that emphasized the pivotal role of postsecondary education and training in building the "Louisiana of tomorrow." For adult education, the emphasis was on expanding the breath of services, and increasing the number of adults served, the number who earn a high school equivalency diploma, and the number who transition to postsecondary education, training, and employment. The policy document used to convey these messages was the state's WorkReady U Pro Form Plan, which provided guidance for the transference of the governance of the adult basic education program and the goals for increasing

adults' attainment of a high school equivalency diploma, postsecondary credentials, and family sustainable employment.

As part of the Policy to Performance project, LCTCS issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for pilot sites to implement the key activities described in WorkReady U. Nine pilot sites from a variety of service providers (local education agencies, community-based organizations, and community colleges) were funded to implement a core set of transition activities that were described in the RFP. These included: (1) the coordination of services through the development of partnerships, (2) the delivery of instruction through the use of accelerated learning, integrated instruction, and dual enrollment strategies, (3) academic and social supports, (4) the use of managed enrollment, and (5) methods to collect longitudinal data. The testing of these transition activities in a variety of delivery settings was intended to provide information about the ways in which these settings could coordinate services to meet the requirements of WorkReady U.

While the pilot sites were underway, LCTCS developed an Adult Education Program RFPs for 2012-2013. One of the RFPs in this grant application package supports adult education through the state adult education grant program. For these grants, local providers are required to implement adult basic skills, work-readiness skills, and pathways to occupational training and/or postsecondary coursework. The states grants program is aimed at further testing of ABE transition models that can result in the outcomes specified in the WorkReady U Pro Forma Plan. Concurrent with the funding of these grantees, LCTCS was awarded an Accelerating Opportunity implementation grant, which supports the further implementation of ABE transition activities begun under the Policy to Performance pilot tests. The lessons from the pilot tests, the new state grants program, and the Accelerating Opportunity implementation activities will provide LCTCS adult education leadership with data and information to use in expanding ABE transition state policies.

Summary

The three states' use of an RFA or RFP for WIA, Title II services to promote ABE transition activities illustrates how a variety of policies can be communicated through this vehicle. States can specify a range of ABE transition services that Title II providers should implement or they can focus on one specific component of services to build or strengthen the foundation for ABE transition. Sometimes both strategies can be employed. In Massachusetts, ABE grantees were asked to provide high quality services with sufficient intensity and duration to facilitate ABE learners' transition. They also were required to develop an individualized education and career

plan with each ABE learner. Louisiana's approach was to specify a component of Title II services that required Title II grantees to integrate basic skills and postsecondary and career preparation programs and to offer adults two or more "pathways" from adult basic skills attainment to postsecondary certificates and beyond. In Virginia, ABE grantees were required to establish new or improve existing partnerships for adult learners to transition to postsecondary education and workforce training programs.

A strategy that states used to further the implementation of ABE transition services beyond the WIA, Title II RFA was to issue additional RFAs for testing new or expanding existing transition models. In Massachusetts, RFAs for separate career pathways and ABE transition to community college programs provided funding for service providers to test specific strategies for ABE transition. Virginia is planning to issue an RFA to expand the use of the PluggedIn VA model in additional sites.

VI. Findings and Conclusions

Findings from the Policy to Performance Project

The Policy to Performance project provided eight states with an opportunity to use planning, development, and evaluation processes to expand their state ABE transition systems. The findings from states' experiences in the Policy to Performance project provide insights about the utility of the project's processes and approaches to implementing the key elements of a state ABE transition system, as well as organizational factors that can affect state systems change.

Using the AIDDE[®] and PPIE[®] Processes. States found it helpful to analyze their current learner data using the AIDDE[®] process. States' review of the numbers of learners at the High Intermediate and Adult Secondary Levels¹⁸ that enroll in ABE services and continue their participation in postsecondary education provided a baseline about learners' transition outcomes that states can use in assessing their progress over time. While state staff were asked to examine ABE providers' transition practices, few were able to ascertain the types and level of transition services underway at the local level because most states had not collected systematic information about ABE providers' transition activities prior to the project. This step in the AIDDE[®] process was particularly useful in reinforcing the need for states to collect implementation data about the functioning of services provided at the local level, particularly in areas of services that are the focus for development or improvement. Identifying the gaps between current practices and potential new practices was a challenging step for state staff, since limited information or training materials are currently available about the operational characteristics of ABE transition services. As more evidence-based information becomes accessible about transition practices, states will be able to make more informed decisions about the practices that should be implemented at the local level.

The PPIE[®] process reinforced some states' (Massachusetts, Louisiana, and Virginia) work in developing strategic plans or frameworks in which states' vision and goals for ABE transition were described. States used the PPIE[®] process in conjunction with the AIDDE[®] process in planning their pilot tests of transition practices and policies. While the Policy to Performance project was designed to have states use all steps in the PPIE[®] process, states' work in implementing pilot sites took longer than planned, such that the final steps in the PPIE[®] process

¹⁸ Levels of learners reported on the U.S. Department of Education's National Reporting System.

for analyzing pilot test data and revising or developing policies based on pilot test results were not able to be undertaken during the timeline for the project.

The use of the AIDDE[®] and PPIE[®] processes also guided Policy to Performance state teams in preparing state transition plans. In the spirit of fostering interagency coordination, some states developed multi-faceted plans with partners that proved to be too ambitious given the project's timeline. A lesson for states from the planning process was to foster coordination by working on tasks that could be accomplished during the project's implementation period.

