**Part 1: Slide 1: Resources and Strategies for Enhancing ABE-Workforce Partnerships**

Hello and welcome to the ACLS FY2016 community planning pre-recorded webinar series. These webinars are intended for Adult Basic Education programs and community planning partnerships to develop strategies and activities to enhance and strengthen ABE community planning utilizing the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions published in 2013, as well as other research-based approaches to adult basic ed community planning.

This three-part pre-recorded webinar will focus on the resources and strategies for enhancing ABE and workforce partnerships.

My name is Patricia Pelletier and I am the community planning consultant with the Adult and Community Learning Services, ACLS, of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. I am also the designer of the Indicators of Effective Community Planning for Adult Basic Education Coalitions in Massachusetts.

Let’s begin the webinar.

**Slide 2: Webinar Overview**

The webinar is divided into three separate but related pre-recorded parts that can be accessed during the specified period of time as communicated by ACLS.

Part 1 provides an overview of the Collective Impact Model developed by the Foundation Strategies Group, FSG, in Boston. The collective impact approach to social change is heavily embedded in a recent Call to Action in February 2015 by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, as we know it OCTAE, entitled “Making Skills Everyone’s Business – A Call to Transform Adult Learning in the United States. The collective impact approach of social change has been nationally acclaimed as an effective partnership strategy, and is referenced in the OCTAE report.

Part 2 provides first-hand information from ABE community planning partnerships and programs with their workforce partners that have a shared commitment to ABE. Their presentations will highlight the benefits and impact of these collaborations as we move toward WIOA implementation.

Part 3 provides some informative resources for integrating the concepts discussed in Parts 1 and 2, particularly how the collective impact approach can be integrated into ABE partnership building and some resources on relationship and coalition building.

**Slide 3: Confluence of Synergy**

The Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, in its publication entitled *Making Skills Everyone’s Business—A Call to Transform Adult Learning in the United States* describes three major initiatives that occurred in 2014 that will greatly influence how we conduct adult basic education.

The first, in 2013, is a major survey of adult skills conducted by the international Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that assessed the cognitive and workplace skills needed to succeed in the 21st century global economy. I highly recommend you review the data summary that is in the OCTAE report for some eye-opening facts about the skills gaps among adults in the US. The link to the report is shown on this slide and the slides will be available to download at the ACLS website.

Then, in July of 2014 the White House released *Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity*. The publication is based on a joint report from the departments of Labor, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services, and was followed by a joint letter to all governors, signed by the secretaries of Labor, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services and Education, and a similar letter to mayors was also sent. These communications emphasize the federal commitment to be more responsive and job-driven, while encouraging elected officials to use their leadership roles to facilitate system-spanning coordination.

Also at the same time, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, was signed into law, replacing the Workforce Investment Act, WIA, of 1998. The confluence of synergy of these three efforts has the potential to create coordinated momentum in the country to address the issue of low skills and make significant progress toward closing achievement gaps for adults.

To seize the momentum of these three major initiatives, the 2015 OCTAE report identifies seven key and interrelated strategies to transform the delivery modes that are required to meet the goals of expanded access, closing achievement gaps, assisting workers to advance, and transitioning learners to credit-bearing postsecondary or occupational training.

**Slide 4: OCTAE Report**

This webinar is intended to provide an overview of the collective impact model of social change, since the drivers of policy and funding for our ABE system have embedded this framework into much of their communications and documentation. And, since these webinars are about ABE community planning, and partnerships are vital to any community planning efforts, understanding collective impact can help to articulate and deepen relationships in your ABE community planning partnership.

Partnership development, coordinated efforts, unduplicated services — these are terms that you see over and over in the four initiatives I mentioned in the last slide as having influence over how we conduct ABE going forward. The OCTAE report states that ABE programs will “establish productive partnerships and coordinate services to eliminate duplicative and outdated offerings.” In Massachusetts, the Adult and Community Learning Services has been providing support and resources for ABE community planning and partnering since 1998. Partnerships formed through the ABE community planning coalitions are more critical now than ever to meet federal, regional, and state requirements, to ramp up services for adult learners and to transition to WIOA.

