



TO: Eligible Applicants

- A community college established and operating under the authority of the Public Community College Act [110 ILCS85].
- A nonprofit entity in partnership with the regional superintendent of schools.
- A chief administrator of an intermediate service center that has authority, under rules adopted by the State Board of Education, to issue a high school diploma.
- A school district organized under Article 34 of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5/34.A-101].*

**FROM: Dr. Brian Durham
Executive Director**

**Jennifer K. Foster
Deputy Executive Director**

DATE: May 20, 2019

SUBJECT: High School Diploma for Adult Learners Program

BACKGROUND

This document stipulates the requirements for submitting an application to develop and implement a High School Diploma for Adult Learners Program. Applicants must address the activities and requirements set forth in this document. Below are items that may assist applicants in the completion of this application.

- Joint Commission on Administrative Rules: High School Diploma for Adult Learners <http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/023/02301506sections.html>
- Alternative Route to a High School Diploma for Adult Learners <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/010500050K3-15.12a.htm>
- Section 10-22.20 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/10-22.20) <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs5.asp?ActID=1032&ChapterID=17>
- Illinois Adult Education and Literacy, Public Act 91-830 <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/pubact91/acts/91-0830.html>
- Illinois Adult Education Provider Manual: https://www.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/adulted/provider_manual/FY19_AEL_Provider_Manual_8-10-18.pdf
- Illinois Learning Standards (<https://www.isbe.net/pages/learning-standards.aspx>)

- Illinois Adult Education Content Standards (<https://www.iccb.org/data/studies-reports/ae-fl-publications-reports/>).

PURPOSE

This proposal is intended to solicit applications from eligible institutions that work to achieve the purpose of Section 3-15.12a of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5]. This section provides eligible applicants with a process for obtaining authority to award a high school diploma to adult learners. Part 1506 of the Joint Council on Administrative Rules (JCAR) sets forth the rules for eligible applicants to apply for approval from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to award a high school diploma to adult learners.

DEFINITIONS

“Adult Learner” means a person ineligible for reenrollment under subsection (b) of Section 26-2(b) of the School Code and 34 CFR 300.102. [105 ILCS 5/3-15.12a (a-5)]

“Board” or *“ICCB”* means the Illinois Community College Board. [105 ILCS 5/3-15.12a (a-5)]

“Career and Technical Education” or *“CTE”* means organized educational programs of study that prepare students for employment in a specific field and should be aligned with related secondary and/or upper-division programs that require a common knowledge and skill set.

“Dual Credit” means an instructional arrangement in which an academically qualified student enrolls in a college-level course and, upon successful course completion, concurrently earns both college credit and high school credit.

“Eligible Applicant” means an entity listed in Section 1506.300 of JCAR Administrative Rules of the ICCB. An eligible applicant is authorized to design a high school diploma program for adult learners, to be approved by the Board prior to implementation.

“High School Diploma Program for Adult Learners” or *“Program”* means a program approved to operate under Section 3-15.12a of the School Code that provides a program of alternative study to adult learners leading to the issuance of a high school diploma. [105 ILCS 5/3-15.12a (a-5)]

“Illinois Adult Education Content Standards” means basic reading, language arts, mathematics, and writing standards for adult learners approved by the Illinois Community College Board. These standards are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards.

“Illinois Learning Standards” means academic standards approved by the Illinois State Board of Education that define what all students in all Illinois public schools should know and be able to do in the seven core areas as a result of their elementary and secondary schooling.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The High School Diploma for Adult Learners is a program approved to operate under Section 3-15.12a of the School Code which provides a program of alternative study to adult learners leading to the issuance of a high school diploma. Those eligible to apply are as follows:

- A community college established and operating under the authority of the Public Community College Act [110 ILCS85].
- A nonprofit entity in partnership with the regional superintendent of schools.
 - A non-profit eligible applicant shall operate this program only within the jurisdictional authority of the regional superintendent of schools, the chief administrator of an intermediate service center, or a school district organized Article 34 of this Code with whom the non-profit eligible applicant has entered into a partnership.
- A chief administrator of an intermediate service center that has authority, under rules adopted by the State Board of Education, to issue a high school diploma.
- A school district organized under Article 34 of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5/34.A-101].