Using a Pilot Test to Implement New Practices as Part of Policy Development. States' planning and implementation of a structured pilot test process prompted them to define guidelines for new transition services (California, Massachusetts, and Louisiana), rethink the implementation guidelines for a new credentialing option (Wisconsin), or specify the key components of an existing transition service (Virginia). The pilot test process also facilitated states' identification of the types of data that they would need to collect to assess the utility of the transition practices being tested and the conditions that should be included in a state policy.

Providing Technical Assistance to Pilot Sites. The provision of technical assistance to pilot test sites was a challenging step for states. While states provide professional development to ABE grantees, the breadth and depth of states' existing ABE professional development capacity varies among the states. For the Policy to Performance project, ABE state staff were asked to plan professional development that could support pilot sites in implementing new transition services. Since most states did not have existing training materials to support the new transition services that were to be tested and since pilot sites were sometimes given broad guidelines about the services to implement, state staff found it difficult to determine the amount and types of assistance that ABE programs would need to conduct a successful pilot test. The availability of better information about the operational characteristics of ABE transition practices and access to transition training materials would enable states to be strategic in determining the types of technical assistance that they should provide.

Communicating “Messages” about the Need for ABE Transition. Project states used their ABE state strategic plans and framework documents to communicate a state priority for providing low-skilled adults with opportunities to move from ABE to postsecondary education and training. While the preparation of a state strategic plan was an activity that was conducted beyond the scope of this project, ABE staff were able to use the information from the project to

guide the plan's content. For example, Virginia used their strategic plan to communicate the state's priority in facilitating ABE learners' movement to a next step. Massachusetts' framework also reinforced the state ABE office's message about the importance of ABE transition, and during the Policy to Performance project, the state's ABE staff worked with the project's communications consultant to develop key messages for communicating the state's transition goals. Louisiana also used its WorkReady U Pro forma Plan to signal a change in the desired outcomes for the state's low-skilled adults.

Building and Enhancing Partnerships. States were able to use the Policy to Performance project as leverage for inviting new partners to address the ways in which multiple agencies could support a state transition system—e.g., New York's work with the State University of New York, the City University of New York, and the State Department of Labor to promote a multi-agency effort to facilitate low-skilled adults' transition to postsecondary education and training. Project participants reported that it was helpful to have a specific project, such as Policy to Performance, to use as a rationale for convening partners. Having such a project both facilitated states' ability to convene partners and gave credibility to the proposed interagency effort.

Leveraging Other Funding Sources. States were able to leverage other funding sources to support their Policy to Performance project activities. In Massachusetts, the Boston Foundation provided support for the state's transition summit in which ABE and workforce partners met together in regional groups to plan possible transition activities. Three states accessed funds from Federal and foundation initiatives that focused on partnership-based transition activities. Virginia was able to leverage the U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training award to provide funding for transition coaches to strengthen the PluggedIn VA sites as well as for the states' ongoing ABE transition activities. The Accelerating Opportunity initiative managed by Jobs for the Future provided Alabama and Louisiana with resources to enhance their vision and planning for ABE transition.

Developing Policies from Practices. Since most states had limited state transition policies at the inception of the project, they were not ready to set policy based on the policies that other states had implemented. They preferred to test potential transition practices as a way of determining the types of guidance that should be included in policies. The use of a pilot test for developing policies could have been facilitated if the states had more calendar time to analyze the data from their pilot tests and determine the extent to which the guidance on transition practices provided in the pilot test was sufficient policy to support further implementation.

Time Required to Develop or Enhance an ABE Transition System. The three-year timeline for the Policy to Performance project was during a period of state budget reductions and other circumstances that influence states' capacity to undertake systemic change. Many factors affected states' timeline in carrying out their Policy to Performance project activities. States' development of new partnerships and expansion of existing partnerships was a lengthy process that required fostering new relationships, establishing mutual needs with partners, and determining the types of partnership activities that would address these needs. Securing funds to develop a pilot test of transition practices took more time than states expected, particularly in states where adult education staff worked with partners on a collaborative effort to plan and support the pilot test. The process of developing and obtaining approval for a Request for Application to procure the pilot's service sites also took longer than some states had anticipated. The involvement of multiple decision makers in the pilot process also slowed down some states' work since the decision makers needed to agree on the activities that were to be conducted during the pilot test. Given the experience of Policy to Performance states and other states that have been involved in complex change initiatives (e.g., the Shifting Gears initiative), more than three years appears to be needed to implement an initiative that involves multiple agencies and new state policies.

Use of Coaching Technical Assistance to Support States' Work. Three types of coaching technical assistance were provided to states by the project's four coaches and Director of Technical Assistance. The first type was overall support and guidance to states in planning their project activities and in monitoring the progress of these activities. Through monthly telephone calls, states' coaches conducted guided discussions with the project's ABE state lead and participating state team members to discuss activities that were in progress, challenges that had been encountered or were anticipated, and next steps. State ABE staff reported that the monthly telephone calls assisted state teams in keeping focused on state transition system development and provided a forum for exchange of ideas and previewing of possible strategies to use in systems development. The discussion of activities for the next month was an ongoing agenda setting process for states' project work.

The second type of coaching was the development and adaption of forms, documents, and procedures that states could use to collect and analyze data. All project states were limited in their capacity to create interview and survey forms for collecting data from pilot sites, data tracking sheets, and data analysis procedures. In addition to developing new forms, the Director of Technical Assistance adapted materials from related projects that could be used by project

states in working with their pilot sites. These included lists of data collection elements and logic models for the pilot activities. States reported that the work in developing instruments and procedures that states could use in collecting and reviewing data filled a gap that would not have otherwise been addressed.

