



# In Community, Strength

## Changing Our Minds about U.S. Adult Foundational Education

*A New Resource Book Series by Paul Jurmo, Ed.D.*

January 27, 2025

### Contents

A new series of five resource books is now available. They focus on these questions:

1. What are the strengths and limitations of current AFE efforts in the U.S.?
2. What are arguments for a multi-purpose, collaborative, empowerment-focused AFE system?
3. What is a draft vision for a community-oriented AFE systems reform initiative?
4. What might community-oriented AFE look like at a local level?
5. How can stakeholders get started with planning and implementing community-oriented AFE?
6. What supports and supporters would a community-oriented AFE systems reform effort need?
7. How have past and current collaborative initiatives built the capacities of local-level AFE innovations?
8. What can we do to get support for such an AFE systems reform effort and then move it forward?

### Audiences and Purposes

This resource book series is written for adult foundational education (AFE) practitioners, adult learners, policy makers and funders, researchers, and other stakeholders who want to strengthen and expand AFE efforts in the U.S. It acknowledges that AFE has – often with limited resources -- produced significant benefits for adult learners and diverse community stakeholders, while also generating program models, trained AFE specialists, and other resources that the field can build on. But the series also summarizes concerns that the current mix of AFE services (a) serves only small percentages of the estimated millions of adults who are challenged by basic skills limitations; (b) responds to only a limited range of learner interests and needs; (c) doesn't adequately involve or tap into the supports of important stakeholders in learners' communities; and (d) doesn't adequately use effective instructional and administrative practices already developed by AFE and other fields.

The series proposes that advocates, policy makers, funders, and other potential partners for AFE and adult learners re-organize themselves in ways to transition this important work to a more comprehensive and effective "community-oriented" model. This model would learn from and adapt effective strategies, tools, and other resources from current AFE systems and add additional resources developed in past years and currently emerging, to better serve more learners and communities.

### The Author

This is the latest in a series of documents written since 2017 by Paul Jurmo ([www.pauljurmo.info](http://www.pauljurmo.info)) with help from dozens of AFE practitioners, learners, and researchers. They were written as resources to support reform of our current mix of AFE services. He welcomes dialogue about how this new resource book series – and the ideas and information presented in it -- might be disseminated, adapted, and used.

**To Learn More:** Download the series at <https://pauljurmo.info/writings%3A-us%2C-2019-2024> . Email the author at [pjurmo@comcast.net](mailto:pjurmo@comcast.net). Visit [www.pauljurmo.info](http://www.pauljurmo.info) .