m꘎ DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ABE Consortium Narrative Requirements

Publication date of this document: September 2023

Due date: June 1, 2024

Introduction and Purpose

The ABE consortium narrative is designed to give ABE grant applicants needing authorization or re-authorization an opportunity to describe program results, organizational structure, adherence to state and federal requirements, and future plans. Along with other sections of the annual consortium grant application, the narrative will be evaluated in order to make decisions about new or continuing multi-year consortium approval and funding. ABE consortium narratives will be rated by a team of reviewers according to the application evaluation criteria specified in Minnesota Statutes, Section 124D.52 and in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan. This narrative identifies basic requirements and areas of best practice for ABE consortia. Check the table at the end of this document to see the list of consortia that must submit narratives.

Note: The ABE Consortium Narrative is a separate submission from the Annual Consortium Grant Application. See "Submitting Narrative" for specific instructions.

Categories of ABE Consortium Narrative Applicants

1. *New Consortium* – includes first-time applicants, ABE programs that have previously been a member of an approved ABE consortium that are applying to become a new, restructured consortium, and ABE programs seeking authorization due to performance issues.
2. *Continuing Consortium* – currently approved ABE consortia seeking multi-year approval status.

Requirements for Applicants

1. New consortia must show evidence of administrative and programmatic capacity by submitting the following information:
   - ABE Consortium Narrative, Sections One through Nine
2. Continuing consortia must submit:
   - ABE Consortium Narrative, Sections One through Eight

Submitting the ABE Consortium Narrative

Applicants are required to submit electronic narratives. An electronic narrative is an organized collection of documents that are accessible online to consortium staff, MDE staff and reviewers.

<u>The web address of the completed narrative must be sent by email to Brandy Logan (brandy.logan@state.mn.us) at the Minnesota Department of Education by 4:30 p.m., June 3, 2024.</u> This web address must have all the required components and be openly accessible for reviewers (without the need to request permission).

Failure to meet the June 1 deadline will put a consortium's funding at risk.

ABE Consortium Narrative Format

All narrative items must be addressed and all required documents must be included. For readability (by the review team), the state ABE office recommends:

- Use 11- or 12-point type and an easily readable font.
- Follow the sequence and format laid out in this document.
- Label sections, narrative responses and documents clearly.
- Include the wording of each item before the response, as an aid to reviewers.

Questions or for more information

If you have questions or would like more information about the ABE Consortium Narrative, please:
- Review information found at the Minnesota ABE web site (www.mnabe.org), especially the Narrative page (www.mnabe.org/abe-funding-grants/narrative); and/or
- Contact Brandy Logan, ABE High School Equivalency and Accountability Specialist at brandy.logan@state.mn.us

ABE Consortium Narrative Content

Section One: Overview

Narrative items

Label	Description
1.1	Provide an **overview** of the **consortium.** Include the following: ● **Geographic area** of service including, as appropriate, Tribal Nations located partially or completely within that area ● Description of and data about the **target population** for ABE services who reside within the geographic area served by the consortium (such as individuals with low levels of literacy, adults without a secondary credential and/or adult English language learners) ● Description of the ABE **students** typically served (including number, demographics and common goals) ● Current number and roles of **staff,** indicating which positions are full-time and part-time ● Brief overview of ABE programming **sites** across the consortium
1.2	Provide data on the consortium's **success in improving skills for ABE students**, such as numbers of students who have made educational level gains, completed a secondary diploma or GED®/HiSET®, entered postsecondary, entered a training program, completed a certificate, or gained employment.

Section Two: Accountability

Narrative Items

Label	Description
2.1	Describe the **governance and decision-making processes** in place between the consortium fiscal agent and its members. Address the following: ● Indicate the fiscal agent and all additional members of the consortium. ● Which members are ABE providers? (ABE providers are members, including the fiscal agent, that receive funding to run ABE programming.) ● Describe consortium meetings, including: frequency, typical agenda items, and invited/required participants with expectations for their attendance. ● How and when is the annual consortium agreement developed and signed by the consortium and its members?
2.2	Describe the **program quality and accountability plans and procedures** for consortium fiscal agents and all members. Address the following: ● How does the fiscal agent ensure that ABE providers in the consortium spend funding appropriately and exclusively for the purposes of running adult education services, and how does the fiscal agent ensure that caps on spending for administration are not exceeded?

