



THE PATH TO YOUR HSED: INTRODUCTION

Provider Version

Introduction

The ultimate goal of the Migrant Education Program (MEP) is to ensure that all migratory students reach challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma or complete a HSED. Today more than ever, having a high school education enables one to be more prepared for further learning and to have productive employment and a stable life.

According to US Census Bureau data from 2020, adults with less than a high school diploma are the lowest paid workers, earning an average of \$619 a week while workers with a high school diploma (no college) were earning on average \$781 a week. This means that someone with a high school diploma earns close to \$8,500 more per year than someone without.

Enrolling in traditional high school and graduating with a diploma is currently the most common way that students complete their secondary education, but it is not always the clearest pathway for migratory youth. Whether it is factors in their day-to-day lives, their age, or current academic and study skills that impact their ability to attend high school, there are options to address those factors that will help them progress toward the goal.

This guide is designed to help MEP staff support migratory students toward obtaining their HSED, wherever they currently are in their academic journey. The guide is organized by academic experience and takes into consideration important factors such as mobility, legal status, and language abilities. It has academic and non-academic program ideas, resources, and ways to collaborate with other programs.

Through this resource, MEP staff will be able to assist a migratory student regardless of academic or mobility factors.

What is a High School Equivalency Diploma?

A HSE is a nationally recognized alternative to a high school diploma that each state offers as an option for a student who, for whatever reason, is not able to graduate from high school. To earn a HSE diploma (HSED) the student must show mastery of the same academic content required to graduate from high school. This can be done through a series of exams (GED or HiSET) or non-exam options.

As the HSED is awarded through each state's Department of Education, each state decides which option(s) it offers and what it requires. Students may demonstrate that they have met competency of the state requirements by taking a series of exams or successfully completing an alternative program.

On the following page is a list of states and which options are available in each. It is strongly advised to visit the individual state's Department of Education Adult/Continuing Education website to see if there have been changes as well as to see if a specific state requires additional course work in addition to passing an exam.

EXAM OPTIONS

Currently there are two options for exams. GED (General Educational Development) and HiSET (High School Equivalency Test). There are similarities and differences in the exams and a variety of factors that would determine what might be the better option for a particular student. A primary factor concerning which exam is taken is where the student resides. Some states only use one exam while other states give the option to choose. The exams cannot be combined, meaning if a student starts with the GED, they cannot transfer their scores and complete the HiSET exams. They can restart, but that has a financial and time impact to consider.



What are the options for HSE Exam?

	GED General Education Development Exam	HiSET High School Equivalency Test
Format of test	• computer	• computer • paper
Number of sections	4	5
Type of sections	• math • social studies • science • language arts	• math • social studies • science • reading • writing
Question type	• extended response • drag-and-drop • drop-down • fill-in-the-blank • hot spot • multiple choice • short answer	• multiple choice • essay (writing only)
Passing score (each section)	Must score 145/200 on each section to earn a passing score. A higher score may earn waivers or credit in college courses/ placement.	Minimum score is 8/20 on each of the five sections and at least 2/6 on the essay; must have a total scaled score of 45.
Languages offered (state-test-site specific)	• English • Spanish • French	• English • Spanish
Published	Pearson + ACE	ETS

Basic comparisons of the exams are demonstrated in this chart. Be advised that the eligibility requirements to take the test offered vary from state to state. These include residency, format, languages offered, etc. Whether or not the results of an exam taken in another state will be transferable also varies by state. It is very important to research which exams are offered and what the testing site requirements are.

NON-EXAM OPTIONS

In some states, alternative pathways to obtaining a high school diploma may be offered. Two common alternative pathways are high school completion programs and the National External Diploma Program.

High school completion (HSC) programs allow academically-ready adult learners to participate in a flexible program and complete the necessary coursework to earn high school credits and receive an actual high school diploma instead of an equivalency. The student needs to demonstrate that they have met academic abilities through a review of their high school transcript, completion of an adult basic education program, and/or a placement test. It is a prescribed study plan to earn specific credits and has tutoring and counseling support.

The National External Diploma Program (NEDP) offered through CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems) is designed for adults and OSY to apply skills from life and work experiences through a competency-based structure. Students have the opportunity to study and practice a range of tasks/activities set to a particular competency and then demonstrate mastery of that competency. The competencies are both academic and college/career focused and allow the students to complete assignments at home online, at their own pace, and to work with tutors and counselors when needed. A student's competency is assessed through proctored checks with multiple opportunities to demonstrate the mastery of the required skills and knowledge to earn a high school diploma.



