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**Adult Basic Education (ABE)**

**Program Overview and**

 **Consortium Requirements**

**Program Year 2014-2015 Performance Report and**

**Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Consortium Application Information**

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# MINNESOTA ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

**A**dult **B**asic **E**ducation provides adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve their literacy skills necessary to become self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members and citizens. The generic term of “ABE” in Minnesota includes several specific types of programs: GED, Adult Diploma, ESL, basic academic skills and workplace skills enhancement, Family Literacy, Transition to Postsecondary, and citizenship/civics education.

More than 500,000 Minnesotans are eligible for ABE because they are at least 17 years old, are not enrolled in school, and have educational skills below the high school comple­tion level. Almost 1 of every 5 adults over the age of 25 in Minnesota lacks a high school diploma. According to the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census, 10% (388,074) of Minnesotans over 18 years old lack a high school diploma or its equivalent. Additionally, the State Demographer’s Office estimates that one in ten Minnesotans over 5 years old speak a language other than English. One out of every 15 workers in Minnesota is an immigrant or refugee.

State and federal ABE funding are available through this application process. To be eligible to apply for funding, a program must: a) be a nonprofit organization such as a public school district, Community-Based Organization, Faith-Based Organization, public postsecondary institution, tribal authority, AND b) have the administrative, organizational, and instructional capacity to deliver ABE and/or ESL services to adults, AND c) have facilities accessible to physically handicapped learners. ABE program requirements and application rating criteria are described in this packet.

To access the official ABE application for consortia, go to the Minnesota Department of Education web site’s Grants Management Directory. It can be found online at:

For more information, please visit the [Minnesota Department of Education’s Electronic Grants Management website](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/Grant/index.html) (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/Grant/index.html).

The ABE application can be found by searching for the Limited Eligibility FIN 438 Federal and FIN 322 State Adult Basic Education Application for funding. Follow the application instructions.

***THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:*** For more information, please visit the  [Grant Application web page](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/grants)(http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/grants) website.

# ABE PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

***The mission of Adult Basic Education in Minnesota is to provide adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve their literacy skills necessary to become self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members and citizens.***

**ABE Programs Available**

* **GED® (General Educational Development Diploma):** National high school equivalency assessment operated by GED Testing Service that includes a set of 4 tests: Math, Reasoning through Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies.
* **Credit Recovery Adult Diploma:** Programs for eligible adults leading to a high school diploma from a local MN school district.
* **Competency-Based Adult Diploma:** (New for 2015!) Programs for eligible adults based on English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Employability/Career Development and Digital Literacy domains that embeds prior experience, standardized assessment, ABE instruction and applied and experiential learning options. It leads to a high school diploma from the state department of education and possibly the local school district.
* **ESL (English as a Second Language):** Instruction for learners whose native language is not English.
* **Basic Skills Enhancement:** For learners who need goal-specific elementary or secondary level basic skills such as work-related math, functional literacy (e.g.- banking skills), reading or writing assistance. Generally considered "brush-up" and not leading to a diploma or GED.
* **Family Literacy:** Program for adults and their pre-school children. Features instruction for adults in literacy, instruction in parenting, and educational/developmental services for kids.
* **Civics & Citizenship Education:** Programs which prepare new Minnesotans for U.S. citizenship and combines English language instruction. Integrated English and Civics Education includes instruction in ESL, Civics, work preparation, and work training to encourage full participation in U.S. society, culture and employment.

**ABE Initiatives and Priority Program Areas**

* **Adult Career Pathways: Preparing Adults for Postsecondary Education, Training, Employment and Workforce Education.** Pre-employment programs to provide basic skills necessary for work are provided at the local ABE site or WorkForce Centers. ABE services are also provided at some local employers’ sites and are designed to improve the basic skills (in the context of work) of the worker. Career pathway programming like through Minnesota FastTRAC combines basic skills instruction, counseling, and college prep skills to better prepare students for postsecondary success in credit bearing or credentialed programs and occupational programs at postsecondary institutions. (This initiative is in collaboration with the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), nonprofit training providers and other partners).
* **Distance Learning and Digital Literacy: Building Adults’ Technology Skills.** Minnesotans statewide can now access numerous distance learning options through their local ABE sites to build their reading, writing, math and digital literacy skills.

**ABE Student Eligibility:**

Adult Basic Education means services or instruction below the postsecondary level for individuals:

1. Who have attained 17 years of age; and
2. Who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and
3. Who qualify under one or more of the following conditions:
   1. Are unable to speak, read or write the English language;
   2. Do not have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education;
   3. Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individual to function effectively in society.

Students are not eligible for ABE services if they are enrolled in a public or private K-12 program – this includes public or private regular high schools, charter schools, ALCs and other alternative high school programs.

Students who are enrolled in postsecondary institutions are eligible for ABE services if they meet two conditions:

1. They are not dually enrolled in a K-12 program (e.g. a PSEO student), and
2. Their standardized test results indicate they are below high school level attainment in one or more ABE-eligible content areas.

**ABE Instructional Content**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***1*** | ***Supplementary Content*** |
| * Reading * Writing * Mathematics * Speaking * Listening * ESL/ELL/ESOL * GED/Adult High School Diploma | * Citizenship/Civics * Basic Technology Skills * Transition to Higher Education * Employment Readiness/Workforce Education * Knowing How to Learn * Creative Thinking and Problem Solving * Personal, Group and Societal Effectiveness * Study Skills |

(Conditional Content = supplemental to core content instruction)

All students enrolled in state and federally funded ABE programs must be receiving instruction in at least one of the core content areas. Conditional content is supplemental to core content instruction. For example, students may receive instruction regarding computer skills ONLY if they are using the computer or software applications to assist them in learning the core content of writing (or one of the other core content areas).

Conditional Work Referrals: Under the Conditional Work Referral Policy, ABE programs may deliver work-focused employment content including basic computer literacy to students that have been referred to ABE from Minnesota Workforce Center staff or MFIP providers. This was previously called the Transitions to Employment category. For more information check out the Conditional Work Referral Policy on the [Minnesota ABE LINCS Law, Policy and Guidance webpage](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance). (http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance).

**For More Policy Information**

Check out the [Minnesota ABE LINCS Law, Policy and Guidance webpage](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance). ([Minnesota ABE LINCS Law, Policy and Guidance webpage](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance)).

Contact Brad Hasskamp, Policy and Operations Specialist, at [brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us](mailto:brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us) or (651) 582-8594.

# SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

1. **Available Funds** – Two categories of ABE funding are available through the application process:
2. **Federal** funding is available through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to approved (through MDE-ABE) Adult Basic Education consortia in Minnesota. **Applicants/grantees are required to use the SERVS Financial System to report expenditures and to access your federal ABE funding.**
3. **State** ABE aid is expected to be available for approved ABE consortia under M.S. 124D.51 et seq. The amount of state ABE aid available statewide will not be known until the state legislature completes the 2015 session.
4. **Consortium Eligibility** – To be eligible to apply for funding as an ABE consortium, a program must:
5. Be a nonprofit organization such as a public school district, community-based organization, faith-based organization, public postsecondary institution, or tribal authority, AND
6. Have the administrative, organizational and instructional capacity to deliver comprehensive ABE and/or ESL services to adults, AND
7. Agree to all ABE accountability processes and grant-identified assurances, AND
8. Have facilities accessible to physically handicapped students, AND
9. The Minnesota Department of Corrections is also an eligible ABE consortium under state ABE law.

Programs that are nonprofit in nature but do not fit the established criteria noted above may participate in ABE programming by seeking membership in an approved or established ABE consortium. Members (partners) of approved ABE consortia must meet all accountability requirements and provide other assurances set forth by the state. Funding and service agreements between an approved consortium’s fiscal agent and its member programs are matters for local decision-making. However, the ABE consortium’s fiscal agent is responsible for the appropriate use of ABE funding and for the consortium’s overall performance in compliance with state and federal ABE laws and policies. If a consortium partner, for example, incorrectly counts contact hours, the consortium’s fiscal agent is liable for the resulting repayment of funds to the state.

All **new** applicants for state or federal ABE funding must be judged through the state application review process against the criteria noted above. New programs that wish to apply for direct ABE funding from the state that do not have prior experience with adult education are encouraged to seek collaborative agreements with existing, approved ABE providers to become members of an existing consortium.

1. **The State ABE Aid Funding Formula** – State ABE aid is distributed through a funding formula that is established in law. - M.S. 124D.51 et seq. Funding components of the state ABE formula are:

Base Population Aid: $1.73 per school district resident using the 2000 US Census. M.S. 124D.51 et seq references 275.14 regarding determining population data. M.S. 275.14 references the most recent census. The remaining 3 components of the formula are calculated as a percentage of the remaining appropriation after the Base Population Aid is subtracted from the total state ABE aid available:

* 1. Prior Year Contact Hour Revenue: 84% of the remainder (FY 2015 was $5.60/hour);
  2. Prior Year K-12 LEP Revenue: 8% of the remainder (FY 2015: $46.62 per K-12 LEP unit); and
  3. Over 25 No Diploma Residents Revenue: 8% of the remainder (FY 2015: $7.84 per resident that is over 20 and has no high school diploma – US Census)

The exact proportions of these components will not be known until all participation data (contact hours) are aggregated and the exact state ABE appropriation from the 2015 legislature is known. Also, there could be formula and appropriation total changes made by the 2015 legislature which could impact the funding amount per consortium.

In order to receive the Base Population Aid noted above, school districts must be formal members of an approved ABE consortium. All of Minnesota’s approximately 340 school districts are members of ABE consortia. There were 44 ABE consortia funded statewide during FY 2015. Nonprofit organizations and correctional institutions may also be members of approved consortia. For administrative efficiency, all state ABE aid is paid directly to a single fiscal agent of a consortium. An ABE consortium may not have more than one fiscal agent.

The accurate counting, documenting and reporting of learner contact hours are required. Approved ABE programs are expected to understand and comply with the definitions of contact hours that are provided with this packet. **Failure to count hours correctly will put the consortium’s entire state and federal ABE aid allocation at risk.** Fiscal audits and contact hour audits are a part of the ABE law. A state-initiated ABE fiscal audit process will include contact hour review, eligible learner criteria review and a review of ABE expenditures.

1. **Federal ABE Aid** –Federal aid is considered “supplemental” to the state ABE aid. For FY 2016, approved programs will be funded based on FY 2014-15 student hours delivered to all enrollees noted in Table A **excluding** those at the diploma or GED level (Adult Secondary Low and Adult Secondary High Educational Functioning Levels) and learners classified as conditional work referral students. Similar to the state aid formula, the forward-funding concept of the federal distribution formula ensures that the federal funds will be a known and fixed amount for an approved ABE consortium for the coming fiscal year.

For FY 2016, three components of federal aid will be awarded to approved programs:

1. **Regular Federal Aid** based upon the program's proportion of eligible prior year learner hours. Hours reported at the “Adult Secondary Levels” on Table A of the Formula – Limited Eligibility FIN 438 – Adult Basic Education (ABE) Grant Application are not included in the prior year count for federal aid. We will not know the exact federal aid rate until all consortia submit their year-end data; federal aid for FY 2015 was $0.67 per prior year student contact hour.

1. **Accountability Aid**: Accountability is an ongoing responsibility of an approved provider. Expenses related to student testing, data management, and reporting should be planned for and budgeted by every program. An amount of federal aid is allocated for these expenses based upon a consortium’s prior year enrollment. If this supplemental aid represents an amount in excess of what the consortium expends for accountability, the program may apply any overage to other ABE related expenses. Accountability aid is calculated per consortium into two components: 1) Data management and reporting: $1,250 minimum or $1.20 x prior year enrollment, whichever is greater, **plus** 2) testing/assessment: $1.90 x prior year enrollment.
2. **Regional Transition Aid:**  Transitions 3.0 is the ABE three-year initiative for fiscal years 2015-7. It is a more focused three-year transition initiative that funds ABE regions to develop multi-year plans, collaborate and expand transitions programming across consortia. Details are outlined in separate notifications to ABE consortia. Please check with your regional transitions coordinator for details. Additional questions can be forwarded to Julie Dincau, State Transitions Specialist, at [Julie.dincau@state.mn.us](mailto:Julie.dincau@state.mn.us).
3. **ABE Expenditures**

a. **Federal Aid** –Consortia must spend their FY 2015-2016 federal ABE aid between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016. There is no carryover provision.

b. **State Aid** – Up to 20% of a consortium’s state aid is available for use for three months into the following or subsequent fiscal year. That is, state ABE aid for FY 2016 may be used from July 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016. But the maximum allowed in that three-month time frame cannot exceed 20% of the consortium’s state aid award.

1. **Administration Cost Caps** – State ABE law specifies that administration expenditures may not exceed 5% of the consortium's total state aid. The state accounting system (UFARS) defines "administration" as Object Code 110*: "Includes the salary of all persons who have administrative and managerial duties including all administrative staff not directly and primarily involved in daily individual student contact necessary in the teacher-student learning situation."* This administration definition includes salary expenses only, not fringe benefits, and does not include office or program support staff such as data entry or secretarial staff. This administration category does include but is not limited to any salary amounts charged to ABE for superintendents, community education directors or nonprofit CEO’s.

