



Quality Assurance and Compliance Monitoring

Adult Education and Family Literacy

Greater Reading or Writing Skills Literacy Council (GROWS)

Final Report
August 12, 2011

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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August 3, 2011

Ms. Marilina Viera, Program Director
Greater Reading or Writing Skills Literacy Council (GROWS)
207 Semoran Commerce Place
Apopka, Florida 32703

Dear Ms. Viera:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Monitoring of the Adult Education and Family Literacy programs from our visit on May 16, 2011. The report will also be placed on our website at <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/compliance.asp>.

We appreciate the leadership and professionalism demonstrated by your staff during the review process. If we can be of any assistance, please contact Eileen L. Amy, Director of Quality Assurance and Compliance. Ms. Amy may be reached at 850/245-9033, or via electronic mail at Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to improve services for Florida's students.

Sincerely,

Loretta Costin

LBC/ela

Enclosure

C: Tashi Williams

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Florida Department of Education
Division of Career and Adult Education

**Greater Reading or Writing Skills Literacy Council (GROWS)
Adult Education and Family Literacy
Quality Assurance Monitoring Report**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Division of Career and Adult Education (Division), in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation, is required to oversee the performance and regulatory compliance of recipients of federal and state funding. The Quality Assurance section of the Bureau of Grants Administration and Compliance (Bureau) is responsible for the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive system of quality assurance including monitoring. The role of the Quality Assurance System is to assure financial accountability, program quality and regulatory compliance. As stewards of federal and state funds, it is incumbent upon the Division to monitor the use of workforce education funds and regulatory compliance of providers on a regular basis.

II. AUTHORITY

The Florida Department of Education receives federal funding from the U.S. Department of Education for Adult Education and Family Literacy under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998. FDOE awards sub grants to eligible providers to administer local programs. FDOE must monitor providers to ensure compliance with federal requirements, including Florida's approved state plans for adult education/family literacy.

Additional cites noting authority to monitor and pertinent laws and regulations are located in the 2010-11 *Quality Assurance Policies, Procedures, and Protocols*, Module A, Section 1.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PROTOCOLS

The *Quality Assurance Policies, Procedures, and Protocols* (Manual) was revised in the 2010-11 program year. The Manual was provided to each provider prior to the monitoring visit. The Manual provides a summary of each facet of the monitoring design and the process. It also contains protocols that may be used as agencies are monitored or reviewed. References may be made to the Manual in this document; it is located on the Division's website at <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/compliance.asp>.

IV. PROVIDER SELECTION

Various sources of data are used throughout the implementation of the Quality Assurance System. The monitoring component of the system is risk-based. Risk Assessment is a process used to evaluate variables associated with the grants and assign a rating for the level of risk to the Florida Department of Education and the Division of Career and Adult Education.

In some cases, specifically with Community- and Faith-Based Organizations (CBOs and FBOs) including Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs), the evaluations of the risk factors result in similar scores. Therefore, such organizations may be evaluated on a periodic and/or cyclical basis as determined appropriate by the Division. For on-site visits, agencies may be chosen to fit in with regularly scheduled travel or scheduled separately as determined by the Director.

Due to a scheduled visit to a local provider, the monitoring strategy for the GROWS Literacy Council was determined to be an on-site visit. Notification was sent to Ms. Marilina Viera, GROWS Program Director, on November 16, 2010.

The on-site visit to the agency was conducted May 16, 2011 by three representatives of the Quality Assurance Section of the Division: Ms. Eileen L. Amy, Director of Quality Assurance and Compliance and Program Specialists, Ms. Sheryl Walden and Mr. Tashi Williams.

V. GROWS LITERACY COUNCIL

Since 1988, the GROWS Literacy Council, a non-profit, community-based organization, has provided opportunities for over 4,000 low-income northwest (Apopka) Orange County residents to improve their literacy, parenting, family relations and work skills. The GROWS currently offers a literacy program, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, and Workplace Literacy and Family Literacy programs.

GROWS's mission is to build better communities by educating immigrants to overcome problems such as unemployment, low-paying jobs, lack of health benefits, language barriers, cultural isolation and the inability to help their children achieve success in school and adapt to North American culture.

GROWS recently received an Excellence in Education Award from the Florida Literacy Coalition, and was also selected by the Florida Family Literacy Initiative as one of two Best Practice Family Literacy programs in the state.

ADULT EDUCATION GRANTS

Year and Grant Number	Type	Total	Unexpended Funds
2008-09 485-1919A-9PH01	Households	\$ 76,240	\$ 21,708*
2009-10 485-1930A-0PE01	EL/Civics	\$ 55,020	\$ 6,869*
485-1910A-0PG01	AGE	\$ 97,982	\$ 14,320*
2010-11 485-1931A-1PE01	EL/Civics	\$ 55,020	
485-1911A-1PG01	AGE	\$ 97,982	

* Unexpended funds exceeded 10% of the grant funds.

Additional information about the provider may be found at the following web address:

www.growsliteracy.org

VI. MONITORING ACTIVITIES

The monitoring activities included pre-visit planning conference calls; entrance conference; interviews with administrators and staff; observations; record reviews; and an exit conference.