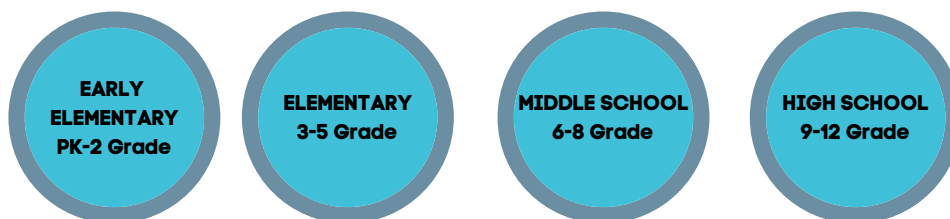
HSED OPTIONS BY STATE

STATE	HSED OPTIONS	STATE	HSED OPTIONS
Alabama	GED	Nebraska	GED
Alaska	GED	Nevada	GED*HiSET
Arizona	GED	New Hampshire	HiSET
Arkansas	GED	New Jersey	GED*HiSET
California	GED*HiSET*CHSPE	New Mexico	GED*HiSET
Colorado	GED*HiSET	New York	GED*NY-NEDP
Connecticut	GED*CT-NEDP	North Carolina	GED*HiSET
Delaware	GED	North Dakota	GED
Florida	GED	Ohio	GED*HiSET
Georgia	GED	Oklahoma	GED
Hawaii	GED*HiSET	Oregon	GED
Idaho	GED	Pennsylvania	GED*HiSET*CSSD
Illinois	GED*HiSET	Puerto Rico	GED
Indiana	HiSET	Rhode Island	GED*RI-NEDP
Iowa	HiSET	South Carolina	GED
Kansas	GED	South Dakota	GED
Kentucky	GED	Tennessee	HiSET
Louisiana	HiSET	Texas	GED*HiSET
Maine	HiSET	Utah	GED
Maryland	GED*MD-NEDP	Vermont	GED*VT-ADP
Massachusetts	GED*HiSET	Virginia	GED*VA-NEDP
Michigan	GED*HiSET	Washington	GED
Minnesota	GED	Washington DC	GED*DC-NEDP
Mississippi	GED*HiSET	West Virginia	HiSET
Missouri	HiSET	Wisconsin	GED*WI-HSED
Montana	HiSET	Wyoming	GED*HiSET

Accurate as of 4/2022. Please check with the state's Department of Education to verify options as there may be changes. In addition to the exams and options listed above, many states allow local school districts and/or adult education centers to offer high school credit make-up classes for out-of-school youth and adults.

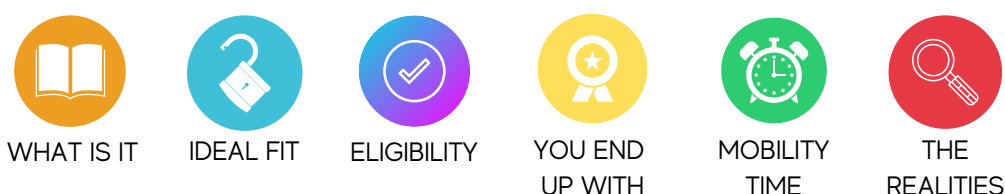
How To Use this Guide

There are four levels based on formal academic experience:



Each level has the following sections tailored to the level of formal academic experience:

At a Glance



Skills Guide

Summary of the academic, study, and life skills that will be strengthened and developed through the completion of the work needed to move from current level to the next level of academic abilities.

How to Assess a Good Fit

The skills, actions, and factors of a student's life and abilities that help demonstrate to MEP staff that the student is a good fit to start to take on the work needed to be successful. This area focuses on Academic Level, Ganas (Personal Why), and Current Living/Working Situation.

Reasons to Do It

Four different ways to talk to a student about why they might want to begin/continue with the work to complete their high school education.

Goal Statement Examples

The iSOSY Goal Setting Materials are a key tool to working with students, regardless of what level they are. To assist MEP staff and students, the guide provides short-, mid- and long-term examples that link to pathway goals.

Project Ideas and Established Programs/Partners

Ways to create independent/integrated MEP programming as well as established programs and resources that can help MEP strengthen their offerings.

Student Profiles

Each level has three profiles of MEP students who have been successful in programming that helped move them from their current level to the next. These profiles can be shared with students and/or staff to offer ideas and motivation. *Please note: While these profiles are based on real people and situations, none of these names/photos are actual students.*

THE PATH TO YOUR HSED: EARLY ELEMENTARY (PK-2)

Provider Version

At a Glance



• WHAT IT IS

Developing pre- and early literacy skills in reading and writing, developing math skills to build toward 2nd grade standards | Most importantly is a student who has had success as a learner and feels more confident and independent



• IDEAL FIT

A student who has expressed a desire and personal reason to want to learn, but has limited literacy with little or no formal schooling in their native language



• ELIGIBILITY

OSY with little (up to 3rd grade) or no formal education but motivated and willing to take the time needed to build basic academic and study skills



• YOU END UP WITH

Reading and math skills reflective of a 2nd grade education | Solid study skills to learn other things, such as English | Increased independence and drive to continue to study



• MOBILITY/TIME

Adult learners may take longer to master foundations so they must have devoted study time | Recognize that it takes a lot of trust for a student to disclose they have very low literacy and math skills | If information is not shared as the student moves, they lose motivation if they have to disclose their education level each time



• THE REALITIES

This is a long road and requires a lot of MEP support | There are reasons why a student is at this level and 'school' can be intimidating | They may not view themselves as a learner, creating invisible barriers to academic success | There are limited materials that may fit the student's profile, especially non-English speakers

