

# Six States Find Creative Ways To Make Adult Educ

Since the release of *Workplace Essential Skills* in August 1999 and *GED Connection* in August 2001, many states have purchased statewide licenses to make the two series widely available to adult learners and adult learning centers within their reach.

Some act primarily as broadcasters, some serve as distributors of the materials, and some form partnerships to deliver and support instruction. Learners in all of these states benefit greatly from the generosity of the organization that acquired the statewide license.

The following profiles are snapshots of six states with very different ways of using and sharing the two series.

## Georgia

Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) includes a nine-station television network, as well as Georgia Public Radio and PeachStar Education Services. PeachStar provides programming for all grade levels, including post-secondary, to 2000+ public libraries, state and technical colleges, universities, public schools and correctional facilities across the state. PeachStar also offers staff development training for teachers and other educators through various state agencies and local school systems.

Included in PeachStar's lineup are *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills*, both produced by KET as part of the PBS LiteracyLink project.

Cooperation with the state library system resulted in seminars focusing on the availability of *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills*, and ways of using the two series. Each local program provides student support and supplementary print materials. Facilitators and adult learners also are referred to the LiteracyLink<sup>SM</sup> site ([www.pbs.org/literacy](http://www.pbs.org/literacy)), where they can work with online exercises for both series, and take GED practice tests. LiteracyLink is "really valuable—there is no cost to the learner," says Patrice Weaver, Project Manager for GPB. "That's one reason why we're excited to work with the libraries" and increase awareness that *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills* are available to Georgians.



Historically, the network had offered *GED ON TV*, also produced by KET, "so when the two new series came out, we were excited and in a unique position to deliver them. We didn't consider any others (educational series) because of our (positive) relationship with KET and with other PBS stations," Weaver says.

## Maine

The Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation (MPBC) has formed a partnership with the Maine departments of Education and Labor, according to Kim Lipp, MPBC Special Projects Director.

The partnership outreach—CAREER AND LEARNING CONNECTIONS—grew from a series of discussions with Education and Labor to identify new ways to reach more people who need their services. Maine is a rural state with geographically widespread and sometimes isolated populations, explains Rhonda Morin, MPBC Media Coordinator. "We knew we *could* get to those homes."

MPBC had heard about *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills* through KET promotional information and looked at preview packages.



"We didn't want to *replace* services of the centers, but rather find tools that could enhance Department of Education and Department of Labor services, and this seemed like a good fit," Lipp says. "We brought (the two series) to department representatives and they were excited about the content."

Daily broadcasts of both series began on January 7, 2002. Through those broadcasts, "we can enhance what Education is doing with instructor-led Adult Education services, and what Labor is doing in its 23 CareerCenters<sup>SM</sup> throughout the state," Lipp notes. "We can raise awareness" of CareerCenter services and Adult Education Services, and (Education and Labor) can use the broadcasts as teaching aids.

Viewers call MPBC's 800 number and receive a packet including contact information for CareerCenter and Adult Education Services sites. For those who do not live near a site, instructors or counselors are available by phone or e-mail.

Calls to MPBC, as well as calls or walk-in visits at Education and Labor centers are being tracked. Ongoing analysis will allow the three partners to adjust procedures as needed.

In April, PBS instructors will train Education and Labor representatives on using the series tapes, and complimentary workbooks and online components; and the department representatives will train each other on CareerCenters and Adult Education Services. "It's a great opportunity (for state employees) to bond and learn how they can support each other," Morin notes.

## New Jersey

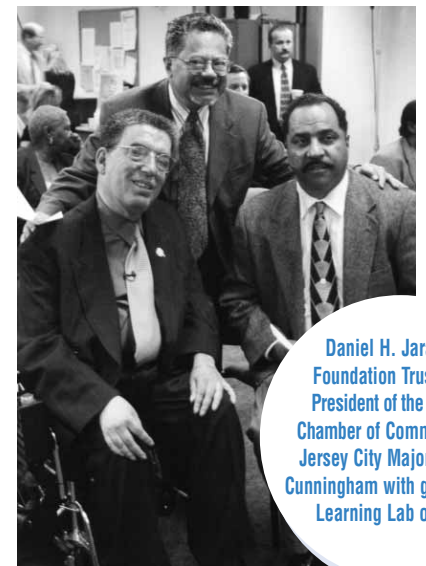
New Jersey's adult learners enjoy all of the advantages of community-based learning centers and digital TV educational programming. Through cooperative efforts of NJN Public Television (NJN), the New Jersey Department of Labor (DOL) and the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE), learners are able to pursue everything from literacy and basic math to GED and ESL studies and workplace readiness skills enhancement.



Elizabeth G. Christopherson, NJN Executive Director and three graduates of the NJ Workplace Literacy Program at the Newark Housing Authority.

"Education is at the heart of our mission," says NJN Executive Director and CEO Elizabeth Christopherson, "and we are committed to using our resources to address adult literacy."

The needs are almost as varied as the population: the high schooler or the displaced worker who needs to hone workplace skills; the learner moving from welfare to work, the skilled employee who needs a GED in order to qualify for promotion, and many more. NJN's outreach is designed to foster, in a variety of ways, the opportunity for every learner to succeed.



Daniel H. Jara, NJN Foundation Trustee and President of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Jersey City Mayor Glenn D. Cunningham with guests at the Learning Lab opening.

