

## **Transforming Michigan's Adult Learning Infrastructure**

### **DELEG June 2009 Update to CLEG**

Since the Adult Learning Work Group's recommendations for transforming adult learning were adopted by CLEG in December, the work of transformation has been focused on aligning funding sources to support the new adult learning model and regional partnerships, and on bringing Michigan into a regional Joyce Foundation initiative that will provide a great framework for systemic adoption and implementation of the new state policies.

### ***Aligning Funding Sources***

A key strategy for implementation is to embed the new adult learning policy framework into multiple funding sources that support basic skills development. We've begun that within the two core adult education funding sources and with a set of demonstration grants. We're now focusing on how to align adult learning strategy within several other programs/funding sources, including:

- Perkins Career-Technical Education funding; and
- Workforce Investment Act Title I adult and dislocated worker funds.

### **Workforce Investment Act - Title II (Federal Adult Education funding)**

This year we opened the WIA Title II funds to competitive bidding for the first time in eight years. This solicitation was closely aligned with the CLEG-adopted policy and includes a preference for services to be provided via partnerships. We received more than 100 applications for this funding and will be making decisions on these applications by the end of June. We are eager to make these selections and deploy a range of programs that align with our vision for adult learning in Michigan.

### **Section 107 of the State School Aid Act (K-12 Adult Education state funding)**

We pursued changes to Section 107 to bring it into alignment with the Adult Learning Work Group's recommendations. While we have found widespread agreement with the programmatic redesign contained in the CLEG action, we have encountered some resistance from stakeholders about changing the funding distribution method for providers. We are convening a working group to design a new framework for Section 107 that will resolve those concerns by the end of this year.

### **No Worker Left Behind Demonstration Grants**

Ten new adult learning partnerships are now in motion helping adults develop the basic skills they need to pursue postsecondary education through No Worker Left Behind. In regions throughout the state stakeholders from adult education, workforce development, postsecondary education, community-based organizations, and a range of other partners are working together to meet the needs of adults with low basic skills. These partners are offering innovative programs that emphasize lifelong learning, make it clearer and more efficient for adults to move toward their long-term goals through strong advising and accelerated courses, make it easier to access services using flexible scheduling and convenient locations, base learning activities on basic skills needed for the workplace, and connect learners with employment opportunities in their regions.

As a result, the CLEG-adopted policy:

- Is in implementation now in the 10 No Worker Left Behind partnerships;

- Will move into implementation this summer in the WIA Title II funding programs;
- Will be the basis for Section 107 funded adult education beginning in 2010;
- Will be integrated with other funding sources moving forward.

### ***Joyce Foundation Shifting Gears Initiative***

We also accepted an invitation from the Joyce Foundation to apply to become an implementation state in their **Great Lakes Region Shifting Gears initiative**. They will be considering and likely approving in August a two-year grant to DELEG of \$300,000 for policy development and action (a) to move the basic skills improvement agenda we worked to create last year through CLEG, and (b) to develop a similar agenda for changes in post-secondary education that increase educational attainment for low-skilled, low-income adults.

Our involvement in this initiative will require a number of stakeholders to collaborate in developing and enacting a comprehensive policy change agenda. The grant proposal includes involving CLEG in two ways:

- First, the reconstituted Transforming Michigan's Workforce Committee has agreed to stay engaged with the initiative on a regular, month-to-month basis and provide feedback as needed about what is working and what needs to be rethought. This is similar to what was done in last year's phase and was very helpful.
- Second, the Executive Committee will serve as an official Shifting Gears governance steering committee to ensure that we have a forum to regularly bring major policy and system change issues to a table that includes leaders from across state government agencies as well as the leadership of all CLEG committees. Two key aides to the Governor, education advisor Chuck Wilbur and economic development advisor Coffiann Hawthorne, have agreed to join these meetings going forward for the Shifting Gears initiative oversight. We anticipate that there will be times when we will ask this committee to take actions to help move the systems change we are attempting.

We are excited about the range of activities underway now and the opportunities ahead of us to increase educational attainment among the 1.7 million low-skilled working age adults in our state, to ensure they are not left behind.