Adult Education Transformation Task Force

Michigan's Adult Education System

# A Framework for Transformation

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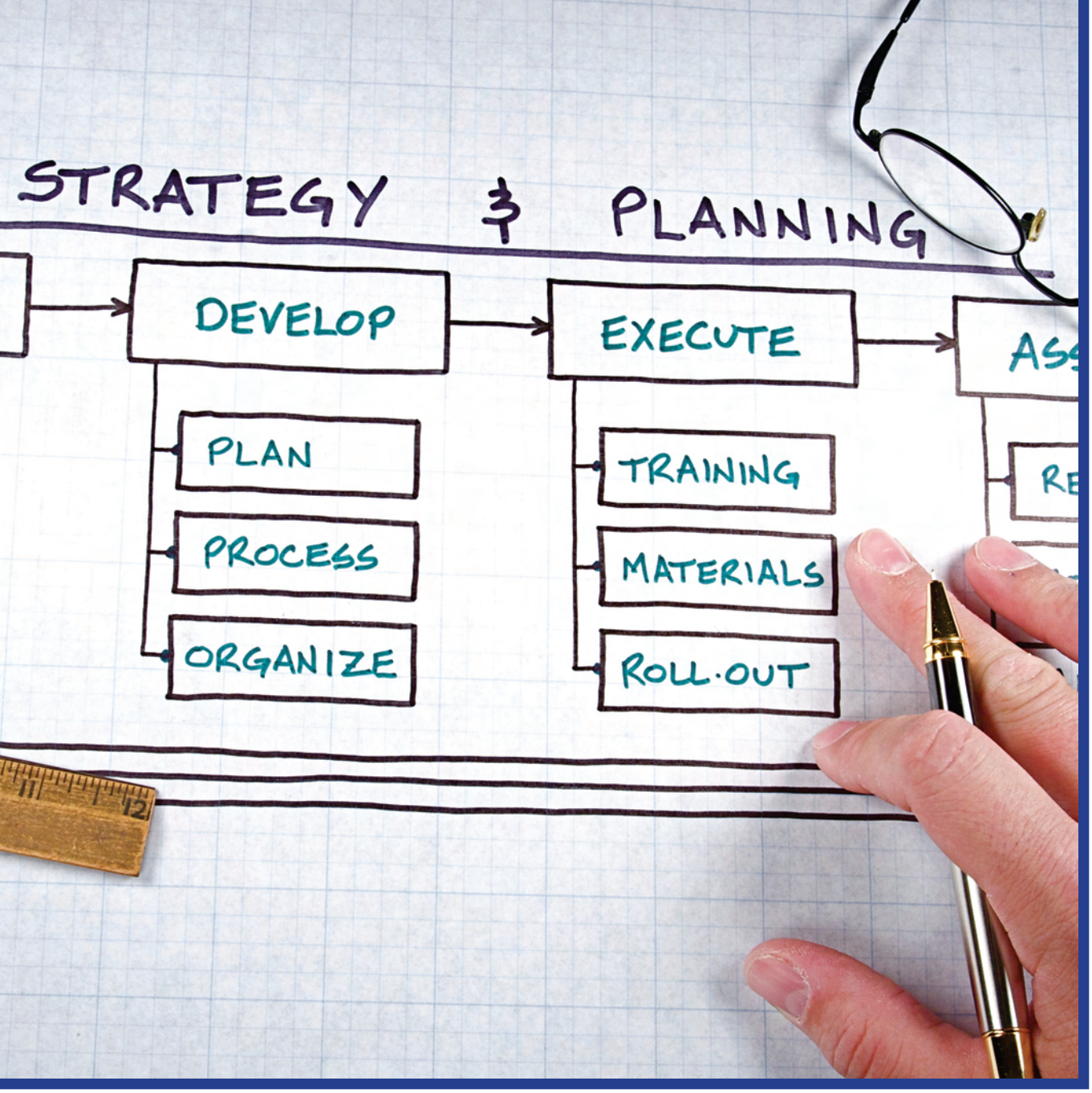



Life in Michigan, and indeed the world, is all about transitions: changes in the local, national, and global economies demand adaptation and innovation.

*CLEG Report, Executive Summary*

# INTRODUCTION

This report was developed by the **Adult Education Transformation Task Force (TTF)**. The TTF was formed in response to the 2009-2010 Section 107 legislation which directed the DELEG Department of Lifelong Learning to create an Adult Learning Planning Group. This group is made up of twenty-one individuals representing a balance of rural, urban, and suburban community adult education directors from throughout the state and advocacy leaders for adult education, English as a Second Language and adult literacy.

