

Improving the Economic Mobility of Detroiters through Innovative Approaches in Adult Education

Essential Program Elements of the Four Focus Strategies Self-Assessment Tool

The “Improving the Economic Mobility of Detroiters through Innovative Approaches in Adult Education” solicitation was issued by a partnership of the Detroit Regional Workforce Fund and Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation in July 2018. This is an opportunity for Detroit adult foundational skill development organizations and partners to develop and strengthen evidence-based program models to improve Detroiters’ foundational skills and connect them to credentials and good jobs.

The solicitation supports four program strategies, which can be implemented individually or in combination:

- Accelerated High School Diploma or Equivalency
- Contextualized Integrated Education and Training
- Career Pathway On-Ramps
- Employment-Based

This self-assessment tool is provided to help solicitation applicants ensure that they are including all the essential elements in their program designs. These essential elements are based on research and evidence.¹ Solicitation applicants are strongly encouraged to use this tool to inform the design of their programs and/or program enhancement; however, this is a voluntary optional tool, and completion will not be required during the application process.

Foundational Skills are the basic, entry-level skills that are common across most workforces and industries, upon which most occupational skills are built. They are pre-requisites for success in most jobs and careers. They include:

- Reading
- Math
- English language proficiency
- Work readiness and basic professional skills
- Digital literacy skills and
- Career management skills

Step-by-Step Guide for Using this Tool

Step 1: Review Part I: Essentials Program Elements-Specific Program Design Elements (the green chart below) and identify which of the four program strategies in the top row your program design incorporates. For example, if you are proposing a stand-alone accelerated HSD/HSE program, you would look at the first column only. However, if you are providing this program at a place of employment, you would look at the first and the last columns.

Step 2: For the program strategy(s) in your program design, highlight the specific program design elements that are associated with each strategy. For example, if you are proposing an employment-based accelerated HSD/HSE program, you would highlight the following design elements:

- Contextualized
- Direct connection to next step
- Strong connections to employment
- Employer partnership
- Employer support
- Incentives for completion
- Career navigation assistance
- Accelerated HSD/HSE

Step 3: Ensure these elements appear in your specific self-assessment chart in Part II below (the orange chart). You may delete any rows that fall outside the specific program elements tied to your specific program design.

Step 4: Complete your tailored self-assessment chart by noting areas of strength in your program design as well as areas for improvement. Seek technical assistance and other resources to strengthen the areas for improvement.

Note: The Essential Elements in the blue chart below are critical elements for all program designs, no matter the specific strategy. Do not delete any of these from your tailored self-assessment chart. Complete this part of the chart as you did on the specific program design elements.

Part I: Essential Program Elements

Specific Program Design Elements	The Four Program Strategies of Focus in this Solicitation			
	Accelerated HSD/HSE	Contextualized IET	Career Pathway On-ramps	Employment-based
Contextualized: Adult foundational skills education is contextualized to a specific industry/occupation		✓	✓	✓
Integrated education and training: Adult foundational skills education is integrated with occupational training – either separate concurrent, coordinated programs (i.e., with shared learning objectives) or foundational skills are embedded into occupational training		✓	Some on-ramp programs are IET	
Direct connection to next step: Program is directly connected to additional education/training opportunities and/or employment	✓		✓	
Strong connections to employment: e.g., program provides job shadowing, work simulation, work experience (internships, etc.), and/or assistance with employment		✓	✓	✓
Employer partnership: Program is offered in partnership with one or more employers			✓	✓
Employer support: Employer(s) provide support for the program (in-kind and/or financially)			✓	✓
Incentives for completion: Program includes incentives for completion, e.g., job promotion or wage increase				✓
Career navigation assistance: Program assists learners in identifying good-fit careers and navigating necessary education, training, and employment systems. Program provides motivational support. Staffing models can include counselors, life/career coaches, and career navigators	✓	✓	✓	
Accelerated HSD/HSE: Program assists learners in earning a high school credential, i.e., diploma, GED, HiSET, TASC, in an accelerated manner.	✓			

General “Good Practice” Program Elements – Applicable to all programs	Accelerated HSD/HSE	Contextualized IET	Career Pathway On-ramps	Employment-based
Curriculum				
Learner-appropriate instruction and content: Curricula, programs, and related services are tailored to participants’ specific academic levels, levels of English proficiency, culture, work and educational experience, human development levels, and home situation.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Appropriately accelerated and intensive curriculum: Curriculum is expediated and concentrated to allow able learners to move through more quickly.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Program Design				
Accessibility: Program is provided at convenient locations and schedules.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support services: Program provides essential support services such as transportation assistance; assistance with clothing, tools, equipment; child care; and other services to help participants access, persist, and complete programs. Services can be provided directly or through partnerships. Other necessary support services may include assistance with housing, medical and dental care, legal assistance, domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Robust intake and orientation: Intake provides thorough assessment of learner; orientation provides thorough overview of program and expectations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Program Management				
Staff knowledge and capacity: Relevant staff, including instructors, curriculum developers, program managers, case managers/career navigators/coaches, etc., thoroughly understand the model and are able to implement it effectively.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partners: Program includes relevant partners to ensure a full and successful experience for learners.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resources: Program has adequate and diverse resources to deliver a quality experience for learners and to sustain itself.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tracking Outcomes: Your team can track and use data on outcomes to inform continuous improvement of program	✓	✓	✓	✓

Part II: The Self-Assessment Chart

Specific Program Design Elements	Areas of Strength	Areas for Improvement
<i>Contextualized</i>		
<i>Integrated education and training</i>		
<i>Direct connection to next step</i>		
<i>Strong connections to employment</i>		
<i>Employer partnership</i>		
<i>Employer support</i>		
<i>Incentives for completion</i>		
<i>Career navigation assistance</i>		
<i>Accelerated HSD/HSE</i>		
General “Good Practice” Program Elements	Areas of Strength	Areas for Improvement
Curriculum		
<i>Learner-appropriate instruction and content</i>		
<i>Appropriately accelerated and intensive curriculum</i>		
Program Design		
<i>Accessibility</i>		

<i>Support services</i>		
<i>Robust intake and orientation</i>		
Program Management		
<i>Staff knowledge and capacity</i>		
<i>Partners</i>		
<i>Resources</i>		
<i>Tracking Outcomes</i>		

ⁱ [Detroit Adult Foundational Skill Development: Challenges and Solutions](#), Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, June 2018.