Retention Strategies

This is a collection of strategies that, when used consistently with all staff, can improve retention of students in Aspire classes. It is organized by the Indicators of Program Quality and matches the numbering from the *Assessment of Program Success Factors*.

The strategies listed are a sampling of activities or ideas to spark your own creativity, whether you are working with basics skills, HSE, ESOL, distance education, or workplace education.

This resource is designed to be used by individual practitioners or the entire program staff.

Ohio Professional Development Network   **www.ohioaspire.org**

INDICATOR 1.0: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Students demonstrate progress toward attainment of literacy skills, including reading, writing, and speaking in English, and computing and solving problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family and in society.

Students transfer learning from the classroom to the rest of life; articulate what they know and are able to do in relationship to their goals; demonstrate increased proficiency in the use of multiple skills that allow them to be placed in postsecondary education or training; gain unsubsidized employment or retain employment; or earn secondary school diplomas or Ohio High School Equivalency Diplomas or HSEs.

1.1   *Assessment of new student is not their first activity in the program.*

- Use the first session for rapport building (i.e., ice breakers, warmups, interest inventories, information sharing).
- Talk about the program and what students will be doing.
- Create a "welcome week" with orientation activities.
- Explain and practice the assessment before it happens.

1.2   *In addition to standardized tests, the program uses non-standardized assessment methods such as student portfolios, textbook tests, and observation.*

- Give students a chance to use journals in class. (Teacher's journals can be utilized to record student progress.)
- Hands-on activities and projects can be recorded and used as an assessment tool.

1.3   *Students have a procedure for routinely monitoring and recording their progress.*

- Develop a checklist of skills so students can keep track of what they have learned and have students keep a file folder of results. End class with a 5–10-minute discussion of progress
- Choose software that gives students immediate feedback.

1.4   *Teachers use a process that systematically assesses learners' gains or changes at established intervals.*

- Show students how to use a personal graph or other visual organizer to record each goal they have reached.
- Each month, schedule ten-minute goal reviews with students. Post on classroom calendar. Use options for recording goals: journal entries, success stories, homework, peer evaluation.

1.5   *Assessment includes evaluation of <u>life skills</u>.*

- Find and use a life skills inventory that will help students list the daily living, survival skills they already have and ones they want to work on. For example, opening a checking account, using coupons, filling out a school form online.
- Record each new life skill learned in student file.

1.6   *Assessment includes evaluation of <u>learning styles</u>.*

- After completing a learning styles inventory, have students brainstorm effective strategies for each style. Be aware of your own learning preference and how it impacts your teaching.
- Find materials (video, books, audio, manipulatives) about multiple intelligences and do a class activity.

1.7   *Assessment includes evaluation of <u>soft skills</u>, like problem solving, communication and personal qualities.*

- Use a social skills checklist or rubric to record student participation in a group.
- Show picture prompts or video clips to generate a list of personal attributes to use as an assessment tool.
- For programs using a workplace literacy model, include role plays for on the job problems to include dealing with a difficult employee, dealing with a difficult supervisor, being part of a team, and learning to complete written documents, such as timecards, evaluations, and memos.

1.8   *Assessment captures authentic performance.*

- Provide sample forms and help students fill them out. This can include job applications or school reports.
- Look at the student's intake application to assess spelling, comprehension, and ability to follow directions.

1.9   *The program has informal and formal student recognition systems for achievement, attendance, and commitment.*

- Reward students who have great attendance with incentives, like program pens, pencils or highlighters, or donated coupons from area businesses.
- Give certificates of completion with students' names on them when students finish program milestones, such as orientation.

1.10   *The program has in place a process and instrument to measure and document life skills.*

- Have class talk about life skills they have used in the past week/month. Develop a grid for students to record the number of times used.
- Do a class project about skills needed at different life stages.

1.11   *Teachers provide opportunities for students to share and demonstrate various skills (i.e. by way of presentations, displays, letter writing, publications).*

- Have students plan a party where they can share food they have made and talk about the recipes they used; have a "hobby day".
- Help students write letters to legislators who support funding for their programs.

1.12   *Students and teachers cooperatively develop learning plans using the student's assessment results.*

- Schedule one-on-one time with students to discuss assessment results and appropriate study materials.
- Guide students to appropriate learning materials, providing them with several options.

1.13   *Individual learning plans include setting long term learning goals.*

- Select a long-term goal and have students draw a timeline showing the steps they need to reach the goal.
- Group students with similar goals. Have students draft a learning plan. Review individually.

1.14   *Students are encouraged to identify and value their own life skills.*

- Students can make a list of all the skills they currently have, i.e. pay bills, save money with coupons, read the classifieds.
- Bring in sample life skills activities (e.g., cereal boxes, vitamin bottles, store coupons, classified ads) and work in small groups to discuss the information in each area and how it can be used.

1.15   *Because students' goals change, teachers and students meet regularly to review students' progress and make goal revisions.*

- Teachers should designate times to meet with students (e.g. during independent work time, at the end of class, just before class begins).
- Teachers and students should review the Student Portfolio to identify progress and mastery of benchmarks.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILP) should be updated to reflect changes in goals.

INDICATOR 2.0: PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT

The program is housed in a safe, age-appropriate and student-friendly learning environment that is in good condition and properly maintained with adequate space and equipment.

2.1   Community data is collected, maintained, and acted upon to determine site locations.

- Talk to your area Chamber of Commerce to determine geographic areas that could benefit from a learning site.
- Identify area businesses that might need workplace literacy programs. Contact by phone or email.

2.2   Classrooms are of adequate size and number for the program's instructional services.

- Add additional teachers at sites that have a large number of students or reduce class size.
- Network with community organizations to explore alternative program sites for extra classrooms or program hours.

2.3   All instructional sites are located near where the target population lives.

- Consult workforce partners to determine location of greatest need.
- Consult American Community Survey (ACS) to determine the need for ESOL classes.

2.4   Instructional sites are accessible to persons with disabilities.

- Be familiar with the Americans with Disabilities Act and take appropriate action for compliance.
- Have a plan to assist disabled students in the event of an emergency.

