



ADDRESSING THE WHOLE LEARNER

Identifying & Understanding Your Target Population



ADULT EDUCATION INNOVATION

DESIGN LAB

WORKSHOP 1




Who's TalentFirst?

Unmatched Collaboration for Regional Impact




About TalentFirst

TalentFirst is a CEO alliance providing leadership on today's complex talent challenges. We rely on data and expertise to illuminate gaps, evaluate strategies, and advocate for solutions to attract, retain, and develop the talent West Michigan employers need and to ensure all individuals and the region can thrive.









Our Goals

-  Grow the labor force
-  Improve knowledge and skills
-  Expand economic opportunity

Our Strategies

-  P-20 Education
-  Workforce Development
-  Employer Strategies

Our Impact

-  **31,000+** kids ages 0-8 now get books when they see their doctor
-  **1000+** business leaders & decision-makers received our insights & solutions
-  **1000+** of our Talent Solutions Playbooks distributed & downloaded
-  **250+** downloads of our reports & strategies
-  **200+** K-12 educators collaborated with us to expand career education
-  **200+** HR leaders used our employer talent strategies
-  **10** bills signed in to law — childcare (8), workforce training & education (2)
-  **1** Executive Order to make State investments in education & training

Next Workshop

Ensuring Equitable Access
& Maximizing Partnership
Potential

June 18, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
West Michigan Works!, Grand Rapids

Register Now





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Section 107a

Adult Education Innovation Program

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. on August 6, 2024, in NexSys (Next Generation Grant, Application and Cash Management).

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development (LEO-WD) is pleased to announce the release of this Request for Proposals (RFP) to support innovative approaches that lead to **increased participant enrollment, retention, and completion of adult education programming**. This funding opportunity was made possible by a \$15 million investment in Section 107a of the State School Aid Act (Public Act 320 of 2023). The purpose of the funding is to **pilot evidence-based and scalable innovations** to equitably and effectively serve adult learners, **including adults without a high school diploma or equivalency and English language learners**. The innovation funding is intended to complement the additional \$10 million allocated to increase capacity and strengthen the adult education system under Section 107 of the State School Aid Act.

The innovations may include, but are not limited to, synchronous and asynchronous program delivery, wraparound supports for participants, alignment between adult education services and postsecondary education, colocation with Michigan Works! or community colleges, and high-quality professional development for adult education staff. **The applicant must demonstrate how the proposed innovation builds off existing research and best practices to support achievement of the defined goals.**

Must Align with LEO-WD Priorities

The innovation programs should align with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development (LEO-WD) priorities:

- ▶ Expand **access** to adult education services.
- ▶ Ensure **equity** in the delivery of services.
- ▶ Ensure services are **high-quality** and utilize **best practices** and **evidence-based** research.
- ▶ Build **equitable career pathways** to high-wage careers.
- ▶ Increase the number of adults in Michigan with a **postsecondary credential**.

Who's Eligible?

Eligible applicants include **adult education providers and community colleges funded under Section 107** with demonstrated experience serving adult learners. **Adult education providers that are not a school district, intermediate school district, or community college must apply in partnership with an eligible fiscal agent** for their application to be considered. The fiscal agent may not use more than 5% of the total award for administration costs for serving as the fiscal agent.

If multiple eligible adult education providers choose to collaborate in the development of a program, **a single application would be submitted in NexSys**. The entity submitting the application would act as the grant contact and fiscal agent, and would be responsible for submitting all deliverables.

Section 107a

Adult Education Innovation Program

Grant Purpose and Funding

The purpose of the funding is to pilot **evidence-based and scalable innovations** to equitably and effectively serve adult learners, **including adults without a high school diploma or equivalency and English language learners.**

Applicants are encouraged to partner with other entities and organizations, as appropriate. Recommended partners include, but are not limited to, other adult education providers in the community or region, school districts, postsecondary education institutions, workforce agencies, community organizations, and employers.

Program activities/services must be provided within the geographic boundaries of the prosperity regions identified in the grant application.

