

Adult Education and Literacy

Fiscal Year 2018

**Policy
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Vermont's Adult Education and Literacy System



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I. INTRODUCTION

Vermont's adult education and literacy system (VAEL) is composed of the direct service providers holding grants for the purpose of delivering services to adult learners statewide, and is regulated by the Vermont Agency of Education's AEL team. Currently, the service providers are Central Vermont Adult Basic Education (CVABE), Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS), The Tutorial Center (TTC) and Vermont Adult Learning (VAL). These organizations, through a competitive process, have been given the responsibility to design and implement a statewide system for the provision of adult education and literacy services. The following vision and mission statements are intended to inform all aspects of the VAEL system's operations.

The Vermont Adult Education and Literacy Vision

VAEL will provide to Vermont the highest quality of adult education and literacy services. It will provide a comprehensive set of services in a consistent manner throughout the State in order to meet the educational needs of Vermont's adult learners in an equitable manner. It will be accountable for successful learner outcomes as measured in relation to the Equipped For the Future (EFF) Standards and College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education, which define the core knowledge and skills adults need to effectively carry out their roles as workers, family members and community members. The VAEL system will also align its efforts to the collective vision of Vermont's Unified State Plan. It will develop services and programs for this purpose and be an efficient and accountable steward of available resources.

The Vermont Adult Education and Literacy Mission

It is the mission of VAEL to meet the educational needs of Vermont's adult learners through supported goal-setting and successful literacy skill acquisition, English language acquisition, high school completion, transition to post-secondary education and training, and transition to employment. Adult learners in Vermont are defined as persons 16 years of age or older who are lacking essential skills and/or a credential equivalent to high school completion. It is the mission of VAEL to meet the commitment made by the State of Vermont to those adults seeking the knowledge, skills and credentials necessary for success as workers, family members and community members in today's world. It is the mission of VAEL to encourage and facilitate learner persistence, defined as a continuous learning process that lasts until an adult learner meets his or her educational goals. It is the mission of VAEL to encourage learners to engage in a lifetime of inquiry and learning.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) created a new vision for how the United States prepares an educated and skilled workforce that expands opportunity for workers and employers.

The State of Vermont has developed a [Unified State Plan](#) to meet the requirements of WIOA, Public Law No. 113-128. The Plan includes the four core WIOA programs:

- Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under Title I
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Program under Title II
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program under Title III

- Vocational Rehabilitation Program under Title IV

Under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II Section 202 and Section 243) the fourfold purpose of federally-funded AEL programs is to assist:

- adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that
 - are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children and
 - lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
- adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in
 - improving their
 - reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics skills; and
 - acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

To read more about WIOA's Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (including the final rules/regulations), visit the [U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education](#).

Per WIOA, Section 203(3), The Eligible Agency is the sole agency in the State responsible for administering and supervising policy for adult education and literacy activities in the State, consistent with the law of the State. The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is the Eligible Agency in Vermont under Title II of WIOA.

A Statement of Common Practice

In order to fulfill the vision and carry out the mission of VAEL, certain common practice will become the norm throughout the system that is VAEL. This common practice has been identified, through research and field experience, as having efficacy in relation to the vision and mission. This statement of common practice will be regularly reviewed and revised as dictated by emerging research and experience. In order to "provide a comprehensive set of services in a consistent manner throughout the State" the current statement of common practice will inform operational decisions until revised.

In order to encourage and facilitate learner persistence and therefore success:

- intake and orientation will help students understand the available programs, set realistic expectations, build a working relationship with program staff, and establish learning goals;
- initial assessment will provide students and teachers with information on student learning needs, be integrated with instruction, and form the foundation for measuring progress;

- each learner will have an education plan (also known as a personal learning plan) that reflects his or her learning needs and personal learning goals;
- programs and instructors will measure and recognize student achievement;
- staff, instruction, and support services will be sufficient to support effective learning, using evidence-based approaches to the essential components of reading such as Orton-Gillingham, or Wilson; and learning needs screening capacity such as the Learning Needs Screening Tool by Dr. Nancie Payne;
- learning opportunities and curricula will be aligned with *Equipped For the Future Content Standards: What Adults Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century* and *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*.
- technology will be integrated into service delivery to extend and enrich learning opportunities;
- a variety of instructional modes will be available to learners; and
- learner accommodations will be available when appropriate to facilitate learning and to make materials and instruction accessible to all learners.