2.5   All classrooms are easy to locate and access with appropriate signage.

- Use multilingual signs if you have a large group speaking a language other than English.
- Include maps and written directions to program sites on promotional fliers. Use entry door program signage.

2.6/2.7 All instructional sites are safe, clean, and in good repair.

- Be aware of the fire codes and emergency exits. Post visible signs for emergency exit.
- Determine who is responsible for emergency repairs, supplies, or cleaning services and post contact number in an accessible location.

2.8   Classrooms are free from clutter and hazards.

- Ensure appropriate clearance to comply with requirements for students with disabilities.
- Contact facilities management for assistance with decluttering.

2.9   Classrooms are temperature-controlled for comfort.

- Before committing to a new class site, ensure that the rooms to be used have both heat and air conditioning.
- Ensure that HVAC systems are functioning properly or schedule maintenance.

2.10   Accommodations are made for learners with special needs (i.e. low noise or low light study areas).

- A learning carrel in a quiet area of the classroom can help students who are easily distracted.
- Provide table lamps, colored overlays, and allow the use of personal headphones.

2.11   Space is appropriate for the full range of program activities including individual conferences and large and small group instruction.

- If possible, set up learning centers, computer stations, and tables for small groups.
- Students should be able to easily move around as their activities change. Use moveable tables and flipcharts to provide instructional flexibility.

2.12   Classroom tables and chairs are moveable, supporting a range of grouping strategies and teaching/learning activities.

- For instructional units that would benefit from students working in small group, create pods or clusters.
- Trade seats and tables with other teachers to change up classroom design.

2.13   Staff annually evaluates physical environments with a checklist or survey.

- Provide staff with a list of physical items that should be in good condition.
- Involve students in assessing and enhancing the physical learning environment.

2.14   Adequate facilities and resources are provided for teachers, including storage space for supplies and materials and access to computers and photocopy machines.

- Work with partner sites to agree on storage space (e.g. file cabinet, closet, desk drawers) for each classroom or the site.
- Purchase a set of laptops or tablets if computers or lab space at the site is unavailable.

INDICATOR 3: PROGRAM PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

The program planning and administration process is based on a written plan, the grant(s), implemented and guided by evaluation.

All staff paid from Aspire funds are formally evaluated, in writing, on a yearly basis to include evidence of staff observations

3.1   *A mission statement exists that defines the program's role and purpose, the population served, the nature of services provided, and the guiding principles and philosophies.*

- Include staff and the program advisory committee in the writing of the mission statement.
- Revisit the mission statement annually to determine necessary revisions.

3.2   *Written policies are employed that address all aspects of program functioning, including personnel, organizational structure, and funding.*

- If your program is part of a larger agency, ensure that the Aspire program is represented in agency documentation.
- Review documentation from other programs and use for guidance in developing or editing your program's.

3.3   *The program's philosophy and mission are translated into a written work plan with clearly articulated job duties and expectations, a clear outline of processes and policies, and a collaborative planning process that involves all staff.*

- Make sure each staff member has a copy of their job description that is reviewed with them.
- All employees should be given a handbook that clearly articulates all program policies and procedures.

3.4   *Program plans contain clear action steps, timelines, and persons responsible for implementation.*

- Assign staff specific roles in program management (i.e. curriculum development, retention, professional development).
- Determine realistic time frames to implement action steps through regularly scheduled planning meetings.

3.5   *Our program uses checklists or other tools for short- and long-term planning and evaluation.*

- Create a schedule for classroom observations.
- Use a program assessment checklist to determine which quality indicators need addressing.

3.6   Our program uses focus groups for short- and long-term planning and evaluation.

- Enlist members of your Advisory Committee; current, former, and potential students; and representatives of community partners for focus groups.
- Have specific questions and needs for focus groups to discuss.

3.7   Our program uses outside consultants for short- and long-term planning and evaluation.

- Contact ODHE or the PDN for assistance with planning.
- Consult community partners to assess and provide feedback on planning.

3.8   Our program uses peer review for short- and long-term planning and evaluation.

- Ask staff and students to provide input and feedback on program plan.
- For an outside perspective, solicit feedback from other Aspire programs to review program plans.

3.9   Our program uses agency retreats for short- and long-term planning and evaluation.

- An external environment can help with new and creative thinking.
- Retreats can be as long or short as needed to give staff adequate planning time.

3.10   Our program uses Advisory Committee meetings for short- and long-term planning and evaluation.

- Schedule a specific strategic planning meeting with a targeted agenda.
- Plan activities and groupings to work on planning during meetings.

3.11   Our Aspire Advisory Committee meets a minimum of twice a year.

- Address items or issues requiring creativity and high energy at the beginning of the meeting.
- Prior to the meeting, share an agenda to clarify the purpose of the meeting and to set the agenda items for discussion, information, and decision.

3.12   Our Aspire Advisory Committee is representative of all stakeholders.

- Include a variety of members to give better perspective: business and industry, the Chamber of Commerce, other literacy providers, teachers, students, and local library.
- Be sure all program service and demographic makeup areas are represented.

3.13   Ensure that program services meet community needs by gathering data through surveys and other community interaction.

- Ask your local Chamber of Commerce, economic development organizations, United Way, etc. for current surveys identifying community needs.
- Serve on committees with diverse planning groups.

3.14   Our program collaborates with other members of the literacy community to address common issues.

- Join a literacy coalition in your area and/or contact and visit other literacy organizations within your referral region.
- Take part in activities of your local One Stop, Family and Children First, America Reads, and other initiatives.

3.16 - 3.18

Staff support and guidance are provided through regular staff meetings, observation and feedback, and supervisory conferences.

- Invite your supervisor to come in for a special class activity.
- Clear and specific agendas are helpful to keep meetings focused and to accomplish tasks.

3.19   Staff support and guidance provided through informal exchange among staff.

- Use virtual and physical space (i.e., email/text chains, messaging apps, breakrooms) to connect with staff regularly.
- Encourage peer mentoring and team teaching.

3.20   Staff support and guidance are provided through adequate preparation time.

- Make sure planning time is built in for the instructors.
- Organize and facilitate monthly planning time for all staff or committees working on special projects and issues.

3.21   Our staff meets four or more times per year.

- Schedule quarterly meetings at the beginning of the year.
- If a meeting needs to be postponed, reschedule as soon as possible.

3.22   All staff members have the opportunity and are encouraged to share ideas, information, and expertise (e.g. suggestion boxes, "sound off" meetings).

- Challenge teachers to integrate a new instructional strategy into one lesson.
- Create a common space (virtual or physical) for staff to share suggestions and comment on others' ideas.

3.23   There are processes in place that ensure clear and timely communications between administration and staff.

- Ask for the best time of day to contact your supervisor with questions and concerns.
- Use technology to communicate time-sensitive information to staff at off-site locations.

3.24   *There are processes in place that ensure clear and timely communications between students and staff.*

- Use messaging apps, the buddy system, and pre-printed post cards to encourage students to return to class.
- Use a messaging app or class website to share program and student news and information.
- Assign a class buddy or Student Ambassador to reach out to students.

3.25   *There are processes in place that ensure clear and timely communications between staff members and support staff.*

- Know who to contact to obtain technology assistance, copying, or student rosters.
- What kind of time frame is involved for what you need?

3.26   *There are processes in place that ensure clear and timely communication among all staff members, including support persons.*

- Issue a current staff roster with phone numbers and email addresses.
- Include support personnel at staff meetings and provide time for them to share pertinent information.

3.27   *Each site offers an adequate number of instructional hours to support student progress.*

- Consider program or site consolidation or offer online learning opportunities to increase the number of instructional hours.
- What are your students' needs? For example, are your classes scheduled at the right time for second shift workers?

3.28   *Class schedules are determined by student needs, not by staff convenience.*

- Hire staff who are willing to adjust teaching schedules to accommodate student needs (i.e. Saturdays, various work shifts).
- Consider flexible staffing schedules to allow increased student options.

3.29   *Program planning includes staff, learners, and other community or advisory committee members.*

- Explain to the class what the advisory board does and ask students to sign up and participate.
- Encourage staff to participate in advisory board meetings since results may affect them.

3.30   *The program plan is shared with all staff.*

- Share with the staff the program grant application and have them suggestions about the program plan.
- During a staff meeting, share the program plan with all staff and discuss implementation.

3.31   *All program staff participates in a yearly program evaluation.*

- Collect ideas and/or program suggestions during the year. Include small improvements, not just the major "blockbusters."
- All staff should complete a program assessment, i.e. "Assessment of Program Success Factors" (ohioaspire.org/retention) for adult education programs.

3.32   *The program demonstrates congruency between planned and actual activities.*

- Use state program evaluation results and teacher observations to determine implementation of the program plan.
- At the mid-year point, review the program plan to determine if adjustments to the action plan timeline and/or goals are necessary.

3.33   *The program has a comprehensive, structured orientation and intake process.*

- Include icebreakers, goal setting activities, class schedules, program information, and learning contracts in the orientation.
- Include simple problem-solving activities, such as shortcuts and tricks to connect with math concepts.

3.34   *The program atmosphere is organized, welcoming, and respectful for entering students.*

- Always say hello to each student when they come in and make sure they can find their file and materials they need.
- Review code of conduct and class rules. Role play or verbalize examples of what respect and disrespect are.

3.35   *Our orientation process is separate from the daily scheduled classroom teaching/ learning environment.*

- Schedule a specific time just for orientation activities.
- Consider implementing a "welcome week" to cover orientation activities before beginning class curriculum.

3.37   *During orientation there is a structured exchange of information that determines the students' goals.*

- Use goal-setting lesson plans and activities to help students set goals.
- Staff assist students in setting goals, offering literacy support and translation where necessary.

3.38   *During orientation there is a structured exchange of information that determines the students' <u>needs.</u>*

- Conduct needs assessments with students.
- Analyze all assessment results and goals to identify needs. Discuss.

3.39   *During orientation, there is a structured exchange of information that determines the students' <u>interests</u>.*

- Plan career awareness and self-exploration activities to identify student interests.
- Ask students to complete interest inventories.

3.40   *During orientation, there is a structured exchange of information that determines the students' <u>personal histories</u>.*

- Have students complete the Past Schooling and Background. Discuss.
- Have students complete a Venn diagram showing the similarities and differences between school now and when they previously attended school (in K-12 or in another country).

3.41   *During orientation, there is a structured exchange of information that determines the students' <u>barriers to participation</u>.*

- Brainstorm the things that can come up between 9pm Sunday and 8am Monday that can keep the student from attending school. Find solutions.
- Do an activity that helps students identify sources of support. Show them how to use a community social service directory.

3.42   *During orientation there is a structured exchange of information that determines the students' <u>need for referral.</u>*

- Analyze assessment results and background information.
- Conference with student to discuss options.

3.43   *During orientation there is a structured exchange of information that determines the students' <u>exploration of postsecondary education and training options.</u>*

- Share information about opportunities for postsecondary education and training.
- Plan an activity (e.g., scavenger hunt, guest speaker, facility tour) to introduce postsecondary education and training options.

3.44   *Entering students are given accurate oral and written information to determine whether the program can meet their needs, goals, and expectations.*

- Create a short, concise information booklet for your students.
- Present information in both written and oral formats, include translation for targeted student population.

3.45   *Our program gears the orientation/intake process toward program completion encouraging students to recognize the relationship between consistent attendance and achievement.*

- Help students determine when they might be able to complete the program if they come on a regular basis.
- Give a certificate for completing orientation.
- Share that the program gives certificates to students with good attendance.
- Certificates include new skills learned or increased scores.

3.46   *The program has established ways to integrate students into the program/learning environment.*

- Keep a list of student volunteers who are willing to be peer mentors to new students. Assign a mentor to each new student.
- Identify several simple group activities to use each time a new student joins the class.

