

2023 TDLWD Adult Education RFA Q&A

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5. If an agency submits for multiple counties but the potential to serve is still less than 4,000, how would the funding work? Since it is not a small single county area, would the agency receive \$200,000 plus some additional funds to cover the larger area, regardless of the potential to serve? Is the potential to serve the main factor?
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7. Can you provide updated Q&A information/responses that has already been submitted?
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38. We have questions about the different funding models for (a) potential to serve and (b) \$1,500 per individual served, as listed in the NOFO. Any guidance you could provide would be helpful.
39. Is it correct that we are to base our budget and staffing requests from Potential to Serve numbers and then in our narrative, explain the "reality" of the numbers likely to be served, based on infrastructure, partnerships, etc.?
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44. How can I apply for English class

1. Is the \$1,500 per individual served unduplicated? If a single person or family receives multiple services, can they be included in numbers served?

The \$1,500 cost-per-participant ratio is the general expectation for grantees; grantees are expected to enroll at least 1 participant for every \$1,500 of funding. A participant is defined as an individual who receives at least 12 hours of services without exiting the program (i.e., going 90 days without receiving any service). The goal is to enroll as many students as possible, and the \$1,500 ratio is to give a general idea of minimum expectations for student enrollment.

2. With the smaller footprint of the service area, it seems there may be new or additional grantees and service providers. How will staff transition be handled (if the current grantee changes)?

The primary goal is to minimize lapses of service in a given area. While some disruption is inevitable, it is imperative for all affected agencies to collaborate and take actions that will result in the best solutions for the communities and students who need the Adult Education program. As soon as the new roster of grantees is determined, TDLWD will initiate collaborative discussions with agencies and provide guidance.

TDLWD will also attempt to provide “seed funding” to grantees to aid in the transition. It will be critical for new grantees to begin hiring staff as soon as possible. Employees who will likely transition to a new agency may need to have a period of extended employment with their original agency, which TDLWD will also provide seed funding for. Example: Agency A currently serves No-Name County, but Agency B will serve there in the new grant cycle. John Doe works for Agency A, serving in No-Name County, and Agency B wants to include John among their potential new hires. Due to Agency B’s hiring policy, they won’t be able to interview and potentially hire John until mid-July at the earliest (even if they get seed funding). If Agency A is able,

they can use seed funding to extend John's term of employment for an extra few weeks into the new program year to keep providing services to No-Name County during Agency B's hiring period.

3. If our IHE has a current negotiated indirect cost rate and some of the activities are "on-site" and others - particularly the incarcerated participants - occur "off-site", can we only use the "off-site" rate?

Grantees must use a *restricted* indirect cost rate, per Federal requirements. See [34 CFR 76.564](#). The restricted rate is typically 8% unless the cognizant agency has provided a different rate. Agencies are encouraged to check with their cognizant agency to determine what their actual restricted rate is.

4. Can monthly stipends be paid to employees such as teachers or paraprofessionals who use their personal cell phones to contact students? I know some workforce boards offer \$50 per to employees who use their personal phones.

TDLWD anticipates that not *all* local program employees will require work cell phones. Grantees should be strategic in determining which employees actually need cell phones. In order to consider the possibility of a stipend to employees who use their personal devices for work, this practice must be established by the local agency as an organizational policy that applies to all of its employees.

5. If an agency submits for multiple counties but the potential to serve is still less than 4,000, how would the funding work? Since it is not a small single county area, would the agency receive \$200,000 plus some additional funds to cover the larger area, regardless of the potential to serve? Is the potential to serve the main factor?

In general, the 4,000 potential-to-serve minimum only applies to single-county proposals. If an applicant proposes to serve multiple counties, even if the total potential to serve is less than 4,000, TDLWD will consider fully funding the applicant and not require local match (assuming the applicant has proposed a budget of at least \$200,000). It's also possible that the budget proposed and awarded could be higher than \$200,000, depending on the circumstance. However, in any such scenario, TDLWD will need to negotiate with the applicant to discuss the specific situation—the service area and funding proposed—to determine what is feasible.

