NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
Dr. R. Scott Ralls, President

September 11, 2009
RESPOND BY: October 14, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Basic Skills Directors
                Volunteer/Community-Based Organization Directors

FROM: Randy Whitfield, Ed.D.
                Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Services
                Basic Skills Department

SUBJECT: Basic Skills Mini-Research and Transition Grants

The North Carolina Basic Skills Program received $400,000 in incentive grants from the United States Department of Education. The Basic Skills State Leadership Advisory Board approved the use of this grant money to fund local mini-research and transition grants. Ten mini-research and ten transition grants will be funded for $20,000 each for the period of January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010. All program plans and applications are due October 14, 2009. **Four copies plus the originals must be submitted.**

The following grants are available for funding:

Mini-Research Project Grants
Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training and/or Employment Grants

Enclosed are copies of both grant plans and applications. A conference call will be held on Wednesday, September 16th at 2:00. If you are interested in applying for these grants and have questions, please call the following number at 2:00 p.m. on September 16, 2009: 919-420-7945.

Enclosures: 2

cc: Presidents
     Senior Continuing Education Administrators

                                      CC09-028
                                      Paper & Email copies

College/Agency/Organization   Date

Person(s) completing this application   Telephone Number

Address

Email Address

Instructions*:   If you have questions concerning the Program Plan and Application, please call Dr. Randy L. Whitfield at (919) 807-7132. Respond to each question and mail to the address listed below.   **The original application and four copies must be received by October 14, 2009. (Not postmarked)***

> Dr. Randy L. Whitfield
> Associate Vice President of Basic Skills
> North Carolina Community College System
> 5016 Mail Service Center
> Raleigh, NC 27699-5016

GRANT CERTIFICATION

Upon receipt of mini-research project grant funds, the agency agrees to the following:
- To provide mini-research design projects which use experimental and comparison groups to determine whether research-based methods and materials for Basic Skills increase federal educational functioning levels for students more than traditional methods and materials (for example, workbooks).
- To allow project staff to attend two mandatory one-day drive-in meetings in Raleigh, NC.   One meeting will occur at the beginning of the grant period, and the second meeting toward the end of the grant period.
- To provide System Office staff with a full report of the project no later than sixty days after the end of the project.

To Be Completed by Community College Programs
(Community Based Organizations do not have to complete this section.)

_____   _____
Signature of Vice President/Dean of Continuing Education   *Date*

_____   _____
Signature of President   *Date*

_____   _____
Signature of Chairman of the Board   *Date*

To Be Completed by Community Based Organizations
(Community colleges do not have to complete this section.)

_____   _____
Signature of Executive Director   **Date**

_____   _____
Signature of Chairman of the Board   *Date*

Basic Skills Mini-Research Projects

Purpose of Mini-Research Grants

The Basic Skills System Office is soliciting requests for grant proposals from local Basic Skills/literacy programs to conduct mini-research projects for the purpose of determining the effectiveness of research-based methods and materials in increasing educational functioning levels. The intent of this solicitation is to isolate those methods that produce real world results for students served in North Carolina Basic Skills/literacy programs. Funding is not intended to be used to conduct full-scale research.

Mini-Research Projects Definition:

Mini-research design projects are projects which use experimental and comparison groups to determine whether research-based methods and materials for Basic Skills increase federal educational functioning levels for students more than traditional methods and materials (for example, workbooks).

Target Group to be Served:

The general target group to be served includes any students in the following Basic Skills educational functioning levels: Beginning Literacy ABE, Beginning Basic Education ABE, Low Intermediate ABE, High Intermediate ABE, Low Adult Secondary Education, High Adult Secondary Education, ESL Literacy, Low Beginning ESL, High Beginning ESL, Low Intermediate ESL, High Intermediate ESL, and Advanced ESL.