The Transformation Task Force was charged with recommending a comprehensive adult education delivery system that ensures all areas of the state are adequately served while fostering partnerships for creating seamless transitions between adult education, post-secondary education and employment.

The Council for Labor and Economic Growth (CLEG) Report entitled ***Transforming Michigan's Adult Learning Infrastructure*** (December 2008) was used as a reference and framework for organizing the work of the Transformation Task Force. The recommendations contained within the CLEG Report were considered in depth and language was developed in order to "operationalize" each recommendation for transforming Michigan's Adult Education system.

During the first two weeks of January 2010, a series of meetings were held at various locations throughout the state. At these meetings, the Transformation Task Force's report was presented and feedback was gathered.

After considering feedback and input from Adult Learner practitioners across Michigan, the final recommendation was submitted to the DELEG Department of Lifelong Learning, the Senate and House appropriations subcommittees responsible for School Aid, and the Senate and House fiscal agencies.

Transform Michigan's adult learning infrastructure to create a unified strategic approach to increasing basic skills and post-secondary credential attainment.

*CLEG Report, Recommendation 1*

# RECOMMENDATION 1

In this report, the Transformation Task Force recommends a delivery system that will effectively transform Michigan's adult learning infrastructure. The successful implementation of this system will require multilateral support for Michigan's Adult Learner. Such support must originate from the Governor and the Legislature.

The recommendations evolved through a process that included the following steps:

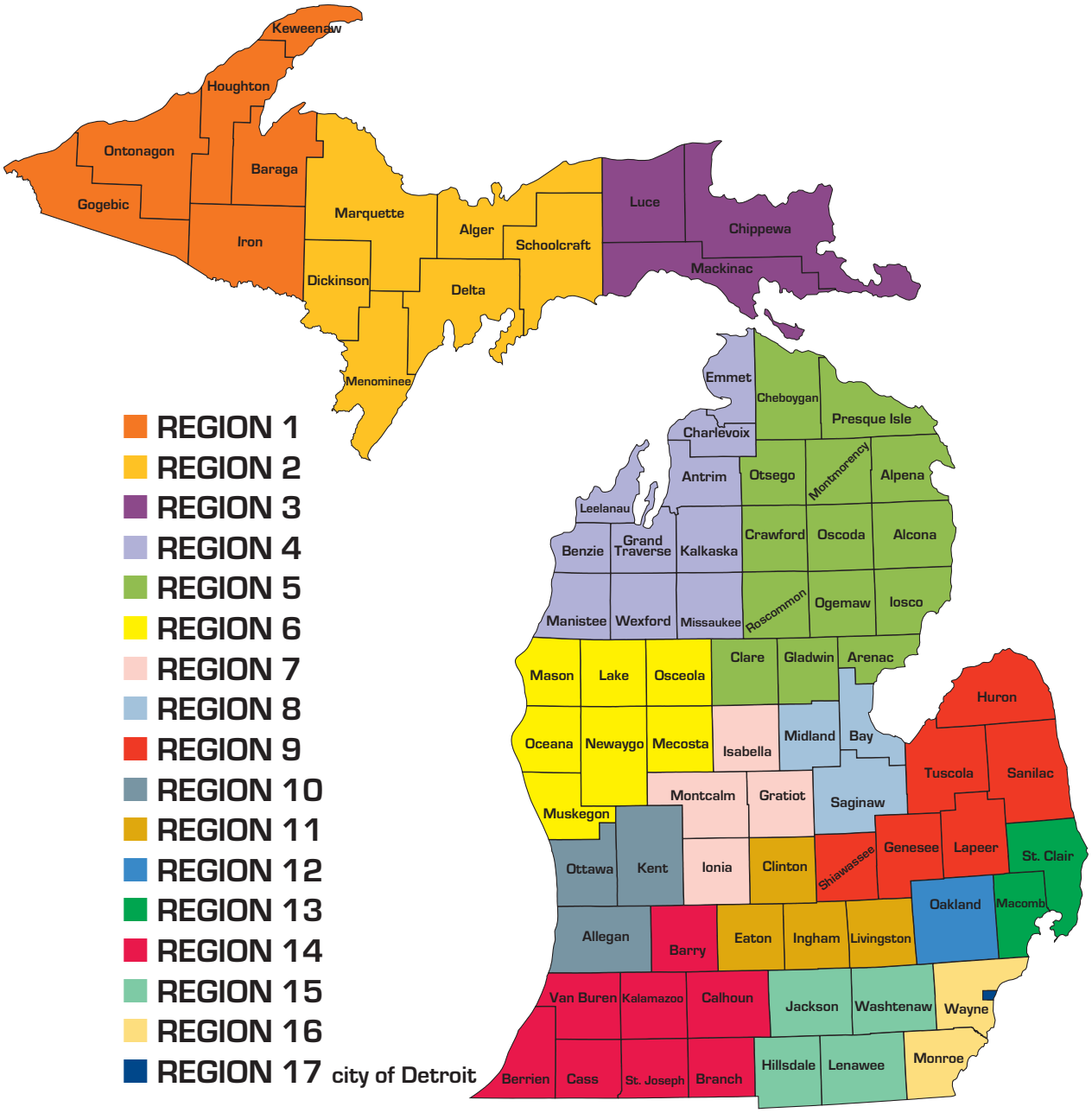
First, the TTF developed a list of essential elements—factors and components to be considered as key to the success of any adult learning system.