6. Is it possible for our agency to write for two clusters of counties? We are hoping to partner with other agencies but want to be involved in both grants.

The six-county maximum applies to a single agency applying on their own. If an agency is partnering with other agencies as a consortium, the consortium may apply for more than six counties. If a consortium is awarded the grant, it is expected that the partnering agencies will use good judgement in determining how to best “split” the service area and program operations, in accordance with where and how each of the agencies is set up.

7. Can you provide updated Q&A information/responses that has already been submitted?

Yes—TDLWD will continue to update this section of the website with Q&A.

8. Can an adult contract high school with Memphis Shelby County Schools (LEA authorizer) in Shelby County apply for this grant? We are a state recognized high school (Not HiSET). We receive funding under the BEP model. We are a non-profit 501 (C) 3 under the Goodwill umbrella.

Yes – if an agency can provide evidence of “demonstrated effectiveness” in providing adult education services (see Appendix A of the RFA), they are eligible to apply for the grant. Demonstrated effectiveness does NOT have to include HiSET prep or high school equivalency.

9. In reference to Section 7- Corrections Education, third paragraph: Can you elaborate on how adult education might provide special education and secondary school credit? Does this mean an IEP followed by a certified special ed teacher only? Is secondary school credit given through adult ed or the secondary school previously attended? Would the credit be earned through HiSET/TABE prep material or through other materials?

The list of possible corrections education services described in Section 7 of the RFA is taken directly from Federal regulations. Each of these services is not necessarily required, but are among the possibilities for designing a corrections education program. In fact, special education and secondary school credit are not currently among services being provided through this grant for corrections education. However, if a grantee were to provide programs for special education and/or secondary school credit, the program design should include best practices and requirements associated with those areas (e.g., using special ed teachers where possible, collaborating with the local high school for credit recovery options, etc.).

Secondary school credit is NOT earned through HiSET/TABE, but through requirements established by local school districts.

10. Since Admin costs are not required to be determined in the budget proposals, when will AJC infrastructure costs be determined? Will that be part of the negotiations? Should applicants be prepared to know what the AE amount for the IFA is in April? Will AE be more able to cover the complete cost of their presence in the AJC?

Local AJC infrastructure costs will be determined by TDLWD, in collaboration with grantees, during the final budgeting and contracting process in May and June. This will NOT be part of the negotiations to determine grant awards. Any funds required to be used by grantees for AJC costs will be provided *in addition* to the base funding amount. TDLWD will discuss these changes in the approach to AJC funding with other WIOA partners at the state level. State-level partners will provide guidance to ensure all local area partners understand the new process. It is yet to be determined the degree to which Adult Education will cover AJC costs. In general, the Adult Education funds are very limited in their ability to cover much of the AJC costs, per Federal regulations.

11. We would like to hire a Workforce Development Coordinator to write all IET's and meet with local employers to set up classes . . . is that considered an administrative position or instructional? I have the same question about a Corrections Coordinator who will oversee all institution classes, but also meet with jail staff to set up classes.

These positions would be considered instructional costs. Note: applicants are *not* required to determine local administrative costs in their budget proposals; administrative cost limits will be determined as part of each year's grant contracting process.

12. In the RFA it states: "Enter into a local memorandum of understanding with the Local Board, relating to the operations of the one-stop system". Is this required as a part of the application or just something we say we plan to do (if we are not applying as an existing program)?

Because TDLWD does not currently know which applicants will be awarded grants, applicants should describe their willingness and capability to participate in the one-stop system—to provide robust services, be a value partner, and enter into an MOU with the Local Board if asked to do so by TDLWD.

13. If our agency does not currently offer Adult Education services in a county that we're applying for, but we would anticipate hiring most of the same staff who currently serve there under a different agency, can we describe the performance outcomes achieved in that county by that staff?