II. SERVICES

The VAEL system provides the comprehensive services necessary for learners to accomplish their goals and VAEL to accomplish its mission. To meet its mission, VAEL full-service centers are strategically located statewide, and each center will provide the following range of services:

A. Outreach, intake, and advising

The VAEL system will actively search out and enroll identified target populations.

Per WIOA, Section 203(4), “eligible individual” means, a person who:

- has attained 16 years of age;
- is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and
 - is basic skills deficient;
 - does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
 - is an English language learner.

Grantees will not deny services to eligible students without reasonable cause and prior consultation with the Vermont Agency of Education.

VAEL grantees will establish intake and enrollment policies and procedures that welcome learners and establish a strong commitment, support, and clear expectations for participation, making full use of personalized learning plans and enabling learners to make fully informed decisions regarding program options. The process will be designed to reduce the risk of early withdrawal before goals are achieved and to identify an appropriate educational program that allows students to take full advantage of VAEL services. VAEL enrollment may occur as early as initial orientation, but must occur no later than the point at which a definable service has been rendered (e.g. assessment). By the conclusion of the first twelve hours of service, each learner should have an identified educational functioning level, established goal(s), and be engaged in a personalized learning plan.

VAEL staff may assist learners in overcoming barriers to participation by making referrals to appropriate social service agencies and partners identified through WIOA as part of the One-Stop system in Vermont. Using VAEL grant funds to directly provide support services should always be a last option. Such direct provision of services may be appropriate when the absence of such services would severely inhibit learner participation and such services are not available elsewhere.

Parties will comply with all relevant federal and state laws and regulations, including the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of WIOA, the Fair Employment and Housing Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in order to make all aspects of American society more accessible to people with disabilities, whether physical or psychological. Centers must provide physical access to and within the building where learners come for services. Also, under the ADA, all programs are required to provide “reasonable accommodations” to learners with documentation of diagnosed disabilities. Those disabilities include both physical and learning disabilities. VAEL is committed to providing support services that are in keeping with our vision and mission and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, centers will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations when it can be demonstrated that doing so would not fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity being provided. It is the participant's responsibility to request accommodations and to provide the necessary documentation in support of the request. However, many participants may not be privy to the rights afforded them and should be informed of protections under the ADA.

B. Instruction

The standards and proficiencies to be used are defined specifically as follows:

[College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education:](#)

- Mathematics
- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Language

[Equipped for the Future](#) Performance Continua for:

- Solve Problems and Make Decisions
- Cooperate with Others
- Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
- Take Responsibility for Learning
- Learn Through Research
- Use Information and Communications Technology

Equipped for the Future standards (no performance continua available) for:

- Observe Critically

- Advocate and Influence
- Guide Others

Equipped for the Future Teaching and Learning Cycle:

Step 1 - Determine individual learner's goals and purposes and identify the Standards that will help him/her achieve them. Identify the learner's prior knowledge about these goals and Standards.

Step 2 - In a group, identify a shared interest, purpose or goal and determine the group's prior knowledge of this topic. Identify the Standard that will help the group address this shared goal. Make clear the connection between the class focus and individuals' needs.

Step 3 - Use the EFF Standard to design a learning activity to address the real-life goal of the learners.

Step 4 - With learners, develop a plan to capture evidence and report learning.

Step 5 - Carry out the learning activity.

Step 6 - Observe and document evidence of performance of the Standard.

Step 7 - With learners, evaluate and reflect on how what was learned is transferable to real-life situations.

Step 8 - With learners, determine next steps to help them meet their goals (return to Step 1 and/or 2).

As part of a personalized learning approach, VAEL instruction will be offered in a variety of schedules, contexts, and formats, and delivered primarily through classes and group programs for intermediate and advanced learners, with supplemental individual instruction as needed. The lowest skilled learners (NRS 1-2) may primarily receive individual instruction, with intermittent opportunities to come together with peers. **Only trained and well-qualified instructors will provide AEL instruction. Volunteers may supplement student learning experiences, but may not substitute for qualified instructors.**

In order to continue receiving VAEL services, an adult learner must demonstrate a gain on approved standardized assessments in reading, writing, mathematics or ESOL equivalent to one grade level for every 75 hours of instruction. *If such progress cannot be demonstrated, the provider will assist the learner in obtaining appropriate services that can best meet their individual needs.*

C. Student assessment

Relative to assessment, the grant under which VAEL services are provided creates the following expectations.

