

Capacity Building Projects

Defining Student Success in WIOA - February 19, 2016

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Good afternoon everyone. I'm Anson Green state director of adult education and literacy at the Texas Workforce Commission. I want to welcome everyone to our latest update webinar, Defining Student Success in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

This is the third in our series.

This webinar introduces a variety of new capacity building projects to support local Adult Education and Literacy providers in Texas as they implement the increased rigor and new models under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

We will be recording this webinar and it will be available , with the other webinars in this series, on the Texas Center for Adult Learning and Literacy website. We will also be releasing several documents describing this in more detail in the next weeks.

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As you know since December we have conducting this series of webinars. Please see the coming dates for two very important webinars:

Mar. 3, 2016 Integrated Education and Training (10:30 CST) and

Mar. 24 2016 Implementing the WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) (1:30: CST)

These are both very important webinars discussing elements critical to WIOA implementation.

Please note too that the times and dates have been adjusted from the dates provided on the AEL biweekly call on February 4th. We wanted to adjust for spring break at some of the schools and other training conflicts in the field.

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In this webinar we will start with a review of WIOA then introduce a new organizational strategy for our professional development and support efforts called TRAIN Tex, the Training, Resource and Innovation Network for Texas. We will end with a review of each of the specific capacity building projects that make up TRAIN Tex.

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Let's begin with an overview of WIOA.

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WIOA strategically positions Adult Education and Literacy to play an integral role within a broader, interconnected workforce development system. This position will deliver greater access to educational services for our customers through the Texas Workforce Solutions delivery system and increase opportunities for a broader array of services available to students.

Under WIOA Adult Education and Literacy is expanded to place a focus on services that promote integration with and transitions to postsecondary education and training or employment. This shift in programmatic philosophy is apparent throughout the law.

There is also an increased focus on academic outcomes and partnerships to achieve career pathways success. Today's webinar will focus on our efforts to support providers in these areas.

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So let's turn to a new organizational strategy and related network of organizations for our professional development and support efforts being branded as TRAIN Tex, the Training, Resource and Innovation Network for Texas.

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The TRAIN Tex strategy represents the Texas Workforce Commission's significant investment in professional development, relevant research, and capacity building projects. We have spent much of the past year developing and purchasing this network through competitive request for proposals and contracting.

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TRAIN Tex replaces and enhances the previous PD Model that many of you are familiar with by adding capacity building projects and repositioning relationships between these projects, the PD Center and the AEL Grantees.

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This is the TRAIN Tex network.

Texas is moving quickly in new directions. The enhanced framework of professional development, research, and capacity-building projects that comprise TRAIN Tex will promote the implementation of a fully integrated system amongst AEL, Texas Workforce Solutions, and other partnerships to deliver increased employment, postsecondary education and training transition, skill gains, and secondary completion for students and greater value for the public.

I want to spend the rest of the webinar describing the strategic investments that comprise TRAIN Tex and more, how they complement local efforts in support of the Agency's goal of full system integration.

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This strategy and the system and network of education, research, and support entities within will work together, to varying extents, to sustain and advance the robust system of Adult Education and Literacy providers and workforce partners and to accelerate the advancement of education and training priorities across the state. These priorities are in support of successful education and workforce transitions for individuals, families and communities in Texas.

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The goal is to support and drive increased student success and forges the alignment of an interconnected network of entities to deliberately increase collaboration and interplay across the

respective entities and increase impact and maximize investments in research and deployment of best-in-class practices.

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TRAIN Tex will focus on bringing greater value to providers and speeding innovation that maximizes the use of a substantial pool of Texas talent. These strategic financial and programmatic investments assist AEL programs and provide into a new, dynamic, and interconnected system of support rather than efforts operating on their own in silos.

Network objectives are to ensure that research, professional development and support are:

Customized to address local needs

Based on data-driven demands

Timely

Designed to balance costs with results

Delivered by best-in-class personnel delivering evidence-based models and approaches

Responsive to state direction and varied expertise of local areas

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So let's review this innovative and comprehensive network that makes up TRAIN Tex.

