

FY2026-27 Adult Education English Language Learning Leadership Grant Guidelines

Purpose

Wisconsin Stat. § 38.01(3)(d) establishes that one of the core missions of the Wisconsin Technical College System is to provide adult education to “enable students to effectively function at a literate level in society.”

Additionally, Wisconsin Stat. § 38.24(1m)(b) requires that students enrolled in adult high school, adult basic education, and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses be exempt from program fees, thereby mandating that these instructional offerings be provided at no cost to students.

Due to this unfunded statutory mandate, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) invites Wisconsin technical colleges to apply for a formula-based leadership grant to support the delivery of adult education and English language learning services to individuals within their college districts. This grant will run from July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

Grant Goals

The goals of this grant are to:

- Increase access by serving more adult learners and English Language Learners (ELLs) and reducing or eliminating waitlists.
- Improve student outcomes by increasing measurable skill gains for adult education and ESL learners.
- Ensure quality and consistency by requiring all supported courses to meet WTCS course content standards and comply with WTCS Adult Education and English Language Learner (ELL) policy.

Suggested Activities

All funding activities must be supportive of or in alignment with stated grant goals. Some suggested activities include but are not limited to:

- Staff/Faculty professional development
- Provide additional course sections
- Hiring faculty/staff (instruction, transition, navigators, etc.)
- Evaluate course modalities for effectiveness
- Reorganizing the AE/ESL orientation process for effectiveness and student centeredness
- Technology assistance (laptop rentals, hotspots, etc.)

- Addressing the needs of students in lower NRS levels
- Ensuring alignment to course content standards and the WTCS Course Clarification Guidance
- Transition to updated NRS assessments
- Building capacity for correctional education
- Credential evaluation costs for internationally trained professionals
- Scaling distance education
- Scaling contextualized instruction

Funds Available and Additional Limitations

- \$75,000 will be a base funding amount for all colleges. Additional funds will be provided based upon district census data related to ABE/ELL population.
- Grant projects will be funded for one year.
- Building and remodeling costs are not allowed.
- Activities must be supportive of overall grant goals.
- Colleges need to identify desired outcomes and indicate data that will be measured to determine funding success.
- Colleges participating will be required to attend two virtual check-ins to share progress and seek feedback.
- These funds should supplement and not supplant AE/ELL programming.
- Grant applications are due June 5, 2026.

Grant Reporting

- If grant funds are being used to provide client services, then an S4 Grant Activity Record should be submitted to the client reporting system for each client.
- An end-of-year grant report will be required for this leadership grant.

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