

Question and Answer Summary
Office of Adult Education and Literacy
2009-2010 Fiscal Year Grant Technical Assistance Session
Held April 1, 2009
James Monroe Building
Richmond, Virginia

ABE/C&I

1. Please describe family literacy category of ABE using examples. Family literacy activities include parents or guardians and their children receiving literacy instruction both together and apart. Often these activities mimic Even Start activities where children and parents learn together. Family literacy includes four major components: (1) adult education; (2) parent time; (3) child education; and (4) parent-and-child time. Providers may provide family literacy activities **if all four components are demonstrated**. Children participating must be between the ages of birth and 18 years old (still enrolled in school). ABE funding may be used for components (1), (2), and (4). only. Other local educational or service agencies must provide funding for component (3), child education.
2. In the packets, many say to number the pages, and put pages in order. This requires whiting out current page numbers and re-numbering. Is the numbering critical? Numbering the pages is not required as long as they are submitted in the order indicated on the checklist that is included in the appendix. Be sure to arrange the pages in that order, and don't worry about the numbering. That requirement will likely be removed for next year.
3. For the regional programs, will the one MOU be sufficient for all the grants?
Yes.
4. What is the rationale for emailing the workbooks instead of mailing them?
Emailing the workbooks allows for OAEI to merge the budgets into the larger budget system. It improves efficiency in the intake and processing activities here in the office.
5. Do we have the option to email the budget workbooks for all the grants or just ABE? This year, we are asking that only the ABE budgets be emailed. Depending on how the email process works, we may extend this option to other grants in the future.
6. A local match that exceeds the 15% -- ignore the "no" that pops up? Even though the federal funding may decrease each year, a local match remains at the state level of 25%. We require local program to match 15% on the federal funds. Local programs and the state are also held to a standard called maintenance of effort. As a state or local program, the local match may not be consistently decreased each year. The local match must be maintained at

generally the same level as the previous year. Local match and maintenance of effort are described in the ABE application and the operational manual for programs. On the project calculator in the budget workbook for ABE programs, we have established a formula that is used to identify the necessary minimum local match for your program. In limited cases, the budget summary may produce a false "No" that the local match has not been met due to a rounding function in Excel. Programs may submit a budget workbook with a "No" indicated. All budget workbooks will be reviewed. If the "No" is due to the rounding error, no further action will be required by the program. Otherwise, we may contact the program to make a correction to the local match on the budget workbook.

7. Tell us more about the federal assurance link. There is now a single form that covers the federal assurances, rather than the multiple forms in the past. If you follow the Web link that is included in the RFP, it will take you to a PDF copy of the form that you can print off and have signed.
8. In terms of family literacy, would purchasing books for the parent to read to the children be appropriate. You'd want to be clear in your narrative about how the books are going to be used, how that activity is directly related to instruction, but yes it sounds like that could be an approved activity and expenditure.
9. In terms of the targets being negotiated and possibly reduced—is this information in the current application or will they be reduced later? The targets are negotiated annually with the U. S. Department of Education, and they will be reflected in each program's targets for this upcoming fiscal year, 2009-2010. Final approved targets for FY 2009-2010 should be released with your ABE award memo and notice in July 2009. The targets will also be loaded into the NRS Web-based Data System in July 2009.
10. In terms of the new federal assurance link, where is that information in the packet? We just have to confirm that our school has this on file? The link to the document is included in the Assurances packet; the link is live within that document, so you should just be able to click on it and you will be directed to the document. Yes, it's probably best to just print it off and have it signed and filed.
11. For regional programs, is that required for each locality (the federal assurances being on file)? The assurances are standard for any division that accepts federal funding, so each division should have a copy on file, regardless of whether they are involved in a regional program.
12. Because the allotment for the planner budget affects the administration waiver—when will we be getting that? That RFP is almost finished and should be posted to the OAEL Web site early next week.

13. Is the Program Managers' Certification training an appropriate request through GAE Funds? If sufficient support can be provided to justify that having such a certification will advance instructional quality then I believe that-- within reason - it would be an appropriate request. A teacher receiving certification would be even more appropriate.
14. Are you instructing programs not to put any diploma program learners in NRS, or do we have a choice as to where to document them? I thought I understood you as saying that they should only be input in the GAE report, which would mean that we would not be able to count them as learners in the NRS system, which would negatively affect our enrollment rates. No, it must be a one or the other input. The primary focus is that the earner not be put in to both systems thus gaining double credit for a single graduate.
15. I would like to know more about submitting an application for the first time. We would like to apply for funds to support EDP efforts--new to our community. Also, we would like to seek funds for ESL completers who need support at the ASE level. All applications must come through Commonwealth school divisions or their contracted designees. Should such an arrangement be formally initiated then an application would be considered.
16. As a university partnering with local divisions, are we considered a designee to submit a grant application if we have support letters and MOUs? If your program has a contractual arrangement with a school division then funds may be provided to you via the school division and an application coming from them. The only way you might apply is if you were a designated and approved regional center.
17. Does each regional program have a limit on the amount of money we should be applying for? I use GAE for salaries and most of the time what I request is not what I get. Funds are only limited by the GAE monies approved and supplied to the individual school systems via their application. In addition, local funding would of course be a matter between the regional program and the applicable school division. We encourage programs to apply for what their programs require to run an effective program.
18. Is there anyway to know what your allocation will be? No. Funding has been formalized yet and will not be until all of the applications have been received and broken down.
19. You talked about the supplemental money and you decide how you distribute that—when you distribute that supplemental money does that come with our allocation when you approve or does that come later in the year? Both. Actually it is possible that there may be two supplemental "pots." We can't guarantee either. The first, monies not applied for or by divisions requesting less than their requirements will be spread amongst applying divisions. This will come with your initial allocation. Historically, it is proportionally not a large sum. The second pot will come at the end of the year when we poll grantees who have not spent a substantial amount of their monies. Monies volunteered

by these grantees will be pooled and redistributed as available. The challenge with this pot is in getting it spent by the 30 May deadline. As with with the first pot these monies cannot be guaranteed.

20. EDP and enrolled in ABE?—would those students be able to be in both places since essentially they're enrolled in two separate programs? EDP hours can be applied against EDP data and ABE hours can be applied against ABE data. The total of both cannot be applied against both.
21. How do you define "regional?" With reference to GAE this is a situation where a group of school divisions have combined their resources and operate under one program. This could be run by a single non-divisional entity or may be a county who is providing services to learners of several other counties. It is a formalized arrangement and must be approved by this office.
22. Is it a total of four pages where we can talk about our program? If it takes more pages to adequately describe your program then your application won't be disapproved simple because the limit has been exceeded. We do encourage programs to be succinct and concise. Applications are not approved by the size of the application but the programs potential and facts.
23. For a student who is both ABE and ESOL, how would you report them? See question 9.
24. In reference to reporting any NEDP learners: sometimes I'll put them in NRS and sometimes I won't. You've said we should report them on one system only and we should choose, however on pg. 7, it says that these learners will not be on NRS. How to resolve this. Report all GAE funded NEDP graduates through the state's GAE reporting system. Report ABE funded NEDP though the NRS.
25. You have warned us about cut and paste in our narrative, but if we've put together a plan that we used this year, can we cut and paste that? Of course. My warning was that if you cut and paste please use caution and paste only data which is relevant to this year's application. In the past there have been many mistakes made by applicants hurriedly cutting and pasting to make a deadline but which leave years old data existant in the pasted portion. I am only stressing simple proofing.
26. Is progress being made putting GAE on the OMEGA system? No. At this time the emphasis is on placing Federal programs under Omega.

Race to GED

27. Is \$75,000 the absolute max? Can large regional programs ask for more? No
28. Is there a max for outreach? No

29. Are there testing centers that require people to remediate content areas before retesting, and how is it enforced? **No testing center does this that I'm aware of. If it was done, it would have to be done for every student so there is no hint of discrimination.**
30. In the new Operational Guidance Manual on pg. 58 under Approved activities: outreach, instruction, testing are included and professional development related to GED instruction or testing? Is this new? Could we send our instructors to VAILL or VAACE with Race monies? **VAILL will be structured differently this year and wouldn't apply, but you could send instructors to VAACE if there are sessions related to GED instruction.**
31. My program does not currently have this grant, but I'd like to know the possibilities of getting the grant if I write or apply. **All proposals will be accepted and reviewed.**
32. In the details of writing the application, on the measurable goals and plans, I have normally based it on past year projection—as we've kind of hit a plateau with Race—do you want numbers? I had 300 practice testers this year—should we go for the sky or make it more of a practical goal for our city? **Make it a practical goal. You may want to develop your goals around your incomplete testers and non-passers.**
33. Is there a limit on outreach monies? A certain amount that must be spent in this area? **No**
34. With budget cuts in many jurisdictions, GED testing will probably be scaled back—we're partnering with a GED center over whom we don't have much control—do you have any recommendations on how we should budget for testing? **You could request money for examiner and proctor salaries.**

Expanded GED

35. If a program is currently funded with an Expanded grant, and it is used to partially support accommodated testing, is that a legitimate use to continue for the next grant cycle? **Yes**
36. Let's say the local GED testing center wants to use the LAGEDA to mine NRS Pro data and use that info to get former examinees back in to retest- can the Expanded GED application include funds to pay the LAGEDA for that work and, more importantly, can the application also include funds to do an inservice to train the LAGEDA on how to mine the data? **You could request funding for the LAGEDA salary but not for the inservice.**
37. For those of us who currently have an expansion grant, these funds would not be legitimately used to maintain the expansion we've already realized but to expand further—so where we are now would be considered a baseline and we'd have to add to that? **Yes that is correct.**

38. Can we include transportation costs for travel, for example to a GED training? Does it always have to relate to testing? **No, expanded GED funds cannot be used for this purpose. They need to be used to expand testing.**

EL/Civics

39. Last year plan narrative sections were broken down to smaller components, 2 points, 5 points etc for a ten point section. I don't see this this year, correct? **Right, that was an experiment, and we've decided this year to return to a more wholistic, narrative application.**

40. The EL Civics RFP, p. 8, indicates 6 approved activities. The slide presentation today adds the phrase "not limited to" ahead of this list. This broadens the possibilities. Which is correct? Can you give examples of other activities not listed? **The RFP does not limit activities to the 6 listed. It states that activities "may include" these. These are just examples. Other activities may be approved, depending on the justification provided in the application. All activities must provide or support instruction. If you have an activity not reflected in those examples that can do this, you are welcome to include that in your application and to explain how it delivers and supports EL/Civics instruction.**

41. Is there less money this year to fund EL/Civics? The largest award amount has gone from 150,000 to 100,000. Is that to fund more programs or because there is less money? **The amount of funds has been cut a little bit at the federal level. The reduction in the upper end of awards was an adjustment made in hopes that we could fund more programs.**

42. I'm pretty sure that we were told volunteer time was not countable for match, is that true? **In response to another question, I indicated that volunteer time was countable towards match as long as the amount is suitably justified.**

43. On the checklist there is no mention of an Abstract. Should that still be a part of the narrative? **An abstract is not required, but you may submit one if you wish within the context of the 10 page narrative.**

44. The budget narrative p. 21 includes the question: Are your expenses reasonable? How do grant evaluators judge this given the variance in costs from locality to locality? Example, a base teacher salary in program A is \$25/hour, plus planning and PD. In Program B, base salary is \$15. Will Program B receive a more favorable rating? **Neither program would receive a more favorable rating, provided that each gave a clear and compelling justification for the respective costs. Reasonable expenses will be different in different regions of the state, so it is the applicant's responsibility to explain the costs. But higher costs will not necessarily be looked on less favorably.**

45. What is the total amount available? Is there a target number of proposals you anticipate funding? **There is about 1.2 million dollars available. We have no**

target number of programs we plan to fund. We will fund as many of the top-ranking programs as we can with the funds available.

