

COVID-19 & ABE Updates

We'll begin at 10:00.

Everyone is currently muted to reduce background noise.

If you are having any tech issues, please chat to Karla Vien for assistance.

This PowerPoint and materials are posted at www.mnabe.org/state-abe-presentations.



COVID-19 & ABE Updates

Friday, April 3, 2020

MDE – Adult Basic Education (ABE) Staff

Staff from Literacy Action Network (LAN) and MN ABE Distance Learning Team

Introductions

MDE Staff:

Todd Wagner, ABE State Director

Astrid Liden, Professional Development Specialist

Brad Hasskamp, Secondary Credential and Policy Specialist

Jodi Versaw, Program Quality Specialist

Julie Dincau, Transitions Specialist

Literacy Action Network and ABE Distance Learning Team members:

Karla Vien, Literacy Action Network Staff

Susan Wetenkamp-Brandt, Senior Manager Ed Technology Literacy Minnesota and Literacy Action Network President

Tom Cytron-Hysom, ABE Distance Learning Team, consultant to Literacy Minnesota

Please hold your questions until the Questions Section

When we get to the Q & A:



- Type using the webinar's chat function



- Raise your hand and ask over phone or headset during Q & A periods when unmuted



Ask Karla Vien if you have any tech questions or need technical assistance

Today's Topics

1. Key Messages and Updates
2. Resources & Professional Development
3. Distance Learning
4. LAN update
5. ABE Grants, Funding and Hours
6. Partner Updates
7. Discussion: Ideas and positive practices from around the state
8. Questions

**Resources from this webinar and earlier
communications can be found online at:**

www.mnabe.org/state-abe-presentations



Key Messages and Updates

Todd Wagner

Brad Hasskamp

Astrid Liden

Thank you

The ABE team at the Minnesota Department of Education have witnessed amazing innovations, rapid adaptability and an inspiring dedication to serving adult education students during the last month.

- Thank you to staff at ABE programs that are reaching out to students and finding new ways to teach and support their learning.
- Thank you to the ABE Support Network providers for dramatically revising your plans and finding new ways to best support our ABE program staff across the state.

You are amazing!



As we all adjust to this new dynamic



We do not expect everything to be the same. ABE programs are creating new service delivery routines that balance student and staff needs and issues.

- **Students:** We understand that some students are busy with other responsibilities and life issues. They may not be able to engage right now. That is okay and understandable.
- **Staff:** Be nice to yourselves and each other. We cannot do everything immediately. Please take care of yourself.

Goals in Response to COVID-19

Goals:

1. Safety of ABE students, ABE staff and our communities
2. Best possible service for ABE students throughout program closures and disruptions
3. Support for ABE programs and staff across the field

Current year ABE funding

ABE program funding awards have been made for this current fiscal year (2019-2020). These funds go through June 30, 2020. These awards will not change.

ABE program staff need not be laid off this fiscal year due to COVID-19.

- Staff can and should be encouraged to work from home.
- Staff should focus on providing remote instruction to students.
- Staff can also spend time on professional development, planning, and capacity building - especially around future online and distance education.

Key Message 1: funding

Especially for the month of April:

- Provide ABE instruction at a distance with as much access and quality as possible.
- Build staff and program capacity to serve students at a distance.

Don't worry about funding.

Key Message 2: contact hours

Especially for the month of April:

- Provide all the instructional opportunities to your students, in all the ways you can, regardless of whether or not you can count contact hours for those activities.

Don't worry about a decline in contact hours.

State Director Notes - Funding

1. Funding through June 30, 2020 is in place and can be used to both provide direct service and build program capacity.
2. We will use contact hours recorded from March 14, 2019 to March 13, 2020 when calculating grant awards for 2020-21.
 - A. Current statute will yield level funding
3. We continue to work with LAN to address issues related to contact hour counting beginning May 1st. Stay tuned.

State Director Notes – Data Privacy

1. Distance education introduces additional data privacy concerns.
2. Programs should follow district/organization policies
3. Possible sources of information regarding distance education and data privacy are attached:
 1. FAQ Regarding Recording Lectures in Distance Learning from MN State
 2. Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Educational Services: Requirements and Best Practices at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/protecting-student-privacy-while-using-online-educational-services-requirements-and-best>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Remember: FAQ document on the www.mnabe.org website.

We are adding new questions and answers based on conversations with you. We will email an updated version next week.