Student Profile



At the age of 17, Carlos moved to North Carolina from a small, indigenous community in Guatemala. Carlos grew up speaking Quiche and also speaks Spanish. At age seven he stopped going to 1st grade to help his mother after his father migrated to the US. Currently Carlos travels between NC and Florida to pick tomatoes and is enrolled in both MEPs. Carlos is outgoing and learned about adults being able to get their high school diploma from another worker. The NCMEP provider worked with Carlos to identify academic skills to work on and used the iSOSY Goal Setting activities to develop short-term goals. The NCMEP provided Carlos access to a Spanish literacy curriculum from Plaza Comunitaria and mentor support. When Carlos moved back at the end of the season, the NCMEP coordinated with the FLMEP so that Carlos could continue receiving needed support with reading, writing, and math skills.

Skills Guide

Build relationships with your instructors/counselors and shift your mindset away from being ashamed about having no to low literacy and academic experiences

Establish short-term personal and educational goals in order to demonstrate quick success to build self-esteem and motivation; and longer-term goals in order to see the pathway

Recognize when you do not understand something but know what to ask for help with and who to ask

Persevere even when something is hard and you might not be successful at first

Early Literacy - Have interest in and enjoy books, increased vocabulary; able to print words and follow writing rules (top to bottom, left to right); able to understand and rephrase a reading passage; recognize letters and common words and the sounds related to them

Writing - Write in complete sentences with appropriate punctuation and grammar; use capital letters correctly; write a short story that has a beginning, middle, and end; do basic research from a non-fiction book and understand and use first-person and third-person point of view

Math - Read and write numerals; addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers; combine shapes to form others shapes and find geometric shapes in real-life situations; learn and compare money values

How to Assess a Good Fit

Academic Level

OSY with little or no literacy typically progress slowly. Ask the student for their level of formal education, if any, and how long they have been out of school. The longer it has been since they were in school, the more preparation will be needed. It is not uncommon for MEP to identify and support OSY who have little or no formal education but have a strong interest in gaining literacy skills in reading, writing, and math specifically and continuing to advance their education in general. However, acquiring these skills as a young adult is not easy and can be overwhelming. As such, it is critical to set OSY up for success by conducting goal setting activities which serve to create learning goals and help by breaking the goals down into smaller steps.

Ganas/Why

OSY who have little or no formal education often lack confidence and self-esteem in terms of their self-efficacy toward schooling. Some may even feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about learning basic literacy skills at an older age. Goal setting activities are critical as they help develop the motivation needed to keep going. The learning plans developed help them set and achieve attainable goals which in turn increases confidence and self-esteem. Celebrating small successes is important. OSY tutors and mentors should provide an abundance of positive reinforcement and praise for the student's steps, even small ones, toward achieving a set goal. Pairing OSY with similar educational backgrounds and goals is a good idea in order to build motivation among students.

Current Living/Working Situation

Overall, building literacy in reading, math, and writing is not a short-term activity. If a student is highly mobile, a provider may think about some of the smaller and short-term activities and goals that a student can do. Help the student understand that having the appropriate amount of time to study is a key factor. The student should think realistically about how much time they have each week to study. Noise, time, and sleep can affect a student's ability to study well. Working on academics will require the student to balance work, studying, and a social life, deciding how to prioritize within that.

Reasons to Do It



Builds your confidence, independence, and self-efficacy



Shows you that you can do this



Starts a process for continued learning that can help throughout your life



Helps you learn English with more ease

Goal Statement Examples

Short-Term Goals (within a month)

- ***Completes placement test to identify academic abilities***
- ***Completes iSOSY Goal Setting activities to create realistic goals and small action steps***
- ***Has resource materials to study***
- ***Meets with tutor/mentor for support***

Mid-Term Goals (3-6 months)

- ***Completes determined number of learning plan steps***
- ***Resolves barriers to learning with support from staff***
- ***Registers for services at a local literacy council or ABE Center***
- ***Completes a series of iSOSY Life Skills lessons***

Long-Term Goals (1+ year)

- ***Enrolls in and attends a community-based class***
- ***Participates independently in community/school activities***
- ***Develops stronger skill sets for advanced employment***

Student Profile



Axlam, a 20-year-old OSY, recently moved with her husband and 3-year-old child to Nebraska as refugees. Shortly after moving, Axlam's husband found work in a chicken plant. The NEMEP enrolled the family and Axlam expressed interest in getting her high school diploma despite not having attended school in her native Somalia. An OSY service provider visited Axlam several times to help the family secure permanent housing and connect with local social service agencies. The MEP was also able to secure Pre-K enrollment for Axlam's child. In addition, the staff member guided Axlam through iSOSY Goal Setting activities to establish learning goals. Goal setting provided motivation to start her journey of building basic literacy skills. Above all, the goal setting activities revealed that Axlam's motivation stemmed from wanting to learn alongside her child. Because Axlam does not plan to work and her child will attend full-day Pre-K, Axlam is able to attend the local adult education program and work to meet her goals.