Project Requirements:

- All projects must include an experimental group using research-based methods and materials.
- The comparison group must be taught using a variety of Basic Skills workbooks.
- Students will be given non-monetary incentives for attendance and will be dropped after a pre-determined number of absences.
- All projects must have one group where the instructor uses methods and materials based in research.
- Students in the group should have placements in no more than three consecutive educational functioning levels (for example, students could be in ABE Beginning Literacy, ABE Beginning Basic or ABE Intermediate Low).
- Students will be required to attend a minimum of four hours per week. (Students who cannot attend all four hours may be given the opportunity to make up work at the program's discretion.)
- Projects must collect data on movement from one educational functioning level to another in the experimental group as well as at least one other comparison group
- Programs must send staff to two mandatory one-day drive-in meetings in Raleigh, NC. during the duration of the project. One meeting will occur at the beginning of the grant period, and the second meeting toward the end of the grant period.
- A final report must be sent to the System Office within sixty days after the end of the project. (Reports will include a description of the project including methods/materials used, the number of students in the project, qualifications of instructor/tutor including training attended during the last two years, the hypothesis for the project, etc.; a description of outcomes including educational functioning levels for each student at the beginning and end of project; a description of what worked/didn't work in the project; and whether or not the project proved the validity of the hypothesis; and other information as determined by project recipients.)

Project Funding for Projects:
- Programs will receive $20,000 for the research project.
- Funding for the project may be used for Basic Skills/literacy materials, salary and/or curriculum development time for instructors or Basic Skills/literacy staff, travel to project meetings, and other items as deemed appropriate.
- Funding may not be used for activities/expenses not allowable under AEFLA (such as stipends, food, or promotional items.)

Mini-Research Projects Overview

Mini-Research Projects have the following components:

<u>Experimental Group</u> – This group will receive direct instruction with researched-based methods and materials which may include computers and technology. Basic Skills/literacy staff may be paid for planning time for curriculum development, etc.

<u>Comparison Group</u> – This group will be taught mostly through individualized instruction using Basic Skills/literacy workbooks.

<u>Data Comparison</u> – Test results for students in the experimental and comparison groups will be compared and general results shared in a final report.

Request for Proposal - Questionnaire

Below are the instructions for completing this questionnaire. <u>Be certain that all sections are included with narrative specific to the questions/statements listed under each heading</u>. Proposals will be reviewed by a 4-8 member panel. Total points awarded are listed in parenthesis beside each section heading.

I. **Abstract** (5 points)
This section is limited to one, single-spaced page.

Provide a summary of your proposal. Narrative should include a research hypothesis as well as an overview of the project.

II. **Body of the Proposal**

The content in this section, along with the other parts of the proposal, gives evidence that the applicant has the capabilities to carrying out the activities proposed in the grant.

A. **Hypothesis** (15 points)
   This section is limited to one double-spaced page.

   "A hypothesis is an educated guess, based on observation. Usually, a hypothesis can be supported or refuted through experimentation or more observation." (*Scientific Hypothesis, Theory, Law Definitions, Learn the Language of Science* by Anne Marie Helmenstine.)

   Describe the hypothesis of the project which should include the rationale for the methods/materials selected for the experimental class and the reason(s) why the methods/materials may produce more educational functioning level gains than traditional Basic Skills workbooks.

   Include the purpose for which you have selected the proposed research project. What question are you attempting to answer that will further the annual progress your students make in your program?

B. **Instructional Services Provided** (50 points)
   This section is limited to ten, double-spaced pages.

   1. Describe the instructional component for the experimental group What kind of methods and materials will be used with the experimental group? What type computer programs or other technology programs will be used? What basic skills will be taught (English, reading, math, etc.)?

   2. How often will the group meet? (Days/Hours – required minimum of four hours per week) How many instructional hours will be provided during the length of the project?

   3. Describe how the experimental group will be selected.

   4. Describe non-monetary incentives used for student retention.

   5. Describe the number of students in the experimental group.

   6. Describe the number of hours that students may miss before being dropped from the project.

   7. Describe proposed outcome measures. How many students will improve a Basic Skills educational functioning level?

8. If needed, how many hours will be used for curriculum development, etc., weekly?

9. Please provide any other pertinent information that gives evidence of your capacity to carry out the goals and objectives of this **project**.

    C. <u>**Management Plan**</u> (10 points)
This section is limited to one double-spaced page.

1. Describe the role of staff that will be assigned to this project. What percentage of their time will be committed to this project?

2. Describe the instructor's/tutor's qualifications. Include all state and local training attended over the last two years.

3. Provide a timetable that outlines major activities, benchmarks and completion dates.

    D. <u>**Evaluation**</u> *(10 points)*
This section is limited to one double-spaced page.

Describe how you plan to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of activities proposed. Include the mandatory report due sixty days after the end of the project.

III.   <u>**Budget**</u> (10 points)

- The total allocation to each program is $20,000.
- Each program must allot funding for two mandatory one-day drive-in meetings in Raleigh, NC.
- One meeting will occur at the beginning of the grant period, and the second meeting toward the end of the grant period.