Applicants must provide documentation demonstrating that the applicant is or has been unable to establish an agreement with a secondary unit school district in which the eligible applicant is located. In addition, applicants must provide a program through which students who successfully complete that program can receive a high school diploma from their district of residence. This does not apply to a school district applicant, with the exception of a school district organized under Article 34 of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5/34.A-101], as listed above.

ELIGIBLE SERVICE POPULATION

An eligible individual to receive services under the High School Diploma for Adult Learner Program is an individual who is ineligible for reenrollment in a secondary school under 105 ILCS 5/26-2(b). Individuals must not be currently enrolled, or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law. Individuals must not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and must not have achieved an equivalent level of education.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The ICCB will accept applications for the High School Diploma Program for Adult Learners from the eligible applicants listed above. An eligible applicant will submit an application to the ICCB electronically and must include the following areas:

- Cover Packet
- Proposal Narrative
 - Statement of Need
 - Mission and Structure

- Instructional Program Design and Activities
- Partnerships and Collaboration
- Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention Strategies
- Program Completion
- Support Services
- Program Evaluation and Accountability
- Professional Development
- Additional Documentation and Information – Nonprofit Organizations Only

APPLICATION DETAILS

The High School Diploma Program for Adult Learner eligible applicants must, at a minimum, consider the following in the development and preparation of their application. Each eligible applicant must include all of required information as listed below including the required documentation under each sub-area. Please note that each area listed below has a corresponding point value that will be used to evaluate applications submitted. Only one application will be accepted per institution.

The total score for the application is 150 points. Up to ten additional points will be awarded to an eligible nonprofit applicant if they submit the additional required information noted in the section below, for a total of 160 points. Each application will be evaluated based on those elements that are pertinent to the eligibility of the applicant. Applications that score at a 70% (105/150 or 112/160) or better will be recommended for approval, given all of the requested information is submitted by the applicant. The ICCB reserves the right to request additional information. Applicants not recommended for approval may appeal the process using the guidelines listed below and/or may revise their application and resubmit in the next submission cycle.

1. Cover Packet (15 points)

- A. Applicants must provide contact information for the Chief Executive Officer, Program Director, and Fiscal Officer or equivalent.
- B. Applicants must provide a letter from the eligible applicant that indicates an agreement cannot be reached between the eligible applicant and a secondary or unit school district in the area.*
 - i. Letter must summarize the discussion, the dates of discussion, and the reason an agreement could not be established.
 - ii. Additional documentation may also be included (e.g., minutes of meetings).
- C. Applicants must provide a one-page summary of the proposed program.

*School districts, with the exception of a school district organized under Article 34 of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5/34.A-101], are not required to submit an application to offer the High School Diploma for Adult Learners Program.

2. Proposal Narrative (20 points)**A. Statement of Need (10 points)**

- i. Describe the demographic, socioeconomic and employment trends for the proposed service area, including labor market and education attainment data that demonstrates a need for the program.

B. Mission and Structure (10 points)

- i. Describe the eligible applicant's mission and past history in serving the adult population.
- ii. Describe the administrative structure of the institution, including but not limited to an organizational chart.
- iii. Describe in detail the secure financial commitments available to support the program and ensure that outcomes and goals are met.

C. Instructional Program Design and Activities (30 points)

- i. Describe the instructional activities, program sequence and multidisciplinary courses. Include any online or technology based curriculum that will be used.
- ii. Describe the Program, including the specific curriculum and its connection with the Illinois Learning Standards **and** Illinois Adult Education Content Standards. See the links to the standards above.
- iii. Describe the intensity, duration and frequency of the educational activities, including but not limited to the times and location of services.
- iv. Describe plans to deliver a system of career pathways that includes career and technical education courses that lead to industry recognized certifications in high growth and in-demand industry sectors identified through labor market analysis and/or dual credit courses from a regionally accredited postsecondary educational institution consistent with the Dual Credit Quality Act [110 ILCS 27]. The Program may partner with a community college district in the area of services to provide career and technical education courses that lead to industry recognized certifications.

