Getting the message out:
TOOLS AND TIPS FOR PROMOTING ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN YOUR STATE AND COMMUNITY
Today:

- Offer some **context**; what **words and messages** connect?
- Provide tools to help you **shine light** on your challenges and **show off** your successes.
- Walk through the **COABE Member Toolkit**
- **Empower you** to raise awareness and be even more effective advocates for
  - your students
  - your programs
  - your communities
  - yourselves
Today:

- Briefly dip into:
  - reaching and working with leadership and communications channels
  - framing the discussion
  - building awareness and pride

- All designed to help you:
  - strengthen your programs
  - celebrate your work
  - help more students
Reasons to tell your stories

- **Inspire decision makers** who shape adult basic education policy and funding

- **Inspire business leaders** and highlighting it’s “good for business” as well as for individuals and families

- **Inspire students** current, past and future - and their allies

- **Inspire educators** to honor and recognize their - your - work
Adult education is underfunded at the national and state levels

WORTH POINTING OUT:
- Congress: $635 million for WIOA Title II
- The President’s budget: $606 million
- Final actual levels – any levels – will be determined in the appropriations process.
Adult education may be underfunded at your local level

**WORTH POINTING OUT:**
- There are multiple funding scenarios across states and even within states
- Federal funds pay only a portion of the cost for adult basic education (for example, in Louisiana, only enough to meet 5% of the need).
Outreach is not just asking for government money

**OTHER OBJECTIVES**

- **Motivating employers** to offer or support adult basic education – in their workplace or in yours

- **Encouraging civic and business organizations** to support adult basic education
  - Chambers of Commerce & CEO conferences
  - Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.

- Showing local/regional **philanthropies** the impact of your work

- Including adult basic education in the growing conversation about **community colleges and workforce training**

- And more
Timely opportunities

Because

The nation is talking about

- low-wage jobs
- the need for pathways to skilled jobs
- growing the middle class

Framing adult education benefits in those areas offer opportunities for discussion and potential action
When to reach your audience

Hill Day – 9/28/16

Adult Education and Family Literacy Week
SEPTEMBER 26 – OCTOBER 1, 2016
#AEFLWeek
Adult Education and Family Literacy Week
SEPTEMBER 26 – OCTOBER 1, 2016

#AEFLWeek

Advocates across the country use this opportunity to elevate adult education and family literacy nationwide with policymakers, the media, and the community.
When to reach your audience
The power of your voice.
The power of your stories.

is a national and grassroots organization comprised of 15,000 educators and administrators – and growing.

COABE’s mission is to inspire educators so adults succeed and communities thrive.

Those succeeding adults and thriving communities make great stories.

Each of us can be a powerful voice to reach

- policymakers
- community leaders
- colleagues
- learners
I AM an educator focused on helping adults and their families.

WE OFFER opportunity.

WE SEE urgent need in our communities.

WE BUILD proven success in our communities, a key to strengthening America’s national economy and global competitiveness.

WE KNOW we must do more.
Pride, opportunity, challenge...success

- **WE SAVE communities money**: our programs generate far more savings than they cost
- **WE ARE a path to growing** America’s businesses
- **WE MAKE a difference**
- **WE CHANGE lives**
- Yet... **WE CAN’T do more WITHOUT YOU**
Who needs to hear from you:

- **National policymakers**
  - Members of Congress
  - The Dept. of Education and the Labor Dept.
  - The White House

- **State policymakers**
  - Governors
  - Legislators
  - Departments and agencies

- **Community leaders**
  - Elected officials
  - School boards & administrators
  - Church and labor leaders
  - Family advocates

- **Corporate leaders**
  - CEOs and owners
  - HR departments
  - Community relations & social responsibility offices

- **Prospective students**
  - Friends
  - Influencers
  - Allies

- **Media**
  - Reporters
  - Editorial boards
  - Columnists
  - Your voice
What to talk about

Personal stories captivate.

Use examples to show how your program is

- Helping students (specific success stories)
- Building families & aiding kids
- Making it easier for a business or an industry sector to hire the people they need, locally
- Constraining community legal and social program costs
How to reach your audience

Direct Outreach
- 1:1 Meetings with Policymakers and Staff
- Letters
- Calls

Social Media
- Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, etc.

Media
- Local stories about your program, your students, educators, the landscape in your area
  - Education reporter, general assignment reporter,
  - A columnist’s or newspaper editorial board’s opinion
  - Letters to the Editor from local residents
The COABE Member Media Tool Kit includes:

- Numbers and resources
- The COABE WIOA Fact Sheet: about the federal funds that support state grants that help fund your local programs
- Building a Local Factsheet: a way to tell your own story
- Sharing Your Good News – how to pitch your story
- Writing and Submitting an Op-Ed – how to make the case in less than 800 words
- Meeting with Editorial Boards and Columnists – enlisting validators to make the case
- Drafting Effective Press Releases -
WIOA: money behind the state grants

This fact sheet is a summary of the current state of federal funding for Adult Basic Education through Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- Inform your own writing
- Use the facts in this document to give context and background to your pitches and opinion pieces.
- Inform your audience
- Take it with you to meetings with elected officials.
- Take copies with you to any meetings or interviews with reporters, editorial boards, or columnists
Framing with the latest data

Roughly 1 in 6 working-age adults in America - some 36 million people - score at or below the lowest literacy level tested.

