EPE Manual Updates

Page 5 – Programs Eligible to Generate EPE State Aid
#2. Distance Education for adults (only those options within this document).
#5. Locally Board of Education approved Training (in person).
#7. FTE contractual agreements with approved community colleges.

Page 6 – Education and Employment Plan (EEP)
Updated quarterly and/or as needed.

Page 7 – Expectations for the Intake Process
All intake processes may not exceed 12 contact hours.

Page 8 – Expectations for the Intake Process
Every intake class must have a monthly roster issued from ASISTS listing students and time spent during intake.

Page 8 – Expectations for the Intake Process
All students moving from one fiscal year into the next fiscal year must also be provided an intake process, albeit less intense than the initial intake process.

Page 8 – Case Management Activities
All student case management conducted by the Adult Education Programs & Policy (AEPP) office funded projects should include the following activities at a minimum:
1. Assessing the student/participant's needs and goals and developing a plan to address them.
2. Identifying the individual student/participant's Barriers to Education and Employment.
3. Assisting students in completing the Individual Student Record Form (ISRF).
4. Acquainting the student with the resources and opportunities offered by your organization, especially those that the student needs most.
5. Educating the student while identifying and meeting them at their literacy levels.
6. Referring the student to appropriate community resources; a list unique to each program.
7. Recording details of all time spent with the student/participant.
8. Building trust and rapport with the student and empowering them to reach their goals.
9. Any amount of time spent with students in the delivery of case management services, should be entered into the AEPP's MIS system, ASISTS, as a case management class. Note that as little as five minutes of case management counts as a half hour.

Additionally, Case Managers must develop and continuously update a list of local and community resources, partners, and contacts that their students/participants can refer to as a part of case management. These lists must be shared with each project's respective RAEN director every December.

The contact hours for developing, modifying, and updating EEPs can generate EPE aid when the time is provided by a teacher or case manager working directly with a student, <u>in person</u>, and documented accordingly on the attendance roster.

Page 9 – Traditional Adult Literacy Instruction

Family Literacy - No EPE reimbursable contact hours are permitted for time spent with children included in a Family Literacy event or class. Family Literacy activities must have prior approval by the AEPP office.

Pages 10 to 12 – Hybrid and Remote Instruction
Distance Education:

Hybrid Instruction was available beginning July 1, 2024, for EPE funded programs for the 3-hour tutoring classes required for Distance Education: SMART, GRASP, and/or ESL. Programs can also apply to offer one (1) 100% remote tutoring class.

EPE Distance Education programs must apply using the most-up-to date Hybrid and Remote Instruction Application (Updated March 2025). If approved, per the program's EPE allocation letter, the program must be administered as directed in the current FY26 Remote and Hybrid Instruction for EPE Funded Programs Memo dated March 7, 2025. Refer to the memo for detailed information related to EPE Distance Education Hybrid and Remote Instruction rules, guidelines, terms, and conditions. The Hybrid and Remote Screening Tool must be completed and filed. The only portion of EPE Distance Education that may be provided in a hybrid or remote model (and included in the application) is the tutoring required from every program for EPE Distance Education.

- Remote, synchronous tutoring may be a part of this application and would require 50% in person tutoring along with 50% remote synchronous tutoring at scheduled days and times published on the PIF generated from ASISTS.
- The tutoring for SMART, GRASP, or ESL may be a maximum of 3 hours per week.
- An EPE funded program may choose to have ONE (1) tutoring class 100% completely remote. All classes must be coded correctly and published on the Program Information Form.
- All performance benchmarks for Post Testing, Measurable Skill Gain, Follow Up Outcomes, and Enrollment must be met. Continuous poor performance that does not demonstrate student gain and progress, may lead a program to Corrective Action, which may result in the termination of the EPE Distance Education option.

