

Section 3: Narrative Questions

3.1 Describe the process used to identify the PD objectives in the consortium PD plan.

Evaluations are conducted annually by the Program Director. Learners in the program are interviewed on a variety of topics to better understand the population that CSD Deaf ABE serves. Staff are also surveyed in order to understand their perspective of the program and to determine areas in need of improvement. Professional development topics are formulated as a result of these surveys.

3.2 Detail the amount and percent of total funding that the consortium sets aside or uses for professional development. Consortia can use recent years' data as examples for a typical year. Percentages and amounts should be for the entire consortium either collectively or individually by organization/site to include fiscal agent and sub-grantees.

\$2000 in FY2014 set aside for Professional Development; this will continue to be provided. For the purposes of the five-year narrative, these monies will be set aside for staffers to attend workshops and pay for their time.

3.3 Describe the process and criteria (e.g., licensure, education, credentials, experience, etc.) used in hiring decisions related to paid instructional staff.
How do you ensure that school district instructional staff holds current K-12 licenses?

All potential candidates are chosen based on specific criteria. It is preferred that they have received their Master Degree in Deaf Education or Linguistics and they must be fluent in American Sign Language. The minimum requirement is a Bachelor Degree, or working towards a degree in Deaf Education, Linguistics, Deaf Studies, and possessing certifications such as TEFL, TOEFL, ESL, ASL, Adult Education, and/or a Minnesota Teaching License.

CSD Deaf ABE program strongly emphasizes the need for understanding both the language and the culture of the various Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners that we work with. It is also vital to have a foundation in Deaf Education with a focus on the bilingual approach. We do not currently have a requirement that instructional K-12 licenses be held while teaching Deaf Learners. However, two staff members do hold K-12 licenses and two others are currently pursuing Adult Basic Education Licensure. The priority of CSD Deaf ABE is to ensure that learners have instructors who are fluent in American Sign Language, and every effort is made to fill these positions with licensed teachers. If necessary, they are required to attend MLC's pre-service tutor training in order to ensure they are trained on how to instruct the adult ESL learner.

3.4 Describe the new staff orientation process and information included.

New staff orientation is based on position and site. The Program Director and Adult Education Coordinator are responsible for initial and ongoing training for new staff. The general orientation process is as follows:

- Human Resources orientation (via CSD Intranet)
- Teacher manual, MARCS, policies and procedures orientation (with Program Director and/or Coordinator)
- Meet with Coordinator to become familiar with curriculum and available resources
- Connect with the Minnesota Literacy Council for ABE new teacher training (either online or at Summer Institute)
- Visit main office and classroom site with a current staff member to become familiar with facilities and resources.
- Meet with Coordinator to determine necessary training for assessments, intake, and data management.

3.5 How does the consortium develop and revise individual staff professional development plans?

At the start of the school year, a staff meeting is devoted to focusing on staff professional development plans. Staff discuss what is needed in the program and what they, personally, can do to improve it. Each staff member outlines at least three SMART goals which is then approved by the Program Director. The plans are revisited and revised (if necessary) at subsequent staff meetings.

3.6 Please list professional development opportunities that are promoted and/or supported by the consortium in some way. Estimate numbers or percentages of staff that participate in each activity in a typical year. Opportunities noted should include:

1. Local or consortium-developed ABE-focused activities;
2. Broader education-focused local school districts' professional development;
3. ABE-focused professional development provided by the Minnesota Department of Education and supplemental services, such as ATLAS regional events or Literacy Action Network's Summer Institute;
4. Online professional development opportunities; and
5. Other professional development.

Please note:

6. Which professional development activities are mandatory and which are optional for ABE staff?
7. How does the consortium decide which opportunities to make mandatory?
8. How does the consortium promote professional development opportunities to staff?



All staff are encouraged to attend workshops and webinars when available. The Adult Education Coordinator is responsible for notifying staff of PD opportunities offered through ATLAS, Literacy Action Network, the Minnesota Literacy Council, or other PD providers. The coordinator is also aware of broader education-focused PD opportunities, including those focused on Deaf Education. Beginning in 2015-2016, all staff are required to earn 15 CEUs per school year.

Mandatory PD opportunities are determined based on individual staff PD plans. At least twice during the school year, all staff members are required to present during a monthly staff meeting on a topic they have learned about at a workshop/conference, or to educate staff about their own research.

During the 2014-2015 school year, staff have participated or are currently participating in the following PD events/programs:

- Literacy Action Network's Summer Institute (25-75% of staff)
- ATLAS's Metro Regional Spring/Fall Conference (25-75% of staff)
- ATLAS's Minnesota Numeracy Initiative (25% of staff)
- PANDA's Universal Design Learning workshop (25% of staff)
- Distance Learning 102 (25% of staff)
- Leadership Excellence Academy (25% of staff)
- ATLAS's Low-Literacy Adult ESL Study Circle (12% of staff)
- University of Minnesota Adult Education M.Ed. (25% of staff)

3.7 What professional development challenges is the consortium experiencing?
How are these challenges being addressed?

Professional Development has always been a challenge because of the uniqueness of our program. Many of the issues addressed in trainings do not include a strong understanding of working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners and American Sign Language. Our professionals often want to engage with other peers in the consortia who can offer advice or tips that would help us improve our programming. With a lack of understanding of the language barriers that are tied to our educational approaches, it is hard to connect on similar issues. Nevertheless, we persevere and participate in trainings within the consortium to build relationships, educate others about CSD Deaf ABE and to learn about their programs. This practice will strengthen our partnerships. In addition, trainings have become more and more accessible to our professional staff. Some of the online trainings that are available remain inaccessible to our deaf teaching staff due to the lack of captioning or ASL interpreting. As a result, staff has not participated in opportunities in order to avoid frustration at the inability to participate in programs. We have had the opportunity to present at the Summer ABE Institute and the Support Staff Conference with minimal results – our presence is not as valued among the consortia as we would like. If there was mandatory participation required in a workshop hosted by our professional staff, we feel that it would greater enable our colleagues to better understand our program and the unique needs of the people of which we serve. This effort could strongly expand our professional development opportunities to be heard and respected among the consortia.