

ABE: Whom and With What?

Recently, we've received more than the usual number of questions about who can be served in ABE and about what the ABE is that we can provide to them. Here are the answers to those questions.

1. We can serve only people who are **not** enrolled, and **not required** to be enrolled, in high school. They must be at least 16 years old.
2. To be eligible for ABE, adults and out-of-school youth also must have academic needs below the high school completion level or be "unable to speak, read, or write the English language."
3. **No international students** (F-1 or M-1 visa-holders, or "nannies"/au pairs here on J-1 visas) may be in any ABE class, even if they or their sponsors offer to pay their full, unsubsidized share of the ABE class cost.
4. ABE classes and other learning/teaching options are "legal" if their intention, purpose, and curriculum enable eligible adults to make measurable progress in at least one of the academic subjects in at least one of the WA Adult Learning Standards educational functioning levels. The progress must be made within three consecutive quarters.
 - a. Classes such as "computer literacy" or "key-boarding" or "résumé-writing" or "college-readiness/study skills" or even "citizenship-naturalization preparation" are **not** allowable ABE activities. Technology and citizenship are allowable media through which to teach ABE (or ESL, etc.) reading, writing, numeracy, speaking and/or listening, but they may not be taught as stand-alone classes under the auspices of ABE.
 - b. We strongly encourage all ABE providers to have explicit transition-to-college and career pathways (or other living wage options) that are focused on helping adult learners figure out what life options are possible, what they'd like to do, what they need to know and be able to do to succeed at that, etc. But, ABE providers may **not** offer a "college transitions class" with ABE money. To be ABE, the "class" must have the purpose and the intent and the corresponding curriculum to enable participants to master ABE or ESL education functioning levels defined by the National Reporting System (NRS) and our state adult learning standards.
5. There is no citizenship requirement for ABE participation. ABE registration should not ask about citizenship.
 - a. Instead, we suggest that your registration form, or a sign on the wall or counter where a person would register, declare: "If you are here on a student visa or on a J-1 "au pair" exchange visa, please go to the (international office, contract education office, community education office, etc.) to choose among their educational offerings. People with F-1, M-1 and J-1 "au pair" visas cannot be served in Adult Basic Education."
 - b. Another sign might warn that people in this country on tourist or business (B-1, B-2) visas who take ABE or other "short" classes may not be allowed to re-enter the United States because records would show that they took courses without having a student visa.
6. A unique student identification number is required for all ABE students. It does not have to be a Social Security number. The student, **not** the ABE provider, teacher or staff, must decide whether to supply a Social Security number.