**Note:** UFARS Object Code 120 may be used to code the salaries of ABE Managers, Coordinators, and Supervisors – individuals that have day-to-day administrative responsibilities for supervising ABE programs and staff. This code typically would not include the community education director or superintendent salaries. Code 120 is **not** counted as a part of the 5% admin cap.

Federal law states that no more than 5 percent of the federal ABE award may be used for administration. However, since the federal definition of "*administration*" includes *"planning, administration, personnel development and interagency coordination",* programs may negotiate a higher level of administrative cost with the state ABE office. Since the federal ABE aid is supplemental to the state aid, the state ABE office is willing to approve up to a 20% administration cost level and has done so for all requesting programs. To date, ALL current ABE consortia have received this 20% cap approval. Once awarded, the permission from the state ABE office to allow the use of the higher admin rate remains in effect for future fiscal years - no need to re-apply.

1. **Fiscal Reporting for FY 2015** – State law prevents reimbursement in state and federal ABE funds from exceeding the *"actual cost of providing these programs".* Therefore, in-kind costs are not counted as costs.

Federal ABE expenditures are reported through the SERVS financial system. State expenditures for school districts are reported on the district UFARS system. A Final Fiscal Completion Report will be due November 16, 2015. Consortia that are not school districts will submit the Final Fiscal Completion Report along with a detailed expenditure report. All ABE related expenditures must appear in the ***Fiscal Agent’s*** UFARS Report. State ABE expenditures should be coded in Finance Code 322 and all federal ABE expenditures should appear in Fin. Code 438. Any consortium applying up to 20% of their state expenditures in the July 1, 2015–September 30, 2015 timeframe will need to submit a detailed expenditure guideline report identifying those expenditures.

1. **Core Indicators of Performance –** The federal ABE law requires that all approved programs establish quantifiable performance levels for three sets of core performance indicators:
2. Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading and problem solving, numeracy, writing, English language acquisition, speaking the English language, and other literacy skills;
3. Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment, or career advancement; and
4. Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Using actual data received from the 2013-2014 performance report, the state ABE office is negotiating (with the federal ABE Office) core indicator performance levels for the state ABE system, and these levels will be the target levels for ALL ABE consortia. See the FY 2016 performance targets on page 38 of this document.

1. **Program Narrative –** All continuing consortia that are due for their multi-year program renewal (five year duration), and newly applying programs for FY 2016, must complete the full program narrative description and submit an original and 5 copies to the ABE Office no later than June 1, 2015. Program narrative descriptions are based on the state program approval language found in ABE law and on compliance criteria established by ABE law(s) and state and federal policies. For more information, please refer to the program narrative instructions later in this document.
2. **Licensed Teachers and Trained Volunteers** – State law, M.S. 122A.26, requires that all paid teachers in ABE that teach as employees of a public school district (community education program) must possess a valid Minnesota teaching license. ABE teachers who are employed by nonprofit ABE programs are not required to have this licensure. However, nonprofit programs are encouraged to use licensed teachers and/or well-trained staff.

An **ESL** instructor provision passed by the 1999 state legislature allows persons with an ***ESL degree*** (who do not possess a K-12 license) to teach in the ESL program component (only) of a public school ABE program.

The state ABE office has developed a policy and a set of guidelines for the training of volunteer tutors used in instructional settings. Since student contact hours delivered by volunteers generate the same amount of ABE revenue as hours delivered by paid staff, and since student progress expectations are identical for volunteer-delivered instruction and paid staff-delivered instruction, it is important for the state to require a minimum level of training and expertise for volunteers. For more information on state volunteer expectations, please review the [Volunteer Training Standards Policy](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance) site (http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance).

1. **Assessment** – Students must be assessed at intake in order to determine their entering National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Level (EFL) and, according to consortium policy, post-tested following instruction or during the instructional cycle in order to document education gains. Assessments must include administration of an approved, adult-appropriate standardized test that has been equated to the (NRS) levels.

In addition to standardized testing, programs are encouraged to include other measures when assessing student progress. For more information, Programs should refer to the [***Minnesota ABE Reporting Requirements***](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/accountability-nrs) document found online at: (http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/accountability-nrs) for specific guidelines regarding assessment. Note that the CASAS appraisal tests should only be used to identify the appropriate CASAS pre-test. The appraisal score alone does not constitute a valid pre-test score.

1. **Management Information System** – Approved programs must maintain use of a state-approved student information system that enables them to comply with all state and National Reporting System (NRS) data collection and reporting requirements. These requirements include maintaining all required data, compiling data for Performance Report tables, and submitting electronic data files that match the required data format.
2. **Desk Review and Compliance Review Process** – The MDE-ABE desk and compliance review process has been designed to enhance accountability for the ABE field in Minnesota. The purpose of a desk review is to identify specific areas of concern regarding the consortium’s NRS performance. The review uses available information and data for the prior and current Program Year. The desk review process requires the ABE consortium to respond to a set of questions that have been prepared around the areas of concern that have been identified. In some cases a more comprehensive compliance review may be necessary after the consortium’s desk review responses have been considered.

The compliance review process is based on two principles: 1. Quantifiable results; and 2. Reliability and equality within the ABE delivery system. **Site visits** will be done with the intent of examining consortia based on performance data compared to the MDE-ABE state and federal targets. The ABE Program Improvement Policy was created to establish the procedures by which consortia identified as “needing improvement” should take actions to improve their student performance results. For more information, please visit the [ABE Program Improvement Policy webpage](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/program-improvement) (http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/program-improvement).

The MDE-ABE Accountability system comprises seven National Reporting System (NRS) student-centered outcomes through a cohort basis:

1. Educational Functioning Level completion based on post-testing
2. Obtain a job
3. Retain a job
4. Enter a postsecondary institution
5. Enter postsecondary training
6. Obtain a GED
7. Receive a high school diploma

This NRS cohort process began in 2012. To learn more about the NRS cohort process, please visit the [Minnesota ABE NRS and Accountability page](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/accountability-nrs) (http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/accountability-nrs).

One goal of the compliance review process is to identify explanations regarding the performance of ABE consortia related to the above NRS target outcomes. The main content for compliance are based on ABE law(s), assurances and policies.

# CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS

A formal collaboration of resources and services, called an ABE consortium, is an efficient and effective way to deliver basic literacy services to individuals. An ABE Consortium ordinarily consists of one or more public school districts (through their Community Education department(s)), and may include community-based organizations, public libraries, local postsecondary institutions, volunteer organizations, local correctional facilities, and other local resource and service agencies.

**Note:** An approved ABE consortium may have only **one** fiscal agent for purposes of the distribution of state and federal ABE aid. Fiscal agents may redistribute funds to consortium members, but those arrangements must be made locally, not by the state. This re-distribution of aid to members does not transfer fiscal responsibility – the fiscal agent is ultimately responsible for the consortium funding and the accuracy of data collected for this report. Local consortia agreements between the fiscal agent and the member(s) should remind members of the need to follow all fiscal and programmatic mandates and policies established by the state.

The following is an excerpt from current ABE law:

***124D.521 Consortium requirements.***

*(a) Each consortium, as defined under section* [*124D.518*](file:///C:\stats\124D\518.html)*, subdivision 1, must meet at least twice per year to develop and amend as necessary an annual consortium agreement signed by all members and filed with the Department of Education that at a minimum includes:*

*(1) a description of the members and fiscal agent of the consortium;*

*(2) a description of the contributions of each member of the consortium and the process for distributing state aid among the members; and*

*(3) the state adult basic education assurances from the annual adult basic education program application.*

*As a condition of membership in a consortium, each member must make a documented contribution toward the cost of adult basic education programming, either as a direct financial contribution, or an in-kind contribution.*

*(b) Each consortium's designated fiscal agent must:*

*(1) collect data from consortium members;*

*(2) submit required performance reports and fiscal reports to the state;*

*(3) receive state adult basic education aid under section* [*124D.531*](file:///C:\stats\124D\531.html) *for adult basic education programming delivered by the consortium; and*

*(4) distribute state adult basic education aid to members of the consortium according to the consortium agreement.*

# PROGRAM GRANT ASSURANCES

*These assurances are also found in the ABE Annual Grant Application and Request for Proposals (RFP). Please refer to your current grant application for a complete and updated list of grant assurances.*

*Assurances A-T include standard assurances included in all Minnesota Department of Education grants that are not ABE program-specific.*

1. Ensures that all students have participated in the development of a Personal Education Plan that guides their work in Adult Basic Education and verifies their progress toward achieving their personal, educational and/or occupational goals;
2. Ensures that all students in all ABE activities are beyond the age of compulsory attendance and are not currently enrolled in any elementary or secondary school program;
3. Has, and will submit all necessary reports to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the U.S. Secretary of Education, maintain records verifying those reports, and provide public access to those records and reports;
4. Will accurately code all ABE expenditures to the school district UFARS report in a timely manner. If the ABE consortium applicant is not a school district, the applicant agrees to submit fiscal year expenditure data to the MDE-ABE on a form prescribed by MDE. Fiscal expenditure data must be submitted to the district UFARS manager (or for non-district ABE consortia, to MDE) within 60 days of the end of each program each year, but no later than October 15 each year;
5. Will submit an accurate program performance report no later than June 1 each year that presents required student participation and outcome information over the time period from May 1 through April 30 and in a format specified by MDE-ABE;
6. Is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in the Federal Adult Education Act program by any federal department or agency;
7. Has not paid and will not pay any federal funds to attempt to influence any federal grant or agreement;
8. Will seek reimbursement under the Federal Adult Education Act only for expenditures that supplement, and do not supplant, monies that are, or should be, available from other sources;
9. Will use fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, all monies paid under this application. School district ABE programs must use the UFARS accounting system;
10. Will request neither state nor federal ABE aid to subsidize the costs of programming for students whose enrollment can generate any general education revenue (foundation aid);
11. Has vested control and administration of ABE funds provided under this application in the applicant agency and its designated fiscal agent, and will use those funds solely for ABE purposes under the authorizing legislation (M.S. 124D.52); See language in 124D.52 Subdiv 1. (d) re purposes.
12. Will maintain control and title to property acquired with funds under this application through the appropriate public school district, or, if that is not feasible, will transfer title to the Minnesota Department of Education; and will maintain an inventory of all property acquired under this application;
13. If delivering state ABE revenue through public schools, will require and ensure that all teachers hold a valid Minnesota K-12 teacher's license and ESL teachers hold a K-12 teacher's license or have a postsecondary degree (or MDE-approved equivalent) in English as a Second Language;
14. Will comply with the MDE-ABE Contact Hour Policy document which establishes allowable procedures and definitions regarding the counting and reporting of student contact hours;
15. Will develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local workforce development one-stop center;
16. Will file the written consortium agreement as prescribed by law with the MDE-ABE office;
17. Will contract for data management and reporting services for the Minnesota ABE database (either MABE or MARCS) and will maintain information in the management and reporting system that is up-to-date according to the quarterly benchmarks established in [Minnesota Reporting Requirements](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/accountability-nrs) (found online at http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/accountability-nrs);
18. The consortium will maintain an electronic (email) communications system that provides two-way communications between the consortium management and the state ABE office;
19. The consortium will provide updated delivery site and program information at least annually to the State Adult Literacy Hotline and will provide additional updates as programming changes occur (including changes in schedule, site locations, programs offered, etc.);
20. The consortium manager or his/her designee will attend each of the following MDE-ABE events:

* Fall ABE Manager’s Meeting
* Spring ABE Consortium Application Workshop
* Annual state ABE database training
* June ABE Consortium Application Review – once every five years (e.g.- must participate in the June 2015 review of FY 2016 applications if submitting a narrative for FY 2017);

1. The state shall own all rights, title and interest in all of the intellectual property rights, including copyrights, patents, trade secrets, trademarks and service marks in the works and documents created and paid for under the award; and
2. The consortium will comply with all requirements in federal law and state statute, all policies, rules and regulations promulgated by the federal Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) and/or the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) – Adult Basic Education (ABE) office.

# ABE Consortium Narrative Requirements

## Introduction and Purpose

This section applies to only those consortia that are required to submit a multi-year narrative. The consortium narrative is designed to give selected ABE consortia and new or reorganized applicants for ABE funding an opportunity to review and describe program results, successes, and organizational structure, adherence to state and federal requirements, and future plans. Along with other sections of the Consortium Application, the Narrative will be evaluated in order to make decisions about new or continuing multi-year consortium approval and funding. ABE consortium narratives received by the deadline will be rated by a team of reviewers according to the application evaluation criteria specified in Minnesota Statutes, Section 124D.52 and in the Minnesota State Plan for ABE. This narrative combines basic legal requirements and identifies areas of best practice for ABE consortia. Check the Table at the end of the document to see the list of consortia that must submit narratives.

**Please Note: The Narrative is a separate submission from the Grant Application. The Narrative is submitted as a separate document to the ABE State Office. Please see “Submitting Narrative” for specific instructions.**

## Categories of ABE Narrative Applicants

1. ***New Consortium*** – includes first-time applicants, ABE programs that have previously been a member of an approved ABE Consortium that are applying to become a new, restructured consortium, and ABE programs seeking authorization due to performance issues.
2. ***Continuing Consortium*** – currently approved ABE consortium seeking multi-year approval status. A calendar showing due dates for consortia seeking multi-year approval is provided at the end of this document.