	● How does the fiscal agent ensure that ABE providers in the consortium adhere to all federal and state ABE law, policy and guidance for operating ABE programming? ● How is program performance data (especially information about attendance, pre- and post-testing, measurable skills gain, level gains and other outcome achievement) monitored at the fiscal agent-, provider-, site-, teacher-, and/or class-levels? ● How and when is program performance data shared and communicated with staff and other partners?
2.3	Describe the process(es) used in the consortium to **help students develop realistic goals and timelines for educational progress**, secondary credential attainment, enrolling in college and/or gaining or improving employment. Refer to Document A as appropriate. Address the following: ● How do these processes vary for different types of students, or for students enrolled in different types of programming?
2.4	Describe how the consortium adequately identifies, reports, and uses information about students that may fall within **WIOA barriers to employment** (public assistance, exhausting MFIP, disability, displaced homemakers, ex-offender, foster care, homeless, learning disabled, low-income, migrant worker, and single parent) in the intake process. ● How are the barriers to employment defined and/or explained to students during the intake process? ● How is the consortium utilizing the information collected? (e.g. specialized referrals, additional services, instructional planning).

Documents

Label	Description
A	Intake and orientation procedures (see Intake and Orientation Procedures Template)
B	Assessment procedures (see Assessment Procedures Template)
C	Contact hour tracking procedures (see Contact Hour Tracking Procedures Template)
D	Most recent consortium annual agreement with member districts and/or organizations
E	Blank intake form if not using the provided form in SiD

Section Three: Professional Development and Training

Narrative Items

Label	Description
3.1	Describe the **process and criteria used in hiring** decisions for staff (licensure, education, credentials, experience, etc.)
3.2	Describe the **new staff orientation process** and information included.
3.3	Describe how the consortium ensures that staff receive the training required by the Adult Education **staff training policy** for their position, such as ABE Foundations, test administration certification and distance learning training.
3.4	Describe how the consortium supports **professional development** (PD) for staff. Address the following: ● What is the process for determining PD needs and priorities at both the consortium and individual staff level? ● Does the consortium require any professional development beyond the requirements of the Adult Education Staff Training Policy? ● How does the consortium ensure all staff are aware of appropriate PD opportunities?

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

Documents

Label	Description
F	Consortium professional development plan that outlines the consortium's PD priorities, goals and activities (see Consortium Professional Development Plan Template)

Professional development plan (with goals, activities, and evaluation measures) for a staff member in each of the following roles: (see Individual Professional Development Plan Template)

Label	Description
G	Administrative staff – e.g., program or site manager
H	Support staff – e.g., intake, data or testing coordinator
I	Instructional staff – e.g., teacher

NOTE: Remove any identifying personal information from the plans.

Section Four: Educational Quality

Narrative Items

Label	Description
4.1	Provide an explanation of how **high-quality educational services** are developed by the consortium. Address the following: ● How are decisions made about what kinds of courses and instruction to offer? ● How are courses and instruction evaluated to determine whether they are high quality? ● How does the consortium ensure that all students have access to sufficient intensity of instruction in order to make learning gains? ● How does instruction incorporate the essential components of reading instruction (alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension)?
4.2	Describe how the consortium's **distance/hybrid learning** programming has expanded over the past 2 years. Address the lessons learned and best practices adopted in recent years, as well as intentions and plans for continued improvement of distance and hybrid learning.
4.3	Give an overview of how the consortium has integrated all three sets of the state's **content standards** for ABE (CCRS, ACES/TIF and Northstar) into instruction to date. Address the following. Refer to document J as appropriate. ● What content standards training have staff participated in? What percentage of instructional staff have participated in Foundations Training for each of the three sets of content standards: CCRS Foundations, ACES Foundations, and Northstar Foundations? ● How are the standards used to plan for instruction and course offerings? ● How does the consortium ensure that instructional materials are aligned to content standards?
4.4	Give an overview of **college and/or career-focused programming**, including Integrated Education and Training (IET) programming, transitions to postsecondary programming or programming that helps students attain a recognized postsecondary credential. Refer to document I where appropriate.
4.5	Give an overview of any current **adult diploma programming,** which allows ABE students to complete a high school diploma (not high school equivalency assessment prep, such as the

