**Georgia Narrative Report 2015-2016**

**Introduction**

“Creating a Workforce for Georgia and a Future for Families.”

Georgia’s Office of Adult Education (GOAE) is a division of the Technical College System of Georgia—an entity that also includes Technical Education and Quick Start (the agency’s economic development arm). The mission of the GOAE is, “To enable every adult learner in Georgia to acquire the necessary basic skills—reading, writing, computation, speaking, and listening—to compete successfully in today’s workplace, strengthen family foundations, and exercise full citizenship.”

The continued need for strategic, responsive, and comprehensive adult education is evident in the state. Approximately 1.1 million adults over the age of 18 in Georgia’s collective 159 counties have less than a high school education. To meet this need in FY 2016, GOAE renewed grants to thirty-one (31) sub-recipients that each covers a unique Service Delivery Area (SDA). Programs include entities that operated under the direction and management of twenty-four (24) technical colleges, four (3) community-based organizations, one (1) faith-based organization, three (3) school districts (administered by the Georgia Department of Education), and one (1) four-year college (administered by the University System of Georgia). Each SDA is managed independently by a program administrator. During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, Georgia enrolled 42,939 students in adult education programs.

Two major departments of the GOAE are the Instructional Services (IS) component and the Professional Development and Transition Resources (PDTR) component. The seven member IS team is comprised of the Director of Instructional Services, a Technical Coordinator, four (4) Grant Program Support Coordinators, and one (1) administrative assistant. The department provides oversight of program processes and performance—to include data monitoring and program review. Further, the department delivers technical assistance to program administrators and staff, including training on data entry, reporting, and assessment.

The PDTR team includes the Director of Professional Development and Transition Resources, a Professional Development Coordinator, a Transition Coordinator, and a Program Assistant. The triplicate focus of this team includes a menu of services to:

* Design, deliver, track participation, and evaluate research-based training and professional development for program administrators, instructors, and staff members within adult education programs throughout Georgia;
* Provide training and technical assistance to Transition Specialists, and other program staff (statewide) to promote awareness of, and access to, postsecondary education career options for Georgia’s adult learners;
* Identify, implement, track participation, manage and evaluate national initiatives and program pilots.

GOAE collaborates with other divisions and sub-components within the Technical College System of Georgia (e.g. the TCSG Office of Technical Education and Georgia’s technical colleges) to fulfill the mission of the agency and to meet the needs of Adult Education students in preparation for postsecondary education and workforce options. GOAE also works in partnership with other core partners in WorkSource Georgia—the state’s network of workforce agencies connected through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Further, Georgia has deliberately and strategically increased the geographic scope of its Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP). The financial and volunteer support provided to Georgia’s adult education students through this program is an essential supplement to reaching the goal of a fully literate Georgia.

State Leadership Funds

**(a) Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership Activities) for each of 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 high quality professional development programs 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).**

**National Initiatives**

The GOAE is actively engaged in contributing to, and remaining informed by, national priorities regarding adult education, policy regulations, and reporting requirements. The staff participates in national forums and professional associations to connect with adult education administrators and leaders from other states, share best practices, and contribute to conversations that inform policy makers. GOAE leadership and staff participated in the following events during FY 2016:

National Training Institute in Chicago, IL, November 3-5, 2015

The GOAE Assistant Commissioner and members of the leadership team attended the National Training Institute in November of 2015. The forum included elements of design thinking and focused planning with regard to WIOA, integrated education and training, and performance measurement. State staff participated in discussions regarding programmatic services for low-level learners, ELL students, and other populations under WIOA.

COABE, Dallas, TX, April 10-13, 2016

The GOAE Assistant Commissioner, along with members of the leadership team and staff attended the Commission on Adult Basic Education conference in Dallas, Texas in April. The conference offered a robust selection of workshops related to adult basic education instruction, career pathways, financial literacy programs, curriculum development and other topics. Topics included foci such as “WIOA and Career Pathways: Making an Action Plan,” and “Impact Teaching.” OAE staff obtained valuable information and contacts to broaden the professional development and technical assistance offered to local providers in the state of Georgia.

SETA, Myrtle Beach, SC, March 6-9, 2016

The GOAE Assistant Commissioner and staff attended the Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) conference in March. SETA offered an invaluable opportunity to connect with representatives from other core partners in the WIOA network, and to contribute to discussions regarding best practices in service delivery and policy frameworks. Workshops included topics such as “One-Stop Operation,” and “Work-Based Learning—Here to Stay.” OAE staff attended workshops related to WIOA implementation, One-Stop Center collaborations, and other areas related to the integration of WIOA-services at the state and local levels.

