California Narrative Report 2014−15

This report describes the major activities supported with State Leadership Funds during the 2014-15 program year. Specifically, the report discusses Performance Data Analysis, Integration with Other Programs, the English Literacy and Civics (EL Civics) Program, Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies, and Adult Education Standards to fulfill annual reporting requirements of the United States Department of Education (ED), Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE).The requirements apply to all states and territories receiving federal funding through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

# Introduction

The California Department of Education (CDE) AEFLA funded program provide educational opportunities and support services to one-fifth of adults enrolled in the AEFLA programs in the United States. These programs address the unique needs of individuals and communities by providing adults with the literacy skills and knowledge necessary to become positive contributors to their families and local economies. California adult education programs help learners (a) gain employment or better their current employment; (b) obtain a high school diploma (HSD) or high school equivalency (HSE) certificate; (c) attain skills necessary to enter postsecondary education and training; (d) exit public welfare and become self-sufficient; (e) learn to speak, read, and write the English language; (f) master basic academic skills to help their children succeed in school; and (g) become U.S. citizens, exercise their civic responsibilities, and participate in a democratic society.

The CDE is committed to maintaining and developing the adult education system that provides Californians with the necessary resources and tools to improve literacy and workforce skills. The Adult Education Students Succeed Web site at: <http://www.adultedlearners.org> highlights accomplishments of adult education students in California*.*

**Overview of California Literacy Needs**

The lack of basic education and literacy skills continues to be an issue that affects millions of adults in California. A significant percentage of the population lacks English literacy skills and basic education to secure employment, obtain citizenship, pursue postsecondary or higher education, and participate in their children’s education. The following section quantifies the literacy needs into four primary areas:

* **High School Diploma or Its Equivalent:** Approximately six million California adults do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent even asCalifornia's graduation rate continues to improve, which currently stands at 80.2 percent. Conversely, the dropout rate has fallen to 11.6 percent. Although graduation and dropout rates have improved, significant achievement gaps among student subgroups persist.
* **Labor Force:** Approximately three million California adults without high school credentials are unemployed or not in the labor force.The need for workplace readiness skills is significant. Many job candidates lack job-readiness skills required in the workplace, such as communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. California ranks forty-fifth with an unemployment rate of 7.3 percent according to the U.S. Department of Labor statistics published on September 2014.
* **English Speaking Ability:** More than 3.5 million California adults “do not speak English well or not at all.”More than one-fourth of the national non-English-speaking population resides in California, and more than 2.3 million of that group lack a high school credential.
* **Economic Impact:** A projection of California’s economy shows a trajectory of steadily increasing demand for a highly educated workforce. However, with the recent recession and budget constraints, the state remains challenged in meeting this demand.

Source of statistics:U.S. Department of Education. 2013. *Tapping the Potential: Profile of Adult Education Target Population.* [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/state-profiles/california.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/state-profiles/california.pdf%20) .

# State Leadership Funds

The CDE Adult Education Office (AEO) contracts with three entities to provide state leadership activities: (1) California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO); (2) Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS); and (3) Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN).

This report also discusses three initiatives set forth in the California State Plan, namely, (a)establish and implement professional development (PD) programs to improve the quality of instructional programs; (b) provide technology assistance, including staff training, to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities; and (c) provide assessments and accountability technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities. The goal of these collaborative efforts is to maximize resources and provide support to AEFLA funded adult education providers. To that end, the CDE has provided numerous opportunities through a variety of platforms – via face-to-face regional workshops and networking meetings, Webcasts, conference presentations, video-based workshops and training sessions, online courses, and electronic downloads. Highlights of successful activities conducted in the 2014**-**15 program year include the following.