Project Ideas and Established Programs/Partners

Adult Basic Education (ABE) / Literacy Council

Connect with your local literacy council or adult basic education (ABE) program. Many communities have local non-profit literacy councils that help adult learners build basic literacy skills. Generally, literacy councils have structured programming to serve adult learners. Adult basic education programs through local community colleges can help adult learners build literacy skills. You can find a local literacy council and/or adult basic education program at the following website:

<https://www.nld.org>.

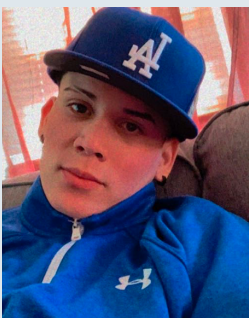
Plaza Comunitaria Program

The Plaza Comunitaria Program is an online learning program hosted by the Mexican National Institute for Adult Education for participants to earn official qualifications valid in Mexico. The program is available to both Mexican and non-Mexican nationals as these qualifications are transferable. Mexican Consulates throughout the US implement the Plaza Comunitaria program and provide curriculum and instruction to work toward gaining a Primaria, Secundaria, or Preparatoria diploma issued by the Mexican government.

English Class appropriate for the learner

Many no or low literacy students want to learn English but some providers are not sure how to approach this goal. There are curriculum options that offer a pre-level 1 class that allows a student to work on learning English while also working on pre-literacy skills. If the curriculum/materials that are being used do not have that option available, modify the pacing so that there are extra opportunities to repeat and practice skills. No or low level literacy students also may do better in a one-on-one learning environment or grouped with students who have similar academic experiences.

Student Profile



Ivan, age 19, and his brother, age 21, have traveled between Michigan and South Carolina to follow the seasons' harvest for the past four years. Before migrating to the US, Ivan's brother completed his second year of prepa (high school). Ivan, however, never attended school. While in the US, Ivan's brother has helped out with important tasks requiring reading, writing, and the use of math and Ivan has always relied on his brother. Recently, Ivan and his brother decided to stay in MI as Ivan's brother plans on getting married and starting a family. Ivan quickly realized that he would not have the support of his brother indefinitely. When the MIMEP approached the brothers, Ivan expressed interest in "salir adelante" and the desire to be independent. Despite being shy and intimidated by not being able to read, write, or do basic math, Ivan is committed to working hard.

THE PATH TO YOUR HSED: ELEMENTARY (3-5)

Provider Version

At a Glance



• WHAT IT IS

Studying 3rd-5th grade academics | Identifying skill and knowledge gaps | Working to address the gaps to complete a 5th grade academic level | Developing and/or strengthening study and life skills



• IDEAL FIT

Someone who has expressed they only attended school for a short period of time but want to learn | Has a bigger reason to want to do it (help their kids with homework, progress at work) to help face challenges | Has the time to dedicate to studying



• ELIGIBILITY

Active in MEP | Completed up to the equivalent of 2nd grade in the US/Mexican school systems | Has basic reading, math, and writing skills (can read and write simple sentences and add/subtract numbers)



• YOU END UP WITH

One step closer to enroll in a pre-HSED program and some career training programs | Worked to fulfill a personal reason(s) for wanting to complete formal education | Increased confidence in ability and skills to move forward in preparation



• MOBILITY/TIME

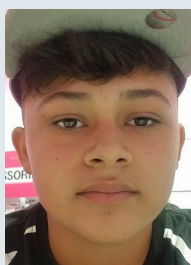
A minimum of 2-5 hours a week available to study with consistency | Should have the ability to attend tutoring/class (in person or virtually) | Recognizing this can be a 1-3 year undertaking



• THE REALITIES

A lot of time spent on academics and study skills | The amount of time will depend on the individual, including how long it has been since they were last in school | It is recommended to enroll in an ABE program or work with instructors with an ABE background to address gaps and experience working with young adults

Student Profile



Elvin is a 17-year-old from El Salvador living with his uncle. They recently moved from South Lima to Malone in New York, now working as milkers on a dairy farm. Elvin finished 4th grade in El Salvador before his local school closed down and he could not afford to travel to the school further away. While living in South Lima working on a potato farm, Elvin was enrolled in the MEP and started English class. He was a great student who practically never missed a class and made a strong connection with his instructor. His instructor did a budgeting activity and saw Elvin liked working with numbers. He had just begun improving his math skills before moving. His work schedule now makes it difficult to attend a class but his instructor gives him work to do on his own and connects with Elvin weekly to review his work.