## Narrative Requirements

1. New consortia (first time applicants for ABE funding), existing programs that are restructuring and programs that are seeking authorization due to performance issues must show evidence of administrative and programmatic capacity by submitting the following information:
   1. Complete consortium multi-year ABE Narrative, including a completed Section Ten (see description later in the document), which gives reviewers additional information about the program (hard copies submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education)
   2. Complete consortium annual ABE Grant Application (submitted electronically to the Minnesota Department of Education)
2. Continuing consortia must submit:
3. Consortium multi-year ABE Narrative, Sections One through Nine (hard copies submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education)
4. Complete consortium annual ABE Grant Application (submitted electronically to the Minnesota Department of Education)

## Submitting Narrative

ABE consortia submitting narratives can either submit electronic narratives (with prior approval by Brad Hasskamp) or hard copies of the narrative.

**The ABE Narrative is a separate submission from the annual grant application.**

***For electronic submission:***

The web address of the completed narrative must be received by Brad Hasskamp at the Minnesota Department of Education by 4:30 p.m., June 1, 2015. This web address must have all the required components and be accessible for reviewers. ABE consortia wanting to submit narratives electronically must have prior approval by Brad Hasskamp at the Minnesota Department of Education.

Brad Hasskamp

[Brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us](mailto:Brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us)

(651) 582-8594

***For hard copy submission:***

6 hard copies of the complete narrative must be received by Brad Hasskamp at the Minnesota Department of Education by 4:30 p.m., June 1, 2015. Follow the guidelines and instructions in this document. The narrative should be submitted to:

Brad Hasskamp, Adult Basic Education

Adult Basic Education

1500 Highway 36 West

Roseville, MN 55113

Failure to meet the June 1 deadline will put a consortium’s funding at risk.

## Consortium Narrative Format

Provide required attachments and documentation, and briefly describe each narrative content area. For readability (for the review team), the state ABE office recommends:

* Use 12-point type.
* Bind copies (either with a spiral bind, a 1-2” binder, or some other easy-to-read format).
* Follow the sequence and format of the narrative.
* Label sections, documents and other attachments with dividers and tabs.
* For each section, put documents and then narrative question responses.

## Questions or For More Information

If you have questions or would like more information about the ABE Narrative, please:

* Review information found at the [Minnesota ABE web site](http://www.mnabe.org) (www.mnabe.org), especially the [Narrative page](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/grants/narrative) (www.mnabe.org/program-management/grants/narrative); and/or
* Contact Brad Hasskamp, the ABE Policy and Operations Specialist at (651) 582-8594 or [brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us](mailto:brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us).

### Consortium Narrative Content

### Section One: Program Overview

***Document*** *–* Provide the following:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| A | Please provide a **brief overview** of the **consortium,** similar to an executive summary. What basic information should people know about the consortium? (This section should be 1-2 pages.)   1. What **area** does the consortium cover? 2. Describe the current levels of **staffing**, full-time versus part-time paid and non-paid employees and volunteers for the entire consortium. 3. Describe the ABE **students** the consortium typically serves. |

### Section Two: Program and Student Accountability

***Narrative Questions*** *–* Answer the following questions. Answers should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand the program’s intent and strategies for each concept presented:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| 2.1 | In adherence with the [ABE Contact Hour Policy](http://mnabe.org/sites/default/files/ABE_Contact_Hour_Policy.doc), explain how student contact hours are recorded and verified for intake, orientation, assessment, daily attendance, distance learning and any other allowable time. Refer to Attachment F in your explanation, the student attendance sheet example. |
| 2.2. | What is your program quality/accountability plan for main fiscal agent sites and all sub-grantees? Accountability plans should include:   1. How does the fiscal agent ensure that the ABE consortium and all its sub-grantees are in compliance with federal and state ABE law, policy and guidance? 2. How often is the consortium’s performance data monitored (especially information found in the state ABE database reports like the National Reporting System (NRS) Tables A, 4, and 4b and others)? 3. How is program performance data monitored at the agency-, site-, teacher-, and/or class-levels? 4. How and when do you share and communicate your NRS outcome and enrollment data with other staff and stakeholders? 5. How has the consortium implemented the [ABE Student Progress Policy](http://mnabe.org/sites/default/files/Student_Progress_Policy_-_final_9-19-07.doc)? If this is addressed in your assessment or attendance policy, please refer to the policy and page number. |
| 2.3 | In what roles do you use volunteers in your program (i.e. instruction, teaching assistance, intake, goal-setting, assessment, data entry, etc.)?   1. How do you orient and train potential volunteers in your consortium for these roles? (Can refer to Document I.) 2. What training do you provide on an ongoing basis for volunteers in the consortium? (In adherence to the Volunteer Training Standards Policy at www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance.) |

***Documents*** *–* Provide the following **local program policies**, which are rules and procedures that apply to consortium programming; describe how the policies are implemented in the program and how these policies are communicated to staff and students (if applicable).

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| B | Student orientation and intake policy (see [Local ABE Consortium Student Orientation and Intake Policy - Template](http://www.mnabe.org/sites/default/files/Student_Orientation_and_Intake_Template.doc) and [Local ABE Program examples](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/local-abe-program-information)) |
| C | Assessment policy (see [Local ABE Consortium Assessment Policy - Template](http://www.mnabe.org/sites/default/files/Assessment_Policy_Template.doc) and [Local ABE Program examples](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/local-abe-program-information)) |
| D | Student attendance policy (see [Local ABE Consortium Student Attendance Policy - Template](http://www.mnabe.org/sites/default/files/Student_Attendance_Policy.doc) and [Local ABE Program examples](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/local-abe-program-information)) |

***Additional Documents*** *–* Provide the following documents:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| E | Student attendance contract (see [Local ABE Program examples](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/local-abe-program-information)) |
| F | A sample student attendance sheet that is completed – remove students’ identifying information |
| G | Student intake or initial registration form(s) |
| H | Personal Education Plan (PEP) or goal-setting form(s) and/or procedure |
| I | Volunteer orientation and training plan (Additional approval required for programs that use volunteers to deliver instruction but are not using the Minnesota Literacy Council’s (MLC) volunteer training. Other programs should still include their local volunteer orientation and training plan here. See also Narrative Question 2.3); For more information, please review the [Volunteer Training Standards Policy](http://mnabe.org/sites/default/files/ABE_Volunteer_Training_Standards_Policy.doc) found on the [Minnesota ABE Law, Policy and Guidance page](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance) (www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance). |

### Section Three: Staff and Professional Development

***Narrative Questions*** *–* Answer the following questions. Answers should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand the program’s intent and strategies for each concept presented:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| 3.1 | Describe the process used to identify the PD objectives in the consortium PD plan. |
| 3.2 | Detail the amount and percent of total funding that the consortium sets aside or uses for professional development. Consortia can use recent years’ data as examples for a typical year. Percentages and amounts should be for the entire consortium either collectively or individually by organization/site to include fiscal agent and sub-grantees. |
| 3.3 | Describe the process and criteria (e.g., licensure, education, credentials, experience, etc.) used in hiring decisions related to paid instructional staff.   1. How do you ensure that school district instructional staff holds current K-12 licenses? |
| 3.4 | Describe the new staff orientation process and information included. |
| 3.5 | How does the consortium develop and revise individual staff professional development plans? |
| 3.6 | Please list professional development opportunities that are promoted and/or supported by the consortium in some way. Estimate numbers or percentages of staff that participate in each activity in a typical year. Opportunities noted should include:   1. Local or consortium-developed ABE-focused activities; 2. Broader education-focused local school districts’ professional development; 3. ABE-focused professional development provided by the Minnesota Department of Education and supplemental services, such as ATLAS regional events or Literacy Action Network’s Summer Institute; 4. Online professional development opportunities; and 5. Other professional development.   Please note:   1. Which professional development activities are mandatory and which are optional for ABE staff? 2. How does the consortium decide which opportunities to make mandatory? 3. How does the consortium promote professional development opportunities to staff? |
| 3.7 | What professional development challenges is the consortium experiencing?   1. How are these challenges being addressed? |

***Documents*** *–* Provide the following documentation:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| J | Professional development plan for the consortium that outlines the consortium’s priorities and goals for professional development |

Provide a complete professional development plan (complete with goals for professional development, rationale, activities, and evaluation measures) for a staff member in each of the following roles:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| K | Administrative staff – e.g., program or site manager |
| L | Support staff – e.g., intake coordinator |
| M | Instructional staff – e.g., teacher |

NOTE: Remove any identifying personal information from the plans

### Section Four: Instructional Program Description

***Narrative Questions*** *–* Answer the following question. Answers should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand the program’s intent and strategies for each concept presented:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| 4.1 | Explain who developed the instructional program descriptions and how the descriptions are communicated and revised with instructors and other staff. |
| 4.2 | How do you ensure that the Adult Literacy Hotline (Minnesota Literacy Council) has the most up-to-date information about your consortium, its sites and its programming? |
| 4.3 | Summarize your consortium’s current transitions programming, including FastTRAC grant projects, postsecondary readiness, employability skills and career awareness. You can also refer directly to pages in Document N. |

***Document*** *–* Provide the following local program information – applicants must use the following:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| N | Instructional Program Description that shows the objectives, format, standards, assessments and other details for each class or type of instruction offered in the consortium (see [Instructional Program Description – Template](http://www.mnabe.org/sites/default/files/Instructional_Program_Description_Template_2.doc) and the [Course Description Template](http://www.mnabe.org/sites/default/files/Instructional_Program_Description_Template.doc)). |

### Section Five: Program Governance and Coordination

***Narrative Questions*** *–* Answer the following questions:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| 5.1 | Describe the governance and decision-making processes in place between the consortium fiscal agent and its formal members. This section can include an organizational chart.   1. Describe the purpose, frequency, invited attendees and required attendees at consortium-wide meetings. A consortium-wide meeting involves members discussing consortium governance and operational procedures. For additional detail, please refer to Minnesota State Statute 124D.521(a). 2. Describe how and when the annual consortium agreement gets developed and signed by your consortium and its members. |
| 5.2 | Describe your consortium’s marketing and outreach plans and/or strategies. |

***Document*** *–* Provide the following:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| O | Consortium annual agreement with member districts and/or organizations |

### Section Six: Program Partnerships and Collaboration

***Narrative Questions*** *–* Answer the following questions:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| 6.1 | Explain the extent and nature of staff and program collaboration with other applicable organizations, such as the local K-12 system, WorkForce Centers, Workforce Investment Board (WIB), MFIP employment counselors, post-secondary education/training institutions, local businesses, labor associations/organizations, industry and employment-training agencies or family education providers (excluding local and county corrections). This should also include participation of staff on Literacy Action Network committees, local boards or councils, or other statewide committees. |
| 6.2 | Describe the resources, other than state and federal aid, that you use to supplement ABE programming (excluding local and county corrections). This should include coordination with external partners to provide support services to meet students’ needs, such as transportation, convenient class locations and childcare. |
| 6.3 | How do you collaborate with local and county correctional facilities?   1. Describe or include the instructional content and schedule(s) if ABE programming is occurring in local and county correctional facilities (can refer to course descriptions in Section 4 Document N). 2. Describe the type of support received from the correctional institution, including financial. |
| 6.4 | Describe your consortium’s role in developing and implementing your regional Next STEP plan. |

***Documents*** *–* Provide the following:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| P | Most recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local Workforce Center |
| Q | Attach a list of your local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) members |
| R | Current year regional plan for Transitions Aid |

### Section Seven: Technology and Distance Learning Plan

***Document*** *–*

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| S | Include a five-year Technology Plan. The plan should include   1. A description of current technology resources available for ABE programming and a description of resources needed in the next five years; 2. A description of staff technology expectations; 3. A description of how staff are trained to use technology; 4. A description of the how the program provides access to technology for students; 5. A description of how technology skills are integrated into core literacy instruction; and 6. Details on which distance learning programs are used in your consortium and your future plans with distance learning. |

### Section Eight: Future Plans and Issues

***Documents*** *–* Provide the following:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| T | The Program Future Plan should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand the program’s intent and strategies for each concept presented, which should align or complement PD, technology and other objectives (see also [Section Eight Notes](http://www.mnabe.org/sites/default/files/2011_ABE_Narrative_Section_Six_Notes.doc) and [ABE Future Plans Template](http://www.mnabe.org/sites/default/files/ABE_Future_Plans_Template.doc)):   1. What are your consortium’s top three to five changes or areas of improvement that it will focus on in the near future? 2. How do you plan on addressing these changes or areas? Please include a brief timeline with:    1. Proposed strategies aligned with the changes/areas of improvement;    2. Who will lead the strategy;    3. Who will be involved in implementing the strategy;    4. What resources are needed to succeed; and    5. What intermediate and long-term outcomes you expect in achieving the strategy. |

### Section Nine: Annual Consortium Grant Application

***Documents*** *–* Provide the following:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| U | Please attach a hard copy of your consortium’s annual ABE grant application, including all the NRS tables submitted in your grant application. |
| V | A copy of each consortium sub-grantee’s NRS Table 4 (A sub-grantee is any entity that receives state and/or federal ABE funding from the consortium fiscal agent as a downstream ABE services provider.) |
| W | A copy of the current grant assurances from the annual ABE consortium grant RFP |

### Section Ten: Additional Information for Programs Seeking New Authorization

(Continuing Programs are not required to complete this section)

***Narrative Questions*** *–* Answer the following questions. Answers should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand the program’s intent and strategies for each concept presented:

| ***Label*** | ***Description*** |
| --- | --- |
| 10.1 | Identify your consortium’s classification in seeking authorization as either: First-time applicants; ABE programs that have previously been a member of an approved ABE Consortium that are applying to become a new, restructured consortium; or ABE programs seeking authorization due to performance issues. |
| 10.2 | What geographic area would the applying program cover?   1. What adult student populations would your program serve? 2. How would the program collaborate with existing consortia in the same geographic region? 3. Why does it make more sense for the program to apply as a separate consortium instead of merging with another existing consortium? |
| 10.3 | Describe what actions your program has taken to familiarize staff with the ABE system |
| 10.4 | What information or data is available for the state to determine first prior year contact hours? First prior year is from May 1, 2014 to April 30, 2015. |
| 10.5 | Describe the process the program would use to effectively record program data and monitor program performance in the state ABE database. |
| 10.6 | Has the program been identified as a low-performing program previously? If so, please include details of your program’s history as a low-performing program or in provisional approval status.   1. If so, what have you done to improve your program’s performance? |

# PROGRAM YEAR 2015 ABE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The following pages include the National Reporting System (NRS) data tables documenting program year 2014-2015 performance that are required for fiscal year 2015-2016 approval. Instructions are included and can be found at the bottom of each table. These data tables should reflect program data from May 1, 2014, through April 30, 2015. NRS Educational Functioning Level (EFL) Descriptors can be found later in this document, following the NRS tables. ABE consortia must use data collection and reporting software approved by the Minnesota state ABE office to generate and report the NRS tables.