	GED®/HiSET®). Include credit completion adult diploma programming, as well as Standard Adult Diploma programming. Refer to Document I as appropriate.
4.6	Give an overview of the consortium's **process to effectively serve eligible adults with disabilities**, including learning disabilities (this could include a referral process when appropriately needed). ● How are providers identifying and utilizing appropriate accommodations for students (and staff)? ● What are the results or outcomes of the consortium's efforts to appropriately serve eligible adults with disabilities?
4.7	Describe how **volunteers** are utilized and trained in the consortium. Address the following: ● What are common activities and roles for volunteers? ● How do volunteers enhance student success in the consortium? ● How are the consortium's volunteers oriented and trained? (Training requirements are outlined in the Volunteer Training Standards Policy.) ● What training is provided and/or required on an ongoing basis for volunteers, locally and/or through other entities? (Volunteers who have tutored for more than one year are required to participate in a minimum of 2 hours of professional development annually after initial training, as outlined in the Volunteer Training Standards Policy.)

Documents

Label	Description
J	Instructional Program Description. (See Instructional Program Description Template) The following questions <u>will be used to evaluate</u> this document: ● Does instructional content align with core and conditional ABE content, as outlined by the Eligible Content Policy? ● Does instructional content align to the content standards (CCRS, ACES/TIF, Northstar)? ● Does instructional content align to the 8 allowable Adult Education activities outlined in WIOA (as listed on the WIOA Regulations and Definitions?) ● Does instruction align to best practices as identified in rigorous and scientifically valid research? (Including but not limited to: career pathways, IET, distance/hybrid learning, STAR/EBRI, IELCE, family literacy)
K	Multi-year content standards implementation plan that includes CCRS, Northstar and ACES/TIF (See Content Standards Implementation Plan Template)

Section Five: Integration and Collaboration

Narrative Items

Label	Description
5.1	Provide evidence of **alignment to local or regional needs and strategies** as outlined by local workforce development boards and/or partners in the workforce development plans (local and regional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) plans).
5.2	Describe the **methods of referral** between local workforce development partners and the consortium, addressing both how the consortium refers learners to workforce development

	partners, and how workforce development partners refer clients to the consortium. Include how the consortium promotes **concurrent enrollment** in Title I programs (Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker) and Title III programs (Wagner-Peyser).
5.3	Describe how instructional programming is developed and delivered in **coordination and collaboration with other educational, training, social services, and employment resources in the community**. Partner entities could include K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations and faith communities. (Refer to data collected about student barriers in item 2.4)
5.4	Describe any **collaboration with local and county correctional facilities**. Address how the consortium ensures that programming in correctional facilities provides sufficient intensity and duration of instruction. Include the following: ● A brief description of the instructional content and schedule(s) of ABE programming occurring in local and county correctional facilities (refer to document I as appropriate). ● Description of all support received from the correctional institution, including financial.
5.5	Describe any **collaboration with Tribal Nations**, if one or more are partially or entirely within the geographic area served by the consortium, or if the consortium serves a significant number of members of a particular Tribal Nation.
5.6	Describe the consortium's role in developing and implementing the **regional transitions plan**.
5.7	Indicate the individual who currently serves as the **Regional Transitions Coordinator (RTC)** for the consortium, and the individual who currently serves as the **ABE Representative to the Local Workforce Development Board**. If the consortium boundaries are in several workforce development areas please list each representative to each board. How does the RTC communicate the information from the quarterly regional transition meetings to the entire transitions region? How does the ABE representative to the local workforce development board communicate the information from the LWDBs to the entire Workforce Development Area?

Documents

Label	Description
L	Most recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local Workforce Center
M	List of local Workforce Development Board (WDB) members
N	Current year ABE Regional Transitions Plan
O	Current Regional/Local WIOA Plan for the local Workforce Development Area(s) (WDA) served

Section Six: Program Resources

Narrative Items

Label	Description
6.1	Describe the use of **technology**, both in person and at a distance/hybrid learning, to improve student access to programming, enhance the quality of instruction, and lead to improved outcomes for students.
6.2	Describe **any resources, other than state and federal ABE funding**, that are used to support ABE programming. This can include financial resources, such as grant funding or charitable contributions. It can also include coordination with community partners to provide support services

	such as transportation, counseling or childcare. (Refer to data collected about student barriers in item 2.4. Also refer to items 5.3 and 5.4 as appropriate.)