3.47   *During the orientation/intake period, students' doubts, hesitations, and/or anxieties about learning are acknowledged, and students are encouraged to believe in their ability to succeed.*

- Find success stories from books or films and share with the students. Identify and list personal qualities of the main character that contributed to their success.
- Invite graduates to come in and share their story; post news articles on successful people.

3.48   *During the orientation/intake period, students are encouraged to make a commitment by making a student learning contract.*

- Create a simple contract that outlines attendance and classroom expectations.
- Ask students to identify what excuses they might use to avoid personal responsibilities.

3.49   *During the orientation/intake period, instruction on the goal setting process and setting long- and short-term goals takes place.*

- Define SMART goals.
- Use goal-setting lesson plans to teach students what a goal is and how to set a goal.

3.50   *During the orientation/intake period, incoming students are informed of the available support services and appropriate referrals are made.*

- Keep the classroom a learning place so that it doesn't become a counseling session. Use a "Suggestion Circle" or other type of problem-solving exercise.
- For critical problems, talk to the student privately and make appropriate referrals. Post crisis hotline numbers.

3.51   *During the orientation/intake period, all students' academic skills are assessed and used to guide initial placement and development of learning plans.*

- Administer and score a standardized test.
- Use test results to place the student in an appropriate class and inform a plan for learning.

INDICATOR 4: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The program has a written curriculum and plans instruction matching students' needs and learning styles.

Assessment results are used to guide development of individual learning plans.

All programs have a written curriculum that is adult appropriate and is built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice.

4.1 *All staff members have the educational backgrounds, experience, and interpersonal skills appropriate to their responsibilities.*

- Hire staff members who are willing to learn and try new things.
- Interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to and work with culturally diverse populations are essential characteristics of the adult educator.

4.2 *Teachers are given regular and comprehensive feedback about their instruction from their supervisor.*

- Staff need regular feedback about their performance in the following areas: classroom management, classroom climate, curriculum choice, and teaching methods.
- Schedule a post-evaluation meeting to commend teachers' strengths and offer a plan to address weaknesses.

4.3 *The curriculum is academically challenging and covers a broad range of instructional levels.*

- Use readability formulas, publisher information, and student feedback to determine level of materials. Encourage students to work beyond their academic comfort level.
- Read aloud or use recorded materials for exposure to higher level materials.

4.4 *The program uses at least one life skills curriculum that serves a wide range of learning levels.*

- Have students research TV programming (e.g., the tv guide, listing, schedule) for the week and make a week-long viewing plan for the family.
- Your life skills curriculum should address students' roles as family members, workers, and citizens. Use student materials.

4.5 *The program selects curriculum and instructional methods based on the needs and goals of the student.*

- Set up learning centers that target different needs and encourage peer interaction.
- Take advantage of libraries, resource centers, websites, and other adult education centers to explore curriculum materials.

4.6 *The program uses real life materials to help foster applied learning (i.e., newspapers, maps, work related materials).*

- Subscribe to a news magazine with several reading levels available.
- Use maps to teach reading, math, and geography.
- Use recipes to teach fractions, ratios, and proportions.

4.7 *Teachers model and encourage the use of manipulatives and hands-on learning (i.e., calculators, squares and cubes, project or inquiry-based learning.)*

- Students need to be taught how to use a calculator.
- Use household tools to teach measurement, perimeter, area, etc. Use problems that could occur in daily life.
- Play board games to enhance math and vocabulary skills.

4.8 *Instruction incorporates a variety of technologies (i.e., calculators, videos, computers).*

- Have one or more computers in the classroom. Old computers can be used to teach word processing and keyboarding.
- Show films and use audiobooks in the classroom, use portions of videos for a lesson.

4.9 *Teachers use curriculum that emphasizes learning and problem-solving strategies (i.e. KWL, DRTA).*

- Have a collection of brain teasers and riddles and do a fun problem-solving activity each class.
- Model problem solving and have students describe the steps they used to solve a word problem.

4.10 *Our program uses the results of the students' various assessments to guide initial placement.*

- Know how to score and interpret assessment results.
- By observing the student during orientation and using assessment results, place the student in the most successful situation, i.e., start them in a class that instructs at their NRS level and teaches skills they need to master.

4.11 *The program uses the results of the students' various assessments to guide curriculum selection.*

- Interpret assessment results to identify objectives and skills on which students need to show progress.
- Combine individual needs to target skills for whole class lessons.

4.12   *The program uses the results of the students' various assessments to guide methods of instruction.*

- Use assessment information to guide students' independent study and placement in small groups based on interests and skills.
- Think: VISUAL, AUDITORY, and KINESTHETIC in every lesson.

4.13   *The program uses the results of the students' various assessments to guide movement within or outside of the program.*

- Programs may consider having specialized classes for specific needs or level (i.e., IET, career pathways, workplace education).
- Refer to more appropriate organizations when indicated (i.e. agencies for students with special needs, HSE Fast Track, tutoring agencies).

4.14   *Teachers have adequate knowledge of the different intelligences and consider them in the planning of instruction.*

- Attend a workshop on multiple intelligences. Try to apply at least three of the strategies in class lessons.
- Learn students' strength areas (e.g., using a computer, strong math skills, oral cultural background, artistic in nature). Students learn best through their strength areas.

4.15   *Teachers explain learning styles and use appropriate accommodations with students.*

- Acknowledge and plan for different learning styles.
- Incorporate universal design for learning (UDL) into all lessons.

4.16   *Teachers have knowledge of relevant learning theories and instructional methods (for adult learners) and apply that knowledge to student instruction.*

- Attend adult education conferences, participate in email lists, and subscribe to professional publications.
- Interact with peers to share effective teaching strategies.

4.17   *Teachers recognize and plan for learning plateaus.*

- Be sure students are aware that learning plateaus are common and point out the student's accomplishments.
- Temporarily have the student move to a different learning or subject area.