In addition to some startling statistics on the consequences of low skills of adults, the OCTAE report notes that the vision for making adult skill development, or upskilling, more prevalent, efficient, effective and convenient, are a shared responsibility of, and value and benefit to, the entire community. Upskilling relies on the understanding that foundational skills of literacy, numeracy, and English language combined with employability skills are required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life. The report outlines seven strategies to transform adult learning you see listed here.

* 1. Act collectively
  2. Transform opportunities
  3. Career pathways
  4. Access to highly effective teachers, leaders and programs
  5. No wrong door approach to services
  6. Engage employers to support upskilling
  7. Close the equity gap

The first and overarching strategy of this national call to action is for stakeholders to act collectively to raise awareness that transforming learning opportunities for youth and adults is a means of reaching shared goals. Today’s presentation focuses on this overarching strategy called collective impactand how ABE programs can use this research-based model to develop and enhance partnerships that can support the transition of ABE to WIOA. So, let’s take a look at what collective impact means and how it can help to understand the changes occurring in how we conduct ABE.

(Source: *Making Skills Everyone’s Business – A Call to Transform Adult Learning in the United States*, USDOE, OCTAE, 2015)

**Slide 5: The Collective Impact Model of Social Change**

In the winter of 2011, Foundations Strategy Group’s, FSG, John Kania and Mark Kramer from Boston introduced the concept of “collective impact” in an article by the same name, describing several examples of highly structured collaborative efforts that had achieved substantial impact on a large-scale social problem. Response to the article was overwhelming: hundreds of organizations and governments from around the world, including the White House, reached out to FSG to describe their efforts to use collective impact and to ask for guidance on how to implement these principles.

Collective impact is described as the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration. Collective impact occurs when organizations from different sectors agree to solve a specific social problem using a common agenda, aligning their efforts, and using common measures of success.

The WIOA legislation, which is now highly influencing adult basic education, attempts to bring together major federal and state systems to solve the problem of a substantial skills gap in the workforce today. This is a collective impact approach to social change.

**Slide 6: Collective Impact**

Collective impact brings together people, in a structured way, to achieve social change. It starts with a common agenda. That means coming together to collectively define the problem and create a shared vision to solve it. It establishes shared measurement. That means agreeing to track progress in the same way, which allows for continuous improvement. It fosters mutually reinforcement meaning coordinating collective efforts to maximize the end result. It encourages continuous communication which means building trust and relationships among all participants. And it has a strong backbone. That means having a team dedicated to orchestrating the work of the group. All of these conditions together can produce extraordinary results.

**Slide 7: Isolated Impact VS. Collective Impact**

In a webinar conducted by Stanford Social Innovation Review and FSG, presenters explained that there is a fundamental mismatch between the complexity of social problems and philanthropy’s typical focus on individual grantees.

Collective impact initiatives provide a structure for cross-sector leaders to forge a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. For many of us who work for nonprofit organizations, we have firsthand experience on the difficulties of meeting the requirements of several different funders, with differing goals, to the numerous and varied reporting requirements for each separate funding source, creating inefficiencies and time constraints that take away from the important work we do.

Wouldn’t it be nice if everyone worked together toward the same goal and measured the same things?

**Slide 8: Collective Impact Infrastructure**

To further explain how collective impact works, in the article entitled “Committing to Collective Impact: From Vision to Implementation” David Phillips and Jennifer Splansky Juster, from FSG and the Collective Impact Forum, write that “bringing cross-sector leaders to the table to agree upon a shared vision and embark on a collective impact initiative is a brave first step that is often very difficult. But moving from visioning to implementation, leaders must commit to sustained action.” This slide shows a graphic depiction of the workings of a collective impact infrastructure. The article, can be downloaded at the ACLS website.

**Slide 9: Collective Impact and ABE**

So what does this all mean to ABE? At the beginning of this presentation, I mentioned the OCTAE Report on transitioning adult learning in the United States. Johan Uvin, Acting Assistant Secretary of OCTAE and primary driver of this research and report, is a strong advocate of the collective impact model, and collective impact is the framework for this report. As many of you know, Johan is the former state director of ABE in Rhode Island. He lives in Roslindale, Massachusetts and is the former Vice President of Commonwealth Corporation, or CommCorp, as we know it.

