



Adult Education Frequently Asked Questions Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This guidance has been developed to provide clarification and support to adult education programs that seek to continue offering services to adult learners during this unprecedented time.

General Questions

- 1. Adult education programs offered within school districts were required to close their buildings effective March 16, 2020 but other programs, such as community-based organizations, are not part of the requirement. Can adult education programs offered by community-based organizations choose to remain open?**

Response: Adult education program sites that are not required to shut down may choose to remain open as long as they are following all current and future recommendations from the governor and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) “social distancing” recommendations.

The “Stay Safe, Stay Home” [Executive Order](#) issued by the Governor on March 23, 2020 temporarily suspends all activities that are not necessary to sustain or protect life and applies to all state and federally funded adult education programs.

- 2. (NEW) Our program provides services in the county jail. Executive Order 2020-170, Section 2.c of the risk-reduction protocol states, “Restricting all visits, except for attorney-related visits, and conducting those visits without physical contact to the extent feasible.” Are adult education teachers considered visitors and currently restricted from entering the jails?**

Response: The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity-Workforce Development (LEO-WD) clarified with the Governor’s Office that adult education teachers, as a normal part of jail programming, are not subject to the restriction on visits because they are providing a service versus visiting. While they are not employees or independent contractors, they also are not volunteers, and have an agreement or contract to enter the facility to provide this service. Although virtual learning should be the default where possible, these educators may enter the facility and must follow the testing protocols identified in EO 2020-170.

Fiscal/Grant Questions

3. If a program suspends operations, can it continue to pay adult education staff with State School Aid, Section 107 and/or Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding?

Response: Yes, LEO-WD encourages adult education programs to continue to pay all adult education program staff currently paid from these sources during the shutdown to alleviate potential financial instability and hardship for employees. However, there will not be additional adult education funds allocated to support that decision.

The amount paid to staff and instructors must be consistent with the agency/district's policies and be uniformly applied to all adult education funding sources as currently reported in the approved MEGS and fiscal agent and providers budgets. Payments to part-time personnel cannot exceed what would be reasonable considering the number of hours ordinarily worked by the part-time personnel.

Providers can use Section 107 and AEFLA funds to pay teachers delivering distance learning programs if such programs deliver adult education and literacy activities allowable under each funding source.

Staff time supported by AEFLA funds should reflect effort that supports or provides adult education activities and must be adequately documented through personnel activity reports/time and effort documents. All activities must be allowable under AEFLA.

For any full or part time staff whose contract has lapsed or ended, the agency/district's financial obligation to the staff/instructor ended when the contract ended.

4. Can adult education providers modify their State School Aid, Section 107 or AEFLA budgets if they would like to purchase distance learning software or additional seat licenses?

Response: Both the Section 107 and AEFLA application budgets can be amended if anticipated costs have changed, including to purchase or expand distance learning options for participants.

The last Section 107 amendment deadline has been moved from April 1, 2020 to **April 17, 2020**.

The Section 107 Special Programs (3rd Quarter) Interim Report deadline has been moved from April 10, 2020 to **April 24, 2020**.

The final amendment deadline for the AEFLA application budgets, including General Instruction, Institutional, and IELCE, is **May 15, 2020**.

These deadlines will be evaluated accordingly as the situation evolves.

5. Will additional Section 107 amendments be available if changes due to COVID-19 occur after the last Section 107 amendment is due?

Response: There is currently not an additional amendment period for Section 107 after April 17, 2020. The final expenditure report allows for deviations of approved budget line items and any deviation of 10 percent or more requires a justification. If it is determined after April 17, 2020 that anticipated costs will not be incurred and a new cost needs to be added, the new costs would need to be emailed by the fiscal agent to the Office of Adult Education for prior approval.

6. If we were approved this program year to use Section 107 and/or AEFLA funds to support adult education staff attending a conference that was cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19, are any charges that were not refunded still allowable?

Response: Generally, the Section 107 and AEFLA grant awards can only support activities that occur during that program year. Given the unprecedented situation and the ban on gatherings of large groups of people, many conferences and professional development activities were canceled or postponed until the next program year. This may result in some costs being paid for in one year and the activities may not occur until the next program year, such as conference registration and flight.

- Expenses that were able to be canceled and costs refunded, such as hotel, should be removed from the current year budget and included in the year the activities occur.
- For expenses where a credit is issued, like airfare, then the credit must be applied and used on an adult education related activity.
- Expenses that do not receive a credit will need to be noted in the final expenditure report.

The Out of State travel form would be completed for any years that have out of state travel expenses identified in the budget and any expenses paid for in the prior year (e.g., registration and/or flight) must be noted.

The Office of Adult Education is awaiting guidance from OCTAE on this issue and will share any updates as they become available.

7. (NEW) Are hand sanitizers, cleaning supplies and personnel protective equipment (PPE) allowable grant costs for adult education participants and program staff?

Response: The following costs have been determined allowable for the purpose of complying with the State of Michigan and CDC recommendations for reducing the spread of COVID-19.

- Face masks
- Gloves
- Goggles
- Face shields
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant/sanitizing products, including wipes and sprays
- Touch-free thermometers

- Social distancing partitions, dividers, and barriers

Programs should check the [MIOSHA](#) and [CDC](#) websites regularly for updates about recommended PPE.

All costs must be reasonable and necessary, and for participants/staff associated with a state and/or federally funded adult education program. These costs should be reported under function code 261 and reported on a separate line item that clearly defines the specific PPE items to be purchased.

