

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 20-10
	DATE December 28, 2010

TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
 ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE AGENCIES
 ALL STATE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER SYSTEM LEADS
 ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

FROM: JANE OATES *Jane Oates*
 Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Release and Availability of seven Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Occasional Papers (ETAOP 2010-11 through ETAOP 2010-17) on Literacy and Targeted Populations

1. Purpose. To announce the release and availability of seven ETA Occasional Papers (ETAOP 2010-11 through ETAOP 2010-17) on Literacy and Targeted Populations prepared by the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

2. Background. As part of the work of the Interagency Coordinating Group on Adult Literacy, ETA and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) initiated the development of four occasional papers based on the secondary analyses of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) data (<http://nces.ed.gov/naal/>). ETA also initiated the preparation of three additional occasional papers to better understand literacy needs of different population segments served through the public workforce system.

3. Publication Description. As part of the MOU between ETA and OVAE, AIR examined the literacy of non-native English speaking adults, America's young adults, female welfare recipients, and incarcerated adults nearing release from prison. The findings in occasional papers suggest that service delivery strategies should include elements of adult education such as adult basic education, English as a Second Language, and computer skills training to assist these populations with entering employment or making employment transitions. Following is a short description of each occasional paper.

Overcoming the Language Barrier: The Literacy of Non-Native-English-Speaking Adults, ETA Occasional Paper (ETAOP 2010-11).

This report, using the 2003 NAAL assessment data, examines the characteristics of non-native-English-speaking adults, as well as the relationship between various characteristics and literacy proficiency of this population group. Several key findings are discussed.

Preparing Youth for the Future: The Literacy of America's Young Adults, ETA Occasional Paper (ETAOP 2010-12).

This report, based on the 2003 NAAL assessment data, examines the characteristics and literacy proficiency of America's young adults ages 16-18 and 19-24, with particular attention to high school drop-outs within these age cohorts. This report also compares the literacy proficiency of young adults with that of older age cohorts and discusses characteristics that are most associated with the low literacy of America's young adults. Key findings from the analyses of these data are discussed.

Gaining the Skills for Employment: The Literacy of Female Public Assistance Recipients, ETA Occasional Paper (ETAOP 2010-13).

This report, based on the 2003 NAAL assessment data, examines the characteristics of women who were current recipients of public assistance as well as the relationship between various characteristics and the English literacy proficiency of this population group. Several key findings are discussed.

Preparing for Life Beyond Prison Walls: The Literacy of Incarcerated Adults Near Release, ETA Occasional Paper (ETAOP 2010-14).

This report, based on the 2003 NAAL Prison Survey assessment data, examines the characteristics of incarcerated adults who were near release as well as the relationship between the various characteristics and English literacy proficiency of this population group. Although the focus of this report is on incarcerated adults near release, several findings were true of both inmates near release and inmates not near release. Key findings for each subgroup are discussed.

In the following four occasional papers, AIR has linked NAAL literacy measures/scores to O*NET job descriptor information in order to identify occupations consistent with the literacy achievement scores of population groups to determine the necessary skills for preparation for employment or advancement. Following is a short description of each paper.

Building Career Ladders for the Working Poor Through Literacy Training, ETA Occasional Paper (ETAOP 2010-15).

The NAAL data provide a basis for comparing data on respondents who are among the working poor with data on other workers, to determine how they differ. The greatest distinction between the working poor and other workers is their literacy levels. The NAAL data show that the working poor, on average, fall below the general population in their literacy proficiency. There are sufficient data to suggest that literacy changes, even modest ones, can be critical links between minimally valued jobs held by the working poor and jobs in high-growth occupations.

Workers in Declining Industries: Literacy's Role in Worker Transitions, ETA Occasional Paper (ETAOP 2010-16).

Structural unemployment requires a response that can address large numbers of workers typically represented in occupations of declining industries. Regional economic development strategies should compare the capabilities of workers in declining industries with the requirements of expanding industries and high-growth occupations. NAAL data show that literacy deficiencies are the critical barrier that prevents workers in declining occupations from adapting to the demands of high-growth occupations. By using

occupations from adapting to the demands of high-growth occupations. By using O*NET data organized around literacy requirements of both declining and high-growth occupations, local area planners can affect the structural causes for unemployment by attracting industries that minimize the retraining needed by dislocated workers.

Survival Literacy Training for Non-Native-English-Speaking Workers, ETA Occasional Paper (ETAOP 2010-17).

According to the 2003 NAAL data, a high percentage (62 percent) of non-native-English-speaking workers are Hispanic, more than a third do not have a high school diploma, about 20 percent do not speak English, and 25 percent learned English as adults but likely have limited English skills. The literacy proficiency of these workers show that literacy is closely associated with length of employment, wages earned, hours worked, and occupations held. Employers are now directed to conduct training that meets the literacy and language skills limitations of their workers. A proposed solution incorporates evidence-based best practices into a new training model.

4. Inquiries. To view abstracts of these publications, or to download the full reports, please visit the ETA Occasional Paper Series Web site at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm>.