**Wisconsin AEFLA Narrative Report 2019-20**

**1.State Leadership Funds** (AEFLA Section 223) Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership activities) for each the following required activities:

* 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 section223(1)(a).
* Establishment or operation of a high-quality professional development programs as described in section 223(1)(b).
* Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section223(1)(c).
* Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of adult education activities as described in section 223(1)(d).

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) challenges states to combine resources and create partnerships and to look to labor market data and industry research to determine which skills the workforce needs and to focus on the creation of a workforce that can meet the expectations of the future economy. Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) have a strong tradition of utilizing partnerships to support and grow Wisconsin's workforce; this creates a solid foundation for WIOA implementation. Three new partners have joined the Program Year 2020-2023 Combined State Plan – the Departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Corrections.

The 2020-2023 WIOA Combined State Plan was jointly developed by one state team, guided by the WIOA Leadership Team. The WIOA Leadership Team is comprised of executive level leadership from all of Wisconsin's Combined State Plan programs. The strategic and operational planning elements were written with input from and approval by the WIOA Leadership Team, while program-specific requirements were written by each program and shared for vetting with the WIOA Leadership Team. The WIOA Leadership Team has continuously met throughout the implementation of WIOA (including through the onset of the pandemic) to coordinate the work of specific WIOA sub-committees and to coordinate the transition to WIOA reporting standards. Wisconsin’s Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) is an integral part of this work and is under the direction of the State Director of Adult Education.

During the 2019-2020 program year the WTCS continued to utilize AEFLA resources to provide various supports and training to help eligible adult education and workforce providers perform their duties as one-stop partners, including:

* Systemwide face-to-face and virtual meetings and numerous webinars/teleconferences for all AEFLA grantees for the purpose of discussing a variety of topics, including promising practices for transitioning adult education learners into the workforce and/or into postsecondary occupational instruction, as well as to respond to emerging needs caused by the effects of the pandemic.
* Face-to-face and virtual professional development for all Title II funded programs to discuss WIOA- and AE-related topics, as well as state-level co-title sponsorship of professional development for WIOA core and partner programs.
* Face-to-face and virtual technical assistance for Title II programs to identify policies, practices and training that would increase their success with meeting Title II targets and serving adult education and workforce customers.

Provision of high-quality professional learning is a cornerstone of Wisconsin’s AE programs at the state and local levels. During the 2019-2020 year, WTCS used state leadership funds (as well as non-AEFLA resources) in the following ways:

* Extensive AEFLA/WIOA-related content at the large cross-agency *Common Ground Conference* in October of 2019 as well as at monthly Title-II grantee webinars/teleconferences
* Half-day and full-day workshops on research-based instructional practices
* A full-day workshop, five regional convenings, and multiple virtual/teleconference sessions on the topic of developing financial aid resources for adult education students (targeting enhancement of the existing 6-credit Ability-to-Benefit process as well as development of the new Wisconsin state process)
* Full-day workshop on adult education services for incarcerated individuals as well as enhancement of re-entry programming (as well as initial planning for multiple virtual sessions after the onset of the pandemic)
* Two full day workshops on implementation of AE and ELL curriculum standards and instructional materials
* Provision of integrated instruction/IET workshops for AE and postsecondary (as well as planning for virtual opportunities after the onset of the pandemic)
* Provision of career-pathway related professional development for Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and literacy councils
* Provision of technical assistance around infusing rigor across all levels of ELL instruction
* Professional development on creation of adult education pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship support programs
* Provision of TABE 11/12 and CASAS informational and training sessions, including extensive work after the onset of the pandemic
* Provision of GED informational and training sessions, including extensive work after the onset of the pandemic
* Development and sharing of the AEFLA Program Monitoring assessment resources and scheduling of the next three years’ monitoring visits
* Extensive professional development on understanding NRS tables, on understanding data flow and typical reporting problems, and on understanding newly-enhanced AEFLA reports that were sent to each program monthly

In addition to the work listed above, Wisconsin’s Title II partners participated in a November statewide WIOA Roundtable conference that included both best WIOA partner practices from around the state as well as facilitated meetings for One-Stop partners for every WDA region in the state. These discussions and professional development sessions built upon the extensive work that was done during the two previous program years, and some of the highest-rated WIOA Roundtable sessions were either led by local Title II leaders and/or specifically focused on Title I/Title II cooperative programming. (In addition, some of these sessions were recorded and put on the interagency WIOA website for viewing by a broader number of workforce development staff.)

