

AEFLA Annual Narrative Report

In March, 2020, NC Community College System employees were sent home and our remote work policy was in effect. The College and Career Readiness team met daily to address challenges that our providers faced and more importantly that students faced. Since we have been working remotely, the College and Career Readiness team lost a few staff members and hired new members. We have three new staff members who have never worked in the office.

In this report, we have included required and relevant information about NC's policy changes and technical assistance provided to adapt to the new reality. Now, as we face a new year, we are reflecting and analyzing our practices to understand what practices still make sense and what practices need to change. With a strong team, and resilient providers, in 2021 NC will focus on innovating to ensure adult education students have equitable access to training opportunities and prepared to earn in-demand credentials.

1. State Leadership Funds

AEFLA requires that each eligible agency use funds provided under section 223 (State Leadership Activities) to develop or enhance the adult education system in four required areas identified below.

(a) Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership activities) for each the following required activities:

- (i) Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Unified or Combined State Plan as described in section 223(a)(1)(A).*

NC workforce development system is guided by three principles: education and skills attainment, employer engagement and leadership, and innovation and governance and system alignment. This Commission coordinates, oversees and assesses the performance of the state's workforce development systems including the WIOA core partners. Title II is not represented on NC Works Commission. However, the State Director is a subject matter expert on a subcommittee, Education and Skills Attainment, and has used this opportunity to advise and advocate for better integration of core partner's services.

Our activities focused on coordinating and building relationships between local workforce development boards and respective providers. To support the state's strategy to develop career pathways, we offered intensive, regional IET training to support accurate and compliant IET implementation.

Providers indicated that a major challenge for IET implementation is the lack of support from training providers that offer credential programs. We established an advisory committee of community college short-term training providers and planned awareness and training activities to deepen their understanding of IET's as strategies to increase credential attainment and enrollment. We planned to present at a major NC workforce conference, but it was switched to a virtual platform. It was clear that participants attention and need was more about how to manage enrollment in this crisis.

In alignment with a NC unified state plan strategy, we provided training on MyFuture NC, a post-secondary educational attainment goal set to increase overall credential attainment across NC.

This year, Title II staff participated in various WIOA unified state plan working committees. The WIOA State plan 2020 development was a core partner and Dept of Commerce collaborative process. This allowed Title II to focus on better integration of services and discussions on performance and shared intake processes. We had plans to meet monthly and plans to provide joint training for local workforce boards. Since COVID, all resources focused on switching to online services and on providing frequent regional economic updates to all

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stakeholders. During the first 4 months of the pandemic, Title II had weekly calls with providers. In these calls we shared economic data, and other opportunities offered by our core partners.

- (ii) *Establishment or operation of high-quality professional development programs as described in section 223(a)(1)(B).*

Since 2012, one of the main activities of the NC College & Career Readiness Professional Development Team has been to offer a credentialing system designed to instruct adult education teachers across the state in the latest research-based practices. During the 2019-2020 program year, we offered four certifications, the Core Credential, ASE Language Arts, ASE Mathematics, and the ESL Fast Track. The Core Credential introduces students to the essential components of reading as well as up-to-date research-based methods for teaching literacy to adult students. In 2020, to encourage a focus on professional development at the local level, we rolled out a new initiative called the Professional Development Facilitator Network (PDFN). The PDF Network has become a major activity of the CCR Professional Development team.

In February of 2020, state leadership allocated funds to all providers to establish the Professional Development Facilitator's Network. This required providers to identify a faculty member to facilitate and coordinate professional development needs for their program. State leadership trained these facilitators guided them through different PD activities. These included:

- Survey teacher needs to determine appropriate professional development activities,
- Assess instructor's knowledge and instructional strategies to meet state performance
- Assist instructors to complete the LINCS Teacher Competency Self-Assessment
- Observe and mentor novice instructors on best practices to encourage students to earn a credential while continuing to work on their basic skills
- Share state and national training opportunities.
- Participate in PDF Network activities.
- Develop and submit to the state professional development team, a local professional development plan aligned to the stated goals of the PDF Network,
- Attend one face-to-face state office training, one end of project meeting, and monthly virtual meetings,
- Attend COABE 2020 Conference as a cohort
- Complete and submit to the state office one quarterly and an end-of-year report reflecting the status of the professional development plan.

The PDF Network began in February 2020 and ran through June 30, 2020. One month after the start of the PDF Network the COVID 19 pandemic struck North Carolina and all Title II providers moved their entire programs online overnight. The main objective of the PDF Network suddenly became offering local professional development focusing on online course design and best practices for teaching adult ed from a distance. The PD Facilitators instantly pivoted and become the distance learning experts at their programs shepherding countless instructors into the world of online instruction. On June 15 and 16, 2020, we held The PDF Network Showcase via Zoom. During the Showcase, each PDF presented on the professional development that they had accomplished during the five-month period of the additional allocation.

