

Changes to Tuition Assistance for ABEA courses

In the March 2014 issue of AEFL Notes, the CDE Office of Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) informed AEFLA grantees that beginning in FY15, July 1, 2014, (effectively the fall 2014 semester) CDE/AEFL will no longer directly reimburse adult educators for tuition and fees related to taking the courses required to earn the ABEA. Programs may include ABEA course reimbursement costs in FY15 budgets due on July 23, 2014. Directors must have documentation on file outlining how the amount allocated to ABEA courses was derived, including the criteria used for identifying instructors who will receive this assistance.

CDE/AEFL will confirm with programs that this documentation is on file during the fall compliance reporting, which is due electronically November 15, 2014. Programs will report the names of instructors who received PD support for the fall 2014 semester and the courses for which they received support and the names of instructors who the program plans to support in the spring 2015 semester.

Below are some recommendations based on the process that CDE/AEFL has used in awarding PD Support of ABEA courses. More detail is available in the 'Authorization Courses' section on the ABEA website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/LIAIndex.htm>.

One required criteria for awarding tuition assistance to instructors is proof of postsecondary degree or that the instructors will earn a degree before they apply for the ABEA. Applicants must have a degree for Educator Licensing to award the ABEA. AEFLA grant funds cannot be used to provide tuition assistance to instructors who have no plans to earn a degree.

- Require all instructors who do not have the ABEA to submit a plan of action for earning the ABEA or update an existing plan of action (form available on ABEA website) to confirm the courses they need to take and the courses they can complete via Evaluation of Equivalent Coursework or Evaluation of Experience
- Recommended criteria to award reimbursement for tuition.
 - An updated plan of action for earning the ABEA on file demonstrating the instructor needs to take ABEA courses
 - Evidence of commitment, e.g. a commitment of two or more years, to delivering instruction to adult learners in AEFLA-funded programs; employed at the program for an established minimum number of hours, e.g. 90 hours
 - In "good standing", i.e. No past history of dropping a course after the drop deadline without appropriate justification, e.g. personal or family emergency
- Recommendations for administering the support:
 - Determine if the program can reimburse instructors for EDU (undergraduate) courses at an **average of \$435/three-credit course*** and EDAE (graduate) courses which cost **approximately \$1,700/ three-credit course**
 - Require instructors to apply for tuition reduction through the College Opportunity Fund (https://secure.collegeincolorado.org/Home/COF/College_Opportunity_Fund.aspx)
 - Reimburse the instructor for a portion, e.g. 50% of the tuition, upon submission of proof of registration and payment of tuition; reimburse the instructor for the remaining amount upon completion of the course with a grade of A or B (the grades currently accepted by Educator Licensing).
 - Withdraw from classes before the deadline
 - Require recipients of tuition assistance to inform the program director that they will withdraw immediately upon making this decision

**Tuition and fees vary by institution. Go to the website of the postsecondary education institution for the exact tuition and fees for three-credit hours in 2014-15. The tuition is higher for those not eligible for the College Opportunity Fund. The tuition for hybrid* community college courses is less than the tuition for online courses through CCCOnline.*

**(a mix of instruction delivered face to face and remotely using other means of communication)*

Implementing the new ABEA Course Competencies

The revised competencies for the four courses required to earn the ABEA were approved by the Colorado Community College System in April 2014. The competencies for the EDU 135 Family Literacy in Adult Education were not revised. This course is being put on hold.

Important updates:

The courses

- Summer 2014 EDU hybrid courses and online courses through Colorado Mountain College used the new competencies. CCCOnline will not offer EDU courses in the fall 2014 semester so the courses can be revised to include the new competencies. It is expected that CCCOnline will offer courses in January 2015.
- A request will be made to remove the EDU 135 course from the Common Course Numbering System.
- Colorado State University will offer a new course starting the fall 2014 semester that addresses EDU 133 course competencies.

The portfolio

- **Instructors in the process of assembling a portfolio must submit it by December 31, 2014.** The Evaluation of Experience forms with the old competencies will not be accepted after that date. The portfolio would be returned and additional observations would have to be conducted.
- **EDU 131 will not be accepted in the portfolio after December 31, 2014.** There are two other options for demonstrating proficiency in the EDU 131 course competencies, through submitting the Evaluation of Equivalent Coursework or taking the ABEA course(s).
- A 3-4 hour face to face training for portfolio evaluators/ instructional supervisors is being planned for September. Instructional supervisors are not required to participate in this training to be eligible to evaluate an instructor's proficiency in the competencies, but it is highly recommended. The process of evaluating instructors' proficiency in the competencies has not changed.
- A webinar will be held in October to review the revised Evaluation of Experience forms.

Evaluation of Equivalent Coursework.

- **Revised Evaluation of Equivalent Coursework forms will be available on the ABEA website by August 15, 2014. The old competencies will be replaced with the new competencies.**

Reminders

Compliance

- AEFLA directors will receive confirmation via email about the program's FY14 ABEA compliance status by July 31, 2014. Programs that are not in compliance must submit revised compliance improvement plans by August 29, 2014. More information to follow in a separate email.
- AEFLA directors will receive an email in October with a memo that has instructions for submitting updates to the Compliance Status Reports. The information is due November 17, 2014.

Training

- September 19, 2014 from 9 am – 12 pm is the tentative date and time for training on conducting the Evaluation of Experience for the ABEA portfolio and other guidance for supporting instructors in assembling and submitting a portfolio. It will be held closest to the area with largest number of interested participants. If there are staff at your program who are interested, email Whitney Westgaard at Westgaard_w@cde.state.co.us and let her know.
- October 16-17 2014 – webinars to review the revised Evaluation of Experience forms and answer questions about the rubrics. 2:30 – 4:00 pm on 10/16 and 9:30 – 11:00 am on 10/17.

Fall 2014 Courses

See the 'Authorization Courses' section on the ABEA website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/LIAIndex.htm>.

Portfolios

- Deadlines - See the 'Portfolio' section on the ABEA website.
- We received less than half the number of portfolios in FY14 that we have received in the past few years. We will be developing a survey to gather information to help us understand the drop in portfolio submissions and the interest in portfolios in FY15.

Thank you for all your work in supporting staff in achieving their ABEA. If you have any questions about the changes to tuition assistance for ABEA, please contact Jean McDonald at 303-866-6884 or McDonald_J@cde.state.co.us