Documents

Label	Description
P	Technology and Distance/Hybrid Learning Plan (see Technology and Distance/Hybrid Learning Plan Template)

Section Seven: Successes and Challenges

Narrative items

Label	Description
7.1	Provide a brief **story of student success** that illustrates the power of ABE programming to make positive change for the individuals and communities served. (Be sure to obtain student permission for any personal information or work included.)
7.2	Describe the most pressing challenges the consortium is currently facing. Include any ideas for addressing these challenges, but note that it is acceptable to acknowledge and describe challenges even without a proposal for addressing them.
7.3	Explain if, when and how the consortium addresses **diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)**, including but not limited to racial equity. Consider the following: ● What definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion is the consortium using to guide its work? ● What is the consortium's vision or strategy for addressing issues of equity? How is this vision or strategy shared amongst providers, staff and students? If a vision doesn't exist, how and when will one be developed? ● How do you implement and measure the effectiveness of your DEI strategies?
7.4	Describe any professional development focused on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) that the consortium has sponsored and/or participated in. ● How do you determine who participates in DEI training? ● How is the consortium implementing and applying lessons learned from DEI PD participation?
7.5	How does the consortium use an equity lens to examine and adjust its policies and procedures?
7.6	What is the procedure for reporting discrimination or other equity concerns in your consortium? How are staff and students made aware of these procedures?

Section Eight: Annual Consortium Grant Application

Documents – Provide the following:

Label	Description
Q	A copy of the consortium's annual ABE grant application, including all required tables and grant assurances.
R	"Level Gains with Post-Test Rates" report from SiD for the period of July 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023. Include this report for the consortium as a whole, as well as for each ABE provider within the consortium (including the fiscal agent) that receives funding to run ABE programming.

Section Nine: Additional required information for new programs seeking authorization for state ABE funding

(Continuing consortia are not required to complete this section)

Narrative Items

Label	Description
9.1	Identify the consortium's classification in seeking authorization as either: First-time applicant; ABE program that has previously been a member of an approved ABE consortium that is applying to become a new, restructured consortium; or ABE program seeking authorization due to performance issues. - What unmet need do you feel this proposed ABE consortium will meet? - What factors have led you to the decision in creating this new consortium?
9.2	Describe what actions the proposed consortium and its provider(s) have taken to familiarize staff with the ABE system. - How has this proposed consortium and providers collaborated with other adult education providers? - What formal and informal training have staff completed to build awareness of the Minnesota Adult Education system, including how it operates, what are the policies, who is served, and how success is measured?
9.3	What entity/entities would be providers in this proposed consortium? What school districts, if any, are providers within this proposed consortium?
9.4	What information or data is available for the state to determine first prior year contact hours? (First prior year is from May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023.)
9.5	Has the program been identified as a low-performing program previously? If so, please include details of the program's history as a low-performing program or in provisional approval status, along with an explanation of what has been done to improve performance and address issues.

ABE 5-year Narrative Schedule – 2024 through 2029

Due June 2024	Due June 2025	**Due June 2026**	**Due June 2027**	**Due June 2028**	Due June 2029
• AEOA • Burnsville • Dakota Prairie-Farmington • Lakeville • NW Service Cooperative • Osseo • South Suburban-South St. Paul	• Alexandria • AOIE-Hopkins • Detroit Lakes • Duluth • Hiawatha Valley-Red Wing • Metro East-North St. Paul • Rochester • SW Metro • West-Monticello	• AALC-LeSueur • Cass Lake • Mankato • Moorhead • Robbinsdale • SPCLC – St. Paul • SW ABE - Marshall • Tri-County Corrections	• Brainerd • Glacial Lakes-Willmar • Metro North-Anoka • Metro South-Bloomington • Minneapolis • Red Lake • ThinkSelf Deaf ABE • White Earth	**FEDERAL COMPETITIVE APPLICATION**	• American Indian OIC • Central MN-St. Cloud • Department of Corrections • Great Rivers - South Washington County • Rosemount/Apple Valley/Eagan • SE ABE- Owatonna • Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe