



Minnesota Adult Basic Education (ABE)

**Volunteer Training Standards Policy**

---

Policy Development Date: July 1, 2006

Policy Implementation Date: July 1, 2006

Latest Policy Revision Date: February 11, 2014

---

**Policy Overview**

***Background***

**Applicable Minnesota Law:**

According to State ABE statute, 124D.518 Adult basic education aid definition,

Subdivision 6, b. 3:

*(b) A community-based organization or nonprofit organization that delivers education services under this section must demonstrate that it has met the following criteria:*

***(3) require all instructional staff to complete a training course in teaching adult learners;***

According to State ABE statute, 124D.52 Adult basic education, Subdivision 2 Program approval, a. 7:

*Subd. 2. Program approval. (a) To receive aid under this section, a district, a consortium of districts, the Department of Corrections, or a private nonprofit organization must submit an application by June 1 describing the program, on a form provided by the department. The program must be approved by the commissioner according to the following criteria:*

***(7) volunteer training and use of volunteers;***

**Policy Statement**

**Volunteer Training Standards Rationale:** The Minnesota Department of Education state ABE office must uphold ABE law as cited above through the development and implementation of training standards for all volunteers who are working directly with ABE students in an instructional capacity. In summary, these required training standards are established for approved Adult Basic Education programs that are counting learner contact hours through the use of volunteers in an instructional capacity.

Enhanced accountability efforts and the requirement of the National Reporting System (NRS) ABE student performance measures have become increasingly important and necessary to meet the requirements of ABE federal and state law. These ABE student performance measures are based on ABE adult-appropriate standardized tests scores and meeting core employment, GED/Adult diploma and post-secondary goals.

## Training Requirements

**Required Training Participation:** The following tutors must receive an approved 12-hour pre-service training and ongoing training:

- ABE volunteers starting after July 1, 2006 who directly tutor or instruct students and generate ABE contact hours (independent from the classroom teacher);
- ABE volunteer takes students from a teacher-led class and tutors them after teacher leaves the building;
- ABE volunteer has responsibility for a separate class of students and is under minimal or no direct supervision of a teacher; and
- ABE volunteers that take over lessons for ABE teachers who become ill or need to leave due to an emergency.

**Exempted from Required Training:** The following tutors are exempt from being required to attend an approved pre-service training:

- In general, volunteers who work as classroom assistants under the direct supervision of a teacher do not need to meet the training requirements. “Supervision” means being directed onsite by a teacher as to how to instruct (teaching methodology), and in the content (curricula with clear activity/lesson objectives) of the instruction – all of which is under the total control of the teacher;
- ABE volunteers who only work in the classroom with an ABE teacher;
- ABE volunteers who take students to another room or segment students into subgroups in the classroom to work with them using a activity/lesson prepared by an ABE teacher while the classroom teacher is present in the building; and
- Volunteers who tutor or instruct students directly in programs that do not receive state or federal ABE funding do not need to meet the ABE volunteer training requirements.

## Volunteer Training Standards Policy – Minnesota Adult Basic Education

ABE volunteers who have no instructional or tutor responsibilities and perform other, non-instructional tasks (e.g. intake, support services, book-keeping, technology aides, data entry, etc.) are not required to receive an official 12-hour pre-service training but are required to receive training for the duties they perform. For example, if a volunteer is assisting with testing, they need to receive training on how to appropriately administer the assessment.

ABE Volunteers who hold the following credentials or prior experience are exempt from the 12 hour pre-service training:

### *Grandfather Clause:*

- Any volunteer tutor who began volunteering prior to July 1, 2006

### *ESL Volunteers with at least one of the following:*

- TEFL/TESL certification
- College degree in ESL or Linguistics
- Current Minnesota K-12 license (Note: Must be a non-expired license which implies the need for renewal credits to keep current.)
- Over 400 hours of documentable ESL instruction within the past 10 years (volunteer or paid teacher) in a program or programs comparable to the Minnesota system ESL programs.

### *ABE Volunteers with at least one of the following:*

- Current Minnesota K-12 license
- Current Minnesota ABE license
- Over 400 hours of documentable ABE instruction (volunteer or paid teacher) in a program or programs comparable to the Minnesota system ABE programs.

Even if an ABE volunteer meets exemptions for required training, it is best practice for any ABE volunteer to receive on-site orientation, pre-service training, and ongoing training in order to ensure exposure to current effective instructional practices, policies, and procedures.