Programs cannot replicate services/activities/costs already being provided for under Section 107 of the State School Aid Act nor under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

Funding Period: September 1, 2024 – June 30, 2026

August 06, 2024

Application Submission Deadline

(by 11:59 PM on August 6, 2024)

August 29, 2024

Applicants Notified

Applicants notified of approval/denial determinations

**October 20, 2024 -
August 20, 2026**

State Aid Payments

Fiscal Agent - LEA or ISD: 1/11th on the 20th of each month
Fiscal Agent - Community College: Payment method to be determined

August 29, 2025

Interim Reporting

Interim financial and program reporting in NexSys

November 01, 2025

Financial Reporting

Fiscal agents and regional providers are required to enter all Section 107a revenue and final expenditure information into the Financial Information Database

August 29, 2026

Final Reporting

Final Report due in NexSys (Participant/Performance, Final Expenditures, and Narrative Report)

November 1, 2026

Financial Reporting

Fiscal agents and regional providers are required to enter all Section 107a revenue and final expenditure information into the Financial Information Database



**Scan to learn more
about the grant
opportunity.**



ADULT EDUCATION INNOVATION DESIGN LAB

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

The Adult Education Innovation Design Lab will assist interested applicants in developing high-quality, competitive proposals for the Section 107a RFP that will result in sustainable and scalable innovations that improve enrollment in, and completion of, adult education programs.

The Design Lab will provide the capacity and technical expertise necessary to help interested applicants design innovative programs and develop competitive proposals for the RFP.

WHAT IS IT?

The 2-month design sprint includes:



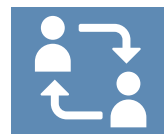
4 Workshops

Address each element of your application with technical support and resources from our workshops.



4 Coaching Sessions

Develop and refine your proposal with individualized coaching from Public Policy Associates.



Peer-to-Peer Learning

Collaborate, partner, and learn from other practitioners across the nation.



ADULT EDUCATION INNOVATION DESIGN LAB

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

- 6/11** **Workshop 1**
Addressing the Whole Learner
Lansing, MI
- 6/18** **Workshop 2**
Ensuring Equitable Access &
Maximizing Partnership
Potential
Grand Rapids, MI
- 7/02** **Workshop 3**
Leveraging Data to Identify
Gaps & Evaluate Success
Detroit, MI
- 7/17** **Workshop 4**
Mitigating Risk & Sustaining
Change
Mount Pleasant, MI

Individualized coaching will be available to applicants between each workshop.

SCAN TO SIGN UP
FOR COACHING



YOUR GOALS

To complete the 107a Design Lab process, and subsequently develop a proposal to be considered by LEO-WD for a Section 107a grant, each applicant will work with TalentFirst and Public Policy Associates to complete the following elements during the 2-month planning process:

1 Needs Assessment

Quantify the size of your adult learner population, evaluate your program data to identify gaps and barriers experienced by your learners.

2 Asset Map

Detail local resources and potential partners in your community that you could leverage to enhance your proposed innovation.

3 Work Plan

Review your plan to evaluate and improve your current delivery mechanism to achieve higher enrollment and completion rates, including plans to mitigate risk and scale your innovation.

4 Success Measures

Articulate a clear vision of success with metrics to capture how your innovation will improve employment, education, and/or quality of life for participants.

5 Sustainability Plan

Develop a clear and realistic plan to sustain your innovation after grant funds exhaust in 2026.



Meet Your Coaches



All Design Lab teams will have access to (4) 1-hour virtual coaching session with Public Policy Associates following each of our 4 workshops. Coaches will provide technical assistance and advice to help you design your innovation and develop a competitive proposal.



Suniya Farooqui
Senior Research Associate

Ms. Farooqui is an experienced researcher and program evaluator specializing in mixed-methods research, quantitative analysis, survey design, and community-based participatory research.



MaryBeth Talbot
Project Manager

Dr. Talbot excels in experimental and survey designs, quantitative analysis, and mixed-methods approaches. She is skilled in identifying implicit and explicit bias and dedicated to promoting equity.



Colleen Graber
Chief Operating Officer

Ms. Graber is a skilled facilitator, researcher, and manager specializing in education, workforce development, and equity. She excels in qualitative research, evaluation, and strategic planning.