46. Can EL Civics funds be used for student scholarships to Citizenship classes? [Not if those classes are delivered by someone or some agency other than the grant recipient.](#)
47. Transitioning learners from beginning-level ESOL to more advanced ESOL to ABE includes achievement incentives and financial-aid scholarships to the learners. This is a strong component of our program and our program's successful outcomes. Based on Cynthia's response to the scholarship question, is this practice frowned upon? [I believe both of us indicated that this is not frowned upon as long as the activity is fully described in the proposal and the amount justified.](#)
48. Would you name some possible in-kind contributions that applicants could consider (as opposed to cash) that can be used as match? [Facilities rental, utilities, copying expenses, transportation and childcare that might be donated from other partners...but you have to include a justifiable explanation and support of the cash-equivalents associated with each of these in-kind contributions.](#)
49. For planning purposes, this grant goes through 12/2010? [Yes, these funds will be available to programs that receive awards for 18 months. However, we encourage programs to plan their activities and spend their funds down within 12 months.](#)
50. Do you anticipate that the award letters for this grant will come out in July as well? [That is our goal.](#)
51. There is no mention under secondary priorities about lowest level and low-income levels—has that been changed this year? (No mention on the Powerpoint.) [Yes and no. Yes, they have been removed as specific priorities, but they are still considerations for funding. We didn't want programs to focus their efforts on these particular groups to the possible exclusion of other groups. Since they are kept as a funding consideration \(see the first bullet under Capacity and Commitment in the Proposal Development section\), this would allow programs to describe what they are doing to assist low income or low-level literacy learners within the context of the broader program priorities.](#)
52. Under last year's guidelines were we permitted or not permitted to have field trips? [Field trips are permissible as long as they support classroom instruction, and you should be sure to make that connection clear in your application.](#)
53. NRS documentation: Because this grant is due 5/7, we will have some other post test scores that will come in after that (therefore the data will be incomplete)—how much weight will the NRS table data have on this grant award? [The description of the applicant's NRS data \(two full years and one](#)

partial year) is a demonstration of a program's past performance with delivering literacy services. While past performance is important, it is one of a number of measures that will be considered in assessing the applicant's capacity and commitment.

54. Are you using the data that relates to EL/Civics students or to *any* ESOL students you had? At the very minimum, for applicants that served ESOL learners and have NRS Table 4 data, we will want to know how well the program was able to serve its ESOL population. An applicant may also want to include a description of its effectiveness with providing EL/Civics instruction, especially if being a past recipient is part of its case for receiving funding, but this is not necessary. If an applicant has served ESOL learners but does not have NRS Table 4 information, the applicant should describe in as much detail as possible what kind of success it has had with instructional delivery.
55. Are all EL/Civics grant awards directed towards large-scale initiatives? Or can smaller initiatives be addressed? The relative size of the initiative is not as important as the quality of the proposed program and the anticipated outcomes. Small programs have just as much opportunity to compete for these funds as do large programs. The key to success will be the design of the project and how the project meets the need of the community being served. Last year, 40 percent of the grants awarded were for projects that were in the \$10,000 - \$60,000 range.
56. I am using incentive grant to run my first ESOL summer program this year—I've surveyed her folks and it will meet some new needs—with the 18 month cycle, is it possible to use the grant looking at summer of 2010? Possible? The grant funds would be available through the end of calendar year 2010, so yes, you could budget these funds for summer classes. But remember, these are not funds for simply ESOL classes, these funds must support EL/Civics instruction, which is different from ESOL.
57. As we're working on our proposal, we're considering submitting a proposal to the LESLLA conference which will be held in Canada? Can it be included since it is outside the US? No.
58. Regarding scholarships for citizenship participation—would you clarify why that wouldn't be looked on favorably? As the question was posed, it sounded as if the funds would be used to send learners to another entity to receive instruction. The purpose of these funds is to support instruction by the program receiving the EL/Civics funding, rather than to pay learners to go to a different entity to receive instruction.

