

**Conditional Work Referral Policy**

**Minnesota Adult Education (ABE)**

**Policy Development Date: March 30, 2011**

**Policy Implementation Date: May 1, 2011**

**Policy Revision Date: October 6, 2011**

**January 1, 2022**

**April 17, 2023**

## Policy Overview

***Background*** – The Transitions to Employment category in ABE was developed in January 2009 with the Eligible Content Policy. It was developed in response to a recognized statewide need to stimulate and enhance the Minnesota economic climate, and to provide greater opportunity for unemployed and under-employed Minnesotans to attain skills leading to productive employment.

The state ABE office encourages programs to collaborate and build partnerships with workforce development. Ideally, adults referred to ABE programs could be served as regular ABE students building core literacy skills and work readiness skills. For those adults not needing to build their core literacy skills, the separate Transitions to Employment category has helped some programs to better serve adults seeking employment and helped build stronger collaborations between some CareerForce Centers and some ABE programs. However, numerous programs have reported confusion regarding this category.

For these reasons, the Transitions to Employment Category is now renamed the “Conditional Work Referral” category with additional guidance and criteria.

***Conditional Work Referral Eligibility and Referral Requirements*** – In order to classify a referral as a Conditional Work Referral, the adult must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Be at least 17 years old;
2. Not be enrolled in public (K-12) school;
3. Not have goals to improve core literacy (as defined in the [Eligible Content Policy](http://mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies)), including reading, writing, math, GED, ESL, etc.;
4. Be receiving services from an employment service provider such as a CareerForce Center, prior to being referred to the ABE program;
5. Be referred **in writing** by CareerForce staff or employment/MFIP counselors specifically for any one or more of the content areas noted in the “Eligible Content for Conditional Work Referral Adults” section. (There is a recommended referral form posted on the Minnesota ABE web site – see link in “Questions and Contacts.”

**Note:** Referral by a state or county correctional institution, college or other post- secondary educational/training institution is not acceptable under this policy. Those institutions may refer students to ABE, but for core content only or for core curricula PLUS conditional content, such as study skills.

***Eligible Content for Conditional Work Referral*** – Programs serving Conditional Work Referral adults in ABE can offer instruction only in the following conditional content areas:

* **Digital Literacy Skills**
  + Example: Basic Computer Literacy
* **Soft Skills Necessary for Work**
  + Example: Academic, Career and Employability Skills (ACES), SCANS skills

In April 2023, Job Seeking Skills (e.g. Résumé Writing, Interviewing, Job Searching) was removed as eligible content at the request of staff at the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

Developing, adopting or adapting specific curricula for each of the above areas is a local program responsibility.

The Conditional Work Referral is for adults participating in the work-focused curricula only. If a program is offering a learner instruction that includes Conditional Work Referral content and ABE core content (math, reading, writing, ESL, GED, listening or speaking), the learner is not a Conditional Work Referral Adult but is a “regular” ABE student, which means that the program can collect state and federal funding for the learner and must follow standard ABE accountability measures, such as pre- and post-testing.

***Enrollment and Contact Hours*** – If the student meets the eligibility requirements noted above, the ABE program may enroll the student and classify them on Table A as a ‘*Conditional Work Referral Adult*.’ Table A was revised for 2011-2012 to accommodate the new category.

Programs can only count contact hours for Conditional Work Referral Adults if the ABE-funded staff are providing instruction.

***Contact Hour Caps*** – A Conditional Work Referral Adult can earn a maximum of 30 ABE contact hours per program year under this policy.

For funding purposes, an ABE consortium’s Conditional Work Referral Adult contact hours cannot exceed 20% of the consortium’s total ABE contact hours per program year. If the consortium’s Conditional Work Referral Adults contact hours exceed 20% of the consortium’s total ABE contact hours in a program year, their Conditional Work Referral Adult contact hours will be capped at 20% of the consortium’s contact hours for funding.

A waiver on the 20% consortium cap may be obtained with approval by the state ABE office at the Minnesota Department of Education. ABE consortia that believe they may exceed the 20% cap should contact the state ABE office as soon as possible.

***Exemption from NRS*** - The policy allows the ABE program to classify the adult in a new ABE category called Conditional Work Referral Adult, which is not subject to the NRS processes such as pre- and post-testing. While Conditional Work Referrals are not required to be pre- and post-tested with an approved assessment for NRS purposes, the Minnesota Department of Education encourages adult education programs to provide a pre-test, especially in reading, to provide an estimate of the individual's literacy level for the services provided. The student will not be counted in any of the NRS tables but would be counted on Table A for revenue generating (contact hour) purposes for state funding only. Conditional Work Referral adults do not generate federal funding.

If a student enrolls in an ABE program as a Conditional Work Referral Adult and later within the program year enrolls in a core content are[a (e.g. English Language Learning, GED or HiSET test preparation, math, reading, writing,](http://mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies) [etc.), all](http://mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies) of their program time should be counted in the core program on the NRS tables.

## For More Information

This policy, along with a sample Conditional Work Referral Form and other ABE policies and resources, can be found online at the [Minnesota ABE Law, Policy and Guidance page](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance) (<http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance>).

If you have any questions about the Conditional Work Referral Policy or any other Adult Education (ABE) policies, contact:

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