Dirk Zuschlag
Senior Research Associate

Dr. Zuschlag contributes extensive expertise in law, teaching, and research to education and workforce development projects. He excels in qualitative research.



Rob Linden
Affiliated Consultant

Dr. Linden brings extensive experience in higher education research and analysis, as well as a strong background in data and grant management.



Meg Chamberlain
Affiliated Consultant

Dr. Chamberlain brings a wealth of experience in research and analysis and is especially adept at transforming complex data into actionable frameworks.

Reserve Time During Each Coaching Cycle

Design Lab participants, or teams, will be asked to reserve a 1-hour slot during each of the 4 coaching cycles outlined below. Participants will have one week after each workshop to complete their coaching. It is recommended, but not required, for all partners to attend coaching if submitting a joint proposal.

Cycle 1

June 12 - June 17

Cycle 2

June 19 - July 1

Cycle 3

July 3 - July 16

Cycle 3

July 18 - July 26

Restoring the Promise of Adult Education in Michigan

Michigan faces two significant challenges to its economic success.

One is demographic: An aging population is retiring, while birth rates and in-migration are failing to replenish the talent pool. The other is that Michiganders have less education and skills compared to neighboring states and the nation overall. Central to that concern: **Far too many adults lack a high school diploma or foundational skills.**

This is holding us back and harming our residents. If Michigan hopes to compete in the knowledge-based economy, it must maximize the education and skills of its workforce. This includes optimizing an adult education system that **currently meets less than 4% of the need** while hundreds of thousands are sidelined from the workforce.

Current State: Coming Up Short

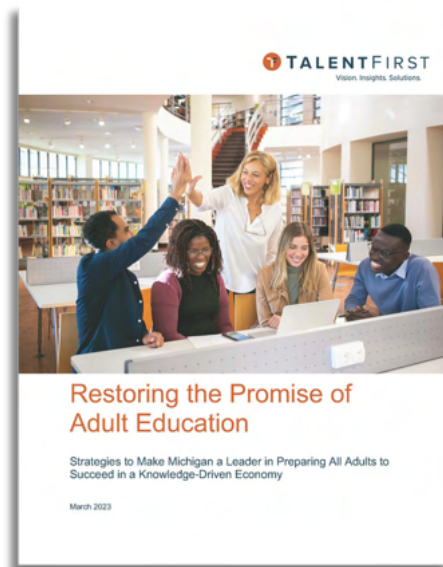
Michigan is making significant investments in post-secondary training and education. But those initiatives – and the good-paying jobs they make possible – remain out of reach for those who lack a high school diploma, as 716,000 did in 2019. Yet, even as Michigan’s adult education system serves just a fraction of the need, **only 1 in 2 who enrolled earn a high school diploma or GED in 2019.**

Adult learners are a diverse group and face a wide range of challenges with little support, resulting in unacceptable disparities in completion rates:

- If displaced homemaker, 1 in 4 chance of success
- With transportation barriers, 1 in 5 chance of success
- With transportation barriers and English language learners, 1 in 6 chance of success
- If Black/African American, 1 in 3 chance of success.

Meanwhile, state funding for adult education has plummeted for decades, and **Michigan invested 1 cent on adult basic education for every \$1.00 spent on higher education in 2023.**

In a state that produces only three graduates for every 10 job openings requiring a postsecondary credential, we must do better with this neglected component of talent development. Adult education can open the door to post-secondary programs, while also serving those who require basic education, English language acquisition, remediation, and high school completion/equivalency.



VIEW REPORT



Restoring the Promise of Adult Education in Michigan

Identifying the Gaps



Alignment

Limited alignment between adult education and workforce development; few programs tailored to learners' specific needs and challenges.



Employer Engagement

Lack of strong partnerships and robust engagement with employers in curriculum development, program design, and service delivery.



Visibility and Respect

Lack of public awareness regarding the function and importance of adult education; no legitimacy for the profession.



Consistency and Equity

Inequitable access to services and support, absence of proactive barrier prevention, learner accommodations, and specific professional training.



Awareness and Capacity

Lack of broad outreach and limited capacity among providers; limited knowledge regarding which services are offered and where to obtain them.



Learner Persistence

Lack of success reengaging learners who exit before accomplishing their goals, and limited success increasing persistence rates.