Yes. You cannot claim those performance outcomes as belonging to your agency, since they were achieved under a different agency. However, in your application, you can describe how you anticipate being able to hire the same staff who achieved those outcomes, and how you anticipate those staff would perform under your agency. Please do not "stretch the truth" on this topic – ensure your responses are honest and transparent.

14. Will applicants be required to rewrite or resubmit any part of the application or proposal after the negotiations period?

No. After the negotiations are complete, TDLWD anticipates only requiring applicants to resubmit their cover page to reflect changes to the service area and/or funding amount.

15. Should we include budget information or details about how our agency plans to provide financial or other support to the program?

Yes! Providing details about how your agency plans to provide additional funding or support to the program, including the estimated financial value of that support, can result in a higher score, particularly in Part 1 of the application (Budget Narrative).

16. Can you explain the supplement-not-supplant requirement?

Grantees cannot use grant funds to replace state or local public funds that are designated and budgeted for adult education services. Rather, grant funds must supplement public funds already designated and budgeted for adult education.

17. If we propose to serve 3 counties, but are willing to take on additional counties if needed, should we describe that somehow?

Yes! TDLWD would appreciate knowing upfront which additional counties an agency would be open to taking on if asked. This can be indicated within the email where the application is submitted, or as a parenthetical note on the cover page where you list the counties you're applying for.

18. Who will be reviewing and scoring the applications?

Reviewers include Adult Education staff from other states and individuals in Tennessee who work in the education-workforce space at the state level. No members of the TDLWD Adult Education staff are reviewers. To achieve higher scores in general, applicants should write with their readers in mind—providing details about how specific services will be provided in specific communities, and showcasing the unique and impactful work provided by the agency, will help readers who aren't familiar with Adult Education in Tennessee.

19. We are a postsecondary institution—should our ABE application focus primarily on how we will expand remedial support in our college and connect students with postsecondary/training opportunities?

While providing remedial support to college students is allowable with the grant, it should not be the primary purpose of the grant. The grant is not meant to become a comprehensive college remediation program. In addition, the grant is not meant to solely provide postsecondary education or training opportunities and connections for students. There are aspects of postsecondary education and training that the grant can support, such as integrated education and training, and postsecondary preparation and transition. However, the primary purpose of the grant is to provide adult basic education services—instruction in math, reading, writing, English language, and high school diploma or equivalency preparation—*below* the postsecondary level.

To the extent possible, applicants should describe *both* aspects of how they will design the program: the basic education aspect, and the connections with postsecondary education and training / workforce development aspect (for the latter, particularly in Part 9 – Contextualized Learning, Part 10 – Cross-Agency Collaboration, and Part 11 – Local Plan Alignment).

20. Can we design the ABE program to only be for a certain group of students, such as ESL learners? Does the whole suite of services need to be provided for all students throughout the service area?

Any individual who meets eligibility requirements must not be turned away from the Adult Education program. However, depending on the circumstance and needs of the communities in the service area, it's possible that an agency designs the program to be optimized for student groups, or that certain activities are provided more robustly in some parts of the service area compared to others. Programs should be designed and located to get the best return on investment. Regardless of the various circumstances in an area, if a program's design is not optimized for

certain student groups, the program does need to do due diligence to provide some level of learning resources and/or connections with other programs and services that are more optimized for those students' needs.

For example, in a major metro area where there is a large population of both native English-speakers and English language learners, there should be programs designed for both. If there are multiple agencies in that community with the grant, it's possible that some of the agencies focus on native English-speakers and some focus on ESL learners, and the agencies coordinate referrals between one another. As another example, if a program in a rural area has very few ESL individuals in the community, it makes sense to not have ESL-specific classes; however, if an ESL learner shows up to the program, the program cannot turn them away, but should provide some kind of ESL learning resource (such as Burlington English) to the student and attempt to connect the student with additional ESL options that might exist via distance learning or other services in the community. TDLWD will provide resources and guidance in such situations.