Below are the credentials awarded by NC and the number of credentials earned during the 2019-2020 program year:

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NC Credentials	Credentials
CORE: Hybrid/Online (10-week course)	75
Adult Secondary Education: LA and Math	40
CORE: 100% Online (10-week course)	36
ESOL Fast Track Online	85
TOTAL	236

In addition to the credentials awarded through the NC College & Career Readiness Professional Development Office, and the newly formed Professional Development Facilitator Network, state leadership has provided many trainings and PD opportunities that were offered via webinar, Moodle, and face-to-face modalities. A summary of those PD activities is provided below:

- In July of 2019, we participated in the Performance Partnership Summit Professional Development Kickoff in collaboration with the NCCC System Office. Presentations were chosen based on feedback from Title II providers and included information on data analysis and IETs.
- To support and offer guidance to approximately twenty new Title II directors, we provided a two-day face-to-face New Directors' Training on September 24 & 25, 2019.
- To share best practices from our providers, Title II grant representatives provided monthly webinars to their assigned providers on topics included financial monitoring, assessment, LEIS forms, NRS measures, the Time and Effort process, budgeting, and compliance.
- Dissemination of practices is provided through a monthly newsletter.
- IELCE PD – We offered two face-to-face regional trainings on an *Introduction to IELCE* on January 9 & 16, 2020 in Raleigh and Hickory.
- Follow up training on implementation was provided at three regional sites - *Credential Attainment – Building Integrated Education & Training (IET) Models* on March 2, 4, & 6, 2020. in Daniel Loges, Director of Professional Development, Title II.

In March of 2020, when the pandemic reached North Carolina, all scheduled professional development shifted to virtual delivery. To immediately support our programs in this new reality we offered a number of webinars focused on the online delivery of adult ed instruction. Below is a summary of the professional development offered from the beginning of the pandemic through July 2020:

- March 18, 2020 - *Utilizing Google Hangouts and Google Docs for CCR Classes During the COVID 19 Crisis*
- March 19, 2020 - *Utilizing USA Learns & Kahn Academy as Distance Ed for CCR Classes During the COVID 19 Crisis*
- April 16, 2020 – *Professional Development Facilitator Network April Meeting*
- May 13, 2020 - *Introduction to Title II Performance and Accountability Requirements*, an on-demand course, was released via Moodle.
- May 14, 2020 – *Professional Development Facilitator Network May Meeting*
- May 18 & 19, 2020 – Two-day virtual conference on “*The Best of IELCE.*”
- June 15 & 16, 2020 – Two-day virtual presentation of *The Professional Development Facilitator Network Showcase*

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June 25, 2020 – *Technology Tips for Teaching Basic Skills Classes Online*

Also, in an immediate response to the pandemic, we transitioned the Core, ASE Language Arts, and ASE Mathematics credentialing courses to the NCCC System Virtual Learning Community and began offering them via a 100% online model of delivery. Until March 2020, these three credential courses had been offered via a hybrid model. The Fast Track ESOL credentialing course had always been offered via a 100% online model of delivery. Also, in response to the pandemic, we offered two additional cohorts of the Fast Track ESOL course during April and May of 2020.

With the arrival of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the pivot to offering adult ed courses nearly exclusively only at a distance, in North Carolina we discovered that many of our basic skills students did not have adequate access either to the internet nor the devices needed to effectively participate in online learning. In response to the need to keep learners engaged who did not have adequate access to technology, the State Leadership Team developed a template for creating paper-based lessons, Alternative Learning Packets (ALPs). The creation of the ALP system allowed providers to offer an alternative distance ed modality that does not rely on technology. ALPs are paper-based lessons aligned to the NCCCS CCR Content Standards and can be mailed to or picked up by students every week. ALP must be submitted to Professional Development team to be approved before use. ALP have become an integral component of the instruction being offered at many of our providers during the pandemic and was especially useful to Corrections. The Professional Development team created written guidance on the details of writing and submitting an ALP and has provided technical assistance on creating learning packets aligned to content standards. The State Leadership Team reviewed and approved over 400 ALP submissions between March and June 2020. This approach to distance education, offering paper based learning modules allowed our providers to continue to engage students, particularly rural and incarcerated students, who would have otherwise been unable to receive instruction.

(iii) Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223(a)(1)(C).

During the 2018-19 program year, the grant representative structure, created to provide more timely and customized technical assistance, was modified slightly to allow for more substantive interactions in fewer programmatic areas. The duties involved with tracking time and effort as well as budget issues were moved to the Grants and Compliance Technician area. This allowed Title II grant representatives to focus on subject matter expertise and other COVID-19 issues. Grant representatives provide technical assistance through the following:

1. serve as first point of contact to create and nurture a professional relationship with adult education and literacy staff throughout North Carolina. Monthly calls with providers were instituted to provide a more organic and responsive approach to technical assistance. since providers were interacting with someone at the state level in a smaller group (typically 15-20), they were more likely to ask nuanced questions and problem solve with their colleagues. This responsibility became extremely important as the COVID pandemic negatively impacted our provider network. Providers looked forward to these regular calls as a source of connection and clarity during very trying circumstances.
2. conduct desk top monitoring throughout the year, particularly as it relates to program performance. Working with our Director of Performance and Partnerships, as well as our IT department, reps have notified providers of the implications of low performance and reiterated the availability of technical

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assistance from the Center for Excellence in Performance established at Central Carolina Community College through funding from Title II.

3. review, assist with, and provide feedback for Corrective Action Plans
4. conduct desktop and on-site monitoring
5. serve as a subject area content specialist in an assigned area (distance education, IELCE, assessment, instruction, corrections, and advising).