Entrance and Exit Conference

The entrance and exit conferences for the GROWS was conducted on May 16, 2011; the following individuals were present at both meetings:

Ms. Marilina Viera
Ms. Eileen L. Amy
Ms. Sheryl Walden
Mr. Tashi Williams

Interviews/Observations/Records Review

An interview was conducted with the Program Director, staff and students during the course of the visit. Administrative, Financial and Program records were reviewed. A complete list is provided in Section VII. Some policies and procedures were reviewed and discussed during the course of the visit.

VII. RESULTS

Greater Reading or Writing Skills (GROWS) Literacy Council
May 16, 2011

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

- The GROWS employs a Program Director and 11 staff.
- The organization moved to a new facility in March 2011; the facility provides more space for students and children and room to expand.
- An open house is scheduled for August of 2011.
- The History of the GROWS is noted below:
 - 1988 – began as literacy program for adults
 - 1990 – ESOL classes started

- 1994 – workplace literacy program started; implemented workplace classes for 5-6 years
- 1999 – Family Literacy program started
- Family Literacy classes are held Monday through Thursday (M/W English and T/TH basic skills).
- The Orange County Public School's bell schedule is followed.
- The facility is located on the bus line.
- The Advisory Board meets monthly.
 - Working on an evaluation tool
 - In process of reconstructing the Advisory Board
- There are twenty agencies that collaborate with the GROWS.

CONCERN:

1. Concern: Some classrooms appeared rather large for one class while other classes appeared very small and overflowing with students.

Recommendation: Assure a plan to ensure that class space is well balanced to accommodate the needs of students.

2. The DOE monitoring staff did not observe any computers. The agency stated that the computers were not yet unpacked.

Recommendation: Consider the use of computers a priority for the benefit of students.

PERSONNEL

- There are four teachers for ESOL classes; three for the children.
 - Teachers are certified through Orange County and have certification in ESOL.
 - Teaching experience ranges from one to 18 years; most of the staff has been there at least ten years.
- Professional development is provided for teachers when classes are not in session.

CONCERN:

1. Non-Discrimination notices/statements were listed in printed materials but not posted broadly in agency's facility.

Agency Response: The agency posted notices prior to the DOE monitoring staff exiting the building.

PROGRAMS

- Programs serve adults (primarily women) and children in the morning.
- More men attend programs offered in the evening due to work schedules.
- The majority of students come from surrounding neighborhoods; some walk, carpool or ride the bus.
- Family Literacy classes for children enable mothers to attend AE classes.
 - Children ages 3-4 to kindergarten are served Monday through Thursday.
 - The mission is to train children for kindergarten preparedness.
 - Children increase their ability to speak and understand English.
- Students learn about the program from flyers, employers, local businesses, family and friends.
- Once children attend regular schools, parents report student success to the GROWS Literacy Council; however, currently there is no data reported from Orange County Public Schools.
- The average student is enrolled at the GROWS Literacy Council from six months to two years or more.
- Tutoring for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is offered during the afternoon.
- Training is provided on family issues, domestic violence, health education and civics education.
- Attendance is affected mostly by weather and transportation.

- Future plans involve implementing a program for those that are deaf to learn English and Sign Language.

DATA AND ASSESSMENT

- Students sign a “contract” when they begin the program.
- Students pretest in August when they enter the program and are post-tested in November, January and May.
- The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is administered to students.
- Students are interviewed and asked about their personal goals when they first attend the school. Some students stated that they plan to attend various Technical Centers in Orlando, Florida; some students have received scholarships to further their education and training.
- When needed, students are referred to various social service agencies that can provide assistance.
- The GROWS currently uses the Literacy Adult and Community Education System (LACES) data management software system.

CONCERN:

1. Students were testing in classroom while a class lecture was in session.

Recommendation: Create a designated testing area to optimize the environment for students.

- * Be advised that this monitoring report will not receive closure status until all issues relating to the reporting of data have been resolved according to the requirements set by the FDOE.

FINANCE

- Funding for the agency comes from foundations, donations and fundraising; financing the organization is their greatest challenge.
- Invoices, per DOE Program Manager, are submitted regularly three to four times per year; however, these invoices are repeatedly incomplete.
- Unexpended grant funds in 2008-09 was due to a change with a previous business partnership.
- Teachers are aware that, as students make gains, there is a positive impact on funding.
- A \$25.00 donation is collected at the time of class registration. This donation is used for books; however, if a student cannot afford a donation, they are not deprived of class/books.

FINDING

1. The \$25.00 donation collected at registration for books was not reported as “program income” and it has not been reported as such in the past.

The Project Application and Amendment Procedures for Federal and State Programs (FLDOE Green Book), Section F, Program Income and the Disposition of Equipment, states that “any donations or fees required from participants and made specifically for the purposes of the program, which are subsequently used for the purposes of the program, must be considered and treated as program income. Any expenditure that is allowable and reimbursable, including but not limited to administration, overhead, furniture, equipment, etc., is considered to be attributable to the purposes of the program. Thus, fees or donations used to pay for the allowable and reimbursable costs must be considered program income.”

