



APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN CALPRO LEARNING COMMUNITIES FOR SITE-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

During 2008-2009, CALPRO once again is offering a professional development initiative to support agencies in establishing site-based professional development (PD). Over the past three years, 19 agencies have participated in this initiative and successfully completed site-based PD plans. For 2008-2009, up to 12 agencies will be selected to participate. Each of the 12 agencies will be invited to send its agency director and one teacher or administrator, designated to serve as a professional development practitioner, to participate in the initiative. This document describes the initiative and the application process.

What is the CALPRO Learning Community for Site-based Professional Development?

Adult education programs are beginning to explore site-based professional development. The goals of this initiative are to build a learning community among staff members, enhance teachers' knowledge/skills, and increase learner achievement. CALPRO has long supported these goals through its various professional development activities and resources available both statewide and regionally. Now CALPRO adds the option for site-based professional development and invites agencies to participate in this initiative, the purpose of which is to develop site-based PD practitioners within their agencies, to establish learning communities among their staff, and to work within their learning communities to create agency PD plans.

Site-based PD practitioners represent a new "front-line" in efforts to strengthen professional development and its effects on teaching and learning. In the agencies in which they work, these practitioners are the people with day-to-day responsibility for enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills to improve their performance. This model extends and sustains learning from the one-shot, "hit-and-run" workshop to an ongoing commitment to continuous program improvement.

Agency directors wishing to launch a site-based professional development program may nominate one teacher and one administrator to participate as a team in the CALPRO Learning Community for Site-based Professional Development. Ideal candidates are those currently serving as coaches, instructional leaders, or staff developers. Persons selected will have responsibility for assessing professional development needs of staff, working with the agency director to create a PD plan for staff, and providing guidance and support to teachers in carrying out the plan. The plan can contain a variety of options for site-based activities including discussion groups, study circles, workshops, online courses, and mentoring. Participants in the Learning Communities Initiative will become acquainted with all the above models of professional development through the CALPRO-delivered training.

The Learning Community will begin with a meeting in December 2008 and will continue through June 2009. The training program includes two, two-day sessions, December 4-5, 2008, and May 14-15, 2009 in Sacramento. CALPRO will cover participants' travel and lodging costs as well as provide all training materials. In addition, CALPRO will provide a stipend of \$1,500 to each agency to partially defray the cost of preparation time as well as completion and implementation of the site-based professional development plan. The agency may use the stipend to reimburse the PD Practitioner's time or to purchase professional development materials and supplies.

What is Required of Learning Community Members?

- Attend both statewide meetings (December 4-5, 2008 and May 14-15, 2009).
- Participate in a learning group of members via e-mail or telephone conference calls.
- Complete and submit agency professional development plan, activity logs, and progress reports.
- Submit evaluative feedback on the Learning Community experience with recommendations to CALPRO for refinement.

Participant Goals

As a result of the series of learning experiences provided through the CALPRO Learning Community, participants/PD Practitioners will be able to

- Establish a learning community among staff members at their agencies;
- Conduct assessment of professional development needs of teaching staff at their own agencies;
- Create a site-based professional development plan in collaboration with the program administrator and instructional staff members. The plan will serve as a road map to
 - Improved teaching and learning within their schools/agencies; and
 - Strengthened relationships with principals and teachers to effect positive change;
- Identify models of site-based coaching, mentoring, and other powerful professional development intervention models;
- Facilitate discussion groups and study circles, as appropriate;
- Advance their understanding of the connection between professional learning and student achievement; and
- Share successes, challenges, and lessons learned with a statewide network of colleagues, thereby extending collaboration and continuous development beyond engagement in the formal Learning Communities meetings.

How Do Adult Educators Become Members of the Learning Community for Site-based Professional Development?

To be considered for membership, candidates should submit the following:

- (1) A nomination from their principal or director indicating the principal's or director's commitment to support establishing a learning community among staff members to develop a PD plan;
- (2) A letter of interest written by the candidate outlining his/her personal goals for participation as well as a description of his/her current job responsibilities; and
- (3) The Learning Community application form (attached, and also available for downloading from the CALPRO Web site at www.calpro-online.org).

