

Adult Education & GED Testing

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Roy W. Johnson, Chancellor

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ADULT EDUCATION FEDERAL ALLOCATION REDUCED \$1 MILLION

Recently the U.S. Department of Education notified the Department that the preliminary estimated FY2004 Adult Education federal allocation for the state of Alabama will be reduced over \$1,000,000 dollars. The reduction is 10% of last year's allocation. According to the U. S. Department of Education, FY2004 will be the first year to use data from the 2000 Census, so it reflects population shifts of eligible clients that occurred since the last Census. Using the data from the Census, eligible clients for adult education services include those that are 16 years old or older, not enrolled in school, and without a High School credential or equivalent. Some question exists regarding the accuracy of the new census data and its use in determining adult education funding. Many sparsely populated rural states will receive significant adult education funding increases. Among southern states, only West Virginia will receive a higher percentage reduction in total adult education funding.

As we are all aware, Alabama still has a very high percentage of adults who not only do not have a High School credential or its equivalent, but many are in the lowest literacy levels, restricting tremendously their ability to earn a decent wage. In the past, we have only had the funds to serve 2.8% of this population in Alabama, so the proposed reduction in funds will only make matters worse. As you may remember from previous newsletters, our adult education programs already will need to operate without \$1,500,000 in federal carryover funds that was applied to FY2003 allocations, but which will not be available for FY2004 allocations. Additionally, we do not know what the state legislature may decide concerning funds that would come from the state. All together, we may be facing an overall reduction of 25% for this coming year.

Given the proposed drastic reduction in federal funds in Alabama due to the data use from the 2000 Census and concerns we have about how the 2000 Census was conducted here in Alabama, we are in the process of questioning the validity of the data that was used as well as the allocation methods used. Rest assured we will do everything we can to see that Alabama's adults receive all of the educational services they need.

MAY 6 LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION WAS A BIG SUCCESS

ALAPCAE, the professional association for adult educators in the state, sponsored a successful legislative reception in which more than 50 legislators attended and heard about the importance of adult education in our state's workforce development efforts. Other notable attendees included several college presidents, most of the Adult Education program supervisors

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"News You Can Use" is a periodic report from the Chancellor to members of the Alabama State Board of Education and adult education practitioners in Alabama about news of interest pertaining to adult education and GED Testing within The Alabama College System.

in the state, and Mr. Joe Reed, AEA Associate Executive Director. We would like to congratulate the President of ALAPCAE, Ms. Lynn Ivey, and her legislative committee chair, Mr. Randall White, for all of their hard work and a job well done. We need each legislator to understand the financial hardship we will be working under this next year so they will make the most appropriate budget decisions. In addition to the work that ALAPCAE is doing, your support in keeping legislators informed of our financial crisis is essential and appreciated.

FINANCIAL CRISES DICTATES EMERGENCY ACTIONS

Due to the unparalleled financial crises we are facing, each adult education grantee has been instructed to cut services to the minimum during the summer so we can determine exactly how much funds will be available for the rest of the year. Therefore, the grantees will receive one allocation amount for July 1- September 30, 2003 and another allocation amount for October 1, 2003- June 30, 2004. We have established several restrictions on what we will reimburse during the first allocation time frame. We are expecting each grantee to do its part to restrict expenditures during this time of difficulty.

GED GRADUATIONS SCHEDULED ACROSS THE STATE

Adult education programs in Alabama have at least one GED graduation ceremony during the year, usually from April to June. If you have never attended a GED graduation, please do so. GED recipients who have earned a GED during the past 12 months are given a certificate on a stage in front of their family and friends. They feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment.

On May 9, three of our largest programs, Northwest-Shoals Community College, Gadsden State Community College, and Northeast Alabama Community College held graduation ceremonies in which a total of 332 graduates were recognized. Northeast Alabama had an estimated 2,500 parents in attendance when they awarded scholarships to 28 deserving graduates. Awarding scholarships to deserving GED graduates is something that needs to be encouraged all across the state.

BUTLER COUNTY SUPERVISOR NEARING HIS 500th GRADUATE

Ronald Shanks, the part-time Adult Education Supervisor from Butler County is approaching a significant landmark in his quest to help others. During his 31 years in adult education, he has been instrumental in nearly 500 of his students reaching their goal of earning a GED. Many of his graduates have gone on to college, became police officers, firemen, and nurses benefiting not only themselves but their communities. He says he has seen how it has affected not just the graduates' lives but their children as well. According to Ronald, "When Mom and Dad are attending classes, motivation runs high for their children to stay in school and have a better chance to succeed in life as well." He describes Adult Education as his passion. Judging by his efforts over many years, everyone would have to agree.

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