

# Adult and Community Learning Services Fall Reopening Guidance

August 3, 2020

## Opening Letter from Adult Education State Director

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Dear Adult Education Program Directors, Educators, and Community Members,

Let me start by thanking you for going above and beyond to meet the sudden and urgent needs of our adult students. I hope you have been able to take a well-deserved break this summer and recharge to plan a fall reopening unlike any before.

On June 25, 2020, Commissioner Riley released the [Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance](#) and several other topical guidance documents have followed. In response to questions regarding how these resources apply to adult education programs, Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) has developed supplemental guidance for these programs.

**This document provides guidance on areas that will need to be adjusted for adult education programs, as well as information on submitting reopening plans to ACLS.** This guidance may be revised as we continue to monitor COVID-19 trends and the latest medical research.

**Adult education programs should submit their comprehensive reopening plans (including in-person, hybrid, and remote models) to ACLS by Monday, August 31, 2020.** Please review the following resources on distance education, provided by the [SABES Program Support PD Center](#), to support you with remote learning plans:

- The [recorded presentation of the ACLS Annual Directors' Meeting session: Distance Education in FY21-Designing Your Program: A Working Session](#) (password 2d%7\*\*O?),
- The [accompanying slides](#), and
- The [Distance Education Planning Template](#) from the session.

We look forward to working with you to plan a successful reopening and successful school year for our students.

Wyvonne Stevens-Carter  
Adult Education State Director

## ACLS Supplemental Guidance

As the Commonwealth prepares for the fall reopening of schools, we are issuing the following supplemental guidance for adult education programs, including appropriate measures to promote the safety of students, teachers, and staff.

**All adult education programs – as well as post-secondary technical institutes that utilize technical/shop spaces and off-site, work-based learning for instruction – must follow the reopening guidance previously issued by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE or the Department), when applicable to their operations:**

- [Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance](#)
- [Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#) (*download*)
- [Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance](#) (*download*)
- [Guidance for Courses Requiring Additional Safety Considerations](#) (*download*)
- [Career/Vocational Technical Education Reopening Guidelines](#) (*download*)

**However, some of the above guidance will need to be adjusted for adult education programs. The key adjustments are outlined below.**

- **Prioritize virtual learning when possible.** Unlike DESE’s guidance for K-12 schools, ACLS is not prioritizing in-person classes. Each adult education program director should decide what model of academic services to use this fall based on consideration of their program’s unique circumstances, such as regional COVID-19 prevalence, physical space and capacity, and local or parent agency guidelines.
- **Consider special populations.** If offering in-person or hybrid classes, programs should prioritize which students would benefit most from in-person services, such as beginning English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) learners. If held in person, ESOL programs should consider the use of transparent face coverings, especially for beginner students who benefit from observing mouth movement as well as facial expressions.
- **When providing in-person services, ensure all students wear masks and practice physical distancing.** Adult education programs should ensure students wear face masks at all times. Exceptions to mask requirements must be made for those for whom masks are not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. Adult education programs should provide at least six feet of distance between individuals in classrooms and other school settings. Additionally, adult education programs must follow all other health and safety requirements outlined in the [Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance](#).
- **When providing in-person services, establish protocols for adult learners who have symptoms.** Adult and Community Learning Services is not requiring programs to have a dedicated isolation space for students who show COVID-19 symptoms, as adult students are able to immediately and independently depart from the premises. However, programs should have a plan in place to isolate and support students who are not well enough to travel without assistance. Additionally, programs should follow up with any students who are dismissed for medical reasons in alignment with the [Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#) (*download*).

- **Encourage vaccinations.** While at this time adult education programs cannot require students to have standard vaccinations, programs should strongly encourage all students and staff to get the flu vaccination as soon as it is available in order to reduce the risk of managing a bad flu season and the ongoing presence of COVID-19.
- **Communication with students.** The Department’s school reopening guidance for preK-12 schools recommends communicating with families about new safety protocols, symptom screening, and other areas. Adult education programs should consider how to best communicate directly with students.
- **Identify a main contact for ACLS.** Program directors should be the main contact for communicating with ACLS. Programs might also consider having a COVID-19 response leader as well as a clear system in place to maximize effective and timely communication within their communities.
- **Consider staffing needs.** Educators and other staff who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will want to consult with their health care providers about whether and under what circumstances a return to in-person school settings would be medically inadvisable.
- **Assume level funding.** At this time, programs should assume level funding for FY21, as noted in the posted [Table 1](#) (*download*). Adult and Community Learning Services will allow adult education programs to use their funding to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed.