# **Alabama Narrative Report 2015-16**

**State Leadership Funds (AEFLA Section 223)**

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

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

**One Stop Partners**

Alabama strategically allocated and expended funds under section 223 (State Leadership activities) to provide and enhance educational and training services for implementing the strategies of the Combined State Plan. Alabama’s six (6) core partners under the major core components of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are in four (4) different agencies: Title I is in the Alabama Department of Commerce, Title II Adult Education is in the Alabama Community College System, Title III is in the Alabama Department of Labor, and Title IV is in the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Our core agencies have partnered over the years; however, under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) there has been a more concise coordinated effort in improving services to the job seekers and employers. Leadership funds have been used to support the integration and expansion of training services to be delivered within the Career Center system.

Adult Education is co-located with each Career Center and services continue to grow beyond traditional academic and High School Equivalency preparation. Under WIOA, Adult Education and the Career Centers are elevating their partnership to include an integrated education and training approach that places adults on a Career Pathway to successful employment and increased earning opportunities. The Adult Career Pathway program, which began as a pilot in a few adult education programs in 2015, has been scaled up to all programs for the 2016-17 program year using leadership funds. Partner funding is also being utilized to support the costs of training. Basic academics are contextualized into technical education skills and adults are able to attain stackable credentials and certificates along the Pathway with multiple entry and exit points. An example of one of the IET models was developed by Wallace State Community College (WSCC). It is an intensive semester-long IET Career Pathway model called the Integrated Contextualized Academic Program (I-CAP). Based on the needs in their local workforce area the program targeted the high demand areas of Welding, Diesel, and HVAC technologies.

The state adult education office is requiring integrated education & training to be performed by each program receiving adult education funding. Programs were required to develop a local team of partners to assist in creating their local plan. Each program presented their preliminary plan during a one day IET event which included their colleagues, state adult education staff, and career center partners. Immediate, constructive feedback was given and then the programs had a month to finalize their plan and budget for submission and approval. The state is providing continuous support through webinars and regional trainings so that all programs will be successful in implementation and results.

Another example of the state partners collaborating to meet the objectives of the state plan is the MOU between the Alabama Department of Human Resources (ADHR) and Alabama Community College System, adult education office, for integrated education and employability skills training to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) population. ACCS and ADHR also have an agreement for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients. The SNAP partnership is specifically for the Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS) population and allows for a state/federal match. All of these initiatives are focused on the embedded academic and job training needed to attain skills and industry recognized credentials for employment in the various sector areas including, but not limited to: construction, manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, information technology, and the service industry.

Leadership dollars were used along with state funding and braided resources from the partners for statewide implementation of these workforce skills training efforts. We are continuing to grow and enhance the offerings but are very pleased with current partnerships and outcomes.

**High quality professional development**

Intensive, quality professional development activities are a cornerstone to successful adult education programs. The state supports professional development through leadership funds at a state and local level. Many different approaches have been and are being used to ensure that all adult education teachers and staff have the strategies and knowledge to prepare students with basic skills for the high school equivalency and beyond. High quality and ongoing professional development ensures that our adult education practitioners are able to implement the requirements and intention of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Our providers learn to utilize evidence based best practices and think creatively and innovatively to meet the needs of the local area when it comes to education and training.

Professional development is an important piece of successful instruction. Leadership funds were used to support the professional development efforts in improving the local administration’s and instructors’understanding of adult education services, including but not limited to: the implementation of collegeand career readiness standards, integrated education & training, career pathways, integrated English Literacy Civics Education, instruction in Reading Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, Learning Challenges, Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). Below are some of the PD offerings during the program year:

***Contextualized Pathways***

* + *Bridge Programs*
	+ *Career Pathways (Technical Programs)*
	+ *Contextualized Learning*

***Workforce Solutions***

* + *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*
	+ *Alabama Career Centers and Regional Councils*
	+ *Soft Skills/Employability Skills “Essential Skills”*
	+ *Building Partnerships*

***Instructional Technology***

* + *Data Collection System- Using Data for Data driven decisions*
	+ *Technology Integration into classroom instruction*
	+ *Distance Education* and *Social Media*

***Innovative Instruction***

* + *Math/RLA*
	+ *Corrections/Institutionalized Classes*
	+ *Poverty/Instruction to engage all generations*
	+ *Retention/Barriers*
	+ *English as a Second Language- Integrated English Literacy Civics Education*
	+ *GED® Preparation CCR Standards*
	+ *College and Career Readiness Standards*

National Conferences: Council on Adult Basic Education (COABE), National Career Pathway Network (NCPN), GED® Testing Service Professional Development Conference

**Provision of Technical Assistance**

 Technical Assistance is an ongoing team process. At the end of the 2015-2016 year the state was divided into four areas to improve on the programmatic technical assistance and support to local programs. Each area has an assigned program specialist and accountant. There are four program specialists and two accountants. These staff provide assistance and support which includes performance, instruction, assessment, data collection, reporting, recruitment, retention, and fiscal management. These staff have also defined specialty areas which are not limited to geographic areas. The specialty areas include instruction, assessment, IELCE, Career Pathways, WIOA, IET, employability skills, data collection, professional development, high school equivalency, fiscal, employability skills, recruitment and retention.

Technical assistance is provided through face to face trainings, webinars, emails, phone calls, and teleconferences. State staff also started a bi-monthly webinar series for programs called “Spotlight.” This is an opportunity to highlight and discuss topics and best practices relevant to the specific needs of the local programs. The state uses the forum to disseminate policy, regulations, “cutting edge” instructional strategies and resources from a national, state, and local level. Questions are asked verbally or through discussion threads. The Spotlight series is recorded and archived as a professional development resource for directors and staff.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation is a consistent and ongoing process that drives technical assistance. Desktop monitoring and actual on-site review visits make up the process used to evaluate the success and/or areas for program improvement. All programs are reviewed through a desk monitoring process based on the National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Levels (EFL), High School Equivalency attainment, Enter Employment, Retain Employment, and Transition to Postsecondary Education. Alabama has four additional state indicators for each program which were added in FY 2015-16 year. These indicators include: 1) an enrollment goal, 2) an overall academic performance measure goal, 3) a National Career Readiness Certificate goal, and 4) a hard number goal for GED® diplomas. The process also takes into consideration attendance patterns, pre/posttest rates, and invoicing patterns to name a few. After the completion of the desk audit, programs are contacted by phone or email. Programs are required to follow-up with an improvement plan on how to increase performance if the program is within a range which would be unacceptable based on the current time of the year that the desk audit is generated.

The state is also in the process of updating all of our monitoring and technical assistance tools. The state is updating the Compliance Review, Technical Assistant Report, Corrective Action Plan document and the Risk Assessment form based on WIOA regulations and OCTAE guidance.

Program effectiveness is gauged through the federal measures as outlined under the federal WIOA and NRS measures. Programs with low performance according to the federal and state indicators are given continuous support by their specialist. In a process to provide additional assistance to low performing programs and programs with new directors, the state offered the Leadership Excellence Academy through the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC). This year-long training is designed to assist directors in becoming the administrative and instructional leaders of their program. Using data to make data-driven decisions for improving performance and accountability is a fundamental component of LEA.

**Permissible Activities**

During the 2015-16 program year additional funds were allocated specifically for programs to increase the services and academic rigor offered to students in the programs and Career Centers. Programs purchased much needed instructional materials, instructional equipment, and increased instructional hours.

Leadership funds were also used to support the WIOA upgrades and reporting features of the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) which is the adult education management information system.

A very innovative strategy that we undertook this past year was a statewide marketing effort which included GEO Fencing (*targeting smart phone messages to devices in a geographic area*). We also used a texting number for interested parties to request information. This has also allowed us to build a repository of numbers that we can use to send messages to interested parties regarding adult education services. We created three targeted commercials for our adult population. One is for the dislocated worker needing to increase basic skills and attain a GED for employment purposes (*My Job* <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pBEmRkjest8>). The second is targeted to the traditional adult student that experienced an unexpected event and needs a high school equivalency to get back on the postsecondary path (*My GED* <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=O2hSYmcz0Ww>) The third is for the English Language Learner needing Integrated English Literacy Civics Education to change their life (*My Life* <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=5bg_ciV2Xk8>).

**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 performance of the state has been relatively consistent with historical norms (see chart below). Increase efforts will take place to ensure that the data shows clear and distinct improvement in the future. However, it is important to note the external factors that may have played a major role in the uncharacteristic decrease in some of the performance indicators. There were many program director positions vacant during the 2015-16 program year. There were 9 director positions out of the 27 that were vacant or filled with an interim for much of the year. This led to local leadership instability which contributed to the average performance. Many of the vacant positions have been filled with permanent leadership. Steps are already being taken to conduct new directors’ orientation trainings with emphasis on the importance of performance and accountability.

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| **Alabama Adult Education Performance** |
| **CORE Performance Indicators** | National AverageOutcome2014-15 | 2014-15 PerformanceOutcome | 2015-16 PerformanceOutcome |
| *ABE Beginning Literacy* | 43% | 43% | 43% |
| *ABE Beginning Basic* | 45% | 41% | 40% |
| *ABE Intermediate Low* | 44% | 38% | 37% |
| *ABE Intermediate High* | 36% | 35% | 34% |
| *ASE Low* | 38% | 38% | 40% |
| *ESL Beginning Literacy* | 50% | 39% | 33% |
| *ESL Low Beginning* | 54% | 50% | 47% |
| *ESL High Beginning* | 52% | 44% | 42% |
| *ESL Low Intermediate* | 46% | 48% | 39% |
| *ESL High Intermediate* | 43% | 43% | 38% |
| *ESL Advanced* | 26% | 30% | 24% |
| *Enter Employment* | 45% | 32% | 31% |
| *Retain Employment* | 64% | 59% | 41% |
| *Obtain a H.S. Equivalency* | 66% | 84% | 86% |
| *Enter Post-Secondary/Training* | 28% | 22% | 24% |

The challenge that all adult education programs face across the nation is that our population of students are increasingly younger and fall into the millennial generation while our practitioners are one to two generations removed. This generational gap causes a divide between the instruction delivery by our instructors and how it is received and processed by our adult students. Professional development efforts during the year focused strategies on understanding the various generations and how to integrate and use technology in the classroom that goes beyond just a desktop computer and software curricula. Progress is occurring but a long term approach to change practitioner behavior and practices will occur through continuous quality professional development. A targeted approach to understanding the learner and providing the support to contextualize learning to the CCR standards will lead to improved progression in all performance measures.

The state adult education office has been increasing the functionality and reporting features of the data collection system including alerts. These data alerts include testing and attendance, performance and accountability dashboards for state and local, and a financial reporting module for allocation and expenditures. The system known as the Alabama Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) is being updated to capture the requirements under WIOA and also to provide instant feedback to the programs for data analysis. System features and processes continue to be streamlined.

**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.

The Alabama Community College System, Workforce Division, Adult Education office is responsible for the requirements under 34 CFR part 463, subpart J, and carries out this responsibility. Adult Education provides adult education services as stated under 34CFR part 463, subpart J, throughout the state in career centers and in partnership with all the other WIOA agencies. As part of the required activities for the AEFLA funding the state requires programs to be co-located and to provide services in partnership with the local Career Center. The services provided in the one stop system is described in more detail in the State Leadership section under One Stop partners.

Infrastructure costs are currently supported through in-kind contributions and some local operational costs. The state adult education office made a statewide purchase of online TABE assessments that are available to all the partners and clients of the Career Center. The adult education program is the main administrator of the assessment, however, other career center partners have been trained in the delivery model. This is provided from a statewide purchase of assessments that were made available to the Career Center system.

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

Alabama Adult Education allocates funding under section 211(a)(2) to support all the activities as described in section 243 for the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program. The goal is to prepare adults who are English language learners for unsubsidized employment in the in-demand industries and occupations in Alabama which lead to economic self-sufficiency. These efforts are supported and assisted through the local Career center.

**State Held Competition**

The last competition held was in 2013 under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The current IELCE program is in a continuation status until the next competitive bid process. The schedule for competing funds will occur prior to July 1, 2018. Alabama was granted an extension to the July 1, 2017 deadline because of the creation of new local workforce development boards and a delay in local board plans being approved and in place before the AEFLA competition is released. The local boards and their plans will not be in place and effective until fall of 2017. However, all programs funded under the previous competition understand the requirement of WIOA and the integration of English Literacy Civics Education with integrated education and training activities which lead to sustainable employment. The state has conducted multiple webinars and training sessions for Directors and staff. These professional development activities have programs focusing their attention on training and employment preparation for all students including the English Literacy Civics Education population. As with all AEFLA services, Adult Education state staff are monitoring and validating programmatic activities and administrative/instructional costs to ensure alignment with all the requirements under WIOA.

In the future, Alabama Adult Education will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs by offering a competitive, multi–year (three year) Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process specifically for Integrated Literacy and Civics Education funds. Competition for funding and the distribution of awarded funds will be completed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section of the Alabama State plan and will comply with the requirements of Subpart C section 243 of WIOA.

**State Efforts in Meeting Requirement**

Each program that receives funding under this section shall be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners (ELL) for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in–demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self–sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The Alabama Adult Education state office will consider the ELL population in each regional local workforce service area in determining future funding. The eligible provider must demonstrate the need and services to be provided which aligns with the mission of the combined state plan and the requirements under WIOA. The funds will target those areas that have a large population of English language learners and provide the skills to improve one’s abilities to read, write, speak the English language, and become a productive citizen with sustainable employment.

Integrated English literacy and civics education are educational services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, which enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. These types of services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. They will also include workforce training. An example of this is including the IELCE students in the Adult Career Pathways, Bridge, and Ready to Work programs.

An evidence–based approach using the framework of Integrated Career Pathways will be used for the non–skilled or skill deficient adults in our state who are non–native English language learners. Instructors from the ELL program and the technical education programs will be identified to provide an integrated instructional model to effectively and efficiently train the student. The program will be a bridge that seamlessly prepares our ELL adults for employment opportunities like any other career pathway program in our state.

Eligible providers must demonstrate in their request the manner in which the program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training career pathway activities. These activities will be provided through collaboration with WIOA and other community partners.

**Preparing and Placement in Unsubsidized Employment**

Eligible providers will design programs that deliver the activities under WIOA including the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training. Providers will also promote linkages between students and potential employers. Providers must prepare English Language Learners for unsubsidized employment in demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self–sufficiency. The activities of the program must reflect the needs of the local, regional workforce area. Civics education, embedded with training, is an integral part of the English language acquisition services for the ELL population. English literacy and civics education classes introduce students to civics–related content and provide them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in their daily lives while building their English language and literacy skills for the workforce. The skills learned in these classes strengthen the ELL adult’s ability to be an active participant and contributor to our communities, workforce, and local economies.

**Integration with Local Workforce Development System**

An increased emphasis is being placed on college and career readiness standards for IELCE participants to prepare them for additional training and/or employment opportunities. Providing targeted IET professional development to the IELCE instructors will be crucial in preparing the English language learner population for the local, state, and national workforce. IET pathway activities will include preparation of the ELL participants for employment opportunities in the in-demand industries with full coordination with the local workforce system. The coordination of placement services through the local career center will connect the IELCE jobseeker to employers. The State Workforce system is launching an Apprenticeship program that will provide comprehensive support, resources, and on-the-job training opportunities to jobseekers including the AE and the IELCE population. Our goal of improving and enhancing IELCE is a continuous process.

**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.

* Optional – Describe implementation efforts, challenges, and any lessons learned.

**Standards**

Alabama Adult Education has adopted the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards disseminated through the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). These standards were developed for Adult Education in the area(s) of Reading Language Arts (RLA) and Mathematics to align with the rigor of the national K-12 standards. Directors and instructors have been and are continuing to be trained and supported on the implementation of the CCR standards. The CCR standards are the instructional blueprint used in preparing adults for education and training beyond a high school equivalency. The standards themselves provide our instructors with the visual objectives that students must attain to be successful. Instructors use these objectives to create the student instructional path and hold themselves and students accountable for results.

Training has occurred in multiple formats including workshop sessions, webinars, and facilitated distance education semester-long courses. National and state level experts are used in disseminating the standards. For example, the National Center for Family Learning conducted a semester-long online training for directors and instructors during the fall of 2015. Another example is the continuous support from the GED® Testing Service with workshops and webinars on GED® test alignment to the CCRS. Also, programs have taken advantage of the online standards courses from LINCS and the sessions offered during the Alabama Summer Conference. The challenge in any process is making sure that implementation occurs. Continuous follow-up and monitoring is used to support and ensure implementation. There were 16 adult education practitioners which included state staff, local directors, and instructors to attend the National CCR trainings in the Spring of 2016. A core working group was formed after the national training to continue to improve the process of statewide training efforts and implementation around standards and innovative instructional strategies.

Alabama is also partnering with the Southern Region Education Board to use the Reading Language Arts (RLA) and Mathematics curriculum aligned to the Common Core Standards but developed specifically for students on a technical education path. The curriculum is contextualized to ensure academic application to skills training. Utilizing the SREB curricula is another example of our commitment to ensure alignment, rigor, and relevance.

**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.

**Alabama Recidivism Rate**

The recidivism rate for the state of Alabama according to the FY 2015 Annual Report from the Alabama Department of Corrections is 30.9%. The Alabama Department of Corrections calculates the percentage of the inmate population which recidivates within three years of release. Recidivism is defined as re-arrest, reconviction, or return to incarceration with or without a new sentence during a three-year period following release.

The NRS data from the 2012-13 program year was used to identify a recidivism rate for the inmate population served through adult education which coincides with the three year period after release used for the state recidivism rate. Data reports from the Alabama Department of Corrections and the Life Tech Institute® were used for determining the rate. The Life Tech Institute® is an Integrated Education and Training program funded through the state office. This program provides a Pathway in academic, mental health, and technical training for adults without a high school diploma transitioning into the free world. These students are able to attain services to further education and employment opportunities upon release. In the NRS program year 2012-13 there were 3,605 incarcerated adults that were served through adult education. There were 1,049 in the cohort to obtain a secondary credential or its equivalent and 835 achieved the goal. The Life Tech Institute® tracked 1,157 program completers over a three year period and found the recidivism rate was **11.4%**. This research shows a significant difference in the recidivism rate of the overall incarcerated population, 30.9% versus the Life Tech Institute® adult education population, 11.4%. The services received through the adult education IET model truly makes a significant difference in the recidivism rate.