



# **Anywhere County Adult Education Program**

**2017 Interest Level**

**Organizational Environment**

- Mission: To provide quality educational opportunities to enhance basic skills and enable adult learners to meet their academic, economic and personal goals.
- Vision: A comprehensive adult education center with a variety of academic and vocational opportunities fully utilized and supported by the community.
- Values statement to support the mission and vision.
- Instruction areas: Literacy, Basic Skill Enhancement, GED Preparation, English as a Second Language, Tutor Training, and Workforce Basic Skills.
- Instruction delivered through: small group classes, individual tutoring, computer-assisted instruction, and distance learning.
- Staff: Part-time - supervisor, 16 instructors, secretary, literacy aide; full-time - coordinator, one instructor, VISTA; Volunteers - approximately 50 tutors.
- Facilities: Learning Opportunity Center, satellite locations for classes and partner workplaces.
- Computer Lab: ten computers, networked, software to support learning (Destinations, Rosetta Stone, GED Interactive), other literacy, GED, and job resources.
- Operates under Kentucky Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Department of Adult Education and the Anywhere County School System.

**Organizational Relationships**

- Key customers are undereducated adults in Anywhere County: lacking a high school diploma, needing to learn or review basic academic skills, or needing English as a second language.
- Potential client sources: Department of Human Services, referrals from service agencies, employees of area businesses, and individuals.
- Partners:
  - Classroom and office space, technology support, administrative assistance and other in-kind services provided by the Anywhere County School System
  - Supplemental funding provided by Anywhere County Literacy Council

## **Key Factors (continued)**

---

- Class locations and other support provided by ABC Company, City Housing Authority, Head Start, Department of Human Services, Anywhere County Justice Center, and Anywhere County Career Center.

## **Competitive Environment**

- Approximately 600 students enrolled in 12 or more instructional hours per year.
- Approximately 150 "project learners" for testing, referral, or short-term goals.
- Only state-supported adult education provider in the county.
- Potential competition from community college, church groups, correspondence courses, and private educational service providers.
- Factors for successful marketing of program: collaboration, price, variety of services, flexibility, status in community, and positive news coverage.

## **Strategic Challenges**

- Human Resources - increase staff and improve effectiveness.
- Workforce Development - partner with additional area businesses, maintain relationships with community service agencies.
- New GED - implement new test content and format effective January 1, 2013.
- Documentation - implement new systems to document learner achievement and other required measures.
- Technology - further integrate technology into the instructional program.
- ESOL - accommodate increased demand for English as a Second Language.

## **Performance Improvement System**

- Annual report to the State Department of Adult Education, including statistics and narrative.
- Utilization of the Baldrige criteria for performance excellence through the Kentucky Center for Performance Excellence program.
- Satisfaction surveys provide feedback from students and local leaders.

## **Key Themes**

---

### **What are the most important strengths or outstanding practices (of potential value to other organizations) identified?**

- Employees, students, and community partners are involved in setting the direction of Anywhere County Adult Ed as well as evaluating its performance. Input is sought for the strategic planning process, feedback regarding the success of partnerships, identification of new employee/student needs, and the completion of a Business Questionnaire of Needs. External input and feedback are received from Advisory Council, Literacy Council, business partners, social service agencies, United Way, Career Center, and Chamber of Commerce.
- The program has an annual recruitment plan that describes different public relations and community activities that take place throughout the year in order to recruit both students and volunteers. This plan includes activities such as: TV spots, brochures, newspaper articles and supplements, job fairs, parenting fairs, referrals from other agencies, etc. One of the most effective methods has been placing classified advertisements in the employment section of the newspaper that say "Call now to earn your GED."
- The organization's understanding of student requirements and needs enables it to offer programs, services, and formats of most interest to the students. These include different instructional formats such as standard classes, closed classes, and distance learning through the local Public Broadcasting Station. An Orientation Class was established to help students understand the intake process and testing activities; the class also includes other tools and resources to support student success.
- A variety of opportunities for staff to reinforce existing skills, develop new skills, and participate in professional meetings is supported by Anywhere County. These opportunities provide employees with the knowledge, networks, and information to provide quality services to their customers.

### **What are the most significant opportunities, concerns, or vulnerabilities identified?**

- Although Anywhere County Adult Ed has significant knowledge about the characteristics of its customers, there is not a formal process to learn about the satisfaction and needs of the students. Such a system would accept customer complaints and ensure the issues are addressed.