**Instructions**:

FY 2015 NRS data must be entered into the ABE Performance Report Tables Excel workbook. **The workbook is part of the grant application**. For more information please view the application and materials posted for the ABE formula grant (Formula Grant 438) the [MDE](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\Cherie\Local%20Settings\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\UPQ0DL5Z\MDE) Grants Page (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/Grant/index.html).

* Programs must also submit FY 2015 NRS data for aggregation. The data submitted should reflect program data from May 1, 2014, through April 30, 2015, and include a record for each enrolled student. Each student record must include the required NRS data elements, contact hours and student district and county of residence. Data submissions for MABE users will be facilitated by the MLC. MARCS users should follow the data submission procedures provided during the spring in-service.
* Reminder: If your consortium had a FY 2015 EL/Civics Grant, those grant-generated contact hours **should be** counted in Table A of the performance report.

**Consortium Enrollee Tables:**

These tables, developed by the state ABE office at MDE, should reflect ***enrollee*** data, meaning any person enrolled in the program that has documented contact hours during the program year. Some tables will pertain only to enrollees that meet other specific criteria.

* Table A
* Table A Distance Learning
* Table A Corrections

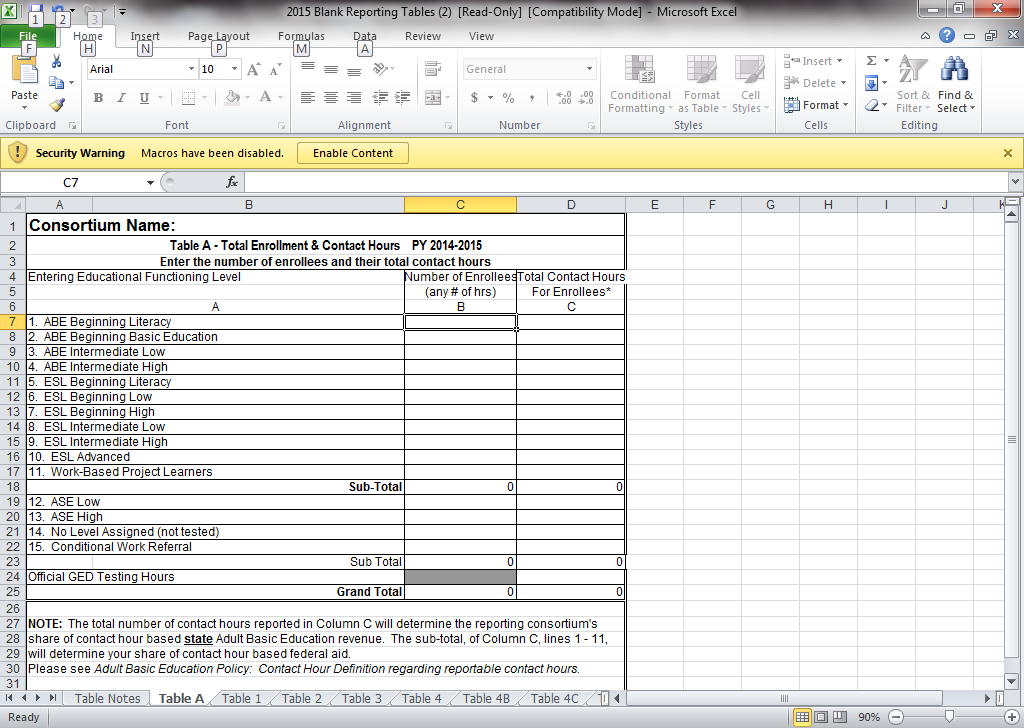
**NRS Tables**:

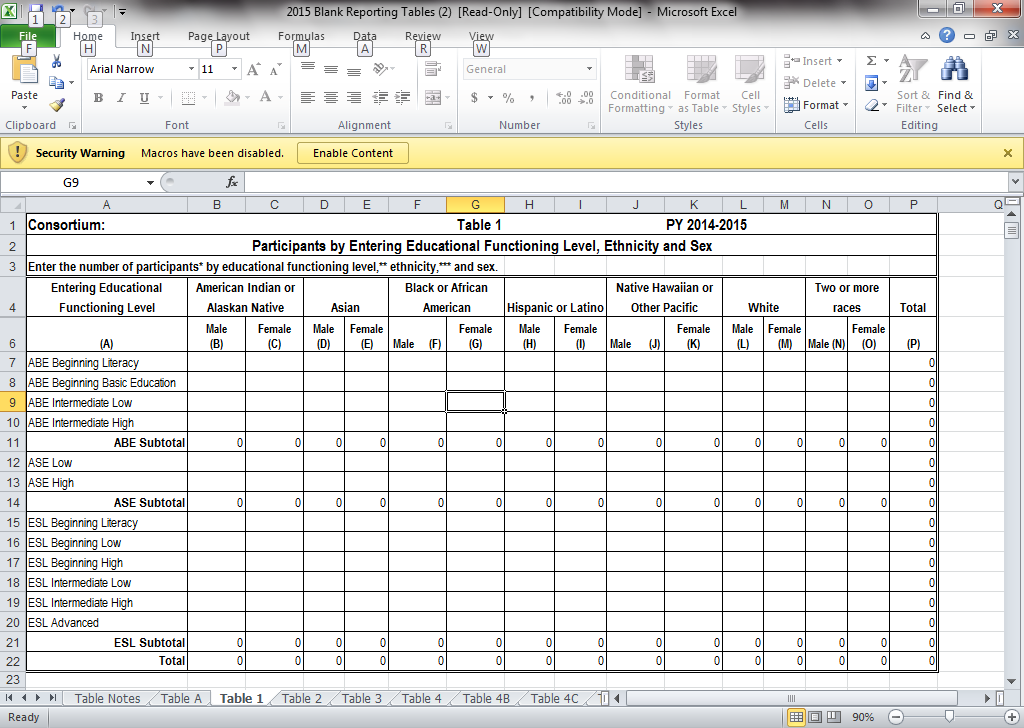
These tables, developed by USDOE-Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), should reflect ***participant*** data only which refers to *students who received 12 or more hours of instruction/orientation/testing in a program year*.

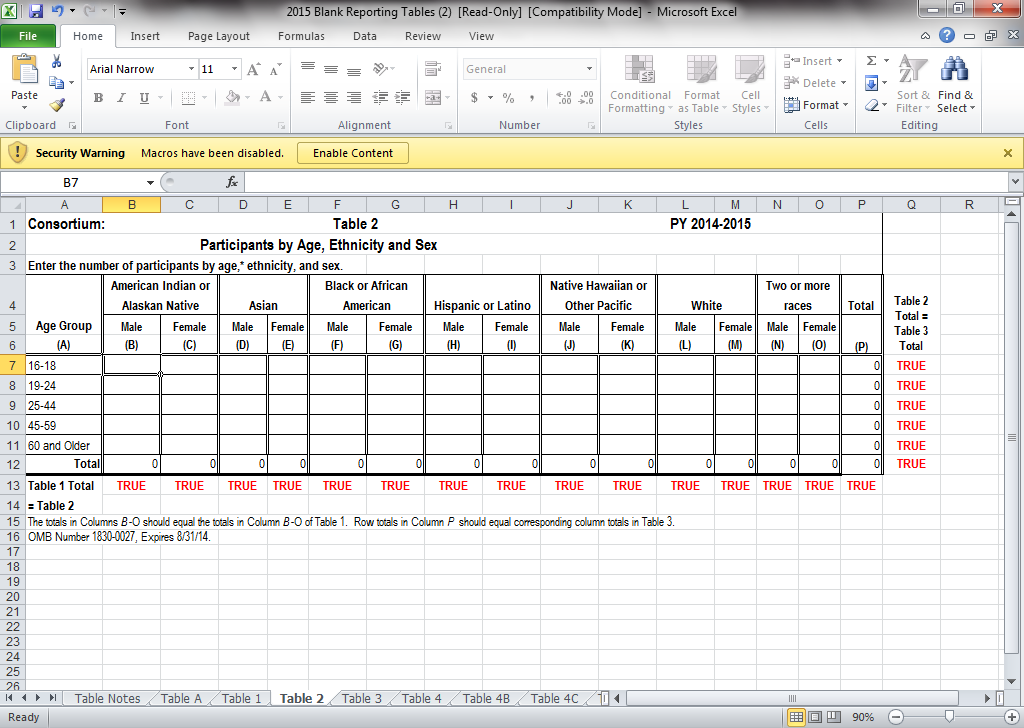
* Table 1
* Table 2
* Table 3
* Table 4
* Table 4B
* Table 4C
* Table 5
* Table 5A
* Table 6
* Table 7
* Table 8
* Table 9
* Table 10
* Table 11
* Table 12
* Table 13
* Corrections Site Table 4

