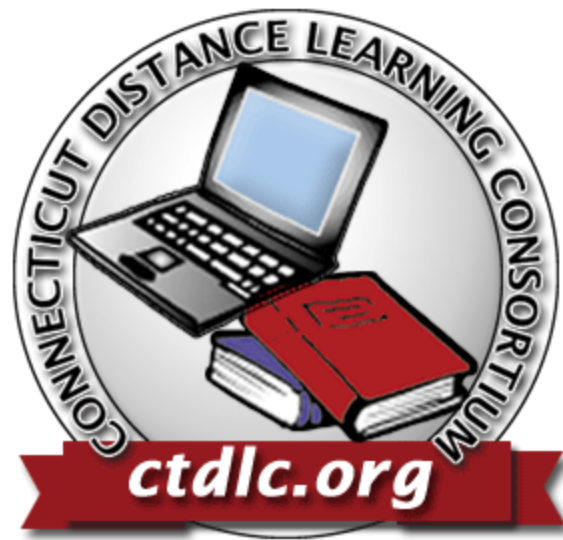


# Web-based Learning for the Adult Credit Diploma Program in Connecticut



**The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium**

*Final Proposal*

July 31, 2002

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## Overview of Project Design

In order to meet the needs of adult students who have not completed their high school diploma, the CTDLC will work collaboratively with four LEA's who offer the Adult High School Credit Diploma to develop a comprehensive model of a web-based adult high school credit program. This comprehensive model will include the development of:

- A web-based "Orientation to Online Learning" course which provides an orientation to the technical, learning and time management skills necessary to be a successful online learner.
- Four (4) web-based high school courses which meet CT Frameworks, CAPT, and CASA standards. These courses will be created as learning objects which will be useable nationally.
- A training program, including web-based modules, for online teachers, advisors, and student service providers.
- A collaborative plan for providing web-based student and academic support services, based on a model which we have piloted with higher education, to promote economies of scale and prevent duplication of services.
- Suggestions for and proposed changes to state and local policies and budgeting processes as well as legislative amendments to facilitate the feasibility and success of this model.
- An assessment plan to provide formative evaluations of all aspects of the model designed to foster improvements throughout the entire process.
- A dissemination plan for informing adult educators throughout Connecticut and the nation about this project including acting as a resource for BCAE's sponsoring of a training institute.

This design requires the active paid participation of four LEA's in the form of assisting on the Advisory Board and three committees, selecting teachers, piloting courses, piloting student and academic support services, supplying data, and disseminating information about the project. Working closely with the BCAE, the CTDLC will provide coordination of the project; facilitation of the Advisory Board and committees; research into current best practices nationally; design, development, and hosting of the courses; a 7-day a week help desk; training of teachers and student service staff, formative evaluations of every aspect of the project, and a dissemination plan.

**Organization and Roles** (see organizational charts Appendix A & B)

**Project Management:** Coordinates the fulfillment within deadline of the Project Components (listed below) with the respective committees. The primary contact to field questions, concerns and suggestions from project committees or outside organizations in the appropriate direction.

**Adult Education (AE) Project Liaison:** Communicates with the LEA's, and the Adult Education population in order to distinguish and meet the needs, requirements and standards around this collaborative effort. Serves on the Advisory Board and sits on the three committees.

**Advisory Board:** One of the first tasks of the CTDLC will be to form an Advisory Board of approximately 10-12 members to be responsible for advising the CTDLC on all aspects of the project. The Advisory Board will consist of the directors of the four participating LEA's, at least one BCAE representative, the AE Project Liaison, three or four additional adult education experts, and will be chaired by the Executive Director of the CTDLC. The Advisory Board will be primarily responsible for developing recommendations for:

- Adoption of standards that will enable course content to correlate with CAPT, GED, EDP, CT Frameworks and CASAS.
- Development of state and local policies and practices that promote inter-district cooperation, promote efficiencies of scale and cost, and reduce duplication of services in the provision and hosting of web based courses.
- Proposed legislative amendments.
- A model for delivery of Connecticut's adult high school credit courses.

Three advisory committees, made up of staff from the participating LEAs, volunteer staff from other LEA's, as well as several outside experts, will report and make recommendations to the Advisory Board. CTDLC Project Management will coordinate the activities of the three advisory committees while the AE Project Liaison will communicate the overall project mission among the committees.

