



Awards & Grants Guidelines

Outstanding Adult Learner

The Outstanding Adult Learner Award is provided to a student who has demonstrated leadership within the formal or non-traditional learning environments. This award is given to a student who has overcome difficult circumstances to pursue adult learning, who has supported other adult learners, and who has managed significant adult responsibilities such as those related to employment, family or community.

Award Criteria:

1. The nominee must be an adult learner as defined by the sponsoring organization. He or she must have significant adult responsibilities, such as those relating to employment, family, or community.
2. Has improved the life situation(s) of self/others as a result of learning experience.
3. Has demonstrated leadership within formal or non-traditional learning environments.
4. Has maintained family, civic, or employment responsibilities while concurrently pursuing educational goals.
5. Has overcome difficult circumstances in order to pursue adult learning experiences.
6. Has been supportive of others engaged in adult learning.
7. The nominee must have been a student or self-directed learner within 12 months prior to the nomination date.



Outstanding Teacher

The **Outstanding Teacher, Edgar M. Easley Award**, is provided to a practitioner with five or more years of adult education teaching experience that participates in school and community activities. This award is given to an individual who understands the characteristics of the adult learner and who is committed to the adult/continuing education profession.

Award Criteria:

1. A current practitioner with five or more years of adult education teaching experience.
2. Participates in school and community activities.
3. Communicates effectively with learners, colleagues, and supervisors.
4. Committed to the adult/continuing education profession.
5. Committed to his/her own lifelong learning (evidence of professional development).
6. Understands the physical, psychological, social, and cognitive characteristics of the adult learner.
7. Accepts the learner's cultural and ethnic uniqueness.
8. Provides a non-threatening, supportive atmosphere for learning, which fosters freedom of thought and expression.
9. Assists learners in formulating personal learning objectives and assessing progress towards those objectives.
10. Uses the instructional methods, techniques, materials, and resources most appropriate for the learning tasks and characteristics of the adult learner.

Outstanding Administrator

The **Outstanding Administrator Award** is awarded to an adult education administrator with five or more years of experience who has made an outstanding contribution toward fostering the concept of education as a continuing life-process. The awardee must demonstrate a contribution to adult education at the community, state, and/or national levels.

Award Criteria:

1. The nominee has five or more years of experience in adult education.
2. The nominee has a clear understanding of adult education and literacy not only as a process but also as a concept that continues throughout life.



- The nominee has demonstrated leadership qualities at all levels (local, state, and national levels) and is a strong advocate of adult education and literacy.
- The nominee has proven results and is respected by his colleagues.
- The nominee has received awards and recognitions for his/her work.

Local Excellence in Advocacy

COABE places a high emphasis on members advocating for adult education at the local, state, and federal level. Did you take action when we sent our legislative alerts encouraging the field to contact their legislators? Did you invite your representative to visit your program? If so, you might be the perfect candidate for Local Excellence in Advocacy!

Advancing Workforce Development for Adult Learners Award

COABE's Workforce Development Award honors one of the following:

1. Workforce Development Board;
2. Workplace / Employer; or
3. Adult Education Program that has implemented programming or initiatives that advance career pathways and workforce opportunities for adult learners.

Adult Education programs, associations or state offices may submit nominations for organizations or programs that have advanced workforce development for adult learners through best practices that integrate workforce skills training with adult education and are responsive to regional or local workforce needs.

Award Criteria:

The nominee provides evidence that the initiative or program:

1. Integrates workforce skills training with basic skills instruction through career-contextualized or customized instruction.
2. Leads to industry-recognized and/or stackable credentials.
3. Is designed in response to regional or local industry needs.
4. Leverages partnership or collaboration between industry, adult education, and/or workforce system partners.



State Innovation Award

Does your state have an exciting new initiative or best practice that can be scaled and replicated in other states? If so, please consider nominating your state for the State Innovation Award. Entries typically highlight state agencies, state associations, or state led consortium, however entries are not limited to these categories.

Scholarship Grant

The **COABE Scholarship Grant** is presented to recipients to fund, or partially fund, college level courses of study that will advance the professional standing of COABE practitioners. Examples of scholarships include employees or volunteers in the field of adult basic education earning a degree or a state certificate/credential; obtaining an ESL certificate; teacher/counselor obtaining counselor/administrative credential; earning an advanced degree in adult education.

Incentive Grant

The **COABE Incentive Grant Award** is presented to recipients to support activities or projects in the field of adult basic education through the secondary level.

Programs Succeed when Learners Lead Incentive Grant

The Programs Succeed When Learners Lead Incentive grant is split into \$1500 to support a Student Leadership project at one adult education program and \$500 to facilitate travel to and registration for COABE 2024, where the grant recipient will present on the process for creating and the results of their Student Leadership initiative.

Behind Every Employer Incentive Grant

COABE has partnered with Full Capacity Marketing (FCM) to provide an incentive grant and technical assistance to an adult education organization that can demonstrate effectiveness in engaging employers with multiple workforce and education partners. Note that you must register your organization to get on the Behind Every Employer locator map.



Excellence in Local Programming

Excellence in Local Programming award is given to a local program that demonstrates excellence that can be quantified by high quality programming, learner outcomes, and an inclusive culture.

Award Criteria:

1. The nominee demonstrates alignment with COABE's mission.
2. The nominee demonstrates that they are a recipient of state recognition.
3. The nominee demonstrates indicators of high quality programming.
4. The nominee demonstrates learner outcomes.

The State Association Leadership Institute (SALI) Award

The State Association Leadership Institute Award is given at the discretion of COABE to an association that shows excellence in leadership for their state association.

Award Criteria:

1. The nominee demonstrates participation in SALI by session attendance and activity in the community of practice.
2. The nominee demonstrates alignment to COABE's mission.
3. The nominee demonstrates commitment to outreach and communication.
4. The nominee demonstrates inclusive and diverse board composition.
5. The nominee demonstrates engagement with partners.
6. The nominee demonstrates a variety of association activities.
7. The nominee demonstrates fiscal solvency.
8. The nominee can showcase top 3 accomplishments.



Research Incentive Grant

The Research Incentive Grant is designed to encourage innovative research that advances the field of adult education and workforce development. The grant provides support for projects that generate new knowledge, highlight best practices, or explore emerging trends with the potential to strengthen programs, inform policy, and improve outcomes for adult learners.

Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate:

- A clear research question or problem statement.
- Methodologies appropriate to the scope and goals of the project.
- Potential for practical application in adult education, workforce, or related settings.
- Plans for sharing findings with practitioners, policymakers, and the broader field.

The goal of this incentive grant is not only to promote research but also to foster collaboration, evidence-based decision-making, and the dissemination of insights that can lead to meaningful, lasting impact.

Practitioner Scholarship

This scholarship recognizes outstanding adult education practitioners who reflect Jody L. Angelone's lifelong dedication to professional learning, innovation, collaboration, and equity. Jody spent more than 25 years advancing the field through high-impact professional development, coaching, and leadership at the state and national levels—including a decade of service on the COABE Board of Directors.

Nominees for this scholarship should demonstrate excellence in:

- Designing and delivering high-quality professional learning.
- Demonstrating innovation and effectiveness in professional development approaches.
- Building educator capacity and fostering collaboration.
- Advancing the field through mentoring, coaching, or leadership.
- Promoting equity, access, and excellence in adult education.

This annual award honors Jody's legacy by elevating practitioners who empower educators and transform the adult learning experience.