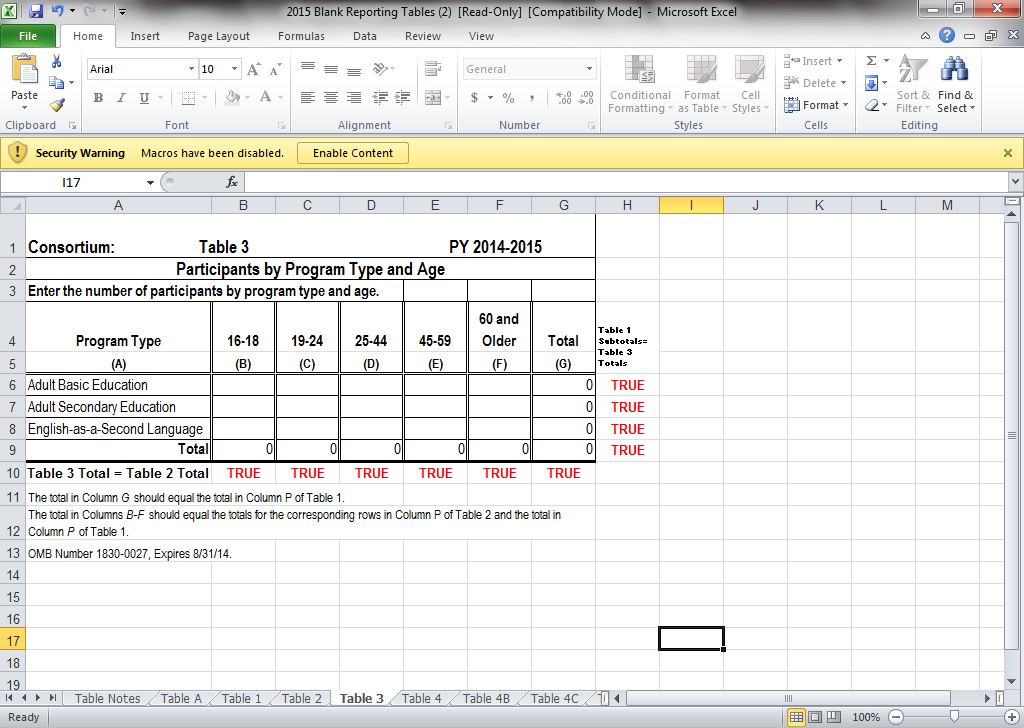
# 2014-2015 Reporting Tables

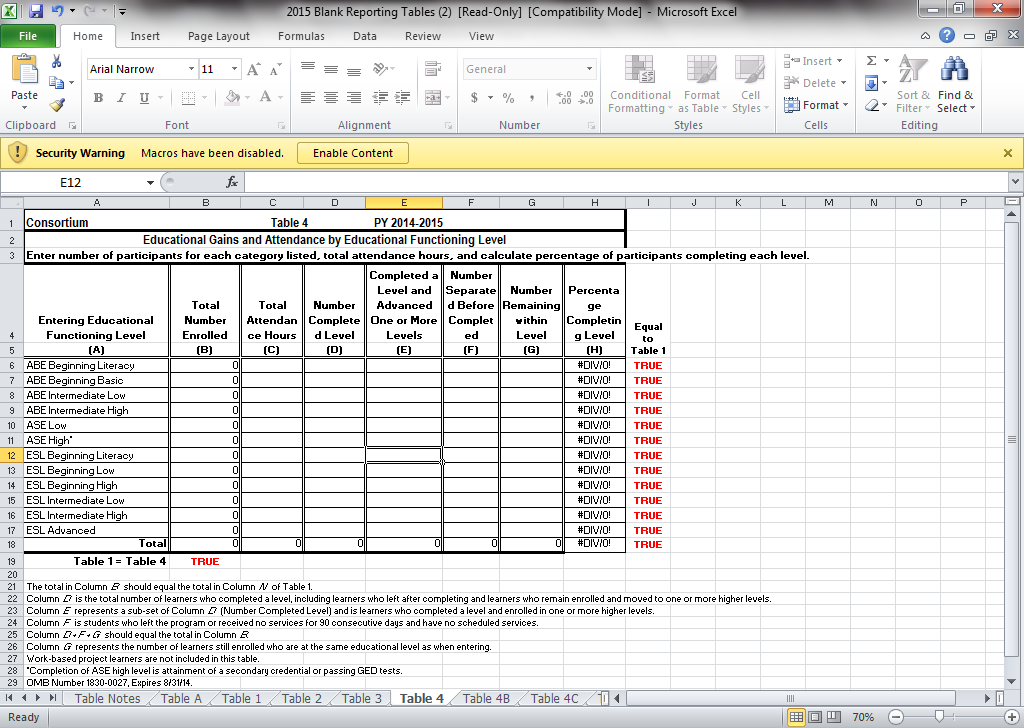
The following tables are for Reference Only