Skills Guide

Recognize when you do not understand something but know what to ask for help with and who to ask

Persevere even when something is hard and you might not succeed at first

Willing and able to work on identified skill gaps and focus on both strengths and areas that need more work

Develop goal setting skills by identifying the reason why you are doing this - and the different steps to get you there

Reading - Build strong vocabulary skills, reading comprehension, and ability to summarize what you have read | Interpret information from maps, illustrations, and graphic information

Writing - Understand the writing process and use correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and different styles and types of writing

Math - Basic number skills, adding/subtracting/multiplying/dividing double and triple digits, beginning understanding of fractions and decimals, measurement, algebra, geometry, problem solving, and personal finance skills

How to Assess a Good Fit

Academic Level

Students with 3rd-5th grade experience will be behind in many basic study skills and have gaps in understanding. It is not uncommon for a student to have strengths in one area but major deficits in another. Finding available and appropriate pre-assessments will help identify specific skill gaps so the most useful resources can be identified. Taking a placement/locator assessment will help identify specific skill strengths and gaps. The Test of Basic Adult Education and other placement tests are designed for adult learners at all levels to help determine strengths and gaps. Starting with a review of a skill set that is slightly below the student's current one may help the student gain confidence and solidify foundational knowledge. Students who lack basic skills typically progress more slowly in all subjects as they are establishing the most basic skills. Working with content that is already familiar and of interest to the student is key.

Ganas/Why

If a student has the motivation and perseverance to achieve their goal, in spite of only a 3rd-5th grade experience, they are more likely to be able to address barriers. The task for both service provider and student is to identify the primary reason to further their formal education. As opposed to having extremely low literacy levels, someone with a 3rd grade education has the basic skills to function in their day-to-day life and they probably know many people who also live their lives with the same education level. The iSOSY Goal Setting materials can be used to help develop and foster a student's motivation, as well as to develop visuals/reminders of why they are working hard to move forward in their education. It will be important to provide encouragement and support for this to be a positive experience. A great way to do this is to ensure as much of a connection between a student's individual interests and the skills on which they are working.

Current Living/Working Situation

If a student is highly mobile with only a short time with you, complete a diagnostic assessment, explain the results, and provide them with a copy to show their next MEP provider or non-MEP instructor. It is advised to take photos of the results to send in a Whatsapp message and maintain copies in your office. To truly make progress, a student should dedicate at least 2-4 hours a week to studying and that should be linked with their goals. If a student is less mobile and has a semi-stable work schedule, connecting them with an ABE center or MEP tutoring will provide the most consistent instruction.

Reasons to Do It



Gain basic skills that can be used in almost all areas of your life and better prepare you to help your family and community and advance in work



Successfully reach a major goal and accomplish an academic milestone



Gain a sense of meaning and purpose, and a productive activity to balance life's demands



Build computer and study skills and have a better foundation to learn English

Goal Statement Examples

Short-Term Goals (within a month)

- ***Creates a realistic study plan, with deadlines, to fill skill gaps***
- ***Completes pre-assessment to identify skill needs***
- ***Obtains a library card and can access audio books***
- ***Has resource material to study necessary skills, including online resources***

Mid-Term Goals (3-6 months)

- ***Has met deadlines based on a plan to fill skill gaps***
- ***Consistently has a schedule for study***
- ***Has read three different types of texts***
- ***Has read 4-5 days each week***

Long-Term Goals (1+ year)

- ***Is enrolled in and attending ABE***
- ***Has completed 3th-5th grade level skills and is ready to move on to middle level skills***
- ***Moves up a full level in English toward fluency***

Student Profile



Byron is a 15-year-old OSY who traveled from Guatemala and was detained at the Mexico/US border and taken into ORR custody. The social workers were able to connect with his uncle who became his sponsor and Byron moved to live with him in Alabama. He began working in a poultry plant and qualified for the MEP. He attends English classes offered at the local church. The pastor of the church was trained as a mentor through iSOSY and has formed a relationship with Byron. Through the pastor, Byron connected with an immigration lawyer who told him that he needed to be in school or start working on his HSED. Due to his low education level (5th grade) there were limited options to enroll in GED classes to accommodate his schedule. The pastor and the MEP have developed a plan to work on financial literacy and have started a book club to help Byron and classmates improve their reading comprehension.

Project Ideas and Established Programs/Partners

MEP Book Club (focus on reading comprehension)

Reading comprehension (being able to read, process what you read, understand it, and talk about what you are reading) is one of the key skills to be able to successfully complete the HSED exams. One way to work on this is to add a MEP Book Club to programming. This can be integrated as part of an English class or on its own. The books can be in the student's native language as these skills are not English-specific. The most important thing is that students are reading, talking about what they read, and then connecting what they read with other areas in their lives or what they have read in the past. Graphic novels and comics are great for lower level readers, as well as reading aloud.

MEP Game Clubs

Playing board and card games helps with math, literacy, and reasoning skills in a fun way. Board games like Monopoly and Chutes and Ladders as well as games such as dominoes, Rummikub, Yahtzee, and Qwirkle are great for math skills. Boggle, Scrabble, and Sequence are good for literacy. Card games including Rummy, Solitaire, Uno, and 21 are portable and low-cost options. The games can be integrated into already existing programs and many of these games are now available online as well for remote learners.

Public Libraries

Libraries are a great place to take students so they can freely access both print and digital books. Visit ahead and talk to the librarians about your students and find out what documents are needed to apply for a library card. Many libraries will allow the MEP to write a letter/provide an affidavit to meet residency requirements for students. Libraries truly are community centers and offer a variety of services and spaces - it is not just about the books!