Each full-service VAEL Center will provide the following range of services as described in the grant agreements and including those listed below:

- Student skill assessments and credentials through:
 - State-approved standardized testing in reading, writing, mathematics, ESOL for baseline and progress assessment of skill levels;
 - State-approved standardized performance assessments (as available) for baseline and progress assessment of skill levels;

- o formal and informal assessments used by teachers and learners during instruction for ongoing guidance and documentation of learning;
- o official GED testing in compliance with GEDTS regulations and State policy for earning a GED Certificate;
- o High School Completion Program in compliance with State statute and policy;
- o Work Keys and other skill certificates and assessments as permitted.

Baseline Assessment - The VAEL provider is required to document reading, writing, math and ESOL skills gained by individual learners using standardized assessments approved by the Vermont Agency of Education. Skill level assessments in reading, writing, math and/or ESOL must be administered to all learners, except work- based project learners, within the first 12 hours of instruction. The student’s learning goals and the focus for instruction should determine the assessments to be used. Reasonable accommodations must be provided to any individual with a documented disability. An individual who does not speak English, and therefore cannot undergo a standardized assessment, should be assigned to the NRS level “Low Beginning” and formally assessed when English language acquisition warrants.

Progress Assessment - It is the expectation that, with few exceptions, VAEL students will have a baseline assessment at the time of enrollment. Again with few exceptions, students who have been baseline assessed should at an appropriate interval be progress assessed in order to determine educational gains and to provide the critical feedback necessary for students to track their own progress. Progress assessment is considered valid if the student has received a minimum of 40 hours of instruction and a minimum of 45 days has passed since the previous assessment. The data acquired from baseline and progress assessment will be used for instructional and goal setting purposes. In addition, assessment data will be used for National Reporting System (NRS) purposes and/or for State reporting purposes as described below.

For State reporting purposes, assessments may include those in the skill areas of vocabulary, spelling, language mechanics, social studies, science and computer skills, as well as reading, writing, speaking and math. Those assessments approved for State reporting purposes include the following (subject to change):

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Skill area</u>
Accuplacer	Reading & Math
BEST Plus 2.0	Speaking & Listening (ESOL only)
CASAS Life and Work	Reading
CASAS Life Skills	Math
TABE Battery 9&10 L only	Reading, Writing, & Math
TABE CLAS-E	Writing (ESOL only)
TABE Survey 9&10	Reading, Writing, & Math
WorkKeys	Reading for Info, Locating Info, & Applied Math

Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gains and National Reporting System (NRS) gains are federal measures that must comply with federal policy. Only assessments approved for this use under federal policy and adopted by the Vermont Agency of Education can be used to determine an EFL or an NRS level in a specific skill area of reading, writing, speaking, or math.

The EFL is a measure of functional ability as determined by a learner’s lowest score in any of the skill areas. Once a skill area is determined for EFL at entry, that skill area will remain the basis for determining EFL gains throughout a learner’s tenure. In other words, if the EFL is determined to be math at entry, then EFL gain determination will always be based on math performance and will not revert to any other skill area even if another skill area subsequently becomes the lowest. This is a federal reporting requirement and should not be the sole foundation for goal-setting and instructional decisions.

Federally-approved assessments that can generate EFL and NRS levels and adopted for this use by the Vermont Agency of Education include the following (this list is subject to change):

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Skill area</u>
BEST Plus 2.0	Speaking & Listening (ESOL only)
CASAS Life and Work	Reading
CASAS Life Skills	Math
TABE Battery 9&10 L only	Reading, Writing, & Math
TABE CLAS-E	Writing (ESOL only)
TABE Survey 9&10	Reading, Writing, & Math

Compliance with the following rules will determine validity of assessment for the purposes described.