**Content Advisory Committee:** The Content Advisory Committee, chaired by the CTDLC's Learning Designer, will include but not be limited to professionals who hold Connecticut Certification for the Adult High School Credit Diploma and teach in adult credit diploma courses in Connecticut. The AE Project Liaison will also sit on this committee. This group will be responsible for review of curricular content development, advising on the selection of Content Experts, and for course development review.

**Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee:** The Research Advisory Committee, chaired by the CTDLC, will consist of representatives from the participating LEA's, a CTDLC Instructional Designer, the AE Project Liaison, representatives from interested LEA's, and possibly outside experts. The Research Advisory Committee will be responsible for providing advice on developing research models for best practices (outlined below) and for evaluating online courses and support services.

**Student Support Advisory Committee:** The Student Support Advisory Committee, chaired by the CTDLC, will consist of representatives from the participating LEA's, the AE Project Liaison, representatives from interested LEA's, and possibly outside experts. The committee will be responsible for providing advice on developing support services for online students which promote inter-district cooperation, promote efficiencies of scale and cost, and reduce duplication of services.

**Content Experts:** Content Experts will hold appropriate certification in adult education and will have initial responsibilities for curricular content identification, development, and review in designated academic subject areas. Content experts will provide appropriate curricular content material to the Content Advisory Committee.

**Local Education Agency (LEA):** With the advice of the BCAE, four LEA's will be selected to receive a two-year grant to participate in this project. The LEA's will be responsible for:

- Having their Director serve on the Advisory Board.
- Having designated staff or teachers serve on each of the advisory sub-committees.
- Piloting one of the four credit courses to be developed as part of this project, including paying the instructor to teach it during both the fall 2003 and the spring 2004 semesters.
- Enrolling students in the pilot orientation course and the four credit courses.
- Providing support services for students in the online courses using the model developed by the Support Services Advisory Committee.
- Providing staff to review existing online courses and models for support services as part of determining best practices.
- Sending a staff member one of the two years to the Virtual HS Symposium for K-12 Educators.
- Providing appropriate data as required by the evaluation and research models.

Other LEA's may be asked or may volunteer to participate on the Advisory Board or Committees, but there will be no monies for their participation.

## **Project Components**

### **1. Research into best practices of existing nationally recognized adult diploma, programs, and courses:**

Before beginning to design online courses and support services, it is essential that we undertake a thorough review of existing online delivery frameworks, courses, and support systems. This will be a three-pronged process:

- Consultation with NCAL and the BCAE about existing models and policies.
- A thorough literature review of research, studies, and evaluations of existing virtual high schools and online courses will be conducted by the CTDLC Institutional Research staff.
- The CTDLC, with the advice of the Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee, will create an evaluation instrument (such as an observation check list). Designated staff members with expertise in course content and in support services from each of the participating LEA's will use the evaluation instrument to conduct research into four nationally recognized programs.

These methods will be used to answer the following questions:

#### *Support Services:*

- How is student enrollment best handled? How is it handled from multiple institutions?
- What student services are most successful in allowing students to complete online courses (technology, academic counseling, tutoring, special needs)?
- What types of collaborative efforts exist between multiple providers of adult credit high school diplomas?
- What are the major barriers to enrolling and retaining adult high school students in online classes?
- What types of orientation courses/programs best support retention in online courses

*Course Content:*

- What factors contribute to a quality online course?
- What factors contribute to an adult-orientation of context?
- Are these courses/programs aligned with the Connecticut Frameworks and CASAS competencies?
- Are there particular materials, components, modules, simulations that we should consider using/buying for our courses?
- What factors contribute to the ease of maintaining these courses (as course content, textbooks, and web sites change)?
- What types of student assessment work best in online courses?

*Administrative Issues:*

- What are the costs involved in creating and offering online courses?
- What models are there for inter-district collaboration?
- What evaluation models and tools are available?

**Products:** As a result of this three- pronged research project, the Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the Advisory Board, and the other Committees for:

- Standards for course content
- Standards for best practices for student support services
- Standards for best practices for collaborative models

**Timeline:** August 1 to November 1, 2002

**2. Development of an Orientation Course:**

Informed by the research results of the Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee, the CTDLC will develop an online course to introduce prospective adult education students to online learning. The course will address topics such as:

- technologies and skills needed to access online courses
- course navigation
- pacing of online courses and self-motivation to complete assignments
- communication and interactions among participants

Product: Online Orientation Course to introduce prospective students to online education.

