

4.1 Provide an explanation of how high-quality educational services are developed by the consortium. Address the following:

How are decisions made about what kinds of courses and instruction to offer?

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) offers instruction that aligns with the Minnesota Department of Education's policy for core instructional content of Adult Basic Education (ABE). While each site varies slightly in its approach, LAAE generally provides the following programming:

- GED preparation
- Adult Diploma preparation
- Career pathways programming for youth and adults
- Digital literacy training
- Workplace literacy services
- Career assessment and counseling
- English language services
- Basic skills acquisition

LAAE follows a one-room schoolhouse model, providing instruction to students of varying educational and skill levels in a shared space. Instructors tailor programming to individual needs and maintain materials to offer targeted instruction whenever a need is identified. Topics may include budgeting, employment skills, career assessments, computer skills, and more.

LAAE's programming is a collaborative effort involving the Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator, instructors, and support staff. The Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator actively participates in initiatives such as the Becker County Interagency Committee and the Northwest Regional Transitions group, and is a member of the Regional Online Career Collaborative (ROCC). Other staff members also engage with various professional groups. These connections allow LAAE to gather valuable insights that inform programming decisions. Additionally, informal relationships with school administrators and community members help maintain open communication channels.

Program development is guided by data from the SID database, eligible core instructional content, ABE content standards, Adult Education activities outlined in WIOA, instructional best practices, and available budget resources.

LAAE offers all core content areas and supplemental activities. Materials and activities are reviewed by the Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator and select instructors to ensure alignment with College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and Academic, Career, and Employability Skills (ACES). The consortium also considers local and regional data, community needs assessments, emerging trends, and new partnership and funding opportunities. For example, LAAE partners with a local business in Perham, MN, where the business provides

funding and resources, and LAAE delivers on-site ESL classes during shift changes.

Curriculum is further enriched with resources such as *English Unlocked*, Northstar Digital Literacy, Ellii, Burlington English, and Essential Education, ensuring that LAAE's programming meets diverse learner needs effectively.

How are courses and instruction evaluated to determine whether they are high quality?

Our program ensures high-quality instruction by selecting materials that align with established content standards. When class materials do not fully meet these standards, they are supplemented with activities that are aligned to guarantee all students receive instruction that meets or exceeds the standards.

To further ensure high-quality instruction, all staff are required to complete training in key frameworks:

- **College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS):** Focused on academic content in English and math.
- **Academic, Career, and Employability Skills (ACES):** Emphasizing soft skills and professional skills essential for workforce transitions.
- **Northstar Digital Literacy (NSDL):** Covering core competencies in digital literacy, including email and internet use.

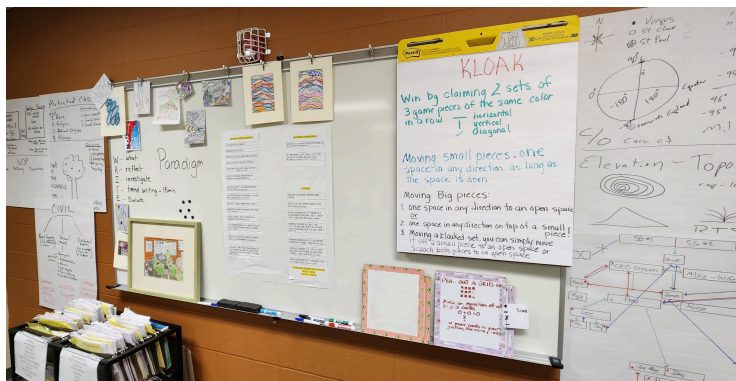
Courses and instruction are evaluated for quality through ongoing monitoring of student performance and progress. We use the Student Information Database (SID) to track measurable learning gains, ensuring students achieve their educational goals. Additionally, NSDL assessments are used to evaluate and support the development of essential digital skills. Outcomes are regularly reviewed to ensure our programs are meeting educational standards and effectively supporting student advancement. These combined efforts allow us to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of our courses and instruction.

How does the consortium ensure that all students have access to sufficient intensity of instruction in order to make learning gains?