Student Profile



Floridalma is a 17-year-old OSY from Guatemala who speaks very little Spanish. She crossed the border by herself and ended up in Arizona alone to make a living. She works 12-hour shifts six days a week at a local greenhouse. When the AZMEP service providers found Floridalma, she explained that she completed the 3rd grade in Guatemala. Using the iSOSY Goal Setting materials, Floridalma realized that her goal to learn English will make her job easier and open up the possibility for promotion. In spite of her long workdays, Floridalma is excited about her future and motivated to work on English Language lessons as well as starting to strengthen her writing and math skills to help her realize her goals.

THE PATH TO YOUR HSED: MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)

Provider Version

At a Glance



• WHAT IT IS

Studying middle school academics by identifying and working to address skill gaps to complete an 8th grade academic level | Developing and/or strengthening the skills needed to enter a high school diploma equivalent program



• IDEAL FIT

Comfortable with 5th grade academics | Has basic computer skills | Understands the time needed to study | Able to ask for help and communicate with instructional staff



• ELIGIBILITY

Active migratory student in MEP who has completed up to the equivalent of 5th grade in the US/Mexican school systems



• YOU END UP WITH

The ability to enroll in high school equivalency programs and some career training programs | Increased confidence in ability and skills to move forward in preparation



• MOBILITY/TIME

Need a minimum of 2-5 hours a week available to study | Must dedicate time consistently | Should have the ability to attend tutoring/class (in person or virtually) | This can be a 1-3 year undertaking



• THE REALITIES

A lot of time spent on academics and study skills | Amount of time depends on student's abilities and how long since they were last in school | Academics should be paired with English classes (if needed) | Recommended to enroll in an ABE program or paired with instructors who have an ABE background to address gaps and work with young adults

Student Profile



Chanda is a 16-year-old who came to Pennsylvania from a refugee camp in Nepal, where she completed seven out of the 10 years of school. She would like to enroll in high school, but lives with her single mom and four siblings that she needs to support. She works the late-night shift at a meat processing plant so it is difficult to enroll in school or attend pre-GED classes. When Chanda is not working, she sleeps a few hours before taking care of her younger siblings while her mom goes to work at a hotel. Her English is intermediate, and she would like some lessons to become more proficient. The PAMEP was able to connect Chanda with a provider who did a locator test to see her academic strengths and weaknesses and is working to develop a study plan that will help Chanda prepare to do self-study for the GED.

Skills Guide

Recognize when you do not understand something but know what to ask for help with and who to ask

Persevere even when something is hard and you might not succeed at first

Willing and able to work on identified skill gaps and focus on both strengths and areas that need more work

Reading/Language Arts - Strong vocabulary and critical questions, using context clues to summarize and analyze what was read, identify main ideas and supporting details, and be able to cite text evidence; read a variety of genres and discuss what is read; analyze maps, illustrations, and graphic information

Math - Number concepts, algebra, and geometry; the relationships between fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios, and proportions; measurement, data analysis, word problem solving, and basics of financial literacy

Science/Social Studies - Texts and interpretation; compare and evaluate data; charts and graphs, including timelines

Writing - Persuasive essay with multiple paragraphs that cites evidence from a provided text; construct sentences correctly with proper spelling and grammar; follow the writing process to edit and revise as needed to ensure a logical and clear message

How to Assess a Good Fit

Academic Level

Students with a 6th-8th grade academic experience will need to focus on both foundational academics and study skills that are needed to prepare for the HSED prep. Taking a placement/locator assessment will help identify specific skill strengths and gaps. The Test of Basic Adult Education and other placement tests are designed for adult learners to help determine accurate abilities. It is helpful to start at a level that is slightly below the student's current one to help the student gain confidence and solidify skill sets.

Ganas/Why

Many students with a middle school education will express an interest in getting their high school degree and have some understanding that this will help them advance and have a more stable life in the United States. What they might not know is what a commitment of time and effort it will take them to achieve this. Using the iSOSY Goal Setting materials can help a student take that bigger picture/abstract goal and break it down into concrete, small steps. Some ways that you can determine a student's motivation could be noting if they are responsible for checking in with you, if they meet deadlines, and if they do research. It will be important for you to provide encouragement and support for this to be a positive experience.

Current Living/Working Situation

If a student is highly mobile, they can still work hard to gain the pre-requisite skills or fill personal skill gaps, but it will be key that any placement assessments and academic program work are documented by the provider to be able to share with their next program. Students should make a commitment of attending one class each week as well as a minimum of 2-3 hours of homework/study time in order to make progress.

