



**An Eastern Kentucky C.E.P., Inc., & Community Action Agency
Recovery Act Project
in Partnership with
Kentucky Adult Education**

Rationale

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) provides funds for training services—including Adult Basic Education (ABE)—to open and align career pathways in an effort to transform the workforce system now and in the future. The economic stimulus legislation recognizes that individuals participating in training to advance or retool their skills need supportive services to remain and succeed in training.

Eastern Kentucky has long suffered one of the highest high school dropout rates in the nation. Census figures indicate that approximately 40 percent of the adult population of eastern Kentucky has not attained a high school diploma or GED® credential. In comparison, the non-attainment rate for the state of Kentucky is only 25.9 percent and the nation as a whole is even lower at 19.6 percent. At the same time a high school diploma or a GED credential is often considered the minimal educational requirement by employers.

ABE teachers say their students frequently drop out of ABE programs due to transportation, child care issues, or other financial hardships arising in today's tough economy. These obstacles can be offset through Workforce Investment Act (WIA) supportive services. If the residents of the region are to be competitive in the workforce of the 21st century, it is imperative to raise the region's educational levels.

Program Overview

In an effort to promote the employability of eastern Kentuckians, Eastern Kentucky C.E.P., Inc., (EKCEP) will utilize a portion of its WIA Recovery Act WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to assist 500 individuals in attaining their GED credentials and then continuing on an appropriate career pathway by launching its latest

economic stimulus initiative—GED2JOB. This program will begin on October 15, 2009 and will run through June 30, 2010. The development of this pilot may serve as a model for continued collaborative opportunities as future funding permits.

Students will be co-enrolled in ABE and WIA Recovery Act training services. Activities will focus on providing occupational information, career planning and work readiness training to selected Adults and Dislocated Workers enrolled in ABE who are functioning in Reading and Mathematics at levels that can be fast-tracked for GED credential attainment. Once admitted into the program, students' continuation will be based upon certification of attendance and progress by the ABE Instructors. Students will be expected to complete the required work readiness training and be prepared to take the GED test within 12 weeks. Up to an additional four weeks will be allowed if a retest is required. Students who are capable of attaining their GED credential in less than 12 weeks should be strongly encouraged to do so. GED testing fees will be covered only when otherwise not available. Once the student earns a GED credential, completes the chosen work readiness training, and tests for the Kentucky Employability Certificate, the focus will shift to successful transition into the workforce. Career pathways offering either a scholarship for up to two years of post-secondary training, or placement in Limited Paid Internships, or direct employment through On-the-Job Training will be offered. Global Career Development Facilitators (GCDFs) will work with students throughout the entire process to provide information that will enable each individual to overcome obstacles, make informed occupational choices, and pursue the next step in the appropriate career pathway.

This effort will require a close coordination between EKCEP, all nine Community Action Agencies, and the ABE contracting agencies in the region. The combined effort will stimulate an awareness of the correlation between education and self sufficiency of the workers in the area. It will efficiently and effectively assist unemployed or underemployed Adults and Dislocated Workers impacted by the current economic downturn in achieving financial independence.

Slot Distribution Per County

Funding is being made available for 500 slots within the EKCEP local workforce area. Slots will be distributed to ABE learning centers in each of EKCEP's 23 counties at a percentage with a 50/50 weighting that correlates with the number of potentially eligible applicants currently enrolled in each county and the number of GED credentials attained in each county during the last two years. Slots may be backfilled with approval from EKCEP as long as the in-coming student can complete all program requirements (defined as attaining a GED credential, completing work readiness, testing for the Kentucky Employability Certificate, and beginning enrollment in: post-secondary training, Limited Paid Internship or On-the-Job Training) by June 30, 2010. However, it is important to understand that once a

student is enrolled, failure to satisfactorily complete the program will negatively impact performance measures which will affect future funding. Therefore careful evaluation of eligible applicants is essential. Unused slots may be distributed by EKCEP at ANY TIME it is deemed necessary to achieve program goals. See Attachment 1 for a chart of slot distribution for county.

Program Elements ~ Part I

All GED2JOB students will spend a minimum of 10 hours per week* on site at an ABE learning center preparing to take the GED test within 12 weeks of GED2JOB enrollment. Those students showing satisfactory progress will be eligible to receive the following assistance—not to exceed a maximum of 30 hours in one week—while in attendance:

- ❖ A flat rate supportive services payment of \$4 per hour during GED preparation while on site at an ABE Learning center
- ❖ Payment of GED testing fees of up to \$100, when otherwise not available
- ❖ Additionally, Dislocated Workers may be eligible for Emergency Housing Assistance

*Important! Requirements of the Trade Act supersede the requirements of GED2JOB. Trade-affected students must comply with all requirements of the Trade Act, including the minimum attendance requirement of 20 hours per week.

Program Elements ~ Part II (Concurrent with Part I)

Work readiness training may vary from county to county based on availability. Work readiness training may be part of the weekly learning regime as well as offered in targeted blocks of training at critical points throughout the enrollment. Students will be able to choose the work readiness training that best suits their interests and their schedules when availability exists. A minimum of 15 hours of work readiness training must be completed before students can transition into one options outlined in Program Elements ~ Part III, career pathways. Attendance in work readiness training counts toward the 10 hour per week attendance requirement. A brief overview of each work readiness training being offered can be reviewed in Attachment 2. Students meeting attendance and progress requirements will be eligible to receive:

- ❖ A flat rate supportive services payment of \$4 per hour during attendance of 15 hours of work readiness training
- ❖ Personalized GCDF-certified staff assistance with goal setting, problem solving, and occupational information culminating in a career plan that identifies next steps after GED credential attainment

Students must sign in and sign out at every work readiness training in order to receive supportive services payment for hours in attendance. The Work Readiness Instructor will submit the sign in/sign out sheet to the ABE Instructor so the time in attendance can be recorded on the timesheet.

Additionally, before students can transition into a career pathway, they must also submit to testing for the Kentucky Employability Certificate.

Program Elements ~ Part III

The assistance provided by GED2JOB does not stop when the student earns a GED and completes work readiness training. It is at that point that the focus shifts to the ultimate goal of GED2JOB—successful transition into the workforce for the unemployed, or advancing the career pathway in the workplace for the under-employed. Students who have earned their GED credential, completed 15 hours of work readiness training, and tested for the Kentucky Employability Certificate will be eligible to receive:

- ❖ Personalized Global Career Development Facilitator services to assist in transitioning into the appropriate career pathway
- ❖ A choice of career pathway options consisting of one of the following:
 - ◆ A scholarship for up to two years of additional training a post-secondary institution or licensed proprietary school, or
 - ◆ A Limited Paid Internship of up to 160 hours with one employer, or
 - ◆ Direct placement in On-the-Job Training

Progress and Sanctions during Program Elements Parts I and II

Once admitted into the program, students' continuation will be based upon certification of progress by the ABE Instructor. Progress will be determined by the ABE Instructor using formal pre-testing when scheduled, practice testing, recording appropriate attendance, and observing acceptable behavior in the ABE learning center. This progress must be documented on the bi-weekly timesheet.

If a student fails to show progress the ABE Instructor may, after notifying the WIA staff, suspend GED2JOB financial support to the student for up to one week. The suspended student must continue to meet the 10-hour minimum attendance requirement while suspended. If a student continues or subsequently fails to show progress after suspension, the ABE and WIA staff will confer and termination from the program may result.

Eligibility and Screening

Being chosen to participate in GED2JOB is a privileged opportunity for those applicants meeting the eligibility requirements. In addition to the basic eligibility requirements, it is expected that the ABE Instructors will screen applicants to identify serious students who demonstrate the ability, motivation and desire to get their GED credential then complete career pathways that will enable them to enter in or advance in the workforce within program parameters. WIA staff will then review the screened students who have completed a pre-application and provided all necessary documentation to make the final selection. A letter of notification will be given to students who are accepted into GED2JOB.

Initial Student Eligibility

To be eligible for GED2JOB, a student must:

1. Be a Unemployed Adult or Underemployed**Adult who is 18 years of age or older
2. Be enrolled in ABE and have actively participated for a minimum of two weeks during the last six months
3. Have a TABE Reading and Mathematics score of at least 6.0
4. Be a citizen of the United States
5. Be a resident of EKCEP 23-county service area
6. Be registered for Selective Service, if they are a male born after December 31, 1959

Documentation is required for all of the above except #2. Acceptable forms of documentation are outlined on GED2JOB pre-application. Other acceptable forms of documentation are listed on the Title 1, W.I.A. - 20 form. (See Attachment 3)

Continued Student Eligibility

Once enrolled in GED2JOB, to maintain his/her eligibility a student must:

1. Physically attend instruction in the ABE learning center or work readiness training for a minimum of 10 hours a week. Students may receive financial support for up to a maximum of 30 hours per week. Off-site study or homework hours DO NOT count toward attendance for the purposes of this program. (Note: Trade-affected students must adhere to the minimum requirements set forth in the Trade Act.)
2. Participate in and complete 15 hours of work readiness training
3. Demonstrate steady progress toward attaining a GED credential

4. Test for the Kentucky Employability Certificate prior to transitioning into a career pathway

****Self-Sufficiency Standard for Employed Workers**

Individuals who are earning \$13.40 per Hour or less -- OR -- Individuals who are earning more than \$13.40 per Hour but have a family income that does not exceed:

Family Size Minimum Income for Self-Sufficiency

1 = \$11,577

2 = \$18,969

3 = \$26,036

4 = \$32,143

5 = \$37,937

6 = \$44,369

for each additional family member, add \$ 6,432

-- Income documentation is required

Priority of Service

Among the applicants who meet enrollment requirements, priority will be given to:

- ❖ Dislocated Workers
- ❖ Recipients of Public Assistance
- ❖ Eligible ABE students with the highest TABE Reading and Mathematics scores
- ❖ Veterans and Eligible Spouses

To fill the slots available within a given county in GED2JOB, Dislocated Workers with a TABE score of 6.0 or higher will be enrolled first. Veterans and Eligible Spouses who are Dislocated Workers must receive the highest priority within this priority group. If there are more applicants that are Dislocated Workers than slots available, selections for enrollment will be done starting with Veterans and Eligible Spouses with a TABE score of 6.0 or higher. After all Veterans and Eligible Spouses are enrolled, the remaining applicants within this priority group will be enrolled starting with those who have the highest TABE Reading and Mathematics scores, then working downward until all available slots are filled.

Recipients of Public Assistance with a TABE score of 6.0 or higher will be enrolled second. Veterans and Eligible Spouses who are Recipients of Public Assistance must receive the highest priority within this priority group. If there are more applicants that are Recipients of Public Assistance than remaining slots available, selections for enrollment will be done starting with Veterans and Eligible Spouses with a TABE score of 6.0 or higher in this priority group. After all Veterans and Eligible Spouses within this priority group are enrolled, the remaining applicants within this priority

group will be enrolled starting with those who have the highest TABE Reading and Mathematics scores, then working downward until all available slots are filled.

If there are less applicants from the Dislocated Worker and Recipients of Public Assistance priority groups than slots available, all applicants within these two priority groups will be enrolled. The remaining slots will be filled from eligible non-priority applicants starting with Veterans and Eligible Spouses who have a TABE score of 6.0 or higher in Reading and Mathematics. After all Veterans and Eligible Spouses from the non-priority group are enrolled, remaining slots will be filled by enrolling non-priority applicants starting with the highest TABE scores and then working downward until all slots are filled.