## **Key Themes (continued)**

---

- While Anywhere Adult Ed has well-defined key processes, the deployment of managing these processes is less mature. Requirements of the processes and measures or indicators to monitor the performance of the processes are not in place. In addition, supplier and partner processes have not been identified or documented. These characteristics contribute to the ability of the organization to achieve its objectives through the daily management of these processes.

### **Considering Anywhere Adult Education Program's key business/organization factors, what are the most significant strengths, opportunities, vulnerabilities, and/or gaps (related to data, comparisons, linkages) found in its response to Results Items?**

- Anywhere County Adult Ed currently has limited results beyond the state reporting requirements. There may be additional measures that will indicate progress toward achieving organizational objectives. Without this information at regular intervals, leaders are unable to accurately evaluate and manage the performance of the organization based on facts.
- The program does not have comparison and benchmark data. Without this type of information, it is difficult for leaders to understand how the organization performs with respect to other similar programs. This understanding also leads to continuous improvement opportunities and new ways of accomplishing the mission.

**(+) Strengths**

---

- + Organizational direction is flowed down to the organization from the State and County Adult Education Plans and performance measures in those plans. The transition from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor led to increased emphasis on workplace needs. This has resulted in partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, Career Center, area business work-site projects, and the City College Literacy Corporation.
- + Anywhere Adult Ed has established Mission, Vision, and Values statements. These were developed with employee input obtained during a staff retreat combined with support requirements of the State. These guiding principles have been communicated to all employees through monthly staff meetings, employee evaluations, and the Year End Report to the State that includes statistics, accomplishments, and program improvements. This systematic development and communication approach ensures constancy of purpose within the organization.
- + Employee communication takes place through several mechanisms. These include a newsletter every two months, monthly staff meetings, staff retreat, and weekly interactions with staff that come in to the program office for paperwork and curriculum updates. The time and location of monthly staff meetings vary each month in order to accommodate the schedules of different staff members. These approaches support all employees in understanding the strategic direction of the organization as well as plans, continuous improvement opportunities, and other important issues.

**(-) Opportunities For Improvement**

---

- Although Anywhere Adult Ed must report some statistics to the State annually, there has not been a purposeful effort to identify key measures that will indicate progress toward achieving organizational objectives. Without this information at regular intervals, leaders are unable to accurately evaluate and manage the performance of the organization

**Observations/Recommendations**

---

- Document the approach leaders use to guide the organization by developing strategic direction and reviewing performance to ensure progress toward objectives. This approach should also address a mechanism to prioritize the implementation of continuous improvement opportunities.

**(+) Strengths**

---

- + Leadership developed the Anywhere County Adult Education 5-Year Plan (2011 - 2015) to identify strategic challenges and create plans to address the challenges. This plan is supplemented by an annual Year End Report that describes issues that may lead to changes or modification of direction. The Annual Report also presents results that show the organization's progress toward State mandated performance measures.
- + Input to the Anywhere County Adult Education 5-Year Plan and annual Year End Report comes from a variety of sources. These include the Kentucky State Five-Year Adult Education Plan, the Anywhere County School System Local Plan, Adult Education learners and staff and community input. Community input incorporates feedback from Advisory Council, Literacy Council, Business Partners, Agencies, United Way, Career Center, Chamber of Commerce. The variety of sources ensures the organization has a well-rounded perception of its contribution to the community as well as a comprehensive evaluation of new opportunities and challenges.
- + Anywhere 's performance measures come from both the Kentucky State Five-Year Adult Education Plan and the local plan. The plan and measures are generally reviewed twice a year, in January and June, which provides an opportunity to determine what operational changes should be considered.

**(-) Opportunities For Improvement**

---

- Although the Anywhere Adult Education 5-Year Plan provides a roadmap of strategic directions and performance expectations, the organization does not have action plans describing how these expectations are achieved. Without describing how strategic objectives are transferred to action, it is difficult for leaders to evaluate current and future resource needs and interim progress toward objectives.

**Observations/Recommendations**

---

- Formally document the Strategic Planning Process utilized in the development of the Anywhere Adult Education 5-Year Plan and annual Year End Reports. Much of this process was provided in a flow chart during the site visit. Evaluate the key steps of this process and consider opportunities to improve the planning process so that it may be more effective to Anywhere's specific needs and challenges.
- Develop action plans to achieve the objectives in the Anywhere Adult Education 5-Year Plan. This is most critical for the objectives that leaders anticipate to be particularly challenging, as it provides an opportunity to document the steps and resources needed to be successful. From this, leaders can consider alternatives to allocating existing resources or procuring additional resources to address these challenges and further the organization. Interim steps also provide a mechanism to measure progress toward organizational goals.