NRS Testing

- Now Available: BEST Plus has now approved a distance testing option.
- Not Yet Available for Distance Testing: CASAS and TABE

Distance testing = Computer testing

The Minnesota Department of Education ABE team and our state assessment trainers will keep you posted.



Exploring GED Testing Options



New testing options are being explored (e.g. testing at a distance).

MDE and GED Testing Service are meeting this month to explore options.

GED Educator Support

GED Testing Service Resources

- [COVID-19 Educator Support](https://ged.com/educators_admins/covid-19-educator-support/)
(https://ged.com/educators_admins/covid-19-educator-support/)
- [Tuesdays for Teachers Webinar Recordings](https://ged.com/educators_admins/teaching_professional_development/webinars/),
including this week's session on teaching
GED at a distance
(https://ged.com/educators_admins/teaching_professional_development/webinars/)



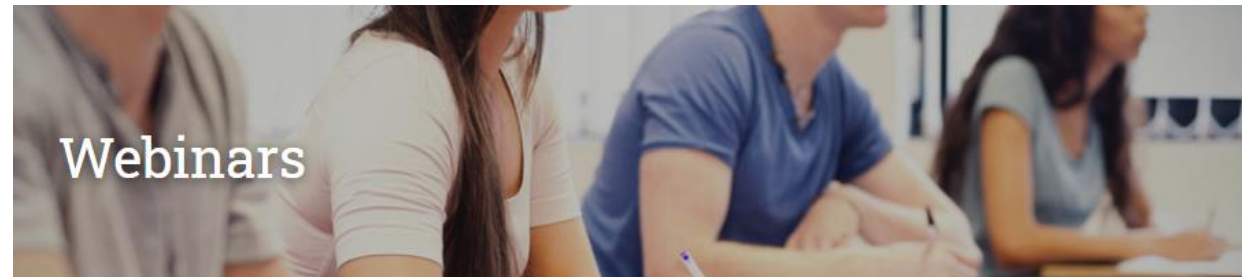
MENU

Home / Educators & Admins / COVID-19 Educator Support



COVID-19 Educator Support

This page is to help you, as educators, continue to help your students progress toward the GED test during this time of social distancing. We've gathered some great resources to help you put together lessons and continue to communicate with your students remotely.



Webinars

Stay in the know from GED® experts.