Second, in designing this model, the TTF researched how other States are responding to the challenge issued at the Federal level. The states reviewed and studied included California, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Third, a glossary of terms was written. As key words were defined, the members were careful to include both research and shared expertise.

The ideal of providing seamless service to the Adult Learner as he/she moves through the system remained in focus throughout the process, i.e. transitioning from basic skills learning to post-secondary training and/or employment. Recommended program design and accountability measures reflect the sensitivity of the TTF to the needs of the Lowest Level Adult Learner for whom even the most basic academic skills are a challenge.

The following report contains a recommended delivery system for serving the Michigan Adult Learner that is both transforming and strategic: through a regional approach, multiple providers will form partnerships resulting in more effective, economical and responsive program design and delivery.




Engage a range of partners in service delivery to meet the diverse needs of adult learners.

*CLEG Report, Recommendation 2*

In order to make Recommendation 2 operational, policies must be developed in the following areas:

**Regionalization**

**Policy Statement**: Partnerships shall be multilateral and include, at a minimum, an adult education program (LEA), a post-secondary institution, and the local Michigan Works! Agency or other organization with demonstrated workforce development capacity. Based on local needs, partnerships may include stakeholders.

- These partnerships shall convene within the borders of the state's 17 regional Adult Learning Collaborative Boards (ALCB).

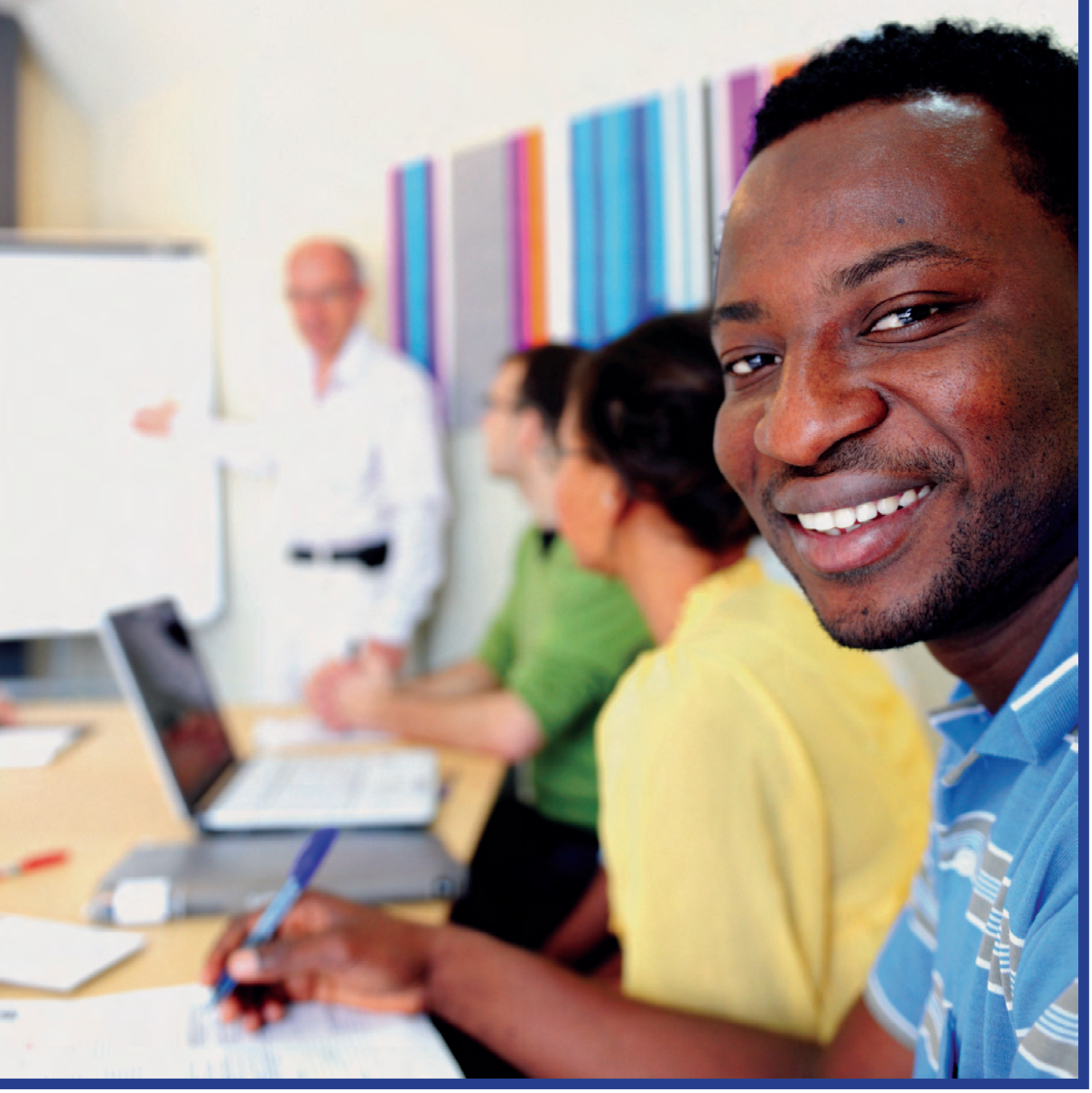
The regional **Adult Learning Collaborative Board** (ALCB) shall have strong decision-making authority for operations within their region including flexibility and ownership for how adult learning services are delivered and how the partnership is operated.

