



<b>WS 15-05</b>
<b>March 2, 2015</b>
<b>Adult Education &amp; Literacy</b>
<b>Expires: Continuing</b>

To: All Contractors

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Subject: Adult Education and Literacy

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## Purpose

Provide information on how to access adult education and literacy service for customers

## Background

In September 2014 the Gulf Coast Workforce Board began administering the public adult education and literacy funds in our 13-county region. Through a consortium of eight contractors, we plan to help more than 25,000 customers using about \$14 million.

## Adult Education and Literacy

Adult education and literacy providers offer English language, mathematics, reading, and writing instruction to help students acquire the skills needed to earn a high school equivalency, enter college or career training and/ or succeed in the workforce.

While some classes may charge a small, nominal fee (less than \$20) most adult education and literacy services are free to adult learners. Service is also available to young people who have dropped out of high school and have not earned an equivalency diploma.

### *Service Categories*

Adult education and literacy providers typically offer a wide variety of adult education courses. Most of these courses are components of four major service categories:

- **GED Preparation** - Academic preparation toward readiness for the high school equivalency examination.

- **Combined GED & Skills Training** - Traditional GED preparation offered with concurrent skills training. You may also hear this referred to as “contextualized learning”.
- **English as a Second Language** - ESL courses teach English literacy to individuals with languages other than English as their primary language.
- **EL/Civics** - Civics courses inform individuals on United States history, culture, and practice in preparation for U.S. citizenship. EL/Civics courses are frequently offered in conjunction with ESL courses.

### *The Consortium*

The consortium includes a managing partner, Region 6 Education Service Center, and seven providers. Region 6 offers programming support for the system. The seven providers offer direct service through their own facilities as well as through sites at hundreds of community based organizations, such as churches, libraries, non-profits, schools.

<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Counties Served</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Region 6 Education Service Center	All 13 Counties	Lead Organization	Provide technical and programmatic support
Brazosport College	Brazoria	Service Provider	Adult education and literacy
College of the Mainland	Chambers and Galveston	Service Provider	Adult education and literacy
Harris County Department of Education	Harris and Liberty	Service Provider	Adult education and literacy
Houston Community College	Fort Bend and Harris	Service Provider	Adult education and literacy
Lone Star College	Harris, Montgomery and Walker	Service Provider	Adult education and literacy
San Jacinto College	Harris	Service Provider	Adult education and literacy
Wharton County Junior College	Austin, Colorado, Fort Bend, Matagorda, Waller and Wharton	Service Provider	Adult education and literacy

### *General Eligibility*

To participate in a class funded through the consortium, customers must be 16 years of age or older, considered out-of-school and not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law. Customers must also:

1. lack sufficient basic educational skills to function effectively in society; or
2. not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; or
3. be unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

**Currently adult education providers conduct intake, make eligibility determinations, and enter data on participation in adult education and literacy service.**

### *Making the Connection*

Staff can connect customers with adult education and literacy service when:

- Staff suggest adult education as a part of an employment or career plan for a customer
- Customers inquire about adult education or literacy

**Workforce Solutions staff should explore free/low cost options within the consortium before using other funds or providers for adult education and literacy.**

### *Referring Customers*

At the present time, staff must refer a customer to an adult education provider; you cannot make an eligibility determination or place a customer in a class.

1. Use the Workforce Solutions referral tool, available online at [www.wrksolutions.com/ael-services](http://www.wrksolutions.com/ael-services). Select the county in which the customer wants to attend class and complete the *Contact Us* form. The appropriate adult education provider will contact the customer to arrange intake and placement.
2. Customers may use the tool themselves, as may any partner organizations or the general public.

## *Things to Know*

1. There are multiple adult education sites and classes located throughout the region, often near a customer's residence or place of employment. Classes or sites sometimes change locations, and at this time, it is best to refer the customer to the adult education provider for exact placement.
2. Many providers offer distance learning options for customers who experience transportation issues or merely prefer the convenience of taking classes remotely.
3. A few of our offices have adult education sites in the career office.
4. Employers interested in improving their employees' basic skills can host adult education classes on-site.
5. The Adult Education and Literacy Referral Desk Aid provides a quick overview of the referral process and may be used by customers, staff and partner organizations.

## Coming Soon

As we work to make better connections with adult education providers, we will:

- Expand and improve the referral tool to offer real-time and more detailed information for staff and customers on the location of individual classes
- Assist in helping staff from the offices, Employer Service, Financial Aid Payment Office, and Financial Aid Call Center connect with adult education staff.
- Work with the Bridging the Gaps workgroup to find better ways to integrate all service for customers

## Action

- Make sure managers, supervisors, and staff members are familiar with how to access the referral tool and make referrals for customers, as well as the basics about the consortium's adult education and literacy service
- Ensure that staff members first consider adult education options and providers from within our consortium prior to authorizing financial aid for other providers.

## Questions

Staff should ask questions of their supervisors first. Direct questions for Board staff through the Issuance Q&A at <http://www.wrksolutions.com/staff-resources/system-resources/contract-management>.