21. How big should an ESL population be to be considered large enough to warrant ESL services?

In general, if census data indicates there are 500 or more adult ESL learners or non-U.S. citizens in a community or county, it is justifiable to offer some level of ESL services with the grant. Regardless, any individual who meets eligibility requirements must not be turned away from the Adult Education program. If a program's design is not optimized for certain student groups (such as ESL learners), the program does need to do due diligence to provide some level of learning resources and/or connections with other programs and services that are more optimized for those students' needs.

22. Is there a page-length requirement for applications?

No. There is no requirement or limit for page-length. To give an approximate sense of scope, historically, applications have averaged 25-35 pages for the main narrative parts, with possibly additional appendix pages or attachments to include more data, letters of support, sample curriculum frameworks, sample syllabi or scope and sequences, class schedules, etc. Only the parts described in the scoring rubric are required for scoring, but applicants can add supplemental components as they deem necessary to add helpful context or additional insight.

23. Should we include supplemental components with our application, such as letters of support, MOUs with other partner agencies, sample syllabi, class schedules, additional data, etc.? How should we provide these?

Only the parts described in the scoring rubric are required for scoring, but applicants can add supplemental components as they deem necessary to add helpful context or additional insight. These can be added throughout the application in the various parts, as appendices, as footnotes/endnotes, or as separate email attachments to accompany the application.

24. Is TABE or CASAS required for all students, or can we use some other intake assessment?

Per Federal requirements, only Federal-approved assessments can be used for programs funded under WIOA Title II. In Tennessee, these assessments are TABE (for native English-speakers) and CASAS (for ESL learners). All students are required to take one of these assessments as part of the intake process. This is the only approved way to determine a student's beginning education level and to enter a student's information into the required performance reports.

25. Can we propose any funding amount? How do we know what's unrealistic?

Applicants should reference the budget guidance in the RFA Appendix C to determine what is realistic. Historically, grantees serve ~2% of the potential-to-serve population in an area, with an approximate cost-per-student of \$1,000 - \$1,500. While it's possible to take those numbers and simply "do the math" to arrive at a total, TDLWD is not suggesting this is how to determine the funding proposal. Rather, applicants can use these numbers to get an approximate sense for what is in the "ballpark" as they are building their budgets proposal. Agencies can be optimistic in their plans—they may anticipate serving a larger number of students or having aspects of a robust program design that cost more money. In sum, applicants should be realistic but optimistic as they build their budget proposals.

26. Is there a cap on the corrections budget proposal?

No. However, applicants should consider what is realistic concerning the corrections education needs and realities in their area. In general, applicants should assume needing a teacher for two separate classes per week for each county jail in the service area (with approximately 6-8 paid teacher hours per class per week). For large areas with many county jails, it may be necessary to hire or designate a full-

time corrections education coordinator (who could help with building partnerships, expanding the program, and do teaching and other program activities).

Adult Education program leaders and support staff can assist with corrections education services, but will not likely be needed solely for corrections education. The personnel part of the Corrections budget should only indicate staff who would be dedicated primarily to corrections education (i.e., they are not accounted for in the ABE budget).

27. Can a local workforce development board provide letters of support to an applicant?

No. Because TDLWD will be soliciting feedback from Local Boards concerning how well applications align with the local workforce development plan, it is not consistent or equitable for a Local Board to provide a letter of support for a given applicant prior to receiving all applications associated with their local area. However, AJC partners may provide a letter of support.

28. Are students enrolled in an adult high school ineligible for the grant's services?

No. They actually are eligible, because they are not enrolled in secondary school under state law, rather, they enrolled of their own free will and volition.

29. Are ACT prep materials allowed to be purchased and used for the program?

Yes. Curriculum materials that align with College and Career Readiness Standards, and that help students advance in their math, reading, writing, and English language skills, are allowable.