Our ABE program ensures all students have access to sufficient instructional intensity by using content standards as a framework for designing programming that meets their diverse needs. These standards serve as a roadmap, defining the knowledge and skills students should acquire at each educational level while guiding the intensity of instruction. By aligning programming with content standards, we ensure that instruction is focused on meaningful learning outcomes that directly support students' educational goals.

Content standards provide a solid foundation for curriculum development, outlining key concepts, competencies, and learning objectives across subject areas. Our program uses these standards to create instructional materials, lesson plans, and learning activities tailored to the needs and abilities of adult learners. We purchase textbooks aligned with CCRS and supplement them with activities that develop ACES skills. For previously purchased curricula that are not aligned, we enhance them with additional materials to meet the standards. Future material purchases are made through the lens of CCRS and ACES to ensure alignment from the start. To further increase instructional intensity, we incorporate professional development resources for instructors, enabling them to improve their delivery of high-quality, standards-aligned instruction.

Our program offers a variety of instructional formats, including in-person and distance learning options, to ensure flexibility and accessibility. We provide Chromebooks to students who need technology access for self-paced learning on platforms aligned with content standards. This approach ensures that all students, regardless of resources, can engage with rigorous, standards-based instruction.



Additionally, content standards allow us to differentiate instruction and tailor programming to meet the diverse needs of our learners. Instructors use the standards to adapt teaching strategies, provide targeted support, and offer alternative pathways for students who require additional assistance or

enrichment. Distance learning opportunities further expand access to intense instruction, ensuring students can progress at their own pace and on their own schedule.

Our program uses assessment data, aligned with content standards, to evaluate student performance, identify trends, and adjust programming to ensure all students make meaningful progress toward their goals. By continually analyzing this data, we maintain a focus on instructional effectiveness and adapt as necessary to meet students' needs.

Finally, aligning with content standards ensures that our programming meets external expectations, workforce development initiatives, and industry certification requirements. This alignment enhances the relevance and applicability of our instruction, better preparing students for further education, employment, and the achievement of measurable learning gains.

How does instruction incorporate the essential components of reading instruction (alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension)?

At LAAE, reading instruction is designed to incorporate the essential components of alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in a way that is both structured and responsive to students' individual needs. Instructors are trained to implement CCRS English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) Standards at all levels of instruction, focusing on three critical shifts:

- Engaging students with appropriately complex texts to build their ability to navigate academic language.
- Reading, writing, and speaking activities in evidence from literary and informational texts.
- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction to expand students' understanding of the world around them.

Given LAAE's one-room schoolhouse model, where students with diverse skill levels learn together, instructors must embed these essential reading components into all aspects of instruction. Diagnostic reading assessments are used to identify each student's needs, guiding the selection of strategies and materials to target specific skill gaps while supporting overall growth. A personal education plan is developed for each ABE student to provide a clear educational path that best suits their learning styles and needs.



For ESL and lower-level ABE students, instruction focuses on foundational skills in alphabetics and vocabulary development. Teachers use structured phonics lessons, flashcards, and multisensory activities to teach letter-sound relationships and decoding. Textbooks, such as *That's Life* and *Life Goes On*, address reading, comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and verb tenses. These textbooks have continuity from lesson to lesson. Online platforms such as Burlington English and Duolingo reinforce these skills by providing interactive practice opportunities. To build fluency,

resources like Marshall Reading and Elli.com offer audio-supported texts that allow students to follow along as they read, often repeating passages to build confidence. Comprehension is developed through strategies such as re-reading,

predicting, questioning, and summarizing, with additional support from platforms like CommonLit and ReadWorks.

For higher-level ABE students, instruction advances to more complex strategies while continuing to emphasize essential components. Alphabetic instruction focuses on analyzing root words, prefixes, and suffixes to help students break down unfamiliar vocabulary. Fluency is strengthened through activities such as repeated readings and reading aloud, where instructors model proper pacing and pronunciation before encouraging students to practice themselves. Vocabulary instruction incorporates context clues, word analysis, and teaching of academic terms to expand students' language skills. To enhance comprehension, students are guided through strategies like predicting outcomes, summarizing passages, and making connections to prior knowledge. They are also encouraged to find evidence within texts to answer comprehension questions, ensuring a deeper understanding of the material.