Special cases can be discussed and need to be approved by the state ABE office at the Minnesota Department of Education and with the state's ABE supplemental service provider for volunteer training, which is the Minnesota Literacy Council.

**In-Service Requirement:** *Effective May 1, 2007*, all volunteers who have tutored for more than one year are required to attend or provide 2-hours of in-service training. Volunteers can be sent to the in-services offered by the MLC or the local program can provide the training.

## Training Timeline

Volunteers who are required to receive training must do so within a 3 month time period of their volunteer assignment.

## Minnesota Volunteer Training Content Standards

All ABE volunteers starting after July 1, 2006 who directly tutor or instruct students and generate ABE contact hours (independent from the classroom teacher) are required to receive **12 hours** of training.

**The pre-service training MUST cover the following four topics:**

1. **ABE Accountability:** initial and ongoing assessment, such as CASAS, BEST Plus and TABE testing procedures, NRS educational functioning levels, annual state ABE level completion targets, and other state accountability information;
2. **Working with Curriculum, Textbooks and Other Educational Resources:** A general overview of how to use instructional resources and/or in-depth coverage of specific text/curriculum/software used by the local ABE program;
3. **Lesson Planning:** This includes effective practices for planning direct instruction and developing lesson objectives; and
4. **Working with Adults:** Characteristics of adult learners, cultural issues, sensitivity to the challenges learning English/literacy.

**The remainder of the training should consist of topics that are relevant to what the volunteer will be doing in the program. Some possible topics include:**

- **Teaching Listening Skills** (pre-listening, listening for specific information, gist, post-listening, comprehension etc. )
- **Teaching Speaking Skills** (mechanical drills, dialogs, role-plays, pronunciation, grammar, etc.,)
- **Teaching Decoding Strategies** (letter recognition, sight reading, context clues, etc.)
- **Teaching Comprehension Strategies** (Pre-reading, questioning, scanning, skimming, etc.)
- **Teaching Writing** (Language experience approach, dialog journals, spelling, process writing, etc.)
- **Teaching Math** (math operations, real-life math, etc.)

- ***Preparing for the GED*** (overview of process, test-taking tips, teaching GED content and skills)
- ***Learning Styles***
- ***Principles of Teaching*** (e.g., repetition, layering, review, limiting teaching talk, etc.)
- ***Integrating technology into learning***

The on-site orientation should include:

- ***Specific details about program testing and accountability practices***
- ***Risk Management*** (student/tutor boundaries, harassment, etc.)
- ***Orientation to program policies***
- ***Orientation to program curriculum***
- ***First lessons***

## **Training Options and Resources**

As a supplemental services contractor of the Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education office, the Minnesota Literacy Council has the capacity to assist with the delivery of the 12 hour pre-service training necessary for volunteers. This training will be available statewide beginning in July 1, 2006. The MLC training has been approved by the state.

An alternative for providing this required training to ABE programs is the local training option. ABE programs that design their own training that is compatible with the pre-service standards (noted above) may seek content approval from the Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education office. If the training content is approved, the local program may deliver that training to its volunteers.

An ABE program's volunteer training is approved for a five-year period. ABE programs need to recertify their volunteer pre-service training once every five years and needs to be resubmitted for approval with the ABE consortium's five-year narrative.

To submit a training program for approval or recertification, please contact Brad Hasskamp at [brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us](mailto:brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us)

## **ABE Program Compliance**

All state and federally funded ABE programs are subject to Minnesota Department of Education – Adult Basic Education compliance reviews. The purpose of the Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education (MDE-ABE) compliance review is to ensure that ABE providers receiving state and federal funds are in compliance with all

## Volunteer Training Standards Policy – Minnesota Adult Basic Education

applicable state and federal laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures, that funds have been expended effectively and efficiently, and that required performance goals are achieved.

### **For More Information**

This policy, along with other ABE policies and resources, can be found online at the [Minnesota ABE LINCS Law, Policy and Guidance Page](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance) (<http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance>).

The contact for training with the Minnesota Literacy Council, which is the state's current supplemental service provider for volunteer training, is:

- Rob Podlasek at [rpodlasek@mnliteracy.org](mailto:rpodlasek@mnliteracy.org)

If you have any questions about Minnesota ABE policies, contact:

- Brad Hasskamp, ABE Policies and Operations Specialist, at (651) 582-8594 or [brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us](mailto:brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us)
- Todd Wagner, State ABE Director, at (651) 582-8466 or [todd.wagner@state.mn.us](mailto:todd.wagner@state.mn.us)