

*Commonwealth Corporation's
Applicant Assistance Program
Special Bulletin*

**Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund
ESOL/ABE Training Initiative**

The following points reflect recent policy changes and adjustments by the Workforce Training Fund regarding grant applications for ESOL/ABE training under the competitive General Program:

- The ESOL/ABE initiative provides a waiver of the six-month waiting period that is normally required between successive training grants under the General Program. This waiver of the six-month waiting period allows a company to apply for and receive grant funds for ESOL/ABE training independently of any other current or previous training grants that the company may have.
- Grant applications that include ESOL/ABE training should explain how the proposed training is directly associated with work and job requirements. ESOL/ABE training that is generally beneficial to training participants, but not required or closely related to daily work activities, will not be favored.
- Grant applications should explain the rationale for the proposed skill level and intensity of training and tie these directly to job requirements.
- Applications for grant funds should explain the basis by which ESL/ABE course levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced) were planned and proposed. Such arguments could conceivably be provided or validated by educators and/or training providers based on focus group discussions, discussions with managers and supervisors, and sample evaluations of individual employees.
- Measures of success stemming from the ESOL/ABE training should include both operational or company related measures, plus individual training related measures, i.e., learners will understand 50 work-based terminology and use this to reduce operator rework from 20% to 10% within three months of completion of training, and 80% of learners will advance at least one SPL (literacy proficiency level). It may be recommendable that the plan include a mid-term and a final learner/student evaluation or test to mark progress. Be clear on how you are going to measure the progress achieved through the ESOL/ABE education training program.

- Applications should include an overview of the course curriculum as an attachment and/or associate the course curriculum with established curriculum standards.
- For approved applications, grant funds may be used to assess the current skills of training participants during the contract period of the grant. For example, the cost of conducting individual learner assessments for the purpose of class placement would be a viable grant expenditure, providing such an expenditure had been included in the approved application.
- Grant funds will not be approved for curriculum development. Costs for curriculum development, course customization and teacher preparation should be considered a matching expense only.
- Competitive applications will define the number of training participants with reasonable certainty. Applications that are based on approximations of potential subscription from voluntary participants in an ESOL/ABE program will not be favored.
- A company that has previously received funding for ESOL/ABE training from the Workforce Training Fund or Massachusetts Department of Education will not be favored for a grant from the General Program for additional ESOL/ABE training. Additionally a company may not seek a WTF grant while completing the final years of a DOE Workplace Education grant.