

Knowledge is Power

Returning to college to earn a degree or credential can be daunting for many workers. You can be the force that helps them succeed. Many adults already have skills, knowledge, and learning that may be worth college credit and can shorten their time to degree completion. CAEL can help you educate your clients about how to earn this credit through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). Our research shows that adult students who earn credit through PLA, are 2 ½ times more likely to graduate than those who do not

Make the most of your training dollars

At a time when the workforce system is struggling with declining budgets, it makes sense to save your Individual Training Account dollars by ensuring that workers are not taking training courses to learn what they already know. CAEL can help you advocate for the use of ITA, federal and state financial aid dollars to pay for PLA, leveraging fewer dollars for greater impact.

Accelerate degree completion

To make Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) an embedded strategy to help workers earn degrees and credentials, it is vital to have a deliberate strategy that reaches clients directly.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Training

CAEL trains staff on the “front line” about PLA. We help staff identify suitable candidates for PLA and make sound, consistent decisions about which PLA methods are most appropriate. CAEL workshops will give them the tools to:

- Understand how your clients’ work, military and corporate training can convert to college credit
- Identify which clients may be able to earn credentials faster by leveraging their prior learning
- Apply ITA training towards post-secondary credential attainment
- Engage college and university partners who will maximize clients’ prior work, volunteer, and experiential learning

The training will include curriculum that contains practical exercises designed to apply the learning. CAEL also engages in interviews of select career center managers and staff to ensure that the training will be useful and readily applied to One-Stop Centers and other public workforce system settings. Training is available in-person and via webinar.

Why CAEL?

CAEL is viewed as the “place to go” for PLA training. We offer PLA workshops at our annual international conference, at meetings throughout the country, and on-site at individual institutions. CAEL’s PLA expertise has been recognized by the Middle States, North Central, North West and Western States regional accrediting bodies, all of which cite our “Ten Standards for Assessing Learning” in their discussions of awarding credit for prior learning.

Case Studies

Indiana

The State of Indiana is the first state to adopt a formal policy that encourages the use of PLA for clients who use WIA training funds. CAEL has forged a strong partnership with the senior leaders of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Higher Education Commission to expand access to PLA in Indiana. CAEL staff has presented at multiple meetings before key stakeholders, including the full Indiana State Workforce Investment Council. CAEL also consulted with leaders on developing and implementing guidance regarding the proper usage of PLA within the WorkOne3 system, leading to a formal resolution by the SWIC, which was then passed in December of 2011, paving the way for PLA to be used as a key workforce development strategy in the State. CAEL is now working with DWD to create train-the-trainer workshops on PLA.

Minnesota

In Southeast Minnesota, CAEL conducted a PLA training in 2012 for Workforce Investment Board (WIB) career counselors at Workforce Development, Inc., an independent non-profit agency serving the needs of job seekers and employers in the region. The training helped counselors achieve a deeper understanding of what Prior Learning Assessment is and its value, how they can identify students who may have creditable prior learning, the various steps and options available to prospective students with regard to getting PLA credit, the typical challenges faced by students seeking PLA credit, and guidance on how to effectively prepare and refer a candidate to the appropriate institution in the region.

Tennessee

CAEL conducted three regional PLA Employer and Workforce Board Summits in the state of Tennessee in collaboration with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. The summits were designed to encourage employers to offer tuition reimbursement for PLA earned credit, provide information on potential return on investment, and build employer capacity for promoting PLA to their employees.