CONCERN

1. Invoices are very often incomplete, poorly prepared, and with repeated errors.

Recommendation: DOE will consider returning incomplete invoices; only complete invoices will be processed.

RECORDS REVIEW

- Financial and programmatic records were reviewed to determine compliance with federal and state rules and regulations. The following records were reviewed:
 - Program, financial, and administrative records
 - Policies and procedures
 - Grant deliverables:
 - Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) pre-test and post-test score roster for Household grant
 - Salary expenditure detail sheet
 - Transaction detail by account
 - Employee timesheets
 - Monthly transaction detail
 - Insurance invoices
 - Purchase orders
 - Student intake forms for ESOL
 - Personnel Action Request (PAR) forms
 - Testing records

CONCERN:

1. The team found administrative and intake forms completed in pencil. Legal documents were scratched out and written over in ink or pencil. The agency has been advised on the proper way of correcting a legal document.

Recommendation: All administrative, intake and student-related forms must be completed in ink to ensure contents are not changed without permission of the author or his/her designee.

VIII. REQUIRED RESOLUTION ACTIVITIES

Adult Education and Family Literacy

1. Corrective Action Plan – The GROWS is required to complete a Corrective Action Plan (Appendix A) to address the finding noted in the focus area of Finance.
2. Action Plan – The GROWS must provide an Action Plan (Appendix A) to address the concerns noted in the focus areas: Organization and Administration, Personnel, Data and Assessment and Records Review.

IX. SUMMARY

Once the field work, including receipt of requested information is completed, a draft report is forwarded to the provider for review. Comments are accepted and considered. The final report is completed and forwarded to the Agency Head with a copy to the appropriate parties. The Bureau's site visit co-leader monitors and conducts follow-up activities to assure issues have been satisfactorily completed within the stated timelines. Finally, the Bureau issues a Closure Notice to the Agency Head and designated contact person. This notice indicates all outstanding items have been completed.

We want to extend our appreciation to all participants in the GROWS Literacy Council's on-site monitoring visit. Special thanks to Marilina Viera for her participation and leadership in this process.

Appendix A

Greater Reading of Writing Skills Literacy Council (GROWS) Resolution Plan

- ☐ Career and Technical Education ☒ Adult Education
☒ Corrective Action Plan ☒ Action Plan ☐ System Improvement Plan

	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Projected Date of Completion</u>
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN Citation/Finding(s): 1. Finding: The \$25.00 donation collected at registration for books was not reported as "program income" and has not been reported as such in the past.	Declare that all collected donations be reported as program income.	Marilina Viera	1. All collected money received for books during registration will be reported as Program Income.
ACTION PLAN Concern(s): 1. Some classrooms appeared rather large for one class while other classes appeared very small and overflowing with students. 2. Students were being tested in a classroom while a class was in session.	Submit a floor plan and classroom usage schedule. Create a designated testing area.	Marilina Viera Marilina Viera	1. Except for the designated pre-k classrooms all of the other rooms are multi-purpose (i.e. classes, testing, trainings, PACT time, etc.). Floor plan attached. 2. Since the audit meeting took place in the normal 'testing' area, the students were tested in their classrooms. (*normally students test all together in their classrooms, that particular day we have a few make-up tests).

3. Invoices are submitted incomplete with repeated errors. <i>Agency has been advised that invoices may be returned if not received in complete status.</i>	Submit the first two invoices from the 2010-2011 year that are complete and free of errors.	Marilina Viera	3. Invoices included
4. All administrative and intake forms are to be fully completed in ink, not pencil. Legal documents were scratched out and written over in ink or pencil. <i>The agency has been advised on the proper way of correcting a legal document.</i>	Submit one month's (May or June 2011) copy of administrative/intake and legal documents that have been completed in ink and corrected in the appropriate format.	Marilina Viera	4. All of the documents have now been corrected in ink. Enclosed two samples.
5. The DOE monitoring staff did not observe any computers. <i>The agency stated that the computers were not yet unpacked.</i>	Submit pictures that show the computers being used by students.	Marilina Viera	5. As soon as the new school year begins, we will submit pictures of students utilizing the computer lab.
6. Non-Discrimination notices/statements were listed in printed materials but not posted broadly in agency's facility.	The agency posted notices prior to the DOE monitoring staff exiting the building.	Marilina Viera	6. Completed and posted on the day of the audit.
* Be advised that this monitoring report will not receive closure status until all issues relating to the reporting of data have been resolved according to the requirements set by the FDOE.		Marilina Viera or designated data staff	
			Issue addressed per DOE
SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (AE only): Indicator/Current Data			
Technical Assistance Needed and/or Provided:			

Date and Status of Action – Completed/Pending
Plan submitted by: <u>Marilina Viera</u> Date: <u>08/10/2011</u>
Plan accepted by Eileen L. Amy, Director of Quality Assurance and Compliance. Date: <u>08/10/2011</u>