Learning opportunities include:

- Fourteen community-based learning sites, where learners study with *Workplace Essential Skills*, *GED Connection* and other video materials at individual computers, selecting the episodes they wish to view or review, and working at their own pace. Each center has video and multimedia software stored on a server, and individuals can access the material at individual computer stations. Some centers choose to use dubs supplied through NJN, others access via special channels, thanks to digital technology. Each center has facilitators/ instructors to assist learners.
- NJN also broadcasts *GED Connection*, *Workplace Essential Skills*, *Math Basics*, *Crossroads Café*, and other educational programs for use at home or in instructor-led classroom settings.
- Another component of NJN's Workplace Literacy Program includes industry-specific and community-specific programming produced by NJN. For example, the daily series *Jobcast* is digitally televised and web cast. The show features job-hunting tips, stories of successful job searches, employment opportunities, master classes and more. The daily show can be used by individuals or by classes as a basis for group discussion. Once a month, NJN presents a monthly call-in edition of *Jobcast* to answer such questions as what clothing and other resources might be needed for a job interview.

# ation Materials Available

"We customize according to the needs of the individual and the needs of the community," Christopherson adds. When you see a proud young mother moving from welfare to work, or one of hundreds of other individual success stories, that makes the NJN staff feel very proud. Success stories are "very moving," she says.

To learn more about NJN capabilities and services, visit [www.njn.net/workforce](http://www.njn.net/workforce).

## Rhode Island

WSBE Channel 36 serves southeastern New England from its base in Providence, R.I., and broadcasts both *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills*.

Many learners use the *GED Connection* telecasts as the centerpiece of a home-study program. Testing is done at various sites by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

*Workplace Essential Skills* is seen as a vehicle for "creating interest" in the learner/viewer, according to LeRoy Czaskos, WSBE Director of Educational Services. Inquirers are directed to the State Department of Education or local agencies using the series and its complementary print and online materials.

Educational pages on WSBE's web site ([www.wsbe.org/Education/index.html](http://www.wsbe.org/Education/index.html)) give specific information about fees; names, addresses and phone numbers of appropriate agencies; and references to the PBS LiteracyLink™ site and KET's 800 number. Because people access the web page from many parts of the nation, WSBE also seeks out local programs in other states, when appropriate, to ensure that the inquirer will find educational assistance close to home.

In addition to the web site, Czaskos and his colleagues spread the educational word in person at shopping mall "Education Expos"; exhibits at teacher conferences, and meetings at local schools.

State statistics on those achieving the GED are not broken down to identify learners studying via TV vs. those in other programs; but Czaskos is eager to get feedback indicating the success of WSBE efforts:

"People will write and thank us (saying things like), if it hadn't been on TV, I wouldn't have gotten the GED certificate, or the college credit, etc." Such messages reinforce WSBE's dedication and its belief that:

*"Behind Every GED Certificate Is A Story Of Courage And Perseverance."*

## Idaho

Idaho Public Television (IdahoPTV) is airing both *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills*, according to Director of Learning Services Gens Johnson.



Staffers from the five-station public television network have worked with correctional education teachers, showing how both video series could be used in class settings. Similarly, the network is training instructors in Adult Basic Education centers around the state, in partnership with the State of Idaho Professional Technical Division.

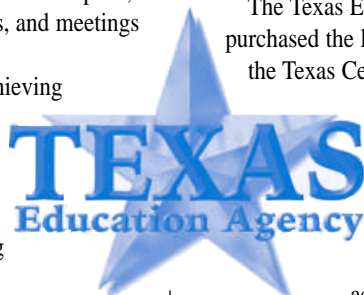
Surveys later this spring will take a closer look at how teachers are using both series in a variety of settings, and what results they achieve.

The network web site, [www.idahoptv.org](http://www.idahoptv.org), offers information for teachers on various educational video materials and how these materials can fit into individual curricula. For adult learners, there is information on getting a job or entering college; and on various telecourses, including *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills*.

## Texas

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) purchased the lease and worked with the Texas Center for Adult Literacy and Learning to provide tapes of *GED Connection* to any non-profit local programs or Community Based Organizations (CBOs) requesting them, according to Dr. Shelia

Rosenberg with TEA's Adult & Community Education Division.




"*GED Connection* was being talked about, and we gave Dr. Rosenberg a heads up," says Harriet V. Smith, Materials/Research Coordinator with the Center, based at Texas A&M University.

The two agencies thought that a lease would be "a good deal for resources for the new (GED) test." Many local adult education programs are small and use volunteer teachers, "so we're always looking for good materials. (Once we had the tapes) we wanted to make the materials available to the most programs at the least cost." In addition to small local programs, large adult education co-ops, correctional programs, Even Start and others have requested the tapes, Smith notes.

The Center is the State Literacy Resource and usually loans materials. In this case, tapes were provided for the cost of duplication.

Some programs broadcast their tapes through closed systems; others obtain multiple sets for each learning center. "People find (the series) very helpful," Smith notes.

TEA also is facilitating GED 2002 training for trainers of teachers throughout the state, focusing on instructional strategies; and has purchased calculators for various local programs, Dr. Rosenberg adds. *GED Connection* is seen as a useful supplement to classroom teaching. 

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