About 1 in 4 score at or below the lowest level tested for number skills.

About 1 in 4 score below the lowest level tested for solving problems.
Framing with the latest data
Building a local fact sheet

It’s important to package your own story. The process of developing it will help you think about the information that will matter most to policymakers, media and community leaders.

Other things to think about

- What do you want to highlight about the needs of low skilled adults in your area and how your work matters?
- What success stories about the students you have helped can you share?
Building a local fact sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Fact Sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CENTER: 1000 N. BURTON AVENUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION: 1000 N. BURTON AVENUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHONE: (773) 535-1234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGISTRATION: MONDAY - THURSDAY 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIREKTOR: MARK MILLER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROGRAM DEMOGRAPHIC FACTS 2013-2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English: 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish: 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age of Learners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 - 24</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 44</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 64</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Field of Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Target Population:**

- Adults 21 years of age and older

**Referrals:**

- SPOKES: SPOKES, a local non-profit organization providing after-school programs for children ages 5-18.
- Other educational programs and community centers.

**Service Delivery Strategies:**

- Individual tutorials
- Group sessions
- Online learning

**Application:**

- Available online at: [www.somewebpage.org](http://www.somewebpage.org)

**Contact Information:**

- Phone: (773) 535-1234
- Email: info@somewebpage.org

---

**Literacy Fact Sheet**

**Who we are:**

- Our mission is to improve literacy skills in our community.

**Reasons to learn:**

- Increased job opportunities
- Better health outcomes
- Improved family relationships

**Literacy Resources:**

- Books
- Online resources

---

**Chicago Public Library**

**Library Locations:**

- [Visit our website](http://www.chicagolibrary.org)

---

**Contact Information:**

- Address: 123 Main Street, Chicago, IL 60601
- Phone: (773) 535-1234
- Email: info@chicagolibrary.org
Using and adapting from your website
Writing and submitting an Op-Ed

Guidelines for writing and submitting opinion (op-ed) pieces to your local newspaper or online news outlet

With resources from The Op-Ed Project
Writing and submitting an Op-Ed

Opinion pieces are opportunities to make the case for the important role adult basic education plays in a community.

The guide in the tool kit includes tips on how to structure, write, and pitch an op-ed.

- Think about who you are ultimately trying to reach and why
- What do they need to hear
- Who do they need to hear it from
  - These pieces can reflect your voice, a student's voice, a policymaker who is a champion of your work.
Close the illiteracy blind spot with adult education

By Tom Rock - March 1, 2007

There's a giant blind spot in our national debate about how to rebuild the middle class, strengthen our workforce and grow our economy. Tens of millions of adults in America can barely read or handle numbers. Unless we address that, we'll be leaving way too many people and communities behind.

You can't graduate from a community college if you can't read or don't have a high-school diploma of the equivalent. You can't find, get and keep a decent job if you can't read a job listing. You may not be able to get the job, even if you can understand a typical schedule. You can't solve problems in a high-tech world if you lack even the lowest-tech skills to use a computer.

Helping millions of adults master the basics is ignored even as policymakers, elected leaders and those who want our votes talk about the also-worthy goals of strengthening K-12 classrooms, streamlining community colleges and overhauling the way we train for college.

Good pay, good schools

By Kirk Simon and Dana Goldhaber

Pay teachers $25,000 a year, expect more and see what happens.
Meeting with editorial boards and columnists

Editorial boards and columnists can add an authoritative voice of support.

Why They’ll Want to Hear from You

Your work is essential to the community’s life and economy.

Your work is vital to individual residents.

Your work impacts whether new readers will be there for them.

Education is a core interest to newspapers.

They will want to know how their voicing an opinion can help:

- The need for more funding in adult basic education
- The need for more teachers in adult education
- The need to bring students back to the classroom
- How adult basic education is playing a vital role improving the lives of local citizens, yet can do so much more to strengthen families and our community
Meeting with editorial boards and columnists

Guidelines for meeting with your local newspaper editorial board and pitching newspaper columnists to write about Adult Basic Education

With resources from American Library Association
Sharing your good news:

Tips for “pitching” student, teacher, administrator and program “success stories” to local media

SAMPLE EMAIL TO “PITCH” AN ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS STORY (These can be particularly powerful in graduation season and at Back-to-School time)

Dear XX,

I’m writing to share an [incredible/powerful/inspiring/etc.] story about Jane Doe, a [description of who the student is: young adult, single mom, 50-year-old etc.] who has [just/recently/etc.] done something interesting: graduated, earned a high school equivalency, won an award, been hired for a job sought after [job, etc.] right here in [neighborhood/city/state].