Johan has extensive experience in adult basic education and workforce development and has focused for many years on how the two systems can work “collectively” to make a lasting impact on adult learners, employers, the economy, and the community. I have personal experience working with Johan on a workforce development research project in my work with the Massachusetts Association for Community Action, and I can attest to his commitment to adult basic education and to all of you who work so hard to improve the lives of your learners.

Page 9 of the OCTAE report outlines Strategy 1 which is to “Act Collectively to Raise Awareness and Take Joint Ownership of Solutions.” This strategy is the framework for the other six strategies recommended to reform adult education. It says that “To be effective, collective action must be more than rhetoric about collaboration. It requires community involvement and commitment; structure; funding to create, staff, and maintain partnerships; a sharp focus on how a partnership’s actions will change opportunities and outcomes for low-skilled individuals; shared measurement; and a clear sense of shared responsibility and benefits among partners. As you can see, OCTAE’s recommendations are almost identical to the original collective impact model and infrastructure described earlier.

The OCTAE report provides stark new data that reinforces the understanding that quality-of-life issues reverberate across the lifespan, across generations, and across communities. An important goal of this Call to Action is to help stakeholders at all levels of government and society understand the connection between low skills and larger goals, such as revitalizing communities, increasing economic growth, improving health, closing achievement gaps, meeting business workforce needs, increasing collective impact, and address challenges practically, meaningfully, and locally.

**Slide 10: Collective Impact and ABE Community Planning Indicators**

Collective impact is based on a community planning framework that has many of the same characteristics of the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions developed in 2012 and for which training was provided in the last three years. Since this webinar series is a continuation of that training on effective community planning in ABE, I’ll take a few minutes to review the Indicators and show the similarities with the collective impact model.

A collective impact initiative moves a partnership or coalition from visioning to implementation. Therefore, the assumption is that a vision is in place in a partnership. ACLS’s community planning Indicator 5 is “Vision and Mission” and for those of you who attended the training or participated in webinars last year, you learned the importance of having a strong vision for your ABE partnership and program. Collective impact emphasizes this as well.

Collective impact discusses how to build a steering committee and establish a common agenda to creating an infrastructure that can discover and execute strategies that lead to positive, sustained change. In collective impact, that infrastructure involves working groups, which use the initiative’s common agenda to further define and execute strategies. The ACLS Indicator 3, Structure, and Indicator 4, Operations and Processes, provide a framework for developing structure, groups, agenda, and other operations to build an effective partnership.

Collective impact emphasizes some key considerations when determining which working groups to create, how to choose group members best positioned for and suited to the tasks at hand, and how working groups can succeed in their first six months. ACLS’s community planning Indicator 2 also discusses membership characteristics.

Collective impact notes that it is important to recognize that the context of each collective impact initiative is unique due to the nature of the relationships, policies, norms and other factors involved with this context. So, contextual factors influence how a partnership transitions from vision to implementation. ACLS’s community planning Indicator 6 is Contextual Factors. Contextual factors are internal and external conditions that either exist or are lacking in the environment and which can benefit or impede the effectiveness of the coalition and the programs it represents.

Collective impact describes a steering committee that leads the initiative. ACLS community planning Indicator 1 is Leadership. In the Indicators document, that you can download at ACLS’s website, it states that “research suggests that effective coalition leader(s) have organizational capacity, commitment, and vision, to build and maintain effective coalitions. Coalitions and partnerships with action-oriented leader(s) are most effective.” The collective impact model also emphasizes the importance of action plans to bring strategies to life.

These are just a few examples of how the collective impact approach aligns with the Massachusetts ABE Indicators of Effective Community Planning and how using these indicators as a framework for ABE planning will help to support your transition to WIOA.

**Slide 11: Collective Impact and WIOA**

The collective impact approach seeks to unite an array of public and private partners behind a commonly developed agenda for tackling a specific, place-based, shared challenge. Partners define shared goals, agree on how to measure results, and establish the roles of each partner in achieving agreed-upon outcomes. A “backbone” coordination organization keeps lines of communication open, builds relationships and trust among the partners, and takes the lead in coordinating everyone’s joint and complementary efforts.

