

**The State of Workplace Education in the States:
A Policy Perspective**

**Prepared by DTI Associates, Inc.
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Attachment A: State Profiles

Attachment B: Questions for States on Workplace Education

I. Executive Summary

Given the current economy that requires skilled workers and the fact that students in adult education programs face greater and greater demands in their jobs, points to an increasing need for effective workplace education programs. It is no longer sufficient for an employee to have only the “the basic skills.” Increasing demands in technology, communications and global interactions require adults to continually expand their set of skills and continue to learn.

Adult education plays a crucial role in helping students develop the basic skills they need to be successful on the job and pursue future. Providing adult education at the workplace offers even more benefits: 1) a motivating learning environment, 2) the access to hands-on learning materials, and 3) the opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom to the job.

It is the intent of this report to provide the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) with an updated view of the status of workplace education in the states. Additionally, it may help inform DAEL about ways to enhance the work that is being conducted in workplace education at the state and local levels. The document may also be helpful to practitioners in the field interested in current and new initiatives that other states are conducting in workplace education.

II. Introduction

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) undertook its major investment in work-based learning from 1989-1996 when it funded over 300 National Workplace Demonstration Literacy Projects in separate states. Of the original group of states, grants were provided to seven state systems that have continued the work in this area even after federal funding diminished. In some cases, states such as Kentucky, have supplemented federal funding with large investments from state funds. Other states, such as Illinois, have a special fund out of the Lt. Governor’s office for work-based learning, and still others work closely with their community college systems to provide work-based learning experiences to learners in their states.

In 2002, OVAE contracted with DTI Associates, Inc. to conduct a state-by-state policy review of workplace education in order to determine a baseline of activity and participation in these activities in state adult education programs. This paper represents a synthesis of information gathered through a variety of sources on the current status of work place education in the United States. An individual profile for each state is also provided.

Before going to the states and gathering information from them, and for purposes of this report, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education specified that the following definition of work-based education be utilized:

“A Work-based Education Program means an adult basic and literacy program that is delivered in partnership with an employer or consortium of employers

...serving individuals identified for participation by the employer(s) sponsoring the program.”

To provide further clarity, it is important to note that for purposes of this report, states were not to use the traditional definition of “workplace literacy,” as defined by WIA Title II. That definition is: “*Workplace Literacy services means services that are offered for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce through the improvement of literacy skills.*” The only place where *workplace literacy* appears in this report is in the Workplace Education Program Qualities Table in Section 5 of the report. The data represented there comes from National Reporting System (NRS) table for “Participant Status and Program Enrollment,” July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002 period.

III. Methodology

DTI began the process of gathering information through a pilot project of five states: Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Nevada, Connecticut and Kentucky. After conducting the pilot study, it was decided that the information that had been garnered was informative and provided a good view on the status of workplace education in the states. OVAE instructed DTI to move forward and try to gather information from the remaining 45 states.

Information was gained through a variety of means, including:

- sharing of information at the most recent Adult Education State Directors meeting held in Portland, OR on April 24-26, 2003;
- internet research on workplace education and adult basic education;
- email communications with State Directors or other identified state staff; and
- telephone conversations with state directors or other identified state staff.

In the cases where internet research was conducted and there was no personal communication with the state, the enrollment numbers reported in the table, *Workplace Education Program Qualities*, and in the State Profiles have been taken from the National Reporting System (NRS) table for “*Participant Status and Program Enrollment*,” July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002 period.

While the questions utilized in the information gathering of the states were based around “*workplace education*,” DTI was instructed to share OVAE’s definition of a *work-based education program* explained earlier in the report under the Introduction.

The same set of questions were asked of all the states and served as the foundation for the writing of this report. The set of questions utilized in compiling the data for this report can be found at the end of the report as *Attachment B*.

Generally, the gathering of information took about three months to complete, with varying degrees of success. For purposes of this report, there are profiles for each

of the 50 states (no territories), though the depth of information varies. (See *Attachment A*)

The information on each of the state profiles varies depending on whether DTI was able to speak to someone that knew the subject matter or only had access to what could be found on state web pages.