A short second paragraph should tell more about the person, why it’s interesting, where he/she is from, etc.

Your third paragraph should put the story in perspective: [Student Name] was one of XX adults in our area who can’t get jobs because they can’t read. Or... In our area and across the country, as many as one in six adults can’t read, either at all or well enough to even read a job posting ad. (etc.)

In your fourth paragraph, offer to help the reporter tell their story, along the lines of: I’d be happy to put you in touch with [STUDENT], as well as the teacher(s) [and/or leaders of program name] who helped [him/her] turn [his/her] life around.

You can reach me at [your contact info]. I look forward to telling you more about this amazing adult student.
Sharing your good news to build support

This guide walks you through crafting different pitch notes that for sending to your local media.

- **Who to pitch?**
  - Research your local papers
  - Find reporters who write about education or personal profiles stories

- **How to pitch?**
  - Write short intro email including important data or newsy statistics
Sharing your good news to build support

Inmate sees future after getting GED

Inmate sees future after getting GED

Hawks, JH, received her General Educational Development diploma Thursday in a ceremony at Warren County Regional Jail with a group of seven other GED graduates and five recipients of the National Career Readiness Certificate.

While serving a sentence for the robbery of a property, Hawks has been transferred among a number of jails but was able to complete her GED coursework in Warren County and pass the exam with honors, which entails a score of higher than 220 out of 300 for each of the test’s four subjects, demonstrating college readiness.

“This day is really important to me,” said Hawks of Louisville, who expects to be released in September. “I think it was a long time to get here, but I didn’t do it all on my own.”

The ceremony also recognized the five graduates among those who participated in the GED and NCCER Construction Education Program at the jail, part of Southeastern Kentucky Community and Technical College’s Adult Education Program.
Issuing press releases keeps the press and other interested parties updated on important events in your programs.

New partnerships, programs, your own take on newly released studies and statistics awards are great topics.

The tool kit includes a template and information to consider when writing and distributing press releases.

**Tips for Press Release**

- Think of it as your own news story
- Use 3rd person voice
- Avoid hype, stick to facts
- Include quotes from key people
- Keep it brief – around 500 words
- Post releases in a permanent location on your website
Drafting effective press releases

Guidelines for drafting an effective press release about Adult Basic Education

Template:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(or EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE Friday, April 15, 2016 at 6pm CDT)

Press Release Headline Here in Title Case

Optional subhead here, usually in sentence format, often in italics and smaller font to offset it from the main headline.

CITY, State Abbr. (if not obvious) (Date) EXAMPLE: Arlington, TX (April 15) — The opening sentence is the most important element in a press release where you should succinctly summarize what is being announced. The opening paragraph should clearly get the reader’s attention through a strong hook while providing or teasing the most important facts.

A press release generally consists of three to six paragraphs where you provide relevant facts and information a reporter should use to write a story. The most important information should be listed first, with the least important information appearing in the final paragraph. Each paragraph should consist of three to six sentences written in the third person. You should maintain an objective tone. Avoid hype and Excessive Capitalization which can make you sound like you are shilling for a commercial product. Try to stay about one page, never go over two. The average press release consists of 500 words or less.

“A great press release should include a great quote from a company executive or industry expert,” says COABE President Mickey Kennedy. “An important thing to know about quotes is that the media generally won’t use them unless they are executive, fresh or state something in a way that would be very difficult to paraphrase. To ensure your quote finds a home in a story based on your announcement, avoid cliches or generalizations.”

Be sure to spell check your press release and fact check any facts or statistics in your press release. You should check your grammar as well read your press release aloud to ensure there aren’t any obvious errors. Lastly, it’s a good idea to have a trusted friend and/or colleague read your press release.

A press release can be used to announce a new or updated product. Other press release topics can include a partnership with a company or organization, as well as being issued an industry award. For additional press release topics, visit http://www.writingpressreleases.com/press-release-topic-ideas.html. As you just saw, you may include a url in your press release.

W (The traditional journalist's symbol for END)
A quick review (but no quiz)

- The **issue matters** to policymakers, community leaders, businesses, media, educators and students. Let’s put it more squarely in the spotlight.

- **How you talk about** it matters; **when** you talk about it helps.

- **Step up outreach** to stakeholders and grow a movement.

- **Your stories, facts, insights and voice** can make a difference.

- You know your stories; you have the **tools**

- Don’t be discouraged!
Inspire each other

- Share your stories with COABE and colleagues
- Send newsclips, web links, photos, videos and more

info@COABE.org
Your turn

Questions?

Ideas?
Getting the message out: TOOLS AND TIPS FOR PROMOTING ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN YOUR STATE AND COMMUNITY