Reasons to Do It



Achieve a major accomplishment that will open doors and opportunities



Realize the key to economic self-sufficiency starts with a high school diploma



Increase technological literacy, academic, and study skills



Be prepared for advancement in the workplace and further vocational training opportunities

Goal Statement Examples

Short-Term Goals (within a month)

- Develops a realistic study plan that identifies resources, deadlines, and supports
- Completes a locator/placement exam to identify skill needs
- Obtains a library card and reads a book (audio books count!)
- Registers for an English class

Mid-Term Goals (3-6 months)

- Accomplishes 30-50% of outlined goals
- Attends English class regularly
- Reads 20-30 minutes a day
- Moves up a level in English and/or academic study

Long-Term Goals (1+ year)

- Obtains 8th grade education and is ready to move to HSED exam preparation
- Speaks English with fluency
- Is able to support family through financial stability

Student Profile



Kody is 18 and works with his extended family who have been shrimping their entire lives in Louisiana. He and his family move between Houma and Grand Isle often every fishing season, resulting in Kody and his siblings being away from Houma around 45-50 days per year. This interruption was so difficult that Kody decided by the end of 6th grade to be homeschooled in order to spend more time shrimping. Homeschooling did not work well for him and he did not complete the 7th grade requirements and stopped school. Kody loves shrimping and wants to expand the business. He knows he needs more schooling to do so. The LAMEP worked with Kody to develop a study plan that has materials available both online and off, allowing him to strengthen his academic skills whenever he can study, whether he has internet or not. Kody's MEP provider checks in with him weekly to support and monitor his progress. Kody's long-term goal is to be able to take a local entrepreneurship course and develop a marketing plan for his family's shrimping business.

Project Ideas and Established Programs/Partners

MEP Book Club (focus on reading comprehension)

Reading comprehension (being able to read, process what you read, understand it, and talk about what you are reading) is one of the key skills to be able to successfully complete the HSED exams. One way to work on this is to add a MEP Book Club to programming. This can be integrated as part of an English class or on its own. The books can be in the student's native language as these skills are not English-specific. The most important thing is that students are reading, talking about what they read, and then connecting what they read with other areas in their lives or what they have read in the past.

MEP Read-a-Thon

To encourage students to read on a regular basis you can plan a read-a-thon. A read-a-thon sets up a goal that everyone is trying to meet together. It can be either the number of books a student reads or, even better, the number of minutes a student reads. Setting a weekly/monthly minute-reading goal will help establish each student's routine of reading on a regular basis.

Connect with Your Local Adult Education Center

Working with your ABE center can be a valuable partnership - whether it be to refer students to already existing programs, gain access to the expertise and academic resources they have, or working together to create an academic program that meets the needs of your migratory population. Many ABE centers also facilitate the TABE placement exams and can assist with determining placement and academic gaps.

Student Profile



Mary is a German Mennonite OSY in Kansas. She and her sister completed 8th grade but now stay home to prepare for marriage by learning to cook, clean, and take care of younger siblings. Mary and her sister are preparing for their presentation to the community, and Mary has expressed a goal to become a great baker. The KSMEP service provider focused on that interest in baking and provided lessons with math measurements, English, reading, and filling out forms. Mary's sister started joining the lessons and learned alongside. Mary felt successful in those lessons and decided she wanted to complete her high school education. Mary took a locator test which showed she had some gaps and needed to work on some pre-HSED materials before starting a HSED prep program to be most successful.

THE PATH TO YOUR HSED: HIGH SCHOOL

Provider Version

At a Glance



• WHAT IT IS

Academically preparing to take a series of exams (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies) | Receive a high school diploma equivalent | The exams are GED and HiSET, and may be available in Spanish



• IDEAL FIT

Comfortable with 9th grade academics and learning environments | Has basic computer skills | Active communicator and organized, especially with time management | Knows why they want it



• ELIGIBILITY

Age 18, not graduated from a US high school (may allow ages 16 + 17) with a government-issued ID | May require state residency but not US citizenship | Read and write in a language that the test is offered in but English proficiency is not required



• YOU END UP WITH

An academic degree that is recognized throughout the United States and in most other countries | Able to enroll in college and certified training programs | Able to earn a higher salary



• MOBILITY/TIME

Between 6-24 months to complete exams | Need 4-10 hours a week available to study | State specific if scores can transfer from one state to another | Limited international testing sites



• THE REALITIES

A lot of time is spent studying and preparing to take exams | Most people retake at least one exam, especially at the beginning | There is a cost to the exams (state specific) | Many free test preparation resources available

Student Profile



Marisol arrived in Massachusetts and enrolled in high school. In April she and her aunt moved to Delaware to work an asparagus harvest. They returned to MA in mid-July and Marisol began working on a tobacco farm through the harvest. She tried to reenroll in school in October but was told she could not since she was 18 and lacked enough credits. The MMEP assessed that Marisol was academically ready to take the HSET exam, but Marisol was hesitant and felt she was not smart enough. With counseling and support, Marisol enrolled in a small MMEP class for pre-HSED, focused on academics and goal setting. Marisol was then ready to enroll in the local HEP program. During that year and a half, she studied and passed the five HSET exams and was awarded her HSED.