CBLO

59. Will the stimulus add any money to the pot? Is \$1.5 million the same as in 2009? The economic stimulus money will not affect any grants issued by

OAEL. No stimulus money was included in the bill specifically for Title II activities.

60. As I prepare the proposal we will be pulling together information from this year's activities- would it be possible to share what the end of year report for this year's grant look like? We ask that programs comment on the extent to which they were able to achieve their goals, objectives, and outcomes.
61. What are the total funds available for CBLO grants and how does this compare with past years? The funding for CBLO this year will probably be the same as last year. It has fluctuated over the past several years, but we are keeping it level-funded this year.
62. NRS documentation: Because this grant is due before our final data comes in—how much weight will the NRS table data have on this grant award? Will you take into consideration that the data is incomplete? Past performance is important. For programs that have NRS data, consideration of the data will have significant weight, but all readers will know that the 2008-2009 data are incomplete and they will take that into account. Yes, it will be taken into consideration.
63. Clarification of funding levels question: in the Powerpoint you mention that 10-49 NRS students qualify for \$10,000—is that total students or just NRS students? Those numbers reflect the number of learners who are reported into the NRS. You may serve other's who are not reported in to NRS, but they are not accounted for in the funding levels. On the other hand, if you are an entity that has not reported into NRS before, you will want to provide the number of learners that you served last year that received at least 12 hours of instruction and that took a pre-test.
64. Enlarge on the previous question. There might be a subset of parents who are learning parenting skills—what would we show as proof of success. You would probably want to focus on literacy activities and metrics that show educational gain in those activities, your definition of learner success, how you measure it, and what your history has been in attaining such success. That is not to discount the importance of the parenting skills, but this funding is focused on literacy activities.
65. Regarding parents who are participating in a program where they, for example, learn to be better parents—the kind of data that we typically collect on these parents isn't like the data that OAEL collects—should I include this data, and if so, how? Again, focus on your history of success in delivering effective literacy instruction. If you operate a family literacy program and have conclusive data demonstrating your success, feel free to include this information. However, this information should be in addition to information that details your success in delivering effective literacy instruction.

66. Last year, for example, we had the NRS numbers to apply for \$40,000 but we had to revise the budget because it was so competitive, to \$20,000. Is that something we can expect again this year? There have been occasions where the actual funding amount was different from the requested amount. Given that the maximum funding level has been reduced this year, this should increase the opportunities for funding and decrease the need to grant reduced award amounts.
67. The RFP online says “Draft,” is that okay? That is a mistake. The ‘draft’ will be taken off and the RFP will be reposted. However, if you already have the RFP with the ‘draft’ on it, it is still valid. There will be no differences in the re-posted RFP.

General Questions

68. How can we access the PowerPoint presentation to print it? The presentation and the questions and answers will be posted to our Web site. If you’d like a copy e-mailed to you, send Randy a message, and he’ll send it to you. Randy’s e-mail address is randall.stamper@doe.virginia.gov.
69. Could you detail the difference between instruction and technology? Is this about computer instruction? It would depend on what context you’re using it. Technology can be used in or out of the classroom to support instruction, or eLearn Virginia could be used to provide instruction to learners. But we’re not referring to training people in computer programs or software.
70. Talk about family literacy—not sure how to interpret a couple of the categories. What is normative in that situation? What is included? There are four categories that comprise family literacy, and to be allowable, all four categories must be delivered by the grant recipient. The only caveat there is that the child education can’t be funded by any grants administered by OAEL. Local funds would have to support the child education piece. Examples could be classes where parents and children come in together and learn to read together, the parent practices reading with the child, the parent goes to a class to prepare for GED testing while the child is in another class receiving basic literacy instruction, etc.
71. I know there’s a Spanish language version of GED—can we prepare students to pass the test in Spanish? All instruction that is funded by OAEL grants must be delivered in English. There is nothing stopping a learner who wants to take the GED Tests in Spanish or French, but we do not fund Spanish-language instruction.