Timeline: Course Development: November, 2002 to March, 2003  
Launch the Orientation Course for prospective students. March to August, 2003

**3. Development of four online credit high school courses:**

The CTDLC will design and develop four 1-credit courses in subject areas identified by the Content Committee. The design will be informed and reviewed by the selection and sequencing of content standards and frameworks by the content Committee and subject matter experts.

Products: Four 1-credit online courses

Timeline: Identify and sequence standards and frameworks: November 2002 to May 2003  
Design and development work: January 2003 to August 2003  
Pilot four courses: September 2003 to January 2004  
Pilot four *revised* courses: January 2004 to June 2004

#### **4. Development of a training model, training modules and materials for online instructors:**

Using recommendations of best practices made by the Research and Evaluation Committee, the CTDLC will create a training model for online instructors. In addition, the CTDLC will design, develop, and implement training modules and training materials.

Products: Training model, training modules, supplementary training materials

Timeline: Recommendations of best practices: November 2002  
Create training model: January 2003  
Design and develop training modules: January 2003 to April 2003  
Design and develop supplementary training materials: January 2003 to April 2003  
Deliver training to online instructors: May 2003 to August 2003

#### **5. Development of collaborative support services:**

Using the recommendations of best practices in support services for online high school students as determined by the Research and Evaluation Committee, the Support Services Advisory Committee will design collaborative student and academic support services for:

- Recruitment
- Registration
- Orientation
- Technological support
- Academic Counseling
- Needs of special populations

These services will be developed to promote inter-district cooperation, promote efficiencies of scale and cost, and reduce duplication of services.

Each participating LEA will put these services into practice, first for students enrolled in the Orientation course and then for students enrolled in the four credit courses. These services will be evaluated and necessary changes made before the courses run the second time. They will then be evaluated a second time.

The Student Support Services Advisory Committee will design a training model to ensure that all staff can provide appropriate services to online students.

Products: The Student Support Services Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the Advisory Board for a model of collaborative support services for online adult high schools students and for professional development for staff.

Timeline: Develop Support Services: Jan. 2003 to Aug. 2003

Pilot Support Services: March 2003 to Jan. 2004  
Revise and Re-pilot Support Services: Jan. 2004-May 2004  
Recommendations of Model Support Services to Advisory Board: May 04.

## **6. Evaluation:**

With the advice of the Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee, the CTDLIC will develop a multi-method approach using both quantitative and qualitative instruments to evaluate the orientation course, credit courses, and services developed during this project. The evaluations will focus on:

- Students: Their experiences with the course delivery, course content, and services.
- Faculty: Their experiences with training and instruction
- Data for retention comparisons and demographics

The results of the initial evaluations will be presented to the Advisory Board and Committees so that appropriate changes can be made before the courses are repeated. The results of the final evaluations will be presented to the Advisory Board for consideration in their recommendations for final models.

Products:     Student course evaluations  
                  Student Services evaluations  
                  Faculty evaluations  
                  Data Analysis  
                  Recommendation for Evaluation Models  
                  Results of the evaluations for the Advisory Board and Committees

Timeline:     Develop Evaluation Plan and Instruments: Jan. 2003 to Aug. 2003  
                  Evaluate courses and services: March 2003 to May 2004  
                  Recommendations of Model to Advisory Board: May 2004.