**Each regional Adult Learner Collaborative Board is responsible for:**

1. Identifying the region's characteristics including demographics, key industries, and available support services.
2. Identifying the educational needs and developing service delivery systems to meet those needs.
3. Determining what educational or training services should be offered.
   - 3.1. Design delivery of services to avoid duplication.
   - 3.2. Utilize most current technology to be used in programming and delivery of instruction, i.e. distance learning.
4. Developing a manageable infrastructure for regional planning and service delivery of adult learning activities to include:
   - 4.1. Identifying a Fiscal Agent of the region who will be responsible for
     - 4.1.1. Requesting and collecting funding from the State.
     - 4.1.2. Distributing funding based on ALCB-approved budget.
     - 4.1.3. Limiting administration dollars to 3% of region's admin. monies.
   - 4.2. Determining how data will be collected and reported.
   - 4.3. Approving all contracts.
   - 4.4. Developing and approving operational budgets.
   - 4.5. Developing Bylaws.
   - 4.6. Convening a minimum of 4 meetings per year.
     - 4.6.1. Agendas and minutes to be sent to the DELEG Office of Adult Education.

**DELEG Office of Adult Education will:**

- Provide ongoing technical assistance and support as needed to existing and potential partnerships around the state during and after the transition to this model of delivery.



Build clear connections between learning and the promise of good jobs.

*CLEG Report, Recommendation 3*

In order to make Recommendation 3 operational, policies must be developed in the following areas:

**Policy Statement:**

**Adult Learner Collaborative Boards ensure that program providers will:**

1. Be accountable for implementing contextualized learning in educational, job training, and life skills programs.
2. Provide programming to assist lowest-level adult learners as they transition into the community: employment, life and family skills, financial literacy, and occupational/career-specific skills.
3. Be required to educate learners and align program offerings to include exit standards that will prepare learners for entrance into real opportunities for employment, education, and training.
4. Encourage innovation in connecting learning and employment through innovative pilot projects, technical assistance strategies, training for program staff, and the use of peer learning networks.
5. Be required to integrate state-approved content standards into curriculum.
6. Be required to utilize department-approved assessments.
7. Be required to employ Michigan Certified Teachers when providing ABE, ESL, GED, HSC and developmental instruction.

**DELEG Office of Adult Education will:**

- Provide ongoing technical assistance and support as needed to support these requirements.
- Review and revise the Adult Learning Plan (ALP) to accurately reflect changes in the Adult Education system.

Use accelerated and connected pathways to help adult learners reach their goals.

