

## Lifelong Learning Transformation Update – March 2010

Michigan is taking a new statewide approach to creating good jobs and economic opportunity for all. Workers need good paying jobs that support families and companies need workers with skills for the new economy. Michigan is committed to ensuring the promise of *No Worker Left Behind*, which has laid the groundwork for the state's recovery by helping workers gain new skills for better jobs. While the statewide demand for training and education is unprecedented, an additional 1.7 million adults in need of basic skills remain at risk of being left behind. These workers require help improving their skills quickly in order to take advantage of crucial education and training opportunities.

Through ***No Worker Left Behind: Everybody In!*** Michigan is making bold policy changes to help workers reach better jobs quickly and efficiently by learning new skills. These new policies and practices will:

- A. **Help communities work better together.** Lifelong learning will be delivered through regional partnerships that involve all three core partners: adult, postsecondary and workforce education. This will help regions to better serve more people by aligning resources and maximizing the strengths of each partner.
- B. **Educate workers more effectively.** Regional partnerships will provide education that is flexible, expeditious, and relevant to the workplace. Promising, powerful approaches will become standard - ensuring more people are able to get new skills and better jobs.

Over the past year, an impressive number of education and workforce leaders formed a variety of workgroups to examine and weigh in on the components of *No Worker Left Behind: Everybody In!*; recommendations from these groups can be found in the Appendix of this document. In addition to providing input on the state's approach, a number of innovative practitioners are modeling the changes we are working to implement. Their input and demonstrative action ensures new policies are grounded in promising practices and lead to better outcomes for our adult learners.

### Change in Motion

**No Worker Left Behind Demonstration Grants.** Education and workforce partners in ten areas of the state are working together to provide integrated education programs that build basic skills in ways that are relevant to workers and connect learners to postsecondary education and training and good jobs through *No Worker Left Behind*. The Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (DELEG) is supporting these local efforts with a \$2.5 million investment that also has leveraged local contributions.

For instance in Flint, Mott Community College is working with Flint Community Schools and Career Alliance to create career pathways for students in the areas of technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing. In Benton Harbor, Lake Michigan College has partnered with Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Michigan Works!, Niles Community Schools, Benton Harbor Area Schools, and a number of other local school districts to create Regional Career Academies in demand industries such as healthcare, welding, and business. These partnerships are already creating an exciting picture of how intentional collaboration among key partners improves outcomes for adult learners. These leading edge collaboratives are helping to inform the policy changes necessary to implement partnerships like these statewide.

**Learning Labs.** Partners in and around the City of Detroit are working together to link adults who need to refresh or strengthen their basic literacy to new skills and careers through a network of ten neighborhood-based Learning Labs to be opened by the end of 2010. These Learning Labs will enable community members to participate in customized computer-based basic skills and postsecondary instruction tailored to their individual learning needs and schedules. To ensure every participant

succeeds in their educational efforts, the labs will offer adult learners additional supports, including dedicated tutors, individualized advising, and access to child care and transportation. An unprecedented partnership among The City of Detroit, the Detroit Public Schools, the Detroit Public Libraries, area foundations, community-based organizations and DELEG is supporting these labs. These labs will demonstrate new ways we can connect adults with very limited literacy skills with occupational training opportunities and new careers.

**Workforce Investment Act Policies.** For the first time in several years, DELEG invited new organizations to apply to offer services using Workforce Investment Act Title II funds, and to align these services with the principles of the CLEG report. In 2011, DELEG intends to align these funds and the services they support with the state's new approach. DELEG also is identifying policy changes that will increase the use of Workforce Investment Act Title I funds in connecting adults with low basic skills to training and employment.

**Programs of Study Innovation Grants.** Community colleges across the state are developing programs of study that will improve transitions from basic skills development and remedial education to occupational training and industry-recognized credentials in several high-demand industries. Catalyzed by innovation grants from the state, these programs will provide momentum for creating more programs throughout the state that will ensure adults at all skill levels can pursue technical training and careers in high-demand fields.

**Professional Development.** As the state's new approach takes hold, DELEG is providing professional development and technical assistance that equips local partners with the tools and knowledge they need to incorporate promising practices into their programs, including practices like contextualized basic skills instruction and building local partnerships. Portions of this year's Adult Education Conference will be focused on connecting local partners more deeply to each other and to the practices that are at the heart of the state's new approach.

**Special Philanthropic Initiatives.** Michigan has reached a tipping point in the number of institutions which are involved in national philanthropic initiatives to model and share promising practices for increasing postsecondary credential attainment, including the Breaking Through and Achieving the Dream initiatives. The majority of community colleges in the state are learning about and testing new models of administration and instruction that are expected to improve outcomes for adults at each institution. The work that is underway in these institutions is helping to inform the policies that are being developed to institutionalize and accelerate high-performing practices in partnerships statewide. Additionally, Michigan is one of six Midwestern states which are part of the Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears initiative. Through the initiative, Michigan is using policy change, data analysis, and communication strategies to advance the dramatic changes needed to increase postsecondary credential attainment by the state's low-income, low-skill adults.