30. Which years of data should we provide?

For purposes of "demonstrated effectiveness", applicants should provide their 2 most-recent full-years' data. For current grantees, this is the data for program years 2020-21 and 2021-22. It is acceptable to provide additional data if the applicant desires, including year-to-date data for this current year, or data from prior years.

31. Does "demonstrated effectiveness" data have to be submitted in advance?

No. Applicants can submit "demonstrated effectiveness" data to TDLWD in one of two ways:

1. Prior to submitting the application, sending “demonstrated effectiveness” data via an email to Jay.Baker@tn.gov; Cc: TL.Smith@tn.gov and LaToya.Newson@tn.gov. This allows TDLWD to determine the applicant’s eligibility for the grant in advance, and potentially prevent an ineligible applicant from writing an application. OR,
2. Sending “demonstrated effectiveness” data as a separate attachment within the application submission email.

32. We’re concerned about using current staff and faculty to teach adult ed classes, particularly in the jails. Can you help us understand how this works?

The majority of the grant’s funds will be used to hire and compensate staff who work under the Adult Education program. Some of these staff might have their primary jobs already working for the agency (e.g., as staff or faculty of a college or, K-12 teachers or paraprofessionals in a school system), and they work some of their time for Adult Education. But many Adult Education staff will have Adult Education as their primary job (whether full-time or part-time). TDLWD anticipates grantees will use their HR practices to post jobs, conduct interviews, and hire individuals—who don’t already work for the agency—to do Adult Education. If grantees struggle to find teachers willing to teach in jails, they can consider paying a higher wage to these positions to entice more interest.

33. If we are awarded an IELCE grant, can we provide IELCE services outside of the county we were awarded to serve?

Yes, provided that services are being provided in communities where there is the most need, and there’s a justifiable need to provide services outside of the main county awarded. Potential-to-serve data indicates that the largest populations needing IELCE services are concentrated in the major metro areas, hence, the grant has been limited to those counties. IELCE funds are limited and must be focused on getting the best return on investment—classes and services should be located where the most possible students can take part in them.

34. If our agency has reverted AE grant funds to TDLWD in recent years, does that prohibit us from asking for a certain amount of funds? Should we try to justify why we reverted funds?

No, reverting funds in the past does not prevent an agency from requesting a certain amount. The budget proposal should be built from “zero”, which is a different funding model (in the past, TDLWD dictated the amount of funds

designated for each area up front). In the budget narrative, an agency can describe reasons for past funding reversions if they desire, but it is not a requirement.

35. How do we know which other agencies might be applying for the grant? Should we reach out to them?

It is a good idea for applicants to attempt to reach out to other prospective applicants in their area. Typical applicants include TCATs, community colleges, local school systems, and education nonprofits, but may include other agencies. Agencies can benefit from collaborating prior to writing an application by determining if there is potential overlap—it may be the case that the applicants can determine together who is best-suited to serve the county and write their proposals accordingly. For large potential-to-serve areas, such as the major metro areas, it's possible multiple agencies can be awarded and "split" the area. Or, agencies may decide to write a joint application as a consortium. It is not required to engage in such collaboration—after the application scoring and negotiation period, the highest scoring applicant(s) for an area will be awarded.

36. For agencies new to the grant, how in-depth does our demonstrated effectiveness data need to be? Can our college use learning support data?

The demonstrated effectiveness data does not need to be very in-depth. TDLWD is looking for nonzero data, for each of the last two full years, that indicate results the agency has achieved with adult learners in math, reading, writing and/or ESL instruction, as well as nonzero data related to high school diploma/equivalency, employment, and/or transitioning learners to postsecondary. For colleges, this can certainly be learning support (remedial programs) data. This is not meant to be a long or complex process; rather, TDLWD simply needs to determine if an agency has legitimate experience providing basic education and workforce development-related services to adult learners.

37. Would the adult students/ participants served through our college's ESL and workforce preparedness classes or sessions count toward "numbers served"? If so, would that include every adult served in every Workforce Training class? Can we count those adults who already have a job but are going back for re-skilling and possibly career advancement?