A learner is considered to have a valid baseline assessment for the purpose of determining instructional needs, and therefore is eligible for inclusion in State reporting, if all of the following are true:

- The learner is a member of the report population (open enrollment during the reporting period and services received according to the selection parameters);
- An appropriate pre-screening mechanism, such as an appraisal or locator assessment, was used prior to assessment to determine which instrument and level is most appropriate;
- The learner was assessed during the period beginning one year prior to the report start date and ending with the report end date or attained NRS 6 in all skill areas (reading, writing, and math);
- The assessment is a skill level or skill diagnostic assessment;
- The assessment is in one of the skill areas of reading, writing, math, ESOL, speaking, vocabulary, spelling, language mechanics, social studies, or science, and produces a skill level record; and
- The assessment was administered by a staff person trained and certified to use that instrument.

A learner is considered to have a valid progress assessment for the purpose of establishing educational gains, and is therefore eligible for inclusion in State reporting, if all of the following are true:

- The learner has a qualifying baseline assessment;
- The progress assessment uses the same instrument and measures the same EFF skill as the baseline assessment;
- If the baseline assessment has a form associated with it, the progress assessment uses a different form (Note: TABE baseline and progress assessments should use the same

instrument form pair. Either form in the pair may be used as the baseline or progress assessment. TABE progress assessments may not use a lower level than the paired baseline assessment; for example, progress assessment using 10M is invalid if baseline used 10D. CASAS Life and Work and CASAS Life Skills progress assessments may not use a lower level or form; for example, progress assessment using Level A is invalid if baseline assessment used Level B or higher.) Progress assessments may become the new baseline assessment;

- The student has participated in a minimum of 40 hours of instructional service and a minimum of 45 days have elapsed since the paired baseline assessment; and
- The assessment is administered by a staff person trained and certified to use that instrument.

A learner is considered to have a valid baseline assessment for the purpose of establishing an EFL baseline, and therefore eligible for inclusion in **NRS reporting**, if all of the following are true:

- The learner is a member of the report population (open enrollment during the reporting period and services are received according to the selection parameters);
- An appropriate pre-screening mechanism was used prior to assessment to determine which instrument and level is most appropriate;
- The learner had an assessment during the period beginning one year prior to the report start date and ending with the report end date;
- The assessment is a skill level assessment;
- The assessment is in one of the reading, writing, math or ESOL skills and produces a skill level record; and
- The assessment is administered by a staff person trained and certified to use that instrument.

A learner is considered to have a valid progress assessment for the purpose of establishing EFL gains, and therefore eligible for inclusion in **NRS reporting**, if all of the following are true:

- The learner has a qualifying baseline assessment;
- The progress assessment uses the same instrument and measures the same EFF skill as the baseline assessment;
- If the baseline has a form associated with it, the progress assessment uses a different form (TABE baseline and progress assessments should use the same instrument form pair. Either form in the pair may be used as the baseline or progress assessment. TABE progress assessment may not use a lower level than the paired baseline assessment; for example, progress assessment using 10M is invalid if baseline assessment used 10D. CASAS Life and Work and CASAS Life Skills progress assessments may not use a lower level or form; for example, progress assessment using Level A is invalid if baseline assessment used Level B or higher.) Progress assessments may become the new baseline assessment;
- The student has participated in a minimum of 40 hours of instructional service and a minimum of 45 days have elapsed since the paired baseline assessment; and
- The assessment is administered by a staff person trained and certified to use that instrument.

Where the WorkKeys assessment is available, testing opportunities should be offered on a regular basis and in accordance to local demand. VAEL centers will also provide instruction designed to prepare students for the WorkKeys assessments.

VAEL centers may offer the WorkKeys certifications only in compliance with the guidelines of the publisher, ACT, and only using assessment proctors who have successfully completed the necessary training and are therefore certified as WorkKeys test administrators. The examining entity is authorized to collect fees for test administration, which will be set by the Vermont Agency of Education. Currently, the established fee is \$15 for each of the WorkKeys tests. For additional information on the approved assessments listed on pages 8-9, refer to the Assessment Manual. Please read this information carefully and comply with all requirements. The *DataWorks* system is programmed to disallow assessments that are not in compliance.

To access the Educational Functioning Level Table, see The AEL Policy Manual version in DataWorks.

