



POLICY TO PERFORMANCE: TRANSITIONING ADULTS TO OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education has launched a new initiative called Policy to Performance: Transitioning Adults to Opportunity. This initiative supports the broad goals of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 as well as aligns with the President’s American Graduation Initiative. President Obama stated that “Now is the time to build a firmer, stronger foundation for growth that will not only withstand future economic storms, but that will help us thrive and compete in a global economy.”¹ Policy to Performance aims to assist states in meeting this goal through targeted technical assistance services designed to advance low-skilled adults into postsecondary education and employment.

HOW DOES POLICY TO PERFORMANCE ENHANCE STATES’ EXISTING EFFORTS?

States across the country have been working on developing higher education initiatives that help citizens transition into the workforce where they can secure family sustaining incomes. State Adult Education systems are aligning policies and practice to help adult learners prepare for the 21st century workforce demands. However this work varies greatly in approach and intensity. Policy to Performance is seeking to advance existing states’ efforts in smoothing the transition between adult education and postsecondary and employment.

WHAT DOES “POLICY” MEAN IN THIS PROJECT?

The Policy to Performance initiative defines policy as a formal or informal plan or course of action designed to influence and determine a clear set of outcomes intended to promote the advancement of college and career readiness for adults participating in Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funded programs. Policy in this context can include strategies such as, the issuing of specific RFP priorities, the design of performance-based funding formulae or written public rules and regulations. Such a broad interpretation of policy affords states maximum flexibility by enabling them to identify an array of potential systemic levers that can be engaged to promote college and career readiness for low-skilled adults and adult learners.

WHAT ARE THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY TO PERFORMANCE INITIATIVE?

The purpose and objectives of this initiative are:

- Enhancing college and career readiness for low-skilled adults through increased and quality access to training and learning opportunities.
- Providing comprehensive technical assistance to participating states on crafting strategic policies that support college and career readiness for low-skilled adults.

¹ Remarks of President Barack Obama on the American Graduation Initiative, Macomb Community College, Warren, Michigan. July 14, 2009

- Helping adult education state directors to connect adult transition policies to larger policy initiatives in their states.
- Providing policy tools, dissemination strategies and resources to assist all states in transitioning adults through the postsecondary education, training and employment continuum.

HOW WERE POLICY TO PERFORMANCE PARTNER STATES SELECTED?

Policy to Performance will initially work with eight states to develop and implement effective policy that will advance access and transition for low-skilled adults and adult learners to move through the education, training and employment continuum. Policy to Performance will provide participating states with coaching, experts, tools and resources to support them in creating, implementing and monitoring new policy as well as aligning existing policy to strengthen the connection between Adult Basic Education, postsecondary, training and employment.

The states of Alabama, California, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin were selected to receive targeted technical assistance chosen through a competitive application process. As a participating state, each will receive customized coaching in examining, analyzing and developing policy that is unique to each state's context and meets the emerging needs of each state's population of transitioning low-skilled adults. These states will also have the opportunity to network with other participating states and experts in the field.

For more information about the Policy to Performance initiative please visit www.policy2performance.org or contact info@policy2performance.org