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**“BOTTOM LINE” PRINCIPLES FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF TITLES I and II OF THE
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT –
THE ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT**

As we did in 1998 the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education has prepared a set of “bottom line” principles for reauthorization.

1. Adult education must support the broad purposes of the program.

Rationale:

The adult education infrastructure must support individual, family, community and economic goals and priorities. Individuals come to adult education for a variety of reasons –

- economic improvement
- getting jobs or better jobs
- providing better support for the education of their children
- learning the English language to become citizens and participate more fully in the economy and society
- finally getting that high school diploma
- transitioning into postsecondary education
- preparing for a better life after incarceration
- taking a greater part in community affairs

All of these reasons, and many others that adults bring to the program, are legitimate and must be valued.

Recommendations:

A re-authorized bill must retain the purposes of the law found in Section 202 of current legislation and add “transitioning into postsecondary education” to “completion of a secondary school education” and add a new category that reads, “assist immigrants and other individuals with limited English proficiency in improving their reading, writing, speaking and mathematics skills and acquiring an understanding of the American free enterprise system, individual freedom and the responsibilities of citizenship.”

It must also retain the definitions of literacy, adult education and literacy activities, English literacy programs (renamed English language acquisition programs and including “competence in reading, writing and speaking the English language”) and, family literacy services and workplace literacy services found in Section 203 of current legislation.

New legislation should also provide for inclusion of education programs for corrections and other institutionalized individuals as found in Section 225 of current legislation, continuing the 10% limitation on service to these populations found in Section 222 that legislation.

To ensure that the full range of adult needs and populations may be addressed, no waiver provisions should be enacted that could authorize a narrowing of the purposes of the legislation or populations to be served through actions of the executive branch or a Governor.

2. We support a clearly defined focus on accountability and results appropriate for adult education services.

Rationale:

In current law Section 212 stipulates three accountability measures, 1) learning gains, 2) post program accomplishments such as placement in, and retention on a job, placement in or completion of a training program or postsecondary education, and 3) receipt of a secondary school diploma or equivalent.

Recommendation:

Revise these measures to remove the requirement to report completion of postsecondary education or training. The databases simply do not exist to provide the information for this reporting. Continue to work with the United States Department of Education to resolve issues around the inability of some States to access Unemployment Insurance and postsecondary databases and the need for common standards to apply to alternative assessment systems.

3. All eligible providers of adult education must have direct and equitable access to apply for grants and contracts.

Rationale:

Different types of providers have unique characteristics that enable them to work with a variety of populations. All effective providers have a role in service delivery.

Recommendation:

Retain Section 231 of current law.

4. The law should recognize unique structures and needs of States and Outlying Areas by permitting them to select their own eligible State agencies for adult education and literacy

Rationale:

Choice of a State agency to manage adult education and literacy programs may be influenced by agency experience with adult education, and by funding patterns, executive and legislative decisions, and constitutional mandates. Each State or Outlying Agency is in the best position to determine which agency is most likely to operate a successful program.

Recommendation: The language in Section 203 of current law, which defines the "Eligible Agency", should be retained.

5. Current and additional adult education effort must be leveraged through matching and maintenance of effort requirements.

Rationale:

Since the Workforce Investment Act is a partnership between the States and the Federal government, each partner should invest in the program to meet demand for services.

Recommendations:

The maintenance of effort and matching requirements in Sections 222 and 241, respectively, of current law should be continued to leverage non-Federal funds.

When economic conditions improve, consideration should be given to incremental increases in the percentage for State matching.

6. There must be adequate funding and support for adult education programs distributed among States and Outlying Areas through a need-based formula.

Rationale:

The national investment in adult education must match the level of need/demand for these services and the importance for attainment of individual, family, community and economic goals.

Recommendations:

Support for this request might take either of two forms. 1) Retain the language in Section 205 authorizing "such sums as may be necessary" for each fiscal year of the law and convey to the Appropriations Committee the need for increased support, or 2) Provide for a gradual increase in the authorization level for the program to impart support for an increased appropriation.

The provision for initial allotments laid out in Section 211(c) (as amended) of current law should be retained except that a re-authorized Act should exempt jurisdictions that receive only an initial allotment from hold-harmless provisions, thereby eliminating the 10% annual reduction being imposed upon certain Outlying Areas.

