

Delaware Narrative Report 2015-16

The FY 16 theme for Delaware's Adult Education was integrating WIOA directives into daily operations. The primary objectives centered on greater understanding and integration of workforce development strategies into instructional practice; enhanced MIS processes; and professional development that supported program staff and benefited students in attaining their goals.

State Leadership Activities

Alignment with One Stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Combined State Plan

During FY16, WIOA partners convened to determine best practices for the successful implementation of Delaware's State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- The Department of Labor held monthly meetings of the WIOA State Plan partners - DOL Title I, III and IV representatives; DOE Adult and Prison Education and Career and Technical Education; DOL Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; DHSS Division of the Visually Impaired; Division of Libraries; DHSS Health and Social Services; Criminal Justice Council; Job Corps; Delaware Economic Development; Stand by Me Financial Literacy; and the Delaware Workforce Investment Board. These meetings focused on understanding the wide variety of services provided by each partner and finding ways for programs to more seamlessly interact for the benefit of mutual clients. These meetings are continuing into FY 17.
- The Delaware Workforce Development Board held monthly meetings of the Core Programs to revise the State Plan and improve alignment with WIOA legislative requirements. These meetings are continuing into FY 17.
- The WIOA Partners planned and held a statewide convening in winter 2016 that brought together front line workers from the partner agencies with the goal of developing a common understanding of WIOA requirements and of each agency's role in the State Plan. This convening is slated to be an annual event, which will solicit front line workers input how the plan is being implemented and promote continuous improvement.
- Adult and Prison Education and the Department of Labor conducted informational sessions for each other's front line workers regarding services and eligibility criteria.
- Adult and Prison Education and DOL have participated in consolidated trainings regarding access to each other's electronic client systems.
- DOL developed a common referral system in which Adult and Prison Education can refer participants to WIOA partner services and vice versa.
- The Department of Education, Adult and Prison Education, is a member of the Delaware Workforce Development Strategic Planning Committee; however, the Secretary of Education appointed the CTE Director to serve as the DOE representative on the Workforce Development Board.

Operation of a high quality professional development program

To best serve adult learners, the Delaware Adult and Prison Education Workgroup, provided professional development gear to increasing the knowledge, skills and abilities of adult educators, program leaders and administrative staff. In FY 16, the following trainings were provided:

1. Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) Training Institutes occurred throughout the year totaling six full day – two days in both October and November 2015 and an additional two days in February 2016. All programs were required to have at least one fully trained STAR specialist helping teachers implement evidence based reading instruction.
2. Standards in Practice Training was initiated in February 2016 to assist teachers in developing plans that aligned with the Common Core’s Career and College Readiness Standards. This training provided teachers unfamiliar with CCR standards a context for new instructional framework.
3. GED Testing Services delivered writing workshops both at the Annual Conference and during the year to Intermediate and ASE instructors to improve classroom content instruction.
4. Delaware Adult Education teachers provided argument writing, critical to GED® attainment, during the Teacher Summer Academy.
5. The ACE Network Resource Center provided Career Writing workshops for teachers to prepare learners for the successful completion of Delaware’s Career Writing Certificates of Attainments designated for various NRS educational functioning levels.
6. LINCS and World Educational trainings were posted to the statewide Schoology website that easily accessible by teachers and administrators. These training were also discussed at monthly administrators’ meetings. These courses were also validated for use towards the professional development hours required for adult educator certification.
7. The Learning to Achieve Program was part of the mandatory training for all prison education teachers prior to entry into the correctional facility.
8. David Haugen presented training on the accommodation process for the GED in addition to a review of the Delaware Accommodation Policy and Learning for Universal Design.

Specific training or technical assistance needs was provided upon request or state mandated based on program student progress performance. During FY 16, specific trainings regarding STAR, writing strategies and data collections were delivered.

An important innovation to professional development was the transition of the ACE Network Resource website from the Moodle to Schoology platform. This change greatly improved the resource accessibility for program staff and administrators. Schoology offers an environment that includes the use of groups and courses. Utilizing the group format for various work units, such as ABE or ESL, provided an online social media interface that was easy to use and eliminated the need for individual listservs. A virtual one-stop information platform was created for staff and administrators to reference whenever needed. Further enhancements are planned for FY 17.

