October 2018

California Adult Education Program Quality Framework and Self-Assessment Recommendations Report

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# Overview

This document was prepared for the California Adult Education Program to provide an overview of the work conducted by the Member Effectiveness Field Team[[1]](#footnote-1) as well as present the field team’s recommendations to the state.

## Field Team process

The team initially began working on quality indicators of effectiveness in March 2018. From that conversation emerged the need to develop tools and resources to help consortia and members not only identify what indicates effectiveness, but also a way to assess said effectiveness. From March until September 2018 the facilitation team worked to develop the products agreed upon by the team while regularly sending the items back to the team for review and revision. Although the facilitation team was responsible for the physical development of the products, the core team identified indicators, provided regular feedback, and had the final say on all products. The results of these planning activities included the development of a Program Quality Framework, Self-Assessment tool, and the [recommendations](#Recommendations) included below.

## Charge

The agreed upon charge of the field team was to identify best practices and metrics each local consortium can use to improve their performance. The team agreed early on that they did not want to only state “this is what effectiveness is” but they want to help consortia and members along and help them achieve effectiveness. Thus, it was identified early on that the products produced would be used a part of a continuous improvement process to identify gaps in service and areas of need.

## Planning Activities

The table below provides the planning objectives and activities the field team participated in from March 2018 through September 2018.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 03/2018 | 03 – 06/2018 Interim | 06/2018 | 06-09/2018  Interim | 09/2018 |
| Clarification of charge | Develop and review framework and crosswalk | Understanding of process and product to date | Develop and review self-assessment | Review self-assessment tool and receive feedback from the team. |
| Discussion of opportunities and challenges |  | Initial input and refinement |  | Review and discuss implementation recommendations for the framework. |
| Clarify roles, schedule, and other organizational issues |  | Next steps for sub teamwork |  | Determine next steps for the field team. |
|  |  |  |  | Identify recommendations to provide the AEP office. |

## Members

Kit Alvarez: Administrator, Regional Occupational Program, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, Inland Adult Education Consortium

Steve Bsharah: Principal, Tehachapi Adult School   
Kern AEP Consortium

Kiu Chuong: Project Specialist – Financial, Sacramento County Office of Education, Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium

Holly Correa: Program Director I Adult Education, Ventura County Community College District  
Ventura County Adult Education Consortium

Steve Curiel: Principal, Huntington Beach Adult School   
Vice-chair, Coast Adult Education Consortium

Kathy Garcia: Business Services & Marketing Manager, Job Training Center   
Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium

Dr. PaoLing Guo: Principal, ABC Adult School  
Leadership Team Member, Partnership for Adult Academic and Career Education

Stacy Nojima: Transition Coordinator, Skyline College   
Adult Education College & Career Educational Leadership Consortium

Valentina Purtell: Provost, North Orange Continuing Education  
North Orange County Consortium for Adult Education

Blaine Smith  
Director, North Far North Regional Consortium

Daniel Soriano: Counselor, Azusa Adult School  
Citrus College Adult Education Consortium

Debbie Vanschoelandt: Interim Dean, Integrated Design, Engineering & Automation (IDEA), Irvine Valley College  
Co-Chair, South Orange County Regional Consortium

**Facilitation Team:** Paul Downs (Allies), Greg Hill Jr. (WestEd), Neil Kelly (CCCCO)[[2]](#footnote-2), and Sudie Whalen (AIR)[[3]](#footnote-3)

# Scope

This scope of the quality framework and self-assessment is to provide a comprehensive framework for improvement. It is the express wish of the field team that the products produced are not be used for accountability purposes but instead be used as part of an ongoing improvement and planning process as outlined below in the [planning cycle](#PlanningCycle) portion of the recommendations section.

# Guiding Framework

Through the work of the field team, a program quality framework was developed, reviewed, and revised. The purpose of the framework is to increase the capacity of consortia and members to achieve the system alignment vision and outcomes of the California Adult Education Program through an ongoing continuous improvement process.