Tuesdays for Teachers Webinar Series

Survey Results: COVID-19 and ABE Programming

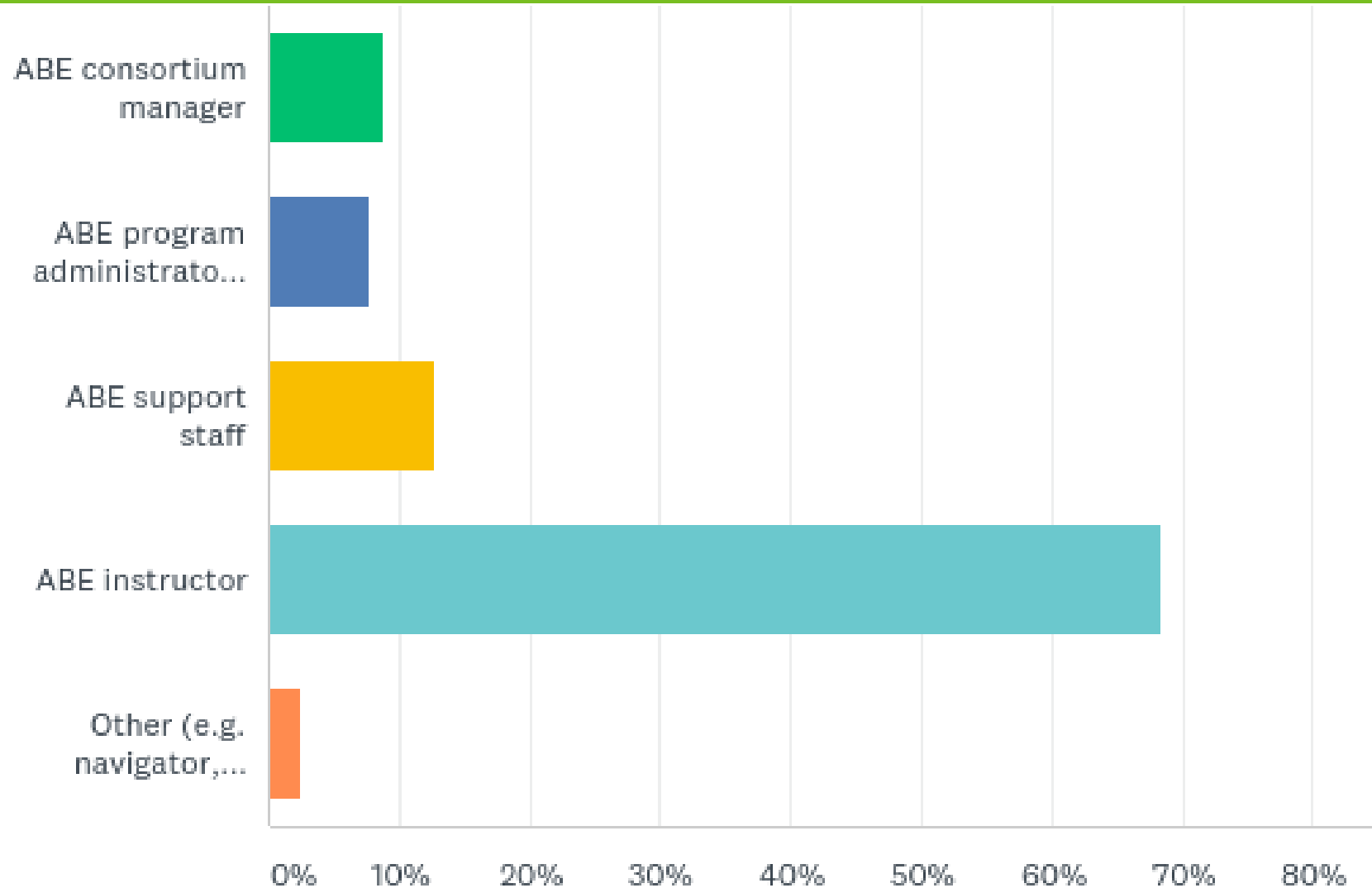
322 responses

in one week *(March 24-31)*

Thank you for your
feedback!



Primary role with the ABE consortium?



- 28 consortium managers
- 25 ABE program administrators
- 41 ABE support staff
- 220 ABE instructors
- 8 navigators, counselors and other roles

Biggest challenges in planning and/or implementing distance education

1. Student access to devices

2. Student skills for using distance education tools

3. Student access to the internet

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Students do not have access to devices.	55.59%	179
Students do not have access to the internet.	50.93%	164
Students do not have the skills to use online distance education tools.	52.17%	168
Staff do not have the appropriate technology skills.	20.19%	65
Staff do not have the skills to implement distance education.	13.66%	44
We are still not sure which distance education resources to use with our students.	13.66%	44
We are having difficulty contacting our students.	25.47%	82
We are having difficulty connecting our students to distance education tools.	25.78%	83
We are having difficulty creating a packet or non-technology-based distance education process.	8.07%	26
Other (please specify below)	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	29.81%	96
Total Respondents: 322		

Nearly 80% of responders said their ABE program was already offering distance education

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Synchronous distance education (for example, instruction via Skype, Google Meet, Zoom, phone, etc.).	71.74% 231
Asynchronous distance education with a platform that has pre-packaged curriculum (for example, instruction via Edmentum, Burlington English, Read Theory, Moby Max, etc.).	78.57% 253
Asynchronous distance education with a course that we created using a learning management system (LMS) (for example, courses in D2L, Moodle, Schoology, etc.).	23.91% 77
Asynchronous distance education using other online tools (for example, email, Google Docs, and Flipgrid).	50.93% 164
Asynchronous distance education through non-internet based methods (e.g. packets or workbooks)	50.00% 161
Not offering or planning to offer any distance education.	3.73% 12
Total Respondents: 322	

Both synchronous instruction and distance learning platforms are most popular forms of instruction.

