

## *History of Adult Education in the USA: A Federal Perspective*

1862

Morrill Act begins a policy of grants to universities for particular fields of study (agriculture and mechanical arts)

1917

Smith-Hughes Act provides aid for vocational training

1920's

English language programs for immigrants are established at local levels

1930's (Depression Era)

Federal emergency monies available to hire unemployed teachers as adult literacy instructors

1940's (WWII Era)

Literacy testing of Army recruits / GED development

1951

US Office of Education's Adult Education Projects for Blacks

1952

National Association for Public School Adult Educators founded. Gives grants to help install AE directors in 9 states: Colorado, Iowa, Georgia, Kansas, Ohio, Oklahoma, Maryland, Minnesota and Utah

1957

National Commission on Adult Literacy established to raise awareness and promote community action

1962

Manpower Development and Training Act

1964

Adult Basic Education Act (part of the War on Poverty)

1966

Adult Education Act (AEA) adds English as a Second Language to program offerings

1968

AEA Amendment changes eligibility from 18 to 16 years of age and above

1970

AEA Amendment expands services to include Adult Secondary Education

1975

Adult Performance Level Project report identifies levels of adult functional competence, promotes development of competency-based programming

1978

Amendment to AEA defines Program purpose as “all adults acquire basic skills necessary to function in society”. This reflects a competency-based approach to assessment and programming, and identifies levels of adult functional competency as an alternative to school-based measures of literacy

1988

AEA amended to include funding for National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Projects, English Literacy Grants Program, Research and Development Projects and requirements for improved planning and evaluation in State adult education programs

1991

National Literacy Act (NLA) replaces AEA and establishes the National Institute for Literacy

1998

NLA replaced by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act

Sources:

*Modeling a Future for Adult Basic Education*, James Parker, Adult Learning Magazine, 1990

*Adult Education Act: 1966-1991*, DAEL, 1991

*Ends or Means: An Overview of the History of the Adult Education Act*, Amy Rose, ERIC, 1991