4.18 through 4.20

> *Teachers have a repertoire of teaching strategies that they use on a regular basis (instructor-centered/lecture, individualized, interactive).*

- Limit class lecture to a small portion of class time.
- Invite speakers from community agencies, area employers and employees, and former students to visit your class.
- Use online lesson plans and student learning activities.
- Interact with students in a variety of ways: use direct instruction, self-directed learning, and small group collaborative learning.
- Use visual organizers (charts, diagrams, concept maps) to help learners organize their knowledge and increase retention skills.
- Work on group projects. Special events, such as the Olympics and the World Series, lend themselves to this type of instruction.
- Borrow resources from the PDN that offer you teaching suggestions.

4.21   Teachers display empathy and concern for their students.

- Listen actively to your students.
- Regard teaching as a relationship.
- Try a variety of peer support teams.
- Include stress management and relaxation techniques in your classroom routine.
- Use suggestion circles as a forum to address personal problems in an efficient manner.

4.22   Teachers have high expectations of students.

- Let students know you believe they can succeed.
- Give students goals that are a little beyond their reach so they can feel the true measure of success.
- Have students develop and sign learning contracts.

4.25   Teachers give students immediate and frequent feedback on their learning progress.

- Students should receive verbal, written, and/or digital feedback about their work using a blend of the positive elements and the areas needing correction.
- Praise in public; review negatives in private.

4.26   Teachers use community resources as a learning vehicle (e.g., libraries, field trips, guest speakers).

- Meet your students at a local bookstore or library for a tour.
- Prepare community scavenger hunts or internet searches that lead students out into the community to discover resources.

4.27   Teachers maximize learner involvement and encourage self-directed learning.

- "Label" students' higher order thinking behaviors (e.g., "Your questions show me you are questioning the source of information.")
- Invite students to be part of the planning committee for special events, focus groups, and the advisory committee.

4.28   Teachers display patience and are willing to explain material as many times as needed for student comprehension.

- Use as many approaches or concrete examples as necessary to help students comprehend new concepts.
- Be generous with concrete examples.
- Find different ways to explain material and concepts.

4.29   Teachers give clear, simple explanations about concepts, materials, and learning objectives.

- Divide difficult lessons into steps and cover one step at a time to determine mastery. Relate the smaller parts to the larger concept.
- Have students explain concepts back to you.

4.30   Teachers draw upon the learners' experience through the use of discussions, problem solving exercises, group work, scenarios, and role playing.

- Role play job interviews and telemarketing pressure calls.
- Students brainstorm a problem and explore possible solutions using the strategies listed above.

4.31   Teachers provide interdisciplinary instruction (e.g., using writing in a math lesson, math in a reading lesson).

- Use theme-based or project-based instruction to involve a wide range of related topics and skills.
- Allow students to publish a class newsletter.

4.32   Teachers emphasize the practical application of learning and relate learning to the life situations of the learner.

- Share utility bills or sales receipts and analyze the skills needed to understand them.
- After every lesson/activity, ask students to identify the learning goal and how they will use these skills in daily life.

4.33   *Teachers clearly communicate to the student the purpose, structure, and logic of a given assignment.*

- Show the students how to graph their assessment results to see learner gain and areas needing growth and skill building.
- Before each assignment, explore the skills that will be used and how they will apply to their learning goals.

4.34   *Teachers recognize students as a primary learning resource and provide an opportunity to share their experiences and to work together in class.*

- Encourage students to ask other students for help.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate a competency or a skill (e.g., changing oil in a car, making a paper airplane, using a special computer program).

4.35   *Universal Design is incorporated into instruction.*

- Use a variety of materials (e.g., online resources, videos, podcasts, PPT, realia, manipulatives).
- Teach to a variety of learning styles (give instructions orally and in writing, use visual aids, graphics, slides, build in movement).
- Provide flexible opportunities for assessment

INDICATOR 5: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The program has an ongoing professional development process linked to a professional development plan that supports program and organizational goals.

Program determines individual and program professional development needs.

5.1   *Our program has policies and procedures that ensure opportunities for all staff to attend appropriate training and staff development activities, including release time.*

- Keep staff mailing list and membership in professional organizations updated so they receive information on all relevant training opportunities.
- Build into the budget release time for staff to attend trainings that match their professional development needs.

5.2   *Our program has policies and procedures that ensure opportunities for all staff to attend appropriate training and staff development activities, including a professional development coordinator.*

- Pay staff to take PD that aligns to their job role.
- Be flexible with PD requirements and opportunities based on role.

5.3   *Our program has policies and procedures that ensure opportunities for all staff to attend appropriate training and staff development activities, including time for discussion of professional development at each staff meeting.*

- Have staff share information learned at trainings they have attended and/or invite trainers on particular topics.
- Use information from the Assessment of Program Success Factors to identify and prioritize staff development needs.
- Add professional development activities and discussion to staff meeting agendas; informational staff meetings alone are not adequate PD opportunities.

5.4   *The program requires that all staff meet the state professional development requirements and maintains written documentation and outcomes.*

- Identify a staff member to ensure that individual professional development and local program needs are addressed.
- Include time for staff to update individual professional development plans at every staff meeting.

5.5   The ODHE Program Improvement and Consultation Plan (PICP) evolves out of a long-range plan that is driven by the needs of the program and staff and reflects major federal and state initiatives.

- Set realistic goals and milestones with your ODHE Program Manager and make sure they align with your program's desired outcomes for the year.
- Revise the PICP throughout the year to include new areas of need as well as completed goals.
- Share the PICP with all staff and involve staff in the action plan.

5.6   All staff is familiar with the resources, assistance, and services offered by the Aspire Professional Development Network (PDN).

- Search or visit the PDN Library for supplemental classroom materials.
- Visit the PDN website as a staff to find resources for Administrators, Teachers, and Support Staff.
- Participate in self-directed training individually or as a group.

5.8   All new Aspire staff receive a local orientation conducted prior to assuming full position responsibilities.

- Build in payroll time for new staff to learn program materials, goals, structure, and procedures.
- Give instructors the opportunity to meet with other instructors, and if possible, observe other classrooms.

5.9   All staff are formally evaluated in writing each fiscal year.

- Review the individual evaluation form at the beginning of each year.
- If you are the director, ask your staff to evaluate you.