#### **CALPRO** (Professional Development)

1. Provided opportunities for California adult educators to interact regularly and learn collectively in a group setting about evidence-based instructional practice. This included:
   * Thirty-six regionally based professional learning opportunities using a Community of Practice (CoP) model serving 629 participants on topics including evidence-based reading, writing, and math instructional strategies and best practices in English as a Second Language (ESL) instructional planning and College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards. Additionally, six regional workshops on learning goal setting and teaching critical thinking served 211 educators.
   * Thirteen facilitated asynchronous courses serving 111 participants on topics that address integrated education and training, postsecondary transitions, lesson planning, learner persistence, optimizing ESL instructional planning, evidence-based writing instruction in the ESL and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classrooms managing the multilevel ESL class; and using questioning strategies to improve instruction.
   * Eight self-directed online courses serving 129 participants were provided ontopics including adult learning and development, goal setting, learner persistence, instructional strategies for math and writing, CCR standards, and orientation for new ABE and ESL teachers.
   * Seven facilitated synchronous workshops served 140 participants on topics of teaching critical thinking and also integrated and contextualized workforce skills in the ESL and the ABE/Adult Secondary Education (ASE) classrooms.
2. Provided additional, technology-based PD delivery tomore than 630 educators who attended sessions from the following webinar series: Administrators Forum, Instructors Forum, e-CoP Webinars, and Adult Education Research Webinars. Also, CALPRO served the field through other online resources, including its e-CoP, three companion Virtual Workrooms, online video library, and two competency-based self-assessments.
3. Provided several PD events to build the capacity of adult education program leaders and administrators. (1) The Administrators’ Forum, a web-based venue to engage critically with their peers on topics that affect the development, management, and sustainability of their adult education programs (serving 35 instructional leaders); (2) The AE Leadership Institute, a six-day face-to-face institute designed to build the leadership skills of new and aspiring administrators (serving 26 instructional leaders); and (3) The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Institute a face-to-face and online institute that engages program teams of administrators and teachers in a six-month process of developing and refining instructional practice (serving 30 participants in 10 program teams).

#### **CASAS** (Accountability and Assessments)

1. Hosted 87 AEFLA regional network meetings statewide covering all 10 CDE regions. More than 1,200 participants attended these regional network meetings that addressed state and federal updates related to accountability, the use of data to inform instruction and improve programs, and PD opportunities. CASAS also facilitated 45 TOPSpro Enterprise network meetings to discuss software and data-related topics that served more than 550 participants.
2. Provided targeted technical assistance (TTA) to 16 agencies to improve programs, data quality, and National Reporting System (NRS) performance on persistence, educational functioning levels (EFLs), and core performance indicators for entering and retaining employment, entering postsecondary education and training programs, and obtaining a HSD or a HSE. Data indicates that agencies that did not show improvement in data quality suffered significant staff turnover. TOPSpro Enterprise helps agencies better monitor and track student and program learning outcomes. The software provides more detailed reporting and enhanced analysis capabilities for student-level data collection, management, and data integrity and monitoring processes.
3. More than 3,000 participants registered online for 121 online training sessions and 44 statewide face-to-face trainings offered by CASAS. The trainings covered the following main topic areas − California Assessment Policy and implementation, NRS data collection, policy guidelines, accountability, data validation, performance monitoring, and reporting. In addition, there are seven self-paced online courses available and online trainings for computer-based assessments (CASAS eTests®). More than 150 AEFLA agencies have implemented CASAS eTests®. Key advantages of computerized testing include placing students into programs quickly and accurately, generating test results and instructional reports immediately, eliminating hand scoring or scanning, and tracking student progress from placement to pretest, post-test, and program exit. More than fifty percent of the agencies are using the TOPSpro Enterprise online version for data collection and reporting.
4. Provide an online (<http://www2.casas.org/dataPortal/>) tool that presents California NRS adult learner data at the state and local agency levels. Agencies can compare local performance with state goals, other local agencies, and counties in AEFLA programs.

OTAN(Data, Technology, and Distance Learning)

1. Provided workshops on technology topics and distance learning topics: Delivered 70 online workshops to 413 attendees. OTAN delivered 42 face-to-face workshops to 596 attendees four new online workshop and new face-to-face workshops topics were created. OTAN staff also delivered 66 conference presentation sessions to 1,587 attendees.
2. Facilitated the Online Teaching Academy (OTAC) to assist instructors in becoming competent online teachers and mentors for other teachers at their respective agencies. The ten competitively selected participants learned about Moodle (an open source course management system) and implemented a project in collaboration with their administrator and agency. OTAC participants each completed an online facilitator’s course and received a nationally-recognized certificate. OTAN continued to offer online courses for teachers to use with their adult learners. Courses include EL Civics courses, an advanced ESL writing course, and courses from the National Repository of Online Courses (NROC) project including developmental math and basic algebra courses.
3. Piloted Community Model of Online Learning to increase regional access to high-quality online math curriculum for adult learners. Implemented three pilot projects from October 2013 through June 2015. Analysis of the project data indicated that all three participating agencies showed significant gains in adult learner math scores.
4. Hosted Technology Integration Mentor Academy (TIMAC) training for participants representing seven adult education agencies, for a year-long professional development project including several days of training in Sacramento. The purpose of the training was for participants to become mentors and increase the effective use of technology in classrooms at their respective sites.
5. Produced 10 new videos for the OTAN gallery including Teaching with Technology and Technology Integration Videos lesson plans. These covered how to use iPads in combination with the Apple TV, Cell Phone Basics, mobile apps, and how to use specific features in Moodle. Videos archives are posted on the OTAN Web site.
6. Hosted Technology and Distance Learning Symposium (TDLS) each year. The symposium rotates between north and south geographic locations in the state. In the 2014-15 year, 40 workshops on topics ranging from how to effectively use social media for professional development to best management practices for online and blended learning classrooms.