7. Programs must be able to make serious investments in program and professional development.

Rationale:

State leadership funds were reduced from 15% to 12.5% of State grants in 1998 (Section 223 of current law) just as States were asked to implement a new accountability system, expand use of technology, make use of new teaching strategies that are grounded in scientific research, and collect and report post-program effects. States have been struggling under this handicap to provide professional development to local staff who are overwhelmingly part-time, subject to considerable turnover, and who depend almost entirely upon in-service instruction to develop their skills because of a paucity of pre-service professional preparation programs in adult education.

Recommendation:

To meet this need the percentage for State leadership in Section 222 of current law should be increased to require that each State expend 15% of its grant on State leadership activities – with an option to go as high as 17.5% if justified in State plans, any increase over 12.5 percent would be devoted to professional development.

8. There must be meaningful and adequate representation of adult education stakeholders on national, State, and local boards.

Rationale:

The “grandfathering” provisions of WIA Sections 111 (State Boards) and 117 (Local Boards) allowed a State or locality to waive the normal composition requirements for a State or local board and retain the board in place during the Job Training Partnership Act. When these provisions were implemented, the effect was to deny adult education any representation, because adult education had not been represented on the JTPA boards.

Recommendations:

The “grandfathering” provisions should not be continued in a re-authorized Workforce Investment Act.

Also, the current regulatory provision that makes the eligible State agency for adult education and literacy the local One-Stop partner should be made statutory.– with the power either to designate State staff to serve on local boards or to appoint representatives of local adult education programs to serve on such boards.

The re-authorized Act should also require that, if the person representing adult education on a State board is not the person directly responsible to manage adult education Statewide, the State Title I plan describe how that board member will work with the State adult education manager.

9. National programs require serious support for priority concerns of the field that States alone cannot address.

Rationale:

The Federal government can play a powerful role in supporting research, demonstration, professional development, and information dissemination activities that States are unable to mount individually. Such activities need to draw upon national expertise informed by the active participation of the States and local providers to ensure that products provide genuine assistance to delivery of services. Project designers should be cognizant of the needs of small States and Outlying Areas.

Recommendations:

Continue to support adequate funding for the purposes currently ascribed to Section 242 – National Institute for Literacy, the and to Section 243 – National Leadership Activities, emphasizing field participation in the design and execution of research and development projects. Set the stage for future increases in Section 243, National Leadership Activities, by removing the \$8,000,000 cap and, when the national appropriation for adult education reaches \$700,000,000, significantly increase the percentage to be reserved.

Expand the language in Section 242(a) (3) that charges the Institute to serve as a “national resource for adult education and literacy programs...” to bolster the original intent of Congress that the primary responsibility of the Institute be support of adult education and literacy programs.

Pay special attention to issues that especially affect small States and Outlying Areas in the design and execution of research and development projects; such States and Areas should have representation on boards and councils that advise on these projects.

Establish within the National Programs appropriation a special fund for grants to small States or Outlying areas, or consortia thereof, to support administrative and leadership activities, especially in designing, testing and implementing accountability systems and a fund to provide professional development grants to national networks of private not-for-profit agencies and public libraries to assist them in using technology, dealing with special populations such as limited English proficient and individuals with disabilities, and disseminating promising practices.

10. Every program included in the incentive program process must contribute the same percentage of its annual appropriation to the incentive fund OR there should be a separate incentive grant program for adult education.

Rationale:

Under current law, adult education is required to contribute a greater percentage of its annual appropriation to the WIA incentive fund than do other participating programs.

Recommendation:

There should be a separate incentive grant program for Title II of WIA or an adjustment should be made in the reauthorized Act to the provisions in Section 211(a)(3) of current law and to equivalent provisions of Title I of the Workforce Investment Act to require each program participating in the incentive system to contribute the same percentage of its annual appropriation.

11. Funds appropriated for adult education administration must be reserved for that purpose and not diminished to pay costs of cooperating programs.

Rationale:

The accountability and continuous improvement mandates placed upon local and state adult education programs require that adult education administrative funds be available to support the design, and implementation of accountability systems, state planning, and monitoring and managing grants to local agencies.

Recommendation:

That a special line item be made available for infrastructure and other support of One-Stop systems rather than having each cooperating agency provide a percentage of its administrative funds.