Cost Effectiveness

Budget Category		Federal Funds Requested
Salaries, Instructional • Full-time (Describe positions.)	$	Total: $
• Part-time (Describe positions.)	$	
• Explanation:		
Educational Materials and Supplies • Explanation:		$
Equipment • **May not purchase equipment unless it is an integral part of the grant and is pre-approved by the grantee.** • Explanation		$
Contractual Services • *Explanation*		$
Staff Travel • *Explanation:*		$
Student Travel • Explanation		$
Staff Training • Explanation		$
Other Costs		Total: $

Note: Administrative Costs (Salaries Supportive and Other Expenses) cannot exceed more than 5% of total grant. *Administrative Costs, Salaries Supportive* • Salaries, Supportive, Full-time (Describe positions.) • Salaries, Supportive, Part-time (Describe positions.) • Explanation *Administrative Costs, Other Expenses* • Other Expenses (office supplies, postage, etc.) • Explanation	$ $ $	
Note: • *How much funding do you expect to use from other sources for this project? (Include state, federal and funds from other sources.)*	$ $	
Total Federal Funds Allowable:		**$20,000**

College/Agency/Organization   Date

Person(s) completing this application   Telephone Number

Address

Email Address

Instructions: If you have questions concerning the Program Plan and Application, please call Dr. Randy L. Whitfield at (919) 807-7132. Respond to each question and mail to the address listed below. ***The original application and four copies must be received by October 14, 2009. (Not postmarked)***

> Dr. Randy L. Whitfield
> Associate Vice President of Basic Skills
> North Carolina Community College System
> 5016 Mail Service Center
> Raleigh, NC 27699-5016

GRANT CERTIFICATION

Upon receipt of transition grant funds, the agency agrees to the following:
- To provide activities which facilitate transitions for Basic Skills students from Basic Skills to postsecondary education and training and/or employment.
  To allow project staff to attend two mandatory one-day drive-in meetings in Raleigh, NC.   One meeting will occur at the beginning of the grant period, and the second meeting toward the end of the grant period.
- To provide System Office staff with a full report of the project no later than sixty days after the end of the project.

To Be Completed by Community College Programs (Community Based Organizations do not have to complete this section.)
_____   _____ *Signature of Vice President/Dean of Continuing Education*   *Date*
_____   _____ *Signature of President*   *Date*
_____   _____ *Signature of Chairman of the Board*   *Date*

To Be Completed by Community Based Organizations (Community colleges do not have to complete this section.)
_____   _____ *Signature of Executive Director*   *Date*
_____   _____ *Signature of Chairman of the Board*   *Date*

**Basic Skills Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training
and/or Employment Grants**

Purpose of Transition Grants
The Basic Skills System Office is soliciting requests for grant proposals from local Basic Skills/literacy programs to provide innovative approaches which help Basic Skills/literacy students transition to postsecondary education and training and/or employment. All states are required to set federal outcome measures for helping students transition to postsecondary education and training and/or employment. The purpose of these grants is to determine which approaches prove to be successful in transitioning students.

Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training and/or Employment Grants Definition:
Transition to postsecondary education and training and/or jobs grants are projects which facilitate transitions for Basic Skills students from Basic Skills/literacy programs to postsecondary education and training and/or employment.

Target Group to be Served:
The general target group to be served includes any students in the following Basic Skills educational functioning levels: Beginning Literacy ABE, Beginning Basic Education ABE, Low Intermediate ABE, High Intermediate ABE, Low Adult Secondary Education, High Adult Secondary Education, ESL Literacy, Low Beginning ESL, High Beginning ESL, Low Intermediate ESL, High Intermediate ESL, and Advanced ESL.

Project Requirements:
- Projects should focus on transitions to postsecondary education and training or employment.
- Funding must be used for Basic Skills activities. Activities which are not aligned with Basic Skills program objectives may not be paid for out of transition grant funds. (for example, pay for occupational instructors, books for occupational classes, etc.)
- Programs must send staff to two mandatory one-day drive-in meetings in Raleigh, NC. during the duration of the project. One meeting will occur at the beginning of the grant period, and the second meeting toward the end of the grant period.
- A final report must be sent to the System Office within sixty days after the end of the project.
- A final report must be sent to the System Office within sixty days after the end of the project.
(Reports will include a description of the project including project activities; a description of outcomes; a description of what worked/didn't work in the project; student data if the project included instruction; and other information as determined by project recipients.)

