

Compliance Guidelines for Funded Providers

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www.phila.gov/programs/adult-education

City of Philadelphia
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All adult education providers users must comply with the terms of the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, the Fair Practices Ordinance (Chapter 9-1100 of the Philadelphia Code) and Mayor's Executive Order No. 04-86, as they may be amended from time to time. In addition, to the extent those provisions do not explicitly prohibit or cover certain types of discriminatory conduct, all providers have broader obligation under their provider contracts. In connection with providing any service or fulfilling any duty under their MOUs or contracts, **users shall not discriminate or permit discrimination against any individual on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, source of income, familial status, genetic information; domestic or sexual violence victim status; or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome ("AIDS") status.** In the event of any breach of this paragraph, the City may, in addition to any other rights or remedies available, suspend or terminate a contract forthwith.

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Purpose of Funding

The purpose of adult education funding is to provide educational activities to help City residents with basic skills needs, including those who speak other languages, to achieve education and career goals through instruction including ESL services, HSE preparation, and digital skills.

Eligible Adults

Adults 16 and over who have basic skills needs and are not currently enrolled in secondary school are eligible to receive adult education services.

Program Accountability

Providers contract for specific services when they submit a grant application. Providers must meet their contracted number of classes, seats, and intake/assessment sessions.

Citywide Referral System

All providers must participate in the Citywide Referral System network to ensure learners are placed in appropriate educational opportunities by following these steps:

1. Enter Intake/Assessment sessions into the Adult Education Information System (AEIS) and open them city-wide at least three weeks prior to the session.
2. Refer learners to appropriate classes or programs through the Citywide Referral System via the AEIS if they are not a fit for an on-site learning opportunity.
3. Assign learners an instructional level based on their intake/assessments and refer learners to an appropriately leveled class using the AEIS.

Recruitment

Providers should work closely with Adult Education Philadelphia (AEPHL) staff, other providers, and partner programs to recruit learners. Potential partners include local schools, libraries, recreation centers, PA CareerLink® sites, and community centers. Providers must actively participate in community events, including connections with Community Schools and Extended Day/Extended Year (EDEY) Schools.

Intake

Providers must have a documented intake process that:

1. Includes information on program requirements and scheduling, and
2. Incorporates setting realistic goals and expectations with each learner.

Assessment

Assessment results will be used to:

1. Place learners within an instructional program,
2. Document learner progress over time, and
3. Guide and update individual learning goals.

For Beginner Levels and Up

Administer formal assessments using test publisher guidelines.

[CASAS](#)

[BEST Plus 3.0](#)

For Preliterate Learners

Providers should develop their own pre- and post-assessments.

Assessment Administration

First Assessment (Pretest)

Learners must be assessed prior to receiving instruction to ensure that instructors have diagnostic information about the learners' educational needs. All programs must have procedures in place to ensure that all learners are given an initial assessment before beginning instruction.

Second Assessment (Posttest)

Programs must have procedures in place to ensure that all learners have a minimum of two administrations of at least one assessment with different forms of the same instrument. Learners that persist in their instruction should be assessed multiple times during a program year, as appropriate.

Recommended Timeframes

Publishers have recommended timeframes for follow-up administrations for all learners. Programs must administer assessments in accordance with the timeframes recommended by the respective publishers.

Data Collection and Entry

Providers must follow directions in the Adult Education Information System (AEIS) Data Entry Manual to ensure complete and accurate data collection and reporting.

Collection

Providers must collect complete and accurate learner intake information, assessments, and attendance records. Providers must create a learner profile for all new learners in the AEIS prior to the start date of the Intake/Assessment and/or Class, whichever occurs first. Providers must collect complete demographic information but may not request or record data on place of birth, citizenship, or immigration status.

Entry

Timely data entry allows provider staff and AEPHL to analyze data on a regular basis and use it for program planning and continuous program improvement. Providers are required to enter data in the AEIS system on a weekly basis and ensure that all monthly data is complete by the fifth day of the following month. Providers should periodically review data reports in the system and make corrections as needed. Providers must be able to provide documentation for all data on request.