The final type of technical assistance was the retrieval of information for states. Coaches assisted states in finding related information about assessments and materials that states wanted to review and consider for use in the project. Coaches' capacity to search and retrieve these materials expanded states' capacity.

Transition in State Leadership during the Project and Their Effect on States' Project Activities. There were different forms of transition that occurred during the project that affected states' activities.

- **Changes in state leadership**—the state ABE director changed in five of the eight states during the three-year period of the project (Alabama, California, Louisiana, New York, and Texas). While new state staff were appointed as the project's liaison, there were minor delays in project activities. The main effect of staff change was some delay in moving ahead with the policy implications from the project's activities, since new leaders had to learn about the state's Policy to Performance activities and the ways in which the results from these activities could be used in building a transition system.
- **State budget reductions**—affected implementation of pilot test in New York, in which the pilot could not be implemented during the timeframe for the project.
- **Organizational location of adult education**—changed from the Louisiana state Department of Education to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. This change facilitated the promotion of the alignment of ABE and postsecondary services.
- **Participation of two states in Accelerating Opportunity (AO)**—Alabama and Louisiana received implementation grants during the project and, as result, shifted some of their activities to focus on meeting AO's non-negotiable elements that were more specific than the approaches they were taking in the Policy to Performance project.

Conclusions

The findings from the Policy to Performance project suggest that there are key processes, information, and technical assistance that can be provided to support ABE state leaders and their interagency partners in ABE state transition system implementation. All of the project states moved forward in working with state partners to further ABE transition to postsecondary education or employment, in identifying transition practices that can assist ABE learners in moving to a next step, and in specifying policies or guidelines to direct and guide transition activities. The experiences of the Policy to Performance states also indicate that there are challenges in implementing a state transition system that could be addressed through further development and evaluation.

Partnership Development. The creation and expansion of partnerships was a critical process for ABE state leaders and enabled them to increase coordination in the delivery of local transition services, expand resources to support services, and position adult education as a significant component of a state transition system. The findings from the project point to the need for the strategic use of partnerships in supporting ABE state transition systems development, and that it often takes time to determine how to work with partners so that expected outcomes from the partnerships can be realized. Partnerships also need to be reinforced so that the activities between partners can grow in depth and importance. Partnerships often begin with a focus on low-risk activities, such as sharing information, and need to be nurtured and reinforced in order to move to high-risk activities, such as blending funding.¹⁹

State ABE leaders reported various factors that helped facilitate their partnerships, including the Federal sponsorship of the Policy to Performance project that signaled the importance of transition systems development and enabled them to approach new partners. The timeliness of the ABE transition topic also assisted states in becoming involved in other federally funded procurements in which partnerships with adult education were a mandated or desirable activity. These included the U.S. Department of Labor’s Workforce Innovation Fund and the Trade Adjustment Act Community College Career Training grant programs.

¹⁹ Alamprese, J.A., Brigham, N., & Sivilli, J. (1992). *Patterns of promise: State and local strategies for improving coordination in adult education programs*. Washington, DC: COSMOS Corporation; Alamprese, J. A. (June 2009). *Final report—Shared goals, common ground: State and local coordination and planning to strengthen adult basic education services*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates Inc.

Planning Processes. State staff sometimes do not have the tools or information to engage in methodical planning and analysis for a new system, and the project's planning processes enabled state staff to use data and information in new ways for identifying and testing practices and policies. Many states have limited access to the types of data that are needed to carry out planning processes, and the lack of appropriate data was a barrier for some state participants in the project. As the quality of adult education data improves, states should be able to apply the analyses and synthesis processes disseminated in Policy to Performance. Another barrier project states encountered was the limited availability of evidence-based ABE transition practices and related training materials that states could use in planning their ABE transition services. The processes reinforced in Policy to Performance about the selection and implementation of transition practices will enable states to use new resources as they become available.

Policy Development. States' implementation and testing of transition practices as a way to develop transition policy can be effective when: there is sufficient time to complete the test of transition practices, there is capacity to analyze data, and there is an opportunity to issue new guidance or policies, such as the issuance of an RFA for funding local providers. The states that were able to collect data during their pilot tests had begun to examine some patterns of practice implementation and identify the types of guidelines or policies that would be needed to facilitate the implementation of practices. In Policy to Performance, the timelines for states' pilot tests were delayed due to reasons that were beyond the control of the project's state teams. The delay of the pilot test then resulted in delays in the other steps that lead to policy implementation. In future efforts, the timeline for planning and conducting a pilot test, analyzing results from the pilot test, developing policies based on these results, and issuing new guidance or policies may need to be considered in estimating the amount of time needed for a demonstration project. This would help to ensure that there is sufficient time to analyze the results of the use of transition practices so that the results can be helpful in making decisions about policies and guidance related to these practices.

Technical Assistance. State participants reported that the provision of technical assistance in developing state transition systems was a critical service provided by the project. Two types of assistance were important. State staff benefited from the coaching support that enabled them to focus on the project during monthly telephone calls. The monthly calls enabled Policy to Performance team members to concentrate on their transition system planning activities, ask about resources, and exchange ideas with their coaches and project staff. Another type of assistance provided was technical expertise in which project staff and coaches developed data

collection instruments and processes to assist states in implementing their pilot tests. Project staff also identified instruments and materials from other projects that state teams could use in their project activities. As indicated by project state team members, most states had limited access to this type of technical expertise. This finding suggests that the provision of technical assistance needs to be a significant component of projects focused on state transition system development.