## **Looking Forward**

Michigan made a promise to leave no worker in our state behind. The tremendous need to help our workers get better skills requires us to act swiftly and dramatically to create good jobs and economic opportunity for all. The work underway is moving us toward a new approach in Michigan that creates shared ownership of this issue, removes barriers for workers, and connects adults at all skill levels to the education and training they need for better skilled, better paying careers in the future. Going forward, we can use this momentum and a sense of urgency to make this new approach the way we do business and improve outcomes for workers, businesses and communities in Michigan.

## APPENDIX - Summary of Recommendations from Work Groups

An impressive number of education and workforce leaders formed a variety of workgroups to examine and weigh in on the state's new approach. The recommendations of these groups point toward a new approach in Michigan where our investments in lifelong learning are organized in regional partnerships where all three legs of our learning stool (workforce development, postsecondary education and adult education) share responsibility for providing services that begin with immediate assessment and planning and feature relevant, flexible, and integrated education that puts people on career pathways and/or into postsecondary education. These recommendations also include a focus on using evidence to improve outcomes and inform changes, and communicating the importance of transformation and gaining support for changes.

### The Adult Learning Work Group – “The CLEG Report”

In 2008, an Adult Learning Work Group made up of leaders from adult education, postsecondary education, and workforce development examined and provided recommendations for transforming Michigan's approach to basic skills development, in order to better meet the needs of adult learners, employers, and the state in an ever-changing economy. The state's Council for Labor and Economic Growth endorsed the recommendations of the Adult Learning Work Group (as detailed in the report [\*Transforming Michigan's Adult Learning Infrastructure\*](#), also known as “the CLEG Report”). The report outlines a new vision for lifelong learning in Michigan and calls on the Department for Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (DELEG) to require that education and training be delivered through regional collaborative partnerships involving multiple organizations in a region, as the most effective way to provide adult learners with customized education programs.

#### Recommendations:

- Transform Michigan's adult learning infrastructure to create a unified strategic approach to increasing basic skills and post-secondary credential attainment.
- Engage a range of partners in service delivery to meet the diverse needs of adult learners.
- Build clear connections between learning and the promise of good jobs.
- Use accelerated and connected pathways to help adult learners reach their goals.
- Increase access to adult learning.
- Make basic skills development a priority within every funding source that can legally support it.
- Hold regional partnerships accountable for success and measure outcomes at the partnership level.
- Engage a broad coalition in communicating the urgent need to improve basic skills.

### **The Transformation Task Force**

In 2009, the Governor proposed major changes to the structure of Section 107 of the State School Aid act as an opportunity to make changes that would align the delivery of basic skills development with the state's approach to lifelong learning delivery. Upon considering the potential changes, the state Legislature called for a Transformation Task Force made up of adult educators to recommend a comprehensive adult education delivery system that serves all areas of the state while fostering partnerships for creating seamless transitions, as informed by the recommendations in the CLEG Report.

#### **Initial Recommendations:**

- Create Adult Learning Collaborative Boards in regions throughout the state, which, at a minimum, will include an adult education program (LEA), a postsecondary institution, and the local Michigan Works! Agency or other organization with demonstrated workforce development capacity.
- Empower these Boards to work collaboratively to implement the design principles presented in the CLEG report (including contextualization; cross-system program alignment; assessment alignment; comprehensive planning, advising and navigation services; and expanded access points and e-learning services).
- Provide funding to a single agent within each Board region based on a funding formula in which 90% of the allocation is based on demographic factors that reflect the scale of need in a region, and in which 10% of the allocation is based on the achievement of certain performance measures, including successful transitions to postsecondary education and employment.
- Hold the Boards accountable for the partners' collaborative success at achieving a range of outcomes.

### **The Postsecondary Policy and Practice Strategy Work Group**

In 2009, a Postsecondary Policy and Practice Work Group made up of adult education, postsecondary education, and workforce development representatives examined how state policy leadership could be used to implement the recommendations in the CLEG report and support improved postsecondary and employment outcomes for the state's adult learners. The Postsecondary Work Group has recommended a number of policy changes DELEG will pursue to outline clear expectations for local participation in Regional Partnerships and to offer a comprehensive spectrum of services for learners statewide, including requirements around the use of select public investments in education and training, and standards for stronger local collaboration.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Define expectations for Regional Partnership efforts to prepare low-skilled adults for success in relevant postsecondary education and related careers and include these expectations in the full range of governing policies associated with cross-system education and training activities – such as policy issuances, strategic plans, legislative directives, program guides, and requests for proposals – associated with a portion of postsecondary funding, Perkins IV, Section 107 of the State School Aid Act, Wagner-Peyser, WIA Title I, WIA Title II, and other relevant sources.
- Articulate and monitor goals for student transitions and integrate Partners' services to reach these goals.
- Encourage Partners to engage employers intentionally and meaningfully as advocates for and partners in the education and training for low-income, low-skilled adults.
- Call for a focus on student success and develop standards for providing services to increase student persistence and attainment.
- Expand the use of e-learning in the state.
- Offer cross-system professional development and technical assistance that supports regional partners in delivering these strategies.
- Advocate at the federal level for changes that will support this agenda.