Monitoring and evaluation of adult education activities provided both motivation and collaboration opportunities for Delaware Adult Education programs. The ACE Network provided thirty-nine professional development sessions focused on high quality data collection, and input, which also addressed the informational needs of program administrators. These sessions, delivered online and/or in person required one to six hours of training depending on the complexity of the MIS technology required. The topics covered were based on LACES MIS revisions and on user requests and included creating new views and searches, using hard-wired reports, and sorting data to seek teacher and program improvements were offered.

The Schoology platform also allowed the creation of an online data workgroup, which enhanced the state's ability to share expectations for continuous improvement with all programs. Data collection, monitoring and review documents and step-by-step directions to complete various data processes were posted within the workgroup for 24/7 access.

Program data was monitored and reviewed on a quarterly basis. The Quarterly Report Card monitoring process was previewed quarterly prior to data collection with program staff. These review sessions typically last sixty minutes delivered via webinar. It is mandatory that each program have at least one person present at each quarterly sessions. Updates to WIOA, NRS, and MIS guidance were presented to ensure that the data collection process is aligned with the new WIOA regulations.

It is due to the shared commitment of program administrators and state staff to monitoring student progress through quality data collection and analysis that Delaware has continually ranked in the top quartile for EFL gains.

Performance Data Analysis

Delaware's FY 16 unemployment rate was 4.5%, lower than the national average of approximately 4.7%. The occupational titles with the highest vacancy rates included: (1) Retail Sales; (2) Food Preparation; (3) Cashiers; (4) Registered Nurses; and (5) Waiters and Waitresses. Interestingly, job projections from now up to 2022 prioritized the following industries as the most in need of employees: (1) Health Care and Social Assistance; (2) Retail Trade; (3) Finance and Insurance; (4) Accommodations and Food Services; and (5) Educational Services. While certain categories carried from current job openings into future job opportunities, the inclusion of finance and insurance as well as educational services, which includes all services that occur within an educational facility, will influence the contextual learning that occurs in adult education classes.

Enrollment

In FY 16, enrollment in Adult Education classes remained stable, increasing by 1 percent from the previous year. ABE enrollment represented 59% of students; ASE represented 10% and ESL 31% - substantially the same as FY 15 enrollment patterns. The age distribution remained stable also. In exchanging information with our DOL partners, the high number of job vacancies appears to have resulted in many adults opting for employment rather than training or further

education. We have surmised that high job vacancy rates especially in occupations that do not require specific educational levels for job entry have resulted in lower ABE enrollment levels. In like manner, training programs not requiring a secondary credential or diploma also led to a decrease in the pool of adults who might otherwise attend ABE programming.

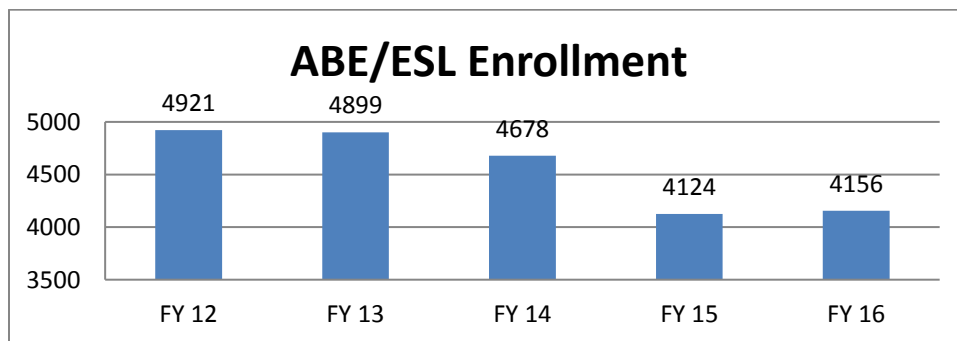
The issue of “diploma mills” remained in FY 16. While awareness of this issue increased dramatically statewide, adults still enrolled with the goal of attaining a secondary credential “quickly”. Upon rejection of the “diploma” by higher education, some employers and training schools, the learners became frustrated, contacted Adult Education, and decided to either enter ABE programs or stay away from education forever. All callers were provided with contact information for the state’s Consumer Fraud Division and information on ABE programs operating in their areas.

An analysis of the self-reported “educational attainment upon entry” into ABE programs revealed that in FY 16 more learners with a secondary credential, diploma or some college (both US based and non-US based) enrolled in programs than in the previous year. As a result, programs reviewed how they could better serve these students.