5.10   The program fosters collaboration and communication among staff and has regularly scheduled opportunities for staff to share information, ideas, and expertise.

- Allot time at each staff meeting for staff to share successes and frustrations.
- Choose one of the retention scenarios to promote discussion of program issues or concerns.

5.11   Staff achievements and contributions are valued, and there are procedures for sharing and recognizing their accomplishments.

- Nominate deserving staff members for area educator recognition awards.
- Use meetings, newsletters, program publications, website and other media to acknowledge successes.
- Celebrate staff during staff meetings or special celebrations.

INDICATOR 6: SUPPORT SERVICES

The program provides a system for support services that promotes students' achievement of goals.

Program staff possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to make appropriate, informed referrals to support services offered within the program and in the community to reduce student barriers.

6.1   *The program administration provides ongoing staff support and guidance through regular staff meetings.*

- Schedule staff meetings that are convenient for day and evening staff.
- Have a written agenda and begin and end meetings on schedule.

6.2   *The program administration provides ongoing staff support and guidance through observation and feedback on classroom practices.*

- Make short, informal visits to the classes.
- Ask students what else they would like to be doing in class.
- Periodically encourage team teaching and peer review to help build weak areas and allow for idea exchange.

6.3   *The program administration provides ongoing staff support and guidance through opportunities for informal exchange among staff.*

- Set up a private Facebook group or group chat for staff communication.
- Set aside the first 15 minutes of each staff meeting for no-agenda discussion.

6.4   *The program has a clear and effective decision-making process that allows for staff input.*

- Talk with staff before changing schedules and class design. See what they think first. Listen for any barriers.
- All staff should be involved in the development of a handbook that outlines program policies and procedures.

6.5   *The program has a clear process for identifying and recording the student support service needs that are personal and/or family related.*

- Bring in speakers that can address how to make a referral and when a referral is indicated. This can also be a good staff development activity. (e.g., SAMHSA, SNAP)
- Use picture prompts and scenarios of typical and dysfunctional families for problem solving opportunities and discussion.

6.6   *The program has a clear process for identifying and recording student support service needs in educational areas.*

- Include a vision and hearing screening in your assessment.
- Expose staff and students to high quality films and/or print material on special needs such as learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and other attributes that can interfere with the learning process.

6.7   *The program has a clear process for identifying and recording the career needs of students.*

- Encourage students to research employment opportunities at the library or on the internet.
- Plan field trips to area employers (hospitals, manufacturers, hotels, and restaurants) to explore job opportunities.

6.8   *The program has an established and clearly communicated process for addressing student support needs such as referral, documentation, and follow-up.*

- Designate a specific time each month to record student referrals and outcomes using a log, journal, or card file system.
- Upon referral, have students complete an outcome checklist.

6.9   *Each of the staff has a written list of support services available to the students.*

- Check with your local United Way for social services directory.
- Secure and maintain individual contact names for agencies that provide support services.

6.10   *The program uses counselors and/or advisors for students to encourage participation.*

- Introduce counselors and advisors during student orientation.
- Counselors and advisors visit classrooms regularly.

6.11   *The program uses career planning assistance to encourage participation.*

- Help students create a resume.
- Develop a career path using: career, temperament, and interest inventories, aptitude assessments, and academic levels. Match students to jobs they would be most successful in.

6.12   *The program uses student family activities to encourage participation.*

- Partner with a family literacy or Even Start program in your area. Ask bookstores to donate books.
- Encourage family activities such as book exchanges, read-ins, math and science fairs, or special craft projects.

6.13   *The program uses the procedures, strategies, and activities to encourage participation in childcare and transportation options.*

- Teach lessons in what to look for in choosing childcare providers.
- Help students brainstorm alternatives or backup plans for transportation and childcare needs.

6.14   *The program shares resources, information, and expertise with providers of related services, such as childcare and counseling. This includes the larger literacy community.*

- Actively participate in your local literacy coalition and literacy-related events.
- Set up a booth at health and job fairs or other community information events.

6.15   *The program maintains an "early alert" system that identifies and applies special strategies to high-risk students.*

- Learn about the concept of "field dependency" and its impact on persistence and retention.
- Starting with your orientation process, involve students in small group activities.

6.16   *In the classroom, activities and other opportunities are provided for learners to get acquainted, establish rapport with fellow students, and form student support systems.*

- Consistently provide varied opportunities for students to interact. This should include ice breakers, class discussions, peer mentoring, special projects, and small group work.
- Involve students in classroom decision making and problem solving, using such topics as breaks, food, and phone calls.

6.17   *Teachers work with students to develop problem solving and coping strategies to address personal barriers.*

- Use role plays, scenarios, film, or video clips to teach motivation, prioritizing, and time management.
- Generate a list of possible solutions to problems by using a "Suggestion Circle". Participants offer one suggestion at a time with no group comments or discussion.

6.18   *Our program recognizes and builds upon students' strengths and experiences (e.g., transferable skills inventories, interest inventories, value and priorities activities, aptitude tests).*

- Analyze results of student interest inventories to incorporate into class and program activities.
- Ask students to volunteer in the classroom and at program events.
- Invite students as guest speakers to share experiences.

INDICATOR 7: PROGRAM PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

The program successfully recruits from the populations in the community identified in the AEFLA, Title II of the WIOA as needing literacy services.

7.1 *Your program implements a formal recruitment plan which includes written materials.*

- Print material should use short, simple sentences, should emphasize benefits, should be jargon free, and should use personal pronouns, present tense, and action words.
- Use a fifth-grade readability level. Use a spelling or grammar check to determine level.
- Design a simple, easy-to-read brochure. Print in more than one language if necessary.

7.2 *Your program implements a formal recruitment plan which includes contact with community agencies.*

- Send informational brochures to community organizations each term and acknowledge supporting organizations.
- Through the area Chamber of Commerce, contact and speak to service clubs. Use PowerPoint presentations, testimonials, and/or promotional videos to inform the community.