Instructors regularly incorporate practical strategies to reinforce these components. For example:

- Alphabetic: Using phonics lessons, flashcards, and practice through platforms like English Unlocked, Burlington English, Ellii, and Duolingo.
- Fluency: Employing paired readings, repeated readings, and fluency-building passages, supported by resources such as Marshall Reading and Readworks.
- Vocabulary: Teaching word meanings using context clues and word analysis strategies using resources such as English Unlocked, Ellii, and Duolingo.
- Comprehension: Encouraging skills like questioning, summarizing, and responding to text-dependent questions to check understanding.

By weaving these essential reading components into instruction, LAEE ensures that students at every level receive the targeted support they need to develop as proficient, confident readers. This approach allows learners to steadily build their skills, preparing them for academic success, career advancement, and personal growth.

4.2 Describe the consortium's distance/hybrid learning programming and how it has expanded in recent years. Address the lessons learned and best practices adopted, as well as intentions and plans for continued improvement of distance and hybrid learning.

Since 2020, the consortium's distance and hybrid learning options have changed and expanded, primarily driven by the need to adapt to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Before this period, distance learning was not widely utilized within the consortium. However, the necessity for remote education during the pandemic shifted focus and aided in the development and adoption of online learning modalities. There are now a variety of classes or courses of study offered online. Online learning is also used in conjunction with in-person learning,

allowing students to utilize both options to further their education. Additionally, we learned that not everyone has reliable internet connections, particularly in rural Minnesota. LAAE received a grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation in the spring of 2020, which allowed LAAE to create a lending library for Chromebooks and hotspots.

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) is an active member of the Regional Online Career Collaborative (ROCC). ROCC is an ABE Regional Transitions project that provides career-oriented online courses that are available to all students in all consortia throughout the region. Lakes Area Adult Education also promotes students taking courses through the online statewide training courses.

We use several distance learning platforms, including CommonLit, Khan Academy, Duolingo, Burlington English, GED Ready, Marshall Reading Program, Northstar, and Readworks. Many of our students have expressed technology fatigue, and we have seen success in not only offering online opportunities for students but in providing Readworks paper packets for students to take home.

In addition to the previously mentioned distance learning options, three instructors and one staff member are TVM-certified (teacher verification model). This allows instructors to develop CCRS-aligned synchronous and asynchronous lessons that are targeted specifically to student needs.

LAAE has appointed a staff member to hold the secondary position of Distance Coordinator. This position includes the following responsibilities:

- Train/orient new staff to DL platforms
- Add/delete students to requested platforms
- Count monthly proxy hours for all learners on all platforms
- Report monthly proxy contact hours in the SID database
- Keep SID classes up to date (enrolling and exiting students, staff, etc..)
- Maintain proxy contact hour records
- Participate in training and professional development to stay up to date with platforms
- Encourage the use of DL platforms with staff and students

For continued improvement in expanding distance learning options, we intend to maintain our current strategies, improve upon our distance learning options for GED/ADP coursework, provide ongoing educator training, evaluate our current technology accessible to students, and develop a plan for keeping those resources up to date. Additionally, we aim to develop more hybrid and distance learning opportunities, working to implement these new developments this fall.

4.3 Give an overview of how the consortium has integrated all three sets of the state's content standards for ABE (CCRS, ACES/TIF, and Northstar) into instruction to date. Address the following. Refer to document J as appropriate.

What content standards training have staff participated in? What percentage of instructional staff have participated in Foundations Training for each of the three

sets of content standards: CCRS Foundations, ACES Foundations, and Northstar Foundations?

All new LAEE instructors and select support staff must complete training in at least one of the content standard areas within one year of hire. Additionally, they must personally go through the assessments they will be administering to gain a thorough understanding of the process. The following percentages of staff have completed the Foundation Standards Training.