Addressing Challenges. The challenges of access to evidence-based practices and training materials about transition practices discussed above can be addressed through systematic development and evaluation. While state staff were guided in designing pilot tests that could assess the implementation of and outcomes from transition practices, state staff preferred to have local providers develop practices rather than to prescribe specific practices for pilot sites to implement as a way of developing local support to implement new practices. Most project states gave pilot sites flexibility in the ways in which they implemented the categories of transition services that were required in the pilot test, such as support services and advising. One result of the flexibility in service design was that there was great variation in the types of transition services being tested within a state, which restricted the types of conclusions that could be drawn about the utility of the transition services being pilot tested. In moving forward, it would be worthwhile for states to consider testing the same specific practices across pilot sites so that information could be gathered about the effectiveness of these practices and how they are used by program staff. This type of information would help to advance the knowledge about ABE transition practices and their effects on different populations of adult learners.

Appendix A: State Policy to Performance Activities

Alabama

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Overview of State's Policy to Performance Project

Alabama came to the Policy to Performance project with the goal of developing a Middle College model in which adults with limited employment skills are concurrently enrolled in accelerated GED preparation and postsecondary occupational courses. In addition to providing academic and career/technical coursework, the 10-week Middle College program provided employment preparation such as resume building, interview skills, and career counseling. The program involved the use of a coach to mentor and guide participants successfully through their first semester of college. The state adult education office required participating ABE programs to use the Middle College practices and requirements that the office had developed; however, programs were given flexibility to adapt selected components of the Middle College model. The Middle College concept evolved over the course of the project to become College Connection. During the project, the key components of a College Connection model for facilitating GED learners' participation in postsecondary education were identified, along with information about the types of state policies and technical assistance that are needed for a successful implementation of the model. Over half of the pilot participants earned a GED and postsecondary credits in career/technical education courses.

Major Partners

Alabama Community College System

Full Policy to Performance Team

Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education and Gadsden State Community College

Pilot

Alabama conducted three rounds of pilot tests of the College Connection program at three community colleges in the Alabama Community College System: Gadsden State Community College, Wallace Community College Dothan, and Wallace Community College Selma.

Next Steps

Ongoing Messaging: Develop state message to promote ABE transition. All information will be shared with the Alabama Legislature and the Legislative Appropriations Committee.

Interagency Coordination: Expand relationships between community colleges and State Workforce Development Regional Councils.

Transition Services: Facilitate the development of local College Connection implementation plans. In fall 2012, additional state Adult Education funds will be used to expand the College Connection program to a limited number of community colleges.

Training and Technical Assistance: Provide professional development to adult education local staff on learner intake processes, coordination between adult education and workforce development, and data collection procedures.

State Transition Policies: Develop state policy to permit the use of state funds for dual enrollment programs. Expand written guidance for the statewide implementation of the College Connection program.

Data Systems: Expand adult education data system to support longitudinal data collection. Data will be maintained in the Adult Education management information system so that the results can be shared with all stakeholders.

California

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Overview of State's Policy to Performance Project

California began the Policy to Performance project with a statewide priority of transitioning adult basic education learners to postsecondary education and employment. After conducting an internal analysis of state initiatives, resources, and current projects, the state adult education office identified a goal of increasing the quality of comprehensive support services that could assist ABE learners in making the transition to and succeed in postsecondary education. The state adult education office developed criteria for the delivery of comprehensive support services to ABE learners and funded ten pilot programs to develop and test comprehensive support services in the context of their existing transition service components. The state collected individual-level data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the piloted practices and to inform a statewide ABE/ASE/ESL to postsecondary education or workforce transition process for the California adult education system.

Major Partners

California Budget Project, Career Ladders Project, California Workforce Investment Board, and California EDGE Campaign.

Full Policy to Performance Team

California Department of Education, California Budget Project, Career Ladders Project, California Workforce Investment Board, California EDGE Campaign, Outreach and Technical

Assistance Network (OTAN), Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS), and California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO).

Pilot

California conducted a pilot test at 10 ABE programs across the state: Berkeley Adult School, Burbank Adult School, Cesar Chavez (Fresno Adult School), Chaffey Adult School, Elk Grove Adult & Community Education, Montebello Community Adult School, North Valley Occupational Center, Pittsburg Adult Education Center, Salinas Adult School, and Stockton School for Adults.

Next Steps

Ongoing Messaging: Use existing state teams and professional organizations to disseminate state messages about the priority of ABE transition to postsecondary education.

Interagency Coordination: Continue developing relationships with key workforce and community college partners.

Transition Services: Promote development of the key elements of an ABE transition program including transition courses and the role of a transition specialist.

Training and Technical Assistance: Disseminate effective transition practices and promote development of local partnerships.

State Transition Policies: Implement new requirements in WIA, Title II competitive grants for 2013-2014, including requirement that grantees show evidence of formalized partnerships and structures to support ABE transition to postsecondary education. Restructure payment point scheme for WIA, Title II grant award to emphasize transition.

Data Systems: Meet with staff from Employment Development Department and Community College System to discuss data system issues.