When the pandemic struck our AEFLA program support efforts took an intensive turn. Among the first initiatives were to establish a Microsoft TEAMS virtual environment that facilitated richer and more collaborative connections between the WTCS AEFLA team and local funded programs. This tool allowed us to meet, chat, collaborate, and call with one common tool. We immediately began filing key virtual teaching, AEFLA-related, and valuable third-party resources in this one site. In addition our AEFLA programs could gain access to several other WTCS “channels” that focused on equity and inclusion, veterans services, Open Educational Resources, etc. Almost all of our AEFLA work, including technical assistance, program monitoring visits, and our monthly program calls and sharing sessions, is done through this virtual channel.

**Figure 1. Wisconsin AEFLA Program Operations.**



A second key initiative as the pandemic set in was to immediately survey our programs to find out what their staff, and their students, needed most. This early April 2020 survey guided much of the intensive work that happened through the end of the 19-20 year (and beyond). In addition to receiving feedback from all federally funded programs, the survey allowed us to identify key focus areas for our work. Results from that survey are shown in Figure 1 using the following legend: Orange – not at this time – not working on a solution; Green – not at this time – actively working on a solution; Blue – yes.

These survey results, along with direct questions and feedback from the field, helped inform ongoing support and conversations with our Title II programs and related professional development March – June 2020. There is extensive related work and continued assistance and support planned for the next program year. Among our first priorities for 19-20 were connecting programs to good virtual instruction resources, developing and deploying a distance education and proxy hour policy, arranging for Wisconsin-specific trainings on the progress of virtual testing and proctoring for both the GED as well as TABE/CASAS pre/post-tests, and vetting and promoting online trainings that would be especially valuable to Title II programs (including sessions provided by adult education partners like WorkForce GPS, COABE, NASDAE, etc).

With regard to our work with incarcerated populations, our AEFLA programs have been well-supported by the Wisconsin Technical College System Office regarding section 223 of the State Leadership Funds of the AEFLA grant by allowing modifications to the providers’ grant that would assist this population through use of distance learning. WTCS recognized the challenges that distance learning presented for correctional institutions and began looking for solutions for (and within) funded local county jail programs. Based on our findings, WTCS staff discussed effective practices on our monthly calls as well as planned for trainings to occur during our 2020 Common Ground that would provide an overview on identified practices and successes for faculty, deans, county jail staff and jail administrators. In the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 years, we will continue to emphasize effective practices regarding virtual instruction, assessment, virtual tools, and testing options that are crucial to serving Justice-Involved populations in the area of Adult Education during this time of COVID-19. The WTCS office also provided training on how WTCS colleges collaborate with the state Department of Corrections to offer postsecondary general education courses to justice-involved individuals, and what the future of this partnership aspires to be, given continuous changes to the delivery of general education instruction in the state correctional facilities.

From March-June 2020, special emphasis on (or development work for) technical assistance topics that were key to the operation of quality AEFLA programs. Topics discussed in both state-wide and single program interactions included:

* Modifying AEFLA grants within WTCS rules and guidelines to quickly meet the needs of students
* Following the guidance of the OCTAE-approved WTCS Distance Learning policy
* Developing (and submitting for approval) a Virtual Assessment Protocol and Process
* Understanding and using WTCS-supplied performance data to improve the outcomes of AEFLA grant-funded activities (especially as the pandemic caused challenges at some programs)
* Understanding and using NRS performance data to improve the outcomes of AEFLA grant-funded activities
* Analyzing local data flow and thus identifying areas for intervention and subsequent improvement of reporting.
* Understanding the requirements, processes and resources associated with 1) WTCS AEFLA Program Self-Assessment and 2) WTCS AEFLA Program Monitoring. (Previously-scheduled Program Monitoring visits were adjusted to become virtual visits, with extensive support materials developed and virtual interviewing/monitoring processes planned.)

