



February 15, 2017

Contact:

Fritz Schneider 301.728.4811

**COUNCIL FOR ADULT AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING SELECTS PHILADELPHIA, MIAMI,
NORFOLK, AND SEATTLE FOR PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT:**

Grant Will Link Local Workforce Systems, Community Colleges for Adult Learner Success

CHICAGO – The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) has selected partnerships of community colleges and workforce development boards (WDBs) in Philadelphia, Miami, Norfolk, and Seattle for a pilot project designed to link workforce systems and community colleges through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) for adult learner success.

Funded by a grant from the ECMC Foundation, this project will build on the existing assets of community-based entities, such as the workforce system and educational institutions, and will help increase the adult learner pipeline into postsecondary credential attainment. The program will also leverage adult learner-focused strategies to support college credential completion.

PLA enables non-traditional learners, a population that the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) projects could encompass more than 30 percent of enrolled students, to complete training and degree programs sooner by awarding them college credit based on the college-level knowledge, skills and abilities they've gained outside of the classroom.

In each of these four communities, CAEL has selected a community college-workforce system partnership to participate in the project. CAEL will work with local education, workforce and community stakeholders to design and implement processes that facilitate attainment of postsecondary credits. CAEL will provide strategy, training and process development/ improvement around participant engagement, assessment of prior learning, and generation of broader workforce system-wide knowledge of, support for and policies to promote PLA as a method for increasing postsecondary credential attainment for workforce system participants.

“Short-term training and rapid job placement initiatives alone fail to address the fact that many individuals may be well-positioned to earn postsecondary credentials, which would lead to higher-value job and career opportunities,” said CAEL CEO and President Pamela Tate. “This project connects adults with workforce systems, such as the Workforce Development Boards, American Jobs Centers (AJCs) and community-based organizations, which can help orient adults to college level learning that better aligns with regional demand occupations and employer demand for education.”

In addition to promoting PLA opportunities among those already pursuing college credentials, CAEL will utilize PLA to better engage community workforce efforts. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides communities with a venue and infrastructure in which promotion and facilitation of PLA can address both workforce development and college completion goals. This approach helps workforce system participants obtain credentials in a faster and less costly way, and facilitate better alignment between workforce boards and colleges to develop more comprehensive, better-informed career pathways.

“Strengthening relationships between public workforce system partners and community colleges presents a win-win for both and provides greater opportunity to students and jobseekers,” said Tate. “It also benefits area employers who are struggling to find individuals who possess the skills and credentials they need.”

PLA has been highlighted by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration as an effective strategy for increasing postsecondary credential attainment. Having WIOA training participants' prior learning assessed

for credit can result in cost savings by reducing tuition expenses and avoiding the allocation of resources to pay for redundant training.

About CAEL

Founded in 1974, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) is a Chicago-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that assists adults with their educational career development endeavors. CAEL works with the public sector, private sector industries and higher education institutions to ensure that adult students receive the most efficient training and education to occupy a meaningful professional place in a 21st century economy. More information is available at www.cael.org. Follow CAEL on Twitter @CAELnews or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CAELnews.

#