As will be easily noted by the reader in the following section, the differences among the states are about as diverse as the states themselves. However, some major similarities do exist, for example, in that states are partnering directly with employers, One-stops, TANF programs and local workforce boards to provide more effective workplace education programs.

III. Synthesis of Findings

In order to determine a baseline of activity and participation for work-based learning in state adult education programs, every effort was made to reach State Directors or other state staff to provide information about their state’s program. In the state matrix, all 50 states are accounted for though the information varies. There were a total of 38 states that responded to questions verbally or in writing, and 14 states where the information was gleaned from Internet research. The statements below represent the responses from all 38 states with the exception of the question on funding and one-stops. Only 35 of the 38 states responded in writing to the questions on funding (#1) and one-stops (#5). Of those 35, only 10 states gave actual amounts of WIA Title II funding amounts.

The synthesized sections below follow the question structure provided in questions 1-8, explained under the methodology section above but found in *Attachment B*. The table represents how states rated themselves on the quality of their workplace education programs in question number 8.

Funding

Question #1: Under WIA Title II, how much state and federal funding did you allocate for workplace education in the last year?

The following percentages are based on a total number of 35 respondents that answered the question on funding. Respondents indicated what percentage of funding allocated towards workplace education in their state was federal, in response to question #1 in *Attachment B*. Of the thirty-five respondents, the percentages allocated to workplace education break down as follows:

Federal versus State Funding					
	100% Federal vs. 0% State	75% Federal vs. 25% State	50% Federal vs. 50% State	25% Federal vs. 75% State	0% Federal vs. 100% State
Number of states	3	9	5	7	11

The eleven states identified above that receive no federal funding for workplace education require special notice. These states have taken the opportunity to utilize state and local investments to expand adult education and develop an infrastructure that will help to sustain workplace education. States have aligned resources and funding and at times, developed legislation that has helped them to become self-sufficient (Self-sufficiency here indicates those states that are implementing workplace education without any federal funding). These states are: Rhode Island, West Virginia, Maine, Mississippi, Utah, Massachusetts, New York, Wisconsin, Oregon, North Dakota, and New Hampshire. For the future, it will be important for policy-makers to learn from these states about the strategies they utilized and the challenges they encountered in obtaining their self-sufficiency.

The following table represents the amount of funds allotted under WIA Title II for workplace education in the last year. Only 10 states (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York and Pennsylvania) provided actual amounts, others said they did not collect the information or it was not available, while still others did not answer the question.

WIA Title II Funding

Dollar Amounts	\$50,000- \$300,000	\$500,000 and above
Number of States	4	6

Of the ten states reporting, employers in 75% of those states provide some form of in-kind contributions. Most of these employers provide support in the form of materials, classroom space and/or release time. In 17% of the states responding, the release time is paid. In Kentucky, employers are required to pay employees for attending any kind of training. In less than half the states responding, employers contribute through targeted funding, specific to workplace education programs. In Wisconsin, employers match funds for a two-year workplace education grant cycle.

Current Initiatives

Question #2 - Is there a current initiative in your state to increase participation in workplace education?

Question #3 - Is this initiative in workplace education tied to state legislative or statutory authority?

Of the 38 states that responded, 52% indicated a current state led workplace education initiative. All but four states indicated there were no ties to any state legislation. In Rhode Island, employers contribute to a special fund for employee improvement. Georgia offers a tax credit to businesses that fund basic adult education for employees and also awards organizations sponsoring and sustaining workplace literacy programs. In Wisconsin workplace education programs are tied to legislation through incentive grants. Although

Colorado does not currently have legislation tied to workplace education, there have been attempts to offer tax incentives to businesses offering workplace education. In Florida, The Florida Business and Education Partnership promotes local business partnering to deliver programs and services. In Mississippi, 15 Basic Skills Specialists are assigned to community colleges and it is their main responsibility to establish partnerships and set-up classes in industries and businesses.