# Principles

The field team identified the five principles which were used to guide the work

1. Focus on the need and goals of students and community stakeholders.
   * The team wanted to ensure the primary focus of all tools developed would be the student experience as they travel through the California adult education program system regardless of their starting point (i.e., k-12 adult school or community college).
2. Promote collaboration and cohesion within consortia.
   * The consensus among the team was cycling greater collaboration and cohesion is needed across the state. Thus, the products developed are intended to be used as part of the clapboard process of identifying both member and consortium needs.
3. Build capacity.
   * It was apparent early on that capacity would need to be addressed. Simply put, the team believes could be difficult for member or consortia to be effective when lacking the capacity to do so.
4. Respond to local circumstances and assets.
   * It was imperative to consider the differing circumstances and assets of the various consortia and members across the state. Because needs vary from consortia to consortia the products produced were designed to be applicable to all consortia and members.
5. Build on existing processes and tools.
   * The team that made an intentional and conscientious effort to consider the use of existing tools and processes in the development of the quality framework and self-Assessment. This was done to assure the products developed were not duplicative but complementary to what already exists.

# Program Quality Framework Overview

The quality framework as five specific categories as indicated below:

1. **Capacity**: this category addresses program design and administration along with community partnerships, learning environment, and facilities.
2. **Connection**: In the connection phase, students first engage with the idea of pursuing a course of study. They are provided or gather on their own the information and resources that lead to the decision to enroll in school in general, and one school in particular. When looking at the student experience at the institutional level, this phase includes students’ selection of a school to attend. When examining the student experience within a particular program of study, this includes students’ exposure to different disciplines and career opportunities.
3. **Entry:** During the entry phase, students arrive at the selected school or begin the onramp to a program of study. At the institutional level, this includes admission, financial aid, assessment testing, and counseling appointments. For programs with prerequisites, included here as well is the completion of “gatekeeper” courses (such as general education requirements). At the program level, the entry phase begins with students’ decision to pursue a particular discipline or program and ends when students have passed the initial required courses or “gatekeepers” for that program.
4. **Progress**: When experiencing the progress phase, students move from their initial engagement with postsecondary education or a particular educational program to a long-term commitment. Specifically, the Loss/Momentum Framework defines progress as completing program requirements, whether that is completion of a credential/degree or a particular program of study. This includes students’ enrollment in the courses they need to achieve their educational goal; the learning experience in each of these courses; and the support that is available to move students closer to completion, both inside and outside the classroom.
5. **Completion/Transition**: The completion/transition phase comprises both the student’s movement through an institution or program and the attainment of secondary/postsecondary credentials, meaningful employment, and/or pursuit of further education.

|  |
| --- |
| Quality Framework Indicators and Guidelines at a glance |
| I. CAPACITY |
| INDICATOR: The consortium and individual members actively build and support the capacity to deliver high-quality adult education to meet community needs. |
| Guideline 1:  Each Consortium maintains effective collaborative processes for planning, implementation, and accountability. |
| Guideline 2:  Member Agencies have the leadership, management and accountability processes necessary to meet community need for AE |
| Guideline 3:  Consortia and/or individual members engage stakeholders in collaborative needs assessment and planning |
| Guideline 4: Agencies have adequate Staffing and Professional Development |
| Guideline 5: Agencies have facilities that promote adult learning and promote high levels of access by communities for need |
| II. CONNECTION |
| INDICATOR: Consortium members provide coordinated, proactive engagement to potential students on educational and training options and choices |
| Guideline 1: Consortia and members collaboratively engage prospective students from communities of high need to provide services in aligned program areas |
| Guideline 2: Program Integration and Alignment - Consortium agencies demonstrate a “no-wrong-door” approach to regional education and training |
| III. ENTRY |
| INDICATOR: Consortium members have established common intake and assessment procedures and provide career and goal exploration and planning that addresses individual student needs and interests |
| Guideline 1: Intake and Orientation - Consortia and members orient adult learners in a manner that is culturally responsive and promotes self-efficacy and confidence |
| Guideline 2: Assessment and Placement - Consortia and members use multiple Guidelines to inform placement, education and career planning, classroom instruction, and continuous improvement activities |
| Guideline 4: Proactive (Intrusive) Advising - Consortia and members collaborate in the provision of proactive counseling and support services to promote persistence and long-term student success |
| Guideline 3: Ongoing and Consistent Support |
| IV.  PROGRESS |
| INDICATOR: Consortium members have shared and aligned programs which allow students to accelerate progress via courses that are geared toward academic, career, and community goals. |
| Guideline 1: Skill Attainment in Aligned and/or Articulated Programs |
| Guideline 2: Integrated Education and Training (IET) |
| V. COMPLETION / TRANSITION |
| INDICATOR: The consortium and member agencies facilitate timely program completion and successful transition into postsecondary education, training, and / or employment. |
| Guideline 1. Programs demonstrate effectiveness in transitioning students into postsecondary and / or the workforce |
| Guideline 2. Partnerships with local workforce and community service providers are integrated into programs of study |
| Guideline 3. Programs conduct continuous improvement planning that in conjunction with all regional adult education stakeholders |
| Guideline 4. Professional development provides opportunities for faculty and staff to turn new knowledge into practice |