Class Schedule

Providers must submit detailed class information each cycle using the template provided at least four weeks before scheduled class start. Any changes or modifications to the classes need to be discussed and approved by AEPHL prior to the changes occurring.

Performance Standards

In addition to meeting compliance metrics, providers should also strive to meet the following benchmarks:

1. Average class attendance hours – 50 hours
2. Pre-post matches – 75% of learners with more than 40 hours of attendance have a second assessment
3. Educational gains – 30% of learners show improvement using standardized assessments
4. Northstar badges/certificates – 50% of learners earn at least one badge

These are provided as suggested benchmarks only; they are not required nor are they part of compliance reporting.

Learner Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to ensure that learners persist in the program long enough to reach their goals. Providers should set an attendance policy and help learners to attend regularly by providing barrier support.

Compliance Reviews

Provider staff will meet with AEPHL staff monthly to discuss programmatic and data-related concerns. They will review and discuss services, plans, assessments, referrals, recruitment plans, course schedules, course curriculum, participant data and participant outcomes, for the efficient and effective alignment between provider, participants, and adult education staff. Provider will submit:

1. Quarterly case management reports due on the first business day on or after the fifth day past the end of the quarter.
2. Monthly qualitative reports due on the first business day on or after the fifth day of the following month.
3. Learner surveys at the end of each class cycle.

Support Services

Providers must provide access to counseling and barrier-reducing supports. Provider should refer to supportive services to help learners overcome nonacademic barriers including (but not limited to) access to childcare, transportation issues, and food insecurity.

Device Distribution

Providers will supply learners with devices as the budget allows and within the parameters of a written purchase and distribution policy to which AEPHL has consented in writing.

Program Staffing

All staff must be properly qualified to fulfill the duties listed in their written job description through training, education, or experience. See hiring toolkit for information on hiring qualified staff.

Instructional Quality

At a minimum, quality instruction will:

1. Be grounded in research;
2. Incorporate the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRS) and the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS);
3. Be taught by qualified staff;
4. Be contextualized;
5. Provide opportunities for learners to improve their digital literacy skills; and
6. Be responsive to learner needs.

Instructor preparation time

Instructors must be provided with sufficient paid preparation time. We recommend one hour of preparation time for every three hours of instruction at a minimum.

Instructor professional development time

Instructors must be paid for their professional development time.

Professional Development and Program Improvement

Providers must ensure that all staff has sufficient paid time to engage in professional development (PD) activities. All full-time paid instructors should spend a minimum of 36 hours per year participating in professional development activities related to adult education. Part time instructors should complete at least 12 hours of PD per year.

AEPHL offers a variety of ongoing professional development and program improvement opportunities throughout the year to engage adult educators of all backgrounds and experience levels. These are in addition to multiple other options available to providers, including in-house trainings and those offered through state and federal governments, as well as third-party entities. Activities include facilitated and self-paced courses, individual coaching or technical assistance, participation in professional learning communities, attendance at webinars, roundtables and conferences, or any other opportunity to improve practice.

The purpose of continuous program improvement and professional development is to ensure the highest-quality service to adult learners. Program improvement efforts should focus on improving program operations and services to learners; professional development planning should focus on improving staff skills and knowledge based on identified learner needs. While not identical, program improvement and professional development efforts should be complementary.

Required Professional Development

AEIS training - All staff who will enter data into the AEIS must complete AEIS training prior to entering any data into the system.

Assessment training – All staff who administer assessments must take the appropriate assessment training course.

Program Quality Benchmarks

Pennsylvania Adult Education and Family Literacy Indicators of Program Quality provide guidance for continuous program improvement and professional development. The indicators can be used as a tool to prioritize and guide continuous program improvement and professional development.

Continuous Program Improvement Collaborative (CPIC) offers providers the opportunity for hands-on program improvement activities using their own data.

Adult Education Teacher Competencies identify the knowledge and skills needed by adult education instructors to improve student learning and performance. Providers can use them to help determine the knowledge and skills that instructors still need to develop and the professional development activities that will support them to achieve that growth and change.

Adult Education Pathway Program offers instructors the opportunity to increase their foundational knowledge.