Barriers in Workplace Education

Question #2 - What barriers are you confronting with workplace education programs?

Nearly all states indicate that appropriate funding for workplace education remains a major barrier. This barrier is often attributed to the downturn in the economy and its effect on business. As a result, employers have cut back on training as a way to minimize their costs.

In some states there is a perception that there is no need for workplace education. In some instances the employers do not feel there are enough students among their employees that require training and therefore are not inclined to participate or contribute.

It is also difficult for employers to coordinate release time for their employees. During a booming economy, employees are needed to work. During a downturn, fewer funds are available from both the private and public sectors.

Another common barrier to workplace education cited by states is the lack of appropriately credentialed teachers to teach in the workplace. The workplace environment requires a different set of teaching skills than those required in basic Adult Education courses. In addition to the basic Adult Education curriculum of reading, math and English as a Second Language, there is a growing demand from employers for “soft skills” such as communications, personal management and teamwork.

Location of Programs

Question #4 - Where are workplace education programs offered?

Of the 38 states that responded, 76% said that half, if not all, their programs are located at the worksite. Thirteen percent (13%) of states specified that less than half their programs were located at the worksite. The remaining states did not indicate the location of their programs.

One-Stop Connections

Question #5 - Are your workplace education programs connected to one-stop services and who’s responsible at the local level?

Of the 35 states that responded to this question, 73% reported a partnership with One-Stops. Nearly half of those states indicated the partnership to be of a limited nature. Only

19% of the respondents indicated there was not a connection between their workplace education programs and the One-Stops.

Responsibility for Implementation

Question #6 - Who's responsible for implementation of workplace education programs at the local level?

In most instances, implementation of workplace education at the local level is through the community colleges and LEA's. More often than not, employers and learning centers play a role in implementation. It was found that in a few cases, community organizations are responsible for implementation.

Support Services

Question #7 - What kinds of support services do you provide to workplace education programs?

The most common support services offered through workplace education programs are training and curriculum development. One-third of the respondents also indicated partnership building, policies and support, and marketing as services offered to their programs.

General Findings

- Although many states do not have a current initiative underway for workplace education, several respondents stress that workplace education is a top priority.
- Many states cannot clearly distinguish the differences between basic adult education and workplace education. In some instances, although a definition was provided, states could not clearly apply the definition to their programs.
- States that have formed solid alliances between their local workforce development agencies and employers are more likely to have a current initiative underway.

IV. Workplace Education Program Qualities

The table below shows the results of how states characterized their workplace education programs according to the following four elements in question #8. The elements are: 1) enrollment in workplace education programs, 2) whether workplace education staff is full-time, part-time or contractual, 3) if there is a state-led effort to promote workplace education, and 4) who the state partners are in workplace education.

Please note that for some states (13) there is information in the table on numbers of students participating in either *Workplace Literacy Programs* or *Programs for Work-*

Based Project Learners. These numbers are taken from the National Reporting System (NRS) table for “Participant Status and Program Enrollment,” July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002 period.

Workplace Education Program Qualities

States	State/Local Partners	Enrollment	State Staff
Alabama	N/A	0% in Work-based Learning Programs; 327 Participants in Workplace Literacy Programs	None
Alaska	N/A	Not known	None
Arizona	N/A	Less than 3%	Not known
Arkansas	One-Stops, Employment Security Agencies, Department of Human Services, Employment and Training Agencies, Economic Development Agencies	3-5%	Full-time
California	California Workforce Investment Board	Less than 3%	Part-time
Colorado	BOCES (Board of Cooperative Services), Colorado Community College System, Colorado Department of Human Services - TANF, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, Department of Corrections, Even Start / Family Literacy Providers, Faith-based communities, K-12 LEA's [NCLB efforts], One-stop directors, Locally elected officials, Private employers, Rural and urban workforce development boards, Colorado State Board of Education, State libraries, and Office of Workforce Development.	5%	Contractual
Connecticut	One-Stops, Employer Advisory Group, LEA's and SDE Staff	3-5%	Contractual
Delaware	DEDO, Inter-agency Council on Adult Literacy	Less than 3%	No
Florida	Department of Education Workforce Florida Alternative Education Department of Juvenile Justice Chamber of commerce Local employers Community Colleges, One-Stop Centers, Youth Challenge (FL	3 participants in Work-based Programs, 10,249 Participants in Workplace Literacy	Part-time state staff and contractual