Traditional Adult Education:

EPE funded programs can apply for AEPP Remote and/or Hybrid Instruction for Traditional Adult Education:

1. Adult Basic Education (ABE) NRS Levels 1-4
2. Adult Secondary Education (ASE) HSE Test Preparation NRS Levels 5 & 6
3. English as a Second Language (ESL) NRS Levels 1 - 6

EPE Traditional Adult Education programs must apply using the most-up-to date Hybrid and

Remote Instruction Application (Updated March 2025). If approved, per the program's EPE allocation letter, the program must be administered as directed in the current FY26 Remote and Hybrid Instruction for EPE Funded Programs Memo dated March 7, 2025. Refer to the memo for detailed information related to EPE Traditional Adult Education Hybrid and Remote Instruction rules, guidelines, terms, and conditions. The Hybrid and Remote Screening Tool must be completed and filed.

EPE funded programs approved to provide AEPP Hybrid and/or Remote Instruction for Traditional Adult Education must provide:

- In-person instruction 50% of each scheduled class time along with 50% remote synchronous instruction where the <u>same</u> teacher is engaged with students on scheduled days and times selected by the program within the same week.
- Class roster for hybrid class may have up to 20 students in attendance at any given time. If the program is approved for a class size waiver, the class roster may have up to 35 students listed, with a maximum average daily attendance of 25 students.
- Each class must be a minimum of six (6) hours per week and a maximum of 20 hours per week. If the program is approved for a class hours waivers, the class can be for a minimum of four (4) hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours per week.
- Each class must be published on the Program Information Form (PIF) generated from ASISTS. (Directions for data entry processes will be sent with approval notifications).
- Students must actively attend both the remote and in-person classes. If students miss 3 consecutive classes of either modality, they should be transferred to traditional classroom programming.
- All students included in Remote and Hybrid Instruction must have a signed Hybrid Screening Tool in their student folders. (the Hybrid Screening Tool is attached for your convenience).
- All performance benchmarks for Post Testing, Measurable Skill Gain, and Follow Up Outcomes must be met. Continuous poor performance that does not demonstrate student gain and progress, may lead a program to Corrective Action, which may result in the termination of the program's remote option.

If approved, each AEPP EPE funded **program** may choose to offer:

- ONE (1) 100% completely remote class to eligible students.
- Class roster for the remote class may have up to 20 students in attendance at any given time. If the program is approved for a class size waiver, the class roster may have up to 35 students listed, with a maximum averaged daily attendance of 25 students.
- Each class must be a minimum of six (6) hours per week and a maximum of 20 hours per week. If the program is approved for a class hours waivers, the class can be for a minimum of four (4) hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours per week.
- This fully remote class must be synchronous online instruction where the teacher is engaged with students on scheduled days and times selected by the program and published on the PIF generated from ASISTS.

- All performance benchmarks for Post Testing, Measurable Skill Gain, Follow Up Outcomes, and Enrollment must be met. Continuous poor performance that does not demonstrate student gain and progress, may lead a program to Corrective Action, which may result in the termination of the program's remote option.

Page 12 – Career & Technical Education (CTE) Courses

CTE courses that are eligible for reimbursement are those that have already been approved by the NYSED/K-12 CTE office <u>for each school district or BOCES</u>.

Literacy students enrolled in approved CTE courses <u>must</u> be dual enrolled and active in literacy classes to generate EPE. Should a student not attend the literacy class for three consecutive scheduled class dates, the student can no longer participate in the CTE training without fully engaging with the literacy class.

CTE courses may be proposed for EPE funding two times per fiscal year; the initial application completed annually in June or in the month of November via an EPE modification request for approval and implementation in the second half of the fiscal year beginning January 1st. These are the two opportunities for programs to add CTE courses for EPE funding, there are no exceptions to this timeline.

Page 12 – Locally Accredited Training Course Requests

CTE removed as the courses are Locally Accredited Training Courses.

An attestation must be completed and signed by the Superintendent or District Superintendent as part of the application process. Please refer to Appendix 8 and Table 7a. In addition, a letter of understanding must be completed and signed by the Superintendent or District Superintendent, affirming that NYSED AEPP is approving the locally approved training for EPE Reimbursement only, and the Local Board takes full responsibility for the curriculum and resulting credential. NYSED does not vet the course, nor approve any portion of the curriculum, or resulting credential and/or certificate. Full responsibility lies with the School District or BOCES. A Local Board Approval Template can be found in Appendix 4. Locally Approved Training Courses must have a Local Board Approval date of three (3) years or less. Locally Approved Training Courses must be approved by the Local Board at least every (3) years to be considered for EPE Reimbursement.

