

**5.1 Provide evidence of alignment to local or regional needs and strategies as outlined by local workforce development boards and/or partners in the workforce development plans (local and regional WIOA plans).**

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) is committed to aligning its programming with the priorities and strategies outlined by local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and regional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) plans. This alignment is reflected in the following ways:

1. Collaborative Partnerships

LAAE collaborates with local Workforce Development Boards, CareerForce centers, and community partners to address workforce development needs. These partnerships ensure that our programming supports regional goals, such as developing a skilled workforce and addressing industries with critical labor shortages. For example:

- Our ServSafe® Food Safety Manager training addresses the needs of the foodservice industry, a key sector identified in regional WIOA plans, by providing participants with a credential required for employment in this field.
- Collaboration with workforce partners ensures that our students receive wraparound services, such as job placement assistance and career counseling.

2. Career Pathway Programming

Our career pathways programs are designed to meet the demands of the local labor market. By integrating academic instruction with workforce preparation, we help students gain the skills needed for high-demand occupations. Specific examples include:

- Regional Online Career Collaborative (ROCC) courses that provide training in areas such as healthcare, manufacturing, and customer service, aligning with priority sectors identified in the regional WIOA plan.
- Development of Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) for students pursuing the Standard Adult High School Diploma, which often include workforce-aligned skills development and preparation for employment or post-secondary training.

3. Alignment with Regional Sector Strategies

LAAE programs align with the regional sector strategies highlighted in WIOA plans, focusing on industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. Our contextualized education offerings integrate academic skills with workforce preparation, ensuring students are equipped to enter and advance in these fields.

4. Support for Targeted Populations

In alignment with WIOA's emphasis on serving diverse populations, LAAE provides programming tailored to individuals with barriers to employment, including:

- English language learners (ELLs), through targeted ESL instruction designed to improve workplace communication skills.
- Individuals with disabilities or those lacking high school credentials, through flexible learning options like the Standard Adult High School Diploma program and online learning platforms.

## 5. Data-Driven Program Development

We use labor market data provided by our WDB partners to ensure our programming reflects current and projected regional workforce needs. Regular feedback from partners helps us adapt and refine our programs to align with employer expectations and regional economic trends.

### Conclusion

Through these efforts, LAAE ensures that our adult education programs not only meet the educational needs of our students but also align with local and regional workforce development strategies, thereby contributing to the broader goal of building a skilled and resilient workforce.

### 5.2 Describe the methods of referral between local workforce development partners (e.g., CareerForce) and the consortium, addressing both how the consortium refers learners to workforce development partners, and how workforce development partners refer clients to the consortium.

*Include how the consortium ensures that referrals are effective, and that individuals referred make meaningful connections with other agencies and services. Include how the consortium promotes concurrent enrollment in WIOA Title I programs (Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker) and Title IV programs (Vocational Rehabilitation).*

The consortium refers learners to workforce development partners, such as CareerForce and other WIOA Title I providers, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, through a structured referral process. This includes:

- Conducting an initial intake and needs assessment, including Bridge to Benefits, for each learner to identify potential workforce-related goals and barriers.
- Directly referring learners to CareerForce services (e.g., resume workshops, career counseling, and job fairs) and WIOA Title I programs that match their career goals.
- Providing learners with detailed information about available resources and assisting them in scheduling appointments with workforce partners when needed.

Workforce development partners refer clients to the consortium by:

- Identifying individuals who lack foundational skills, such as basic literacy, English language proficiency, or a high school credential, during their CareerForce intake process.
- Referring these individuals to the consortium for adult education programming, including GED preparation, ESL classes, and career pathways courses.

The consortium ensures referrals are effective and lead to meaningful connections by:

- Maintaining open communication with workforce development partners through regular meetings and updates.
- Offering support, such as transportation assistance through the use of bus tokens, or technology access, to help learners successfully engage with both educational and workforce services.
- Collecting feedback from referred individuals to assess their experience and improve the referral process.

In alignment with WIOA's emphasis on serving diverse populations, LAEE provides programming tailored to individuals with barriers to employment, including:

- English language learners (ELLs), through targeted ESL instruction designed to improve workplace communication skills.
- Individuals with disabilities or those lacking high school credentials, through flexible learning options like the Standard Adult High School Diploma program and online learning platforms.

#### Data-Driven Program Development

We use labor market data provided by our WDB partners to ensure our programming reflects current and projected regional workforce needs. Regular feedback from partners helps us adapt and refine our programs to align with regional economic trends.



