



INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

NEW YORK

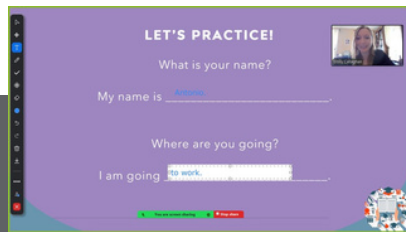


Our main initiatives focus on Out-of-School Youth. New York has a significant OSY population, and over the last several years we have focused on increasing the opportunities for this population of students to receive high-quality instruction. We have seen youth rise to the occasion, taking advantage of these opportunities and demonstrating their incredible work ethic and love for learning.

New York's Service Delivery Plan includes engaging students and families, when appropriate, in conducting a needs assessment for each eligible migratory student.

For OSY whose needs include instructional services, a Personal Learning Plan is completed to identify and document each youth's short-term goals. Ongoing efforts to maintain regular contact with OSY are made to identify ongoing or additional interests and needs, such as life skills, English language development, and job skills. All OSY are provided with support services, including direct assistance, advocacy, and connections to resources based on their individual needs and interests.

For secondary students, NYS-MEP staff deliver both instructional and support services. Students' academic progress is monitored in several ways, including consulting and collaborating with teachers and guidance counselors, reviewing transcripts and attendance records, and family check-ins. Students are supported in setting short- and long-term personal goals, assist students and families in understanding and meeting NYS graduation requirements, and provide information and opportunities related to post-secondary options.



New York has long recognized the health and well-being needs of migratory children and youth. However, the last year and a half has been especially challenging for our students and families. Statewide, we have identified a need for each of our regional program centers to offer supports related to well-being. This has included workshops for staff, families, and youth on topics such as coping with stress, supporting families with communication skills, and motivational interviewing for improved goal setting. We continue to offer virtual learning and engagement options for students and families. In addition to the many offerings through iSOSY, New York's statewide support team offers stand-alone and workshop series for OSY.

MATERIALS INTEGRATION PLC

New York State has participated in the iSOSY Materials Integration Professional Learning Circle (PLC), focusing on expanding accessible instructional resources for English language learners. As part of this initiative, TST Member Emily Callaghan (NYS-MEP Identification & Recruitment Training Coordinator) developed a comprehensive packet of English lessons using materials from the iSOSY website.

The packet includes 10 carefully selected lessons, based on topics frequently requested by both educators and students. Designed with flexibility in mind, the lessons can be taught sequentially as a cohesive curriculum for beginner learners or used independently as stand-alone resources. Content was drawn from both the iSOSY English for Daily Life materials, as well as the iSOSY STAT lessons. To ensure consistency throughout the packet, we created a corresponding lesson plan and pre- and post-assessment for each of the English for Daily Life lessons. These additions align their structure with the STAT lessons, giving all 10 lessons a consistent format and instructional flow.

After completing the packet, we introduced it to our OSY Support and Learning Community. In March 2025, Emily hosted a training session to familiarize educators with the materials and implementation strategies. Each participant was then asked to pilot at least one lesson with at least one student over a six-week period. Following the pilot, we gathered valuable feedback through multiple channels. Educators and students shared their experiences via a survey, and we facilitated a group discussion with the learning community to capture additional insights. We also collected pre- and post-assessment data from participating students to help evaluate the effectiveness of the lessons. This collaborative effort provided meaningful feedback that will guide future improvements and support ongoing efforts to enhance instructional resources for OSY across New York State.



NEW YORK

AZTEC

New York launched the AZTEC GED Pilot Program in November 2024 with support from iSOSY. Since then, under the statewide coordination of SST Member Liz Bliss (NYS-MEP Senior Education Specialist), migrant educators across NY have worked diligently to promote the program and expand access for OSY and students who have dropped out of school. As a result, students who have faced barriers such as transportation and other accessibility issues are now able to prepare for the GED test and move closer to earning their High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma.

Over the past 18 months, educators Marjorie Stanton, Dawn Hurley, Marilyn Santiago, Kellie Meegan, Abbie O'Grady, Hugo Castillo Cordova, Claudia Rivera Rodriguez, and Liana Brennan have introduced the AZTEC platform resources to 51 students, resulting in more than 406 hours of instruction and student engagement. With guidance and support from Alan Dale of AZTEC, educators were trained to determine if students were candidates for the pilot program using the Locator Series assessments in math, reading, and language arts. They also ensured that students had reliable internet connectivity and appropriate devices to participate in the online program and engage in lessons and activities. Educators closely monitored student progress, assigning new lessons and practice activities based on assessment results. As students prepared to take the GED test, educators supported them in signing up through the NY GED Portal registration. In May 2026, our student "Yareth" became the first in the pilot program to earn her High School Equivalency Diploma!