Literacy students enrolled in locally board approved courses <u>must</u> be dual enrolled and active in literacy classes to generate EPE. Should a student not attend the literacy class for three consecutive scheduled class dates, the student can no longer participate in the locally board approved training without fully engaging with the literacy class. It is expected that every literacy student enrolled in locally board approved courses must continue their literacy education as actively enrolled in a literacy component within the same EPE program.

Locally accredited training courses may be proposed for EPE funding two times per fiscal year; the initial application completed annually in June (as a part of the annual EPE application) or in

the month of November via an EPE modification request for approval and implementation in the second half of the fiscal year beginning January 1st. These are the two opportunities for programs to add locally approved courses for EPE funding, there are no exceptions to this timeline.

Page 15 – Reimbursement Formulas
Traditional Formula
The traditional EPE formula is used for all students attending programs described as Traditional, Career & Technical Education, and local board approved training.
Distance Education Formula:
Claiming EPE aid in Distance Education programs is based on the number of packets a student returns completed. Each two-week packet that is completed and returned is recorded as a "2" in the students' attendance record in ASISTS; when the student completes a second packet in the same month, a "4" is recorded in that month for attendance signaling that two packets were completed and returned. Attendance must not be recorded until the packets are returned by the student and reviewed by the Distance Education teacher. A student may take longer than the prescribed two weeks to complete a packet, however the packet is counted as two weeks of completed work regardless; and a "2" is recorded in ASISTS regardless of how long the student may have needed to complete the work in the packet. If the teacher assesses the student's work and determines it was too much or too difficult for him/her, the teacher may adjust the amount of work or the intensity of the work provided in the next packet prepared for that student.

Page 16 – HSE Testing
For a student who achieves the NYS HSE while enrolled in an approved CTE class or locally board approved training class, the student may complete that CTE class or the locally board approved training class, and the attendance hours in that CTE or locally board approved class will be reimbursed within the same fiscal year during which the student achieved their NYS High School Equivalency diploma. The accrual of contact hours for this type of student will be included in the 3% regulated maximum for students with a NYS High School Equivalency diploma. Any contact hours in excess of the regulated 3% will not be reimbursed by the state aid office.

Page 17 – Fast Track Programming under EPE
$20 million in EPE State Aid was removed from the match for federal Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act (WIOA) funds and will be used to focus on three (3) distinct initiatives:
- Fast Track High School Equivalency preparation
  - This includes the six possible models outlined on page 15,
- National External Diploma Program (NEDP) High School Equivalency programming,
- NRS Level 1 ABE and ESL students (up to 50% of each population of students) as determined on the TABE 13 & 14 assessment or the BEST Plus 3.0/BEST Literacy 2.0.
  - These NRS Level 1 students should be those that a program supports with comprehensive programming but the students are likely to need more than one fiscal year to demonstrate an Educational Functioning Level gain. Once a student is enrolled into a Fast Track funded class, they may not be returned to a traditionally funded class in that same fiscal year; programs must have a vetting

process in place to determine if this strategy will be beneficial to the program. It remains an option, not a mandate.

Proportionate distribution of these monies for these initiatives will be determined by NYSED annually. Note: not all three of these options are indicative of Fast Track programming however each of the three will generate EPE reimbursable contact hours under Fast Track funding. Programs may apply for any one of these options or all three, in all cases, the estimated number of anticipated contact hours should be included on the EPE Application under Fast Track. It is incumbent on the program to manage these allocated hours and no program may exceed their allocation.

Page 18 – Fast Track High School Equivalency Programming

1. Build short-term, intense ("Fast Track") instructional opportunities for test takers who indicate probable success on the HSE readiness assessment, the options are limited to the six listed below;
2. Significantly raise HSE math sub-test pass rates across the state; and
3. Significantly increase the effectiveness of HSE preparation throughout the state.