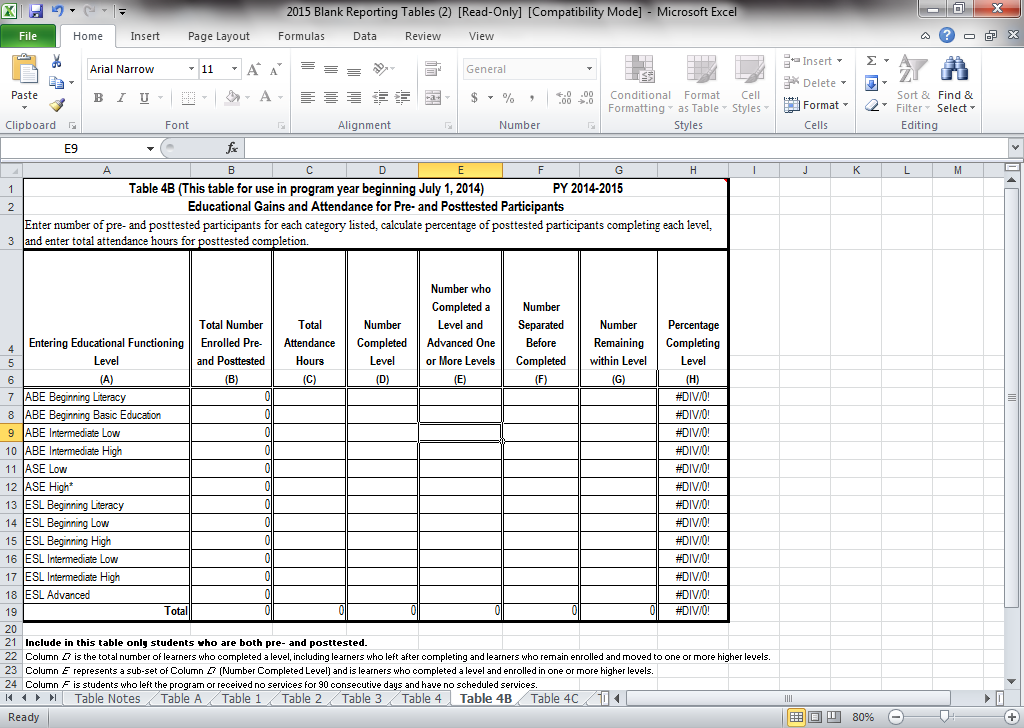


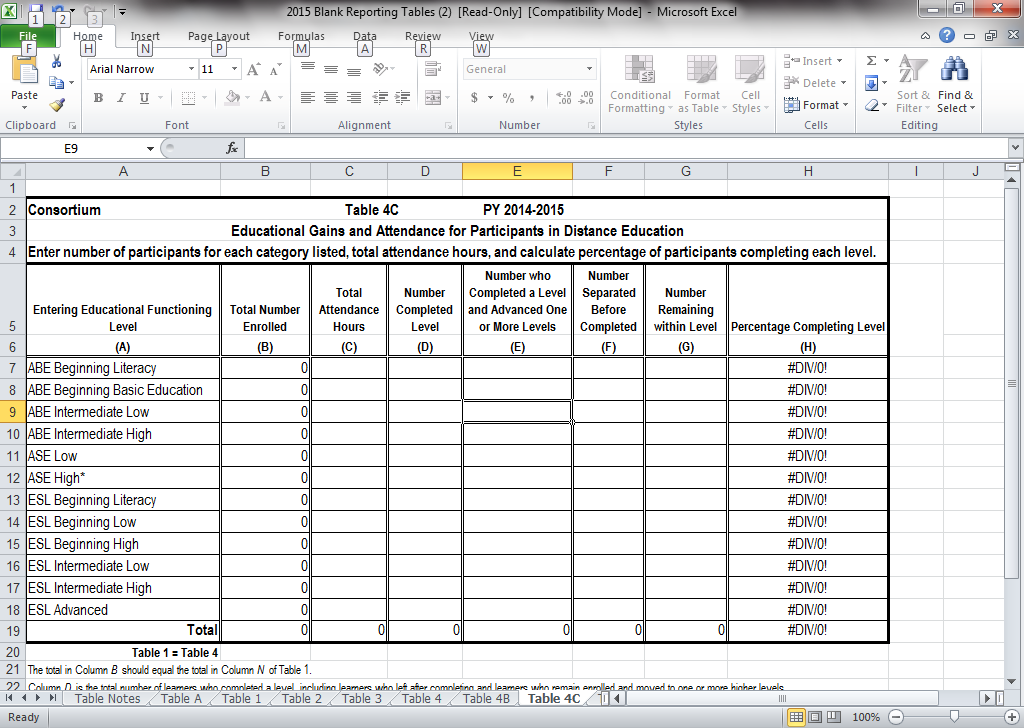


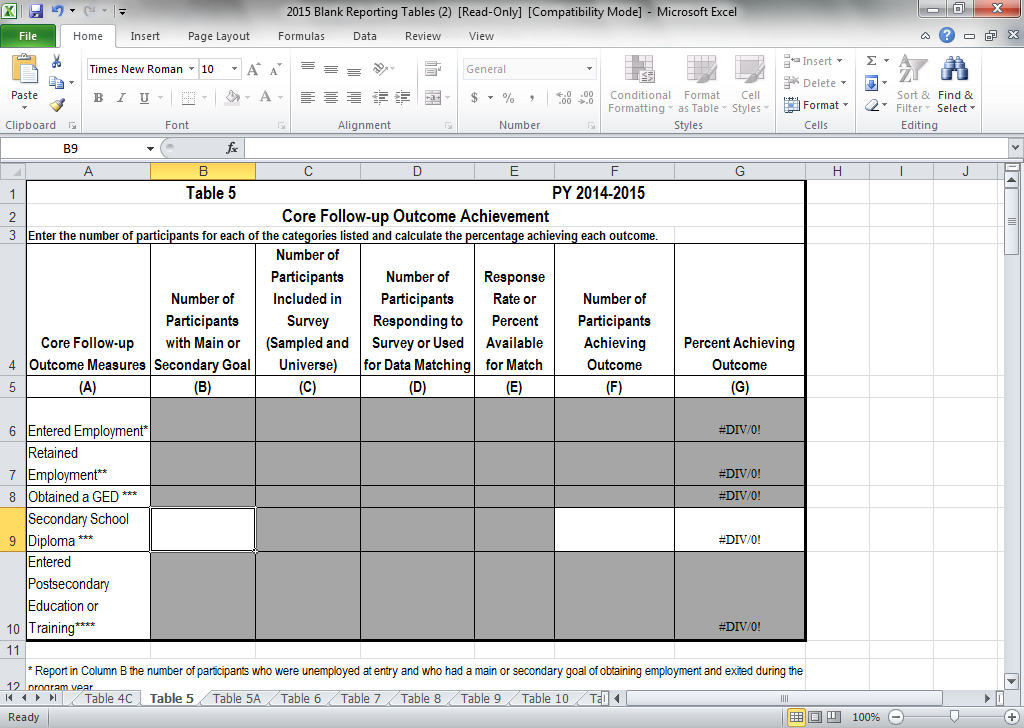


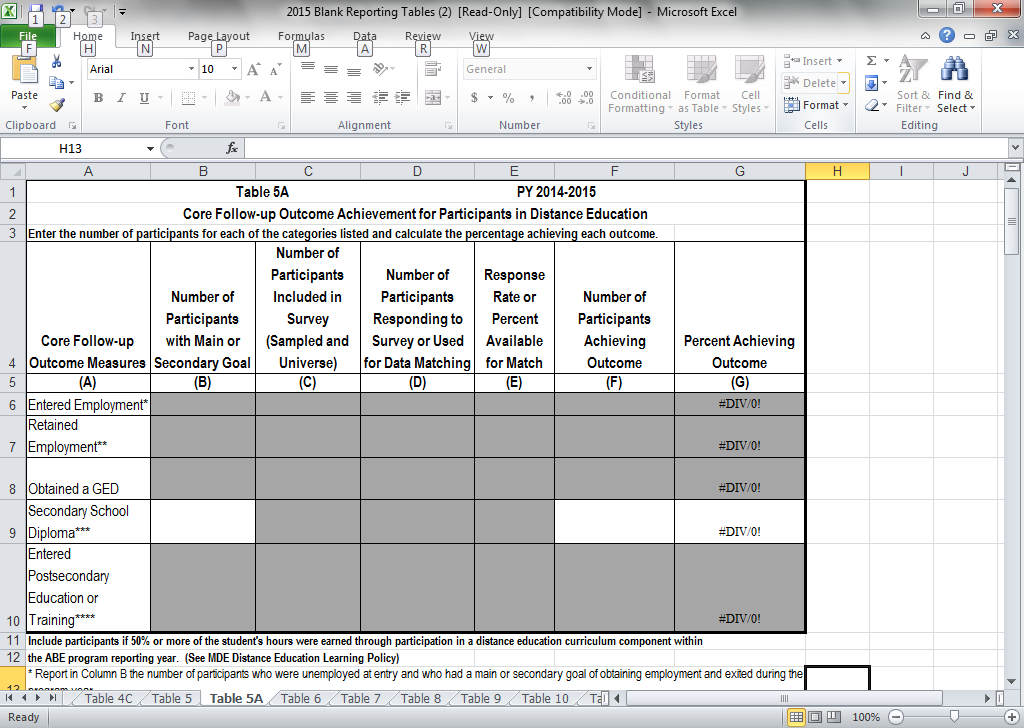


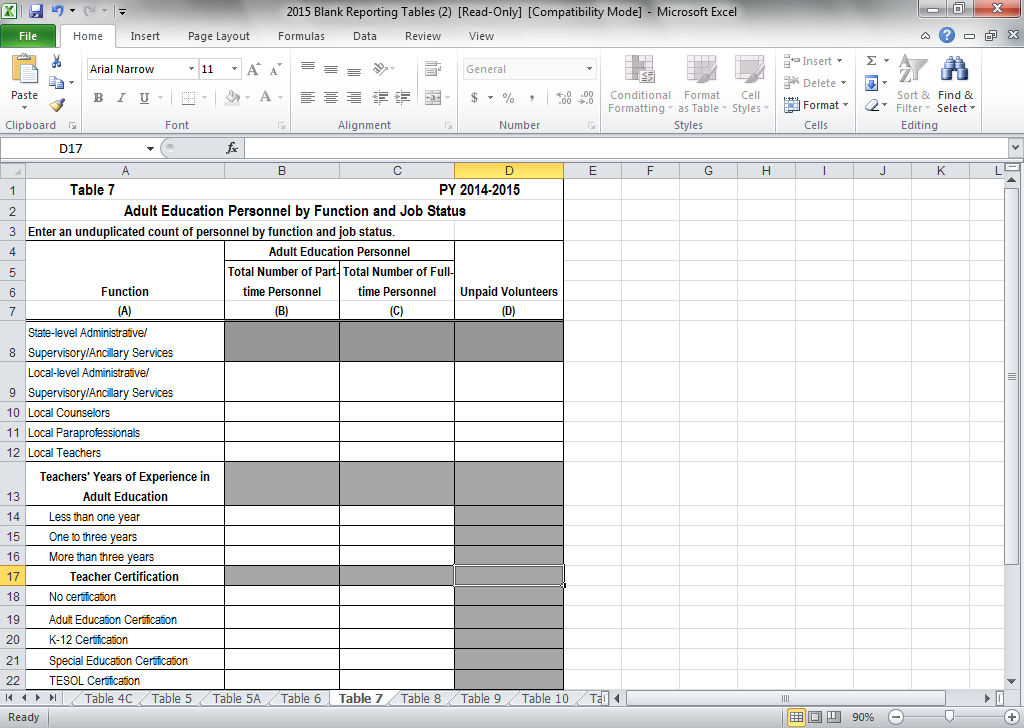


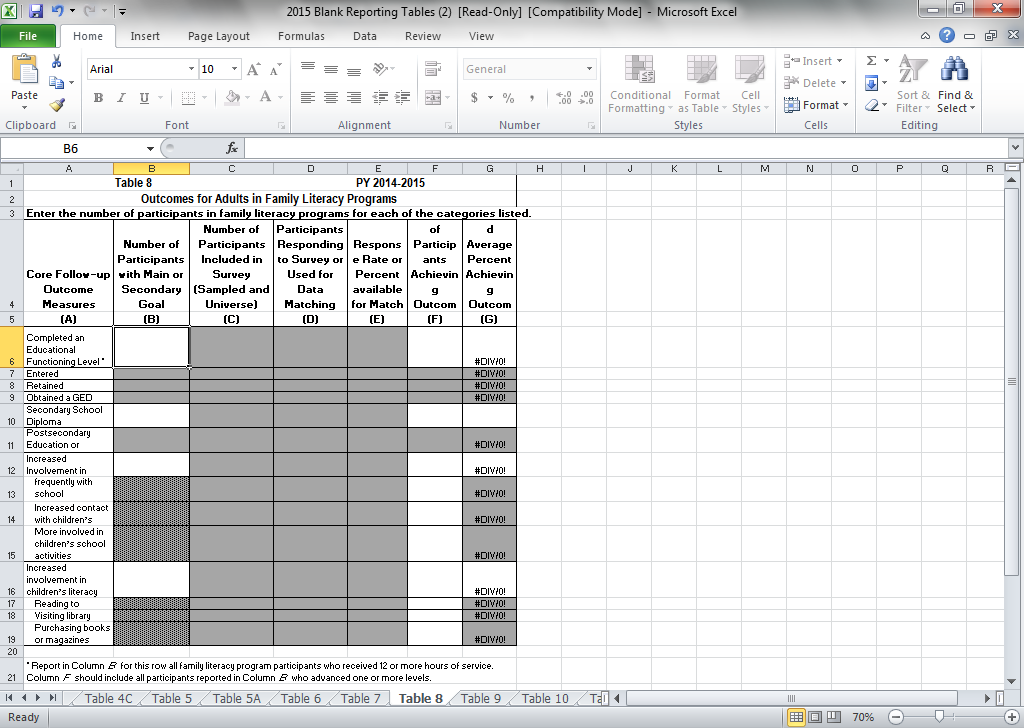
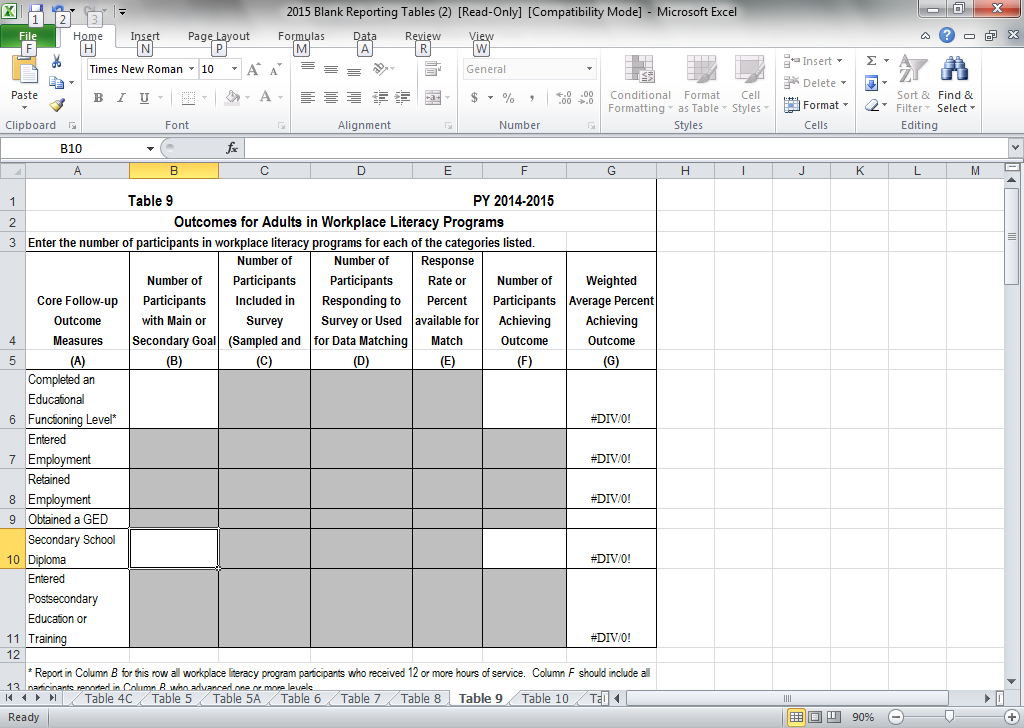