**(+) Strengths**

---

- + Student information is gathered and segmented in a number of ways. It is analyzed according to gender, age, ethnicity, and starting level. This provides the organization with an overall view of the types of students it is serving. This analysis also may indicate trends and changes over time of student characteristics and the needs of the community.
- + Anywhere Adult Ed has an annual recruitment plan that describes different public relations and community activities that take place throughout the year in order to recruit both students and volunteers. This plan includes activities such as TV spots, brochures, newspaper articles and supplements, job fairs, parenting fairs, referrals from other agencies, etc. One of the most effective methods has been placing classified advertisements in the employment section of the newspaper that say "Call now to earn your GED."
- + The program identifies customer requirements from the primary and secondary goals identified by the student during the intake process from a standard list provided by the State. A Learning Needs Screening is also utilized to identify additional requirements. Finally, instructors document on a student form additional personal, educational, and/or work goals that students have based on individual interactions.
- + As a result of gathering and understanding student requirements and needs, Anywhere offers different instructional formats. Standard classes are instructed at an individual student's pace; students can attend as available and pick up where they previously left off. Closed classes, also called "Limited Term," are for a specific duration and students are expected to attend every class. Distance Learning classes are available on the local Public Broadcasting Station for students who cannot travel to class locations.
- + Student Satisfaction surveys support Anywhere in determining the effectiveness of its programs. Previously, this data was gathered once a year, but has recently increased to every three months. Several changes have occurred due to student feedback. Two examples are changing class offerings at a specific location from GED to Literacy to meet a more basic need before the GED and the development of a student orientation class.

- + Anywhere Adult Ed designed an orientation class based on informal feedback from students having questions on some of the intake and testing activities. The orientation includes going over pre-test scores, meeting the staff, touring the facilities, taking a Learning Styles Inventory and a Learning Needs Screening, using the Computer Lab, and visiting the Career Center. This service will support the needs of the students and help them feel more comfortable in the learning environment.
- + Anywhere has identified some areas for improvement and formed committees to resolve the issue. Two issues identified during the Staff Retreat were to make the Intake Process more customer friendly and less intimidating, and having a quieter environment for testing. In addition, a Student Council has been established that identifies some areas for improvement of particular interest to the students (i.e., a paved parking area for students).

**(-) Opportunities For Improvement**

---

- The student starting level is assessed and revised every year. While this provides a clear picture of progress for a single year, it is difficult for instructors and organizational leaders to review long-term student success. Both short-term and long-term measures may provide critical information to the organization's ability to Manage by Fact.
- Anywhere currently serves 600 adults enrolled in at least 12 instructional hours a year, and additional 150 adults as project learners. The 2010 Census data indicated that approximately 31,000 adults in the county (approximately 32% of adult population) lacked a high school diploma. According to these figures, the county is reaching about 2% of the market it serves.
- The program does not have a formal process to accept customer complaints and ensure the issues are addressed, resolved, and appropriate follow-up made. Although the county outlined a General Complaint Resolution Process, this process was based on informal feedback received from students and did not incorporate other aspects of a more robust system.

**Observations/Recommendations**

---

- Identify appropriate performance measures to monitor long-term student success. Student starting level is assessed annually and is reviewed and managed on a single-year basis. This data may also provide long-term insight into the curriculum, instruction, and overall program effectiveness.
- Develop short- and long-term goals for the percentage of adults the organization desires to serve. This may be aided by benchmarking other programs' participants and market size to see how the organization's 2% compares as well as to see what might be possible. These goals can be used to develop resource plans, evaluate the addition of program offerings, and request additional operational funding.
- Break out the activities in the annual recruitment plan so that organizational leaders can readily evaluate the activities and their intended purpose. Address what initiatives are specifically to recruit new students and what initiatives are to recruit volunteers. Although some activities may meet both purposes, the joint plan may provide an unclear representation of recruiting efforts.
- Develop a mechanism to assess the recruiting efforts. The organization needs to know which methods are working and which are not so that resources can be allocated most effectively. This will also free the leaders to consider new initiatives and their potential impacts.
- Evaluate the reading level of printed material that is sent to potential students and used in the newspaper (releases or inserts). Are potential students able to understand what is sent to them so they can act on the information? Consider other means to inform individuals (some identified in the annual recruitment plan) of the services offered by the Adult Education program.
- Develop and document a process to gather, address, and resolve customer issues from multiple sources. This process should consider methods to provide feedback to individuals initiating the complaint so they know their feedback was heard and acted upon. Additional consideration should be given to aggregating complaints for analysis to determine trends, continuous improvement opportunities, and/or changes in organizational effectiveness.