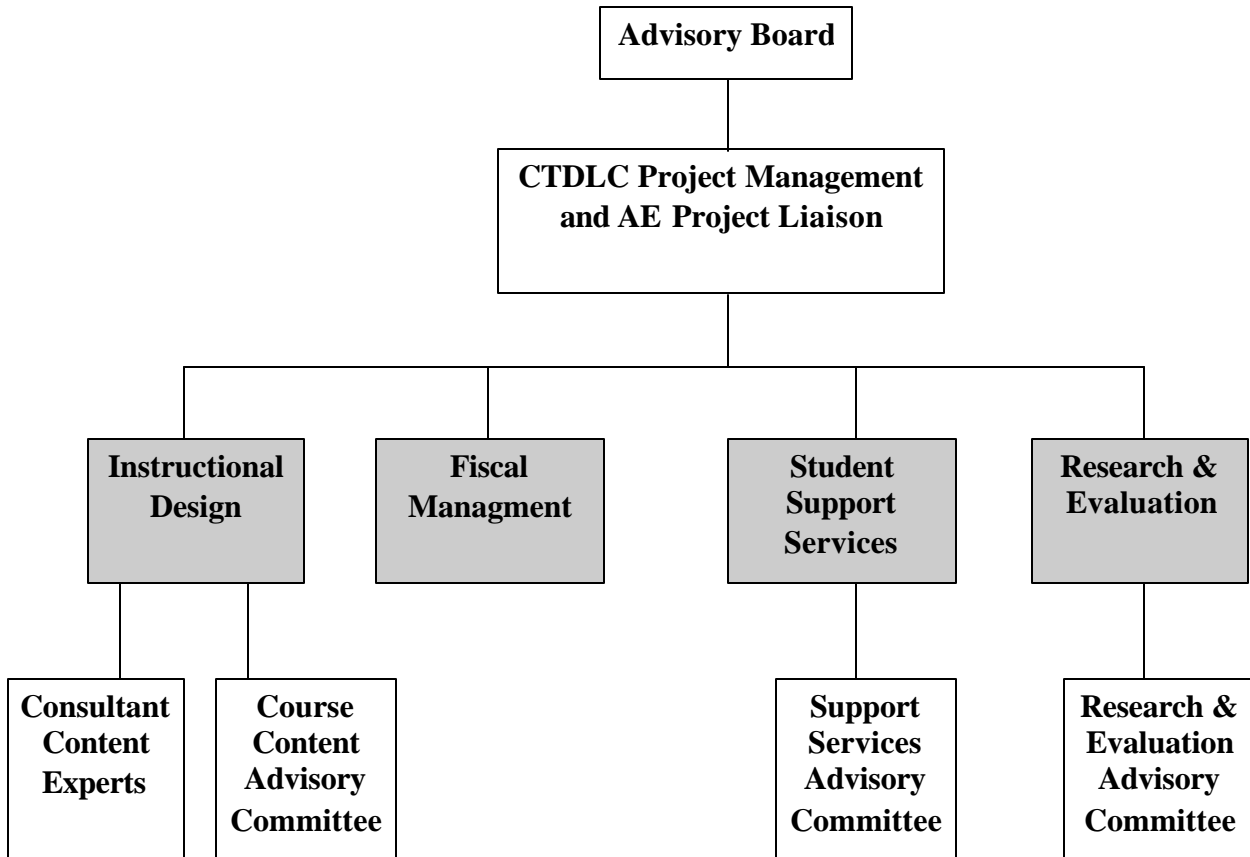
## **7. Final Project Deliverables:**

The CTDLIC, with the advice of the Advisory Board, will submit the following products at the end of the grant:

- Model for delivery of Connecticut's adult high school credit courses that would enable a managing entity to receive appropriate funding from participating districts, coordinate course scheduling, hire and compensate instructors, schedule students, manage the course content and required revisions, and oversee course delivery.
- Model for collaborative services to support online adult high school students.
- Model for evaluation of services and courses.
- An Orientation Course.
- Four (4) credit comprehensive web-based courses that meet the standards as set by the Advisory Board.
- Training modules for professional development of staff and instructors that will be involved in online instruction and support for adult high school students.