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The network is driven by TWC direction, guidance and technical assistance.

AEL Grantees are the customer as well as contributors to the network and have contractual responsibilities to employ PD Coordinators that will deliver local day-to-day, or Core, professional development training, continuous improvement strategies and training based on a local analysis of performance and staffing needs that effectively support student success, the Commission's strategic priorities and local needs.

Local professional development is critical to performance success; local programs are best positioned to diagnose their needs and plan for improvement and innovation. The local coordination of PD planning and provision is also a collaborative effort which engages the local PD coordinator, the AEL Program Director, and an assigned PD Specialist employed by the PD Center.

AEL grantees and the PD Center did a good deal of professional development last year.

In program year 2104-2015 a total of 3,577 AEL staff participated in professional development activities across Texas. Texas AEL educators were required to document a minimum of 12 hours of professional development during the program year, but most staff exceeded the minimum requirement. The average number of professional development hours was 33 and the median number was 24.

Participating staff included full-time and part-time administrators, supervisors, teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals and unpaid volunteers. Of these, approximately 74% were teachers and 17% were administrators or supervisors.

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The Professional Development Center maintains a central role within TRAIN Tex, and is responsible for delivering training, including training-of-trainer events, informational resources and other support to local programs, Workforce Solutions staff, and other key stakeholders. PD Center staff, including PD Specialists, are responsible for deploying statewide PD activities, identifying and recruiting additional contract trainers, developing and delivering training throughout the state, including online content development and deployment, and assisting AEL Grantees and other providers with professional development planning and services provision.

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We are most familiar with this entity, the PD Center. The center is responsible for content development, updating, and delivery of training, including training-of-trainer events, informational resources and other support to local programs, students, and stakeholders. PD Center staff, including PD Specialists, are responsible for local program data analysis to assist local PD coordinators with professional development planning and services provision. The PD Center develops and maintains the Learning Management System, assists with AEL related conference and meeting provisions, and produces and maintains a website that provides an array of adult education related resources that include a calendar of scheduled local, regional and statewide professional development provision.

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Let's go to the next section and ...

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Let's now turn our attention to the capacity building projects. Many of these new assets to our system.

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Capacity Building Projects are sharply focused initiatives that expedite research and development to address TWC priorities. Six initiatives are currently funded. There will be more. These projects are explicitly intended to support research and related resource and curriculum development, expand educational technology and support for teachers and to accelerate and enhance the integration of services with other education and workforce agencies and organizations, including Texas Workforce Solutions.

While they are separate from the PD center, these projects are designed, like all of the TRAIN Tex model, to work together, inform each other, and leverage respective expertise and resources.

As of January 2016, TWC has dedicated more than 2.7 million dollars for the following projects that are funded or in development.

Let's look at each of these capacity building projects in more depth. I'll present them in no particular order.

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The Career Pathways Expansion project is a new initiative whose purpose is to provide mentoring services to TWC AEL Grantees and TWC Accelerate Texas Colleges to expand Integrated Education and

Training Career Pathways Programs in Texas. Even though it is the Commission's primary objective for expansion Texas, like the nation, has struggled to find adequate professional development for career pathways. To address this we are using the expertise of entities who have a proven track record in career pathways to mentor others. The mode will leverage experienced and proven colleges who have implemented Integrated Education and Training under Accelerate Texas to mentor AEL grantees who are just starting, expanding or struggling to implement. We hope to announce the awarded organization very soon.

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The distance learning mentor initiative has been in place since August of 2015. This project is building capacity and expanding or improving the performance of AEL distance learning initiatives throughout Texas. Two mentor providers, College of the Mainland and Northside ISD, are mentoring eight mentee sites to develop, implement, expand and/or enhance distance learning services within their respective programs.

College of the Mainland is mentoring the Houston Community College System, San Jacinto College, Lone Star College and Alamo Colleges and Northside ISD is mentoring Region 20 ESC, San Antonio ISD, Southwest Texas Junior College and Each One Teach One in San Antonio.