**(+) Strengths**

---

- + Anywhere Adult Ed collects attendance data monthly and reports it annually in the Year End Report. The program must meet specific enrollment criteria to continue to offer specific classes and a variety of locations. These results may necessitate changes in locations or combining locations.
- + The program has modified the frequency in which student re-testing and satisfaction surveys are completed from annually to every three months. This modification will support the organization's data collection because student turnover often occurs without a means to gather exit information. In addition, the increased frequency will provide an opportunity to make more immediate changes in the program based on student progress in re-testing and feedback from the satisfaction surveys.

**(-) Opportunities For Improvement**

---

- Anywhere does not collect data beyond the state reporting requirements. There may be additional measures that will be useful to the organization in understanding its progress toward achieving its objectives and following the strategic direction. In addition, this data is often reviewed and reported annually, although it is collected monthly. A frequent review of data is necessary for fact-based decision making.
- The program does not have comparison and benchmark data. Without this type of information, it is difficult for leaders to understand how the organization performs with respect to other similar programs. This understanding also leads to continuous improvement opportunities and new ways of accomplishing the mission.

**Observations/Recommendations**

---

- Independent of the State reporting requirements, identify the key measures the organization believes will indicate success and achievement of its mission. After these are identified, consider ways to utilize the data already being collected for State reporting and determine what, if any, additional data may be necessary. While the reporting data may be useful, it may not be inclusive of the indicators the organization should be monitoring to determine effectiveness.
- Consider the appropriate frequency to review and evaluate each of the key measures identified. An appropriate frequency will ensure that operational changes are made as soon as the need is identified and will facilitate the leaders' ability to Manage by Fact.
- Identify sources of data on other Adult Education programs. The natural comparison and benchmark would be from the programs within the State, but there may also be some programs nationally worth exploring. Some of this information may be available in the Kentucky State Five-Year Adult Education Plan. Another opportunity is to identify the programs that have participated in the Tennessee Quality Award and consider forming a network with those programs to share results, successes, measures of interest, processes, lessons learned, etc. Since there is nearly no competition between county programs, this would be an excellent way to reinforce Performance Excellence principles, and provide at least some of the comparison data that all of the programs are looking for.

**(+) Strengths**

---

- + Instructors must have a State of Kentucky teaching certification and contracts are renewed on an annual basis; full-time staff are selected through the Anywhere County School System's personnel process. The majority of the instructors have worked with the Adult Education program for several years and enjoy this aspect of their work. As a result, there is very little turnover in staff. This consistency and familiarity will facilitate the organization's ability to incorporate continuous improvement initiatives throughout operations.
- + Instructor performance is evaluated through periodic classroom observations, although this is not currently a systematic process. Full-time Anywhere County Schools personnel are evaluated on a regular schedule based on the school system's process, which may be once every 5 years after tenure is achieved. Students provide feedback on instructor performance through the course evaluation. Each of these mechanisms assists instructors identifying ways to improve their delivery.
- + Anywhere Adult Ed supports a variety of opportunities for staff to reinforce existing skills, develop new skills, and participate in professional meetings. Examples include Adult Education conferences, GED 2002 Training, the Staff Retreat, ESOL, online training, and Families First. These provide employees with the knowledge, networks, and information to provide quality services to customers.
- + Employees are empowered to address and resolve issues through their direct interaction with students. If a given issue cannot be immediately resolved, it is communicated to the Adult Education staff for assistance. Recently, students in an ESOL class were worried about the terrorist attacks. The instructor arranged for a KEMA employee to speak to the class, reassuring them of Kentucky's preparedness. This concern could not be resolved through the curriculum or a process; the instructor was empowered to identify what would provide the best service for her students.

**(-) Opportunities For Improvement**

---

- Although the program has an annual volunteer recognition program, there is currently not a process or program to recognize instructors and staff. A systematic approach to employee recognition would reinforce high performance and bolster employee well-being and loyalty.