Completed Applications Should Include the Following:

- Completed Nomination/Application Form indicating the name of the staff member to serve in the capacity of PD Practitioner;
- One- to two-page** narrative from applicant's principal or director, addressing the following:
 - Commitment of agency principal or director to attend the training along with the agency's designated teacher candidate/PD practitioner;
 - A *challenge* that the agency is facing and that professional development can address;
 - How the director *knows* this is a challenge (e.g., review of agency data, staff surveys, etc.);
 - A program improvement goal for the agency related to this challenge;
 - A description of how and when the agency will measure growth or improvement toward reaching this goal; and
 - Statement of commitment to provide support in the form of release time for the participant to attend the training sessions and to work with program staff, using the skills gained in the Learning Community experience.
- One-page narrative/letter of interest from the candidate including
 - Statement of commitment to be an active participant in the Learning Community and to meet the program expectations;
 - Description of the candidate's role within the school; and
 - Reasons for seeking participation in the Learning Community.

Application Deadline: November 13, 2008

Applicants will receive notice of acceptance by November 18, 2008.



CALPRO Learning Community for Site-based Professional Development—Pilot Project Questions and Answers

Q: *How many agencies will be selected to participate in the Learning Community for Site-based Professional Development—Pilot Project?*

A: Up to 12 agencies will be selected statewide, based on a competitive application in which the agency director designates (1) a topic to be the focus of professional development for teachers in the agency; (2) a staff member to fill the role of Professional Development Practitioner; and (3) commitment on the part of the agency director or one of the agency's administrators to attend the CALPRO training sessions with the PD Practitioner.

Q: *Can small agencies or Community-based Organizations (CBOs) apply for this pilot?*

A: CALPRO will accept applications from any WIA Title II-funded agency. This includes CBOs, library or volunteer literacy agencies, adult schools, community college non-credit programs, prisons, jails, or other institutions; it includes small, medium, and large agencies.

Q: *What is involved in applying to be a pilot agency in the Learning Communities for Site-based Professional Development—Pilot Project?*

A: Interested agency directors or principals must complete the attached application form and include a **one- or two-page narrative** that identifies

- (1) A *challenge* their agency is facing that can be addressed by professional development;
- (2) How they *know* this is a challenge (e.g., by a review of their agency's data; by key informants among their staff and/or students; by surveys of staff and/or students; by report of their advisory or stakeholder group);
- (3) A *program improvement goal* for their agency related to this challenge that they believe targeted professional development for staff can address;
- (4) How and when they will *measure growth* or improvement toward reaching this goal;
- (5) *Statement of commitment* to provide support in the form of release time for the participant to attend the CALPRO training sessions and to work with program staff, using the skills gained in the Learning Communities experience; and
- (6) Commitment of agency director or an administrator to attend the two, 2-day training sessions along with the PD practitioner.

Nominees for PD Practitioner must also include a one-page narrative/letter of interest that describes

- (1) Their role within the agency;
 - (2) Their reasons for seeking to participate in the Learning Communities Initiative; and
 - (3) Their commitment to be an active participant in the Learning Communities and to meet program expectations.
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Q: *How much time will local agency directors need to devote to this effort?*

A: The agency director or designated administrator will need to

- (1) Attend two, 2-day training sessions along with the Professional Development Practitioner to plan for this site-based initiative, and
- (2) Hold staff meeting(s) to assess need and determine staff interest in working toward this goal, identify participating staff for the site-based learning community, and provide support to staff participating in creating the agency-based PD plan. Research on systemic reform in K-12 programs indicates that reform efforts are generally more successful when the program leaders are supportive and hold meetings with staff to check on progress and concerns. We recommend that applicants build this model into their plans.

Q: *What are some examples of a challenge that site-based professional development might address?*

A: Examples of a challenge that an agency may want to address include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Organizing and monitoring instruction to improve student learning gains;
 - (2) Increasing use of evidence-based practices in teaching reading skills;
 - (3) Establishing and institutionalizing a peer support/mentoring system for teachers;
 - (4) Establishing and institutionalizing a learner goal-setting process;
 - (5) Establishing and institutionalizing a program of support for new teachers;
 - (6) Institutionalizing a lesson-planning process to be used by all teachers;
 - (7) Establishing and institutionalizing a process for effectively serving adult students with learning disabilities;
 - (8) Improving learner persistence rates.
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Q: *Can an agency identify a different challenge than one of those listed above?*

A: Yes. Each agency should identify a problem or challenge that would benefit from the support of a Professional Development Practitioner to help address the problem or challenge. CALPRO is most interested in those applications that seek to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills. Applicants should keep in mind that the challenge must be one that professional development can address. For example, "insufficient funding" is not an appropriate challenge for a professional development initiative.

