

Issue No. 36, June 10, 2013

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(from Aspen and Goodling Institutes, Carnegie Foundation, MDRC, and IES)



CAAL NEEDS YOUR HELP NOW

There's a lot to do this year. Keep the pressure up for WIA, help launch PIACC, convene an ROI roundtable, get the message out about ROI in adult education -- just to name a few key items.

Like so many others, we don't have the funds to do what needs to be done. Many organizations ask for \$3. We need more than this. Please add as many zeros as you can to the \$3 magic number. It will make a huge difference. You can give either online immediately or mail a check to CAAL at the address shown below.

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PIAAC UPDATE #3 -- COMING OCTOBER 8

This third CAAL report on the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) provides four new information resources developed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). Findings from the PIAAC will be released on October 8th -- for the U.S. by the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) and internationally for all 24 participating countries by [OECD](#).

(1) **PIAAC: A New Strategy to Assess Adult Competencies and their Social and Economic Impact in the United States and Internationally** (4 pp.) explains what PIAAC is and what it measures. It also explains PIAAC's approach to assessment, including a section on how PIAAC can inform decision-making in the U.S. A final section offers ideas on how PIAAC can help streamline instruction and training.

(2) **The U.S. PIAAC National Supplement and Prison Study** discusses the nature of the national supplement in the U.S. to increase the sample size of key U.S. subgroups, and the U.S. Prison Study to be carried out in early 2014.

(3) **Education and Skills Online Assessment: The Online Version of PIAAC**. This four-page document explains "E&S Online" in terms of how it works, who can take it, what it measures, and what information will be provided.

(4) **PIAAC 2012 - Publications and Data Tools**. This one-pager indicates the titles and release dates for 6 reports and data tools scheduled in late 2013, and a seventh data resource document scheduled for early 2014.

The documents listed above will eventually be posted on the AIR website. To help AIR get the word out, CAAL is making them available as a single 10-page document from the [CAAL website](#). Our readers are encouraged to distribute the material as they wish to their own constituencies. AIR will work with interested groups to arrange speakers or webinars for conferences and other meetings (for that purpose contact Timothy Werwath at twewrath@air.org).

As noted in the last issue of the CAAL E-News, the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor are both planning activities to increase understanding and use of PIAAC data with their constituent groups. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) will issue policy recommendations to be available when PIAAC findings are released. The National Coalition for Literacy (with funding from Dollar General Corporation) will coordinate their PIAAC activities with OVAE and carry out various outreach and stakeholder meetings of their own.



WIA STATUS IN SENATE

The Senate remains committed to WIA, recognizing that we face daunting economic challenges in preparing the workforce for 21st century demands. Reports vary on exactly when draft WIA legislation will be advanced because of a crowded Senate agenda, but we urge national, state, and local leaders who care about WIA, the Adult Education and Economic Growth Act, and related reform to contact their elected officials and members of the HELP Committee (especially Senators Harkin, Murray, Isakson, and Alexander) to stress the vital importance of this legislation and the urgency of enacting it without further delay.



OTHER NEW RESOURCES

▶ [Helping Adult Learners Navigate Community College and the Labor Market](#), new from the Aspen Institute, was released in March 2013. The report is based on findings from a three-year demonstration project, ***Courses to Employment***, carried out by Aspen with Mott Foundation funding from 2008-2010. The project studied sectoral approaches in six non-profit community college partnerships that serve low-income communities and workers (in Seattle, Austin, Chicago, Flint, Los Angeles, and Fairfax County). "Many Americans need to re-tool their skills in order to compete for jobs," the report says, and "community colleges are at the heart of this re-tooling process." Many adult learners, especially low-income, low-skilled adults, face obstacles or "traps" that if unaddressed will keep them from succeeding in college and in jobs. ***Helping Adult Learners Navigate*** describes the obstacles identified in the partnerships studied, and highlights issues and strategies to better support adult learners on college campuses. It also discusses some of the specific achievements possible when community colleges, nonprofit organizations, and others involved in workforce development collaborate to help adult learners overcome the challenges they face.

▶ [Addressing the Health Literacy Needs of Adult Education Students](#) by Angela Mooney and Esther Prins, May 2013, is available as Practitioner's Guide #4 from the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy. It offers a redefinition of health literacy, placing more responsibility on health care practitioners "who should learn to use effective oral and written communications to

meet patients' needs." It discusses the prevalent lack of health literacy and access among minorities, those at low income levels, people with low education attainment, and adults with ESL language barriers -- the very groups commonly served by adult education programs. It considers the often dire consequences of low health literacy for these population groups. Recognizing that some causes of low health literacy are beyond the influence of the Adult Education system (e.g., the structure of the U.S. healthcare system, developing and implementing healthcare policies, and training medical professionals), the Guide offers examples of successful interventions that adult educators are taking now and makes numerous recommendations for future programming.



[Pathways to Improvement: Using Psychological Strategies to Help College Students Master Developmental Math](#), by Elena Silva and Taylor White, has been issued by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. It discusses strategies to help "students persist and succeed in math," by "changing students' mindsets, adding relevance to the rigor of math, and diminishing students' sense that they don't belong." The pathway strategies discussed are in practice in 28 community colleges examined and discussed by the Foundation.



[Enhancing GED Instruction to Prepare Students for College and Careers: Early Success in LaGuardia Community College's Bridge to Health and Business Program](#), by Vanessa Martin and Joseph Broadus, was released in May by MDRC. After a year of collaborating with the College, and with funding from the Robin Hood and MetLife Foundations, this report details some of the key findings from their study that indicate early success in the LaGuardia GED Bridge program. Among other findings is that "one year after enrolling, students....were more than twice as likely to have passed the GED exam and three times as likely to have enrolled in college as students in a more traditional GED preparation class."



[IES Announces FY2014 Research Competitions](#). The Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S Department of Education has announced its 2014 Education Research Competition. Grants will range from \$100,000 to \$1 million for up to five years. Among the ten topics that will be considered are Postsecondary and Adult Education, English Learners, Reading and Writing, and Education Technology. Funding will be given as discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. Guidelines and an application package are available at the above link.

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