(iv) *Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of adult education activities as described in section 223(a)(1)(D).*

Based on the risk assessment conducted, a total of ten providers were selected for onsite monitoring. However, because of our governor's stay at home order on March 13, 2020, only three visits could be completed. We informed the remaining seven providers that couldn't be monitored as planned that "due to the impact and requirements of the COVID-19 health crisis, the onsite monitoring visit has been suspended." They were further informed that "their submission of documents and information into the College and Career Readiness portal was determined to be sufficient to meet all monitoring requirements for the program for the 2019-20 program year." As of the end of the program year, onsite monitoring was still suspended.

(v) *As applicable, describe how the State has used funds for additional permissible activities described in section 223(a)(2).*

The Career READY is a system developed to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education, including creating links to community colleges. The project customized curriculum to align to community college academic standards for enrolment in gateway credit bearing math and English courses. The goal of this project is to improve transition to post-secondary. Regional coordinators created an Implementation Manual to assist providers on best practices for recruitment, collaborating with curriculum partners and program design. COVID-19 impacted enrollment and did not allow for face-to-face regional workshops. But, virtual workshops were held and next year, plans are to expand this program to more providers.

The Center of Excellence for Performance in Adult Education continues to support and provide technical assistance and professional development to programs to meet State adjusted levels of performance. This year, on-demand training was provided on meeting post exit performance measures.

2. Performance Data Analysis

Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based on the core indicators of performance. Discuss how the assessment was used to improve quality and effectiveness of the funded eligible providers and any plans to further increase performance in future reporting years.

The COVID-19 crisis has had an adverse impact on North Carolina's MSG rates, disrupting how and when assessments are given, and how hours and attendance are collected. The inequity of access to distance learning platforms and other technological devices has impacted both the instructional hours and overall student attendance hours. Thus, creating a high level of anxiety for our providers, and in turn, ultimately negatively impacting the performance outcomes for many of our programs. The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the measurable skill gains target rate for the 2019-2020 program year increasing from 39% in 2018-19 PY to 42%, and a decrease in the number of participants within the programs, created a "perfect storm" contributing to lower performance outcomes for the 2019-2020 program year.

In March 2020, NC advised programs to move to remote activities and close and or reduce the number of in-person instruction and services. As a result, our goal was to assist programs in reaching and or keeping

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current students engaged in learning. In recognition of challenges providers faced in delivering instruction and services, we issued a memo stating we would not measure a program's success or failure to meet 2019-20 program year.

As the crisis persisted, during the month of April, we addressed the challenge of in person testing and approved proctored exams and approved alternative options for documenting student's academic placement and eligibility.

Pre-COVID, the State of North Carolina saw continuous improvement with our measurable skill gains (PY 2016: 35.48%MSG; PY 2017: 39.89% MSG; PY 2018: 44.88% MSG). The pre-pandemic data from July 2019-March 2020, suggests that the program year performance was projected to be on pace compared to previous years data during the same time period.

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ABE/ASE

Our aggregate Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) levels overall fell below the 42% target for the 2019-20 reporting year with a performance of 34% and 39% respectively. All of our levels except for ABE Level 6 fell below their targets. The majority of MSGs were achieved by pre and posttests followed by high school equivalency and post-secondary enrollment.

ESL

Our aggregate English as a Second Language (ESL) levels fell below our 42% target for the 2019-20 reporting year with a performance of 35%. Our most significant shortfalls occurred at ESL Levels 1, 2, and 3. The vast majority of the MSGs were from pre/post-testing EFL gains followed by enrollment into post-secondary education after exit.

Combined Program Performance

Factoring in periods of participation (PoP) for the 2019-20 reporting year, our overall MSGs were 35% which was a significant decrease over the prior program year's 44% performance and fell short of our target of 42%. Our participant population for ABE/ASE was approximately 64% and ESL accounted for 36% of our participants. The number of participants in all ABE/ASE levels, except for ABE level 6, decreased from the prior program year. All of our ESL levels had fewer participants than the prior program year.

During the 2019-2020 program year, we worked with IT to customize and enhance our student information system database. Part of this programming included the creation of additional tools and reports to aid providers in pro-actively monitoring their data and performance. We worked in conjunction with IT, and Research and Performance Management (RPM) to provide feedback, trainings and webinars throughout the year with a focus on data quality and performance improvement. We worked in conjunction with RPM in the creation of developing the Performance Dashboards, which allows providers to pull data to create specific reports for programs to analyze to help identify potential problems and or to resolve problems.

For the program year 2019-2020, a new contract has been awarded to a new vendor for the Adult Education and Literacy state MIS, which will be used by all programs. The new MIS system will incorporate NRS measures using common definitions and categories. We are currently in the implementation phase for the new MIS. NRS tables will calculate accurately to include error checks and prevent double counting with the new state MIS.

To address areas of weak performance, State staff members conducted webinars, regional trainings (before the COVID-19 pandemic), and specific virtual technical assistance to programs who were not meeting data reporting deadlines and or performance outcomes. The State Office continued the services of the Center of Excellence for Adult Education (CEAEP) to provide professional development and technical



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assistance projects to providers on improving their performance, as well. During the COVID-19 pandemic, State staff provided weekly and monthly virtual statewide meetings with providers to provide important guidance/policy updates and resources for programs.

3. Integration with One-stop Partners

Describe how the State eligible agency, as the entity responsible for meeting one-stop requirements under 34 CFR part 463, subpart J, carries out or delegates its required one-stop roles to eligible providers. Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system. Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through the local option. In the event the local option was not used in a local area, indicate that the State option was triggered.

