

## FOR Lessons Learned Column

Contact:

Elaine Peck, Putnam County Community Foundation  
2 South Jackson Street  
Greencastle, IN 46135  
Phone: 765.653.4978  
Email: [epeck@pcfoundation.org](mailto:epeck@pcfoundation.org)



### *GED is means of getting ahead*

Almost nineteen percent of adults aged 25 and over in Putnam County do not have a high school diploma or a GED. According to 2007 census data, this translates to 6663 persons in Putnam County who may not have the information and skills needed to support themselves financially. As our society becomes more complex, there are fewer job opportunities for people who do not have a high school diploma. The GED program has become a significant means for these adults to obtain better jobs. The information in this article was obtained from the website of the Indiana Department of Education.

The General Educational Development (GED) test can lead to a high school equivalency diploma for students who have been unable to complete high school, or who have dropped out. The GED equivalency diploma, usually simply called the GED, is respected by most employers and higher education institutions and is recognized throughout the United States.

The GED test does not provide an “easy” way to earn a diploma, just a different way. If you are having a hard time in school and are tempted to drop out and take the GED test, it is usually a better idea to study diligently, attend classes regularly, and make sure you are doing your best in high school while meeting the normal requirements for graduation. Take every opportunity to pass both sections of the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE). You will probably find the GED test more difficult than the GQE. The GED is based on twelfth grade standards and covers five subject areas, while the GQE is based on ninth grade standards and covers two subject areas. If you are far behind in high school credits, for a legitimate reason such as a serious illness, you may want to consider the GED test. You can talk to your high school counselor for advice on whether it is a good option for you.

The GED test is made up of five subtests: *Language Arts: Writing* (sentence structure, organization, usage, mechanics, and original essay); *Social Studies* (U.S. history, civics and government, economics, world history, and geography); *Science* (biology, earth and space science, and physical science); *Language Arts: Reading* (literary text and nonfiction prose); and *Mathematics* (arithmetic, algebra, geometry, data, statistics, and probability).

**Eligibility:** To take the test, a candidate must be at least 17 years old, must have lived in Indiana for at least 30 days immediately preceding the testing, and must not have earned a high school diploma from a U.S. high school. Seventeen-year-olds must provide documentation of a completed exit interview that shows their withdrawal from high school, as well as passing GED practice test scores.

**Preparation:** Adult basic education courses throughout Indiana help candidates prepare to take the tests. Free, individualized programs are provided year-round for adults who have not earned a high school diploma. For information on these courses, you can check with your local high school or call the Indiana Department of Education at 317-232-0522. If you wish to prepare on your own, self-study guides are available in bookstores and libraries. These guides, usually with titles like *How to Prepare for the High School Equivalency Exam*, often have explanations of correct answers on sample tests. For information on “GED on TV,” a learn-at-home project sponsored by PBS public television, call toll-free 1-877-GEDONTV (1-877-433-6688).

**Cost:** In Indiana, it will cost up to \$60 to take the GED test, depending on the testing site. An individual subtest can also be taken separately for \$10-\$12. Those wishing to take the test *must* determine the testing schedule of a site close to them, register in person, and pay ahead of time. They should bring three forms of identification when they register, including one picture identification. *The same three forms of identification should also be brought to the testing session.*

**Accommodations for Those with Disabilities:** If you require accommodations because of your disability, specific procedures must be followed in making a request. It usually takes two to three weeks to receive an answer, but it can take up to six weeks if a psychologist has to review it. If your request is approved, testing can be scheduled and arrangements made for testing with the accommodations. GED tests are available in audiocassette, braille, and large print versions. The most common accommodations allowed are the use of a private room, frequent breaks, sign language interpreter, scribe, calculator, or extended time.

*Elaine Peck is Executive Director of the Putnam County Community Foundation, a nonprofit public charity established in 1985 to administer endowments, award grants and provide leadership, enriching life and strengthening community in Putnam County. The Community Foundation administers more than 180 funds for donors, supporting a variety of charitable purposes. To discover all the ways you might make a difference, contact [www.pcfoundation.org](http://www.pcfoundation.org) or 765.653.4978.*