



Newark/Essex County Workforce Development Board
LITERACY COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC PLAN 2016

➤ Statement of vision

Adult learners must be equipped with the education and skills necessary to progress academically in order to obtain gainful employment.

➤ Statement of mission

To enable adult learners at all levels to attain skills in reading, writing, math, and basic computing that support academic development and credential training through a continuum of instructional services in Adult Basic Education, ESOL and EL Civics, leading to academic achievement, a credential, post-secondary education, citizenship, and/or employment.

➤ Goals, objectives and time frame for a comprehensive Adult Literacy System in Newark and Essex County:

Goal 1: To ensure that various funded programs (Title I and Title II) work cooperatively and interdependently to achieve a common purpose of providing educational and employment opportunities for adults at all levels.

Objective 1a: Align the Literacy plan with the federal, State and local plans

Objective 2a: Broaden the scope of Literacy Committee membership through outreach to the employment community

Objective 3a: Accomplish this within one year

Key strategies:

- a. Work cooperatively with Newark and Essex One Stops
- b. Interact with SCALES and NJALL

Goal 2: To influence redefinition of funding priorities to reflect cooperative programming -

Objective 1b: Work with NJALL, SETC, SCALES and providers to direct funding to reflect the skills gaps that employers are finding with Essex County Adult Learners

Objective 2b: Accomplish this within one year

Key strategies:

a: Increase communication with key players in the state to influence funding and coordination decisions

Goal 3: To ensure that work with the One Stops reflects a trained staff with the knowledge and ability to refer appropriately to educational programs -

Objective 1c: Within two years, ongoing meet and greet sessions will be held to familiarize staff with service providers' offerings

Objective 2c: Joint training sessions will be held for One Stop staff and provider agencies

Key strategies:

a. Work with the literacy consortium, the state, SCALES and NJALL to establish effective and relevant professional development training for both One Stop and Educational Program staff.

b. Participate in regular webinars offered through NJALL and attend professional development meetings organized by the state

Goal 4: To create systems with the One Stops that enable all parties to effectively serve participants for literacy, job readiness and job placement - within two years

Objective 1d: Enable program staff to share student needs, strengths and weaknesses with One Stop staff.

Objective 2d: Create easier paths for back and forth referrals

Key strategies:

a. Work with other WDB committees to help alleviate student barriers to success such as transportation, childcare, and learning disabilities

b. Note that all objectives refer to the targeted populations in the county: students age 16 and older who do not have a high school diploma; those who do not speak English well enough to obtain or retain employment; those with limited reading, math, and computer skills; individuals who need to achieve US citizenship

c. Alleviate environmental factors related to the vision and mission that are additional barriers to success: e.g. most of the targeted population have limited financial resources and poor foundational education.

Goal 5: To structure ESOL and ABE curricula to promote job readiness and promote the attainment of High School Equivalency (HSE) and higher education - within two years

Key strategies:

- Curriculum review and development
- Teacher training

Goal 6: To enable non-citizens to attain the language and knowledge necessary to pass the citizenship exam

Objective 1e: Improve instructional services provided to adult English Language Learners who are preparing for the citizenship test.

Objective 2e: Target civics instruction to the requirements of the Citizenship exam

Key strategies:

a. Work with The Office of Citizenship to improve curricula on civics education and/or assist with the naturalization process

The strategies listed above are consistent with the overall vision, mission and goals of the Literacy Committee; however, there are currently insufficient resources available to most effectively implement them. Additional resources will be needed to meet all strategies in the timeframe listed. At this point, WIOA regulations are still to be determined which may affect the focus and timing of the strategies. Additional barriers are limited funding and limited opportunities for programs to work cooperatively. There are many opportunities for all stakeholders who can contribute to the outcome to work together to improve the delivery of services to reach the target population.

➤ Evaluation of strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- o Ability to provide quality literacy services
- o Years of experience
- o Very strong programs
- o Passion and care of members
- o Familiarity with population
- o Ability of members to adapt to change

Weaknesses

- o Lack of sufficient knowledge of all the resources currently available.
- o Inability to identify when an individual has a disability
- o Duplication of services amongst the providers because of the way the system is structured

- o Timeliness of services
- o Lack of adequate communication with Employment Counselors
- o Lack of adequate funding
- Evaluation of opportunities and threats
 - Opportunities
 - o The system has been siloed for so long that there is knowledge and readiness for a better system
 - o Better bridge supports to help individuals transition
 - o Development of partners and institution of a better dialogue with employers
 - o Customization of programs to help individuals get skills they need to maintain employment

Threats

Basic needs that must be provided which are beyond the scope of the committee

- o WIOA is a threat because the legislation takes effect July 1st and a system needs to be implemented with little federal direction
- o Lack of training of literacy providers to adapt new programs to focus on employment
- o Focus is moving away from service of literacy and shifting to employment
- o Unrealistic benchmarks
- Action plan:
 - To work with the One Stops and the Workforce Development Board to ensure that there are trained city and county staff that understand the needs of the education community.
 - To prepare for the development of sector-specific literacy training, including teacher training and the acquisition of new materials.
 - To expand the use of computer technology to enhance work-specific literacy training opportunity.
 - To secure a better working relationship with the employment community and to ensure that the employment community works more closely with the education community on job placement and employer needs.
- Action steps: through implementation of the strategic plan, students will be better prepared for educational and employment success.
 - o The plan will be carried out by the education staff together with the One Stop staff in an ongoing process.
 - o The resources needed include funding, training, professional development, and outreach to the employer community. The resources available include the current class structure and the relationship among the consortium partners
- Evaluation of action plan

- o The plan will continue to be developed and refined over time
- o The final decisions regarding what will be done and who will do what by when are dependent upon the WIOA federal regulations and the state, regional, and local plans still under development
- o Additional changes that will need to be planned and implemented will be decided after state plan and federal regulations are known
- o Money, staff, and expertise are needed to implement the plan
- o The Literacy Committee has been working toward closer relationships with the employer community and post-secondary training providers; the plan therefore is in part a continuation of ongoing activities
- o This is an ever-changing plan that must conform to the requirements of WIOA that are as yet unknown and the finances provided for implementation
- Use of the strategic plan
 - o The plan will be disseminated to all service providers and the employment community.
 - o The Literacy Committee will work with other One Stop partner committees such as Business Development, DVR, Welfare to Work and Youth
- Implementing action planning steps
 - o The first changes that will be made are:
 - * Professional development
 - * Improving communication among key stakeholders
 - o The most important changes that are key to the committee's mission/vision:
 - * Improving coordination among training providers and the One Stops
 - * Curriculum development
 - * Realistic financial reimbursement
- Process for monitoring progress and making changes
 - * Ongoing meetings to discuss the issues
 - * Evaluation of trainings and the results
 - * Noting student successes through narrative reporting
 - * Changes will be made as appropriate when WIOA regulations are published and understood