*CLEG Report, Recommendation 4*

In order to make Recommendation 4 operational, policies must be developed in the following areas:

**Policy Statement:**

**Adult Learner Collaborative Boards ensure that program providers will:**

1. Align services to create pathways through which adult learners will move from entry to goal attainment.
   - 1.1. Align entry and exit requirements of adult learner programs within the region using a pathway strategy.
   - 1.2. Require evaluation of "transition points" in pathways to ensure expectations are appropriate.
   - 1.3. Develop and implement accelerated learning strategies to encourage adult learner momentum.
   - 1.4. Open entry and exit will be available at all agencies for adult learners.
   - 1.5. Modularized instruction will be available for ease of entry and exit.
     - 1.5.1. Modules should focus on core competencies along career pathways that include computer skills, soft skills and employability skills.
2. Facilitate the movement of a participant through their pathway by providing a state-approved enrollment form/Adult Learning Plan, assessments and policies that will be universal to all partners and stakeholders.
   - 2.1. All documentation must be accessible to all agencies as the learner progresses through the adult learner system.
3. Provide Advising and Navigation Services.
   - 3.1. Career and educational advising will be made available to all adult learners.
   - 3.2. Advisors and navigators will be trained and/or have knowledge of all partnerships and resources available in the region.
   - 3.3. Advisors and navigators will use common Adult Learning Plan (ALP).
   - 3.4. Navigators will ensure ease of transitions from agency to agency.

**DELEG Office of Adult Education will provide:**

- Offer professional development in contextualized learning, learning pathways, modularized instruction, and linking learning and employment.
- Training for agencies to ensure successful transformation to the new model of adult education, including the concept of the navigator and advisor.
- Extensive training for the positions of navigators and advisors.
- Continued professional development for navigators and advisors.
- On-going support for LEAs serving on the ALCB.

Increase access to adult learning.

*CLEG Report, Recommendation 5*

In order to make Recommendation 5 operational, policies must be developed in the following areas:

**Policy Statement:**

**Adult Learner Collaborative Boards ensure that program providers will:**

1. Work with partners to provide multiple access points to the system.
2. Utilize multiple formats of distance learning to increase access to instruction, i.e. on-line learning, tele-courses and correspondence classes.
3. Identify barriers to education and employment.
4. Collaborate with partners to determine available resources to overcome identified barriers through referrals and follow-up. Resources/existing social support (wrap around) services include, but are not limited to, childcare, transportation, shelter, food, clothing, financial stability, mental and physical health, life management skills, and emergency services.
5. Identify as stakeholders entities that have the capacity to provide legally mandated accommodations for participants with diagnosed learning disabilities.

**DELEG Office of Adult Education will:**

- Provide professional development opportunities to teachers and administrators to assist them in
  - developing insight toward creating trusting relationships with participants;
  - understanding poverty and limited literacy skills; and
  - developing retention strategies that reduce barriers to education and employment.

Make basic skills development a priority within every funding source that can legally support it.

*CLEG Report, Recommendation 6*

In order to make Recommendation 6 operational, policies must be developed in the following areas:

**Policy Statement: Funding**
Beginning FY 2010/11, provide funding to each region based on the 2009-10 allocations to the Section 107 LEAs operating within the 17 Adult Learner Collaborative Board regions with the stipulation that ALCBs will convene no later than 11/1/10.

Beginning in FY 2011/12, provide funding to a single fiscal agent within each of the 17 Adult Learner Collaborative Board regions based on the following funding formula:

1. **Funding Formula**:
   - 1.1. Base funding* = 25%
   - 1.2. Population** = 45%
   - 1.3. Unemployment rate** = 10%
   - 1.4. Poverty rate** = 10%
   - 1.5. Non-grads* *= 5%
   - 1.6. Non-English Speakers* = 5%

**25% of the total Sect. 107 allocation will be distributed equally among the regions.*
***based on 2010 US Census data, to be re-calculated every 5 years thereafter.*

2. **10% (90/10) of the allocation based on the following performances**:
   - 2.1. Program enrollment goal = 50%
   - 2.2. Educational gain = 25%
     - 2.2.1. HSC and GED (as defined by DELEG Office of Adult Education) OR
     - 2.2.2. Lowest level learners: (as defined by NRS levels—Beginning ABE, Beginning Basic, Low Intermediate Basic and Beg ESL Literacy, Low Beginning ESL and High Beginning ESL): 5-point scale score gain on post-test
   - 2.3. Goal attainment = 25%
     - 2.3.1. High school diploma or GED certificate
     - 2.3.2. Enter post-secondary
     - 2.3.3. Attained, retained, improved employment
     - 2.3.4. Earned credential
     - 2.3.5. Citizenship
     - 2.3.6. English Proficiency

*Note: Performance monies (10%) recouped for non-attainment shall be re-distributed to the Regions and shall be used for regional program improvement based on numbers of lowest-level learners served.*

**The Adult Learner Collaborative Board will:**

1. Identify any funding sources available for basic skills.
2. Collaborate in the acquisition of new funding to continue and/or enhance services.