# Performance Data Analyses

California is the largest adult education provider in the United States. The state served nearly one-fifth of ***the nation’s adults*** enrolled in AEFLA programs in the last five program years. Because the state is home to one-fourth of the national non-English-speaking population, the ESL program comprised 60 percent of California’s AEFLA programs and 27 percent of the nation’s ESL program. California also served more learners in ABE and ASE programs than any other state, comprising 13 percent of total learners enrolled in ABE and ASE nationwide.

## Enrollment 2014–15

In 2014–15, 199 local agencies served 469,521learners in the AEFLA programs. Of these learners 304,831 (65 percent) qualified for NRS federal reporting. The decrease in enrollment can be attributed to the California budget crisisthat resulted in the significant reduction of the state’s education funding and shifting ofadult school funding decisions to the local school districts. The budget crisis created unprecedented pressures on the adult school system and reduced the funding base from the state. As a consequence, California’s AEFLA programs have seen a significant decline in enrollment over the last several program years—19.6 percent in 2009–10, 14.1 percent in 2010–11, 12.3 percent in 2011–12, and 6.0 percent in 2012–13 and 2013−14. In 2014–15, enrollment increased slightly by 1.4 percent.

Adult learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting reflect the diversity of the state. The largest ethnic groups of learners are Hispanic (66.8 percent) and Asian (14.6 percent). Adult learners are more likely to be female (54.7 percent), and adult learners between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four (49.3 percent) comprise the largest age group.

The current profile of California adult education providers includes 142 local school districts, 21 community-based organizations (CBOs), 20 community college districts (CCDs), 5 county offices of education (COE), 9 library literacy programs, and 2 state agencies.

There are 26 agencies serving institutionalized adults under Section 225 of AEFLA. These include 2 state agencies, one CBO, one library literacy, 3 CCDs, 2 COEs, and 17 jail programs provided by local school districts.

Local school districts with adult schools comprise the majority of AEFLA agencies and enroll 64.5 percent of total learners served by California. Adult schools and libraries saw a slight drop in enrollment. All other providers saw an increase in enrollment.

## NRS Performance

The NRS data documents California’s continued success in addressing the state’s basic skills needs by improving student persistence and learning outcomes. California had steadily improved its performance from 2006 through 2012 on persistence, EFL completion, and advancing one or more levels. California has equaled or exceeded the overall national performance in the past five program years.

In 2014–15, California met or exceeded state goals in ESL Intermediate High and ESL Advanced. Of the 304,831 learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting, 134,925 (44.3 percent) completed an EFL, and 94,868 (31.1 percent) advanced one or more EFLs. In the last two program years overall performance in persistence, EFL completion, and advancing one or more levels remained steady. The total persistence rate achieved in 2014–15 was 70.3 percent, exceeding the California state goal of 50 percent. More than 60 percent of the learners who persisted completed an EFL.

The 304,831 learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting averaged 192 hours of instruction. The 214,355 learners who persisted in the program and took pre- and post-tests reported more than 230 hours of instruction.

The CDE disburses AEFLA funds through a pay-for-performance system. Agency performance on NRS core measures determine how much funding a local provider will receive. The CDE uses learning gains, attainment of HSD or HSE certificate and transition to postsecondary or training benchmarks as a basis for federal grant funding. Agencies can earn the following benchmark payments per student for student achievement within the program year: (1) completes an NRS EFL;(2) advances one or more EFLs; (3) attains a high school diploma or HSE certificate; and (4) attains outcomes in EL Civics Citizenship Preparation and Civic Participation. Agencies are also rewarded when students participating in the random sample surveys achieve outcomes in employment and postsecondary education and training-related core performance follow-up measures.

