



# National Coalition For Literacy

## NATIONAL CENTER FOR ADULT EDUCATION, LITERACY, AND WORKFORCE SKILLS

### Section 242. The National Center for Adult Education, Literacy, and Workforce Skills

- (a) **PURPOSE** - The purpose of the National Center for Adult Education, Literacy, and Workforce Skills is to provide national leadership with the goals of improving the skills and knowledge of adults in the United States and preparing them for transition to postsecondary education, training, and the 21st century workforce by:
- (1) coordinating efforts to address current and future critical issues such as health literacy, immigration, financial literacy, and career pathways by:
    - (A) collaborating with federal, state, and local government agencies, including but not limited to the Departments of Labor, Education, HHS, Justice, Homeland Security, Interior, Commerce and Agriculture;
    - (B) collaborating with other national organizations with a vested interest in issues related to adult education, literacy, and workforce skills; and
    - (C) Building partnerships with the private sector and initiating policies and plans that will increase public and private support for adult education, literacy and workforce skills.
  - (2) supporting, identifying, disseminating and providing national leadership for professional development focused on effective, innovative practices that draw on a range of research and professional wisdom;
  - (3) advancing technology in order to provide tools and resources for practitioners and professional development; and
  - (4) Promoting initiatives that increase the professional quality of the field.

**(b) ESTABLISHMENT-**

**(1) IN GENERAL –**

(A) There is established within the Executive Branch the National Center for Adult Education, Literacy and Workforce Skills. The Center shall be administered by a Director, who is responsible for carrying out all functions under this title. The Director shall work with the Secretaries of the Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services to coordinate efforts to address the adult education, literacy, and workforce skills needs of adults.

(B) The Center Director shall work with the Secretaries of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services to align any research and development center, institute or clearinghouse established within the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, or the Department of Health and Human Services the purposes of which are determined to be necessary to carrying out the work of the Center with Center initiatives.

(2) **OFFICES-** The Institute shall have offices independent from the offices of the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

(3) **RECOMMENDATIONS –** The National Center for Adult Education, Literacy and Workforce Skills Advisory Board (in this section referred to as the “Board”) established under subsection (e) shall work with the Center Director to recommend and develop strategic goals for the Center. Based on such goals, the Director shall create a proposed plan of work for the Center, and share such plan with the Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services and other federal agencies, as appropriate, in order to ensure that the work of the Center and such federal departments or agencies is coordinated and mutually complimentary. The Director shall carry out the plan and any programs necessary to achieve the goals of Center.

(4) **DAILY OPERATIONS-** The daily operations of the Institute shall be administered by the Director of the Institute.

**(c) DUTIES-**

(1) **IN GENERAL -** in order to carry out its stated purposes, the Center is authorized to:

(A) be an objective, nonpartisan resource to Congress and the Administration;

(B) advise Congress and Federal departments and agencies regarding the development of policy with respect to adult education, literacy, and workforce skills;

(C) establish and maintain a research center that will:

(i) develop a comprehensive, national research agenda to move the field forward;

(ii) engage institutions of higher learning in adult education research initiatives;

(iii) create a central repository to collect and disseminate adult education research findings and effective and innovative practices.

- (D) establish and maintain a technology center that will:
- (i) expand access to adult education services through the use of technology;
  - (ii) provide professional development for providers of adult education, literacy, and workforce skills services so they are able to:
    - ....effectively use technology in the delivery of adult education, literacy and workforce skills services; and
    - ....improve the quality of instruction and accelerate the achievement of basic educational skills, English language literacy, and secondary school equivalency of postsecondary educational and training readiness for adult learners.
  - (iii) assist states in developing a 21st Century delivery system for adult education, literacy and workforce skills services; and
  - (iv) assist adults in developing technology literacy.
- (E) establish a comprehensive information and communications system that will:
- (i) disseminate effective practices in the provision of adult education, literacy, and workforce skills instruction.
  - (ii) foster information sharing and opportunities for discussion and networking among practitioners and provide technical assistance;
  - (iii) link research findings to practice and inform research through practice, and
  - (iv) update the field of developments from the public and private sectors relevant to the adult education community.
- (F) establish an initiative to promote increasing the professional quality of the field that will:
- (i) provide professional development and technical assistance for improving professional quality, career advancement and working conditions of/for practitioners;
  - (ii) undertake other activities that result in the improvement of adult education separately or in partnership with other government, public and private entities.
- (G) coordinate the support of reliable and replicable research and development on adult education, literacy, and workforce skills in families and adults across Federal agencies, especially with the Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the Department of Education, and to carry out basic and applied research and development on topics that are not being investigated by other organizations or agencies, such as the special literacy needs of individuals with learning disabilities;
- (H) collect and disseminate information on methods of advancing literacy that show great promise;