Prison Education participation increased by 9% over FY 15. Though many factors, outside of ABE’s control, affected correctional enrollment, two major changes contributed to the increase. The largest prison in the state mandated that all inmate workers possess a secondary credential or diploma prior to employment by DOC and additional vocational training programs requiring specific educational levels were initiated throughout the system.

In FY 15, a lack of “transitional” or middle skilled jobs into which lower skilled workers can transition with additional education and/or training was cited as a barrier to a career pathways mindset. After speaking with DOL partners, a difference in employment analysis was uncovered. DOL assumes if a job is filled, then the worker has the skills to fulfill the job requirements. As a result, there was no consideration needed for middle skilled jobs since the emphasis was on the job requirements and not the worker’s skills. As we collaborate further in support of WIOA, common understandings will allow both agencies to better support workforce development efforts.

In providing ESL services, there was a slight increase in the number of students entering at the ESL Beginning Literacy over last year. Enrollment decreased slightly in the remaining EFLs.

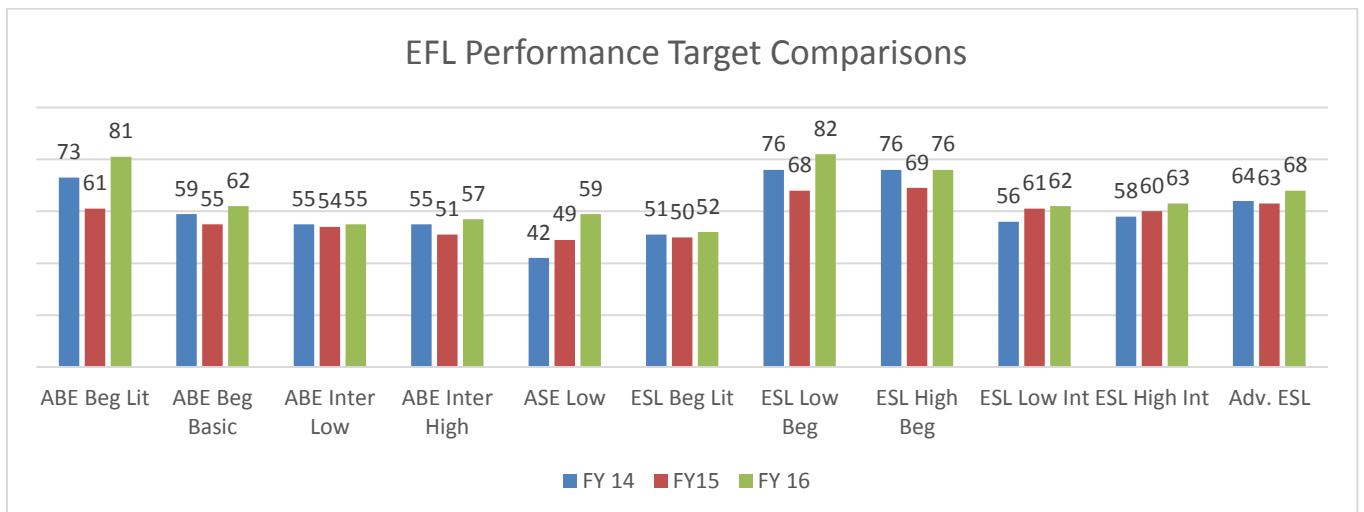


Performance Target Achievements

- *Educational Functioning Level Completions*

Delaware Adult Education met or exceeded performance targets in 8 out of 11 educational functioning levels. In the remaining three EFLs, Delaware was within 7% of achieving the proposed targets. The ABE Intermediate Low and High EFL targets were missed by 4% (40 students) and 1% (8 students) respectively. The ESL Beginning Literacy performance was 19 students or 3% short of its proposed target. Average ABE/ESL attendance remained at 87 hours, a number that has remained stable over the past three years.

Average ABE student attendance was 90 hours and average ESL attendance was 80 hours. These numbers represented a slight decrease in ABE retention but a slight increase in ESL retention. Programs continue to note a larger diversity of students entering adult education classes, specifically learners from the Middle East and the Caribbean areas.



- *Core Completions*

Delaware attained three of its four core performance targets. Delaware did not meet its employment core goal, attaining 33% compared to the target of 40%. The probable cause for the low performance was an erroneous understanding of FY 16 employment outcome reporting. Programs did not push for changes in student employment status as much as in the past.

