

Adult Education & GED Testing

NEWS YOU CAN USE

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ALABAMA LEGISLATURE SUPPORTS ADULT EDUCATION

When the Alabama Legislature met for its recent special session, the state's budget crisis was of primary importance. Many agencies and programs across the state were facing proposed drastic reductions in funding, if not total elimination. With help from ALAPCAE, the professional association for adult educators within the state, legislators were more informed of the long-term consequences of a possible reduction in adult education funding when it became time to vote. As a consequence, adult education was one of the very few programs in the state that received a slight increase in funding. Congratulations to ALAPCAE and the hard work of the adult educators in ALAPCAE in making this possible.

ADULT EDUCATION TO TWO-YEAR COLLEGE TRANSITION

Recent Bureau of Labor Statistics projections indicate that 70 percent of the fastest growing jobs will require education beyond high school and that 80 percent of all new jobs will require postsecondary education below the baccalaureate degree. According to the U.S. Department of Education, employers are seeking employees who are proficient in math and reading, and who can solve problems, work in teams, and communicate effectively. In order to meet the demands of today's workplace, especially here in Alabama, adult learners not only require access to basic education programs, but also admission to two-year college certificate and degree programs.

The Adult Education and Skills Training Division within each college will play a vital role in making this happen in Alabama. Working together we can develop a unified cohesive program within each college where adults can continuously progress in their education and training and have rewarding careers.

JOB READINESS ACTIVITIES BEGAN AGAIN OCTOBER 1

Since the early 1990s, the state Department of Human Resources (DHR) and Alabama's adult education program have maintained an interagency agreement where adult education programs across the state can provide the counseling and instruction welfare recipients need to succeed in the workplace. DHR provides the funding for the activities using federal funds. For the funding year starting October 1, 2003, job readiness activities will be provided in 19 counties across the state with an anticipated enrollment of 900 for the year. Job Readiness activities can include home visits, a four to six week job readiness course including drivers' education instruction, resume writing, mock interviews, field trips, and job search activities. It is a joint effort between the local adult education program and that county's DHR office.

OVER

"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.

EL/CIVICS GRANTS AWARDED

Also starting a new year October 1 are the English Language (EL)/Civics grants for 11 local adult education programs. These grants are in response to the ever-increasing numbers of non-English speaking people who come to Alabama to work and live. In addition to learning English in an English as a Second Language (ESL) class, students can learn more about our system of government and how to become a citizen. The EL/Civics curriculum contains a lot of practical information. To demonstrate the Department's commitment to this program, the EL/Civics federal allocation that Alabama receives for this program is supplemented with adult education funds to ensure its success.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Fifty-seven percent of Alabamians aged 25 and older lack the literacy skills needed to read and follow the directions in a cookbook (90 percent in some counties).
- Adult Education programs are provided in every county in Alabama and efficiently operated on an average annual cost of \$610 per student.
- The accountability system for Alabama's adult education program is one of the most rigorous in the nation. Alabama has already earned a Data Quality rating of Superior from the U.S. Department of Education (DoE)
- Alabama was the first state in the nation to implement an adult education report card that has been used by the U.S. DoE for training purposes.
- Alabama's adult education program is experiencing a growing need for ESL (English as a Second Language) instructors to deal with the 270 percent increase in the state's Hispanic population during the past decade.
- Sixty-seven percent of adult education students are less than 24-years-old with over half being less than 18-years-old. The average age is getting younger every year.
- Less than 12 percent of Alabama's adult education students function at the ninth grade level or higher. The average functioning level for all adult education students is between the sixth and seventh grade.

CALC VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR NAMED

Beverly Nelson received the Volunteer of the Year award from the Central Alabama Literacy Council. Originally she came to volunteer to help adult education students in Jefferson County develop their reading skills, but she quickly saw the need the students have to learn about finding, getting, and keeping a good job. She is always willing to talk about any areas of concern her students may have about jobs. She is always willing to counsel one on one, do mock interviews, or anything else the situation dictates.

Prior to her retirement, Beverly was a vice-president of Human Resources at HealthSouth Corp. She retired because of rheumatoid arthritis and has gone through several surgeries, but that has not stopped her in wanting to help her students. She has a deep commitment and concern for adult literacy with her heartfelt words and smile. Congratulations, Beverly.

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