D. Partnerships and Collaboration (10 points)

- i. Describe the established educational partnerships and collaborations, including those with Regional Offices of Education, school districts and community college districts in the area in which the Program is delivered.
- ii. Describe connections to the community that will enhance the ability to deliver services to adult learners, including business and industry, local workforce boards, social service agencies, state agencies, and other stakeholders.

E. Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention Strategies (10 points)

- i. Describe the recruitment and enrollment process of the program.
- ii. Describe the retention strategies of the program.

- iii. Describe the target populations to be served in the Program. Strategies for the delivery of instructional services through a Program should target the following populations:
- Long-term unemployed and underemployed, and those not in the labor force who demonstrate a deficiency in basic skills;
 - Low-income adults;
 - Individuals with disabilities;
 - Individuals receiving public assistance;
 - Out-of-school youth;
 - Veterans;
 - Migrant and seasonal farmworkers;
 - Incarcerated and other institutionalized individuals;
 - Re-entry individuals (ex-offenders);
 - English Language Learners;
 - Older individuals;
 - Homeless individuals;
 - Single parents, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients, and displaced homemakers;
 - Youth in the foster system or who have aged out; and
 - Low literacy adults, without a high school diploma.

F. Program Completion (10 points)

- i. Describe the requirements for program completion, including the use of any standardized testing or assessments.
- ii. Describe plans in which adult learners will complete the U.S. and Illinois State Constitution Test, as well as the Flag Test, as required by the School Code (see 105 ILCS 5/27-3).

G. Support Services (15 points)

- i. Describe the support services that will be provided by the applicant or in coordination with partners (e.g., transportation, childcare services, employment).
- ii. Describe any assessments that will be used to determine eligibility for services.
- iii. Describe the academic, behavioral, and emotional support services to be offered to adult learners enrolled in the Program.

H. Program Accountability (20 points)

- i. Describe specific outcomes, goals and metrics of the Program, including enrollment projections and completions, as well as the projected number of diplomas to be awarded.
- ii. Describe the use of any Board approved adult education assessments in determining reading and math levels (i.e., pre- and post-testing).

- iii. Describe the use of Program data to evaluate the success of the Program and the outcomes of adult learners.
- iv. Describe the process by which the institution will award a high school diploma, including the signatories, assurances that the institution will maintain and secure all official documentation including transcripts, diplomas and other pertinent information, and provide a description of how the institution will meet all minimum requirements under this code for receipt of a high school diploma.

I. Professional Development (20 points)

- i. Describe all staff and their responsibilities related to the Program, including:
 - program administrator;
 - coordinators;
 - counselors;
 - instructional staff, including licensed teaching staff, teacher aides, and tutors; and
 - other staff involved in the Program.
- ii. Describe the specific certifications of staff, including educator licenses valid for the high school grades or other adult education specific certification approved by the Board. All instructional teaching staff must hold an educator license valid for the high school grades issued under Article 21B of the School Code.
- iii. Describe the professional development requirements for all staff, including completion of the required new teacher orientation.

3. Additional Documentation – *Nonprofit Organizations Only* (10 points) In addition to the above required information, a nonprofit eligible applicant shall provide the following to the Board for review:

- A. Assurance through evidence and documentation that the nonprofit entity has the ability and capacity to fulfill all the requirements of this Part and Section 3-15.12a (b) of the School Code.
- B. A description of the coordination and oversight the partner entity will provide in the administration of the Program by the nonprofit entity.
- C. Evidence that the nonprofit entity has a history of providing services to adult learners whose educational and training opportunities have been limited by educational disadvantages, disabilities and challenges.

DEADLINES AND SUBMISSIONS

Application Period: The ICCB will accept applications three times during the fiscal year, **April 30th**, **July 1st** of and **October 31st**. Applications received after these dates will not be reviewed but may be resubmitted in the next submission cycle by the applicant. An electronic copy of the **High School Diploma for Adult Learners Program** application must be

received by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) no later than **4:30 p.m. on the specified dates listed above.** Submit applications and questions to: Kimberly.Dismuke@illinois.gov.