However, Delaware did exceed its job retention target by 15% attaining an 80% retention outcome. The state also exceeded its diploma/secondary target by 11% attaining a 99% outcome and exceeded its transition to postsecondary target attaining a 49% outcome.

Delaware Adult Education's focus on "what's next" has been instrumental in achieving these targets. Education has been "re-imaged" as the tool by which learners attain other goals that support themselves, their families, their workplaces and their communities.

Integration with One-Stop Partners

Integration of One Stop partners has increased this year. Through collaboration with various state agencies, adult education was able to support employment and training objectives; statewide career development plans; and post incarceration reentry goals.

- ABE classes were co-located in all four One Stops. The Departments of Education and Labor supported these classes through cost sharing for space, furniture, salaries, instructional materials and assessments. Through monthly meetings, partner agencies focused on developing a seamless process for client referrals to shorten wait times; reduce unnecessary duplication of services; and provide a common message to clients. For example, DOL referred clients to ABE classes to increase skills for entering a DOL training or employment. Upon attainment of a secondary credential, students returned to DOL for employment or training. Approximately \$15,000 of AEFLA federal funds is funded ABE providers at One Stop Centers. Instructors at ABE classes not co-located at One Stop Centers referred students to One Stops for additional career services.
- Classroom instruction, both at the One Stops and at other locations make extensive use of career resources on the DOL website. Career information and job resources gathered from the DOL website and from DOL's Career Compass publication are used as the basis for writing skills verifications in ABE classes.
- DOL representatives have trained ABE program administrators on the Delaware Job Links system and DOE representatives have met with DOL contractors regarding assessments and educational credentialing.
- ABE instructors can refer students to DOL workshops for job interviewing, job search, and resume building through the WIOA partner referral process.
- All work-eligible ABE students at the One Stops enroll in the Delaware Job Links (DJL) system and all other work-eligible ABE students are referred to the One Stops for DJL enrollment.
- Adult Education has collaborated with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to set up a process by which eligible correctional education students meet with a DVR representative prior to release in preparation for DVR service applications upon re-entry.
- Under the new WIOA State Plan, Adult Education is a member of the Workforce Development Board's Planning Committee under the guidance of the Steering Committee. The Secretary of Education has appointed the Career and Technical Director to represent both Perkins and Adult Education on this Steering Committee.

To date, there has not been any formal discussion of infrastructure costs. However, as noted previously Title II funds are being used to provide services at the One Stops.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics (IELCE) Program.

- In spring 2016, the Department of Education issued a continuing grant application to provide IELCE services. Delaware received a total of \$153,638 for provision of these services. Six programs applied for and received IELCE program funding.
- The IELCE funding targeted the various components of IELCE programming, as understood in the fall and winter of 2016. Programs provided instruction in English language acquisition, civic participation, rights and responsibilities of citizens, self-management skills, digital literacy skills, and workforce development skills. Programs also integrated industry cluster knowledge into classroom exploration and discussion. All job information was based on DOL in-demand occupations. Further, programs were tasked with investigating specific in-depth skills training that could be the basis for funding in FY 17.
- Throughout the year, Adult Education met with representative from the Department of Labor, the Delaware Economic and Development Organization, Delaware Technical and Community College and vocational-technical school districts to discuss braided funding to support integrated education and training programs. By year's end, several agencies agreed to place the IELCE concept on its FY 17 list of potential initiatives. No formalized funding streams were established. Agencies had several concerns regarding this initiative including: (1) the increased possibility of undocumented students whose numbers would decrease performance outcomes or whom they could not serve by law; (2) level of employer willingness to accept ESL employees; (3) several other initiatives were also being considered with no increase in resources; and (4) effectiveness of this concept when ESL job seekers seem to be gaining employment already. Some challenges that surfaced were the ability of partner agency to find multi-lingual staff and/or provide translation services at local sites and ESL worker willingness to enter into occupations that were not familiar. Many ESL workers in Delaware have traditionally entered the landscaping, mushroom farming, poultry and hospitality industries. There was uncertainty as to the willingness of ESL job seekers to explore new job opportunities where they might be the trailblazers.
- Delaware Department of Labor's in-demand industries/jobs are based on occupations with the most openings. While some of these jobs do lead to economic sufficiency, others are low skilled and lower paying. The goal of IELCE programming will be to provide training in specific skilled occupations where jobs are available and are "in-demand" in a specific county. Therefore, funded programs will respond to the unique needs of the areas in which they are located. As the State Plan is revised, a focus on the employment needs of ESL Delawareans will hopefully be increased. In a period of high stakes performance accountability, agencies are carefully considering their responses to new initiatives.