Top 8 Distance Education Tools/Resources



1. **Packets/Workbooks (50%)**
2. **Instruction via email (50%)**
3. **Instruction via phone (49%)**
4. **Zoom (47%)**
5. **Read Theory (45%)**
6. **Moby Max (42%)**
7. **Google Docs (42%)**
8. **Edmentum (39%)**

Next Steps

- In general, administrators prefer webinar updates; teachers prefer email updates; we plan to continue both in the future, though not quite as frequently
- Those that requested an individual response, we will start reaching out via email next week to discuss your questions
- MDE-ABE team and DL team are analyzing responses and planning for professional development and technical assistance around distance education



Resources & Professional Development

Astrid Liden



COVID-19 and Distance Education Resource Hub

New Schoology group designed to:

- centralize resources being shared around COVID-19 and its impact on MN adult education programs
- facilitate the sharing of questions, resources, and ideas for continuing to serve learners at a distance

To join:

1. If you don't already have a Schoology account, go to www.schoology.com and sign up as an **Instructor**.
2. Once you are in your account, go to the top blue bar, choose **Groups**, and then click **My Groups** on the right.
3. Click **Join a Group** and then enter the group access code **4PQM-9XNK-FRF7X**.
4. Click the **Join** button.

COVID-19 and Distance Education Resource Hub

Discussion threads include:

- Distance learning using DL platforms
- Synchronous distance education
- Teaching about COVID-19
- Free instructional resources
- Programmatic issues, questions, ideas
- Community resources
- Providing social & emotional support
- ACP at a distance
- Resources for parents and families
- Low-level/low-literacy ESL resources

Resource folders include:

- Distance learning
- Synchronous distance education
- Instructional software, tools and apps
- Instructional resources related to COVID-19
- Free instructional resources
- ACES/TIF instructional resources
- ABE program management resources
- General community resources
- Mental health resources
- Low-level/low-literacy ESL resources
- Courses for adult learners shared by MN ABE teachers

LINCS COVID-19 Support for Adult Educators

The screenshot shows the LINCS website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a home icon, and tabs for 'Community', 'Courses', 'Resource Collection', and 'State Resources'. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar. Below the navigation bar, the LINCS logo is displayed on the left. To the right of the logo, there is a red banner with a white exclamation mark icon and the text 'COVID-19 SUPPORT FOR ADULT EDUCATORS'. Below the banner, there is a grey bar with the text 'Professional Development Center' and 'Federal Initiatives'. A breadcrumb trail below the grey bar reads: 'Home > State Resources > Federal Initiatives > COVID-19 Support for Adult Educators'. On the left side, there is a sidebar menu with the following items: 'Home', 'Learning Portal', 'Resource Collection', 'State Resources' (which is highlighted with a blue bar), 'Professional Development Center', and 'Federal Initiatives'. The main content area on the right has the title 'COVID-19 Support for Adult Educators' and a row of social media icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Email, and Print. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: 'In response to COVID-19, the need for adult educators to remain abreast of the Department's response to the pandemic and to transition from in-person to distance teaching, LINCS has created this page with useful resources to help adult education programs.'

Create a free account at: [Lincs.ed.gov](https://lincs.ed.gov)

ATLAS ABE Teacher Virtual Coffee Breaks

Join ATLAS staff and adult ed colleagues from around the state to discuss teaching at a distance, share ideas, and ask questions!

Math & Numeracy: April 8, 1:00 - 2:00

ESL: April 9, 10:30 - 11:30

Reading/EBRI/STAR: April 15, 1:00 - 2:00

GED & Diploma: TBD

Register on the ATLAS calendar!





Upcoming webinars

- **MN Adult Education System Updates: IET, WIOA, Accountability & PD:**
April 17, 10:00 - 11:30
- **ESL Teaching from a Distance:** April 21, 2:00 - 3:30
- **SiD End of Year Prep:** April 23, 9:00 - 10:30 and April 29, 9:00 - 10:30
- **ACES Webinar – Navigating Systems:** April 27, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
- **Burlington English - Getting Started with Zoom & 5 Steps to Quickly Serve Students Online:** Multiple dates & times

Archived webinars on MN ABE PD YouTube Channel

View past webinars, including webinars on distance learning, on our YouTube channel:

www.tinyurl.com/mnabepd

The screenshot displays the YouTube channel page for "MN ABE Professional Development", which has 880 subscribers. The page is set to the "PLAYLISTS" tab. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled "Created playlists" with a "SORT BY" option. The page features a grid of 18 video thumbnails, each representing a playlist. Each thumbnail includes a video preview, a title, and a number of videos in the playlist. Below each thumbnail is the title and a "VIEW FULL PLAYLIST" link.