Louisiana

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Overview of State's Policy to Performance Project

Louisiana's participation in the Policy to Performance project began as the responsibility for the state's adult education program was being transferred from the Louisiana Department of Education, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). With this move, adult education was located within LCTCS, whose core mission of workforce education and training expanded the purpose of adult education beyond literacy and GED attainment to focus on work-readiness and sustainable employment. The state redesigned the organizational, operational, and financial designs of the state adult education services model to build upon the resources of LCTCS and the community. This new vision for adult education, known as WorkReady U, promoted the following goals: (1) increase the number of adults who attain an alternative high school diploma, (2) prepare adults to be work ready, and (3) increase the number of adult learners who achieve postsecondary credentials. LCTCS developed the [WorkReady U Pro Forma document](#) to encapsulate the vision of an effective ABE transition system and redesigned the 2012 Federal and State RFPs for ABE grantees to move the ABE system closer to the intended state vision for transition.

Major Partners

Louisiana Department of Education (initially), Louisiana Community and Technical College System, and Delgado Community College.

Full Policy to Performance Team

Louisiana Department of Education; Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding; ISC Constructors, LLC; and the Louisiana Community & Technical College System.

Pilots

Louisiana conducted the following nine pilot projects: St. Bernard Parish Local Educational Agency (LEA) located on Nunez Community College campus, Chalmette, LA; Terrebonne Parish LEA located on L. E. Fletcher Technical Community College campus, Houma/Thibodaux, LA areas; Sabine Parish LEA located on Northwest LA Technical College - Sabine Valley Campus, Many, LA; Central LA Technical College Consortium (includes Catahoula Parish LEA), Alexandria/Harrisonburg, LA areas; Bossier Parish Community College Consortium (includes Caddo Parish LEA located on Northwest LA Technical College - Shreveport Campus and Southern University at Shreveport), Shreveport/Bossier City, LA; Greater Baton Rouge Literacy Coalition (partnered with Baton Rouge Community College), Baton Rouge, LA; Literacy Council of Southwest LA (partnered with Sowela Community College), Lake Charles, LA; Ouachita Parish LEA located on Northeast LA Technical College Campus, Monroe, LA; and Delgado Community College, New Orleans, LA.

Next Steps

Ongoing Messaging: Continue utilizing the WorkReady U vision and messaging that ABE transition to postsecondary education and employment is building the future of the state.

Interagency Coordination: Strengthen relationships with the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Economic Development agency, and the community and technical colleges.

Transition Services: Promote (1) the role of the regional transitional specialist/advisor; (2) ABE learners' completion of the FAFSA form as part of their literacy plan; and (3) the use of braided funding to support transition specialist.

Training and Technical Assistance: Provide regional training with technical assistance in identified strands to support ABE transition services.

State Transition Policies: Review assessment policy, develop fee policy, include managed enrollment in ABE grantee requirements, and analyze options for alternative diploma programs.

Data Systems: Study the capacity of the expanded statewide community college data system to meet the National Reporting System requirements.

Massachusetts

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Overview of State's Policy to Performance Project

Prior to Policy to Performance, Massachusetts had completed a series of labor market reports that revealed the need to strengthen and integrate ABE transition services to support greater alignment between ABE and postsecondary education throughout the Massachusetts system. As part of its overall ABE transition-building activities, the state adult education office funded eight ABE pilot programs to integrate comprehensive advising and counseling services into ABE transition services, enhance contextualized instruction, and/or increase college and career readiness activities. Pilot programs were asked to design their interventions according to the criteria for transition services that were provided by the state adult education office. Lessons learned from the pilot will inform state policies on goal setting, instruction, support services, and length of services.

Major Partners

The Commonwealth Corporation, Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office, and the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board.

Full Policy to Performance Team

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Adult and Community Services; Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance; Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board; Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office; Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development; Quinsigamond Community College; Commonwealth Corporation; City of Cambridge Community Learning Center; The Career Place One-Stop Career Center; and Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) of Greater Boston.

Pilots

Massachusetts conducted eight pilot programs throughout the state: Brockton Public Schools Adult Learning Center in Brockton, MA; Center for New Americans in Northampton, MA; Community Education Project, Inc. in Holyoke, MA; Community Learning Center in Cambridge, MA; Framingham Adult ESL Plus and Framingham Public Schools in Framingham, MA; Jamaica Plain Community Centers, Inc. in Jamaica Plain, MA; Jewish Vocational Service in Boston, MA; and Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester, MA.

Next Steps

Ongoing Messaging: Present at relevant state and partner agency conferences and meetings.

Interagency Coordination: Expand the Policy to Performance task force to engage new partners and continue working on interagency career pathways projects.

Transition Services: Expand contextualized curriculum development projects, advising processes, and use of learner education and career plans. Coordinate with college navigators and develop inventory of transition services.

Training and Technical Assistance: Promote the use of learning community on selected transition topics and conduct transition-related training in coordination with partners.

State Transition Policies: Develop policies and guidelines for community planning, math instruction, adult career pathways, transition programs, and next steps strategies.

Data Systems: Implement revisions to SMARTT data system to adhere to new National Reporting System requirements. Collaborate with Board of Higher Education on capacity for longitudinal data collection.

New York

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Overview of State's Policy to Performance Project

New York State began Policy to Performance with a number of promising transition initiatives in progress and the desire to align the services and policies of these initiatives into an integrated system of career pathways. The state adult education office documented the range of ABE career pathways services underway in the state to inform guidelines for ABE transition/career pathways services in the state's 2013 Request for Proposals for ABE services. The state also has the goal of facilitating the exchange of data across partner agencies and is formalizing the data system structure, identifying key data points available through partner networks to support adult learners, and expanding accessibility. A state longitudinal database, supported by Race to the Top funds, is currently in development.