**DELEG Office of Adult Education will:**

- Identify and leverage every funding source available for basic skills.
- Develop and provide a matrix of every funding source available for basic skills.
- Direct all funding for basic skills through the ALCBs for delivery of service.

Hold regional partnerships accountable for success and measure outcomes at the partnership level.

*CLEG Report, Recommendation 7*

In order to make Recommendation 7 operational, policies must be developed in the following areas:

**Policy Statement:**

**Adult Learner Collaborative Boards will:**

1. Implement unified systems of enrollment, assessment, evaluation and data collection among all partners and stakeholders.
2. Measure the success of regional partnerships through the achievement of the following outcomes:
   - 2.1. Educational Attainment
     - 2.1.1. High School Diploma
     - 2.1.2. GED Certificate
     - 2.1.3. Transition to Post-secondary
     - 2.1.4. Post-secondary credential
     - 2.1.5. Citizenship
     - 2.1.6. Career certification
     - 2.1.7. Lowest level learner (as defined by NRS levels - Beginning ABE, Beginning Basic, Low Intermediate Basic and Beg ESL Literacy, Low Beginning ESL and High Beginning ESL): 5-point scale score gain on post-test
     - 2.1.8. English Proficiency
   - 2.2. Employment
     - 2.2.1. Obtain a Job
     - 2.2.2. Retain Employment
     - 2.2.3. Improve Employment

**DELEG Office of Adult Education will:**

- Be responsible for the execution of a unified data collection system between agencies to track information.
- Actualize the vision for a K-20 Data Warehouse.

Engage a broad coalition in communicating the urgent need to improve basic skills.

*CLEG Report, Recommendation 8*

Through the work of the Adult Education Transformation Task Force, the first steps have been taken to help the more than 1.7 million Adult Learners in Michigan who lack the basic skills needed to acquire and maintain employment that provides them with a family-sustaining wage.

With the leadership of the Governor and Legislature, DELEG can begin to communicate to the state of Michigan the urgent need for these Adults to acquire the basic skills necessary for them to go forward to post secondary training needed to maintain or improve employment. However, it is not enough to just communicate this need. The need must be addressed aggressively and strategically!

The only way to effectively address this need is for all Adult Learner service providers to work together. Viable partnerships through regionalization must be formed within which all resources can be maximized and services can be efficiently and effectively delivered.

This challenge calls for a unified strategy involving the Governor, Legislature, Adult Education, Michigan Works!, Post Secondary institutions and ALL stakeholders and the accountability must rest on the shoulders of ALL stakeholders because the Adult Learners in Michigan deserve our best!

## Transformation Task Force Members

**Karre Ballard** ■ Gladwin Adult Education
**Megan Byard** ■ White Lake Area Community Education
**Judy Cock** ■ Southgate Community School District
**Gregg Dionne** ■ Hazel Park Schools
**Karyn Goven** ■ Novi Community Schools
**Gloria Henry** ■ Port Huron Area School District
**Jim Hunt** ■ Cadillac Area Public Schools
**Sharlie Jones** ■ Battle Creek Public Schools
**Rich Klemm** ■ Niles Community Schools
**Christina Luckey-Nelson** ■ Traverse Bay Area ISD/NW Michigan Works!
**Jo Pamment** ■ Haslett Public School
**David Porter** ■ Detroit Public Schools (retired)
**Dawn Sanchez** ■ East Detroit Public Schools
**Kathleen Sullivan** ■ Grand Rapids Public Schools (retired)
**Bill Sutter** ■ Consolidated Community Schools, Eastern Upper Peninsula
**Kim Thinnes** ■ Kalamazoo Public Schools
**MaryAnne Thorndycraft** ■ Lake Orion Community Schools
**Gary Tweddle** ■ Hazel Park Schools (retired)
**Christine Van Heel** ■ Second Mile Education Services, Midland
**Sheila Veraghen** ■ North Menominee County Community Schools
**Doug Wood** ■ Orchard View Community Schools

# GLOSSARY

**Access point(s)**: Site(s) or location(s) of services available to the adult learner.

**Adult Basic Education**: As defined by the federal Office of Adult and Vocational Education (OVAE): Instruction provided to adults who function below the ninth grade equivalent level in language arts and/or mathematics as determined by a DLEG approved assessment test. Adult Basic Education consists of four EFLs as defined by the National Reporting System including:

- Beginning Literacy
- Beginning Basic Education
- Low Intermediate
- High Intermediate

Adult basic education is to be provided by LEA adult education programs.