NC Works Commission does not have unique representation by Title II on the state board. In requesting that Title II be represented, NC Department of Commerce, the manager of the NC Workforce Board indicated that per their legal counsel, NC is not required to have unique representation of Title II. We will continue to request a Title II seat on the Board.

Title II did not delegate its one-stop requirement responsibilities to local providers. Local MOU's were reviewed and approved by Title II office.

Title II works with the NC Council of Workforce Development Board Directors to promote better integration of services at NC Works centers. Training was provided to Title II programs and local boards on ways to collaborate and on roles and responsibilities of Title II as a core partner. In 2018-19 training was provided to Title II providers on the ways they need to integrate services with their local NC Works. Many providers reported that the local NC Works and Boards were not responsive to the Adult Education programs efforts to integrate services. This was also evident as the State reviewed and approved the 23 NC WDB MOUs. Our main activity has been on educating local boards on their responsibility to coordinate career services for Title II participants and to identify local WDB that were successfully integrating. . In the MOU, the services provided to Title II lists the following: job placement, career counseling, workforce preparation activities. It is unclear how these services are provided. For program year 2019-2020, the State Director has negotiated with the 23 Boards to detail in the MOU how services and access for Title II are delivered.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, State staff participated in monitoring visits to one-stop centers that were identified as successfully integrating services. Visits to the local one-stop and interviews with workforce partners is an integral component of the on-site monitoring protocol to understand the level of cooperation between the adult education and other one-stop partner programs. During the pandemic, State staff shifted to monitoring one-stop programs online via email communication, where one-stop centers shared their partnerships and method of referrals. The State staff's goal in conducting the monitoring visits, is to help develop the relationship between Title II providers and local one-stops to form a partnership that best suits the students they serve to meet their local workforce demands.

During the 2019-2020 program year, an infrastructure cost allocation formula was utilized that reflected proportionate cost to benefits received. The infrastructure costs for local NC Works were negotiated by NC Dept. of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions and NC Community College System Office, Title II State Director. The IFA allocation is based on allocation per participant who received staff assisted services.

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4. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program (AEFLA Section 243)

Describe how the state is using funds under Section 243 to support the following activities under the IELCE program:

- Describe when your State held a competition [the latest competition] for IELCE program funds and the number of grants awarded by your State to support IELCE programs.

North Carolina was awarded a total of **\$1,090,460** for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) activities. For the 2019-20 program year, North Carolina did not hold an open competition, but continued funding to current providers. The current IEL/CE Federal award sub-grantees were awarded funding for a three-year grant period. A total of 10 programs were approved by the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges on July 17, 2020. All programs were required to submit a narrative, which included information regarding how they are reaching out to the target population as specified in the IEL/CE Federal award. Additionally, to ensure that the target population are receiving equitable and fair services, funded IEL/CE providers were required to engage in professional development opportunities that would strengthen their abilities to provide comprehensive outreach services to target populations as outline in the IEL/CE Federal award. North Carolina will compete funds for the IEL/CE Federal award during program year 2020-21.

- Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training activities.

During the 2019-20 program year, all funded IEL/CE programs were required to establish Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. To support the development of the IET programs, funded providers were allocated funds from the 243 Federal awards to support the curriculum development and design of their IET programs. IET programs ranged from Industrial Sewing to Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC). Programs were required to work in tandem with their Local Workforce Development Board, Continuing Education counterparts, and local employers to develop the IET programs. All the IET programs developed and offered were based upon rigorous evidence-based research regarding the regional employment needs in their service areas. Additional funding was awarded to support a industry curriculum design. All funded IEL/CE providers engaged in a six-month intense IET curriculum design training entitled "Occupation READY." The Occupation READY project was aimed at providing support for ELLs enrolled in North Carolina's IEL/CE programs. The term "READY" an acronym that stands for Refreshing, Enhancing, Accelerating, and Developing Your skills. Occupation READY is a curriculum development project designed to focus on accelerating students academically. IELCE providers were required to focus on occupationally relevant instruction and hands-on activities enhanced each participant's occupational skills knowledge and English language proficiency needed to earn an industry recognized certificate. This model required concurrent enrollment in occupational training, workforce preparation activities, civics education and English language learning activities. The curriculum developed for the training required a single learning objective. Providers were required to develop a scope and sequence for lessons that would be used in their IET programs. All providers were required to develop curriculum that was customized for each occupation that providers identified as a high-demand industry. Creating customized occupational curriculum is a challenge as it requires a team and partnership with training providers such as Curriculum and Continuing Education. During the initial planning phase of the Occupation READY project, providers were encouraged to start assessing pertinent team members that would serve on the Occupation READY leadership team. Customizing curriculum requires a team that includes an occupation training expert, trained English language learning instructor, and administrators. Providers were required to submit the names of the individuals that would serve as the first point of contact for the different leadership areas during the Occupation READY project. One of the major lessons learned during the curriculum development project was the sense of comradery developed amongst the IEL/CE providers. The providers worked independently to create

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valuable content that could be utilized statewide. The providers also created a strong communication network to share stories, ideas, and curriculum that could be used by all providers. The Occupation READY network laid a foundation for future IET program development in the state of North Carolina. Many of our providers not funded by the IEL/CE program look to those providers that are currently funded for guidance regarding developing IETs in their areas that focus on in-demand careers. One of the major challenges during the IET curriculum redesign was time. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our group was unable to meet face-to-face and share ideas. Many of our providers wished for more time with the project to continue to develop additional IETs to support the adult learners in their service areas.

During the 2019-20 program year, the North Carolina Adult Education and Literacy Program developed a Center of Excellence for English Language Learners Workforce Development. The Center of Excellence served as a training and professional development mechanism for programs implementing and facilitating the IEL/CE program. The overall management of the Center of Excellence was conducted by a state staff member and one of the Title II funded providers. Intense professional development was offered during the 2019-20 program year for all IEL/CE programs. Programs were required to attend monthly calls to discuss their plans and initiatives as it relates to the IEL/CE program. Additionally, in concert with the state staff member, the local provider that facilitated the Center of Excellence programming conducted on-site program visits to all programs funded by the IEL/CE dollars. To enhance the knowledge and skill regarding the development of high-quality lesson planning, co-teaching, co-enrollment, and full cycle IET development, the Center of Excellence offered two regionally based trainings during the month of January. The trainings focused on lesson planning skills and IET Scope and Sequence program development. In the month of May, the Center of Excellence offered a two-day professional development session. The two-day professional development sessions focused on The Workforce Development System and Career Pathways Development, Engaging all English Language Learner Communities, Employer Engagement, Occupational Trainers, Program Design, and Contextualization. Due to the COVID pandemic, the two-day training in May was conducted virtually via the Zoom platform. In tandem with the state staff member, the local program that managed the Center of Excellence was required to complete an on-demand training. The on-demand training is composed of five modules that helps programs review information starting from initial program development to full IET implementation. The topics of the five modules include: IELCE Overview, Community Engagement and Program Planning, Program Design, Instruction, and Contextualization. Additionally, as programs continue to implement their IEL/CE programs, in tandem with the state staff member, the Center of Excellence for English Language Learners Workforce Development completed an IELCE Implementation Manual. The implementation manual is available on the North Carolina Community College website. Programs are encouraged to use this document as a reference while facilitating the IELCE program.

To support IELCE, one state staff member is dedicated to working with the IEL/CE program. During the 2019-20 program year, the state staff member worked with the Center of Excellence to provide high-quality technical assistance, professional development, and curriculum development opportunities to support the full implementation of IETs. The state staff member dedicated to managing the IEL/CE program held additional technical assistance meetings with IEL/CE providers in addition to the meetings scheduled via the Center of Excellence. During the provider calls, the state staff member answered technical assistance questions regarding budgets, program modifications, and new and innovative ways to facilitate the program due to the COVID pandemic.

One of the major examples that funded providers have implemented to support the IEL/CE program is a full redesign of their curriculum. The Center of Excellence helped to facilitate a full curriculum development redesign that would support in-demand careers in their areas. Also, many programs have decided to devote one full-time staff member to facilitate the IEL/CE program. Based upon review and interactions with programs,

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having one devoted staff member has helped them streamline their processes and procedures as it relates to providing services to eligible IEL/CE participants. The Center of Excellence was required to oversee the development of a lesson plan repository. The lesson plan repository consists of lessons and IET models developed by funded IELCE programs. The lesson plan repository has helped programs share information, ideas, and best practices around IEL/CE programming. The IEL/CE curriculum and IET programming information is housed on the North Carolina Community Colleges System's Learning Management System, Moodle. All funded Title II providers have access to the course, which means the information can be shared statewide to facilitate IET programs.

The Center of Excellence provided professional development information regarding how the target IEL/CE population should be recruited. Funded IEL/CE providers were required to assess how they were recruiting their students and determine if the method was successful. If the method was not successful, the funded programs were required to redesign their recruitment methods. Again, one of the best practices that was derived from reviewing their recruitment methods was dedicating at least one-full time staff member to oversee the IEL/CE programming.

Another promising practice that was developed during the program year was the use of data to make programmatic decision. All IEL/CE providers engaged in sessions that demonstrated how the use of data and metrics would help them deliver impactful programming that aligned to their regional needs. Providers used their new data skills to make determinations about whether to start a new IET program, or enhance their program already offered at their location.

One of the major lessons learned during the program year, was the importance of developing IETs that met the regional needs. Programming offered by the Center of Excellence helped funded IELCE programs conduct a very in-depth analysis of their programs. Programs determined that they needed to work closer with their Continuing Education and Occupational Training partners to ensure that students were being placed in high-demand jobs that meet the regional needs. Additionally, programs were provided with technical assistance and modeling that helped support professional co-teaching and co-curriculum development models.

- *Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency as described in section 243(c)(1) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.*

During the 2019-20 program year, funded programs were required to work with their local One-Stop partners to assess the regional employment needs, Additionally, programs were required to work with local employers in their area to develop pipelines for employment. All curriculum developed the program year, required that the program use data and information derived from local employers to create content. For example, one of the major regional in-demand careers in the western part of our state is industrial sewing. One of our funded providers worked closely with the company's human resource department to ensure that upon completion of the academic and IET courses, students could be placed in unsubsidized employment. Additionally, many programs offered work-based learning opportunities at employer locations to increase access to programming and recruit students that were already engaged in the high-demand career. North Carolina's 243 programs conducted a two-prong approach by working with the employers to place new employees in unsubsidized employment and help enhance the skills of employees working at certain employers that would in turn help lead to a promotion.

North Carolina's IELCE providers established partnerships with employers by offering training on-site to students in many instances. North Carolina is a very diverse state, so for those programs located in very rural areas, the best way to reach students and provide trainings are to facilitate the training at the local employer's

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location. Also, many of the occupational trainers wanted to refresh their skills regarding the information that were teaching. Many of our occupational skills teachers went to the local employer locations to learn the skills and develop the curriculum based upon exactly what the future employees would complete during work hours. Funded providers were required to develop a pipeline with employers to help ensure that students would be able to be placed in unsubsidized employment upon completion of the IEL/CE program. In addition to working with local employers, funded providers were required to work with other stakeholders such as their Local Workforce Development Board to determine the need in the area. The Center of Excellence provided tools to help programs determine staff that served on the Local Workforce Development Board. Programs were required to determine if their role on the Local Workforce Development Board was making a meaningful impact as it pertained to the IEL/CE program. Additionally, programs worked with local transportation agencies to ensure that students had safe and reliable transportation to class, or the location where the classes were to be facilitated. According to many of the funded providers, most of the IEL/CE curriculum and IET courses were developed around the appointment requirements of the students enrolled in the program. Many programs worked closely with their local Department of Social Services agencies to ensure that students received adequate wrap around services such as nutritional, childcare, and other subsidies. Programs indicated that by providing holistic services to the student, this helped to ensure that the student would remain engaged in the program.

NC IELCE programs created several paths in different industry sectors. All funded IEL/CE programs were required to develop IET pathways for students in their program. During the 2019-20 program year, funded programs developed 10 strong IELCE and IET programs for students. Some of the programs included Certified Nursing Assistant, Heating, Air, Conditioning and Ventilation, Industrial Sewing, Machining, Fabric Sewing and Upholstery, and Cosmetology. All the IELCE curriculum and IET programs developed during the program year have both the academic content and full cycle IET information. Funded IELCE programs devoted at least one full-time staff member to facilitate the program. Full-time staff members were responsible for providing career navigation and career exploration activities for students enrolled in the IELCE program. Additionally, many programs kept copious notes and documentation on each student enrolled in the program to ensure that were receiving not only the academic content, but the wrap around services required to be successful. According to many programs, they worked with their local community colleges to help students transition to curriculum to transition programs if they were interested. Many programs had guest speakers from the community colleges come to speak with students about the possibility of transitioning into curriculum programs. For example, Certified Nursing Assistant is a very popular program for IEL/CE participants. Many programs scheduled sessions with the nursing curriculum programs to help students engage with advisors that could assist them with transitioning into the full nursing program.

IET program completion is one of the major performance results that funded providers focused on during the program year. One of the major lessons learned during the program year was that students need additional time to complete the IET programs. Often, the IET programs require students to devote a substantial amount of time to the program. Programs determined that they need to continue to develop methods that will offer flexible schedules for students enrolled in the IEL/CE program, as this will help retain students. Although students completed the IET programs, many times this posed a challenge because of their other life commitments such as family and work. During the new program year, programs would like to expand their course offering at local employer locations. Providing content at local employer locations have proven to be one of the best mechanisms to retain students and help them manage their responsibilities.

Programs worked closely with employers to ensure that upon completion of IELCE and IET programs, students would be placed into jobs. As previously stated, many funded programs facilitated classes at employer locations to ensure that adult learners had access to programming and hands-on learning. As indicated by providers, the major challenge was getting the employer to support the IELCE program. However, once

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employers determined that they would receive high-quality future employees, most of the employers supported the program. For example, one of our programs provides courses and IET programming at the local furniture making factory. Furniture making in the western part of the state is a very high-demand career. However, the employer did not have enough skilled workers to fill all the vacant positions. The students engage in the academic content two days per week, and the remainder of the week work on the IET and workforce preparation portion of the program. The program has developed a strong relationship with the furniture making factory, therefore, when students complete the IEL/CE program they are offered employment.

The Adult Education and Literacy area has just started working with the North Carolina Apprenticeships Department. In the 2020-21 program area, the state staff member devoted to IEL/CE will work with the Apprenticeship Department to help programs develop relationships with their local apprenticeships staff members in their area. Many IELCE programs are very interested in working with their local apprenticeship staff members. Based upon research, the apprenticeship programs offer opportunities that could be beneficial to the adult learners served by the Adult Education and Literacy program. It is the goal of the state staff member to setup formal introductions with the local apprenticeships staff in spring 2021.

- *Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of ensuring that IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system and its functions as described in section 243(c)(2) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals*

During the 2019-20 program year, programs were required to work closely with their Local Workforce Development Boards. Information derived from the Local Workforce Development Boards helped programs determine the regional workforce needs in the area. Additionally, programs funded by IELCE were encouraged to attend the Local Workforce Development Board meetings, so that members would be aware of the program offerings available for English Language Learners.

During the competition period programs were required to submit information and documentation that detailed how their programs aligned with the Local Workforce Development Board local plan. The Local Workforce Development Board could make comments about the alignment about each applicant's plan. Specifically, for IELCE program, Local Workforce Development Boards assessed the needs of the English Language Learners in the area. In subsequent years after the competition, programs were required to frequently communicate with their Local Workforce Development Board about employment needs and how the IELCE program would help to fill the employment needs. The frequent communication with the Local Workforce Development Board helped programs make decisions about current and future IET programs.

Based upon conversations with the IELCE staff members, most of the Title II Directors are members of their Local Workforce Development Board. Thus, this ensures that members of the Local Workforce Development Board remain abreast of the IELCE programs. Also, many of the program directors serve on subcommittees on the Local Workforce Development Board. By serving on the subcommittees this allows the program directors to develop meaningful relationships with Local Workforce Board Development members.

All the Title II providers have developed relationships with their local One-Stop Center in their area. According to the providers funded to facilitate IELCE, at least one staff member is required to provide time at the local One-Stop Center. Staff members that are assigned to provide services at the One-Stop Center, often recruit students for the IELCE program. Also, in some cases, some programs have decided to offer some classes at the local One-Stop Center. By offering classes in multiple locations, such as the One-Stop Center, this increases access to programming for students. Due to the presence of Title II staff members, programs have developed a mutually beneficial referral system between the One-Stop Center and Title II provider. For example,

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if a student needs wrap around services, our program refers students to the One-Stop Centers. Additionally, if the One-Stop Center staff determine that the consumer needs literacy services, the adult learner is referred to the Title II program. Both the One-Stop Center staff and IELCE staff work in tandem to ensure that students who wish to participate in the program receive co-enrollment services in the program of their choice.

In the new state plan, IELCE providers were required to ensure that they were providing concurrent enrollment. One of the major challenges described by providers was developing schedules that would allow their adult learners to meet their employer and family demands. Many of the adult learners enrolled in the IELCE program have other responsibilities, so developing a comprehensive schedule to fit the student need has been a challenge for all programs funded by 243 dollars. The most promising practice developed during the program year was offering the classes at employer locations. Thus, students were able to benefit from the pipeline to employment mechanism developed by the program. Also, the students were able to complete the concurrent enrollment requirement, as the schedules would be developed based upon their needs.

5. Adult Education Standards

If your State has adopted new challenging K-12 standards under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, describe how your Adult Education content standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.

NC has not adopted new K-12 standards under Title I. The North Carolina Community College System College and Career Readiness Adult Education Standards were originally developed, refined, and field tested by adult educators from across the state during 2007 to 2010. With the introduction of the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) in April 2013, the [NCCCS College and Career Readiness Adult Education Standards](#) were aligned to reflect these new standards in 2014.

With the arrival of the COVID19 Pandemic and the pivot to offering adult ed courses nearly exclusively only at a distance, in North Carolina we discovered that thousands of our basic skills students did not have adequate access either to the internet nor the devices needed to effectively participate in online learning. The State Leadership Team's response to the need to keep those learners engaged who do not have adequate access to technology was to allow our providers to offer a distance ed alternative to technology: Alternative Learning Packets. Alternative Learning Packets (ALPs) are paper-based lessons aligned to the NCCCS CCR Content Standards that can be mailed to or picked up by students every week. In order to be approved to use ALPs, providers are required to submit sample lesson plans and packets for each NRS Level and content area for which they intend to utilize ALPs. The State Leadership Team reviewed and approved well over 400 ALP submissions between March and June 2020. This throwback approach to distance education, offering correspondence courses to basic skills students allowed our providers to continue to engage thousands of students, particularly rural and incarcerated students, who would have otherwise been unable to attend literacy classes at all.

6. Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals (AEFLA Section 225)

What was the relative rate of recidivism for criminal offenders served? Please describe the methods and factors used in calculating the rate for this reporting period.

In 1998, the North Carolina General Assembly directed the Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission to prepare biennial reports evaluating the effectiveness of the State's correctional programs. The 2020

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Correctional Program Evaluation released by the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, in conjunction with the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, examined recidivism for Structured Sentencing Act (SSA) offenders who were placed on supervised probation or released from prison in FY 2017 (N=46,094). Recidivism was defined broadly as arrests, convictions, or incarcerations during a fixed two-year follow-up period. The North Carolina General Assembly directed the Sentencing Commission to measure the rates of recidivism of criminal offenders involved in state-supported correctional programs. The legislation calling for these measurements made it clear that recidivism meant repeat criminal behavior, and implied that measuring recidivism was to be a way of evaluating correctional programs and sanctions.

There is no single official definition of recidivism. Researchers have used a variety of definitions and measurements, including recidivist arrests, convictions, and incarcerations, depending on their interests and the availability of data. Official records from police, courts, and correctional agencies are the source of most research on adult recidivism. For offenders involved in a recidivism study, different types of records will indicate different rates of recidivism. In its studies of recidivism, the Sentencing Commission uses arrests as the primary measure of recidivism, supplemented by information on convictions and incarcerations, to assess the extent of an offender's repeat involvement in the criminal justice system. Arrests, as used in this research, take into account not only the frequency of repeat offending but also its seriousness and the nature of the victimization (for example, crimes against the person, crimes involving theft or property damage, or crimes involving illegal drugs). The volume of repeat offending is handled by recording the number of arrests for crimes of various types.

The sample selected for the current study included all offenders released from state prison or placed on supervised probation during FY 2017 with some exceptions; offenders with a most serious conviction for Driving While Impaired (DWI), offenders with a most serious conviction for a misdemeanor traffic offense, and offenders released from prison with a misdemeanor conviction were excluded from the study. The final study sample includes 46,094 offenders sentenced under the SSA, affording a comprehensive look at the recidivism of offenders in North Carolina.