	National guards), LEA's, Regional Workforce Boards		
Georgia	N/A	3% -5%	Part-time
Hawaii	Not known	Less than 3%	Not known
Idaho	None	Less than 3%	No
Illinois	Advisory Board composed of Illinois Department of Employment and Security housed with a one-stop	Less than 3%	No
Indiana	Workforce Development	3-5%	Part-time; Contractual
Iowa	Iowa Workforce Development	5-10%	Full-time
Kansas	None	5-10%	No
Kentucky	Council on Postsecondary Education, Cabinet for Workforce Development, Cabinet for Economic Development, and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System	Over 10%	Full-time
Louisiana	The Louisiana Workforce Commission, Louisiana Department of Labor, Local Workforce Investment Boards, The State Board of Regents and Community & Technical Colleges.	Less than 3%	Full-time
Maine	Department of Labor, Department of Human Services, Department of Corrections, Maine Centers for Women Work and Community, Maine Public Broadcasting	No Data – ME does not collect	No
Maryland	Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation Programs; One- Stop centers; LWIBs, Welfare to Work; Employers	Less than 3%	Not known
Massachusetts	Industry associations & the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Commonwealth Corporation & the Division of Employment and Training, and the LWIB Association	6%, 1449 workers	Full-time
Michigan	Not known	3-5%	No

Workplace Education Program Qualities

States	State/Local Partners	Enrollment	State Staff
Minnesota	Governor's Workforce Development Council, Workforce Education Resource Team, Higher Ed Coordinating Agency, MN Dept. of Economic Security	3-5%	Part-time
Mississippi	Community Colleges MS Development Authority Employment Security Office Planning and development Districts Department of Human Services	1785 participants in Work-based Programs, 2278 Participants in Workplace Literacy Programs	Local staff funded through community colleges
Missouri	Division of Workforce Development, Employment and Training, Missouri Chamber of Commerce	3%	Part-Time
Montana	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nebraska	N/A	No participants in Work-based Programs, 76 Participants in Workplace Literacy	N/A
Nevada	Community colleges, public libraries, faith based and community organizations, employers	3-5%	Part-Time
New Hampshire	None	Less than 3%	No
New Jersey	Department of Labor	976 in Workplace Literacy Programs	N/A
New Mexico	N/A	1406 participants in Work-based Programs, 362 participants in Workplace Literacy	N/A
New York	AFL-CIO	Above 10%	No*
North Carolina	None at the present time	5-10%	Part-time
North Dakota	One-Stops, Community Colleges, Community-based Organizations, LEA's	3-5%	Part-Time

Workplace Education Program Qualities

States	State/Local Partners	Enrollment	State Staff
Ohio	State Superintendent of Public Instruction on the Governor's Workforce Policy Board	3-5%	Contractual and part-time
Oklahoma	One-Stop Title I participants	Approximately 5%	Part-time, Contractual
Oregon	Governor's Workforce Office, Title 1B, Employment Department, TANF, Voc. Rehab., Professional Technical Education, Economic Development. Oregon Workforce Investment Board Oregon State Board of Education	N/A	N/A
Pennsylvania	Community colleges, PA Dept. of Labor and Industry, Workforce Investment Boards, WIA network, One-stops	3-5%	Part-time and Contractual
Rhode Island	RI State Department of Labor and Training, Human Resource Investment Council	3-5%	No
South Carolina	One-stops, Vocational Rehab, Corrections	22% (26,000 of 119,000 total ABE students)	Full-time
South Dakota	AEL	Less than 3%	Part-Time
Tennessee	N/A	818 participants in Work-based Programs, 913 Participants in Workplace Literacy Programs	N/A
Texas	N/A	0% in Work-based Programs, 393 Participants in Workplace Literacy Programs	None
Utah	DWS, Utah Education Network	5-10%	Yes
Vermont	N/A	0% in Work-based Programs, 327 Participants in Workplace Literacy Programs	None
Virginia	Virginia Employment Commission, Department of Health and Human Services, Virginia Literacy Foundation	5% at most, geographically concentrated	Contractual
Washington	State Education Advisory Council, Department of Health	Less than 3% Programs	Part-time (2FTE who devote part-