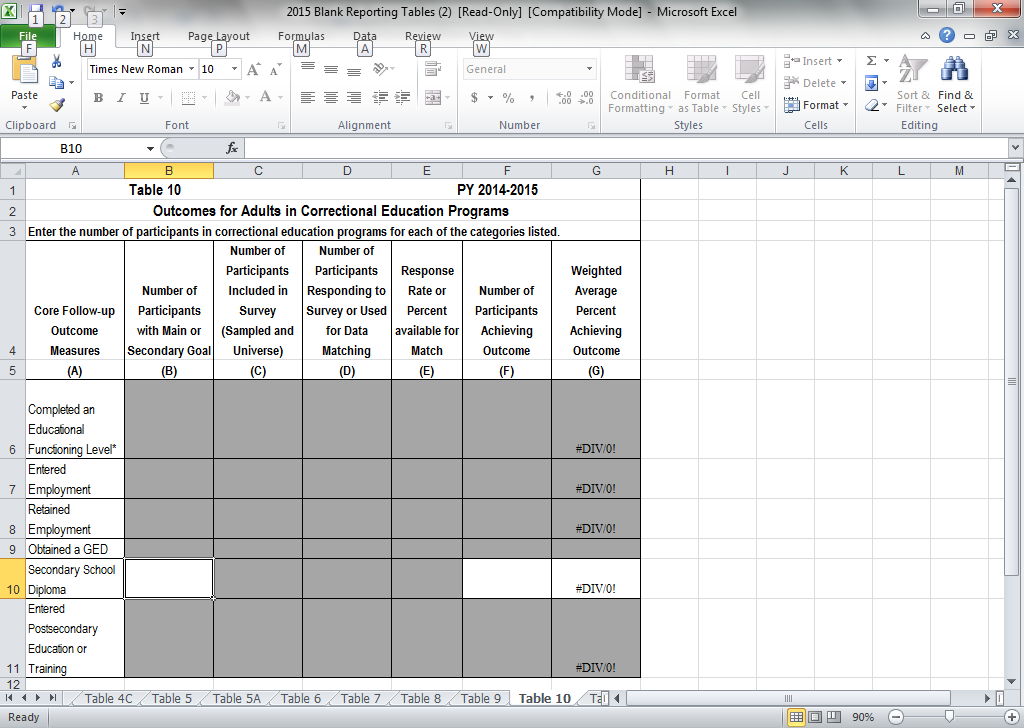


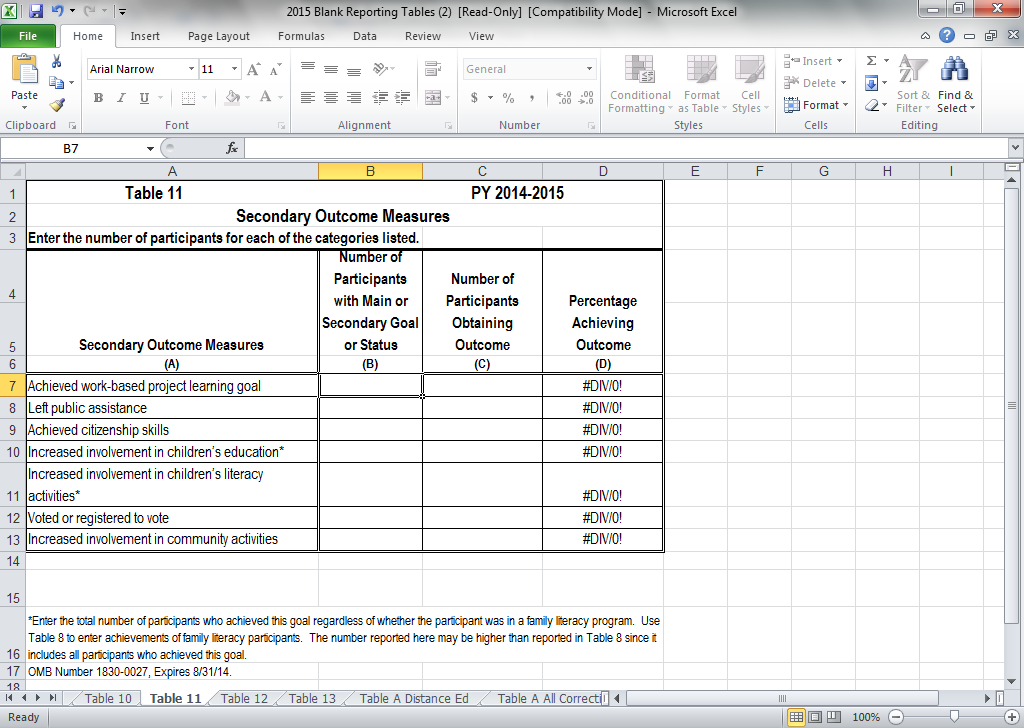


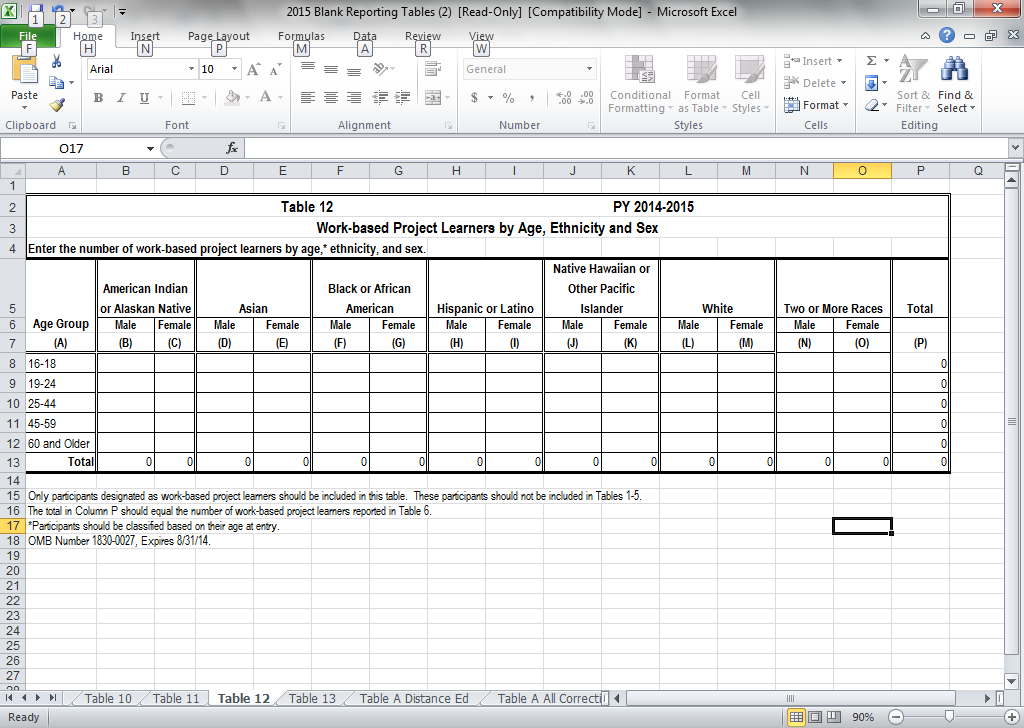


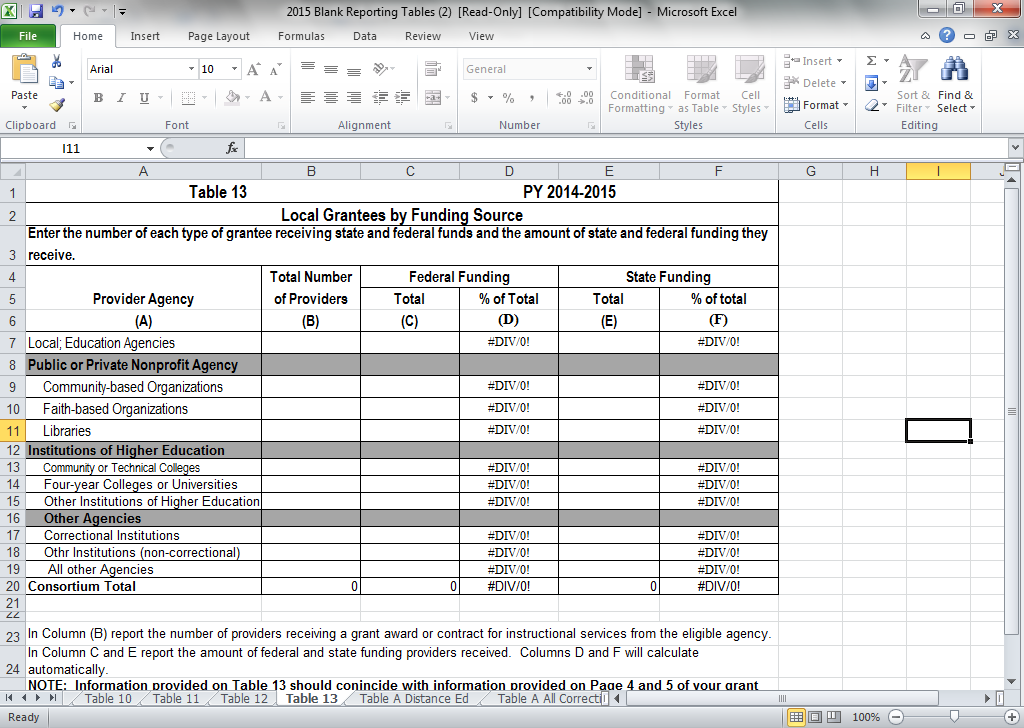
 

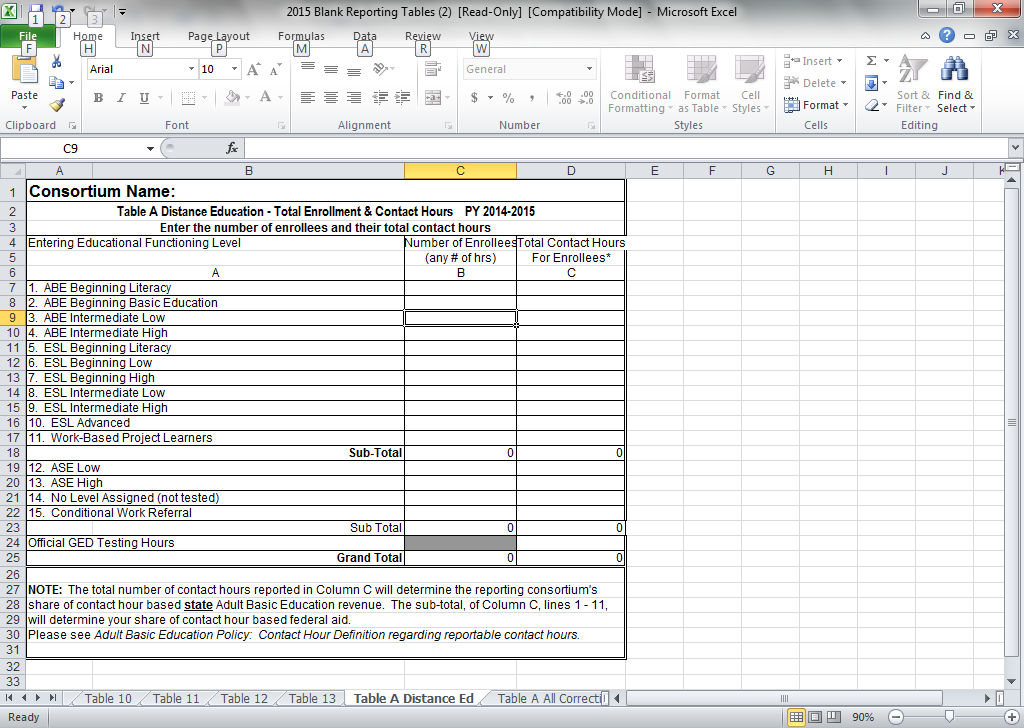
 



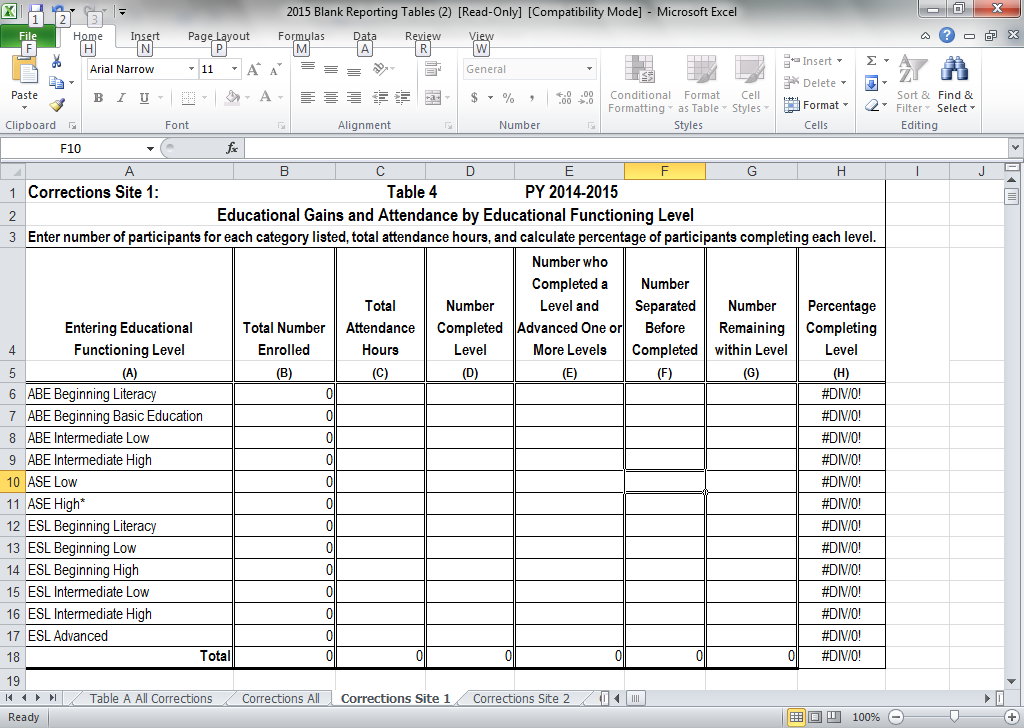






**CORRECTIONS ALL** cells will populate after completion of the Corrections Site tables

# ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

## **Assessments Permitted**

Minnesota has authorized the TABE, CASAS and BEST Plus standardized assessments for use in establishing NRS educational functioning levels. Additionally, assessment within these test systems:

* Are appropriate for measuring literacy and language development of adult learners
* Have standardized administration and scoring procedures
* Have alternate, equivalent, forms for pre- and post-testing
* Have evidence linking them to the NRS Educational Functioning Levels

### BEST Plus

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Name/Series*** | ***Content*** | ***Format*** | ***Forms/Levels*** |
| Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus\*\* | ESL | Paper-based  Computer-adaptive | A, B, C |

*\*\*Approved by OVAE and the Minnesota Department of Education for NRS purposes through June 30, 2016. Beginning July 1, 2016, these tests may not be used for NRS purposes in Minnesota’s ABE system.*

### CASAS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Name/Series*** | ***Content*** | ***Format*** | ***Forms/Levels*** |
| **Beginning Literacy** | Reading\* | Computer-based  Paper-based | 27 and 28 |
| **Life and Work** | Reading\* | Computer-based  Paper-based | * Level A: 81, 82, 81X, 82X * Level B: 83, 84 * Level C: 85, 86, 185, 186 * Level D: 187, 188 |
| Listening\*\* | Computer-based  Paper-based | 981L-986L |
| **Life Skills** | Math\* | Computer-based  Paper-based | 31-38, 505, 506 |

*\*Approved by OVAE and the Minnesota Department of Education for NRS purposes through June 2017.*

*\*\*Approved by OVAE and the Minnesota Department of Education for NRS purposes through June 30, 2016. Beginning July 1, 2016, these tests may not be used for NRS purposes in Minnesota’s ABE system.*

### TABE

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Name/Series*** | ***Content*** | ***Format*** | ***Forms/Levels*** |
| 9 and 10 Survey\* and Complete Battery\* versions | * Reading * Complete Math (2 tests: Math Computation and Applied Mathematics) * Language | Computer-based  Paper-based | L: Literacy  E: Easy  M: Medium  D: Difficult  A: Advanced |

*\*Approved by OVAE and the Minnesota Department of Education for NRS purposes through June 2017.*

Specifically, the BEST Plus may be used with ESL level students. The CASAS Life Skills, Life and Work and ECS tests series reading, listening, math and writing tests may be used with either basic literacy or ESL level students. The TABE Reading, Complete Math and Language tests forms 9/10 may be used with basic education and adult secondary level students. Students should be assessed in the modality(s) that most closely match the needs and instructional plans identified in the required personal education planning process. Note that all students, excepting Work-based Project Learners must be pre- and post-tested in at least one modality using a one of the above noted test series.

**Recently Expired Tests**

The following tests expired for Minnesota ABE programs on April 30, 2014, for NRS reporting purposes:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CASAS Employability Competency System (ECS)** | Reading\*\*\* | Computer-based  Paper-based | 11-18; 114, 116 |
| Math\*\*\* | Computer-based  Paper-based | 11-18 |
| Listening\*\*\* | Computer-based  Paper-based | 51-56, 63-66 |
| **CASAS Functional Writing Assessment** | Writing\*\*\* | Paper-based | 460, 461, 462, 463 |
| **CASAS Life Skills** | Listening\*\*\* | Computer-based  Paper-based | 51-56, 63-66 |

*\*\*\* Beginning May 1, 2014, these tests cannot be used for NRS purposes in Minnesota’s ABE system.*

**Testing Policies**

* Programs administer state and NRS-approved assessments to all ABE students
* All ABE students get a pre-test within their first 12 hours
* Students post-tested every 40-60 contact hours
* Programs adhere to testing directions
* More than 60% of participants are post-tested

Common post-testing options:

* The entire class will post-test once a month.
* The entire class will post-test once every six weeks.
* Students will be pulled to post-test after every 40-60 contact hours.

**Assessment Certification**

For tests that local programs are using, each consortium is required to have at least one person who has attended certification training in the last five years in the tests used for NRS level completion purposes. The Minnesota Department of Education strongly encourages all ABE staff to participate in test training.

**For More Information**

Minnesota ABE Assessment Web Site ([Minnesota ABE Assessment Web Site](http://www.mnabeassessment.com/))

Minnesota ABE LINCS Web Site ([Minnesota ABE LINCS Web Site](2015%20ABE%20Grant%20Application%20Meeting%20Agenda.docx))

# NRS CORE PERFORMANCE – DRAFT TARGETS AND RESULTS\*

## **MINNESOTA’S ABE NRS TARGETS AND RESULTS for 2012 - 2016**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NRS Educational Functioning Level and Core Indicator Goals** | **FY 2013**  **(2012-13)** | | **FY 2014**  **(2013-14)** | | **FY 2015**  **(2014-15)** | | **FY 2016**  **(2015-16)** | |
| % Completing Each Level/Goal | | % Completing Each Level/Goal | | % Completing Each Level/Goal | | % Completing Each Level/Goal | |
| Target | Actual | Target | Actual | Target | Actual | Target | Actual |
| ***Beginning ABE Literacy*** | 62 | 66 | 64 | 67 | 64 |  | 67 |  |
| ***Beginning Basic Education*** | 55 | 57 | 59 | 62 | 59 |  | 62 |  |
| ***Low Intermediate Basic Education*** | 52 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 53 |  | 55 |  |
| ***High Intermediate Basic Education*** | 43 | 44 | 45 | 45 | 45 |  | 46 |  |
| ***Low Adult Secondary*** | 43 | 44 | 46 | 44 | 46 |  | 46 |  |
| ***Beginning ESL Literacy*** | 56 | 55 | 57 | 58 | 57 |  | 59 |  |
| ***Beginning ESL(Low)*** | 65 | 68 | 71 | 73 | 71 |  | 73 |  |
| ***Beginning ESL High*** | 59 | 61 | 62 | 65 | 62 |  | 66 |  |
| ***Low Intermediate ESL*** | 49 | 52 | 54 | 55 | 54 |  | 56 |  |
| ***High Intermediate ESL*** | 47 | 49 | 51 | 54 | 51 |  | 55 |  |
| ***Low Advanced ESL*** | 25 | 29 | 30 | 32 | 30 |  | 33 |  |
| ***Entered Employment*** | 32 | 42 | 32 | 44 | 43 |  | 45 |  |
| ***Retained Employment*** | 62 | 72 | 62 | 73 | 72 |  | 74 |  |
| ***Receipt of Secondary Diploma or GED*** | 60 | 60 | 60 | 82 | 61 |  | 61 |  |
| ***Placement in Postsecondary Education or Training*** | 17 | 30 | 17 | 32 | 31 |  | 33 |  |

