



## Statement Regarding Continued School Closures and Future ABE Funding

April 28, 2020

On April 23, Governor Walz signed [Executive Order 20-41](#), which extends the closure of Minnesota schools through the remainder of the school year. This executive order does not specifically address closure of ABE programming, but based on our understanding of the intent of the order, and the public health concerns that prompted it, the Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education (ABE) team provides the following guidance:

**Through at least June 1, 2020, all in-person ABE programming across the state of Minnesota should remain closed.** This includes locations offering drop-in or one-room-classroom type services, as well as ABE programs not located within a school building. ABE providers should encourage their students to stay home when they would have been attending ABE programming.

*Exception:* ABE programming located within a correctional facility should work with the leadership of that facility to determine the best strategies for student and staff safety. This applies to both the state correctional system and local or county jails.

**The MDE-ABE office would like to commend and recognize ABE professionals across the state of Minnesota,** who, over the past six weeks, have been engaged in reaching out to students and providing ABE instruction via phone, email, paper packets, Remind, Zoom, Schoology, Read Theory and many other tools and platforms. All ABE programs are encouraged to continue providing services in this way, utilizing any and all available methods to reach students where they are at and provide them opportunities to study ABE content at a distance. Current ABE funds, which have been awarded through June 30, 2020, can continue to be used to pay all ABE staff, including managers, instructors and support staff, to provide ABE services from a distance, and also to build capacity for future online or distance programming.

### **ABE funding for Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022**

ABE funding for Fiscal Year 2021, which starts July 1, 2020, will be allocated utilizing contact hours from an adjusted contact hour period: March 14, 2019 - March 13, 2020. This will allow that funding to be allocated without the negative effect that might have resulted from the loss of contact hours in late March and April of 2020. In other words, contact hours generated between March 14 and April 30, 2020 will not be included in the count used to determine Fiscal Year 2021 funding.

ABE funding for Fiscal Year 2022, which starts July 1, 2021, would typically be allocated utilizing contact hours from May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021. Because of executive order 20-41 and resulting closure of in-person ABE programming, we now know that contact hours will remain low in May 2020. We do not yet know the extent of other shutdowns or disruptions that may occur as a result of COVID-19 between June 2020 and April 2021. Because of this, the MDE-ABE office has not yet determined what adjustments will be made to the contact hour reporting period used to allocate Fiscal Year 2022 funding. *But please note that it is likely that May 2020 hours will not be included in this calculation.*

The MDE-ABE office, in partnership with Literacy Action Network (LAN), will be engaging an ABE stakeholder group to discuss and determine the best course of action regarding which hours to use in the funding formula for Fiscal Year 2022.