Similarly, WIOA calls for alignment and integration across ABE and workforce development, unified state plans, and common performance measures. So, are you ready to make this shift?

**Slide 12: Are you ready?**

The WIOA Program Readiness Self-Assessment Tool for Massachusetts ABE Programs was distributed to the ABE network in 2015. The self-assessment tool is designed to help local ABE programs prepare for and navigate the transition to WIOA. Based on the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium’s WIOA Readiness Assessment, it is intended to guide programs’ observations and reflections on their own readiness to implement WIOA activities, requirements, and outcomes. The self-assessment tool may also be used to aid in the development of a transition plan from FY16 and can help support the planning process. If you were to look at the WIOA program readiness self-assessment tool from a community planning partnership lens, you would see many of the elements of collective impact. For example:

Element 1.1 of the self-assessment refers to aligning your program’s mission to WIOA. Collective impact says that progress toward solving problems depends on working toward the same goal or mission.

The ABE WIOA-readiness assessment element 1.3 says that “Our governing body (such as your board of directors, host agency, fiscal agent) is cognizant of and supports our program in the implementation of WIOA requirements.” Collective impact says you must have a strong backbone—a team dedicated to orchestrating the work of the group.

The WIOA-readiness assessment, elements 2, 3 and 5 are about strong communications and partnerships with workforce partners. Collective impact says that partnerships with various sectors are vital.

The WIOA-readiness assessment, element 4, Performance Accountability system talks about having procedures in place for accurate and timely collection of learner data for current and exited students. Collective impact emphasizes tracking progress in the same way, which allows for continuous improvement.

And, element 6 of the WIOA-readiness assessment is all about quality. Collective impact notes a sharp focus on how a partnership’s actions will change opportunities and outcomes for low-skilled individuals, and the impact these efforts will have on overall quality and outcomes for the end users, which, in ABE, are our adult learners.

The Massachusetts WIOA Program Readiness Self-Assessment Tool for ABE could be a good tool to facilitate and forge deeper relationship with workforce partners in your region. For example, you could ask to meet with your Workforce Investment Board’s WIOA transition team or Career Pathways Workgroup to review the self-assessment together. Not only will this help you to determine the areas in which you need to focus but it will help to build a strong relationship with workforce partners.

You could also use the WIOA self-assessment tool with your community planning partnership as an on-line survey, or an activity of a sub-group or committee. Or, you could identify key stakeholders and conduct a focus group using the WIOA readiness self-assessment tool to frame the content of the discussion.

**Slide 13: Summary**

To summarize this presentation, three major initiatives have occurred since 2014 that will greatly influence how we conduct adult basic education. They are the White House’s *Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity* report, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act which was signed into law in 2014, and the OCTAE call to action in 2015. All of these initiatives place a strong emphasis, if not a mandate, on developing and enhancing partnerships in ways that have traditionally been challenging for the education and workforce networks, from the federal level on down to the local level.

The OCTAE call to action in 2015 outlines seven strategies to transform adult learning to meet the new standards, with the collective impact approach as the overarching framework.

The collective impact approach, developed by FSG in Boston, provides a structured form for collaboration. Collective impact models plan for the sustainability of a network as well as the developmental growth of the participants in that network.

The major elements of the collective impact approach are very much aligned to the characteristics identified in the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning for ABE, making the Indicators even more important and relevant as we focus more and more on partnership development in ABE.

In Part 2 of this webinar you will hear from your ABE colleagues in Massachusetts who have developed effective workforce partnerships that will support the transition to WIOA.

And Part 3 will provide some resources for further review of collective impact approaches and partnership development including examples of programs that have integrated the concepts of collective impact and their results.

**Slide 14: Contact**

This concludes Part 1 of the three-part pre-recorded webinar series on Resources and Strategies for Enhancing ABE and Workforce Partnerships.

For further information on ABE community planning, please contact Kathy Rodriguez at the email shown on this slide.

Thank you.