NYSED, has identified promising Fast track strategies that can be supported under the $20 million EPE HSE initiative. The following list of strategies are intended to identify and support instruction focused on HSE preparation, especially math:

- Outreach using the GED Manager data system to recruit adults (age 21 or older) who do not succeed on HSE subtests or indicate interest in an HSE program:
  - Customized flyers disseminated to test takers at HSE testing centers;
  - Network with NYS HSE Test centers to offer services to test takers that are not successful on any HSE subtest,
  - Either of these two options may be included under EPE costs.
- Short-term instruction options:
  - Fast Track Math GRASP Distance Education packets (paper or electronic) utilizing the NYSED/CUNY sixteen (16) HSE math modules for students choosing to learn from a distance education model. The eight modules are divided into Part I and Part II sections for a total of sixteen (16) sections.
    - Packets are electronically stored on www.Collectedny.org
  - Six (6) hour intense instruction sessions made available evenings, weekdays, or Saturdays in math, writing, reading, science, or social studies,
  - Two x Two sessions where two subtest areas of instruction will be the focus (6-hour minimum class time),
  - Test taking skills and strategies, including reduction of test anxiety,
  - Computer based testing skills and strategies.
  - Community outreach campaigns.

Page 21 – NRS Level 1 ABE and ESL Students

The next initiative NYSED has excluded from NRS guidelines under the repurposed $20 million in EPE funding is the special attention given to NRS <u>ABE & ESL</u> Level 1 students. All programs that are supporting NRS Level 1 <u>ABE & ESL</u> students under EPE funding are exempt from NRS reporting. Note: These students will no longer show under contracted enrollments for funding under Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act (WIOA) as they will be in a separate cohort established to insulate them from NRS guidelines and will be included under NYRS reporting.

Page 26 – Specific Allowable Expenditures

Instructional costs, without adjustments, are at least 95% of budget total, and other costs, including indirect costs, without adjustment, are no more than 5% of budget total.

Pages 27 to 28 – Transportation and Child/Dependent Care

EPE funding can be used to provide transportation for students to commute to and from EPE funded classes. Programs can allocate up to 6% of their annual EPE budget to support student transportation and/or child/dependent care costs for their students (the 6% allocation is meant to cover both transportation and child/dependent care). Using AEPP funds to pay child/dependent care and/or transportation costs to ensure that adult learners can attend and participate in AEPP-funded programs (this refers to literacy classes and in-person case management) is allowable if these costs are reasonable and necessary. This option is not a requirement for EPE funded programs.

EPE providers may seek other funds for transportation such as the local Department of Social Services. EPE funds may be used to pay reasonable costs for student transportation for students going to and from EPE funded classes only. This may include bus tokens, the cost of a van or bus, or ride share services. These expenditures must have prior approval from the AEPP office before implementation.

Pages 33 to 34 – ASISTS Data Matches

General Education Diploma (GED) Data Match:

The High School Equivalency (HSE) Office sends ASISTS candidate test result data for each calendar year on a quarterly basis. The General Education Diploma (GED) Data Match Report is sent to ASISTS approximately 10 – 12 weeks after a quarter ends: December, March, May, and August. Data received from the NYSED HSE Department will be data matched to ASISTS data based on Prep Code, Student First Name, Student Last Name, and student Date of Birth. Results for Attachment R and NEDP pathways are included in the match.

The Report will confirm an HSE diploma for programs if the student took the final subtest in the previous quarter and passed the GED exam. The student must also have had an "enrolled" status in GED Manager, with the programs Prep Code at the time that the testing occurred. An HSE diploma can only be tied to one prep program. This will be the program that the student was "enrolled" with on GED Manager when the final subtest was passed.

Employment Follow Up Outcomes Data Match:

The Employment Follow Up Outcomes Data Match is conducted by the New York State Department of Labor (DOL) in: December, March, June, and July. The report is matched with ASISTS students that have social security numbers entered in ASISTS that show wages from employment based on DOL records. Social Security Numbers are submitted to the NYS Department of Labor to determine if students were employed in the second and/or fourth quarter after their exit quarter. Results are incorporated into the Program Evaluation statistics for the cohort of students who have an SSN in ASISTS.

Manual employment follow-up is required for exited students that do not have social security numbers entered in ASISTS. Every exited student must be followed up with twice: 1) 2nd Quarter after Exit 2) 4th Quarter after Exit. The timeline for the follow up is based on the exit quarter of the student being surveyed. The names of all exiters who need to be followed up with will appear on the WIOA/NRS Table 5 Data Check Report as well as the WIOA Outcome Survey Tool. Students may be surveyed until the data deadline, and may be asked about a quarter that has already passed.