Thumbnail	Title	Count
ACP: Adult Career Pathways	ACP: Adult Career Pathways	7
Webchats with MDE Staff	Webchats with MDE Staff	12
ACES/TIF: Academic, Career, and Employability Skills & Transition...	ACES/TIF: Academic, Career, and Employability Skills & Transition...	24
Pronunciation Instruction	Pronunciation Instruction	9
CCRS in the ABE Classroom	CCRS in the ABE Classroom	10
ESL for Adult Learners	ESL for Adult Learners	25
One Room Schoolhouse/Multilevel ABE...	One Room Schoolhouse/Multilevel ABE...	5
Distance & Blended Learning	Distance & Blended Learning	3
MN ABE Administrator Webinars	MN ABE Administrator Webinars	2
LAN Legislative Webinars	LAN Legislative Webinars	2
ESL Teacher Training Toolkit: Classroom Videos	ESL Teacher Training Toolkit: Classroom Videos	4
Classroom Activities for Adult ESL Learners	Classroom Activities for Adult ESL Learners	33
GED & Standard Adult Diploma	GED & Standard Adult Diploma	1
Volunteers in ABE	Volunteers in ABE	4
Math/Numeracy PD	Math/Numeracy PD	20
EBRI: Evidence Based Reading Instruction	EBRI: Evidence Based Reading Instruction	9
Writing Instruction for Adults	Writing Instruction for Adults	1

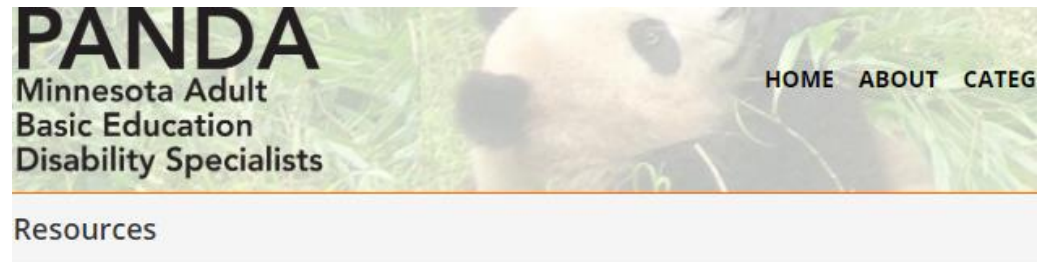
PANDA: Mental Health Resources

Mental health resources on [PANDA website](#)

COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Guide:

- Info about crisis line numbers, telehealth services, cell phone apps to reduce anxiety and other mental health resources

Other links with tips on how to manage stress during this difficult time



The COVID-19 (also called coronavirus) pandemic has created fear and uncertainty in Minnesota and around the world about our safety, health and future which may impact people's mental health. It is important to remember we are all in this together and we will get through this together. Reach out to someone in need to help them connect in this time of social isolation. Make sure to take care of yourself as well.

If anyone needs help to reduce anxiety and stress in this changing time, the following list of resources has free crisis lines, phone apps, telehealth and in-person mental health resources. The links that follow offer more information with tips on how to ease anxiety and stress.

Click below for a COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Guide

[COVID-19 Mental Health Crisis Lines, Apps and Other Mental Health Resources for Teachers and Students](#)

Other helpful links to articles about managing anxiety during COVID-19

American Psychological Association

Keeping Your Distance to Stay Safe <https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/social-distancing>

How to keep COVID-19 fears from affecting your mental health:

https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/14/health/coronavirus-fears-mental-health-wellness-trnd/index.html?fbclid=IwAR2pBP7wjGgIYJCQKiKDC3ip_RuXy5Uiiy2L5hdCu70I6E01xYjtlCqEa_o

Taking care of your mental health in the face of uncertainty:

<https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/>

Stay connected with MN ABE Connect!

Read your newsletter and stay connected!

Recent articles to help you navigate our new landscape include:

- COVID-19: ABE Resource Considerations for Today and Beyond
- Teaching ACES/TIF in the Time of COVID
- The 3rd “C” in CCRS – Focusing on Community Right Now
- Expanding Distance Learning in Minnesota ABE

More to come in your inbox every Tuesday!