Regarding monitoring and evaluating the quality and improvement of adult education activities as described in section 223(1)(d), WTCS AEFLA-funded staff spend significant time monitoring the quality of AEFLA grant-funded activities. All AEFLA programs submit data reports to the WTCS Client Reporting System, which can be reviewed on a consistent basis. All AEFLA-funded programs submit tri-annual reports monitored by WTCS ABE staff to review goal performance, implementation of programming adjustments to meet goals, fiscal expenditures information, etc. WTCS staff also participate in a year-end data review in order to reconcile grantee’s reported numbers and intervene with them before the end of the grant year if necessary. WTCS staff also oversee funded programs’ four-year self-studies as well as perform the program monitoring duties referenced above.

**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 pandemic had significant impacts on Wisconsin AEFLA operations and services. At the onset of the national public health crisis, Wisconsin providers quickly moved curriculum into a distance education format and trained staff on distance education technology to support ongoing instructional delivery. These efforts resulted in a large proportion of AEFLA programming being delivered through distance education at the onset of COVID-19 (see Figure 1). All of Wisconsin’s AEFLA providers offered at least 20 percent or more of their AEFLA programming in a distance education format in spring 2020, with 50 percent of Wisconsin providers offering 60 percent or more of their programing in a distance education format. The WTCS Office coordinated state-wide technical assistance at the onset of the pandemic that included an expedited completion and rollout of the state’s distance education policy, identifying instructional activities that qualify as distance education, a review of the three methods to verifying distance learning via “proxy” hours, identifying state reporting requirements for proxy hours, and an overview of distance education NRS Tables. Three virtual sessions on distance education were coordinated with all AEFLA providers attending a session.

**Figure 1. Percent of AEFLA programming offered as distance education in spring 2020.**



Wisconsin AEFLA providers also coordinated non-instructional services to ensure students were holistically supported during the uncertainty of the pandemic. Services included expanded referrals to other community programs to support food and housing resources, implementing new approaches (e.g. social media) to remain in contact with students, training students on navigating distance education technology, and providing students with access to technology including laptops and internet hot spots. While Wisconsin quickly transitioned AEFLA programming to a distance education format, COVID-19 still had a substantial impact on current students and new participant engagement in adult education services.

Of the 11,280 participants served in the Wisconsin AEFLA program during the 2019-20 program year, nearly 30 percent exited the program prior to or at the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. This means that more than 70 percent of participants in the AEFLA program either had an interruption of services or began services during the COVID-19 crisis. Of the participants that continued in their program beyond March 2020, more than 52 percent transitioned to emergency remote instruction delivered through distance education.

Discussions with Wisconsin providers revealed that many AEFLA participants were unable to maintain engagement in the program due to the pandemic’s impact on their family. Most notably, caring for school aged and young children, many of whom were also engaged in distance education learning for the first time. These provider comments are further substantiated by pivotal Wisconsin events related to COVID-19. On March 13, 2020 Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers announced the emergency mandate to close all K-12 public schools. Additionally, 39 percent of Wisconsin’s 4,500 childcare providers reported to the Department of Children and Families that they had closed due to the pandemic as of May 19, 2020.

COVID-19 also had a considerable impact on AEFLA outcomes, such as Measurable Skill Gains. The 2019-20 Measurable Skill Gain rate prior to the pandemic (before March 1, 2020) was 52 percent while the Measurable Skill Gain rate among participants who continued services or began services during the pandemic was 42 percent. Differences between the Measurable Skill Gain rate pre-pandemic and during the pandemic were sizable across student groups (see Table 1). The impact of COVID-19 on Measurable Skill Gain achievement is further compounded by the existence of equity gaps in outcomes across student groups. For example, the overall Measurable Skill Gain rate pre-pandemic was 52 percent, while the rate among low-income participants was 44 percent. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated a significant reduction in Measurable Skill Gain among low-income participants, resulting in a rate of 37 percent.

**Table 1. Differences in Measurable Skill Gain pre-pandemic and during pandemic (2019-20).**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MSG Pre-Pandemic** | **MSG During Pandemic** | **Difference** |
| *Overall* | *52%* | *42%* | *-10%* |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 36% | 26% | -10% |
| Asian | 53% | 43% | -10% |
| Black/African American | 47% | 40% | -7% |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 49% | 40% | -9% |
| More than one race | 65% | 48% | -18% |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander  | N/A – small sample | N/A | N/A |
| White | 56% | 49% | -7% |
| Low-Income Participants | 44% | 37% | -7% |
| Single Parents | 41% | 38% | -3% |

COVID-19 had a more sizeable impact on English Language Learning services compared to participants receiving Adult Education services. Prior to the pandemic, both the Adult Education and English Language Learning programs were experiencing increases in Measurable Skill Gain rates (see Figure 2). Both programs demonstrated a decrease in Measurable Skill Gain rates from the 2018-19 to 2019-20 program year, but the decrease was more pronounced in the English Language Learning program resulting in a 14-percentage point decrease.