- 100 % - College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) Foundations
- 100 % - Academic, Career, and Employability Skills (ACES) Foundations
- 100 % - Northstar Digital Literacy Foundations

How are the standards used to plan for instruction and course offerings?

Our course development is guided by the CCRS, ACES, and Northstar Digital Literacy Standards, which serve as the foundation for creating rigorous, relevant, and best-practice aligned educational programs. These standards inform every aspect of our curriculum, from lesson planning and instruction to the selection of textbooks and materials. Each class level identifies the standards appropriate for that stage, building lessons to teach the specific skills associated with each standard.

We continually review and update our courses to ensure alignment with these standards, analyzing the curriculum to identify gaps and supplementing it with additional content or activities to maximize student benefit. For example, the CCRS Foundations guide the design of lessons, such as having students analyze complex texts and write narratives to demonstrate their understanding. Instruction follows the CCRS template to select appropriate texts and includes activities that foster critical thinking and writing skills, while assessments are based on a rubric aligned with CCRS to evaluate comprehension and writing.

We also assess our courses against ACES standards to ensure that existing lessons meet the required criteria and identify areas that need enhancement. Any weaknesses are addressed, and lessons are tailored to better meet the needs of students. Through this ongoing process, we ensure that our educational offerings are aligned with current standards and best practices, continuously improving to support student success.

How does the consortium ensure instructional materials are aligned to content standards?

We prioritize standards alignment when choosing instructional materials to ensure our courses are both rigorous and relevant to students' educational needs. By carefully selecting resources from trusted, reputable publishers, we aim to enhance the learning experience while maintaining adherence to the CCRS, ACES, and Northstar Digital Literacy Standards. These materials are integral in supporting our curriculum development and instructional strategies. Examples include the following:

- Steck-Vaughn
 - Preparing for the GED Science
 - Preparing for the GED Social Studies
- Kaplan GED Test Prep
- McGraw-Hill
 - GED/ABE
 - Common Core Achieve - All Subjects
 - Common Core Basics - All Subjects
 - Number Power
 - Breakthroughs in Science
 - Breakthroughs in Social Studies
 - Language Builder - All Levels
 - Reading Basics - All Levels
- New Readers Press-
 - GED/ABE content:
 - Writing for the GED Test - Books 1-4
 - ESL/Workforce Readiness content:
 - Road to Work
 - Conversations for Work
 - At Work in the U.S.
 - That's Life
 - Life Goes On
 - Citizenship: Passing the Test
- USCIS- citizenship materials and guidance
- Cengage
 - Grammar in Context
 - Great Writing
- Essential Education
- Khan Academy
- Burlington English
- English Unlocked
- Ellii

4.4 Give an overview of college and/or career-focused programming, including Integrated Education and Training (IET), transitions to postsecondary, or programming that helps students attain a recognized postsecondary credential.

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) has implemented various contextualized classes and career pathways programs over the years, achieving varying degrees of success. Partnerships have been established, and innovative proposals have been implemented. However, rural programming challenges—such as attracting enough students to fill a class and securing the necessary partners to sustain projects—have limited opportunities for replication. Despite these obstacles, LAAE remains committed to designing and implementing career pathways and educational opportunities. Currently, there is no Integrated Education and Training (IET) programming offered by the consortium.

That said, several past and present programs related to careers and transitions to post-secondary education highlight the consortium's efforts:

ServSafe® instruction:

In 2019, LAAE Adult Basic Education began offering ServSafe® instruction. This program provides training and testing for the ServSafe® Food Safety Manager credential, which leads to the Minnesota Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certificate. This credential is required for all facilities in Minnesota that serve food to the public.

This initiative is an excellent opportunity for adult learners to earn a valuable credential while improving their language and literacy skills in the context of safe food handling. The training is typically offered twice a year, but can also be scheduled on demand if a business has enough participants to fill a class.

LAAE trained its staff to become ServSafe® certified instructors and proctors to deliver this program. By offering contextualized literacy instruction aligned with the needs and interests of adult learners, this program equips participants with both employability skills and a recognized credential to enhance their job search, particularly in the food service industry.

