

Issue #3, October 8, 2009

Each issue of the E-News reports on CAAL's programs and publications, including follow-up activities related to the National Commission on Adult Literacy. Occasional feature articles are offered, along with news about complementary work by other groups.

In This Issue:

- New CAAL Discussion Paper: Rebuilding NIFL to Meet Future Needs
- David Perdue speaks at Virginia Adult and Continuing Education Conference
- Gail Mellow column in *NY Daily News*
- Cheryl King to moderate Independent College Presidents Panel
- NCEE *One Step Forward* Series on Adult Education for Work
- Model Training Program: Work Certified Solutions©
- Directory of Federal Funding Sources



NEW CAAL REPORT

Rebuilding NIFL for the 21st Century

Today (October 8, 2009) CAAL released [REBUILDING NIFL TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS: A New and Innovative Agency with a Broader Mission](#) (NC-CAAL10). It is written by Forrest P. Chisman and Gail Spangenberg with input from a working group and other national advisors. This 28-page discussion paper calls for a substantial revamping of the current National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) into a new independent entity called the National Institute for Adult Learning (NIFAL).

The paper reviews the history of NIFL and its accomplishments and considers why its Congressionally-mandated leadership role never came to be fully realized. It offers a detailed proposal for a new NIFAL agenda with a broader more appropriate 21st century mission, greater independence and authority, a new and potentially more effective governance structure, heavier attention to the roles of coordination within and outside of government, long-term strategic planning, technology leadership, and accountability. It calls for restoration of an exclusive adult focus, and details the role that the new independent organization would play in pulling all the players together both within the federal government and among public and private sector groups at the national, state, and local levels.

Although funding for NIFL has been cut as a result of recommendations from OMB and the Department of Education, NIFL presently still exists in the Workforce Investment Act and in the provisions of the Adult Education and Economic Growth Act. The authors hope that their proposals can be adapted to the already-existing NIFL but concludes that if NIFL were gone it would have to

be recreated in some form to meet current and future needs in adult education and workforce skills development.

The concluding paragraphs of *REBUILDING NIFL* read as follows:

"...When President Kennedy established the national goal of sending men to the moon and returning them safely, all branches of the armed services, other government agencies, and the private sector had programs and expertise in rocketry and the other aspects of science and technology required. And they have continued those efforts to meet their particular goals since that time. But it required a single agency to focus that expertise on a singular national goal. Fortunately, Congress had established NASA to orchestrate similar missions in the past. NASA is, of course, a line agency that does more than provide coordination and vision. It also controlled the entire process of the moon landing through its own research and product development.

Similarly, the necessary line agencies are in place to create an adult education and workforce skills system. But leadership that focuses on all aspects of this goal and proceeds with a coherent, integrated system in mind is missing. The new NIFAL is the ideal entity to provide that much-needed leadership."



CAAL News In Brief

- ▶ Later this month, CAAL expects to release a new paper on the role of technology in advancing adult education and workforce skills development. The new publication will provide a primer on the tools of technology, a discussion of barriers to implementing technology more fully, a table on exemplary technology models, and a discussion and next-step recommendations on how technology can be usefully deployed to bring adult education and workforce skills services to scale.
- ▶ On October 6th, David Purdue, Chairman of the National Commission on Adult Literacy, former CEO of the Dollar General Corporation, currently international businessman, spoke about workforce skills and the recommendations of the Commission in his closing address at *Hope Floats*, the Virginia Association of Adult and Continuing Education Annual Conference, in Roanoke, VA.
- ▶ On September 25th, Gail Mellow, President of New York's LaGuardia Community College, CAAL Board member, and member of the National Commission on Adult Literacy published a short compelling article in the *New York Daily News* titled "[End big banks' subsidies and bet on community colleges.](#)" The article is available on the CAAL website.
- ▶ In January 2010, Cheryl King, president of Kentucky Wesleyan University, will moderate a panel of Independent College Presidents at the Council on Independent College (CIC) Annual Conference in Florida, bringing the Commission's messages to independent higher education

institutions.



Also Worthy of Note...

One Step Forward Initiative. In April 2009 CAAL and the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) co-sponsored a 2-day "Readiness Roundtable" where outstanding adult-education-for-work programs explored new ways to provide service especially at the state and local level. The project resulted in a CAAL publication, [EXPANDING HORIZONS: Pacesetters in Education for Work](#) (NC-CAAL9) in June. A series of NCEE publications, titled the ONE STEP FORWARD Initiative, was published in September as part of a project funded by the Wal-Mart Foundation. (CAAL's Forrest Chisman is a member of the Initiative's Advisory Group.) The *Employer Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce* (by Audrey Theis of Keylinks, Inc) outlines specific steps policymakers and educators must take to transform current adult education programs into training and education that prepares low-skilled adults to advance their careers and support their families in the 21st century economy. Three other Initiative publications are: *Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Build a Skilled Workforce*; *Employer Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Build a Skilled Workforce*; and *International Trends in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning*. A new Workforce Development Strategy Group (made up of staff from NCEE and Jobs for the Future) now runs the Initiative. All four publications are available at <http://www.jff.org>.

Work Readiness Program Transforms Classrooms into Offices. Work Certified Solutions © is an award winning national work readiness program created by employers and educators in 1999 to give job seekers the skills they need for actual jobs while building self-esteem and a sense of professionalism. Piloted and based in Florida, this model business training program now operates in eight states (CO, FL, IL, KY, MA, NC, PA, and WI) and continues to grow. The "classroom" functions as an office with computers at every desk and all the requirements of a job-dressing appropriately, working in teams, having valid excuses for absences, and all the normal activities of a work environment. There are nine course modules reflecting employers' needs -- such as reading comprehension, business technology and math, business communications, customer service, general business knowledge, and other skills. To enter the program, all candidates must pass a pre-assessment equivalent to the 7th grade TABE level for reading, writing, and math. They must then master 59 competencies and pass a final certification exam. Instructors must also take a 30-hour training program and pass a certification exam. Program participants do not pay. The program is sold to workforce boards, corporations, small businesses, communities, faith-based organizations, school systems, and government programs around the country. The Florida group customizes each program for local needs while maintaining all the basic elements. To learn more visit <http://www.workcertifiedsolutions.com>.

Directory of Federal Funding Sources From Abt Associates. The Annie Casey Foundation commissioned Abt Associates to update their 2004 report on federal funding for adult education. A new comprehensive guide titled [Directory of Federal Funding Sources for Adult Education](#), prepared by Lauren E. Dunton and Judith A. Alamprese, was released in February 2009.

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If you think CAAL is doing a good job, you can help us do an even better one. Please consider a contribution on our website at www.caalusa.org.

In the 10 years since we began, with a small budget and an even smaller staff we have published 26 reports, sponsored over a dozen task force and Roundtable meetings (on ESL, community college transitions, workforce readiness, and other topics), and spearheaded the National Commission on Adult Literacy. We remain dedicated to ensuring that the recommendations in Reach Higher, America translate into legislation, new thinking, and innovative projects across the country. Like all nonprofits we depend solely on grants and donations, and we are affected by the same tight funding as everyone else.

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