Major Partners

Central Southern Tier Regional Adult Education Network, City University of New York, New York State Department of Labor, and State University of New York.

Full Policy to Performance Team

New York State Education Department; Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse; State University of New York System Administration and Chancellor's Office; CNY Works; State University of New York; Cayuga Community College; Literacy Assistance Center; Central Southern Tier Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN); New York State Education Department; and Literacy New York.

Pilots

As part of the overall ABE transition activities in the state, a pilot project is underway to track ABE learners' participation in and outcomes from postsecondary education in two colleges: Cayuga Community College and Onondaga Community College.

Next Steps

Ongoing Messaging: Disseminate messages through conferences, summits, and program networks.

Interagency Coordination: State-level team formed under the project with the State University of New York, the City University of New York, and the State Department of Labor will continue and expand partnership to engage new partners. Local partnerships will be expanded through the local Literacy Zones.

Transition Services: The Literacy Zone framework will continue to enhance the role of case management and counseling in transition to postsecondary education and employment.

Training and Technical Assistance: Rebid professional development system in 2014.

State Transition Policies: Use lessons learned from Policy to Performance project to incorporate new policies to promote ABE transition in 2013 Request for Proposal for WIA, Title II grantees.

Data Systems: Continue participation in state's development of P-20 data system that includes adult education.

Texas

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Overview of State's Policy to Performance Project

In 2008, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Council collaborated on a tri-agency initiative that sought to increase the transition of adult education students to postsecondary education, career pathways, and workforce services. The goal of Texas's Policy to Performance participation was to build bridges between these agencies to create a unified system through enhanced coordination, delivery of services, and development of a transparent and unified client tracking system. The state's focus for Policy to Performance was to increase the readiness of ABE/ESL learners to benefit from One-Stop services through their participation in accelerated GED instruction and career awareness/readiness services. Five pilot sites in three regions implemented new processes for cross-referral between the ABE provider and the One-Stop Center. The state adult education office provided core requirements for these services and pilot sites were able to develop aligned transition practices.

Major Partners

Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Texas Workforce Commission.

Full Policy to Performance Team

Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas LEARNS, and Texas Workforce Commission.

Pilots

Texas piloted activities in three regions identified as having "robust" relationships between adult education providers and the local workforce system. These pilot regions were: Austin, Houston, and San Antonio.

Next Steps

Ongoing Messaging: Develop adult education strategic plan that promotes the transition of adult learners to postsecondary education and work.

Interagency Coordination: Continue the state-level Workforce Literacy Resource Team collaboration and engage new agency partners.

Transition Services: Analyze the outcomes from the C-4 Policy to Performance pilot projects and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board I-BEST grants to identify key practices and resources related to the use of contextualized curriculum and teacher-training materials and methods.

Training and Technical Assistance: Continue implementation of career awareness curriculum in programs funded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

State Transition Policies: Require all AEFLA-funded programs to adhere to new transition policies in the next AEFLA competitive grants application.

Data Systems: Work with the Texas longitudinal data systems to determine how adult education data can be incorporated.

Virginia

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Overview of State's Policy to Performance Project

At the start of Policy to Performance, Virginia had developed the PluggedIn VA model and tested it in Southwest Virginia. PluggedIn VA has four components of services that are aimed at providing low-skilled adults with the basic skills, digital literacy skills, soft skills, and occupational credentials to obtain employment in high-demand occupations. PluggedIn VA provides participants with a six-month, intensive course in which participants earn a GED, a Career Readiness Certificate, Microsoft Certifications, industry certifications, and community college credit. Learners also develop a technology portfolio and present a capstone project. Virginia's activity for Policy to Performance was to replicate the PluggedIn VA model in two pilot sites. Using the lessons learned through the implementation of the new PluggedIn VA pilots, the state developed a manual to support the successful replication of this model at additional sites.

Major Partners

Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, Virginia Community Colleges, Virginia Department of Labor & Industry, and Southwest Virginia Regional Adult Education.

Full Policy to Performance Team

Virginia Department of Education, Southwest Virginia Regional Adult Education, Virginia Literacy Foundation, Virginia Department of Labor & Industry, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, Virginia Community Colleges, Radford University, and Woodmark Inc.

Pilots

In addition to continuing to support the expanding PluggedIn VA programs in Southwest Virginia, two additional pilots were implemented in New River Community College and the Danville Public Schools Adult and Career Education Program.

Next Steps

Ongoing Messaging: Provide technical assistance on existing strategic plan. Present at relevant conferences and maintain websites.

Interagency Coordination: Continue to align state career pathways initiatives.

Transition Services: Utilize the career coach role and the Virginia Wizard to implement enhanced transition services. Hold a competition for state funds to expand PluggedIn VA statewide.

Training and Technical Assistance: Disseminate PluggedIn VA Implementation Guide and training. Deliver professional development on the use of contextualized instruction, development of partnerships, and soft skills instruction. Provide training on adult education theory to PluggedIn VA partners.

State Transition Policies: Collect and analyze data from PluggedIn VA programs to determine policies that are needed to support effective implementation of the model.

Data Systems: Continue development of a longitudinal data system to include state National Reporting System data. Modify state web-based NRS data system to track and evaluate PluggedIn VA program performance.