Regional Online Career Collaborative (ROCC) Courses:

Since FY21, the LAAE consortium has partnered with three other ABE consortia in the region (Alexandria ABE, Moorhead ABE, and Northwest Service Cooperative) and two northern ABE consortia (Duluth ABE and Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency/AEOA ABE) to offer regionally coordinated, online career-focused courses through Regional Transitions funding.

These courses are accessible to students from any of the nine ABE programs within the regional transitions service area, as well as those in the northern region. Offered online and during non-traditional hours (early to mid-evening), these classes provide flexible learning opportunities. Referring consortia retain the contact hours for their enrolled learners, fostering collaboration and encouraging participation. As part of the partnership, the referring consortia retain the contact hours for their enrolled learners, which benefits the referring programs and encourages participation. Twelve classes were designed and offered during FY25, including:

Developing a Future Pathway: Course introduces students to the Minnesota Career Information System. Students will learn to use the occupations database, take and interpret at least three career assessment tools, use those results to research specific careers, set a career goal, and make plans for achieving that goal. Students will also learn the steps of a professional resume and develop a resume.

English Vocabulary for MN Driver's Manual: This 10-week course focuses on the basic vocabulary and knowledge that is needed to help English language learners begin studying for the Minnesota Driver's license written exam. This is our level one course in preparing for the MN Drivers Written Exam. After completing this course, students are ready to take the level 2 course, Knowledge & Content for Written Driver's Exam.

Knowledge & Content for Written Driver's Exam: This level 2 course focuses on the knowledge and requirements needed to pass the MN driver's license written exam. The content is based on the MN Driver's Manual and includes road knowledge, traffic laws, vehicle operation and signage. This is our level 2 course in preparing for the MN driver's written exam. Students who have taken the level one course, English Vocabulary for MN Driver's Manual, should take this next in preparation for the permit test.

Fast Paced Knowledge & Content for Written Driver's Exam: A shorter and faster-moving version of the course that focuses on the knowledge and requirements needed to pass the MN driver's license written exam. For students who only need a little boost to pass the written exam and whose English is at a high level. This is our level 3 course in preparing for the MN driver's written test.

English for Healthcare Pathways: This course is designed to introduce students to the basic vocabulary and foundational concepts around healthcare careers, HIPAA, and body systems.

English for Hospitality Careers: This course is designed to help non-native English speakers become more proficient in English skills on the job in the hospitality career field. It is a bridge course preparing students to successfully pass certification exams.

Paraprofessional Training & Certification: Course is designed to qualify paras and meet Title I requirements. Eligible students will enroll in ParaEducator Online and work synchronously with a professional instructor through the first thirteen lessons. Proctored certification testing is provided upon completion of the course.

Pre-CNA Course: This course is designed to pre-teach many of the topics covered in the CNA class and the NATO knowledge test. (Skills will not be covered.) Students will discover the various paths available to them in healthcare and how to move forward on those paths.

Professionalism for Healthcare Careers: This course will explore the soft skills needed for success in a healthcare career pathway. The primary focus will be on identifying optimal personal characteristics, qualities, teamwork, communication skills, personal management, and diversity in the workplace, as well as navigating getting ahead within the healthcare field.

TEAS Exam Prep: Course is designed to help individuals who are going into the nursing field. The Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) exam is an aptitude test given to nursing school applicants (RN and LPN) before admittance into a nursing program. Class will offer help in science, math, language arts, and reading skills in preparation to take the TEAS Exam. Free TEAS Practice Test (\$65 value) for those who complete 40 or more hours of the course.

Writing a College-Ready Research Paper: This class is designed to teach how to form a research question, find credible research sources, complete a rigorous research process, and organize the information for presentation in an essay. This is an important process for success in college-level classes in all subject areas.

Math Foundations for Paraprofessionals: This course is designed to build the foundational math skills necessary to successfully participate in the Paraprofessional Training & Certification course and the math instruction within the ParaEducator online training modules (number sense, operation sense, multiplication & division concepts).

4.5 Give an overview of secondary credential/adult diploma programming, which supports ABE students in completing a high school and/or equivalency diploma:

Which secondary credential/diploma options are offered?