**Statewide Initiatives**

GOAE’s state professional development plan and technical assistance platform are based upon a statewide needs assessment. The GOAE provided responsive and content-relevant technical assistance and professional development to address the needs of programs, and to reinforce nationally-recognized best practices, including:

**Grant Compliance—Local Program Support**

A critical function of the GOAE is to provide support to the local programs through training and technical assistance related to the grant requirements. The primary responsibility for this training and technical assistance falls upon the IS Team. Throughout FY2015-2016, online training was available to local providers related to the Assessment Policy, NRS Foundations, NRS Updates and Reminders, and the Intake Assessment Form. Assessment training for BEST Plus and BEST Literacy was also provided. Face-to-face targeted training was provided to programs that fell in the lower quartile the prior FY and to other programs that identified a need for training. The team provided targeted technical assistance related to program performance, grant compliance, instructional quality, student assessment data collection and reporting, and recruitment/retention.

**Data Management**

Data quality continued to be a focus during FY2015-2016. A couple of changes to data collection practices included the requirement for local providers to enter attendance hours weekly at a minimum (prior requirement was monthly) and the addition of a block in the data management system, GALIS (Georgia Adult Learners Information System), which prohibits entry of assessment results prior to the minimum number of contact hours required by the assessment policy.

GOAE provided GALIS New User Training as requested by local programs. Additionally, the agency continued advanced training for local Data Managers via a two day training that covered exporting data to make Excel PivotTables and successful practices for local GALIS and data training. Two webinars provided local data managers the opportunity to present to their peers about (1) Data Checks and Balances and (2) Creating and Managing Classes in GALIS.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

The GOAE conducted continuous data monitoring, site visits and on-site program reviews to identify areas in which technical assistance was needed for program improvement. Specific attention was given to those programs with low performance; targeted technical assistance was provided to help improve program outcomes. Three methods were used to provide monitoring and evaluation of program improvement activities.

1. Monitoring Visits – IS team members established a monitoring schedule for all programs. Lower-performing programs experienced an increased number of visitations as compared to other programs. While making site-visits, team members met with program administrators and/or staff, observed classroom instruction, toured facilities, and met with stakeholders.
2. On-Site Program Reviews – GOAE continued its contract with the University of Georgia to provide logistical support and facilitation of the On-Site Program Review process. Five programs were identified from the state’s monitoring cycle schedule and were evaluated on the quality of instruction, adherence to policies and procedures, and the overall quality of program administration. A formal written report was provided, and each program was asked to respond to areas that needed improvement.
3. Mid-Year Program Performance Report – In January, GOAE provided a Mid-Year Performance and Comparison Report to each local program. The report included year-to-date performance for each of the core outcome measures as compared to the state average and the negotiated percentage. Comparisons to the prior year were given for NRS enrollment, state enrollment, and number of students with a post-test. Local programs were asked to develop written action plans to address areas in need of improvement.

**Technical Trainings for NRS and Assessment**

In addition to the technical training detailed previously, GOAE continued Technically Speaking, a series of teleconferences that allowed program administrators, ABE/ASE teachers, ESL & EL/Civics teachers and Data Managers an opportunity to present promising practices to their peers around the state, ask questions of each other, and share experiences. Eight unique teleconferences were held throughout the fiscal year. Some topics included, “Strengthening Relationships with WIOA Core Partners,” “Successful Classroom Management Strategies,” and “Innovative Ways to use Volunteers in the ESL and EL/Civics Classroom.”

**Combined Statewide Professional Development (Adult Educator, Program Leader and Program Staff)**

**2015 Adult Education Fall Conference**

The GOAE Fall conference is the largest professional development activity held in the state. The FY 16 conference included over 30 sessions that focused on math, reading, writing, science and social studies, as well as critical thinking and comprehension. Other tracks included topics that addressed classroom management, instructional planning, and student recruitment and retention. The conference also provided a Program Administrators track that included sessions focused on leadership, program improvement and recruiting and retention of students.

**EAGLE Leadership Event**

For over 20 years the EAGLE (Exceptional Adult Georgian in Literacy Education) Award program has honored adult education students who have excelled in their academic and personal pursuits. EAGLE delegates are selected through a statewide competition and are charged with representing and advocating for Adult Education across the state of Georgia.

**Adult Educator Professional Development**

**Adult Educator Institute Series**

Continuing to respond to the feedback of our statewide needs assessment, we once again delivered regional, face to face, two-day institutes that focused on instructional strategies, classroom activities and curriculum content with an emphasis on the College and Career Ready Standards. The institutes improved instructor competency in:

* Mathematical Reasoning: Critical Thinking and Mathematical Comprehension & Instructional Strategies for Engaging the Learner (2015 Fall)
* Science and Writing: Instructional Strategies for Engaging the Learner(2015 Fall)

**ESL and EL/Civics Fall and Spring Summits**

The 2015 Fall ESL and EL/Civics Summit provided professional development for over a 130 ESL and EL/Civics educators during two intensive days of speakers and workshops. The key note speaker, Edly Vliet (Community Relations Officer, from USCIS), shared the latest information relating to citizenship. Workshop topics included: Culturally Responsive Strategies for ESL Success in Reading and Writing; Guide to Communicative Practice: Classroom Activities to Increase Oral Fluency; and Five Components of Strategic Classroom Management in the Adult Education Environment.