Q: *How much will this effort cost the participating agency?*

A: The only cost to an agency for participating in this effort is time:

- (1) The director's time in meeting with the professional Development Practitioner and with staff to develop the PD plan; and
 - (2) Staff's time in participating in the PD options identified in the agency's PD plan.
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Q: *Does CALPRO provide compensation for the PD Practitioner's time and travel?*

A: CALPRO will award a mini-grant of \$1,500 to each agency selected to participate in this initiative. The mini-grant is intended to be used to support the PD Practitioner's time for preparation and for working with staff. The agency director also may use the mini-grant to purchase professional development materials and supplies. CALPRO will reimburse the PD Practitioner for travel costs to each of the two training institutes.

Q: *Does every staff member within an agency need to participate in this program?*

A: No. The director may decide to work with only one program area, e.g., ESL or ABE, instead of all program areas in the agency. For example, the agency might initiate study circles for ABE teachers on the topic of research-based reading strategies. It is the director's decision whether to pilot the program with a subset of ABE teachers who are most interested in participating or whether to hold regular staff meetings and ask all ABE teachers to participate.

Q: *What is the time commitment expected of the PD Practitioner?*

A: The program (Learning Communities for Site-based Professional Development) begins in December 2008 and ends in June 2009. During that time, the PD practitioner can expect to invest from two to four hours a week on this effort. Major tasks of the PD Practitioner will be to (1) establish a learning community among agency staff; (2) assess professional development needs of staff; (3) work with the agency director and staff to draft a professional development plan for agency teaching staff; (4) monitor progress on the PD plan and make recommendations for adjusting the plan, as necessary, based on feedback from participating teachers and students, if appropriate; and (5) complete evaluation forms and provide feedback to CALPRO on lessons learned.

Q: *What are the agency's responsibilities beyond the 2008-2009 school year regarding this effort?*

A: CDE and CALPRO would like feedback from agency directors, from participating teachers, and perhaps from their students. The feedback will consist of measurable growth (e.g., student learning gains, improved student retention, an institutionalized program of learner goal setting or of collaborative lesson planning) and of lessons learned as well as suggestions for improving the site-based PD effort before expanding to additional agencies for 2009-2010.

**CALPRO Learning Community for Site-Based Professional Development
Nomination/Application Form for 2008-2009**

Nominee Name _____
Title _____
Agency/School _____
Preferred Mailing Address _____

Office Phone _____ Fax _____
Home Phone _____
E-mail address _____

Principal/Director _____

Office phone _____ E-mail address _____

Years in position _____

I will support the participation of the above-named nominee in the CALPRO Learning Community for 2008-2009

(Principal's/Director's Signature) *(Date)*

For adult schools only: ADA served by agency in 2007-2008 _____

I agree to meet the Learning Community expectations listed on previous pages:

(Nominee Signature)

Nominee: Attach a one-page narrative in which you describe the following:

- (1) Your role within the school/agency;
- (2) Your reasons for seeking to participate in the learning community;
- (3) Your commitment to be an active participant in the Learning Community and to meet program expectations.

Agency Director: Attach a one- to two-page narrative in which you describe the following:

- (1) A *challenge* that your agency is facing;
- (2) How you *know* this is a challenge (i.e., by a review of your agency's data; by key informants of your staff and/or students; by surveys of staff and/or students; by report of your advisory or stakeholder group;
- (3) A program improvement goal for your agency related to this challenge that you believe staff/professional development can address;
- (4) How and when you will measure growth or improvement toward reaching this goal;
- (5) Commitment to provide support in the form of release time for the participant to attend the training sessions and to work with program staff, using the skills gained in the Learning Community experience;
- (6) Commitment of agency director to attend portions of the training for administrators.

**Send nomination/application packets (by fax or regular mail) no later than
November 13, 2008 to the attention of**

Ellen Oka, CALPRO Executive Assistant
2151 River Plaza Drive, Suite 320
Sacramento, CA 95833
Fax: 916-286-8840

For Further information, please contact
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or Ellen Oka by phone at 916-286-8817