Access – Survey Summary

Since March 25, 2015, 185 respondents have completed the Adult Education Stakeholders Survey. In addition to the survey data presented at the Adult Ed convening, the survey included the following four open-ended questions:

* What is one thing that you would like to know about adult education in RI?
* What are the biggest strengths of adult education?
* How can adult education be improved?
* What are your biggest hopes and concerns for adult education in RI over the next few years?

The responses to the open ended questions have been synthesized to identify the following common themes: Resources, Access, and Connections. These responses will be shared with Working Groups as they meet this June and made available on the project website (see link below).

**Access -- Summary of Open-Ended Responses:**

Overall, many survey respondents cited the diversity and availability of adult education programs as the greatest strength. Many felt that there was strong geographic diversity of programs across the state, with many adults able to access programs right in their neighborhood. In areas with several programs, learners have several options that they can choose from based on their individual needs. Stakeholders stated that there are many different levels and types of programs in our state to meet learner needs, from basic literacy, to family literacy, to GED courses. In general, many felt that there are a variety of schedules available to meet adult learner need.

Despite the diverse programs offered in the state, stakeholders expressed concern that certain programs and classes and programs tend to have long waiting lists due to limited offerings. For instance, several individuals stated that there are not enough evening classes to keep up with demand. Additionally, several identified an increasing demand for adult education courses among young adults ages 16-24 years old. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that there is a need to increase access and availability to programs and classes for low-literacy adults, due to the great need that exists in our state. While some programs offer low-cost or free courses, many expressed concern that that affordability of courses is a significant barrier for many adults. Additionally, another barrier cited by many was the lack of information about what classes are available. Many articulated a need to improve advertising, outreach, and information distribution efforts about available programs and that registration for classes should be more accessible and flexible for working families.

In addition, many respondents identified a need to strengthen supports for learners enrolled in adult education courses, such as wrap around services, transportation support, support for adults with learning disabilities, access to technology, and flexible funds made available to adults for instructional materials or the GED test. Additionally, several individuals stated that increased coordination between and across services and programs could make it easier for adults to access the services that they need.

**For More Information:** The full survey responses can be viewed on the Adult Ed project website, toward the bottom of the page, and can be found [here](http://adultedri2015.weebly.com/adult-education-in-rhode-island.html).