Meaningful Data

Lack of holistic performance measures to accurately assess the unique value different program types can offer to learners with varying needs and goals.

Adult Education Checklist Program & Policy Strategies

Michigan needs to elevate adult education at the state level while retaining and bolstering the regional partnerships necessary to deploy resources locally. TalentFirst worked with Public Policy Associates, subject matter experts, and practitioners in the field to develop a model for adult education resource deployment. The full report contains 21 recommendations stratified into the following four categories:



Systems Integration



Educator Supports



Funding



Learner Services

Short-Term

Medium-Term

Longer-Term

Adult Learner Variability



Understanding the Context of Adult Learning

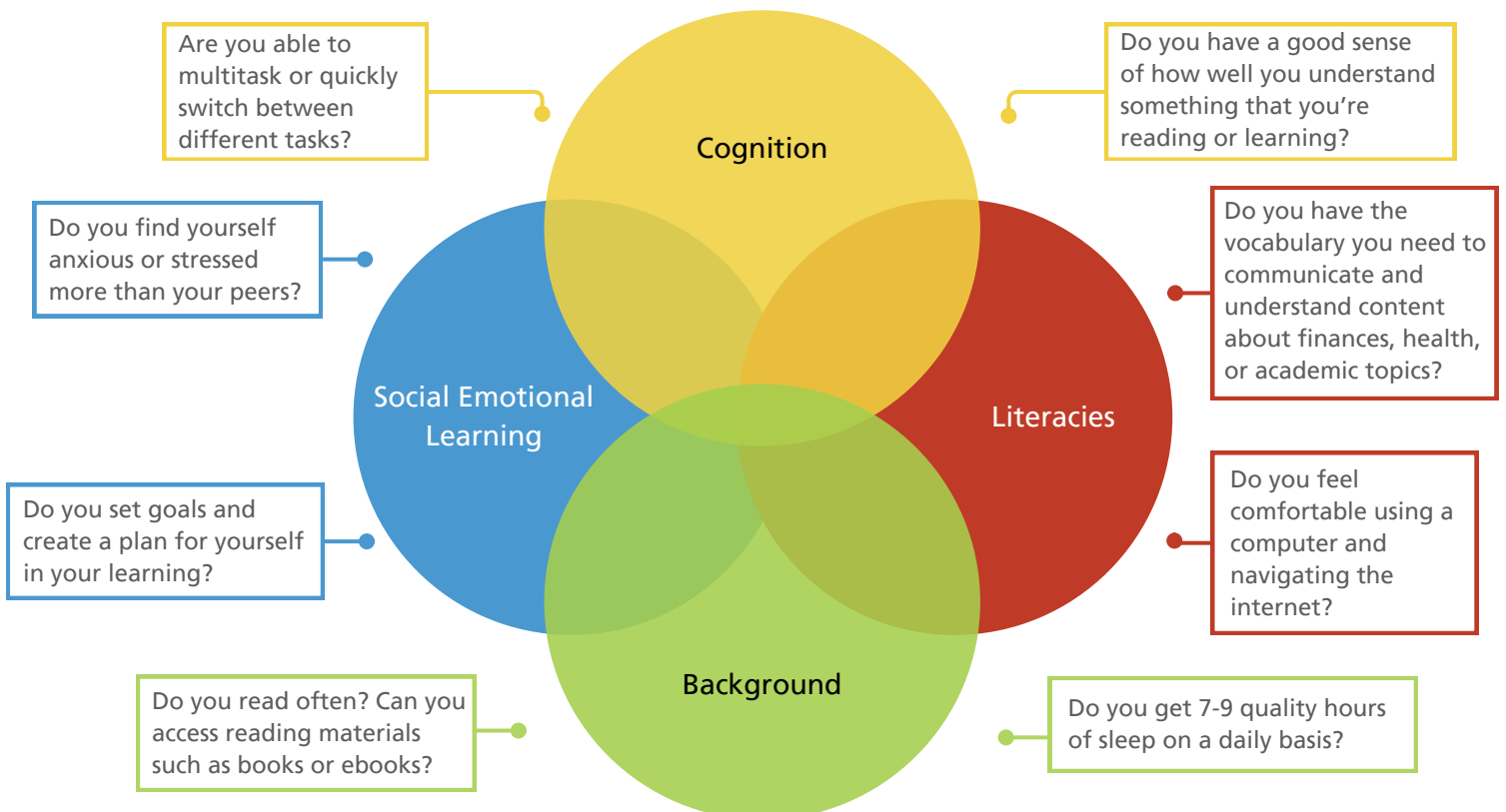
Adults are uniquely motivated to learn and develop skills at work and in life. They bring significant insights, experiences, and connections from prior learning to new learning opportunities. For example, research shows that some immigrant mothers are motivated to develop numeracy to support not only their own real world needs, but also their children’s math learning in school. **It is critical to center adults’ unique backgrounds, such as motivations, prior schooling experiences, and linguistic and cultural resources, at the foundation of our work to understand how they learn best.** Research on adult learning exists across learners and learning contexts; however, this research has rarely been synthesized to show the complexity of lifelong learning.

Digital Promise set out to examine the factors that underlie adult literacies and lifelong learning—and how they intertwine. Building on PreK-12 models from the Learner Variability Project (LVP), we created the **Adult Learner Model** to synthesize learning sciences research for adult learners with essential skills in mind. The framework is organized into **four key categories—literacies, cognition, social-emotional, and learner background**—and reveals how these categories interact to create a complex but meaningful picture of the whole learner (see below). We explain factors such as digital literacy, working memory, motivation, and adverse experiences, and we source instructional and product design strategies that span active learning, collaboration, multisensory, and metacognitive supports to promote the development of high-quality, personalized learning experiences.

VISIT THE ADULT LEARNER MODEL



Factors That Impact Adult Learning



Adult Learner Variability

What We Know About Adult Learning

Adults need a variety of 21st century foundational skills to survive and thrive.

Adults must see the benefit of learning tasks to fully engage.

Engaging in lifelong learning activities is interconnected with general well-being

Factors That Can Positively Influence Learning in Adults

- **Social supports:** Adults are more likely to persist in their education when they have strong social supports.
- **Community resources:** Local resources, such as libraries, play a critical role in building adults' digital literacy skills, which in turn allow them greater access to learning materials.
- **Motivation:** Adults can develop digital literacy skills, particularly if they are motivated and see value in digital technology.
- **Social awareness** and **Emotion:** Older adults can use social technology to reduce loneliness which impacts emotional and physical health.

Factors That Can Negatively Influence Learning in Adults

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences:** Adults who experienced abuse as children are at greater risk for having working memory deficits.
- **Housing Insecurity:** Poor housing conditions, often due to poverty, are associated with poorer sleep quality in adults, which in turn impacts the ability to focus on learning.
- **Trauma:** English language learners who are refugees may have experienced trauma in the process of their resettlement.

ADULT LEARNER FACTORS

Learner Background	Social and Emotional Learning	Cognition	Adult Literacies
Adverse Experiences	Emotion	Attention	Background Knowledge
Hearing	Learner Mindset	Auditory Processing	Composition
Literacy Environment	Motivation	Cognitive Flexibility	Digital Literacy
Physical Well-being	Self-regulation	Inhibition	Disciplinary Literacy
Primary Language	Sense of Belonging	Long-term Memory	Foundational Reading Skills
Safety	Social Awareness & Relationship Skills	Metacognition	Numeracy
Sleep	Stereotype Threat	Reasoning	Oral Communication Skills
Social Supports		Short-term Memory	Problem Solving
Socioeconomic Status		Speed of Processing	
Vision		Visual Processing	
		Working Memory	

What is a Needs Assessment?

WHAT



A needs assessment is a systematic process used to **identify and analyze the gaps between the current conditions and desired conditions** or outcomes. In the context of adult education, it helps educators and administrators understand the needs of their learners, communities, and stakeholders to improve program effectiveness and outcomes.

Current State

Enrollment rate: 60%
Success Rate: 70%

Gaps (Needs)

Need to increase enrollment and success rates by 20%.

To do so, we first need to understand:

Target Population: Who are we trying to serve?