- High School Equivalency assessment preparation, including GED®/HiSET®;
- Credit completion or credit recovery; and/or
- Standard Adult High School Diploma programming.

How are students advised in selecting the option that works best for them?

The Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) consortium has been offering Standard Adult High School Diploma (ADP) programming since approximately 2016. Currently, the Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator and the Program Assistant are trained to oversee and implement the Standard Adult Diploma program.

When an ABE student joins the program seeking a high school equivalency, the local teacher meets with them to explain the available options. Students are placed in the ADP program when both the local teacher and the Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator determine it is the best path forward. Factors influencing this decision include the number of high school credits the student has completed, test anxiety, challenges with passing a GED test, or a preference for earning a diploma over a GED, among others.

ADP Process

Once identified as an ADP candidate, the student's transcript is analyzed by the Program Assistant and/or the Lead Instructor/Program Coordinator to develop

an individualized ADP plan. This plan is then shared with both the student and the local teacher to ensure clarity and alignment.

In addition to in-person instruction, ADP students and teachers have access to asynchronous ADP Level D instruction. This instruction combines Khan Academy resources with TVM lessons created and taught by a TVM-certified Adult Diploma instructor. Upon completing their Level D instruction, either through in-person classes or the asynchronous ADP distance learning option, students meet with their local teacher to complete their final project. This project demonstrates mastery of a Level E standard and serves as the evidence uploaded to the Statewide Student Information Database (SID) for submission to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).



Students complete the ADP program when they fulfill all requirements for their standard adult high school diploma portfolio, which is then reviewed and rated as passing by MDE.

Program Outcomes and Challenges

Over the past five years, 21 students have graduated with their adult diploma through LAAE. Currently, the consortium has 10-15 students actively working toward their diploma, having completed portions of their required work but not yet enough to submit a full domain.

As with all ABE programming, adult diploma programming faces challenges, particularly in maintaining student persistence and addressing barriers to success. To mitigate these issues, the consortium developed the asynchronous ADP platform to provide greater flexibility and support for students navigating these challenges.

4.6 Give an overview of the consortium's process to effectively serve eligible adults with disabilities, including learning disabilities (this could include a referral process when needed).

How do providers identify and utilize appropriate accommodations for students (and staff)?

The majority of our sites comply with the accessibility standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enabling our program to support individuals with disabilities. However, the Waukon-Dairy Farm location is an exception, as classes there are held in an upstairs room without elevator access.

Our educators are well-versed in the resources and support provided by Minnesota Adult Basic Education's Physical and Non-Apparent Disability Assistance (PANDA), the state ABE supplemental service provider for disability training and support. Last spring, our program hosted a visit from PANDA staff, during which they provided valuable insights and guidance on accommodating students with disabilities. Teachers are trained to request appropriate resources to address individual needs.

To identify necessary accommodations, all students complete a questionnaire during the intake process. We also request IEPs and 504 plans, along with transcript requests when appropriate, which allows us to continue following documented instructional supports as part of a learner's transition into ABE.

In addition to the accommodations we provide to our students, we also assist those who require support in applying for testing accommodations, including for the GED and ServSafe exams.

What data and/or information do you have that shows how effectively eligible adults with disabilities are being served?

Early detection through our intake process allows us to implement accommodations promptly, ensuring that every student's needs are addressed with both sensitivity and effectiveness. To support this, we develop Personal Education Plans that incorporate the required accommodations. These often include extended time on assessments but may also involve adapting lessons to better match individual learning styles. For instance, some students benefit from visual aids, while others thrive with a more hands-on approach.

When needed, we provide referrals to external resources. Similarly, many of our students come to us through referrals from organizations such as CareerForce, Mahube-Otwa, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and others. These learners often arrive with identified disabilities, existing support plans, or established connections to resource professionals. This allows us to coordinate with those partners to ensure continuity of services and instructional support.

4.7 Describe how volunteers are utilized and trained in the consortium. Address the following:

What are common activities and roles for volunteers?