# Organizational Chart

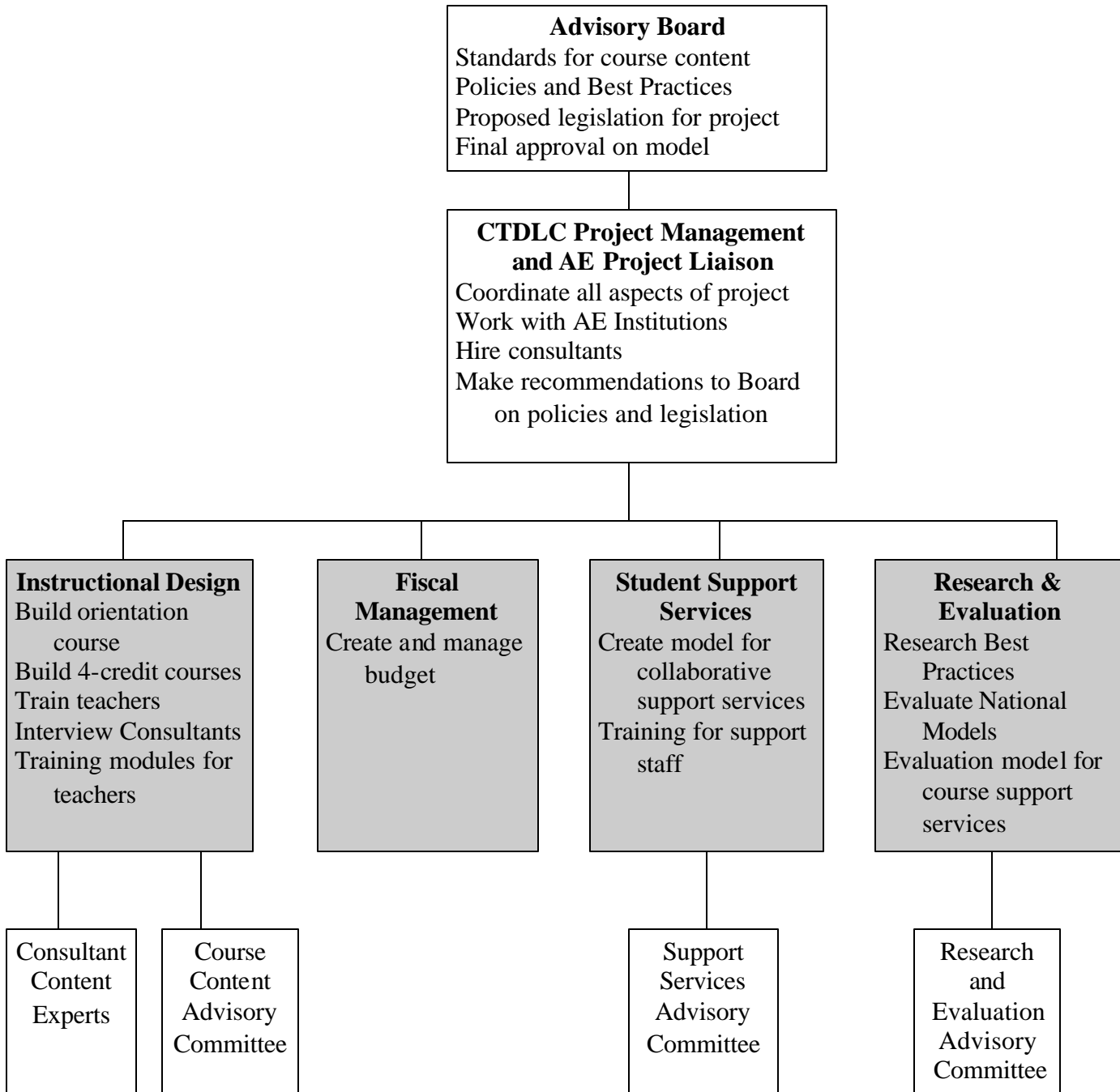
## Appendix A





# Responsibilities

## Appendix B



## Appendix C

### Project Timeline for Web-based Learning in the Adult Credit Diploma Program

Objectives	Timeline
Establish the roles and responsibilities and budgets for the participating LEA's and solicit/invite 4 to be part of this project	July 2002
Establish an advisory board of approximately 10-12 people consisting of the directors of the 6 LEA's, a BCAE representative, and outside experts responsible for advising CTDLC on all aspects of the project.	July 2002- end of grant
In collaboration with NCAL and BCAE design a research model and conduct research into existing AHSCD programs nationally which result in recommendations for best practices in learning design and student services.	Aug 02-Nov 02
Establish working committees from the participating LEA's and including outside experts with responsibilities for curricular development including standards, design, and frameworks; policy development; infrastructures; support services.	Sept 02-Aug 04
Design or adapt an "Orientation to Online Learning Course" and train a small group of facilitators.	Jan-March 03
The 4 LEA's will enroll students who seem likely to participate in one of the web-based classes during Fall 03 into the Orientation course.	March 03-Jan 04
Use data and focus groups for formative evaluation.	March 03-May 03
Develop state and local policies that promote cooperation and economies of scale and propose amendments to existing policies and legislation where necessary.	Feb 03-June-04
Select and, in consultation with CT curricula experts with AE certification, develop 4 web-based courses that meet the required standards.	Feb 03-August 03
Develop training modules for web based instruction and provide training for the instructors of the 4 courses including providing teacher guides.	Sept 02-March 04
Pilot the 4 courses using students who have completed the Orientation course.	Sept 03-Jan 04
Develop collaborative student and academic support service models and training.	Jan 03-August 03
Using data and qualitative methods assess the course and student support.	Sept 03-Feb 04
Pilot the revised 4 courses using students who have completed the Orientation course.	Jan 04-June 04
Using data and qualitative methods assess the course and student support.	Jan 04-June 04
Deliver completed AHSCD courses.	June 04
Deliver alternative model for a comprehensive web-based adult high school.	Jan 03-June 04
Act as a resource for the Training Institute for Web-Based Diploma.	June 04