Wisconsin

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Overview of State's Policy to Performance Project

Wisconsin's participation in the Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) Initiative, funded under the Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears Initiative, enabled the state to move forward in strengthening its career pathways system. For Policy to Performance, the state adult education office identified a need to create an enhanced Wisconsin high school equivalency diploma option. The enhanced option has a combination of standardized academic assessments (e.g., Test of Adult Basic Skills), courses in civics and health, career awareness instruction, employability skills, and occupational certificate courses. This expanded option is expected to assist low-skilled adults in participating in postsecondary career pathways services. After the expanded option is approved, the state will create local implementation policies, program applications, state office approval processes, and evaluative processes.

Major Partners

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Full Policy to Performance Team

Madison Area Technical College; Western Technical College; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Wisconsin Technical College System; Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board; Milwaukee Area Technical College; Western Technical College; and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College.

Pilots

Three technical colleges that currently implement the equivalency high school diploma option that is being enhanced will participate in a pilot to test the effectiveness of the new guidelines for the enhanced option.

Next Steps

Ongoing Messaging: Present at relevant state meetings to communicate this “refreshed” equivalency diploma option.

Interagency Coordination: Continue to deepen relationships between adult education and career and technical education.

Transition Services: Specify the guidelines for assessing the competencies for enhanced equivalency diploma option and conduct a pilot test of the implementation of the new guidelines.

Training and Technical Assistance: Determine training for statewide implementation based on the results of the pilot process.

State Transition Policies: Continue to develop formal policies to guide the implementation of the enhanced equivalency diploma option.

Data Systems: The state has an existing longitudinal system that enables learners’ transition from ABE to postsecondary education to be tracked. Consider options for tracking learners’ attainment of occupational certificates, which are not currently included in the state longitudinal database.

Appendix B. Analyzing State Policies and Guidance to Support ABE Transition Form

State policies and guidance play a critical role in facilitating the implementation of ABE transition services. A key step in developing an ABE transition system is the analysis of a state’s current policies and guidance concerning the key components of an ABE transition system to identify the status of existing policies and the potential for new policies. This tool is designed to assist state staff in analyzing their current ABE transition policies.

Review the tables below that list ABE Transition Components (Column 1) and Illustrative Policies (Column 2) in two main categories: (A) State Policies to Support Local Implementation of ABE/ESL Transition Services, and (B) State Policies to Support Overall State ABE Transition System.

Directions:

- (1) In Column 3, list any ABE state policies or guidance supporting ABE transition that currently are operational in your state. List the policies according to the categories of ABE Transition Components. If your state has policies supporting ABE transition that do not correspond to the categories of ABE Transition System Components, space is provided on the table for you to list your state’s policies under “Other State Policies to Support Local Implementation of ABE/ESL Transition Services” and “Other State Policies to Support Overall State ABE Transition System.”
- (2) In Column 4, list the location of the current policy, i.e., the document in which the policy is stated or contained. Examples include a state regulation for the ABE program, a state memorandum to grantees, a state’s adult education policy manual, or the RFA for local ABE grants.
- (3) In Column 5, list any ABE state policies supporting ABE transition that are being planned in your state OR any current policies that are expected to be updated. List the policies according to the categories of ABE Transition System Components. If your state is planning new or updating existing policies to support ABE transition that do not correspond to the categories of ABE System Transition Components, space is provided on the table for you to list your state’s planned or updated policies under “Other State Policies to Support Local Implementation of ABE/ESL Transition Services” and “Other State Policies to Support Overall State ABE Transition System.”

A. State Policies or Guidance to Support Local Implementation of ABE/ESL Transition Services

Table A-1. Local Interagency Coordination

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Use of Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of required partners between ABE and other divisions within organization (e.g., within community college, school district) • Type of required partners between ABE and other organizations • Minimum number of partners 			
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of activities that partners should undertake • Frequency of activities that partners should undertake 			

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Other Types of Interagency Coordination Policies				
Other Types of Transition Services				

Table A-2. Transition Service Models

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Learners to be Served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill levels (NRS Levels, CASAS/TABE levels) of learners who should be referred to transition services 			
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of assessments to administer for ABE placement into transition services • Pre-test score criterion level for placement into transition instruction • Length of time between pretest and posttest • Types of assessments to use to determine learners' readiness for postsecondary participation (e.g., college placement test) 			

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Instructional Design and Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of basic skills courses that should be offered to transition learners • Types of coordination required between ABE/ESL and CTE instructors in designing/delivering courses • Types of coordination required between ABE/ESL and local business/industry in designing/delivering courses • Use of state basic skills standards to guide instruction to facilitate transition • Use of contextualization in transition course development • Types of courses required for transition services (accelerated basic skills, bridge courses, career pathways, college and career awareness) 			

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Advising/ Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of advising services that should be provided to support ABE/ESL learners' transition • Frequency at which services should be provided • Type/content of learner career plan that should be developed • Frequency with which learner career plan should be updated 			
Learner Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of information to collect about learners' risk factors, needs for support services • Types of support services to provide directly or through coordination with other agencies that can address learners' risk factors 			

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications of staff involved in the delivery of transition instruction, advising/ counseling 			
Training & Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of training required for staff who deliver transition services • Amount and frequency of training required for staff who deliver transition services 			

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Other Types of Transition Services				

Table A-3. Learner Financial Aid/Support

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Eligibility Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of courses students must take to be eligible for financial aid • Criteria for eligibility for free tuition credits; number of credits; time period over which credits must be used 			
Other Types of Financial Aid/Support Policies				

Table A-4. Data Collection and Evaluation

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
ABE/ESL Learner Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/percent of learners who set postsecondary participation as a goal • Number/percent of learners who set employment as a goal 			
ABE/ESL Learner Performance Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of learners who enroll in postsecondary education • Percent of learners who complete /earn credits for postsecondary courses • Number of postsecondary credits that learners earn • Percent of learners who obtain jobs • Percent of learners who retain jobs 			

