

Archive of Adult Foundational Education Resources NOW OPEN

By Paul Jurmo, Ed.D. (www.pauljurmo.info)

December 17, 2025

I'm pleased to announce that a new "Archive of Special Collections" is now open on the COABE website at <https://adultedresource.coabe.org/program-level/archive-of-special-collections/>.


PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE: This Archive is an outgrowth of a concept paper¹ issued on February 6, 2023 by the Adult Foundational Education Digital Library Group. This ad-hoc group of AFE researchers and practitioners made the case for a new national on-line library of valuable AFE-related resource materials. Its primary purpose would be to preserve and disseminate hard-to-find research, policy documents, curriculum and assessment tools, and other resource materials. Most of these would be from previous decades, but some would also be more recent. Making these resources more easily available now would help planners and implementers of AFE services (e.g., administrators, instructors, evaluators, and adult learners) and AFE supporters (e.g., advocates, researchers, policy makers and funders, and other stakeholder partners) to create, expand, and sustain effective AFE systems.

SUPPORTERS AND CONTENTS: COABE stepped up early this year to provide moral and technical support to create this new Archive of Special Collections. Dozens of other individuals and organizations also provided in-kind supports.² This working model demonstrates the potential contents, audiences, uses, methods (for organizing, storing, and disseminating materials), and requirements of a national AFE digital library. The Archive contains these four Special Collections:

- ***Learners, Educators, and Communities as Problem Solvers*** (December 2026): Presents materials showing how participatory and community-oriented AFE can equip learners and the community groups they participate in to manage meaningful challenges and opportunities they face (e.g. related to work, family, health, democratic civic participation, and other issues.) Includes materials from many individuals and organizations including Equipped for the Future, *Focus on Basics*, National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Literacy South, and smaller community-based organizations.
- ***Workplace Learning*** (October 2025): Contains resources (research, program evaluations, policies, program models and curricula related to various industries and worker populations) showing how AFE has been customized to serve incumbent workers and the industries and communities they participate in. Includes materials from many individuals and organizations such as the National Workplace Literacy Program, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Equipped for the Future, state workplace literacy initiatives, labor unions, workplace health and safety specialists, program evaluators, and specialists in participatory education.

¹ See the full concept paper titled "A National Digital Library to Support U.S. Adult Foundational Education" here: <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4b259097-f77f-4c70-813c-4cff11dc6161/downloads/AFEDL%20Concept%20Paper%202-6-23.pdf?ver=1765645816326>

² In addition to the above-described supports given by COABE and the Adult Foundational Education Digital Library Group, dozens of other individuals (acknowledged by name in each of the Collections) provided materials and ideas for the four collections. Additional in-kind support was provided by the Collections' author and his family.

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- ***Policy for Adult Foundational Education*** (August 2025): Presents research, policy papers, and other resources in two sections: (1) General Policy for AFE and (2) Special Issues for Policy Makers. Sources include the Business Council for Effective Literacy, Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, National Commission on Adult Literacy, National Institute for Literacy, National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, National Center on Adult Literacy, Southport Institute for Policy Analysis, and individual researchers and policy analysts.
 - ***Business Partnerships*** (March 2025): Includes reports, newsletters, guidebooks, and other materials showing the diverse ways that individual businesses and business groups have supported AFE (through financial and in-kind resources for AFE providers; supports for planning, policy making, and awareness raising; and provision of AFE for incumbent workers and particular industries). Sources include the Business Council for Effective Literacy, Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, and National Commission on Adult Literacy.

HOW YOU MIGHT USE AND SUPPORT THIS WORK: You are invited to review these four collections and (1) consider how you might use them in your own work; (2) share them with colleagues; (3) send questions and suggestions to me (at pauljurmo@gmail.com) about how such collections might be improved and expanded; and (4) consider whether and how you might support the creation of similar collections on a variety of key AFE themes (e.g., health literacy, family literacy, and others). In early 2026, I will be reaching out to the field to invite interested colleagues in AFE and other fields (e.g., digital libraries) to build on the above work to explore how additional resource collections might be supported and created. This is especially important now that supports for <https://lincs.ed.gov> and similar AFE resource centers is at risk.

Meanwhile, deep thanks to all who made this initial Archive of Special Collections possible!
Through your collaborative thinking and action, you have created a model of human intelligence that our nation can learn from.