More About Yareth:

Yareth came to the United States four years ago in the middle of 11th grade. "I was scared because it was a new life," she explains. It was difficult for her to learn English while trying to adjust to her new classes. "I tried very hard," she says. She was an honor roll student, but did not pass the NYS Regents Exam in English Language Arts for graduation. "I was so disappointed," she recalls.

When Yareth learned about the GED, she decided, "It's now or never." She enrolled in the AZTEC GED Pilot Program offered by her regional NYS-MEP program center. In an area with limited GED resources, the program provided a real pathway forward by combining computer-based independence with local educator support from Dawn Hurley. Yareth passed the Language Arts Exam in May and recently received her High School Equivalency Diploma in the mail. "I was so very, very happy," she says, adding that everyone in her family cheered when the diploma arrived. Yareth is now planning to enroll in college.



SOMLA

New York provides secondary students with a unique opportunity through the SUNY Oneonta Migrant Leadership Academy (SOMLA), a statewide program planned by SST Member Odilia Coffta (NYS-MEP Identification and Recruitment Associate Director). SOMLA brings together high school students from across the State, many of whom are first generation college-bound, onto a college campus where they can earn college credit while developing leadership and life skills. Participants explore their strengths, set personal growth goals, and create long-term plans aligned with their passions and interests, preparing them for future academic and career success.

During the pandemic, SOMLA transitioned into the virtual summer High School Online Leadership Academy (HOLA). To extend learning beyond summer, students were offered a series of workshops throughout the following year. At the same time, NY identified the need for additional high-quality educational opportunities for OSY, similar to those provided to secondary students online. In response, the OSY Online Workshop series was developed.

These workshops incorporate iSOSY educational resources, NYS-MEP ID&R's Simply Speaking book, and other vetted English language learning materials, alongside valuable life skills content presented by NYS-MEP staff and guest experts in fields such as health, law, education. We offer these online workshop opportunities on the first Thursday evening of each month to OSY statewide. Collaboration with MEP educators ensures that students have the resources and support needed to access the workshops and actively participate.

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"This has made a tremendous difference for me," Yareth concludes. "My advice for other students is to never give up. When you feel tired, stop and look at how far you have traveled and feel proud of that, and then keep going."



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NYS-MEP remains committed to meeting students' needs by prioritizing flexibility, responsiveness, and strategic use of resources. The program continuously conducts needs assessments to ensure services are aligned with the most pressing academic and support needs of migratory students.

We have leveraged existing instructional resources, such as iSOSY materials and the NYS-MEP ID&R's Simply Speaking book, while also building staff capacity through support and learning communities and targeted training. The OSY workshop series topics are adjusted each year to reflect the needs and interests of youth, as identified by the students and service providers. In addition, as New York State learning standards are updated, we incorporate resources and guidance from the SEA to update our MEP instructional resources, available to all educators through our staff library.

Strong collaboration is another key strategy. We work closely with schools, community organizations, other farmworker-serving groups, and families to coordinate services, reduce duplication of efforts, and connect students to a broader network of support. This approach ensures that students receive comprehensive services beyond what the program alone can provide.

CHALLENGES

Staff capacity and competing priorities can make it difficult to fully engage in new trainings, pilot materials, and maintain consistent follow-up with students—particularly with OSY who often have demanding work schedules and are highly mobile.

Time commitments have also been a challenge when implementing new resources or participating in learning communities. While these efforts are valuable, balancing them alongside direct service delivery requires careful planning and flexibility.

Additionally, sustaining initiatives over time can be challenging with uncertain funding.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NYS-MEP provides a range of targeted professional development opportunities to both regional and statewide staff to strengthen their ability to support migratory students, including OSY and high-risk secondary students. These learning opportunities focus on building both instructional capacity and knowledge of effective support strategies.

- OSY and Adolescent Support and Learning Communities (SLCs) provide ongoing forums for staff to share strategies, address challenges, and build expertise in supporting diverse student populations
- New York State Education Department Diploma Requirements and Graduation Pathways ensures staff can accurately guide students and families toward graduation
- Worker Justice Center of New York workshops include information about available services and support for farmworkers, as well as presentations on topics such as the Green Light Law
- Other OSY-focused trainings, such as establishing relationships and differentiating instruction for OSY

The advice we would provide to other States is the same advice we have for our NYS-MEP staff. *Prioritize relationship-building—establishing trust is critical, especially with OSY and difficult-to-reach students. It is important to be flexible and student-centered. We need to adapt services to fit students' schedules, when possible, and be persistent in outreach efforts.*



Our experiences have strengthened our approach to working with migratory students by emphasizing the importance of flexibility, relationship-building, and responsiveness to individual needs. Through initiatives such as piloting instructional materials, participating in learning communities, and providing targeted staff training, we have gained a deeper understanding of the diverse circumstances our students face—particularly OSY and high-risk secondary students. By offering a combination of regionally tailored training and statewide professional development opportunities, we ensure that all educators across the State share a foundational knowledge while also adapting services to reflect local needs and resources.