Digital Literacy Competencies for Adult Educators are designed to assist adult educators to build the digital literacy skills they need to help their learners meet educational and workplace goals.

Use of Volunteer Instructional Tutors or Class Aides

Volunteers can help expand program capacity by providing learners with tutoring support and instructors with classroom assistance. Providers are not required to use volunteers in their programs; if they choose to do so, they must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Staffing
 - a. Assign a designated staff person to coordinate volunteer programming and communication.
2. Training and Engagement
 - a. Refer prospective volunteers to Adult Education's volunteer tutor training program.
 - b. Require new volunteers to attend tutor training unless they have previous training.
 - c. Actively engage volunteers in both the provider's and Adult Education's professional development opportunities.

- d. Direct volunteers to Adult Education’s Volunteer Coordinator for additional support when needed.
- 3. Referral Process
 - a. Contact referred volunteers within one week and schedule an initial meeting.
 - b. Update the Adult Education Volunteer Coordinator on the volunteer matching process within two weeks of the referral date.
 - c. Provide a pre-service orientation to discuss expectations with volunteers.
 - d. Match volunteers with learners and share relevant information about the learners.
- 4. Tracking
 - a. Track volunteer hours and learner/class data in coordination with the Adult Education Volunteer Coordinator.

Fiscal Requirements/Use of Funds

All budgets must conform to City contracting rules and follow requirements outlined in the contract. Funds must be used solely for the purposes outlined in the Scope of Work.

Budget modifications

Providers may request budget modifications if they need to make a budget change.

Important dates

| Report | To | Due Date(s) |
|--|--|---|
| Quarterly case management | Shared provider folder | Oct 5, January 5, April 5, July 5 |
| Monthly qualitative report | Shared provider folder | 5 th day of each month |
| Learner surveys | Shared provider folder | End of class cycle or upon learner exit |
| Invoices | OCF.Invoices@phila.gov | Monthly |
| Last date to ask for a budget modification | Executive Director, AEPHL | March 31, 2026 |

Glossary

Adult Basic Education (ABE) – A program of instruction designed for adults who need support developing skills in reading, writing, speaking, problem solving, or computation at a level necessary to function in society, on a job, or in the family.

Adult Education Information System (AEIS) – The AEIS is an online platform that serves as the citywide referral system. It is a secure system that allows users to create learner records and refer learners to both assessment appointments and classes. All participating learners have a record in the AEIS. The records hold information on the learners’ educational attainment, their goals, assessments, attendance, and class grades.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE) – A program of instruction designed for adults who are preparing for a high school diploma or a recognized equivalency test including the GED®, HiSET®, or similar test.

Assessment – Standardized assessments for reporting individual adult learner gains. Assessment results are used to place learners within the instructional program, document learner progress, continuously guide instruction and update goals.

Citywide Referral System – see Adult Education Information System.

Digital Literacy – The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.

Educational Functioning Level (EFL) – The NRS (defined below) places adult educational skillsets into 12 functioning levels. Upon assessment, adult learners are placed in an NRS instructional program level based on their demonstrated abilities. When a learner's post assessment shows mastery of all skills at that educational functioning level, the EFL is considered complete.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – A language learning program designed for a learner who wishes to strengthen their reading, writing, speaking, or listening proficiency in English. The goal of this program is to provide learners with the skills to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English and/or to participate fully in the English-based portion of society.

High School Equivalency (HSE) test – There are two high school equivalency tests approved for use in Pennsylvania: the GED® test and the HiSET® exam. Both tests cover the content areas: science, social studies, mathematics, reading, and writing. Both tests are available in English and Spanish. Test takers may take the tests in either language and may combine passing GED® and HiSET® subtests taken in either language to complete a battery of tests.

Northstar Digital Literacy – An online digital literacy platform that assesses computer skills and provides the curriculum to build digital literacy skills in key areas.

National Reporting System (NRS) – [NRS](#) is an outcome-based reporting system for the State-administered, federally funded adult education program. While AEPHL funded providers are not required to report data to the NRS, the website provides information about and definitions of the twelve EFLs.