Through these efforts, LAEE ensures that our adult education programs not only meet the educational needs of our students but also align with local and regional workforce development strategies, thereby contributing to the broader goal of building a skilled and resilient workforce.

5.3 Describe how instructional programming is developed and delivered in coordination and collaboration with other educational, training, social services, and employment resources in the community. Partner entities could include K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and faith communities. (Refer to data collected about student barriers in item 2.4)

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) develops and delivers instructional programming through intentional partnerships and collaboration with various community entities, ensuring that programs address the diverse barriers faced by our learners and provide pathways to success. This collaborative approach integrates educational, social, and employment resources to create holistic support systems for our students.

Partnerships with K-12 Schools and Postsecondary Institutions

*K-12 Schools:* LAAE partners with local school districts to provide transition programming for young adults who have aged out of the traditional high school setting or who lack the credits to graduate.

*Postsecondary Institutions:* Collaboration with community and technical colleges supports the development of career pathways programs. For example:

- Students enrolled in M/State who are lacking in fundamental math skills can receive instruction from LAAE instructors to improve their skills free of charge.
- Partnerships with colleges provide access to career counseling, financial aid workshops, and bridge courses that prepare learners for postsecondary education.

Collaboration with Workforce Development Boards and One-Stop Centers

LAAE works closely with local Workforce Development Boards and CareerForce centers to align instructional programming with regional labor market demands. This includes:

- Integrating workforce preparation skills into ESL, ABE, and GED courses.
- Developing contextualized training programs, such as ServSafe®, that meet employer needs while addressing the literacy and language skills of students.
- Hosting job fairs and career readiness workshops in collaboration with CareerForce staff.

Integration with Social Service Agencies

To address barriers such as transportation, childcare, housing insecurity, and mental health, LAAE coordinates with social service agencies. Key collaborations include:

- Utilizing Bridge to Benefits to help identify student needs
- Referrals to housing and food assistance programs for students experiencing economic hardship.

### Engagement with Community-Based and Nonprofit Organizations

Community-based organizations and nonprofits play a critical role in outreach and student support. For example:

- Faith-based organizations help identify potential students and provide meeting spaces for classes in underserved areas.
- Nonprofits focused on immigrant and refugee services collaborate with LAAE to provide information and assistance with citizenship preparation.

### Data-Driven Development and Delivery

LAAE uses data collected about student barriers (e.g., language proficiency, economic instability, access to transportation, and educational gaps) to design programming that meets learners' specific needs. Collaborative entities provide input on emerging barriers, ensuring that programs remain relevant and responsive to community challenges.

By leveraging these partnerships, LAAE delivers instructional programming that is comprehensive, relevant, and accessible. This collaborative approach not only addresses immediate educational and employment needs but also empowers students to overcome systemic barriers, achieve their goals, and contribute to the community.

### 5.4 Describe any collaboration with local and county correctional facilities. Address how the consortium ensures that programming in correctional facilities provides sufficient intensity and duration of instruction. Include the following:

*A brief description of the instructional content and schedule(s) of ABE programming occurring in local and county correctional facilities (refer to document J as appropriate). Description of all support received from the correctional institution, including financial.*

#### Instructional Content and Schedule

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) collaborates with Becker County Jail (BCJ) to provide educational programming to the incarcerated population. The programming focuses on foundational literacy and numeracy, GED preparation, and life skills. Instruction is tailored to the individual needs of inmates, with a focus on equipping them with skills that improve their employability and ability to reintegrate into society upon release.

Instructional methods include reading and discussing literature, vocabulary development, reading comprehension exercises, critical thinking skill-building, and writing activities. Additionally, inmates participate in impromptu math exercises, or "math pop-ups", which provide practical, hands-on problem-solving opportunities, and engage in artwork and crafts as part of a holistic educational approach. These diverse instructional strategies create a dynamic learning environment that supports varied learning styles and interests.

Assessments are administered as needed to measure progress and inform instructional adjustments. TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) tests are used to

gauge literacy and numeracy levels and identify areas requiring additional support. LA AE provides curriculum, resources, materials and training for BCJ staff to help align instructional practices with evidence-based adult education standards.

Beyond traditional instruction, LA AE also fosters community-building and social development through other activities, such as an arts and crafts evening or the regularly scheduled game night. This initiative promotes positive social interactions and engagement among inmates while reinforcing cognitive and strategic thinking skills.