This spring summit continued to provide professional development to instructors with workshops including: Developing Listening and Speaking Domains in Multi-level and Multi-language classrooms; Helping Students Build Strong Vocabulary Skills; and Strategies for Teaching Multi-level and Multi-cultural Classrooms.

**Spring Transitions Summit**

The Transition Summit was designed to bring Transition Specialists, Program Administrators and Adult Education staff members and core WIOA partners together in a two day intensive professional development summit. Sessions included an overview and training on:

* GED PathSource given by GED® Testing Service;
* Georgia BEST, a soft skills program designed and developed by the Georgia; Department of Labor (GDOL) in conjunction with Georgia business and industry; and
* A presentation by the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency.

**Standards in Adult Education Online Course**

WIOA requires the implementation of standards-based education and focus on college and career readiness standards. To that end, GOAE began a statewide rollout of foundational standards professional development by offering Unit One: Understanding the College and Career Readiness Standards, an online course that was developed and facilitated by the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL).

**Program Administrator Professional Development**

**FY 2016 Operations Meeting**

The Operations Meeting provided Program Administrators an overview of updated program policies and procedures, grant management expectations and instructional best practices for the upcoming year. The FY 16 session also focused on providing administrators with tools that increase professional effectiveness including a full day Time and Stress Management workshop.

**Quarterly Meetings with GOAE Leadership**

Program Administrators participate in quarterly meetings that provided governance and leadership support in the areas of program improvement, data management, and leadership development. The sessions included specific training in the area of student testing, database and records management, instructional leadership, and presentations on promising practices and national trends. In FY 16 a special session was added in the month of December to address the issue of low enrollment. Administrators were presented various enrollment best practices, asked to review their current recruitment and retention plans and implement 3 key strategies to increase enrollment. The IS team followed up with technical assistance as needed.

**Special Initiatives**

**Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP)**

With the Certified Literate Community Program, a community establishes an independent non-profit collaborative that mobilizes local resources to address the twin problems of limited funding and recruiting adult students in greater numbers. This business-education-government partnership makes literacy a community-wide commitment that has helped children, families and workers improve their literacy levels. The partnerships have resulted in successful public awareness campaigns and fund development. Eighty-seven counties and 2 cities have been certified by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia as CLCPs. Fifty counties and 1 city are CLCP Participants (first level of certification) and 37 counties and 1 city are Certified Literate Communities (second level of certification). CLCP participants are currently working towards a collective goal of serving 226,070 individuals. The Certified Literate Communities made the commitment to serve 202,477 and served 257,365 and continue to add to that number each year. Every CLC exceeded their goal and most did it in less than 10 years. Annually, CLCPs now secure over $2.4 million for their programs and an additional $2.4 million in in-kind resources. 2,293 CLCP volunteers donated 52,701 hours of service and 397 tutors provided 44,607 hours of volunteer tutoring. CLCPs sponsored over 302 literacy awareness events including 85 health literacy and 8 financial literacy awareness programs.

**Community Outreach Efforts**

In an effort to increase community support and advocacy for adult education, several projects are implemented on an annual basis. A Legislative Literacy Honor Roll recognized 10 congressional and state legislators for their work on behalf of literacy. A letter writing campaign resulted in 8,680 letters, the majority written by adult education students, to legislators about the role adult education plays in their lives, their local communities and the state. A Day at the Georgia State Capitol in February assembled together over 100 adult education advocates, providers and students to meet with legislators to discuss issues facing adult education. A CLCP Literacy Honor Roll recognized 14 literacy champions throughout the state. Four advocacy training workshops were presented.

**TCSG Spring Leadership Summit**

Program Administrators participated in the TCSG system-wide Spring Leadership Summit. This event provided an opportunity to network across TCSG as a whole, and to receive updates about the organization from senior leadership team members. In addition to the scheduled programming, breakout sessions and peer group meetings allowed the Program Administrators to focus on issues and receive updates from peers across the system-wide organization.

Performance Data Analyses

**Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based on 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.**

Georgia has steadily increased its overall educational gain benchmark performance over the last three years. In 2015-2016, 48% of local programs (15 of 31) met or exceeded the benchmarks in every educational functioning level where they reported students. Three additional programs met in all areas except one.

The GOAE honored local programs for achievements in a variety of areas, as a part of the Georgia Adult Education Fall Conference. Awards were presented to programs for meeting all educational gain benchmarks, growth in enrollment, highest number of students awarded citizenship, and the greatest use of volunteers.