D. Credentials

GED - The General Educational Development (GED) Tests are available in Vermont through the VAEL centers and a few additional sites. Testing opportunities should be available on a regular basis and in accordance with local demand. VAEL centers also provide instruction designed to prepare students for the GED Tests. It is essential to the integrity of the GED Testing program that instructional responsibilities are kept separate from test administration functions. Therefore, persons instructing potential candidates for the GED Tests cannot be appointed as GED Chief Examiners, Examiners, or proctors, or otherwise have any access to any secure GED testing materials.

GED Examiners must have a bachelor's degree from a nationally accredited college or university and experience in teaching, training, counseling, or testing, or an associate's degree from a nationally accredited community college and three years of experience in teaching, training, counseling, or testing. GED Proctors shall have at least a high school diploma or GED certificate. Proctors are selected by the GED Chief Examiner or GED Examiner. Proctors are not permitted to conduct a testing session under any circumstances. Proctors may not substitute for Examiners. Proctors shall always work under the direct, constant supervision of the Chief Examiner or Examiner.

The examining entity is authorized to collect fees for test administration. Computer-based tests are priced by GED Testing Service.

VADP - The Vermont Adult Diploma Program is funded and administered by the Vermont Agency of Education (under the authority of 16 V.S.A. § 945.) The Adult Diploma Program is an assessment process administered by the Agency through which an individual can identify a pathway to earning a secondary credential. This process is accessible to individuals 20 years of age and older seeking a high school diploma or individuals 16 years of age and older seeking a GED.

HSCP - The purpose of the High School Completion Program is to provide learners, ages 16 and up, whether enrolled or not enrolled in a high school, with educational services of the scope and

rigor needed for the attainment of a high school diploma through flexible pathways to graduation. The 2006 Vermont Legislature established the HSCP through 16 V.S.A. §1049, and the 2009 Legislature amended that statute to allow enrolled students to participate. The 2013 Vermont Legislature removed the age cap under 16 V.S.A. § 943. See [High School Completion Program Policy Manual](#).

III. ACCOUNTABILITY & CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Continuous Improvement Process

AOE requires that funded providers demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. Performance targets have been established, described below, and shall serve as indicators of that improvement. Performance will be measured against established targets and may be used as a basis for compliance determinations. If performance targets are not met, a continuous improvement plan (CIP) must be submitted and approved by the AOE. When appropriate, technical assistance for the CIP process will be made available. Technical assistance will be developed and executed through a collaborative process involving the provider and AOE staff.

Indicators of Performance

Grant performance for the program year July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 will be measured in accordance with WIOA (Section 212). As stewards of federal and state funds, the Vermont AOE must ensure continuous improvement in performance outcomes. The AOE has agreed with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), during annual performance measure negotiations, to meet the overall Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) target of 36% for the program year 2017-2018. The AOE additionally requires that each local provider meet performance levels on the Indicators of Performance below to contribute to Vermont’s overall success in meeting or exceeding the agreed upon MSG. Providers must also demonstrate continuous improvement in local performance targets, which will be established when grants are awarded.

For adult education programs, MSGs are demonstrated through: **educational functioning level gains (baseline and progress assessment or entry into postsecondary after program exit) or receipt of secondary credential (high school diploma or its equivalent).**

Indicator 1: Demonstrated improvements in Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.	Measurement: Percentage of Students who increase their Educational Functioning Level (EFL) based on NRS Approved Assessment
Adult Basic Education (ABE) Beginning Literacy (NRS 1)	35%
ABE Beginning (NRS 2)	36%
ABE Intermediate Low (NRS 3)	40%
ABE Intermediate High (NRS 4)	40%
Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Low (NRS 5)	40%
English as a Second Language (ESL) Beginning Literacy	23%

Indicator 1: Demonstrated improvements in Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.	Measurement: Percentage of Students who increase their Educational Functioning Level (EFL) based on NRS Approved Assessment
ESL Beginning Low	28%
ESL Beginning High	28%
ESL Intermediate Low	24%
ESL Intermediate High	24%
ESL Advanced	20%
Vermont's overall reportable MSG	36%

Program year (2016-2017) performance in Vermont will provide a baseline for AOE/DOE negotiated employment and training targets for program year 2017-2018. Employment measures will be tracked through a data match with the Vermont Department of Labor. Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent attainment will be tracked by providers. Post-secondary enrollment and credential attainment will be tracked by providers through survey method and by the AOE through a data match with the National Student Clearinghouse. Indicator 2 targets will be tracked starting with the funding period beginning July 1, 2017.