Distance Learning

Tom Cytron-Hysom

Susan Wetenkamp-Brandt

Distance Learning Update: Recently Approved Platforms

These are all on the DL Website:

- Reading Horizons
- New Readers Press Online Learning
- TrueWayASL
- Reading Plus
- Readworks
- Quill

Distance Learning Update: Platforms under Review

- Aztec
- Gogyup
- Gedonline

Distance Learning Support: Webpage Filters

- 'GED' has been added to the list of filters
- Let the DL team know if you have ideas for additional filters

www.mnabe-distancelearning.org

Distance Learning Support: Online Intake

- This is an emerging issue
- The DL team is working with state staff to develop resources and procedures

Distance Learning Resources

New ABE DL Resource site - [Tips for Distance Learning](#) (EdTech - resources to help adult basic skills programs scale up or launch distance education programs)

Weekly webinars, 12-1 p.m., every Friday, featuring lightning talks about LINCS resources and guidance on choosing online curricula. Here is the [link to register](#)

Free and Low Cost Internet Plans - <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/free-low-cost-internet-plans/> (NDIA)

Updated LAN Efforts



Advocating for Minnesota
Adult Basic Education



- Further review of the ABE statutes, has revealed that MDE has the authority to shift the contact hour reporting period to March 14, 2019 to March 13, 2020.
- LAN leadership are in full support of that action as it will allow a full year of non-disrupted service to be used when calculating consortium grant awards for 2020-21.
- LAN will continue to direct legislative efforts towards:
 - increasing funding,
 - revising the funding growth provision and
 - addressing issues related to service disruptions that may occur in 2020-21.
- Watch for action alerts.

ABE Grants, Funding and Hours

Jodi Versaw

Due Dates Have Not Currently Been Adjusted



- Annual ABE Grant Applications
- Five-Year ABE Narratives
- IELCE Reports
- Regional Transitions Plans

If there are any adjustments, we will let you know.

Reminders about Annual Grant Application

The annual grant application will be due on June 1, as usual.

The grant application materials should be posted by mid-April.

More information and explanation at the Annual Grant Application Workshop:

- Recorded workshop will be posted online by mid-April
- WebChat on May 6 (1:30-3)



Table A, as usual

Table A with the standard time period will be included

	A	B	C
1	Consortium Name:		
2	Table A (May 1, 2019 - April 30, 2020)		
3	Total Enrollment & Contact Hours		
4	Enter the number of enrollees and their total contact hours.		
5	Educational Functioning Level at Entry	Number of Enrollees	Total Contact Hours
6		(any # of hrs)	For Enrollees
7	A	B	C
8	1. ABE 1		
9	2. ABE 2		
10	3. ABE 3		
11	4. ABE 4		
12	5. ABE 5		

New this year: Table A1

Necessary because of adjustment to contact hour reporting period

Consortium Name: <input type="text"/>		
Table A1 (March 14, 2019 - March 13, 2020)		
Total Enrollment & Contact Hours		
Enter the number of enrollees and their total contact hours.		
Educational Functioning Level at Entry A	Number of Enrollees (any # of hrs) B	Total Contact Hours For Enrollees C
1. ABE 1		
2. ABE 2		
3. ABE 3		
4. ABE 4		
5. ABE 5		
6. ABE 6		

Current year ABE funding

ABE program funding awards have been made for this current fiscal year (2019-2020). These funds go through June 30, 2020. These awards will not change.

This funding can be used to pay staff for:

- Working from home
- Providing instruction to students at a distance
- Professional development
- Planning and curriculum development
- Capacity building - especially around future online and distance education

Reminder: Time periods

Fiscal year: July 1 – June 30

Contact hour reporting period: May 1 – April 30 *

* Change for this year:

- March 14, 2019 – March 13, 2020

Key Message 1: funding

Especially for the month of April:

- Provide ABE instruction at a distance with as much access and quality as possible.
- Build staff and program capacity to serve students at a distance.

Don't worry about funding.

Key Message 2: contact hours

Especially for the month of April:

- Provide all the instructional opportunities to your students, in all the ways you can, regardless of whether or not you can count contact hours for those activities.

Don't worry about a decline in contact hours.

Reminders about April

In April:

- No in-person classes, except potentially in correctional facilities
- Focus on student and staff safety, communication with students, offering instruction at a distance, and building staff/program capacity to do distance education
- Record all contact and proxy hours in SiD, but remember hours generated in April irrelevant to next year's funding

Looking ahead to May: Contact hours

Starting May 1, 2020 a new contact hour reporting period begins.

- MDE and LAN will continue to work towards the goal of holding ABE programs harmless from reduction in contact hours caused by COVID-19
- Contact hours generated starting May 1, 2020 may be used in the calculation of funding for Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022)
- Please stay engaged and informed over the upcoming weeks and months!