- (I) provide technical assistance to Federal, State, and local entities for the improvement of policy and programs relating to literacy and alignment of policies and regulations across agencies;
  - (J) network with State or regional, public and private nonprofit adult literacy resource centers to assist State and local efforts to improve literacy by enhancing the capacity of State and local organizations to provide adult education services by –
    - (i) encouraging the coordination of adult education, literacy, and workforce skills services, and
    - (ii) serving as a link between the Institute and providers of adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of sharing information, data, research, expertise, and literacy resources
  - (K) coordinate and share information with national organizations and associations that are interested in adult education, literacy, and workforce skills.
- (2) **GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS-** The Center may award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, individuals, public or private institutions, agencies, organizations, or consortia of such institutions, agencies, or organizations to carry out the activities of the Center.

(d) **RESEARCH -**

- (1) **IN GENERAL** – In order to provide rigorous research utilizing appropriate scientifically-based research standards as defined in Section 102(18) of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, to inform the field and improve practice, the National Center for Adult Education, Literacy and Workforce Skills shall administer, through a research center, a program of research in adult education, literacy, and workforce skills.
- (2) Funding - Such research shall be funded through contributions totaling \$5 million annually from the Interagency Group, equally divided.
- (3) Independent Panel - The Center shall create an independent panel to:
  - (A) set the research agenda,
  - (B) review applications for a research center and, in consultation with the director of the Center, select a grantee
- (4) Research Agenda - The Independent panel shall develop adult education priorities and a five-year research agenda.
  - (A) Prior to establishing a research agenda, such panel shall compile a list of adult education, literacy, and workforce skills research needs in consultation with members of the adult education, literacy, and workforce skills community, including, but not limited to the members of the National Coalition for Literacy.
  - (B) The research agenda shall be reviewed annually and modified when appropriate or to address new information related to the needs of the field.

- (5) Independent Panel Membership- The panel consist of 12 members and shall be appointed by the Director of the Center in consultation with the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Labor and shall consist of at least one representative each from the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor, and each of the groups listed in (A)-(I). Nine members of the panel shall be state and local practitioner representatives of:
- (A) state adult education directors
  - (B) adult education researchers
  - (C) adult education and family literacy program managers
  - (D) adult education and family literacy teachers
  - (E) adult education volunteer organizations
  - (F) libraries administering adult education programs
  - (G) workplace education
  - (H) corrections education
  - (I) adult students
- (6) Distribution of Panel Members – Panel members shall be representative of a cross-section of adult education, including adult basic education, English language acquisition, adult secondary education, family literacy, workplace education, and health literacy.
- (7) Research Center – The Center, based on recommendations of the Independent Panel, shall award one five-year grant, on a competitive basis, to carry out the research agenda of the Center.
- (8) Grant Period – The grant shall be for a period of 5 years and shall be re-competed prior to end of the grant period.
- (9) Eligible entities: The research and development center is to be housed at a university. Such university:
- (A) shall have experience in conducting research on improving adult education, as defined in Section 203 (1).
  - (B) conduct research, in collaboration with states, on improving professional quality, practitioner career pathways, and working conditions of/for practitioners.
  - (C) may include a network of universities and/or other research entities around the country.
- (10) Responsibilities - The Center shall be responsible for carrying out high quality research, submitting such research to peer review journals, developing a web-based source of information and professional training materials, training new researchers, and other appropriate activities.
- (11) Report - The research center shall provide to the independent panel, the advisory board, and the director an annual report on its activities.

(12) Dissemination -

- (A) The grantee shall prepare the research for dissemination to the adult education field, teachers and tutors, program managers, state directors of adult education, policymakers, researchers and others in the adult education field.
- (B) The Center and the research center shall disseminate the findings in a manner that assists education stakeholders, including but not limited to programs operated through the Departments of Education, Labor and Health and Human Services, to understand, judge, and utilize the research.

(e) **LITERACY LEADERSHIP-**

- (1) **IN GENERAL-** The Center, in consultation with the Board, may award fellowships, with such stipends and allowances that the Director considers necessary, to outstanding individuals pursuing careers in adult education or literacy in the areas of instruction, management, research, or innovation.
- (2) **FELLOWSHIPS-** Fellowships awarded under this subsection shall be used, under the auspices of the Center, to engage in research, education, training, technical assistance, or other activities to advance the field of adult education or literacy, including the training of volunteer literacy providers at the national, State, or local level.
- (3) **INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS-** The Center, in consultation with the Board, may award paid and unpaid internships to individuals seeking to assist the Institute in carrying out its mission. Notwithstanding section 1342 of title 31, United States Code, the Institute may accept and use voluntary and uncompensated services as the Center determines necessary.

