

Lit Scan

Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

Volume 6 ♦ Number 1

January 15, 2002

Educational Activities of Adult Colorado Works Recipients *The Role of GED & Other Basic Education Programs in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families*



The Colorado Works program enables counties to provide cash assistance to low-income families under the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. While in the program and as they exit it, participants are encouraged to participate in a variety of adult education activities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Currently, adults in Colorado Works program rarely participate in GED preparation classes and other basic education activities, but the rate of participation has increased dramatically in 3 years (30%).
- Adult education activities rank third among work-related activities of adults exiting the Colorado Works program (over 25%).
- Colorado Works will attempt to increase recruitment of program participants into GED preparation classes.

High School Attendance and GED Preparation Increasing

While receiving cash assistance, Colorado Works participants are encouraged to acquire job skills and work experience through a variety of work and education-related activities. Of the education-related activities, participation in GED preparation classes has been reported most frequently over the past three years and has increased by more than 30 percent. Still, the overall rates of participation have remained low: 4.3% in 1998 and 5.6% in late 2000. Vocational education runs a close second to GED preparation, but levels of participation in high school, ESL classes, and Basic Education classes are dramatically lower. (See Table 1.)



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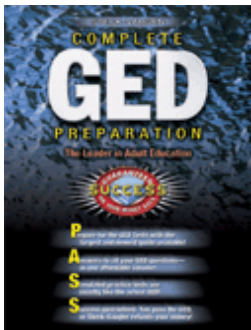
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Educational Activities of Adult Colorado Works Recipients

**Table 1. Participation in Educational Activities by
 Adult Colorado Works Recipients, 1998-2000**

Educational Activity	June 1998	June 1999	June 2000	Dec. 2000
All educational activities	14.5%	19.2%	14.0%	14.3%
Selected activities				
GED preparation class	4.3%	5.6%	5.2%	5.6%
Vocational educational training	3.9%	4.7%	3.8%	4.9%
High school attendance	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
English as a Second Language (ESL) class	0.8%	1.2%	0.5%	0.4%
Basic Education Class	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%

*A Quarter of Exiting Colorado Works Recipients in Adult Education Activities,
 One in Five Enrolled in GED Preparation Classes*



Participation rates in adult education activities are much higher for exiting Colorado Works recipients, especially those who have not earned high school diplomas or passed the GED tests. Among the latter group, more than a quarter of exiting Colorado Works recipients are involved in adult education activities, and almost one in five without high school or equivalent credentials is enrolled in a GED preparation class. As for all CW recipients, participation rates in other educational activities are much lower. (See Table 2.)

In its 2001 program evaluation, the Colorado Works program received and accepted a recommendation to work more closely with counties to improve assessment processes to identify CW recipients who could benefit from placement in GED preparation classes or other basic education activities.



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Table 2. Work Activity Participation of Exiting Colorado Works Recipients by Education Level, State Fiscal Years 1999-2000

Work Activity	Recipients Without High School Diploma or GED	Recipients With High School Diploma or GED
Total number of recipients	8,300	9,383
Unsubsidized employment	50.5%	58.3%
Job search and job readiness activities	34.9%	38.3%
Adult education activities	28.5%	13.8%
GED preparation class	19.3%	1.2%
Vocational educational training	3.4%	9.9%
High school attendance	2.4%	0.3%
English as a Second Language (ESL) class	2.0%	1.3%
Basic Education class	1.4%	1.1%
Job skills training directly related to employment	20.0%	21.3%
Work experience	11.1%	11.8%
Community service programs	8.1%	4.8%
Subsidized employment	0.7%	0.9%
On-the-job training	0.3%	0.3%
Child care provision to community service program participants	0.3%	0.2%

SOURCE

- Berkeley Policy Associates, **Evaluation of the Colorado Works Program: Third Annual Report: Part 1: Diversion Programs and Work Activity Participation, August 2001.** Available online at: http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/audit_dir/2002/2002perf/1260Pt1.pdf.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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