This section provides information on the recidivism of the FY 2017 sample of offenders using a fixed two-year follow-up period following either a release from prison or an entry to probation. Two automated data sources were used to provide comprehensive data on the sample of offenders. The North Carolina Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Offender Population Unified System (OPUS) was used to identify offenders in the FY 2017 sample and to obtain information on demographic characteristics, offender RNA data, current convicted offense and sentence, 11 correctional sanction and treatment programs, and prior and recidivist probation and incarceration measures. The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation's (SBI) Computerized Criminal History (CCH) system was used to provide fingerprinted arrest records for prior and recidivist arrests, as well as recidivist convictions. The study excluded arrests for impaired driving or other traffic offenses, as well as noncriminal arrests (e.g., arrests for technical violations of probation). Each offender in the FY 2017 sample was followed for a period of two years to determine whether repeat criminal behavior occurred, with one-year and two-year recidivism rates reported. The two-year follow-up period was calculated on an individual basis using the prison release date plus two years for prison releases and using the probation entry date plus two years for probation entries. Of the 46,094 offenders in the FY 2017 sample, 44% (n=20,447) had a recidivist arrest during the follow-up two-year period. During the follow-up, prisoners had a higher rate of recidivist arrest than probationers (51% and 41% respectively).

The following includes COVID-19 impact on Corrections in NC. Approximately 10% of students who are typically served in North Carolina's Title II programs are in correctional facilities. However, when the Governor of

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North Carolina declared a State of Emergency that mandated all state and local government entities and agencies cooperate with the implementation of the North Carolina Emergency Operations Plan. An unintended consequence of this mandated plan caused a steep drop in enrollment of participants in Title II programs. In the Spring, the spread of the COVID -19 virus in the correctional facilities became significant enough that the North Carolina Department of Public Safety suspended all in person visitations at State prisons as a COVID-19 precaution. As a result of this announcement, Title II personnel were prevented from entering the prisons to provide instruction and testing. This has had a devastating impact on enrollment and testing. For example, for the 44 cc's serving correctional facilities, fewer than 20% were able to continue to provide educational services.

On March the 12th, all NCCCS personnel received that there would be an all agency meeting on March 13th. Staff were informed that based on the guidance from Governor Cooper, the agency sent all staff home to work remotely beginning immediately. Be prepared to work remotely and wait for further guidance. This rapid change in workflow greatly impacted System Office collaboration and timely communication to Title II providers. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a variety of strategies were put in place to ensure institutionalized participants had access to educational opportunities. Below are instructional and organizational strategies employed to ensure continued student success.

Instructional Strategies

With the steep decline in enrollment, Title II providers made it a priority to maintain student engagement through evidence-based instructional strategies. Instructional delivery methods that were able to continue in institutions despite the shutdown: Paper-based distance education packets, limited face to face instruction (8-10 hours weekly), video instruction, simulators utilized for vocational training, offender teacher assistants assisting in HSE and ABE classes, alternate every other day / staggering scheduling. Alternative learning packets (ALPs) was the most heavily adopted instructional delivery method. This allowed students to continue accessing new adult literacy instruction on a weekly basis. Instructors would send back lesson plans with feedback for the students' benefit. Due to an approved instructional methods memo that was sent by the System Office in conjunction with NCDPS, some facilities ordered webcams and equipment for virtual learning to take place. Some providers used CARES funding to purchase tablets for their local prisons. However, many correctional facilities were limited in utilization of technology due to concerns about inmate security and safety. A few correctional facilities without any cases of COVID-19 opened their doors for official testing on a limited basis. However, as with other areas impacted by the global pandemic, there was a drastic decrease in the opportunity for official testing and NRS approved pre- and post-testing.

Organizational Strategies

As a response to this unprecedented situation, the North Carolina Community College System Office hosting weekly check-in calls with Title II providers and relevant correctional facility staff. These weekly meetings have occurred since April 2020 involving local Workforce Development and Continuing Education staff, System Office and local College and Career Readiness staff, and correctional education coordinators. In these meetings, System Office staff shared any updates and local staff were able to share concerns or best practices they implemented. It became evident that non-Title II provider personnel had numerous questions about best educational practices during the pandemic. Title II became the resident expert on how to still provide educational services to students utilizing a variety of delivery methods.

It was evident that our Title II providers would benefit from additional, targeted guidance. The NC Community Colleges System Office addressed this concern by convening an advisory committee to provide guidance on program models supported by 225 funds. This group meets once a week to discuss current issues in accessing students in correctional facilities and possible solutions to said barriers. This group has developed a

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vital one-page document highlighting many of the technical requirements behind administering Title II educational services (pre/post testing, tracking attendance, performance measures).

Title II providers recognized the need to provide support to students who were recently released from a correctional facility. Community re-entry efforts aimed at those inmates who were granted early release included: Many providers made efforts to enroll students in an in-person or hybrid class during the week immediately following an inmate's release. They saw that this early, in-person intervention increases the likelihood of student retention. Even though keeping track of this transient population proved extremely difficult to our providers, they made certain to keep their students engaged. Many programs loaned out laptops to released inmates who do not have technology access. Gas cards and parking lot Wi-Fi access are also available to help this vulnerable population. These support services have proven invaluable to assist in the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.