*\*Submitted to OVAE for approval in March 2015.*

# EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

| Outcome Measures Definitions | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational Functioning Level Descriptors**—**Adult Basic Education Levels** | | | | |
| Literacy Level | **Basic Reading and Writing** | **Numeracy Skills** | | **Functional and Workplace Skills** |
| **Beginning ABE Literacy**  Test benchmark:  TABE (9–10) scale scores  Reading 367 and below  Total Math 313 and below  Language 392 and below  CASAS scale scores  Reading 200 and below  Math 200 and below | Individual has no or minimal reading and writing skills. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument. At the upper range of this level, individual can recognize, read, and write letters and numbers but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading. Can write a limited number of basic sight words and familiar words and phrases; may also be able to write simple sentences or phrases, including very simple messages. Can write basic personal information. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear, inconsistently uses simple punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks), and contains frequent errors in spelling. | Individual has little or no recognition of numbers or simple counting skills or may have only minimal skills, such as the ability to add or subtract single digit numbers. | | Individual has little or no ability to read basic signs or maps and can provide limited personal information on simple forms. The individual can handle routine entry level jobs that require little or no basic written communication or computational skills and no knowledge of computers or other technology. |
| **Beginning Basic Education**  Test benchmark:  TABE (9–10) scale scores  Reading: 368–460  Total Math: 314–441  Language: 393–490  CASAS scale scores  Reading: 201–210  Math: 201–210 | Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety, but individual shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization). | Individual can count, add, and subtract three digit numbers, can perform multiplication through 12, can identify simple fractions, and perform other simple arithmetic operations. | | Individual is able to read simple directions, signs, and maps, fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write phone messages, and make simple changes. There is minimal knowledge of and experience with using computers and related technology. The individual can handle basic entry level jobs that require minimal literacy skills; can recognize very short, explicit, pictorial texts (e.g., understands logos related to worker safety before using a piece of machinery); and can read want ads and complete simple job applications. |
| **Low Intermediate Basic Education**  Test benchmark:  TABE (9–10) scale scores:  Reading: 461–517  Total Math: 442–505  Language: 491–523  CASAS scale scores  Reading: 211–220  Math: 211–220 | Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with a main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors. | Individual can perform with high accuracy all four basic math operations using whole numbers up to three digits and can identify and use all basic mathematical symbols. | | Individual is able to handle basic reading, writing, and computational tasks related to life roles, such as completing medical forms, order forms, or job applications; and can read simple charts, graphs, labels, and payroll stubs and simple authentic material if familiar with the topic. The individual can use simple computer programs and perform a sequence of routine tasks given direction using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer operation). The individual can qualify for entry level jobs that require following basic written instructions and diagrams with assistance, such as oral clarification; can write a short report or message to fellow workers; and can read simple dials and scales and take routine measurements. |
| **High Intermediate Basic Education**  Test benchmark:  TABE (9–10) scale scores:  Reading: 518–566  Total Math: 506–565  Language: 524–559  CASAS: scale scores  Reading: 221–235  Math: 221–235 | Individual is able to read simple descriptions and narratives on familiar subjects or from which new vocabulary can be determined by context and can make some minimal inferences about familiar texts and compare and contrast information from such texts but not consistently. The individual can write simple narrative descriptions and short essays on familiar topics and has consistent use of basic punctuation but makes grammatical errors with complex structures. | Individual can perform all four basic math operations with whole numbers and fractions; can determine correct math operations for solving narrative math problems and can convert fractions to decimals and decimals to fractions; and can perform basic operations on fractions | | Individual is able to handle basic life skills tasks such as graphs, charts, and labels and can follow multistep diagrams; can read authentic materials on familiar topics, such as simple employee handbooks and payroll stubs; can complete forms such as a job application and reconcile a bank statement. Can handle jobs that involve following simple written instructions and diagrams; can read procedural texts, where the information is supported by diagrams, to remedy a problem, such as locating a problem with a machine or carrying out repairs using a repair manual. The individual can learn or work with most basic computer software, such as using a word processor to produce own texts, and can follow simple instructions for using technology. |
| **Low Adult Secondary Education**  Test benchmark:  TABE (9–10): scale scores:  Reading: 567–595  Total Math: 566–594  Language: 560–585  CASAS scale scores  Reading: 236–245  Math: 236–245 | Individual can comprehend expository writing and identify spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors; can comprehend a variety of materials such as periodicals and nontechnical journals on common topics; can comprehend library reference materials and compose multiparagraph essays; can listen to oral instructions and write an accurate synthesis of them; and can identify the main idea in reading selections and use a variety of context issues to determine meaning. Writing is organized and cohesive with few mechanical errors; can write using a complex sentence structure; and can write personal notes and letters that accurately reflect thoughts. | Individual can perform all basic math functions with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions; can interpret and solve simple algebraic equations, tables, and graphs and can develop own tables and graphs; and can use math in business transactions. | | Individual is able or can learn to follow simple multistep directions and read common legal forms and manuals; can integrate information from texts, charts, and graphs; can create and use tables and graphs; can complete forms and applications and complete resumes; can perform jobs that require interpreting information from various sources and writing or explaining tasks to other workers; is proficient using computers and can use most common computer applications; can understand the impact of using different technologies; and can interpret the appropriate use of new software and technology. |
| **High Adult Secondary Education**  Test benchmark:  TABE (9–10): scale scores:  Reading: 596 and above  Total Math: 595 and above  Language: 586 and above  CASAS scale scores  Reading: 246 and above  Math: 246 and above | Individual can comprehend, explain, and analyze information from a variety of literacy works, including primary source materials and professional journals, and can use context cues and higher order processes to interpret meaning of written material. Writing is cohesive with clearly expressed ideas supported by relevant detail, and individual can use varied and complex sentence structures with few mechanical errors. | Individual can make mathematical estimates of time and space and can apply principles of geometry to measure angles, lines, and surfaces and can also apply trigonometric functions. | | Individual is able to read technical information and complex manuals; can comprehend some college level books and apprenticeship manuals; can function in most job situations involving higher order thinking; can read text and explain a procedure about a complex and unfamiliar work procedure, such as operating a complex piece of machinery; can evaluate new work situations and processes; and can work productively and collaboratively in groups and serve as facilitator and reporter of group work. The individual is able to use common software and learn new software applications; can define the purpose of new technology and software and select appropriate technology; can adapt use of software or technology to new situations; and can instruct others, in written or oral form, on software and technology use. |
| Outcome Measures Definitions | | | | |
| **Educational Functioning Level Descriptors**—**Adult Basic Education Levels** | | | | |
| Literacy Level | **Basic Reading and Writing** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Functional and Workplace Skills** | |
| **Beginning ESL Literacy**  Test benchmark:  CASAS scale scores  Reading 180 and below  Listening 162-180  BEST Plus: 400 and below (SPL 0–1) | Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or very simple learned phrases. | Individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May be able to recognize and copy letters, numbers and a few words (e.g. own name). May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language. Individual may have difficulty using a writing instrument. | Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words. May recognize only common words, signs or symbols (e.g., name, stop sign, product logos). Can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. May have no knowledge or use of computers. | |
| **Low Beginning ESL**  Test benchmark:  CASAS scale scores  Reading: 181–190  Listening: 181–189  BEST Plus: 401–417 (SPL 2) | Individual can understand basic greetings, simple phrases and commands. Can understand simple questions related to personal information, spoken slowly and with repetition. Understands a limited number of words related to immediate needs and can respond with simple learned phrases to some common questions related to routine survival situations. Speaks slowly and with difficulty. Demonstrates little or no control over grammar. | Individual can read numbers and letters and some common sight words. May be able to sound out simple words. Can read and write some familiar words and phrases, but has a limited understanding of connected prose in English. Can write basic personal information (e.g., name, address, telephone number) and can complete simple forms that elicit this information. | Individual functions with difficulty in social situations and in situations related to immediate needs. Can provide limited personal information on simple forms, and can read very simple common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as product names. Can handle routine entry level jobs that require very simple written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge and experience with computers. | |

| Outcome Measures Definitions | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational Functioning Level Descriptors**—**Adult Basic Education Levels** | | | |
| Literacy Level | **Basic Reading and Writing** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Functional and Workplace Skills** |
| **High Beginning ESL**  Test benchmark:  CASAS scale scores  Reading: 191–200  Listening: 190–199  BEST Plus: 418-438 (SPL 3) | Individual can understand common words, simple phrases, and sentences containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with some repetition. Individual can respond to simple questions about personal everyday activities, and can express immediate needs, using simple learned phrases or short sentences. Shows limited control of grammar. | Individual can read most sight words, and many other common words. Can read familiar phrases and simple sentences but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading.  Individual can write some simple sentences with limited vocabulary. Meaning may be unclear. Writing shows very little control of basic grammar, capitalization and punctuation and has many spelling errors. | Individual can function in some situations related to immediate needs and in familiar social situations. Can provide basic personal information on simple forms and recognizes simple common forms of print found in the home, workplace and community. Can handle routine entry level jobs requiring basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge or experience using computers. |
| **Low Intermediate ESL**  Test benchmark:  CASAS scale scores  Reading: 201–210  Listening: 200–209  BEST Plus: 439–472 (SPL 4) | Individual expresses basic survival needs and participates in some routine social conversations, although with some difficulty. Understands simple learned phrases easily and some new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with repetition. Asks and responds to questions in familiar contexts. Has some control of basic grammar. | Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing familiar vocabulary. Individual can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but may lack variety in sentence structure, clarity and focus of writing. Shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and spelling. Uses some punctuation consistently (e.g., periods, commas, question marks, capitalization, etc.) | Individual can interpret simple directions, schedules, signs, and maps, etc. Completes simple forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified. Can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication but in which job tasks can be clarified orally or through demonstration. Individual may be able to use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions (e.g., fax machine, computer). | |
| **High Intermediate ESL**  Test benchmark:  CASAS scale scores  Reading: 211–220  Listening: 211–218  BEST Plus: 473–506 (SPL 5) | Individual participates in conversation in familiar social situations. Communicates basic needs with some help and clarification. Understands learned phrases and new phrases containing familiar vocabulary. Attempts to use new language but may be hesitant and rely on descriptions and concrete terms. May have inconsistent control of more complex grammar. | Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, logical order). Can use word analysis skills and context clues to determine meaning with texts on familiar subjects. Individual can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures. Can self- and peer-edit for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. | Individual can meet basic survival and social demands, and can follow some simple oral and written instructions. Has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Can write messages and notes related to basic needs and complete basic medical forms and job applications. Can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology. | |
| **Advanced ESL**  **Test benchmark:**  **CASAS scale scores**  **Reading: 221–235**  **Listening: 219–227**  **BEST Plus: 507–540 (SPL 6)** | Individual can understand and communicate in a variety of contexts related to daily life and work. Can understand and participate in conversation on a variety of everyday subjects, including some unfamiliar vocabulary, but may need repetition or rewording. Can clarify own or others’ meaning by rewording. Can understand the main points of simple discussions and informational communication in familiar contexts. Shows some ability to go beyond learned patterns and construct new sentences. Shows control of basic grammar but has difficulty using more complex structures. Has some basic fluency of speech. | Individual can read moderately complex text related to life roles and descriptions and narratives from authentic materials on familiar subjects. Uses context and word analysis skills to understand vocabulary, and uses multiple strategies to understand unfamiliar texts. Can make inferences, predictions, and compare and contrast information in familiar texts. Individual can write multi-paragraph text (e.g., organizes and develops ideas with clear introduction, body, and conclusion), using some complex grammar and a variety of sentence structures. Makes some grammar and spelling errors. Uses a range of vocabulary. | Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and to use English in routine social and work situations. Can communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Understands radio and television on familiar topics. Can interpret routine charts, tables and graphs and can complete forms and handle work demands that require non-technical oral and written instructions and routine interaction with the public. Individual can use common software, learn new basic applications, and select the correct basic technology in familiar situations. | |

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| CONSORTIUM NARRATIVE DUE DATES *Updated April 1, 2015* | | | | |
| **Due 6/2015** | Due 6/2016 | Due 6/2017 | Due 6/2018 | Due 6/2019 |
| 1. **Brainerd** 2. **Communications Services for the Deaf** 3. **Glacial Lakes-Willmar** 4. **Hastings** 5. **Metro North-Anoka** 6. **Metro South-Bloomington** 7. **Minneapolis** 8. **Red Lake** 9. **White Earth** | 1. American Indian OIC 2. Department of Corrections 3. Faribault County 4. Freshwater-Staples 5. North Central-St. Cloud 6. Rosemount/Apple Valley/Eagan 7. South Washington County 8. SE ABE-Owatonna | 1. AEOA 2. Burnsville 3. Dakota Prairie-Farmington 4. Lakes & Prairie-Wadena 5. Lakeville 6. Lincoln-International Education Center 7. NW Service Cooperative 8. Osseo 9. South Suburban-South St. Paul | * 1. Alexandria   2. AOIE-Hopkins   3. Carver Scott   4. Detroit Lakes   5. Duluth   6. Metro East-North St. Paul   7. Hiawatha Valley-Red Wing   8. Rochester   9. St. Paul   10. West-Monticello | 1. AALC-LeSueur 2. Cass Lake 3. Fergus Falls 4. Mankato 5. Moorhead 6. Robbinsdale 7. SW ABE 8. Tri-County Corrections |