Root Causes: Which factors are impacting our target population's ability to enroll and complete?

Desired Future State

Enrollment rate: 80%
Success Rate: 90%

WHY



For an innovative program to succeed, it's crucial to have well-defined goals, specific objectives, and established benchmarks to align and guide staff and partners during implementation. To pinpoint areas requiring the most focus to reach the ultimate goals and objectives, programs should conduct needs assessments.

BENEFITS



Informed Program Design

Comprehensive data on the specific educational needs, preferences, and challenges faced by adult learners ensures the program is designed to address fundamental issues not just symptoms of the problem.



Targeted Interventions

Programs designed based on identified needs are more likely to address the root causes of educational challenges, leading to enhanced learner outcomes such as better enrollment, retention, and completion.



Enhanced Equity and Accessibility

Identifying barriers to access and participation, such as socio-economic, geographic, or technological challenges, informs strategies to mitigate barriers and serve learners with diverse needs and backgrounds.



Relevant Curriculum

Ensures the curriculum and instructional strategies are relevant to the learners' goals, interests, and real-world applications.



Flexibility and Adaptability

Understanding the evolving needs of learners allows for the creation of flexible programs that can adapt to changing needs and circumstances, ensuring the program remains relevant.

How to Identify Root Causes

1 Define the problem

Clearly define the problem you are trying to address.

2 Gather and analyze data

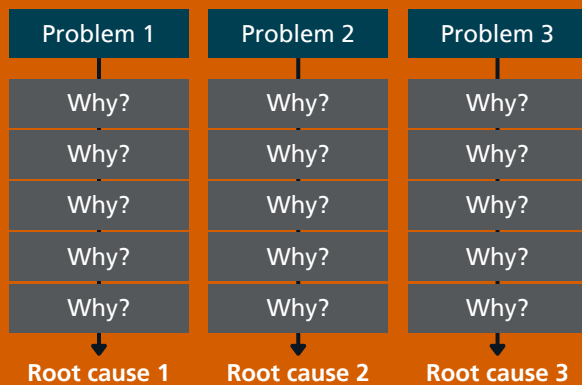
Utilize various data sources to better understand gaps between current state and desired future state.

3 Identify possible causes

Brainstorm potential factors contributing to the problem.

4 Analyze the causes

For each possible cause, ask "why?" 5 times to tease out underlying causes.



5 Identify the root causes

Through the analysis, identify the root causes that are most likely resulting in the observed problem.

6 Develop solutions

Propose solutions to address the root causes.

7 Implement and monitor

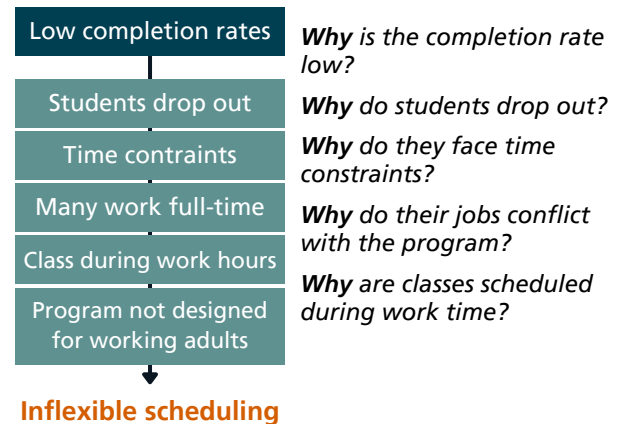
Implement proposed solutions and monitor their effectiveness, adjusting over time as necessary.

Example: Our GED program has a low success rate, only 40% of enrolled students complete.

Example: Completion rates among working adults are 2x worse than the overall.

Example: *Why is the completion rate low?* Potential factors could include: personal circumstances, program structure, instructional methods, support services, student motivation, external factors (e.g., work commitments).

Example:



Example Root Causes for Low Completion:

1. Inflexible scheduling
2. Insufficient supports for students
3. Ineffective teaching methods

Example Solutions:

1. Offer evening and weekend classes
2. Provide tutoring, counseling, and additional supports
3. Train instructors in strategies to incorporate more interactive and engaging activities.



Vision. Insights. Solutions.



Contact Us



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