7.3 *Your program implements a formal recruitment plan which includes the use of local media.*

- Learn how to write press releases and know who to send them to. There is a contact person normally assigned to each geographic area for radio, newspapers, and television.
- Contact state and national literacy organizations (OAACE, Ohio TESOL, COABE, TESOL) for copies of PSA's.
- Contact local television and radio stations to promote adult literacy through provider interviews and sharing of success stories.

7.4 *Your program implements a formal recruitment plan which includes participation in community events.*

- Staff a table at a community art festival.
- Participate in events hosted by community partners, including libraries, schools, and local businesses.

7.5 *Your program implements a formal recruitment plan which includes the use of social media.*

- Ask your students which social media they use and let them guide your recruitment platforms.
- Create a Facebook page for your program and post to it at least twice a month.

7.6   *Your marketing/recruitment plan considers the needs and objectives of prospective students/target population in your community.*

- If your program focuses on workplace literacy, create posters and fliers using workplace vocabulary for the work environment.
- Use words that are not limiting unless your program focuses on one specific population such as HSE or ESOL.

7.7   *Your marketing/recruitment plan considers the needs and objectives of the program.*

- Use data to determine what program sites or areas need more intense marketing or recruitment efforts.
- Have a plan in the event your recruitment efforts exceed your program's capacity.

7.8   *Our recruitment materials and activities portray the program accurately.*

- Be realistic about timeframes and workload when promoting your classes.
- Use pictures of actual buildings and classrooms; don't use stock photos.

7.9   *Our recruitment materials and activities inform prospective students of services and expectations.*

- Maintain a publicly available, up-to-date schedule of sites and classes.
- Be upfront and realistic about time commitments and requirements.

7.10   *Our recruitment materials and activities remain consistent with program philosophy.*

- Make sure that your materials reflect what is readily available in your program; don't offer services and content that your staff isn't ready to provide.
- Recruit from a variety of places to ensure a demographic cross-section of the community.

7.11   *The recruitment process enables students to self-screen for suitability, success, and appropriateness of program.*

- The recruitment and orientation process must clearly communicate the program goals and objectives.
- The recruitment and orientation process clearly communicates what is expected of the student, such as attendance, commitment, effort, and time.

7.12   *The program tracks how students learned about the program and assesses the effectiveness of different recruitment strategies.*

- Identify a person/team (i.e., staff, student, or community volunteer) to gather data on the effectiveness of the marketing program. Request suggestions for improvement.
- Gather feedback and suggestions about recruitment materials and methods directly from student self-report.

7.13   *Our marketing/recruitment plan is monitored, evaluated, and revised as needed based on community and program needs.*

- Review enrollment trends quarterly to make sure that the plan is working as you planned.
- Adjust plan according to changes in employment trends, such as business openings and closings.

7.14   *All staff members fielding phone calls and drop-in inquiries from prospective students have the knowledge and the interpersonal skills to respectfully and accurately provide information regarding services, registration, and referrals.*

- Observe interactions between staff and prospective students.
- Make sure that all staff are aware of new sites, classes, and programming offered.

7.15   *Community organizations that refer our students understand our mission, can explain it, and have accurate, current information about the program services.*

- Meet twice a year with partner agencies and provide reports of referrals.
- Notify organizations of significant changes to site locations, class times, and program leadership.

INDICATOR 8: TRANSITIONS

The program provides Aspire transitions services that facilitate students successfully progressing to postsecondary education, training, and/or employment.

The program provides instruction aimed at addressing the gaps in knowledge and skills needed for success in postsecondary education and the workplace (e.g., integrated education and training (IET), algebra, advanced and writing, critical thinking).

The program provides support in the areas of career assessment and advising.

8.1   *Our program operates within the Transitions Framework.*

- Identify which area is lacking and focus staff training on developing solutions to address the gaps (e.g., if the gap is with collaborations, staff might suggest events to attend or volunteer to do outreach to agencies to develop relationships to strengthen postsecondary connections).
- Introduce all staff to the framework and explain how services connect.

8.2   *Our program has an MOU for the workforce development system in our area.*

8.3   *Our program has a copy of our local workforce development plan.*

- Review local area plan and identify who represents WIOA Title II in your area. Plans are available at https://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/WIOA/Plans.stm.
- Confirm that your program is included as a partner and service provider in the plan.
- Make sure that all program services are represented, including ABE/ASE/HSE, ESOL, IET, citizenship, distance education, workforce preparation, etc.
- All staff should be aware of the local and regional plans and how Aspire works within the workforce development system.

8.4   *Our program partners with local postsecondary education institutions and the workforce.*

- Postsecondary doesn't always mean 4-year colleges and universities. Search the Ohio Board of Career Colleges and Schools at https://oh.edvera.com/directory/institutions for registered career schools and colleges in your service area.
- Talk with local employers about credentialing that they require and integrate that content into instruction.

8.5   *Our program maintains partnership agreements with ODHE and local community partners.*

- Review and update the partnerships listed in your Aspire grant quarterly.
- If students use services from area agencies that aren't formal partners, meet with agency leadership to discuss the benefits of a partnership.

8.6   Our program seeks out partnerships and coordinates services as much as possible.

- Join community groups for networking services. Some counties have a foundation that facilitates networking, others utilize the chamber of commerce.
- Engage in the community to identify partnership opportunities.

8.7   Our program collaborates with partners to build capacity and share resources for the benefit of all partners.

- Attend workforce development meetings to share services and coordinate with other core partners to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Refer students to partners for specific services and track partner referrals to your program to demonstrate mutual benefit.

8.8   Our program follows a career pathways plan.

- Document and regularly review and update career pathways-related services.
- Developed a step-by-step action plan that addresses the identified gaps in implementing a comprehensive career pathways service delivery model.

8.9   Our career pathways plan aligns with the skill needs of industries in the local economy.

- Review your local area plan with a focus on the outlined labor market information to identify sectors of growth. This can be coupled with career resource sites (e.g., MyNextMove.org) to inform instruction to address core skills.
- Survey local industries to ensure plan alignment to identified skill needs.

8.10   Our career pathways plan prepares students to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered apprenticeships.