Distance Learning Questions

- 8. If our program has not offered distance learning instruction in the past but would like to offer it now, do we need approval from the state office?**

Response: All state and federally funded adult education providers will be required to complete and submit a Program Modifications Due to COVID-19. This document will identify any changes to adult education programming and budgets in response to the coronavirus. There will be a separate communication from WD, Office of Adult Education related to this document.

- 9. If we did not have classes previously set up in MAERS as distance classes, can we change it so we can now enter distance learning hours?**

Response: On March 27, 2020, MAERS was upgraded to better support adult education providers in reporting distance learning offered to adult learners, as follows:

- Class Instructional Method fields are now editable to be changed to include Distance Learning.
- All classes regardless of the Instructional Method will allow entry for Distance Learning Hours.
- Attendance labels have been updated with Regular Hours are now labeled as **Classroom Hours**, and Proxy Hours are now labeled as **Distance Learning Hours**.

Performance/Testing Questions

- 10. What are the options for pre and/or post-testing participants virtually?**

Response: The Office of Adult Education has been in communication with Data Recognition Corporation (TABE) and CASAS as they explore options for virtual testing. At this time, remote testing is not an option and agencies will have to test participants upon the reopening of classes. If options for virtual testing are implemented and available, that will be communicated to all adult education providers.

The Office of Adult Education is also exploring options related to pre-testing new enrollments; however, this may require an amendment to the assessment policy. We are waiting on guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) for further guidance on assessment policy changes.

11. Will the state evaluate program performance differently this year due to program closures during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Response: The WD, Office of Adult Education understands that measurable skill gains will be impacted because of participants inability to post-test and/or take high school equivalency tests. The WD, Office of Adult Education highly encourages adult education providers to monitor and track the impact of the pandemic on program performance and include the effects in its WIOA annual narrative report submitted in MEGS+ by October 31, 2020, and with the Section 107 final expenditure report submitted in MEGS+ by August 21, 2020.

New WIOA Application Questions

12. Will the WIOA, Title II grant application deadline be extended since many adult education programs are closed?

Response: Given the unprecedented public health emergency, the Office of Adult Education will be extending the WIOA, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act application deadline to

April 28, 2020. Applicants that have their application completed and are able to submit before then are encouraged to do so.

13. How will the decrease in performance due to COVID-19 impact the review and scoring of the AEFLA applications for the next grant cycle?

Response: The AEFLA applications for the grant cycle beginning July 1, 2020 required performance data from program years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 to determine past effectiveness, as those are the most recent years with complete data available. The 2019-2020 program year data is not required since the program year will end after the application is due.

If applicants have modified program offerings and service delivery strategies as a result of COVID-19, those changes would only be included in the application if it is anticipated that those offerings and/or delivery methods will continue in the 2020-2021 program year. The application should be completed based on the services and activities to be delivered during the program years in that grant cycle.

High School Equivalency Questions

14. Will high school equivalency (HSE) testing for GED, HiSET, and TASC continue during this time?

Response: HSE test centers may be closed or have limited testing to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Tests may be scheduled with open test centers. For detailed information specific to GED, please visit <https://ged.com/coronavirus-covid-19/> and for HiSET visit <https://www.ets.org/s/cv/hiset/the-america/>.

15. Will the HSE-to-School Program continue to process and provide voucher codes to qualifying participants?

Response: Yes, voucher codes will continue to be processed during this time.

GED voucher codes may be requested by testers on the [website](#). Please direct questions about voucher codes to Tricia Kane via email at KaneP1@michigan.gov.

HiSet Voucher codes may be requested by adult education programs. Please direct questions about HiSET voucher codes to Tricia Kane via email at KaneP1@michigan.gov.

16. If an HSE test center is closed and a tester is not able to take a scheduled test will they lose their voucher code?

Response: No, if a test center is closed then the test will be cancelled by the test center and the code used to schedule the test will be reactivated to schedule a new test for a later date. For assistance with rescheduling contact GED or HiSET directly.

GED Customer Service

North and South America: 1-877-EXAM-GED (877-392-6433) Monday–Friday, 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. CT; closed on local holidays. Preguntas en Español 1-877-450-3276 Monday–Friday, 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. CT; closed on local holidays.

HiSET Customer Service

Live chat on their website <https://hiset.ets.org/> or phone at 1-855-MyHiSET.

17. Will voucher codes expire?

Response: Voucher codes are not expected to expire during this time. The codes have a 12-month expiration date from the time our office receives them so testers can anticipate a 10-month life span before the code expires. Should a non-redeemed code expire then a new voucher code will be reissued.

Resources

18. Are there any resources that can support adult education providers to continue delivering services for adult learners during the coronavirus pandemic?

Response: A number of organizations have compiled and are sharing resources to support adult education programming, including:

- **Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education (MACAE)** has a MACAE Response to Coronavirus [resource page](#).
- **National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE)** has a resource page on their [website](#) to share distance learning resources, including offers for free access from various vendors.
- **LINCS** has created a [COVID-19 Resource Page for Adult Educators](#).
- **American Institutes for Research (AIR)** has identified several of its [resources](#) that may assist adult educators on topics such as distance learning, online teaching, digital literacy, and health literacy.

- **GED Testing Service** has created a [COVID-19 Educator Support](#) page, including information to help educators and students stay safe and informed:
 - [Managing stress and anxiety](#)
 - [COVID-19 info to distribute to students](#)
 - [Strategies to help students manage their time](#)