Looking ahead to May: Pre-testing requirements

Possible change - starting on May 1, 2020:

- Lift the 12-hour restriction in SiD for students with no pre-test

Factors that might influence this decision:

- Availability of NRS assessment at a distance
- Guidance from OCTAE (U.S. Department of Education)

Contact Hours – what is allowable?

Laws and policies around allowable contact hours *have not changed.*

NOTE: It is allowable to count contact hours for real-time instruction at a distance using any video conferencing tool or telephone. (This is not a change, but most programs were not doing this type of programming before.)

Recording contact hours in SiD

Record **contact hours** in SiD for real-time instruction at a distance.

Record **contact hours** in SiD for intake and educational counseling/advising.

Record **proxy hours** in SiD for approved distance learning platforms.

Entering data in SiD: Synchronous instruction

Synchronous instruction to individual students or groups (e.g. via Skype, Zoom or phone call) should be recorded in SiD as contact hours (not proxy hours).

- Please create new classes in SiD for this.
- Use “Online” in the class name, and indicate the software/platform as well as the instructional content/focus. For example:
 - “Online Skype Beginning ESL”
 - “Online Zoom GED Prep”

Entering data in SiD: Counseling

Hours for educational advising/counseling can be entered as contact hours, as they always have been.

- Think about hours entered as “Counseling and Testing” hours before COVID-19. These have not changed, except that now this counseling is happening at a distance (often over the phone). Continue to enter these hours.
- Phone calls helping students get set up for distance/online learning CAN be counted as contact hours.

Entering data in SiD: Asynchronous distance learning

Proxy hours for approved distance learning platforms should be entered as they always have been.

- New distance learning platforms continue to be approved – be sure to check <http://mnabe-distancelearning.org/> to stay up to date!

Other asynchronous activities

These activities do not count for contact hours or proxy hours:

- Students watching a recorded video or lesson on their own time
- Email
- Text messages
- Packets, handouts or workbooks completed on students' own time

But they may still be valuable and important activities!

Entering data in SiD: Students with no pre-test

Currently no more than 11.75 hours can be entered for a student with no pre-test.

- Important: programs do not have to stop delivering distance instruction to the student in this scenario
- Note that this may change starting May 1

Continuing to provide educational services

We want you to find ways to help your ABE students continue learning!

Some ways that can be entered as contact or proxy hours in SiD:

- Deliver ABE instruction using Skype, Zoom or another video conferencing tool
- Online learning with currently approved distance learning platforms
- Instruction via phone

Some ways that can't be entered as contact or proxy hours in SiD (and that is OKAY!):

- Online learning using distance learning platforms that are not currently approved
- Emails
- Text messages
- Snail mail (handouts, worksheets, textbooks, packets, etc.)

Partner Updates

Julie Dincau

April 1st was Census Day!

In FY2016, Minnesota received **\$15,459,175,947** through 55 federal spending programs guided by data derived from the 2010 Census.

For more information:

<https://www.census.gov/en.html>

Minnesota response rate:

49.9%

(as of 4/2/2020)

74.1%

(2010 final self-response)

So far, most households have responded online. The internet response rate as of 4/2 is **46.5%**.

Monitor Minnesota's self-response rate

<https://www.censushardtcountmaps2020.us/?query=states%3A%3A27>

The Urban Institute estimates that **as many as 29,500 Minnesota residents may be undercounted in 2020.**

Minnesota State Course Placement Change

Due to ongoing concerns related to COVID-19, all onsite and online course placement testing has been suspended until further notice.

In short, this guidance eliminates the standardized testing requirement and allows:

- The use of cumulative high school GPA as a standalone measure or readiness, and
- Self-determined placement for students without a reportable high school GPA (e.g., adult learners)

Workforce partners could use our support

Other WIOA programs also use academic assessments with their clients. Like ABE, they are having difficulty proctoring assessments virtually.

Do you know of any non-NRS assessments that would provide an approximate grade level equivalent?

- Preferably a free resource
- Online or paper/pencil form
- Many are associated with learning platforms (ReadTheory)

DEED Question and Answers for Providers

If your ABE program is involved in an Adult Career Pathway grant from DEED please read the attached document.

- They are extending the grants
- It also describes an electronic onboarding procedure for new clients



What questions do you have?



Discussion

What are some effective ways you are working with your diploma and GED students?



Next check-in webinar

TBD

Thank you!

Resources from this webinar and earlier communications can be found online at:

www.mnabe.org/state-abe-presentations