- Provide students with a variety of career options and encourage them to think about the work they would like to be able to do.
- Discuss apprenticeships and why they're viable career opportunities. Have students search for apprenticeship opportunities at ApprenticeOhio.

8.11   Our career pathways plan includes advising to support individuals in achieving education and career goals

- Provide definitions, descriptions, examples of related terms including career pathway, career/occupational cluster, workforce credential, and certificates.
- Review the site in class and then have students look at different career pathways options at OhioMeansJobs' Career Path site.

8.12   Our career pathways plan includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

- Develop specialized content courses to address curricula specific to career clusters and integrated with workforce training.
- If possible, implement a co-teaching model, partnering an Aspire teacher with an occupational trainer.

8.13   Our career pathways plan organizes education, training, and other services to meet the needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent possible.

- Conduct workforce preparation activities before and after career-specific instruction.
- Integrate career-related soft skills training into classroom lessons using role-playing games and problem-solving scenarios.

8.14   Our career pathways plan enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least one recognized postsecondary credential.

- When selecting curricula for career programs, verify that the content will prepare students for testing for industry-recognized credentials (e.g., CDL, ASE, CNA).
- Review class schedules and available times to ensure sufficient intensity and duration for students to complete both their Aspire coursework and what is needed for credentialing.

8.15   Our career pathways plan helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

- Track high-demand careers in your service area and discuss the duties, skills, and requirements for the jobs with your students.
- Take interested students on a site visit to a local employer that offers employment along a particular career pathway from OhioMeansJobs.

8.16   Our career pathways plan is used as a strategic planning tool.

- Review the career pathways plan thoroughly with staff at the beginning of the program year.
- Solicit feedback from Aspire and agency staff on the plan and how to address gaps.

8.17   Our program has an Integrated Education and Training (IET) program.

- Work with your Aspire Program Manager to identify an appropriate and feasible IET based on your students' interests and career goals.
- Review the IET Design Toolkit from AIR at lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2022-08/IET-Toolkit.pdf.

8.18   Our program has established partnerships with occupational training providers for delivering an IET.

- Pay a salary portion of an educator from a career center; funding for occupational skills training is an allowable grant cost.
- Ask your Aspire Program Manager about other Aspire programs offering similar IETs and find out who offers their occupational training.

8.19   Our program tracks student enrollment in postsecondary education and training.

- Set up local data matches with postsecondary institutions near your program, especially those which won't be on the HEI data match.
- Remind students to let their teachers know when they've enrolled in postsecondary training or education.

8.20   Our program tracks when students obtain employment.

- Make sure that all staff know to use the Follow-Up Survey for students who don't share SSNs or who don't have jobs which would be on the JFS data match.
- Explain to students why your program is interested in tracking their employment: it's not just a requirement of the grant, but also shows student success.

8.21   Our teachers provide instruction designed to address the gaps in knowledge and skills for success in postsecondary education and the workplace (e.g., algebra, reading, critical thinking).

- Incorporate career advising into instruction using information from OhioMeansJobs.
- Use lessons from [Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE and ESOL Classroom](#) in your classroom.

8.22   Our students have access to career evaluation, counseling, and advising.

- Career counseling can be done as a group or one-on-one.
- Have career counselors visit Aspire classes, share their schedules, and explain services offered.

8.23   Our program has a devoted staff member to delivering transitions services. (e.g., counselor, transitions specialist, transitions coordinator, career navigator).

- Having a single point of contact for students and staff can help streamline services and eliminate redundancy.
- The transition coordinator can also have other responsibilities in the program, such as teaching.

8.24   Our transitions staff (career navigator/transitions coordinator) provides supports to all staff and students. (e.g., counseling, advice, instruction).

- Have your transitions staff regularly update the rest of the staff on student successes during staff meetings.
- Set aside time for transitions staff to meet with each class to answer questions and provide guidance.

8.25   Our program has career pathways classes. (e.g., bridge, college prep, workplace education).

- Partner with a local postsecondary institution to offer a class on campus that provides services and instruction to students for a more seamless transition for students.
- Plan bridge or college prep classes to close the gap between NRS Level 6 (ASE and ESL) and postsecondary education and training.

8.26   Our program has specialized programs. (e.g., Integrated Education & Training, Apprenticeships, Adult Diploma).

- If you need assistance starting a specialized program, consult with your Aspire Program Manager about funding, structure, and feasibility.
- Partner with another Aspire program if it isn't feasible to offer specialized programs.

8.27   Our program partners with the local One-Stop delivery system (OhioMeansJobs).

- All staff should know the location and services of your county's OMJ Center and provide referrals to students.
- Visit the OMJ website for your area (https://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/wioa/map.stm) and verify your program is listed as a partner agency.

8.28   All students at all levels have access to transitions services.

- During goal setting, let all students know that they have options for postsecondary education and employment.
- Discuss the process of career pathways with students and demonstrate the continuum of skills needed to progress.

8.29   All students at all levels are introduced to career awareness.

- Students at the lowest skill levels may benefit the most from introducing potential career options.
- Use curricular resources developed for all levels (e.g., Integrating Career Awareness in the ABE & ESOL Classroom, Modified for Beginners)

8.30   *Teachers are encouraged to include career awareness into instruction.*

- Discuss the concept of transferable skills and have students write about the transferable skills they've developed from working, volunteering, and managing their personal lives.
- Ask students what jobs they're interested in and why. Have them search for skill requirements, education, salary, and other components of those jobs.
- Integrate activities from [Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE and ESOL Classroom](#).

8.31   *Teachers are provided with career pathways planning information to direct or refer students.*

- Set aside time during a staff meeting or in-service to go through the career pathways site at [OhioMeansJobs](#). Identify two or three pathways that are relevant to your students and review the courses, credentials, and information for each.
- Take a course through the PDN on career pathways topics. Contact the PDN for guidance on selecting appropriate professional development or to request customized training and resources.

8.32   *Our program's curriculum is designed to prepare students for success in college and career.*

- Use or modify the vetted lessons from [Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE and ESOL Classroom](#).
- Call, email, or view the catalog of the PDN Library for appropriate curriculum.