	and Human Services, Employment Security Department, Department of Community and Trade Development, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Worker Center		time to work-based learning)
West Virginia	Adult Basic Education, the Governor's Workforce Investment Division.	Less than 3%	Full-time, Part-time and Contractual
Wisconsin	Department of Workforce Development, Wisconsin Economic Development Association, Workforce Development Boards, Adult Continuing Education/Economic Development (WTCS)	Less than 3%	Part-time
Wyoming	None at present	Less than 3%	No

V. Conclusion

The general findings of this report show that although many states do not have a current initiative specifically aimed at workplace education, many claim to consider it as a top priority. States find that workplace education is intrinsically tied to the successful economic development of their communities and a better skilled workforce. This points to the importance of increasing and strengthening the implementation of effective workplace education programs at the state and local levels.

A more targeted marketing approach aimed at engaging greater numbers of employers is crucial. These employers need not only be large companies but also small and medium-size businesses. Those employers that participate in workplace education programs do so because they see it as a means of gaining the skilled workers they need to do business in an effective and efficient way.

States are continuing to offer workplace education in a variety of ways and methods. Some states are taking big steps and setting systems in place that appear to be working such as:

- Arkansas with their *Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE)* program,
- Pennsylvania through their *Framework for Foundation Skills* initiative and their *Workforce Improvement Network (WIN)*,
- Massachusetts with their *Basic Education and Employment Skills Training (BEST)* initiative,
- Connecticut, with their *Workforce Education Initiative*, and
- Florida with their *The Florida Best Business and Education Partnership Program*.

These states, among others, are clearly paving the way as models for other states to emulate. Their strides toward self-sufficiency and the development of creative strategies

to engage new partners among employers, state and local agencies and organizations are certainly noteworthy. It is also becoming increasingly important to look at the alignment of funding, services and other resources in order to avoid duplication of efforts and develop a more cohesive workplace education system.

VI. Suggested Policy Actions

Following are some suggested policy actions for consideration.

For Policy-Makers:

- Identify and fund “promising practices” in workplace education at the state and local level in order to document and collect evidence-based data on the outcomes of these practices, which then can serve as models for replication in other states or locales.
- Encourage state investment in workplace education using the language in the reauthorization blueprint as a starting point. States should be encouraged to utilize the designated 5% of their funding to develop programs with employers that meet the special needs of participating employees in any given population.
- Encourage alignment of resources and services among the various federal and state agencies mandated to assist in workforce development.
- Develop better parameters for reporting student achievement through the NRS.
- Develop accountability standards that will crosswalk different agencies and federal, state and local regulations.
- Encourage coordination of capabilities and services for workplace education among adult education programs and community colleges.

For Program Developers:

- Engage more business participation in workplace education through concerted marketing strategies.
- Continue to develop creative strategies to interest small and medium size businesses in becoming involved in workplace education.

For Administrators:

- Provide professional development opportunities and develop training models in workplace education for teachers in the field.
- Provide on-going technical assistance resources for Adult Education practitioners and employers (i.e. Academies, websites, funded research, etc.).

For Practitioners:

- Continue to research possibilities for combining services offered to employers that will also help students reach varied goals, i.e. GED completion, ESL training, etc.
- Develop assessment tools and curricula that can be utilized across programs in order to facilitate the transition of learners from one program to another.