**Observations/Recommendations**

---

- Develop a systematic process to evaluate the performance of employees. Establish classroom observation criteria and implement evaluations on a consistent schedule. Use this opportunity to identify ways to improve classroom delivery as well as training and development needs or interests. This feedback is essential for personal learning and continuous improvement of the organization.
- Develop a process for employee recognition. This may be formal recognition from supervisors, "Teacher of the Year," and/or recognition from peers for a job well done. The positive reinforcement that employees are doing well, and an occasional pat on the back for going "above and beyond the call of duty" will reinforce the core value of Valuing Employees and Partners.
- Develop a resource plan to accommodate the expected increase in capacity and capability due to new programs or increased offerings of current programs.

**(+) Strengths**

---

- + Anywhere Adult Ed has defined their key processes for delivery of curriculum and support processes. The *Student Flow* encompasses several processes such as intake, class selection, and assessment/evaluation/evaluation. Understanding current processes is the first step to identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.
- + Feedback from corporate clients and students provide the organization with information regarding the success of its partnerships with other organizations. Key success factors include the participation of students at given locations. This is a good indicator of both the program's success and the viability of the partnership.
- + Partnerships provide the organization with referrals, class sites, volunteers, and/or in-kind services. The establishment of these partnerships begins with a Business Questionnaire of Needs to determine what skills needs the organizations require. This may lead to program offerings that are currently designed (such as English as a Second Language, Basic Skills, testing, etc.) or a program may be designed specifically for the partner (such as ABC's apprenticeship program). This depicts Anywhere County Adult Ed's agility and ability in meeting the needs of the community and industry.

**(-) Opportunities For Improvement**

---

- The program identifies new services based primarily on requests from outside sources or partners. While meeting the urgent, and often changing, needs of the community is essential for the organization, this is a reactive situation. A process to identify and evaluate potential new services will support the proactive planning and resources necessary to accommodate new needs.
- While Anywhere Adult Ed has its key processes well defined, the deployment of managing these processes is less mature. Requirements of the processes and measures or indicators to monitor the performance of the processes are not in place. These process attributes ensure the core value of management by fact functioning within the organization.
- Key supplier and partner processes have not been identified or documented. Process requirements and measures of performance ensure the supplier and partner functions contribute to the organization's strategic objectives toward performance excellence.



**Observations/Recommendations**

---

- Define in greater detail each of the stand-alone processes that are currently incorporated into the single *Student Flow* process. Also consider other key product/service processes, support processes, and supplier/partner processes. For each, document the requirements of the process and measures to monitor the performance and progress.
- Establish a process for identifying and evaluating potential new services to offer in order to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of existing staff as well as plan for additional staff.
- Adopt a process improvement methodology (i.e. Plan, Do, Check, Act or other similar system). Communicate and train staff and partners in this methodology so that they will utilize the system as appropriate. The use of a systematic approach to improvement leads to a more consistent evaluation of improvement opportunities, ensuring management-by-fact and organizational decisions based on strategic objectives.

**(+) Strengths**

---

- + The program has limited Student Satisfaction results and therefore modified the process so that the survey would be administered every three months when students are re-tested.
- + Anywhere Adult Ed has significant knowledge about student characteristics and demographics. The results provided also indicate recent changes in the student population.

**(-) Opportunities For Improvement**

---

- The program currently has limited results beyond the State reporting requirements. Results for financial and market considerations, customers, human resources, and organizational effectiveness are essential to the success of the organization. Key measures will support leaders in evaluating these functions and how they contribute to the organization's ability to meet its objectives and achieve its mission.

**Observations/Recommendations**

---

- Identify key measures that contribute to the organization's ability to understand its performance with respect to financial and market considerations, customers, human resources, and organizational effectiveness.
- Consider varying methods of displaying data so the results are easy to interpret. Different formats (line charts, histograms, pie charts, etc.) can communicate results with different purposes. For example, the presentation of Student Starting Level may be of interest in defining student population. However, the change in Student Starting Level for a given year and over several years (as appropriate) will provide an indication of student progress. Both formats are useful, but they have different purposes.
- Identify sources of comparison and benchmark data (see Category 4, Information and Analysis).
- Provide trend data over time when this data is available and applicable. Data trends indicate the rate of change of performance for particular measures and can be used to support the projection of results into the future. Trends also support the principle that there is a cause and effect relationship between results and the processes implemented to address the other six Performance Excellence categories.