Page 34 to 35 – EPE Program Annual Waivers
Classes should operate at least 6 but not more than 20 hours per week, unless otherwise approved by the AEPP office. To receive an annual waiver of these requirements, the following information must be included with the program's annual EPE application:
- The minimum and maximum number of hours the class will operate. Waivers will not be granted for classes meeting more than 40 hours per week.
- Waivers for classes meeting less than six (6) hours per week must be requested. In cases where a waiver is requested to provide instruction for fewer than six hours per week, the minimum number of hours must be identified, however, at no time will less than four hours per week per class be permitted.
- The annual waiver request must include a justification narrative for the minimum and maximum number of class hours.
- Waivers will be provided for specific classes.

Class Size Waiver:

Class registers should not exceed 20 students, unless otherwise approved by the AEPP office. To receive an annual waiver of this requirement, the following information must be included with the program's annual EPE application:
- The maximum number of students on the class register or expected to be enrolled in the class.
- The Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and/or the projected ADA per class.
- Waivers can be granted for class registers to exceed 20 students, however, at no time will a waiver be granted for a class roster exceeding 35 students.
- The annual waiver request should indicate how a high level of quality would be maintained with an increase of students. Innovative approaches to ensuring student success are encouraged (e.g., individualized instruction, team teaching, and

instructional aides).

- Class Size Waiver requires program assurance that class quality and expected educational outcomes will not be adversely affected.
- Waivers will be provided for specific classes.

HSE Testing Waiver:

HSE testing cannot generate EPE state aid. If NYSED determines that there is a severe shortage of public HSE testing in a region of the state, NYSED may grant an annual waiver to an EPE provider who is both:

> a) a public testing center, and
> b) operates an adult EPE funded HSE preparation program

Said waiver will allow the EPE provider to generate EPE hours on eligible HSE preparation students referred from their own preparation program, public testers, or HSE preparation students referred from other preparation programs in their local proximity. The limit for generation of EPE hours is 1 percent (1%) of the EPE provider's prior year's EPE accrual. (To calculate maximum HSE reimbursement, take 1% of the program's EPE contact hour accrual from the previous fiscal year.)

A justification for the HSE Testing Waiver must be provided.

Page 37 – Fees and Tuition
Tuition:

Programs using EPE funds are not required to provide all services free of charge to participants. New York State Education law specifically mentions tuition as one source of bridging the gap between aid and cost. Although tuition may be charged, the NYSED AEPP Team recommends that whenever possible, literacy and basic education programs be provided without cost to participants because a high percentage of the population served by these programs are low-income individuals. Programs must notify NYSED AEPP if they plan to and/or are charging tuition for any program supported by EPE funding. In addition, programs must include the tuition in the combined total of all sources of revenue for the program. If the combined total of all sources of revenue for the program exceeds the actual cost to operate the program, then the excess EPE must be returned to NYSED.

Page 47 Appendix 4 – Local Board Approval Template

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) Office of Adult Education Programs and Policy (AEPP) provides reimbursement funding for documented contact hours generated by eligible adult students (21 years older or older), that are co-enrolled in high-school equivalency or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, through a funding program called Employment Preparation Education (EPE).

AEPP will reimburse eligible contact hours for any K-12 approved Career & Technical Education (CTE) course approved by NYSED and listed on the Career & Technical Education Approved Programs website:
[*https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/current-nysed-approved-cte-programs.pdf*](https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/current-nysed-approved-cte-programs.pdf)*. In addition, AEPP will reimburse contact hours generated by eligible students for any Local Board of Education Approved Training Course, which is predicated on the Local Board taking full responsibility for the curriculum and any resulting credential. Approval from NYSED for these same courses communicates only that the contact hours generated by the adult students enrolled in these classes will be reimbursed based on the EPE rate issued by New York's State Aid Office. NYSED does not vet the course, nor approve any portion of the curriculum, or resulting credential and/or certificate. Full responsibility lies with the School District or BOCES.*

As the Board is the local authority for Locally Approved Training programs, (Program Name) is requesting the Local Board of Education to approve the following Adult Education training program(s):