**Advisor**: Career and educational advising is a component of programs to ensure that learners understand how learning relates to working and the role of education in progressing toward their career goals. Advisors conduct intensive, persistent advising to retain and advance learners along pathways. Advisors must identify learner barriers and maintain ongoing efforts with the learner to address those barriers. Advisors must have a working knowledge of learning pathways and the requirements of programs in other agencies, particularly those that precede or follow programs offered by their agencies. In addition, advisors also serve as learner advocates and ensure that instruction staff are aware of any learning style or difficulties that require accommodations and/or career pathway interests and goals around which coursework can be contextualized. Advisors must be seen as a resource for instruction staff who may face challenges in working with individual learners. It is also important to recognize that advisors should help learners self-advocate and gain the skills necessary to navigate pathways as identified in Individual Learning Plans, seek support, and make decisions as they pursue lifelong learning. Advisors should use case management tools and techniques to facilitate learners' use of intensive support resources in helping to address personal barriers, including services like proactive advising, peer support, and college success classes. Helping learners to seek family support for learning endeavors is also crucial to success (taken from page 34 of the CLEG Report).

An advisor generally works for an agency/provider.

**Basic Skills**: skills in the areas of life and family, academics and employability necessary to attain a family sustaining wage that also contributes to the state's economy.

**Adult Learner**: An individual who is 20 years of age or older on or before September 1 of year of enrollment and is lacking basic skills (as measured by a state-approved assessments), a GED certificate, or a high school diploma, necessary for success in post-secondary at a 100 course level or higher or employment.

**Adult Learning Collaborative Board (ALCB)**: has strong decision-making authority for operations within their region including flexibility and ownership for how adult learning services are delivered and how the partnership is operated.

The ALCB is responsible for

- Identifying the region's characteristics including demographics, key industries, and available support services
- Determining what educational or training services should be offered
- Identifying or developing service delivery that addresses the identified needs

- Developing a manageable infrastructure for regional planning and service delivery of adult learning activities

The makeup of the regional Adult Learning Collaborative Board must include partners and stakeholders. Partners include adult education programs, Michigan Works! Agencies or other organizations with demonstrated workforce development capacity, and post-secondary education/training institutions.

**Bridging**: A systematic approach linking two or more programs for the transition of participants and resulting in his/her advancement. This bridging may occur between educational programs and/or between educational programs and employment. (Bridging may be a seamless approach depending on partnerships/cooperative arrangements in a region.)

**Career Readiness Certificate**: A certificate that is easily understood and nationally valued as a credential that certifies the attainment of basic workplace skills.

Extended definition: The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) verifies to employers anywhere in the United States that an individual has essential core employability skills in Reading, Math, and Locating Information. ACT has researched over 16,000 occupations, and these three skills are highly important to the majority of jobs in the workplace.

**Contextualization**: Providing instruction for the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes drawn from the context in which they will be used, using real-life materials and situations from that context. To provide "instruction on work-related reading, writing, or math abilities…using a mixture of material including work oriented instructional material or focusing on work oriented reading tasks (reading manuals, completing employment forms, etc…)".

- Lessons should be based on authentic problem solving. Students should "discover meaningful relationships in the context of the real world; concepts are internalized through the process of discovering, reinforcing and relating." *#1*
- Contextualized learning "helps teachers relate subject matter content to real world situations and motivates students to make connections between knowledge and it's application to their lives as family members, citizens, and workers, and to engage in the hard work that learning requires." *#2, #3*

*#1* "Workplace Literacy", National Institute for Literacy. www.nifl.gov RFP (Opportunity Chicago-RFP for integrating Contextualized Literacy Education with Employment Training and Placement Programs

*#2* Why Do I Need To Know This? Contextualized Instruction in the ABE Classroom: Bonnie Goonen and Susan Pittman-Shetler M.A.E.P.D. Project

*#3* What is Contextualized Learning? Nebraska Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy Retrieved from the World Wide Web at http://literacy.kent.edu/~nebraska/curric/ttim1/art5.html

**Duplication of services**: Providing identical services to the same individuals through the same or different funding streams at the same time. Examples:

- An individual participant receiving GED preparation from two separate State funded programs at the same time.
- The same adult basic education program is provided by Community Colleges, MWAs and LEA adult education programs.