# Self-Assessment Tool Overview

The self-Assessment uses similar categories and terms as seen in the framework. Participants may take the assessment and rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 5. The assessment is useful for planning purposes to help identify areas of need. This assessment can be taken by consortia directors, counselors, transitions, and other consortium and member staff. Although this self-assessment is intended for use at the consortium planning level, it is also beneficial for individual members to be able to rate their effectiveness by using said assessment. If each member in a consortium were to take the assessment, the consortia director would have significant information specific to the effectiveness of each member, thereby making the director better equipped to support the needs of the consortium as a whole. This, in turn, will allow for better consortium planning and greater efficiency in terms of identifying technical assistance and professional development needs.

# Recommendations

**Core Recommendation** - The member effectiveness team’s core recommendation is to establish **a policy for implementing a consortium-led ongoing quality improvement and planning process**. The team developed a Program Quality Framework and Self-Assessment Tool, which are recommended as core elements of the quality improvement policy. The team further recommends that the state provide supportive resources, including a quality improvement handbook, professional development and technical assistance. The team recommends that the policy be implemented entirely through a locally-defined process and not be used as a state-mandated accountability process. The team also recommends that the state provide regular updates to K12 superintendents and community college administrators on the value, purpose and quality improvement processes for the California Adult Education Program.

1. **Implement an overarching performance-enhancement strategy linking and integrating all statewide technical assistance and professional development:** As previously mentioned, the team strongly felt that the products produced should be included as part of a seven-step continuous improvement process with the following characteristics:

* High-impact performance improvements
* Greater efficiency and coordination of state and local resources
* Flexibility to support technical assistance and professional development at the state, local, and regional levels.
* A just-in-time assessment that allows agencies to pinpoint improvement areas and tap into resources immediately.
* Allows for the identification of best practices and subject matter experts at a regional and local level.
* Integration of recommendations of other field teams

The team recommends the seven-step process below:

* 1. Conduct self-assessment
  2. Find area(s) of improvement
  3. Access the program quality framework
  4. Identify areas of need specific to professional development and/or technical assistance[[4]](#footnote-4)
  5. Contact a Technical Assistance and/or Professional Development provider for assistance
  6. Technical Assistance and/or Professional Development provider connects consortia/member to training/Technical Assistance
  7. Follow up evaluation on progress (or self-assessment)

1. **Incorporate Quality Improvement Cycles into 3-Year and 1-Year AEP Planning** – Implement Align the quality improvement process to AEP planning cycles (3 year comprehensive; 1-year update, WASC accreditation)
2. **Formalize use and application of the Program Quality Framework and develop processes to ensure ongoing renewal.** Peer Learning -- Use the Framework as an organizing structure at statewide AEP events to promote peer sharing and support.
3. **Develop AEP Program Handbook** and related resource aligned to the quality categories, a glossary of terms to facilitate the use of common language, and other items identified by the AEP leadership.
4. **Leverage Technical Assistance / Professional Development to support consortium continuous improvement.** Technical Assistance and Professional Development -- Use Technical Assistance and Professional Development resources, while ensuring relevance to California.
5. **Use an effective state-wide roll-out approach to support the quality improvement process:** Use available resources toprovide webinars and a face-to-face training series specific to the use of the self-assessment and framework. This series should provide guidance as to how consortia and members should use the tools as part of theseven-step continuous improvement process and result in the characteristics mentioned in [Recommendation I](#_Recommendations).
6. **Provide targeted communication to improve Stakeholder Understanding and Support for Quality Adult Education**. Use briefings and other communication strategies to build awareness and support for Adult Education among community college and K12 leaders, and particularly those who may not typically be engaged in adult education planning, i.e., K12 superintendents, fiscal officers, and high-level administrators.

# APPENDIX 1: Program Quality Framework

# APPENDIX 2: Self-Assessment Tool

# APPENDIX 3: Crosswalk of Quality and Effectiveness Approaches

# APPENDIX 4: Professional Development and Technical Assistance Resources

1. Referred to as “field team” or “team” from this point forward. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. CCCCO: California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. AIR: American Institutes for Research [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Technical Assistance - a process of connecting persons or groups to expertise and resources that address needs and provide support. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)