(f) **NATIONAL CENTER FOR ADULT EDUCATION, LITERACY AND WORKFORCE SKILLS ADVISORY BOARD-**

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT-**

- (A) **IN GENERAL-** There shall be a Center Advisory Board (in this section referred to as the `Board'), which shall consist of 10 individuals, all of whom shall have expertise and experience in adult education, including family literacy. The Board shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.
- (B) **COMPOSITION-** The Board shall be comprised of individuals who are not otherwise officers or employees of the Federal Government and who are representative of entities from each group listed below—
  - (i) literacy organizations and providers of adult education services, including nonprofit providers, providers of English literacy programs and services, social service organizations, and eligible providers receiving assistance under this subtitle;
  - (ii) businesses that have demonstrated interest in adult education, literacy and workforce skills programs;
  - (iii) adult education, literacy and workforce skills students, including those students with disabilities;
  - (iv) experts in the area of adult education, literacy and workforce skills research;

- (v) State and local governments;
- (vi) State Directors of adult education; and
- (vii) representatives of employees, including representatives of labor organizations.
- (viii) representatives with expertise in health literacy as it relates to adult education.

(2) **DUTIES-** The Board shall—

- (A) make recommendations concerning the appointment of the Director and staff of the Institute;
- (B) provide independent advice on the operation of the Institute and make recommendations to the Center's Director.
- (C) receive written reports from the Director.

(3) **FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT-** Except as otherwise provided, the Board established by this subsection shall be subject to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(4) **APPOINTMENTS-**

- (A) **IN GENERAL** - Each member of the Board shall be appointed for a term of three years. Any such member may be appointed for not more than 2 consecutive terms or a total of six years.
- (B) **VACANCIES-** Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the appointed only for the remainder of that term. A member may serve after the expiration of that member's term until a successor has taken office.

(5) **QUORUM-** A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may hold hearings. Any recommendation of the Board may be passed only by a majority of the Board's members present.

(6) **ELECTION OF OFFICERS-** The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board Chairperson shall be 2 years. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson may not serve for more than one term.

(7) **MEETINGS** - The board shall meet semi-annually or at the call of a majority of the Board.

(g) **GIFTS, BEQUESTS, AND DEVISES-**

(1) **IN GENERAL-** The Institute may accept, administer, and use gifts or donations of services, money, or property, whether real or personal, tangible or intangible.

(2) **RULES-** The Board shall establish written rules setting forth the criteria to be used by the Institute in determining whether the acceptance of contributions of services, money, or property whether real or personal, tangible or intangible, would reflect unfavorably upon the ability of the Institute or any employee to carry out the responsibilities of the Institute or employee, or official duties, in a fair and objective manner, or would compromise the integrity or the appearance of the integrity of the Institute's programs or any official involved in those programs.

(h) **MAILS**- The Board and the Institute may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the United States.

(i) **STAFF** - The White House shall appoint and fix the pay of the Director. Such pay shall be consistent with that provided to the Assistant Secretary of Vocational and Adult Education.

(1) **DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS** - The Director shall have:

(A) experience and expertise in the field of adult education; and

(B) managerial experience consistent carrying out the duties of the Center.

(2) **TERM** –

(A) the Director shall be appointed to serve for a period of 6 years, beginning on the date of the reappointment.

(B) the Director shall undergo an evaluation every two years. If evaluation demonstrates that the Director's performance is not consistent with the requirements of the position, a new Director can be appointed.

(C) If the evaluation finds that the Director's performance is consistent with the requirements of the position, the Director can be appointed for another 6 year term.

(3) **ADMINISTRATION** - the Director shall -

(A) administer, oversee, and coordinate the activities carried out under the Center.

(B) guide strategic planning for the Center.

(C) propose to the Board priorities for the Center.

(D) coordinate with Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services and other appropriate agencies to align adult education policy and services among federal agencies.

(E) solicit and consider recommendations of adult education stakeholders, in order to ensure there is a broad and regular public and professional input from the adult education field in planning and carrying out of the Center's activities.

(F) to carry out and support other activities consistent with the priorities and mission of the Center.

(j) **APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE LAWS**- The Director and staff of the Center may be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates, except that an individual so appointed may not receive pay in excess of the annual rate of basic pay payable for level IV of the Executive Schedule.

(k) **EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS**- The Center may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

- (l) **REPORT-** The Center shall submit a report biennially to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate. Each report submitted under this subsection shall include—
- (1) a comprehensive and detailed description of the Center's operations, activities, financial condition, and accomplishments in the field of literacy for the period covered by the report;
  - (2) a description of how plans for the operation of the Center for the succeeding 2 fiscal years will facilitate achievement of the goals of the Center and the goals of the literacy programs within the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Human Services; and
  - (3) any additional minority, or dissenting views submitted by members of the Board.
- (m) **FUNDING-** Any amounts appropriated to the Secretary, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, or any other department that participates in the Center for purposes that the Center is authorized to perform under this section may be provided to the Center for such purposes.