Any eligible student who enrolls in the Adult Education program and who attains at least 12 contact hours with the program (i.e., any allowable adult education or literacy activity supported by the program) is considered a participant and counts

toward numbers served. College students are not considered as program participants by default, but only if they enroll in and are served by the program.

38. We have questions about the different funding models for (a) potential to serve and (b) \$1,500 per individual served, as listed in the NOFO. Any guidance you could provide would be helpful.

The \$1,500 cost-per-participant ratio is a general expectation or goal for grantees; grantees are expected to enroll at least 1 participant for every \$1,500 of funding. However, this is not a hard and fast rule. The goal is to enroll as many students as possible, and the \$1,500 ratio is to give a general idea of expectations for student enrollment. Historically, grantees serve ~2% of the potential-to-serve population in an area, with an approximate cost-per-student of \$1,000 - \$1,500. While it's possible to take those numbers and simply "do the math" to arrive at a total, TDLWD is *not* suggesting this is how to determine the funding proposal. Rather, applicants can use these numbers to get an approximate sense for what is in the "ballpark" as they are building their budgets proposal. Agencies can be optimistic in their plans—they may anticipate serving a larger number of students or having aspects of a robust program design that cost more money.

39. Is it correct that we are to base our budget and staffing requests from Potential to Serve numbers and then in our narrative, explain the "reality" of the numbers likely to be served, based on infrastructure, partnerships, etc.?

No, the potential-to-serve numbers are only informational and can help determine realistic parameters for the budget and staffing requests. Applicants should start "from zero" and build their budget based on what they hope to accomplish; they should *not* start with a potential-to-serve type of formula and work backward.

40. What happens regarding budget if there is a shortfall in our calculations? Are there repercussions if we fail to achieve certain cost ratios or enrollment numbers?

There cannot be a "shortfall" because TDLWD has not established a hard and fast rule for how much funding can be proposed. If TDLWD receives a budget proposal that is excessive or there are not enough funds statewide to meet all grantees' requests, TDLWD will conduct negotiations with applicants to determine necessary adjustments. If grantees are not funded at their proposed levels, TDLWD will adjust expectations and goals for what is realistically doable for the grantee. Applicants should not let fear of asking for too much money be a reason to not apply for the grant. There are not financial repercussions for failing to achieve certain cost ratios

or enrollment numbers. If grantees give minimal effort to provide good services and don't strive for improvement, TDLWD may take action, but in general, the bottom-line expectation is for grantees to strive for continuous improvement and follow guidance from TDLWD.

41. Are we basing “Potential To Serve” numbers from census data on adult populations without a high school diploma or equivalent *and* jail population data?

Yes. The potential-to-serve data comes from the American Community Survey, which includes individuals in correctional facilities.

42. Are we required to do corrections education if the county jail already has an independently established education program (e.g., Davidson County and Shelby County)?

No, with a caveat. If a county already funds corrections education in their jail(s), a grantee does not necessarily need to provide services there, and the budget proposal for corrections can be minimal or left blank. However, grantees should strive to partner and assist with the corrections education work in the county jails to the extent feasible. TDLWD will provide additional guidance in these situations.

43. Can a paraprofessional that has a degree be used as a Corrections Coordinator to work with the jails? Can additional duties be assigned to the Corrections Coordinator as needed?

The degree or qualifications an employee needs depends on if the person will be teaching. The only requirement TDLWD has for staff qualifications is concerning teachers—teachers must have a bachelor's degree, and licensure or certification at the time of hire into Adult Education generally (or they can go through a waiver process). Specific duties assigned to an employee are at the discretion of the grantee and its program leaders. Only time spent working in the Adult Education program can be charged to the grant.

44. How can I apply for English class?

To apply for a grant to teach English classes, please review the Request for Applications. To sign up as a student to take an English class, please contact a local program near you (contact info found at: <https://www.tn.gov/workforce/jobs-and-education/ae/aer/find-your-program.html>).