Indicator 2: Employment and training measures (targets to be determined)	FY 18
Employment second quarter after exit	%
Employment fourth quarter after exit	%
Median earnings second quarter after exit	%
Attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent (could count as MSG)	%
Attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent and employed within one year of exit	%
Attained a post-secondary credential while enrolled or within one year of exit	%
Program exit and entry into postsecondary education (could count as MSG)	%
The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers	TBD

Indicator 3: Additional performance targets for productivity required by AOE	FY18
Total students served (this number will be determined with provider after awards are made)	#
Percentage of students qualified for inclusion in federal report	45%
Percentage of students with baseline assessment	90%
Percentage of students with progress assessment	50%

Learner goals are defined as the reasons a learner has chosen to participate in adult education. Every learner shall have at least one goal established. The status of goals, whether open, met, or cancelled, will be a basis for continuous improvement monitoring. Learner goals are to be considered as the intellectual property of the learner and therefore may be revised or cancelled only with the consent of the learner. Upon successful completion of a goal, it may be shown as met in *DataWorks* without learner consent, but such indication must be accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Performance expectations

In order to track actual performance against established productivity and learner achievement targets, providers are required to enter data on every VAEL participant in the centralized electronic database. This database is referred to as *DataWorks* and is a secure, web-based system designed specifically for the collection and reporting of all VAEL data. *DataWorks* is the repository for data regarding demographics, enrollment, and student goals, services, assessment and achievements. It is designed for “real time” data entry, which is the expected norm, and data must be entered at least bi-weekly. VAEL full-service centers must maintain auditable, hard copy student files as documentation of student achievements recorded in *DataWorks*. However, *DataWorks* is the sole source of performance data relative to established targets.

The State will evaluate compliance with grant requirements based on periodic site visits and monitoring of pertinent learner, administrative, and fiscal records of AEL grantees. Compliance determinations may be based on performance targets identified as continuous improvement measures. Compliance determinations shall be based on demonstrated adherence to these policies, and to the terms of the current statewide grant describing operational procedures, full range of services, and vision, mission and common practice. The State will notify grantees of identified performance problems that could jeopardize continuation of the grant award in writing, and will provide the grantee a reasonable opportunity to take corrective action and to demonstrate compliance with 1) implementation of the vision, mission and common practice and 2) the full range of services. If grantee fails to correct performance and achieve compliance with requirements within six months of notification, the grant may be terminated. The grant can also be immediately terminated due to gross misconduct. In such an event, prior to or at the time of termination, grantee will be provided with written notice of such termination, including specific identification of the misconduct.

IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The ongoing professional development of VAEL staff is essential to the success of VAEL programs and therefore, our adult learners. In order to fulfill its responsibility for providing professional development opportunities to the field, the Vermont Agency of Education has dedicated staff and financial resources to this effort. In order to ensure that these resources are fully utilized, the State has established the following policy expectations for professional learning for VAEL partners.

VAEL teachers, assessors, plan managers, and program administrators will have an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) in progress and updated/revised at least annually. There

is an acceptable format for an IPDP provided in Attachment A of the *AEL Policy Manual version posted on DataWorks*. Other formats that address all of the following components are acceptable:

- self-assessment;
- setting PD goals to enhance the individuals' skills or knowledge that are also aligned with the strategic goals of the organization;
- creating an action plan to achieve the goals;
- implementing the plan; and,
- documenting progress with reflection/evaluation on progress and revision as necessary.

VAEL providers will support their staff in the development of professional development goals that connect to individual needs and interests, the priorities of the VAEL system, and ways of better serving adult learners. Supervisors will hold staff accountable for developing and making progress on the IPDP. Progress on the plan must be documented at minimum annually.

Supervisors may exclude certain staff (for example, those on a limited contract or some support staff) from this requirement by documenting the reason in the employee's file.