### Program Schedule

Classes are scheduled in coordination with BCJ staff to align with jail security protocols and operational priorities. Instructional sessions are offered multiple times per week, with sufficient intensity to meet the needs of inmates over their incarceration period. This flexible scheduling ensures consistent educational opportunities for participants, regardless of the length of their sentence.

### Support from the Correctional Institution

Becker County Jail provides essential support to ensure the success of the program, including:

- BCJ allocates dedicated classroom space for assessments and educational programming.
- BCJ staff work closely with LA AE to schedule instructional sessions and facilitate smooth program delivery while adhering to security protocols.
- BCJ collaborates with LA AE to share assessment and program participation data, which is used to evaluate program outcomes and improve instruction.

### Financial Support

LA AE provides BCJ with a prorated payment of \$6,500 for the use of classroom space from December 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. This payment supports BCJ's operational costs associated with hosting the program.

### Ensuring Sufficient Intensity and Duration of Instruction

To ensure instructional programming is impactful, LA AE incorporates the following strategies:

- Instruction is tailored to meet the specific educational needs of each inmate, ensuring that even those with shorter incarceration periods can make meaningful progress.
- Regular assessments identify areas for improvement and allow for targeted instruction, maximizing the impact of available instructional time.
- LA AE provides training, materials, curriculum, and resources for BCJ staff to enhance their ability to support inmates' educational progress effectively.

- Regular communication between LAAE and BCJ ensures that programming remains aligned with both the jail's operational needs and the educational goals of the consortium.

This partnership enables incarcerated individuals to receive high-quality education that meets their unique needs, contributing to their personal growth and successful reentry into the community.

**5.5 Describe any collaboration with Tribal Nations, if one or more are partially or entirely within the geographic area served by the consortium, or if the consortium serves a significant number of members of a particular Tribal Nation.**

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) is located partly within the boundaries of the White Earth Reservation. According to data from SiD, 21% of LAAE students identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native on their intake forms. LAAE has a long-standing and supportive relationship with the White Earth Tribal Nation. GED testing sessions hosted by LAAE have always been open to students from the White Earth ABE program, and we continue to offer that access to support students' educational progress. When the White Earth program experienced a staffing transition during the 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 program years, LAAE provided instructional and logistical support by operating a class site on White Earth's behalf and training volunteer tutors to help continue instruction during the interim.

In addition to instructional collaboration, LAAE students who are eligible to graduate are welcomed to participate in the White Earth ABE graduation ceremony. This invitation reinforces the ongoing partnership between the two programs and provides students with a meaningful opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments in a culturally significant setting.

LAAE is proud to support the educational goals of students living on or affiliated with the White Earth Reservation and continues to look for ways to partner respectfully and meaningfully in support of tribal sovereignty and student success.

*"The White Earth Reservation, located in northwestern Minnesota, is the largest of the 11 reservations in the state. The reservation encompasses over 1,300 square miles of land and is rich in cultural heritage, natural resources, and a deep connection to the land. The White Earth Reservation Business Committee and its programs are committed to preserving traditions while working to address contemporary challenges, including economic development, education, and the preservation of language and culture."*

– [whiteearth.com](https://whiteearth.com)

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## 5.6 Describe the consortium's role in developing and implementing the regional transitions plan.

### **Role in Developing the Plan**

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) plays an integral role in both the development and implementation of the Northwest Region Transitions Plan. This collaboration ensures that adult learners in the region are provided with robust pathways to education, training, and employment opportunities aligned with workforce needs.

#### Active Collaboration:

LAAE participates in quarterly meetings facilitated by the Regional Transitions Coordinator (RTC) alongside other ABE consortia, workforce development boards, and partners such as Rural Minnesota CEP and NW Private Industry Council (PIC). These sessions are key to identifying regional needs, defining objectives, and aligning educational programs with WIOA-inspired strategies.

#### Contributing Expertise:

As a contributing partner, LAAE shares insights based on local student barriers, enrollment data, and program outcomes to shape actionable strategies for addressing workforce and education gaps. This includes providing feedback on labor market trends and aligning programming with occupations in demand, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and transportation.

#### Program Planning:

LAAE helps design innovative initiatives, such as the Regional Online Career Collaborative (ROCC), which aims to increase access to online career-focused courses for adult learners throughout the Northwest and Northeast Minnesota Transitions Regions. LAAE co-leads the development of specific course offerings, such as "Knowledge & Content for the Written Driver's Exam" and "Developing a Future Pathway."