California showed a steady increase in the number of learners who obtained a secondary school diploma or HSE certificate from 2006–07 to 2009–10. In the past several years, programs showed mixed results in HSD and GED® certificate recipients. The decreases may be attributed to a significant overall decrease in student enrollment. In 2014–15, 8,275 learners (54.1 percent) obtained a secondary school diploma or a HSE certificate.

California implemented random sample survey methodology starting program year 2012–13 for employment and postsecondary education or training core follow-up outcome measures. The survey response rate has improved in 2014–15 compared to previous years for entered and retained employment although the response rate is below the NRS requirement of 70 percent. The Student Follow-Up sample survey for Entered Employment indicates that 58 percent found employment; for Retained Employment the survey indicates that 90 percent stayed employed; and for Postsecondary Education or Training 47 percent of learners entered postsecondary education or training.

California has continued to make data quality a top priority. The CDE continues to provide online and regional training as well as individualized targeted technical assistance to increase the local agencies’ understanding of accountability requirements and to improve data collection. Local agencies submit data to CDE on a quarterly basis, permitting continual analysis and early identification of incomplete or inaccurate data. At the end of the program year, the statewide NRS EFL goals and performance are compared with agency-level performance. The longitudinal data are analyzed to track improvement in persistence and performance. The CDE staff and CASAS program specialists jointly provide targeted technical assistance to low performing agencies and agencies with newly appointed program administration teams.

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# Integration with Other Programs

Beginning in December 2014 the State Board, CDE, California Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO), EDD, DOR, Department of Social Services (DSS), ETP, California Workforce Association (CWA), California Welfare Directors Association, and designated representatives of Local Boards, publically met periodically under the auspices of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Implementation Committee Workgroup (WIOA Workgroup). In the bimonthly meetings that followed, staff workgroups comprising high level policy staff assigned by state partner departments and agencies in three multiagency staff and stakeholder workgroups were formed to discuss the WIOA State Plan. These included a Mapping the Field workgroup, a Data-Sharing and Performance Accountability workgroup, and a Local and Regional Service Coordination workgroup.

**Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB):** Results from the 2014-15 AEFLA Program Implementation Survey (AEFLA survey) indicate that 64.6 percent of adult education providers reported involvement with their local WIB. Among this group 44 percent indicated they collaborated very effectively or somewhat effectively with local WIBs. In addition, agencies reported specific ways they interacted with their local WIB, and the most frequently cited responses included (1) Agency is represented through a consortium (57.8 percent); (2) Staff attend WIB meetings (53.1 percent);(3) Agency has Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WIB (45.3 percent); and/or (4) an administrator served on a local WIB board (28.9 percent).

**One-Stop Systems:** As in previous program years, more than 56 percent of the agencies indicated they collaborated effectively with local One-Stop centers. Agency enrollment size reflected patterns in relationships. More than 65 percent of the large and medium sized agencies interacted effectively with One-Stop systems, followed by small agencies (50 percent). A large majority (74.6 percent) of agencies reported receiving or providing student referrals, 35.4 percent indicated they provided classes or training at the One-Stop, and 32.8 percent conducted workshops, conferences, or informational meetings. In addition, 27.3 percent of agencies reported providing testing and assessment services for the One-Stop center, 24.7 percent assigned a staff liaison to One-Stop Centers, and 23.7 percent tracked referrals to or from the One-Stop center.

**Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG):** In 2013–14, the State Budget appropriated 25 million dollars and tasked the CDE and the CCCCO to allocate funding for two-year planning and implementation grants to regional consortia of community college districts and school districts. The purpose of AB 86 Section 76, Article 3 is to provide grant funds to regional consortia to create and implement a plan to better provide adults in its region with all of the following:

* Elementary and secondary basic skills, including classes required for a HSD or HSE certificate
* Classes and courses for immigrants eligible for education services in citizenship and English as a second language and workforce preparation classes in basic skills
* Education programs for adults with disabilities
* Short-term career technical education programs with high employment potential
* Programs for apprentices

The initial report to the legislature was submitted in March 2014 by the AB86 Work Group. The final regional comprehensive plan was submitted on March 1, 2015.

The 2015-2016 California State Budget appropriated $500 million funding for adult education through the Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG) legislation. The CCCCO and the CDE are working in partnership to implement the AEBG. The AEBG funds will be provided to 70 Adult Education Regional Consortia consisting of community college districts, school districts and county offices of education for the purpose of implementing regional plans for adult education to better serve the needs of adults.

# English Literacy and Civics Education (EL Civics)

In 2014−15, the CDE EL Civics program awarded funds to 167 agencies to provide EL Civics educational services to more than 160,000 adult learners. Of the 163,025 learners 20,103 enrolled in Citizenship Preparation and 152,379 were in Civic Participation. More than 10,000 learners passed the CASAS Government and History for Citizenship test, and 3,329 passed the oral CASAS Citizenship Interview Test. In the 2013−14 AEFLA survey, more than 75 percent of EL Civics agencies reported enhanced or improved literacy instruction, and improved teacher and staff collaboration.

Civic Participation programs assess students through use of performance-based additional assessments that measure student attainment of civic objectives. Agencies may select from a list of 47 pre-approved civic objectives grouped under competency areas such as consumer economics, community resources, health, employment, and government and law or may develop their own. Pre- approved civic objectives used must meet the following criteria:

* Integrate English language and literacy instruction into civics education.
* Focus on helping students understand the government and history of the United States; learn the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and participate effectively in the education, employment, and civic opportunities this country has to offer.
* Integrate active participation of the learners in community activities.

More than 100,000 students throughout the state took Civic Participation performance-based additional assessments, and more than 90 percent passed one or more of them. Agencies that have implemented innovative activities that carry EL Civics lessons from the classroom into the community are displayed under EL Civics “Making a Difference in the Community” web page on the CASAS Web site. The following activities were supported with PY2014-15 EL Civics funds.

* The EL Civics Web site provides a single online location for all California EL Civics information. Agencies have immediate access to EL Civics online resources, including an alignment of CASAS QuickSearch Online information to EL Civics language and literacy objectives and a database of pre-approved Civic Participation objectives. By using the Web site local providers can select, and customize, their own program objectives online based on the identified needs and goals of their students. The Web site facilitates and streamlines communication among agencies, the CDE consultants, and the CASAS program specialists.
* Training and technical assistance for all aspects of implementing the EL Civics program. CASAS program specialists work closely with the CDE adult education regional consultants to provide comprehensive PD and capacity-building technical assistance for accountability, program implementation, and continual program improvement. Program staff can attend regional training workshops and network meetings, access Web-based trainings, and use online training modules.

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# Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies

California state policy allows individuals who are no longer enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law to be awarded a HSD or HSE certificate at any state approved public, private, or nonprofit adult education and literacy provider. Individuals awarded a HSD must complete specified state and local graduation requirements. Local school districts have the authority and responsibility for establishing high school graduation requirements. However, California Education Code Section 51225.3 specifies that students must pass a minimum set of required courses.

Alternatively, individuals may be awarded HSE certificate by passing three state approved tests. These are the GED® test, the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET®), and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC®). Currently the GED® test and the HiSET® test are being offered at local California testing centers. A test taker who passes any of the three tests will be awarded a Certificate of High School Equivalency from the CDE.

Furthermore, Senate Bill (SB) 172 signed October 7, 2015, suspends the administration of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) and the requirement that students completing grade twelve successfully pass the high school exit examination as a condition of receiving a diploma of graduation from high school for the 2015 through 2018 program years.

In addition, SB 172 requires local educational agencies to grant a diploma of graduation to any student who completed grade twelve in the 2003-04 school year, or a subsequent school year, and has met all applicable graduation requirements other than passing the high school exit examination. The bill also requires the Superintendent to convene an advisory panel to make recommendations to the Superintendent on the continuation of the high school exit examination and on alternative pathways to satisfy the high school graduation requirements pursuant to California Education Code sections 51224.5 and 51225.3. SB 172 will take effect on January 1, 2016, at which time LEAs shall be permitted to issue diplomas to eligible students.

# Adult Education Standards

The CDE has not formally adopted a board approved set of CCR standards for adult education. However, AEO has made progress toward educating local adult educators about CCR standards by providing professional development opportunities for AEFLA funded agencies.

During the 2014-15 fiscal year, the AEO provided funding support for one CCR standards professional development webinar, two Community of Practice training activities, and piloted the CCR standards: English/Language Arts (ELA) Implementation and Application Training of Trainers using the State Leadership portion of the AEFLA grant. CALPRO, a partner in this effort, developed the module series to support teachers, administrators, and programs to align curriculum and assessments to CCR standards.

The CCR standard: English/Language Arts (ELA) Implementation and Application Training of Trainers piloted in 2014 will be offered as two-part module in the 2015-16 program year. To access a webinar series on CCR standards, visit the following URL:

<http://www.calpro-online.org/researchwebinars.asp>