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Other Types of Data Collection/ Evaluation Policies				

Table A-5. Other State Policies to Support Local Implementation of ABE/ESL Transition Services

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>

B. State Policies or Guidance to Support Overall State ABE Transition System

Table B-1. State Data System

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
State Data System				
Linkages to Other States' Data Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of Understanding with other agencies (K-12, Higher Education, Workforce Development/Unemployment Insurance) concerning the tracking of learner data across state systems 			
Types of Data to Collect	<p>Use of a longitudinal data system that can track learners':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment in postsecondary courses • Completion of postsecondary courses • Attainment of certificates, credentials, and degrees • Transfer from community college to four-year college/university 			

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Other State Data System Policies				

Table B-2. Allowable Uses of WIA, Title II Funding

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
ABE/ESL Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults with a high school diploma or equivalent whose skills are below the secondary level 			
ABE/ESL Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of advising or counseling services 			

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Other Policies Related to Uses of WIA, Title II Funding				

Table B-3. Secondary Credentialing Options

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>
Secondary Credentialing Options				
High School Equivalency Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for assessing learners' completion of credential requirements (e.g., demonstration of competencies) 			
Other Secondary Credentialing Options				

Table B-4. Other State Policies to Support Overall State ABE Transition System

ABE Transition System Component	Illustrative Policy	Policy is Operational <i>List current policies for each component</i>	Location of Current Policy <i>List the document in which policy is contained</i>	Policy is Being Planned -OR- Current Policy will be Updated <i>List updated or planned policy</i>

Based on Alamprese, J.A. (2009). *State policy development: Tips and tools for writing policies and guidance*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates Inc.

Appendix C. Policy Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PPIE[©]) Process for State Transition Policies in Adult Education

Planning
1. Determine Goal or Issue that Policy is to Address
<p>a. Review Workforce Investment Act, state legislative requirements to identify missing policies or practices.</p> <p>b. Analyze data from learners, current transition activities, annual program reports, monitoring site visits, and other sources to determine issues/problems in programs that could benefit from new policies/practices.</p> <p>c. Examine state data, state context for national or state issue that a policy could address.</p>
2. Research/Review/Analyze
<p>a. Identify research and information about the issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of transition issue to state adult education system. • Political climate regarding the issue. • Related policy initiatives that may affect development of transition policy. • Potential “effective” practices that could be included in policy. • Possible barriers to implementing policy/practices. <p>b. Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other states’ adult education transition policies. • State partners’ policies to facilitate transition. <p>c. Analyze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data that will be used as benchmark(s) in implementing policy. • Whether potential practices related to transition policy will work in the state.
3. Prepare Framework/Paper on Transition Issue
<p>a. Synthesis of need for policy.</p> <p>b. Justification for practices that policy will address.</p> <p>c. Key “messages” about transition issues/policy that should be communicated.</p>

Policy Development

4. Prepare Draft Policy

- a. Use state formats/mechanisms if required.
- b. Provide overview of state context for policy.
- c. Specify the requirements of the policy:
 - Practices to be undertaken and any conditions for practices.
 - Who is to conduct the practices.
 - Where practices are to be conducted.
 - Timeline for activity.
- d. Write policies that are clear and concise.
- e. Specify life of policy (e.g., until this date, until further notice).
- f. Develop processes for review and editing.

5. Consult with Internal Agency Stakeholders (adult education office, offices within state agency)

- a. Provide justification for policy development.
- b. Ensure that key stakeholders understand importance of policy.
- c. Identify stakeholder(s) who can communicate the need for the policy within the institutional hierarchy.

6. Consult with External Stakeholders (local adult education providers, other state agencies, governor's office, state councils, other key stakeholders)

- a. Provide rationale for policy early in policy development process.
- b. Gather support and address challenges from variety of local providers and other stakeholders.
- c. Circulate drafts of documents for review and comment.
- d. Develop process for responding to questions and comments.

7. Finalize Policy

- a. Revise policy based on feedback from internal stakeholders.
- b. Revise policy based on feedback from external stakeholders.
- c. Communicate to stakeholders that their feedback was considered in development of final policy.

Policy Implementation

8. Test/Implement/Monitor Policy

- a. Conduct pilot test:
 - Develop pilot test of policy with sample of service providers.
 - Provide professional development on intent of policy, processes for using policy.
 - Provide ongoing technical assistance on use of policy.
 - Collect data about use of policy in pilot test.
 - Revise policy based on pilot test.
- b. Implement policy:
 - Provide professional development regarding intent of policies, processes for using policy, consequences of not following policy.
 - Provide ongoing technical assistance on use of policy.
 - Update policy as needed.
 - Provide easy access to current version of policy.
- c. Monitor use of policy:
 - Develop processes for collecting and analyzing data and program practices related to policy.
 - Identify extent to which policy is being implemented and barriers to the use of the policy.
 - Conduct feedback sessions at provider meetings.
 - Communicate with state partners' about progress of policy use.

Policy Evaluation

9. Evaluate Results from Policy

- a. Collect, review/analyze data related to policy:
 - Learner characteristics and outcomes.
 - Staff characteristics and outcomes.
 - Operation of program services/practices.
 - Program performance outcomes.
- b. Assess quality of program practices addressed by policy.
- c. Determine whether policy needs to be revised or whether a new policy is needed.