**Figure 2. Wisconsin AEFLA Measurable Skill Gain rate (2017-18 to 2019-20).**



One contributing factor to the reduction of the Measurable Skill Gain rate was the ability for participants to engage in testing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Historically, 72 percent of participants who complete a post-test are reported as achieving a Measurable Skill Gain, while 25 percent of participants who do not post-test are reported as achieving a Measurable Skill Gain. During the 2019-20 program year, over 2,000 fewer AEFLA participants were able to complete a post-test compared to the year prior. It is important to note that the number of AEFLA participants across the two years was relatively consistent; 11,123 participants were served in 2018-19 and 11,280 participants were served in 2019-20. The ability to complete a post-test is especially impactful on the English Langue Learning program. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 50 percent of all English Language Learning participants achieved a Measurable Skill Gain through the pre/post-test method. During the 2019-20 program year, the rate dropped to 35 percent. While many AEFLA programs transitioned to virtual test proctoring in spring 2020, the overall pre-/post-test rate in Wisconsin decreased significantly (see Figure 3). Further, only 9 percent of Wisconsin AEFLA providers achieved the state pre-/post-test goal of 67%.

**Figure 3. Wisconsin AEFLA pre-/post-test rate (2017-18 to 2019-20).**



At the conclusion of the 2019-20 program year, the WTCS Office coordinated the annual AEFLA risk assessment process. The 2019-20 risk assessment process focused solely on AEFLA data reporting and performance. Each Wisconsin provider was assessed across a series of indicators and assigned a risk score from 0 to 100. A higher score represents a higher “risk” of not achieving AEFLA goals.

**Table 2. Percent of AEFLA providers achieving AEFLA goals in the 2019-20 program year.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **% of AEFLA Providers Achieving Goal** |
| 1) Achieve AEFLA Students Served Goal | 50% |
| 2) Achieve WTCS Pre-Post-Test Rate Goal of 67% | 9% |
| 3) Achieve 90% of Measurable Skill Gain Expected Level of Performance Target (Provider Specific Target) | 50% |
| 4) Achieve 90% of Measurable Skill Gain WTCS Negotiated Level of Performance (State Target) | 32% |
| 5) AEFLA Provider is Reporting IET | 77% |

From November to the conclusion of each program year, AEFLA providers are emailed a monthly point-in-time report presenting their program’s progress in achieving goals across each of the risk assessment indicators. Results are reviewed by WTCS Office staff and used to inform targeted conversations with AEFLA providers during the program year. Discussions with providers in late winter and spring of 2020 made it clear that the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on AEFLA goal achievement. As demonstrated in Table 2, the 2019-20 end-of-year risk assessment model results reveal varied success in achieving AEFLA goals. Most notably, 50 percent of all Wisconsin providers achieved their students served goal and 50 percent achieved 90 percent of their local Measurable Skill Gain rate goal.

The cumulative risk score assigned to Wisconsin providers also varied. This finding suggests that providers likely had varied approaches and successes in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. To better understand the impact of COVID-19 on AEFLA goal achievement and provider strategies to navigating the pandemic, a sequential mixed methods research approach was used. This research approach included the analysis of provider risk assessment scores which then informed the selection of AEFLA providers to participate in semi-structured interviews. Providers with the lowest risk scores were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews to understand best practices used. Additionally, providers with the highest risk scores were contacted to better understand program challenges and to understand professional development/technical assistance needs.

Analysis of semi-structured interview data revealed a series of emerging themes. A total of four themes were identified from the interview data and illustrate strategies that allowed the program successful navigation through the COVID-19 pandemic (see below). To support AEFLA provider success, the following four themes will be discussed during the 2020-21 monthly AEFLA Community of Practice meetings. Additionally, providers will be invited to share activities that strengthened their program’s AEFLA outcomes during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

* Organization leadership understand and support Adult Education as a pipeline to career pathways
* Innovation in instructional delivery through distance learning
* Success in maintaining relationships with students in a virtual environment
* Leveraging data to inform and support program operations

**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 State and local options.

During the 2019-2020 year, all Title II-funded partners were bound by their signed assurances regarding implementing the roles and responsibilities as a required partner in the one-stop delivery system as specified in 34 CFR § 463 415(b). Grantees also were committed to complying with the requirements and expectations set forth in Wisconsin’s WIOA State Plan. During the program year, Title II programs were routinely involved in discussions, planning and operations with their One-Stop partners, and followed the Wisconsin Job Center Guidance (released by Wisconsin’s Department of Workforce Development in February 2017). WIOA partners also participated in a statewide WIOA Roundtable conference in November 2019 that included best WIOA partner practices from around the state and facilitated meetings for One-Stop partners for every WDA region in the state. These discussions and professional development sessions were some of the highest-rated sessions and were either led by local Title II leaders and/or specifically focused on Title I/Title II cooperative programming.

Due to COVID-19, Wisconsin’s job centers and most Title II programming went totally virtual, which this led to some early discussion on how this might affect infrastructure contributions (including the ratio of in-kind to cash support). There were limited changes made in 2019-2020, with many to be captured in the 2020-2021 program year. These partners also participated in WTCS-led discussions with topics including the provision of distance education to support workforce/education clients, the options for capturing measurable skill gain, options for helping education/workforce clients access free/low-cost wireless and free/low-cost technology, and supporting occupational instruction and credentialling through virtual adult education and ELL, including IET and IELCE programs. There was ongoing discussion regarding how to further adapt programming and services for the upcoming instructional terms.

Regarding provision of Career/Training Services, Wisconsin’s funded Title II providers continued providing referral and options to participants, a public listing of program cost and outcome information, service referrals, and the AE/ELL portion of integrated career pathway bridge programming. Throughout the pandemic local partner response included AE/ELL coursework in online delivery platforms, participating in Rapid Response efforts due to employer layoff/downsizing with their job centers, colleges and in the impacted communities, adjusting marketing and recruitment efforts to address dramatic changes in the local workforce situation, and expanding digital literacy training.

In addition to the critical response at the local level due to pandemic, DWD and WTCS continued regular meetings and calls to discuss key issues in interagency collaboration. This includes ongoing WIOA policy development, updating the state’s Eligible Training Provider List, provision of coordinated professional development, and the creation of shared messaging/training efforts.

**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:

The WTCS, in cooperation with eligible providers across the state, offers integrated English language instruction and civics education under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language adult learners, including immigrant professionals with degrees and credentials from their native countries. Twelve AEFLA providers who received funds for these purposes provided instructional services and civics education concurrently and contextualized across the state to meet the need of these adult learners. As part of the IELCE programming, providers used funds under Section 243 to:

* Prepare adults with limited English proficiency across the state for placement in unsubsidized employment in high demand industries that leads to economic self-sufficiency. The funds under this section were awarded to providers for the purposes of providing integrated instructional services that targeted occupational skills training that leads to economic self-sufficiency, civics education, digital literacy, workforce preparation, and instruction in English acquisition; and also,
* Coordinate occupational skills training with the local workforce development system and other local and state providers. In Wisconsin, it is a requirement of all funded AEFLA grantees to work with their local boards and become familiar with their local planned activities to ensure that adult learners are benefitting from occupational training services that are planned and coordinated at the local level learners in high-demand areas that lead to economic self-sufficiency and have excellent placement rates.

During Fiscal year 2019-20, AEFLA providers under section 243 were also able to identify integrated education and training opportunities for adult participants within the service delivery area where they resided in the following occupational areas: construction and GED, healthcare, commercial driver licenses, informational technology, welding and manufacturing. For the purposes of integrated English literacy and civics education instructional activities, the WTCS have also funded the providers through AEFLA funding described in Title II, Section 231. The proposed activities and budget under Section 231 are reviewed by WTCS staff to ensure that the activities meet all statutory requirements under WIOA.