# GLOSSARY

**Employability Skills**: Basic skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job. These skills are generic in nature rather than job specific and cut across all industry types, business sizes and job levels from entry level to senior positions. Employability skills are divided into three skills sets: (a) basic academic skills, (b) higher-order thinking skills, (c) personal qualities. These three skills sets can be broken down into more detailed skill sets:

| *Basic Academic Skills* | *Higher-Order Thinking Skills* | *Personal Qualities* |
|---|---|---|
| Reading/Comprehending | Learning | Responsible; Honest |
| Writing | Reasoning | Self-confidence |
| Science | Thinking Creatively | Self-control |
| Math | Decision Making | Social Skills |
| Oral Communication | Problem Solving | Teamwork/Spirit |
| Listening | | Adaptable/Flexible |
| Technology | | Accountable |
| | | Self-directed |
| | | Work Ethic; Punctual |
| | | Positive Attitude |
| | | Well Groomed |
| | | Cooperative; Efficient |
| | | Self-motivated |
| | | Self-managed |
| | | Initiative; Integrity |
| | | Organized |

**Enrollment**: a participant may be considered enrolled if he/she:

- Signed a registration or enrollment form, dated no more than 90 days prior to the beginning of the program year (April 1st), and
- Has attended one or more class sessions.

*Taken from DELEG adult education administration guidebook*

**LEA**: Local Education Agency—A school district that is required to elect a local school board, to submit annual financial and pupil audit to MDE, to pay teachers and receives state school aid based upon pupil membership.

**Lowest Level Learner:** an adult learner whose test scores place him/her at one of the following NRS (national reporting system) levels—beginning ABE, beginning basic, low intermediate basic and beg ESL literacy, low beginning ESL and high beginning ESL.

**Modularization**: Small units of learning with obvious achievement and end points. This supports the adult learner in accelerating and meeting goals. Examples are classes, tests, certificate programs or credit.

**Navigator**: The Navigator (person or process) assists the adult learner in creating an individualized education and training plan and provides pre-college advising. The Navigator will be well informed of all resources in the region that adult learners may access, including high demand employment sectors, levels of basic skills attainment, education and training required to advance within each career pathway. The Navigator will be employed by or contract with all members of

the regions, maintaining regular contact with adult learners and staff at each site.

The Navigator is responsible for assisting adult learners with access to wraparound services within an adult learning partnership and in the community in which they reside. These wrap-around services will focus on identifying and addressing the barriers impeding access to and progress through adult learning opportunities, including transportation, childcare, health care, housing and counseling.

**Partner**: an entity that has a monetary investment in the success of the Adult Learner. Partners will be represented on the regional ALCB. An LEA partner shall remain a partner on the ALCB as long as they continue to be a service provider.

**Pathway**: The route by which a student travels from their individual starting point to the accomplishment of their goal or goals. Students may have academic, employment and personal goals and might also have distinct pathways to each area. The pathways are defined by the student with guidance from the Adult Learner advisor/ navigator. How these pathways intersect is documented in the student's Adult Learning Plan (ALP).

**Range of services:** Adult literacy and basic skills services, GED/HSC, conversational English, upgrading basic skills of adult workers for changes in workplace technology, improving adult workers competencies in speaking, listening, reading, writing, computing, reasoning and problem solving.

**Stakeholder**: An individual or group with an interest in the success of an organization in delivering intended results and maintaining the viability of the organization's products and services.

All stakeholders are not equal and different stakeholders are entitled to different considerations.

An organization that only brings in-kind contributions to the table shall be considered a stakeholder.

**Student Performance Standards**: Standards (optional: in the core academic areas) approved by the State by which student competence or performance is evaluated. Performance standards are observable, (specific indicators of success), meaningful outcomes. They give students specific performance expectations, detailing a systematic rating of the student's performance of an educational objective.

**Transitional Services**: Services provided to participants in an effort to align career plans and skills with appropriate resources and programs to ensure that participants can make the transition from Adult Basic Education (ABE) to postsecondary education and training. These services are offered to participants based on their needs and skill level to provide a seamless pathway from the participant's current educational or job training level to the next.

**Transition Student**: a high school graduate who is not ready for college and/or falls within one or more of the following categories: the unemployed; low-skilled incumbent workers; parents or caregivers with low basic skills.

**Workplace Literacy**: a skill set and training necessary for an individual employee to do his or her job.