

3.4 - Professional Development and Training

How does the consortium ensure all staff are aware of appropriate PD opportunities?

The ABE Coordinator and ALC Principal meet monthly or as needed to develop and outline the annual plan based upon these mandates and the current needs of our students, share updated information relayed by the state ABE administrative team, legislative and funding updates, new materials and curriculum, PD training, etc. These meetings also afford the staff the opportunity to come together to share resources and curriculum, and to participate in trainings specific to local needs. Past examples of this include MN Adult Diploma Working Group, Distance Learning 101, training on content standards integration for Academic, Career and Employability Skills (ACES) and the Transitions Integration Framework (TIF), webinar training to become certified proctors for Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment, training on the use of technology, and publisher sponsored webinars on the use of new resources and instructional materials or distance learning platforms, such as STAR, Edmentum, and Northstar Digital Literacy. Staff meetings also address a variety of consortium needs, such as review of curriculum and technology resources, or implementation of content standards.

The ABE Director participates in bi-monthly meetings which bring together ABE managers from across the northwest region, as well as bi-monthly NW Regional Transitions meetings which include the region's ABE managers and Regional Transitions Coordinator. The ABE Director also participates in meetings with representatives from the Leech Lake Tribal College, Leech Lake Youth Build, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Workforce Council, in addition to the Regional Transitions Coordinator, and the local Workforce Investment Board.

CLBW staff has been able to attend numerous opportunities offered through Minnesota Adult Basic Education supplemental service providers as applicable to their job duties. Some of these conferences include Language and Literacy Conference, Adult Diploma Working Group, Fall Managers Meeting, Support Services, Adult Career Pathways Cohorts, and Numeracy. All these conference options have consistently provided excellent high quality, research based, rigorous, practically applicable professional development that staff have utilized effectively for continuous growth in our instructional practices.

The ABE Coordinator forwards email notification regarding professional development opportunities to ABE staff and strongly encourages them to attend. The Coordinator will follow up with a phone call or a face-to-face discussion if needed to support staff in addition will manage the paperwork required if requested by staff members to ensure appropriate reimbursements are received

Does the consortium require any professional development beyond the requirements of the Adult Education Staff Training Policy?

There are several required Professional Development activities that are mandatory for all ABE staff in the consortium. As outlined in [Narrative Item 3.3](#), beginning July 1, 2023, Minnesota Adult Education implemented a new Staff Training Policy which outlines required training for all staff who are new to Minnesota Adult Education. The policy states that within the first twelve months of employment, all staff in all roles are required to complete the foundational training in ABE (although full time staff are encouraged to complete it within the first six months of employment). The policy also outlines other training that is required before staff begin to implement programs or products into instruction. As a consortium, we adhere to the state training policy for all new staff and have no additional requirements of ABE staff, although they are supported financially and encouraged to expand their base on knowledge by participating in various opportunities that are available.

ABE staff who are new to the consortium participate in orientation training with the ABE Coordinator. This orientation typically takes several hours and may span the course of two or three meetings to complete. Volunteers or support staff participate in local training at the classroom site where they are located. This training is conducted by the lead teacher in charge of the classroom.

The ABE Coordinator participates in bi-monthly meetings which bring together ABE managers from across the northwest region, as well as quarterly NW Regional Transitions meetings which include the region's ABE managers and Regional Transitions Coordinator. In addition, the ABE Coordinator participates in quarterly statewide webchats hosted by *Literacy Action Network*. These webchats are an opportunity for ABE program leaders and instructional staff to visit with representatives from the Minnesota Department of Education / Adult Basic Education (MDE/ABE) leadership team, to discuss updates on new and emerging issues in ABE. Annually, the ABE Coordinator (or a staff representative) must attend both the spring Grant Application workshop and the fall ABE Managers workshop sponsored by the MDE/ABE. The ABE Coordinator must attend annual spring SiD (online database) training sponsored by the *MN Literacy Council*.

To the extent that schedules allow and the training is relevant, CLBW ABE consortium staff members have been regular attendees and presenters at many regional and statewide PD events, including the *Language and Literacy Institute*, the annual statewide *ABE Summer Institute*, and many more. The Coordinator has been the Chair for Summer Institute since 2024 and attends all monthly meetings for Literacy Action Network, PANDA, and SPARC.

Members of the ABE staff have the opportunity to sign up for specialized professional development opportunities throughout the year. These generally involve an application process, and a larger commitment of time and attention than one day training. They are usually in a nationally recognized training area offered by certified trainers. Past examples of specialized training in which staff from this consortium have participated include:

- **Student Achievement in Reading (STAR)**, a project from the national Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) that provides training and support for teachers of intermediate reading students in effective, evidence-based practices in the four major components of adult reading instruction: alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- **The College and Career Pathways Institute (CCPI)** of LaGuardia Community College, New York City, which focuses on using evidence-based approaches to contextualized basic skills instruction.
- **MN Numeracy Institute**, a year-long professional development activity offered by ATLAS to explore the content, context, and cognitive and affective components of numeracy through the online course *Foundations of Teaching Adult Numeracy*.
- **College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) Implementation Cohort Training**, an intensive, long-term, professional development opportunity to prepare program teams to align curriculum and instruction to the CCR standards and develop a long-term standards implementation plan for their program.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** training offered by the *Physical and Non apparent Disability Assistance (PANDA)* organization, assists teachers in creating classroom learning environments that minimize barriers and maximize learning for all students, based on scientific insights into how humans learn, and helps teachers refine why they teach, what they teach and how they teach

Online professional development opportunities are available to ABE staff and are becoming a more frequent mode of receiving professional training. Each member of the staff has completed one or more online courses offered by the *Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC)*. Each member of the ABE staff has been required to complete the *Distance and Blended Learning Basics for Adult Basic Education* online course. In addition, MLC offers services such as professional development on educational technology and distance learning best practices, administration and training for state-supported distance learning platforms, facilitation of assessment of curricula for inclusion under distance learning policy, communication of distance learning information and resources to the ABE field, training on integrating digital literacy skills into instruction, online course development and delivery, and online learning resources, including Open Educational Resources (OERs).

What is the amount and percent of total funding that the consortium sets aside or uses for professional development?

Maintaining a well-informed, highly skilled staff to conduct classes in remote, rural areas is a very expensive proposition! Every year, the consortium sets aside approximately 2% of its state funding to pay for typical PD related costs (such as registration, mileage and meal reimbursement, and accommodations).

We have been fortunate to access the services of *ATLAS, the Adult Teaching and Learning Advancement System*, a supplemental service provider for MN ABE programs, housed at Hamline University in St. Paul. Among the many services they provide are travel scholarships to rural ABE programs like ours, which help to increase equity of access to high quality professional development opportunities. By removing some of the financial burden of participation, the consortium has been well represented over the years at many ATLAS sponsored professional development events. The CLBW ABE is grateful to utilize the travel scholarships frequently offered by ATLAS and by the Minnesota Literacy Council, as these scholarships make it fiscally possible to attend many trainings because of the additional time away from our program.