To meet all statutory requirements, funds under section 243, were made available through a competitive grant application process. The competitive grant announcement was shared directly with providers through posting on the WTCS website and posting it on the state's Public Notices site. All eligible providers were offered the same information and all applications were evaluated using identical scoring criteria. Applications were scored by multiple readers utilizing the published guidelines for scoring. Grants were awarded on a three-year cycle (2018-21) with updated applications submitted each year (2019-20). The process met all of the requirements specified in Title II of WIOA with every effort made to ensure direct and equitable access.

**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.**

WTCS held an open competition for providers of adult education under Title II of WIOA during fiscal year 2017-18; programs were awarded on a three-year cycle (2018-21) with updated applications submitted each year (2019-20); the funds were made available through the previously mentioned competitive grant application processes, with FY 2020-21 being the last year of the three -year-cycle. The competition resulted in eight (8) funded programs, with a wide reach of participants and regions across the state.

The competitive grant announcement was shared directly with providers through posting on the WTCS website and posting it on the state's Public Notices site. All eligible providers were offered the same information and all applications are evaluated using the identical scoring criteria. Applications were scored by multiple readers utilizing the published guidelines for scoring. Grants were awarded on a three-year cycle with updated applications submitted each year. This process meets the requirements specified in Title II of WIOA with every effort made to ensure direct and equitable access.

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

WTCS ensures that funds in the IELCE category are being used to provide educational programs for adults (including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries) that enable adults to achieve competency in English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, employees, and citizens in the United States. To ensure stronger outcomes in IELCE services, WTCS held a series of discussions in late spring 2020 to discuss and share the newly developed *Wisconsin AEFLA Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education IET Planning Tool*.

This new tool was designed to ensure that IELCE services and offerings are integrated with the local workforce development needs. An eligible provider who receives funds through the IELCE program must now complete this form and submit it to the WTCS office where staff will vet the planned activities and also identify new or innovative practices for sharing across all AEFLA programs. The tool and related forms will also be used to monitor AEFLA supported IELCE in compliance with state and federal guidelines, including service in combination with IET.

**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; and**

During FY 2019-20, IELCE programs continued to making progress toward meeting the needs of adult learners in terms of English language acquisition, integrated civics education, digital literacy, workforce preparation and occupational skills training; IELCE providers increased the number of participants in IET programming, especially for learners in the lower levels of English language learning, and some of the providers’ goals have focused on preparing adults English language learners for placement in unsubsidized employment in high demand industries that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

During FY 2019-20, funds under section 243 were awarded to providers for the purposes of instructional services that targeted occupational training that provides wages that leads to economic self-sufficiency, and to prepare adults in occupational training in high-demand areas that had high placement rates and offer opportunities for career mobility. Additionally, we continue to address and work through the challenges of improving access for IELCE and IET offerings, finding ways to continue increasing the number of individuals in this type of programming, for example by the creation of the IELCE Planning Tool and through having adult learners utilize the state’s Ability to Benefit – State Process and use this string of Title IV funds to provide more integrated programming in industry areas in high-demand within the state and locality. We continue to address some of the challenges at the local level with the collaboration with workforce boards to increase the offering of joint IELCE/IET programming. While progress has been made with the joint programming in some areas of the state (e.g. Milwaukee), there is still work to be done to take to scale efforts statewide.

**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**.

WTCS has worked with IELCE providers to ensure that the programming for IELCE was aligned with the strategic directions of the local boards. The alignment also assisted IELCE participants for placement in integrated education and training (IET) in occupations in high demand in their respective regions; this approach facilitated achievement of self-sufficiency for participants in these programs. Eligible providers who receive funds through the IELCE program may choose to incorporate IET if they wish by:

1. Co-enrolling participants in integrated education and training as described in Stat. 463.74, subpart D, that is provided within the local and regional workforce development area from other sources other than section 243; **or**
2. Using funds under section 243 to support integrated education and training activities as cited in 463.74, subpart D.
3. Starting with FY 20-21, eligible learners and AEFLA have also the opportunity to use funds from the ability to benefit -state process to enroll in PSE/training, as well as, to cover the cost of occupational skills training

Providers are required to coordinate occupational skills training with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program for the purpose of integrated education and training activities. It was a requirement of all funded AEFLA grantees to work with their local boards and become familiar with their local planned activities to ensure that adult learners are benefitting from occupational training services that are planned and coordinated at the local level in high-demand areas that lead to economic self-sufficiency and have excellent placement rates.