Adult Education Standards

Delaware has adopted the Common Core/Career and College Readiness Standards. Adult Education has adopted the Career and College Readiness Standards for Adult Education. In this

second full year of implementation, Delaware focused on providing instructors with strategies and resources that promoted student success. These efforts included:

- Professional development and technical assistance to adult educators in CCR English Language Arts instruction (Reading, Writing, Language, Speaking & Listening), with a focus on secondary credential assessment preparation.
- Standards in Practices professional development was offered as a yearlong project to help teacher integrate CCR standards into their planning and delivery of instruction.
- Writing instruction provided by GEDTS concentrating on strategies to complete successfully the short answer and extended responses components of the assessment.

Some teachers, especially those currently working in K12, are familiar with CCR Standards and can easily transfer these understandings to their adult education classes. Other teachers, who are not be currently teaching in K12, have a more difficult time implementing this new framework. Professional development for these instructors can be challenging given that most instructors are part time and their availability is limited. Consequently, there is an increased reliance on distance learning. With limited funding, a process for reimbursing PD time while not reducing student-learning time is difficult. Since most administrators are also responsible for other programming within their institutions, there is also a need to develop an efficient and effective mentoring process across main campuses and satellites.

Another challenge that is surfacing is the disagreement on the value of teaching to standards with WIOA partners. Adult Education has been asked upon occasion to teach “just in time” skills and release students to jobs and/or job training. Most of our partners have not been in a classroom in some time and do not see the value in a more reflective system that takes more time to complete.

Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals

Reporting a recidivism rate is difficult since there is no standard definition for the term. In addition, there is no standard process for determining how to calculate this statistic. Therefore, comparison of rates is problematic and inconclusive.

Delaware’s most current Recidivism Report was published in 2013 and examined two cohorts of offenders for three years. The cohorts were offenders released in 2008 and in 2009. Delaware provides a unified correctional system, with all correctional facilities and institutions falling under the jurisdiction of the State. The Department supervises between 6,500 – 7,000 inmates within our correctional facilities and approximately 17,000 probationers within the community. Therefore, these stats includes all offenders within the state including those that would routinely be included in local jails in other states.

The recommitment rate (offenders returning to prison) after one year was 47% and 45% for the 2008 and 2009 cohort. No educational data is collected by the Department of Correction upon incarceration and education is mandatory in some prisons and not in others.

The formula used to develop these stats was:

$$\text{Interval Recidivism Rate} = \frac{\# \text{ of Recidivists}}{(\# \text{ of Recidivists}) + (\# \text{ of Non-Recidivists})} \times 100\%$$

In developing the “relative recidivism” rate for adult education students in the correctional system, a similar formula was used including only the offenders released in FY 16.

$$\text{ABE Recidivism Rate} = \frac{\# \text{ of FY 16 ABE Recidivists}}{(\# \text{ of FY 16 ABE Recidivists}) + (\# \text{ of FY 16 ABE Non-Recidivists})} \times 100\%$$

When performing an initial analysis with limited data, the statistics revealed that:

- 49% of offenders, male and female, who participated in FY 16 at any level of ABE for more than 12 hours returned to prison within FY 16.
 - 33% of female offenders did return to prison while 67% did not return to prisons by the end of FY 16. There is no comparison with Department of Correction statistics since they determined that the number of female offenders was too small to be significant.
 - 51% of male offenders did return to prison while 49% did not recidivate by the end of FY 16.
 - 55% of male offenders who participated in only ABE did recidivate while 45% remained out of prison during this timeframe.
 - 47% of male offenders who participated in ABE and non-academic courses (computers, HVAC, ServSafe, Flagger, NCCER, etc.) did recidivate while 53% remained out of prison during this timeframe.
 - 32% of male offenders who participated in ABE and specific vocational courses (Flagger, HVAC, ServSafe, NCCER) did recidivate while 68% did not return to prison within this timeframe.
 - 63% of male offenders, age 24 and younger, did return to prison. This aligns with DOC recidivism patterns.
 - 51% of male offenders, age 25 and older, did return to prison while 49% did not return to prison during this timeframe.