Documentation will be required for any student claiming priority of service for enrollment into GED2JOB. Acceptable forms of documentation are outlined on the GED2JOB pre-application. Other acceptable forms of documentation are listed on the Title 1, W.I.A. - 20 form. (See Attachment 3)

Application, Documentation and Enrollment Process

ABE Instructors will announce GED2JOB and open the application process at each ABE learning center. It is anticipated that there will be more applicants than slots available so judicious screening with program goals in mind—along with adherence to eligibility requirements and observance of priority of service—is expected. The tremendous opportunity this program offers should be conveyed to the students and only those individuals truly committed to advancing their education and career should be considered.

Applications will be gathered, reviewed and ranked by the ABE Instructor for possible enrollment. Students selected for possible enrollment will be invited to participate in GED2JOB and must present **ALL** required documentation to the ABE Instructor within **ONE WEEK** of being notified of their potential acceptance into GED2JOB. Failure to present all required documentation within one week will result in the invitation to participate being withdrawn and offered to the next student on the list. Once all documentation is in place, the ABE Instructor will turn it over to the WIA contractor staff who will make the final selection, complete the necessary WIA paperwork, and enroll the student in the Employ Kentucky Operating System . (See Attachment 4)

To expedite collection of required documentation and accelerate program start-up, EKCEP will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each Chief Administrative Officer at the ABE contracting agencies under which EKCEP will reimburse each ABE contracting agency \$100 per successful enrollment into GED2JOB to compensate for the extra time and effort associated the with application and documentation process.

Financial Support Limitations

A maximum of \$2,020 of supportive services per student is allowed during GED preparation at the ABE learning centers.

Post-secondary scholarships have the combined annual dollar limit for direct training and supportive services of \$6,000 for Adults, and \$9,000 for Dislocated Workers. An additional \$500 will be added to the post-secondary scholarship of any student who gets a GED credential and plans to pursue post-secondary training in a field that emphasizes strong Mathematical skills, when the student attains a score on the TABE, Compass or ACT that allows him or her to test out of developmental Mathematics.

(Note: Additional eligibility requirements of WIA Individual Training Accounts, Limited Paid Internships, and On-the-Job Training will be waived for GED2JOB students transitioning into those service components.)

Monitoring & Reporting

Each ABE learning center participating in GED2JOB will be visited monthly by EKCEP's Workforce Recovery Coordinators. GCDF-certified staff will have on-going contact with students to assist them in progressing toward attaining their GED credential and then successfully transitioning into the appropriate career pathway. ABE Instructors will submit bi-weekly timesheets tracking student attendance and progress, as well as other data as necessary to gauge student demographics and program effectiveness. Upon program completion, a final report will be required containing at a minimum: the total number of students served by county, the number of GED credentials attained, the number of weeks it took to attain a GED credential by student, the number of students going on to post-secondary training, Limited Paid Internship, or On-the-Job Training, and the number of students failing to complete.

WIA Community Action Agency contractors are responsible for maintaining GED2JOB records. These records will be monitored by EKCEP and the Commonwealth's Division of Workforce Services in accordance with each agency's established monitoring procedures.

Hard copy documents must be maintained in files throughout the period of active enrollment and follow up in WIA and until completion of the state's monitoring for any file active during the time period being monitored. Electronic files of scanned documents are acceptable after the client's follow up time frame has expired and monitoring has been completed.

The MOUs with ABE contracting agencies will be monitored by EKCEP's Accounting Department through desk-top reviews that cross check invoices, enrollment records and completion reports. Workforce Recovery Coordinators will do on site verification of enrollment and progress reports.

GED2JOB is funded by Eastern Kentucky C.E.P., Inc., (EKCEP) through the Office of Employment and Training, Division of Workforce Services, Kentucky Education Cabinet, with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Workforce Investment Act funds. EKCEP is an equal-opportunity employer with equal-opportunity programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