**Improvement Plans**

In FY 2015-2016, two local programs were on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) due to noncompliance with some state and federal policies related to fiscal management. . In addition to the corrective action measures that were required, both of the programs went through a fiscal monitoring in the last quarter of the fiscal year.

As a result of missing a minimum of 50% of their educational targets for the prior fiscal year, ten programs were on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) during FY 2015-2016. In addition to submitting plans to improve performance, the programs had to identify a performance improvement team, identify reasons for prior low performance and develop actions to improve performance. Additionally, these programs were required to host a performance-related training by GOAE and submit quarterly updates.

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 Office of Adult Education provided guidance to local providers of adult education to ensure that Adult Education is appropriately represented on local workforce development boards, and engaged in local initiatives. The OAE provided technical assistance and guidance to ensure that local providers remained prepared to meet the need for adult education through collaborative efforts —such as provision of services at One-Stop Centers. A number of the state’s local programs contributed to collaborative efforts by providing services at local One-Stop Centers. Services included Adult Education intake/orientation, ABE/ASE instruction, and transition resources. GOAE also provided technical assistance to local Transition Specialists at local programs. The amount of funds being used to support activities and services through the One-Stop delivery system is unknown at this time because there is not an assigned project number to this activity. During this program year, the Adult Education local providers were not required to contribute to the cost of One-Stop Center infrastructure.

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 Sate to support IELCE programs.**

**\* Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirements to provide IELCE services in combination with the 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.**

The components of IELCE (e.g. the integration of workplace readiness and job training opportunities with English Literacy and Civics Education) were not required during this program year. Since the Office of Adult Education had not competed IELCE funds, we were not able to collect the data nor implement the requirements for an IELCE program. However, Adult Education local providers in Georgia were actively engaged in ongoing English Literacy/Civics (EL/Civics) education. EL/Civics funds were awarded to 15 adult education programs around the state that used the funds to provide quality instruction in English Literacy and citizenship skills. The grantees included nine technical colleges, three community-based organizations, one faith-based organization, and two school systems. Through these programs, 5,264 studentswere served for 12 or more hours in EL/Civics classes. OAE re-emphasized the importance of setting and tracking secondary measures, and the programs did their part. Programs reported that 2,286 students achieved citizenship skills, which is a 36% increase from last fiscal year. In addition, 125 students were reported as achieving U.S. Citizenship, which more than double the number reported last year.

GOAE provided assessment training for *BEST Plus* and *BEST Literacy*. This included:

* 4 BEST Plus Test Administrator sessions (6 hours each), 62 participants;
* 2 BEST Plus Scoring Refresher trainings (4 hours each), 14 participants; and
* 2 BEST Literacy Administration and Scoring trainings (3 hours each), 24 participants.

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**

The TCSG Office of Adult Education (TCSG OAE) adopted the OCTAE College and Career

Readiness Standards (CCRS). While the effective date for local providers to execute the standards was July 1, 2016, the Office of Adult Education expanded its knowledge of Standards-based curricula through participation in OCTAE’s Standards in Action implementation institutes which occurred from March through June of 2016. The institutes provided strategies and models for the assessment and integration of standards into the adult education classroom. The OAE led an exhaustive review process to ensure that these standards aligned with the GSE. From January 2016 to March 2016, the OAE conducted a review of CCRS and related research, followed by a review of Georgia Standards of Excellence from April 2016 to May 2016. These processes enabled OAE staff to identify alignment between the two sets of standards. Eligible providers will be required to implement the CCR standards to maximize the effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students for transition to post-secondary education and/or the workforce.

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.**

The *Report of the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform* (2015) documented Georgia’s recidivism rate at 27%. According to the report, the state has increased its efforts to address the efficacy of re-entry efforts and related services. With regard to the education of incarcerated individuals, it is notable that the Georgia Department of Corrections has a distinct and independently-funded education program for inmates. Additionally, Adult Education local providers support these efforts by offering classes in settings such as local jails, day reporting centers, and drug and alcohol centers.

Adult education services were provided to 3,444 students throughout the state. Approximately 50% of those enrolled completed an educational functioning level. Of the percentage of participants whose goal was to obtain a secondary credential, 86% achieved the goal. The percentage of program participants that achieved the goal of entering postsecondary education/training was 17%.

*The following prompt from the 2014-2015 NRS Narrative Report demonstrate the Georgia OAE’s efforts to meet key pieces of the WIOA legislation.*

Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies

**Describe your state’s policies related to how it awards a secondary school diploma or its equivalent to individuals who are no longer enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law. Include state recognized tests that are used to award the diploma as well as other criteria that may be recognized, such as competency-based or credit-based methods.**

The state of Georgia awards the General Educational Development (GED®) Diploma to students who have successfully passed all content areas of the GED® Test.