Skills Guide

Recognize when you do not understand something but know what to ask for help with and who to ask

Persevere even when something is hard and you might not be successful at first

Remember the reason why you are doing this - and the long-term benefits

Reading comprehension - Including strong vocabulary, asking questions, using context clues, identifying the main idea and supporting information, being able to summarize what you read

Math - Basic math; algebra and geometry; strong understanding of the relationships between fractions, decimals, and percentages; graphs; word problem solving

Science and Social Studies - Texts and interpretation; compare and evaluate data; charts and graphs, including timelines

Writing - Persuasive essay with multiple paragraphs that cites evidence from a provided text; construct sentences correctly and use proper spelling and grammar

How to Assess a Good Fit

Academic Level

There are many ways to assess a student's levels in key areas of math and reading. One way for any student who has attended school in the US is to ask them what their last classes completed were. Another is to give them one of the sample or placement tests that are available in most HSED prep books. If you only have time for one test, use the science placement test as it combines reading, comprehension, math, and data interpretation. Creating partnerships with HSED programs offering placement tests is a more formal way to assess as well.

Ganas/Why

Ganas, or the reason why, is just as important to know as someone's academic level. Students with the motivation to achieve their goal are more likely to follow through when challenges arrive. We call this the student's personal why. A student may be able to clearly tell you their personal why or may need help to verbalize it, but this is key to being successful in the sometimes difficult process of obtaining a HSED. You can measure a student's motivation by asking them to respond to you (instead of having to follow after them to do something), meet deadlines, and even do research. Have students write a short bio and explain why obtaining their HSED is important to them, and how it will affect their future. Goal setting materials from iSOSY can help develop and foster a student's motivation, as well as develop visuals and reminders of why they are pursuing their HSED.

Current Living/Working Situation

This is not a short-term activity! A student who is highly mobile is not a hard no, but they must be driven and independent. The student needs to be responsible in communicating when/where they are moving, especially as some exams are state-specific. Having the appropriate amount of time to study is also a key factor. The student should think realistically about how much time they have each week for uninterrupted study. Lastly is the environment where they are living. Noise, time, and sleep all affect a student's ability to study well. Students must also balance work, studying, and a social life, deciding how to prioritize within that.

Reasons to Do It



Gain high school credential necessary to enroll in college studies, certification programs, or when seeking employment



Realize a sense of meaning and purpose; productive activity to balance the many challenges of migratory work and life



Earn a credential recognized by most Latin American countries as equivalent to 12 years of formal schooling



Build computer and study skills to be well-prepared for college and career training programs

Goal Statement Examples

Short-Term Goals (within a month)

- ***Receives study materials for exam***
- ***Creates a study plan with deadlines***
- ***Registers for an English class***
- ***Completes a practice test and identifies areas to work on***
- ***Registers for a test prep program***
- ***Reads a book***

Mid-Term Goals (3-6 months)

- ***Completes half or all of the study plan***
- ***Takes and passes half of the exams for HSED***
- ***Begins an English class***
- ***Registers for an exam***

Long-Term Goals (1+ year)

- ***Has a college education***
- ***Earns a salary with benefits***
- ***Is a supervisor***
- ***Owens own business and is own boss***
- ***Speaks English with fluency***

Student Profile



Jorge moved to Vermont from Mexico and was working as a milker. In Mexico he had only one year left in preparatoria and wanted to finish but he had to earn money for his family. In VT, he enrolled in MEP and in English classes. VMEP recognized his academic history and felt he would be a good candidate for HSED but Jorge's priority was working and his schedule made it impossible to attend a structured prep program. Jorge was referred to the local HEP coordinator, who helped develop a realistic plan for him to study and obtain his HSED. HEP provided a study book and access to a tutor. VMEP and HEP staff worked together to support Jorge with technology, transportation, and motivation. His hard work and collaboration paid off. Jorge received his HSED and enrolled in an online accounting program.

Project Ideas and Established Programs/Partners

MEP Book Club (focus on reading comprehension)

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HSED Prep Classes/Tutoring

Provide small group or one-on-one tutoring for students who are studying for the HSED exams. For those who may struggle to find an appropriate instructor, there are many online academic programs available as well. Remember, the programming may not have to be academic, it can be weekly check-ins, helping the student stay on a study schedule, addressing barriers, providing a quiet study space, and helping the student be accountable.

Connect with Your Local HEP and/or Adult Education Center

Create a network with the local Adult Education Centers in your area and develop or strengthen your relationships with HEP program(s) in your area. HEP is not limited by the state in which they are located, so you can also connect with the HEP where the student may travel. MEP students are eligible to enroll in HEP up to 24 months after MEP eligibility ends, meaning that if a student is not ready right away, they have a longer window of time to enroll.

Student Profile



Since a young age, Joel has traveled with his parents between Florida and North Carolina to follow the tomato harvest, transferring between schools during the year. In high school, the transfers resulted in Joel falling behind in credit accrual. Joel also works to help support his family so he decided that pursuing a HSED would be the best option for him. The NCMEP quickly assessed Joel's academic ability for completing a HSED diploma and provided a tutor to help him prepare for the exams. Joel worked with his tutor several times a week after work, and he continued to study in FL during the winter harvest. Joel returned to NC in the summer and was able to complete the exams and receive his HSED.