Lakes Area Adult Education has been fortunate to benefit from the support of several dedicated volunteers. These individuals serve in various capacities, including working under the direct supervision of a classroom teacher, providing individual or small group tutoring outside the classroom under teacher guidance, or assisting in the administrative offices.

Volunteers support teachers with classroom activities, help students navigate technology, and tutor individuals or small groups who need additional help with reading, vocabulary, writing, speaking, or math. Additionally, tutors have worked with students in person or virtually for one to two hours at a time, focusing on specific needs such as foundational math, citizenship, or driver's test preparation, speaking or reading practice, or academic writing.

The following outlines the number of volunteer hours contributed to Lakes Area Adult Education by academic year:

2020-2021: 351 hours
2021-2022: 896 hours
2022-2023: 1219 hours
2023-2024: 1480 hours
2024-2025: 561 hours

How do volunteers enhance student success in the consortium?

LAAE is fortunate to have several long-time, dedicated volunteers who bring a wealth of skills and experience to our students. These volunteers play a vital role in enhancing student learning and success by:

- Assisting teachers in providing leveled and scaffolded instruction to meet the individual educational needs and goals of students.
- Building trusting relationships with students increases their persistence and supports deeper learning.
- Enabling LAAE to better serve larger groups of students.
- Creating a more learner-friendly and equitable classroom environment, particularly through the contributions of bilingual and multilingual volunteers who help facilitate learning.
- Offering students a connection to the community, which is especially valuable for newly arrived immigrants.

How are the consortium's volunteers oriented and trained? (Training requirements are outlined in the Volunteer Training Standards Policy.)

Lakes Area Adult Education (LAAE) employs a Volunteer Coordinator who facilitates the recruitment, training, and management of volunteers in alignment with the Volunteer Training Standards Policy. The Volunteer Coordinator, a current classroom teacher, is uniquely positioned to understand classroom needs and works closely with other instructors to ensure effective collaboration.

Volunteer Recruitment and Onboarding Process

Potential volunteers begin by completing an application and signing a code of conduct agreement. Once the application is submitted, the Volunteer Coordinator contacts the applicant to conduct an interview. This conversation assesses the candidate's skills and interests, provides an overview of available training, and shares more details about volunteer opportunities within the program.

If the candidate is determined to be a good fit for LAAE's needs, the Volunteer Coordinator schedules an orientation meeting. During this meeting, the new volunteer receives an overview of their role and is introduced to the classroom teacher with whom they will work. Teachers provide the role-specific training necessary for classroom activities, while the Volunteer Coordinator maintains communication with both teachers and volunteers, offering support as needed.

Volunteer Training Requirements

All LAAE volunteers complete the training required by the State. Per the updated MDE Volunteer Training Standards Policy (June 18, 2021):

- Volunteers who began after October 1, 2021, must complete a 4-hour Initial Training provided by Literacy Minnesota. This training must be completed within six months of starting as a volunteer.
- Volunteers working one-on-one as virtual tutors are required to complete the State's 12-hour training program.

Volunteers are also encouraged to attend additional training opportunities, such as the Summer Institute, Spring and Fall Regional Trainings, and other professional development events that align with their interests or enhance their effectiveness.

What training is provided and/or required on an ongoing basis for volunteers, locally and/or through other entities? (Volunteers who have tutored for more than one year are required to participate in a minimum of 2 hours of professional development annually after initial training, as outlined in the Volunteer Training Standards Policy.)

All volunteers in Minnesota Adult Education programs are required to complete appropriate training to ensure they can perform their roles effectively and provide high-quality adult education services. Volunteers receive program-specific orientation and training. Depending on their role, volunteers working with adult learners must complete one of the following training programs:

- Foundations of Adult Education Tutoring (12 hours)
- Foundations of Volunteering in the Adult Education Classroom (4 hours)

These trainings are offered by Literacy Minnesota in multiple formats, including in-person sessions, webinars, and asynchronous courses.

Additionally, some LAEE volunteers are licensed or retired teachers who bring a strong understanding of educational best practices to their roles. Returning volunteers are required to complete a two-hour training tailored to their specific volunteer assignments. This may include in-house training or virtual training provided through Literacy Minnesota.