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The Focus on the Basics: Reading and Math project is another new initiative that is currently being contracted; hopefully we will soon be making an announcement regarding the awardees.

To meet the objectives and expectations of increased college and career transition for adult learners under WIOA, this project will implement a research, development, and professional development effort to expand research-based best practices and curriculum for reading and math, with emphasis on reading at all levels and math at transition levels.

The agency intends to leverage current and past research and expertise in Adult Education and Literacy as well as state efforts in remedial and developmental education at Texas community colleges and universities.

The Reading and Math Institutes are to be designed to build capacity for teaching reading and mathematics in local adult education programs by applying research-based best practices, curriculum frameworks aligned to content standards, training, and follow up.

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To support our non-profit partnerships, Literacy Texas was awarded a professional development training initiative grant to provide PD support for persons providing AEL services for non-AEFLA funded programs; this includes PD support for tutors, the majority of which are volunteers, program and administrative staff, and related community stakeholders interested in making essential training accessible.

To execute this, Literacy Texas is conducting several regional training symposia. Each one-day event is customized to address local needs and utilizes evidence based best-practices. Literacy Texas is customizing each event through collaborative efforts with local Workforce Boards, AmeriCorps, libraries,

TCALL, local AEL programs and other community non-profit organizations. By the end of this contract year, Literacy Texas will have facilitated regional symposia in coordination with the East Texas Literacy Council, Literacy Advance Houston, Literacy Connexus, Literacy Lubbock, South Texas Literacy Coalition and in Central Texas. Literacy Texas and associated partner AmeriCorps utilize the services of VISTA staff for the development of online volunteer training, as well.

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One of our newest projects is a much needed update to the AEL content standards.

Texas State University will update all competency levels of the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks and align them with the Texas College & Career Readiness Standards, the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency and the Texas Success Initiative Assessment. This work is required under WIOA, and a much needed revision.

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Here is a list of the newly selected Standards Workgroup members. They were selected out of over 4000 nomination and represent experts in AEL, the STAAR test and end of course exams, high school equivalency, the Texas Success Initiative Assessment, College and Career Readiness and business needs. I want to both congratulate and thank them for their future work and service.

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The last two projects were committed in December by the TWC commission. The first is a project with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission that will support services expansion and integration between public and academic libraries and TWC Adult Education & Literacy providers. The project will develop tools and resources and facilitate training and technical assistance to Libraries on best practices of AEL/library engagement in the state.

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The other project dedicated in December is with the OneStar Foundation, an organization that promotes the nonprofit sector and innovative public-private partnerships to drive community solutions.

OneStar will support local AEL program recruitment, retention, and integration efforts through connections to both the Texas Connector data system and the Volunteers In Service To America or VISTA program. The Texas Connector data system will support a reduction in student participation barriers by identifying connections for providers to support services, transportation information, and other valuable student support information.

VISTA engagements will provide expert volunteers to selected local programs and deliver coordinator-level support to the program. Carefully selected VISTA volunteers will support AEL program capacity through efforts such as the use of Texas Connector. They will also support student recruitment and outreach efforts within the community. VISTA coordinators may provide a deliberate focus on the capacity building and training of volunteers, provide support in data analysis, and assist in overall program evaluation.

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So these of the capacity building projects to date. There will be more as our system progresses and advances under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Commission objectives. Let's conclude.

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The value of Adult Education and Literacy in Texas has never been greater.

Texas providers are advancing and implementing innovative student service delivery options that include hallmark career pathways, workforce services and distance education models.

Naming the strategy and organizing deliberate contractual obligations across the systems of professional development, research, and support will speed innovation and transformation and leverage diverse expertise. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

TRAIN Tex is organized to support our unprecedented opportunity to fully deploy an Adult Education and Literacy system that transforms the limited legacy options of the past into a high quality, fully integrated network of adult education and literacy providers, workforce training systems and the state's Workforce Solutions services.

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Mar. 24 2016 Implementing the WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) (1:30: CST)

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This concludes our webinar. I will leave the screen open for a few minutes to allow those of you who have not downloaded the PowerPoint.

Thank you for your attendance.