In terms of performance results, challenges and lessons learned, WTCS has ensured throughout the grant extension guidelines that providers of IELCE programs were connected and aligned with services offered by Title I to facilitate the concurrent enrollment and training for all participants of IELCE program as described in section 243(c) (2) of new WIOA Law for Title II (Pub. Law 113-128) -- the mandate that required states to provide an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program.

We monitored this via tri-annual reports to ensure that instruction in English literacy was meeting the instructional standards to facilitate transition into PSE and/or unsubsidized employment. Additionally, we monitored IELCE providers to make sure that adult learners were receiving instruction in workforce preparation and occupation skills training where appropriate.

**5.Adult Education Standards**

Wisconsin aligned its Adult Education standards to College and Career Readiness (CCRS) standards in 2013-14, and formally adopted these new standards. The CCRS-aligned WTCS Adult Basic Education standards are aligned with college and work expectations; are clear and consistent; include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills; build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards; and are evidence-based. The curriculum also features integrated reading and writing instruction contextualized within the three adult literacy themes of 1) Financial Literacy, 2) Civics Literacy, and 3) College Transition. All AEFLA grantees are required to adopt these curriculum standards as a condition of receipt of AEFLA funds. Additionally, these standards have been shared with non-funded adult education providers (e.g. Wisconsin Department of Corrections).

Professional development on the new standards is ongoing, and in 2019-2020 included providers designing model learning plans, materials, and instructional strategies that were subsequently shared at the October 2019 Common Ground Conference (WTCS-sponsored Adult Ed/ELL conference which featured over 500 attendees). This all-day training received positive reviews and feedback.

WTCS ELL Curriculum has also being aligned with the College and Career Standards as of April of 2019. Similarly, the ELL curriculum was featured in multiple training sessions at the 2019 Common Ground conference, and planning began early during the pandemic to offer some of this training virtually in the fall of 2020. WTCS will continue to utilize its ABE/ELL website and its WIDS curriculum repository for storing and making available best practices learning materials in these and other focus areas; the curriculum is available with open access at the following link: [https://wtcsystem.wids.org](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__wtcsystem.wids.org&d=DwQFAg&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=51qnEVsidJlFGIARznsz5OswUZArBgi2u8cUX94Qv-E&m=u7zy_lClzp1Wk3HkXV0DqmQ8z19jAABklZgJqOkseOI&s=4981NfzfBcHLRxgt_VTCHQ8Ga62ahlidFd8ldIf4mGE&e=)

**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.

Wisconsin has adopted the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) definition of recidivism for narrative reporting purposes. The Wisconsin DOC defines recidivism as a new offense resulting in a conviction and sentence to the Wisconsin DOC after release. While Wisconsin uses the DOC definition, it is important to note that all students served are in county jails.

There are three key components to the Wisconsin recidivism rate calculation: the ***starting point***, the ***follow-up period*** and the ***recidivism event***. The ***starting point*** defines the cohort or group of offenders being examined to assess if they recidivated. For example, offenders released from prison who received services during the 2016-17 program year. Wisconsin has also established that the released individuals must have received 12 hours of service or more in the program year to enter the cohort for tracking. The ***follow-up period*** defines the timeframe in which an offender may recidivate. The Wisconsin DOC has established the length of the follow-up period as being three years. If an individual recidivates during that three-year follow-up period, the date upon which the individual committed the recidivating offense is the date that is used to define the ***recidivism event*** when reporting.

Below shows the final Wisconsin AEFLA results of the 2015-16 cohort (254 individuals) and the 2016-17 cohort (270 individuals), and the preliminary results of the 2017-18 cohort (189 individuals) and 2018-19 cohort (106 individuals).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **% Recidivate within 1 Year** | **% Recidivate within 2 Years** | **% Recidivate within 3 Years** |
| **WI AEFLA 2015-16 Cohort** | 20% | 27% | 29% |
| **WI AEFLA 2016-17 Cohort** | 23% | 39% | 41% |
| **WI AEFLA 2017-18 Cohort** | 16% | 19% | N/A |
| **WI AEFLA 2018-19 Cohort** | 26% | N/A | N/A |
| **WI DOC Benchmark** | 15% | 26% | 33% |