

FOCUSED REVIEW

Interagency Council on Adult Literacy



Joint Legislative Oversight
& Sunset Committee

Executive Summary

The Interagency Council on Adult Literacy is not operational and held its last meeting in June 2015. The council is not codified in Delaware Code, and Governor Minner’s Executive Order 40 re-established it in 2003. Epilogue language in the state’s budget still lists the Interagency Council on Adult Literacy as a pass-through program in the Department of Education, with a budget of \$278,600. JLOSC staff was unable to find an established public body that specifically and regularly discusses the topic of adult literacy.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The Joint Legislative Oversight and Sunset Committee (“JLOSC” or “Committee”) voted on March 25, 2021, to have their staff perform a focused, limited review on the Interagency Council on Adult Literacy to determine its operational status. Unlike full oversight and sunset reviews, this review does not follow the standard review process which includes a self-report and formal presentation from the entity under review. In a focused, limited review, JLOSC staff explore the specific research request from the Committee and supply the Committee this report of the findings and recommendations on the topic. To complete this report, JLOSC staff conducted interviews and reviewed available public documents.

Staff Recommendations

JLOSC staff does not have a legislative recommendation for JLOSC to consider at this time and has shared this report with the Governor’s Office, Director of Adult and Prison Education Resources, Delaware Department of Education, and Delaware Division of Libraries. JLOSC can recommend staff research re-establishing a public body to meet on the topic of adult literacy.

Background Information

JLOSC staff researched the operational status of the Interagency Council on Adult Literacy. The following is a summary of the information gathered.

Name of Entity: Interagency Council on Adult Literacy (“ICAL”).

Date of creation: Existed in some form before 1995, reestablished on March 27, 2003, by Executive Order # 40.¹

Section(s) of Delaware Code: None.

Published Regulations or By-Laws: None.

Primary Functions of Entity: Executive Order #40 said ICAL was “responsible for the development of an action plan to advance literacy within the State” and listed the following duties:

- Coordinate and convene a literacy summit to develop recommendations for increasing literacy.

¹ Executive Order #40: https://archivesfiles.delaware.gov/Executive-Orders/Minner/Minner_EO40.pdf

- Develop an adult and family literacy policy.
- Recommend appropriate literacy-related legislation.
- Coordinate policy and resources with other agencies regarding delivery of services for existing and future programs.
- Review and recommend target populations.
- Gather and analyze literacy data.
- Monitor and evaluate literacy-related activities in an effort to attain literacy goals.
- Publicly highlight the on-going literacy successes and challenges in Delaware.
- Devise a plan to provide access to literacy services.

Website: None.

Annual Report: None.

Public Meeting Frequency, Agendas, Minutes: No entries on the Public Meeting Calendar. Last meeting held in June 2015; no future meetings scheduled.²

Board Members: Executive Order #40 states ICAL shall consist of no more than 15 members, each appointed by the Governor, with reserved seats for specific officials. No mention of term limits. The Governor's office last made appointments to this group in December of 2008.

Budget: State budget epilogue language lists ICAL as a pass-through program in the Department of Education, with a budget of \$278,600.³

Latest News on Entity: Last news article found dated July 1, 2014, from Cape Gazette, about literacy coordinator Alison Tingle, honored for service.

Additional Notes: ICAL is not codified as Governor Minner re-established the Council by Executive Order. Removing this defunct council from the Governor's Office list of boards and commission is outside the scope of JLOSC's duties.⁴

In discussing the current JLOSC review of the Council on Libraries, the Division of Libraries expressed interest in ICAL. Further discussions could occur with the Division of Libraries to see if ICAL should be reestablished under its umbrella, either as a subcommittee of the Council on Libraries or a standalone body. JLOSC staff cannot locate a current public body charged with specifically discussing adult literacy.

Lastly, research found limited records for ICAL. Through communications with the last known administrative support for ICAL, Maureen Whelan, Director of Adult and Prison Education Resources with the Delaware Department of Education, provided the following information:

- Last meeting held by ICAL in June 2015.
- No members currently serving on ICAL.

² Last meeting date provided by last known administrative support office.

³ It is unclear why ICAL remains in epilogue language as it has not held a meeting since June 2015.

⁴ Application (last updated 12/05/2018) available at: https://governor.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/12/board_and_commission_application-form_120518.pdf

- Confusion around if an Executive Order expires.
 - Correspondence discussing officially disbanding ICAL with the Governor’s Office provided no resolution.
 - Recommends rescinding the Executive Order due to inactivity.
- Groups currently meeting with representatives from agencies who were once represented on ICAL:
 - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (“WIOA”) Leadership Team, purpose: State Plan on Workforce Development.⁵
 - Delaware Workforce Development Board, purpose: State Plan on Workforce Development (this group may subsume the WIOA Leadership Team above).⁶
 - Delaware Correctional on Reentry Commission – Department of Correction and Department of Education.⁷

Report Prepared by Division of Research Staff:

⁵ Information available at: <https://labor.delaware.gov/divisions/employment-training/team-info>

⁶ This board exists by Executive Order only, not in code, is holding regular meetings, does not appear to specifically and consistently address adult literacy topics, by-laws available online: <https://labor.delaware.gov/wib/bylaws>

⁷ Delaware Correctional on Reentry Commission released the Delaware Recidivism Reduction System Blueprint for 2021-2024 and the Commission ended in 2020. Report available at: <https://doc.delaware.gov/dcrc/assets/docs/dcrcblueprint.pdf>

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