### **Role in Implementing the Plan**

#### Instructional Programming:

LAAE delivers key components of the plan through contextualized learning programs that integrate academic instruction with workforce preparation. These include courses like Writing a College-Ready Research Paper, which align with in-demand occupations and postsecondary readiness.

#### Partnership Integration:

LAAE collaborates with partners such as CareerForce, Minnesota State campuses, and local employers to implement career pathways and training programs. For example, LAAE works with CareerForce to co-enroll students in Title I programs and with Minnesota State Community and Technical College for dual enrollment opportunities.

#### Assessment and Data Sharing:



To measure progress, LAAE conducts regular assessments and shares data with regional partners. This data helps evaluate program effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and inform future iterations of the transitions plan.

#### Support Services:

LAAE connects learners to support services, including career counseling, financial aid resources, and referrals to community-based organizations. These services address barriers such as childcare, transportation, and housing, enabling students to persist in their education and training programs.

#### Professional Development:

LAAE actively participates in professional development activities outlined in the plan, such as the Summer Institute and regional training sessions. This ensures that staff remain informed about best practices and emerging strategies in adult education and workforce development.

#### Impact and Alignment

Through its involvement in the regional transitions plan, LAAE helps address the following priorities:

- Programs are tailored to meet labor market demands in sectors such as healthcare and manufacturing.
- Online learning options and partnerships with tribal and rural communities expand opportunities for underserved populations.
- Collaboration with other consortia and integration of funding streams ensure the longevity of programming.

By actively engaging in both the development and implementation of the plan, LAAE contributes to a cohesive regional strategy that enhances opportunities for adult learners and strengthens the workforce pipeline.

5.7 Indicate the individual who currently serves as the Regional Transitions Coordinator (RTC) for the consortium, and the individual who currently serves as the ABE Representative to the Local Workforce Development Board. If the consortium boundaries are in several workforce development areas, please list each representative to each board. How does the RTC communicate the information from the quarterly regional transition meetings to the entire transitions region? How does the ABE representative to the local workforce development board communicate the information from the Local Workforce Development Boards to the entire Workforce Development Area?

#### Regional Transitions Coordinator (RTC):

The current Regional Transitions Coordinator for the consortium is Russ Fraenkel.

#### ABE Representative(s) to the Local Workforce Development Board(s):

The ABE representatives to the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are:

1. Tammy Schatz
  - a. Email: [tschatz@moorheadschoools.org](mailto:tschatz@moorheadschoools.org)
2. Kirsten Fuglseth
  - a. Email: [kfuglseth@nw-service.k12.mn.us](mailto:kfuglseth@nw-service.k12.mn.us)

As the consortium boundaries span multiple workforce development areas, Tammy Schatz and Kirsten Fuglseth represent the ABE interests across the following areas:

- Northwest Private Industry Council (Region 1, Area 1)
- Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (Region 1, Area 2)

*Communication of Information from Quarterly Regional Transition Meetings:*

The RTC, Russ Fraenkel, ensures that information from quarterly regional transition meetings is communicated to the entire transitions region through the following methods:

- The RTC provides detailed summaries and reports from the meetings, which are distributed to ABE managers and transition partners across the region.
- Information is shared during quarterly meetings with ABE managers and partners, ensuring alignment with regional transitions goals and WIOA strategies.
- Critical updates, meeting agendas, and key decisions are disseminated via email to all stakeholders to ensure timely access to information.
- The RTC engages with various MDE-ABE and workforce-related events, sharing insights and updates from these engagements with the region to ensure consistency in communication.

*Communication of Information from Local Workforce Development Boards:*

The ABE representatives to the Local Workforce Development Boards, Tammy Schatz and Kirsten Fuglseth, communicate information to the Workforce Development Area in the following ways:

- Representatives provide regular updates to ABE managers through email, meetings, and written reports summarizing decisions and discussions from LWDB meetings.
- Information regarding workforce trends, funding opportunities, and new initiatives is integrated into consortium programming, ensuring alignment with LWDB goals and regional workforce strategies.
- Representatives collaborate with workforce development partners, such as CareerForce and Perkins Consortia, to share information and coordinate efforts to enhance services for adult learners.

- Representatives lead discussions at regional meetings, ensuring that information is disseminated effectively and questions or concerns from partners are addressed.

This structured approach ensures seamless communication and collaboration between the RTC, LWDB representatives, and all stakeholders within the transitions region, fostering alignment with regional and state-level goals.