The IPDP will be used to inform regional and/or statewide planning of professional development opportunities. As such, IPDPs will be available for review by the Professional Development Coordinator at the Agency of Education as they are established or updated. Supervisors of staff should ensure that copies of the IPDP are submitted on an annual basis.

All new staff in adult education and literacy programs will successfully complete the online courses, "Orientation to Adult Education and Literacy in Vermont" and "Equipped For the Future Orientation for Vermont" within six months of hire. Supervisors may exclude certain staff (for example, those on a limited contract or some support staff) from this requirement by documenting the reason in the employee's file. Completion of these online courses is required for participation in additional professional development opportunities.

V. FUNDING FORMULA

In October 1992 a task force of representatives of VAEL providers, libraries, human services, corrections, and colleges met to develop a needs-based rationale for distribution of VAEL funds. Their recommendation was amended and endorsed by the Vermont Literacy Board in February, 1993 and the State Board of Education in April, and became Rule 2410-11 in 1993. The following year the Rule was amended slightly and this version continues in use.

The formula was developed to "balance service delivery throughout the state" with funding linked to the need for services at the county level. A base amount was incorporated in order to ensure a basic level of services for each county and to acknowledge access and small population issues. The formula was designed to be responsive to the needs of adults and give weight to populations most likely to demand services. Great care was taken to avoid linking the distribution of funds to providers.

The formula, outlined in State Rule 2410.1-3 consists of three parts:

1. Base of \$30,000 to each county;
2. 70% of balance for allocation on basis of statewide need – the need of the county relative to all counties in the state (State Need);

3. 30% of balance allocated on basis of comparative density of need within each county (County Burden).

Indicators of need for services, used in both the State Need and County Burden sections of the formula are:

- 15% ... un- or under-employed persons without a high school diploma;
- 50% ... persons 16 or older without a high school diploma;
- 20% ... persons living at 125% of poverty;
- 15% ... persons in categories of offenders, mothers without high school diplomas, and for whom English is a second language.

Data for indicators are updated annually with the most current information available.

- Population: census data or most recent population estimates published by the Vermont Department of Health.
- Several data categories are based on census and therefore not updated annually:
 - persons 16 or older without a high school diploma;
 - persons living at 125% of poverty;
 - persons for whom English is a second language.
- Data for three indicators is available on a more regular basis from other State agencies:
 - un- or under-employed persons without a high school diploma;
 - offenders.

Glossary

Adult Basic Education (ABE) – Describes students and services at NRS levels 1-4, which includes *ABE Beginning Literacy*, *ABE Beginning Basic Education*, *ABE Intermediate Low*, and *ABE Intermediate High*. These levels are roughly equivalent to grade levels preK-8.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE) – Describes students and services at NRS levels 5-6, which includes *ASE Low* and *ASE High*. These levels are roughly equivalent to grades 9-12.

College and Career Readiness – A student possesses the foundational skills and learning strategies necessary to begin studies in a career pathway and has the ability to enter the workforce or pursue post-secondary education or training without the need for remediation.

College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) – These are the academic standards that define college and career readiness in English Language Arts and Literacy (ELA), and Mathematics. These standards consist of a subset of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) adopted by Vermont for use in the PreK-12 system in 2010.

Distance Learning - A formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time or both for the majority of the instructional period. For reporting purposes this requires the use of an online or computer-based program that tracks and captures the elapsed time that a learner is connected to, or engaged in, that program.

Equipped for the Future (EFF) – The 16 EFF content standards define the knowledge and skills adults need in order to successfully carry out their roles as parents and family members, citizens and community members, and workers. These 16 skills support effective performance in the home, community, and workplace.

General Educational Development (GED) - A group of four subject tests which, when passed, certify that the test taker has high-school level academic skills. In Vermont, successful completion results in a State GED certificate. However, completers are still eligible for high school diploma-related services such as free access to career and technical education.

National Reporting System (NRS) – The outcome-based reporting system for the State-administered, federally funded AEL program, which was developed by the U.S. Department of Education.

Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) – A plan developed by the student, a representative of the AEL system and, when appropriate, a parent or legal guardian and a representative of the local educational agency (LEA) that defines the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities for the student to attain college and career readiness. The plan shall be developmentally appropriate and reflect the student’s emerging abilities, aspirations, interests and dispositions.