Project Funding for Projects:
- Programs will receive $20,000 for the project.
- Funding for the project may be used for Basic Skills/literacy materials, salary and/or curriculum development time for instructors/tutors or Basic Skills/literacy staff, travel to project meetings, and other items as deemed appropriate.
- Funding may not be used for activities/expenses not allowable under AEFLA (such as stipends, food, or promotional items.)

Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training and/or Employment Grants

Local programs are encouraged to design innovative transition projects which will facilitate the transition of Basic Skills students to postsecondary education and training and/or employment.

Projects may include, but are not limited to:
1. Pathways to Employment type programs which link Basic Skills and Occupational Extension programs.
2. Development of curriculum which assists students to transition to postsecondary education and training with skills at a high enough level to place into most curriculum classes, not developmental education.
3. Establishing content standards which enable students to transition to postsecondary education and training and/or employment.
4. Development of curriculum which incorporates workplace essential skills into Basic Skills reading, writing, mathematics, and/or communication skills.
5. Collaboration projects which strengthen relationships with postsecondary education and training staff and/or local workforce staff which lead toward smoother transitions for Basic Skills students.
6. A planning grant to develop future strategies for transitioning students.
7. Other projects as appropriate.

All projects are required to have outcomes during the project period; however, projects could be used to fund the implementation of the first phase of a longer project.

Request for Proposal - Questionnaire

Below are the instructions for completing this questionnaire. <u>Be certain that all sections are included with narrative specific to the questions/statements listed under each heading</u>. Proposals will be reviewed by a 4-8 member panel. Total points awarded are listed in parenthesis beside each section heading.

I.   **<u>Abstract</u>** (5 points)
       This section is limited to one, single-spaced page.

Provide a summary of your proposal. Narrative should include a needs statement, services to be provided, collaborative partners, and any other pertinent facts.

II. **Body of the Proposal**
The content in this section, along with the other parts of the proposal, gives evidence that the applicant has the capabilities to carrying out the activities proposed in the grant.

A. **Needs Statement** (15 points)
This section is limited to one double-spaced page.

From a local perspective, explain the need for the transition project and the rationale upon which the proposal is based.

B. **Services Provided** (50 points)
This section is limited to ten, double-spaced pages.

1. Describe the transition project. What is the project? Who is involved in the project? Describe which students the project is designed to help. How long will the project last? Who will manage the project? What are the objectives of the project? What will be the project outcome?

C. **Management Plan** (10 points)
This section is limited to one double-spaced page.

1. Describe the role of staff that will be assigned to this project. What percentage of their time will be committed to this project?

2. Describe the qualifications of staff who are involved in the project. Include all state and local training attended over the last two years for each staff person involved.

3. Provide a timetable that outlines major activities, benchmarks and completion dates.

D. *Evaluation (10 points)*
This section is limited to one double-spaced page.

Describe how you plan to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of activities proposed. Describe what will be the outcome(s) of the project. Include the mandatory report due sixty days after the end of the project.

III.   **<u>Budget</u>** (10 points)

- The total allocation to each program is $20,000.
- Each program must allot funding for two mandatory one-day drive-in meetings in Raleigh, NC.   One meeting will occur at the beginning of the grant period, and the second meeting toward the end of the grant period.

Cost Effectiveness

Budget Category		Federal Funds Requested
Salaries, Instructional • Full-time (Describe positions.) • Part-time (Describe positions.) • Explanation:	$ $	Total: $
Educational Materials and Supplies • Explanation:		$
Equipment • **May not purchase equipment unless it is an integral part of the grant and is pre-approved by the grantee.** • Explanation		$
Contractual Services • *Explanation*		$
Staff Travel • *Explanation:*		$
Student Travel • Explanation		$
Staff Training • Explanation		$
Other Costs		Total: $

Note: Administrative Costs (Salaries Supportive and Other Expenses) cannot exceed more than 5% of total grant. ***Administrative Costs, Salaries Supportive*** • Salaries, Supportive, Full-time (Describe positions.) • Salaries, Supportive, Part-time (Describe positions.) • Explanation ***Administrative Costs, Other Expenses*** • Other Expenses (office supplies, postage, etc.) • Explanation	$ $ $	
Note: • ***How much funding do you expect to use from other sources for this project? (Include state, federal and funds from other sources.)***	$ $	
Total Federal Funds Allowable:		**$20,000**