SPECIAL NOTE: The subject line of the email should include the following:

HSDALP [INSERT APPLICANT'S NAME]

APPLICATION FORMAT

- Narrative responses must be a minimum of 12-point type, 1.5 spacing, and in a Times New Roman font.
- All required information must be included as a part of the application.
- Incomplete or late application will not be considered after the application deadline, but may be resubmitted by the applicant in the next cycle.
- No faxed copies will be accepted.
- Unrequested attachments or letters of support will not be reviewed.
- Applications submitted by applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be reviewed, and applicants will be notified as to the reason for their ineligibility.
- Applications must be submitted in the order indicated in the Application Details section above.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Applicants applying for the High School Adult Diploma Program must abide by the policies and procedures set forth. All applicants must provide direct instruction through the use of qualified staff. All instructional teaching staff must hold an educator license valid for the high school grades issued under Article 21B of the School Code.

In addition, instructional activities must be in alignment with the Illinois Community College Board's Illinois Adult Education Content Standards and the Illinois State Board of Education's Illinois Learning Standards.

BUDGET & FINANCE

There is no funding opportunity available through the Illinois Community College Board for the High School Diploma for Adult Learners Program. The applicant must ensure that the program is securely funded at a level that will allow them to successfully meet the goals and objectives of the program as outlined in their proposal.

DATA & ACCOUTABILITY

Data Collection and Reporting Requirements

All approved High School Diploma for Adult Learner Programs will be required to collect program specific and outcomes data on all program goals. Programs are required to maintain student records on each student, administrative records, as well as programmatic records, including attendance.

Programs are all required to prepare and submit reports on a quarterly basis. At a minimum, programs must report the following:

1. Student enrollment and progression data.
 - A. Program recruitment, enrollment and retention data.
 - B. Attendance hours.
2. Program outcomes data.
 - A. Graduation rates.
 - B. Earning of high school diplomas.
 - C. Earning of industry-recognized credentials.
3. Program goals and metrics for evaluation.

MONITORING

All High School Diploma for Adult Learner Programs will be monitored regularly to ensure compliance with state and ICCB policies, regulations and procedures.

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA FOR ADULT LEARNER PROGRAM APPROVAL GUIDELINES

Below are the guidelines for approval of an approved High School Diploma for Adult Learner Program.

1. Initial approval of an eligible applicant by the Board shall be for a period of two school years.
2. After initial approval, renewal of an eligible applicant by the Board shall be for a period of four school years and shall be contingent upon submission to the Board of an application for renewal in accordance with the provisions as outlined above as well as demonstration to the Board of specific documented outcomes listed above.
3. Program approval may be given only if the Executive Director determines that the eligible applicant has provided assurance through evidence of other documentation that it will meet the requirements of the subsection (b) of the administrative rules adopted by the Board. The ICCB shall make public any evaluation criterial it uses in making a determination of program approval or denial.

4. The Board has the right to request additional information in making a determination of program approval.

REVOCATION OF PROGRAM APPROVAL

If an entity authorized to offer a High School Diploma for Adult Learner Program fails to meet any of the requirements of this application or Section 3-15.12a (b) of the School Code, the ICCB shall place the program on probationary review.

Programs in review status shall follow a corrective action plan outlined by the Board to regain approved status. Corrective action plans will be designed to address the specific deficiencies of the program and may include elements such as monitoring of program performance and outcomes identified in Section 1506.500(b) of the JCAR administrative rules for the ICCB.

Programs under a corrective action plan that fail to complete the requirements of their corrective action plan within the time allotted by the plan will have their status as an approved High School Diploma for Adult Learner Program revoked by the ICCB.

APPEALS PROCESS

If an institutions application is not approved, the applicant may appeal the decision. Below are the guidelines for the appeals process.

1. All decisions of the Board that result in non-approval of a Program or revocation of an approved Program shall be provided in writing in the form of a letter delivered by certified mail and shall specify the reason for the non-approval or revocation.
2. All decisions of the Board that result in non-approval or revocation may be appealed within 30 days after receipt of the written notification by submitting a written request for reconsideration of the decision to the ICCB Chair.
3. The ICCB Chair shall review the request and place it on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.
4. The appellant may make both oral and written presentations to the ICCB at the time the decision is reconsidered.