

Iowa Narrative Report 2015-2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)

I. STATE LEADERSHIP FUNDS

WIOA Title II established the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). Section 223(a) of the Act mandates that the eligible agency shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds for both required and optional activities for State leadership activities. The activities, programs, and projects supported with State Leadership funds described below are required and optional elements under AEFLA and have been aligned as indicated.

Alignment with One-Stop Required Partners

The Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) State Director and consultants worked closely with other one-stop required partners to develop and implement the strategies in Iowa's Unified State Plan. Representation on several key committees included: the **Association of Iowa Workforce Partners (AWIP); Career Pathways Consortium; Central Iowa Workforce Investment Board (CIWIB) Planning and Operations Board and Committees; Corrections Liaison Meetings; National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC); One-Stop Operations System Design Work Group Meeting; Sector Board and Career Pathway Advisory Council Meetings; Sector Facilitator Trainings; Skills 2 Compete Coalition;** and numerous **WIOA Steering and Sub-committees**. In these work groups, the State Director and state consultants assisted in drafting the common elements and AEL specific elements in the Unified State Plan which included the needs assessment and AEL strategy implementation plan; and addressed performance measures, strategies for working with under-served & under-employed populations, transitions, youth services, instructional technology, and one-stop system design.

WIOA Partners' Conference -- The Iowa Department of Education Adult Education and Literacy team assisted in planning Iowa's first joint Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) conference which was held on June 27 – 29, 2016 in Altoona, IA and attended by over 525 participants. The theme of this conference, "One Door, Many Paths," was based on the idea of integration, collaboration, and alignment and brought together several key stakeholders including: Iowa Department of Education, Division of Community Colleges; Iowa Department for the Blind; Vocational Rehabilitation; Iowa Workforce Development; and Iowa Department of Aging.

In addition to working closely with the core and required one-stop partners in the development and discussion associated with certification, common orientation and intake, and seamless service delivery the AEL team forged partnerships with organizations whose missions are aimed at improving the outcomes of underserved populations. Examples of these organizations and initiatives include: **Iowa Latina Education Initiative Conference; Iowa Literacy Council; OpportUNITY Iowa; Adult Education & Employment Readiness Workgroup; and Refugee Employment Alliance.**

Operation of a High Quality Professional Development Program

The **State Staff Development Leadership Project** is designed to fund and coordinate state level

staff development activities within Section 223(a) of the Act based on one or more of the State Leadership activities focusing on the following areas: (1) Core measure attainment, (2) Quality program instruction, (3) Data accountability and integrity, and (4) Strengthening program delivery methods.

The impact of professional development on instruction and adult learner outcomes is evaluated against the following criteria:

- State-wide implementation, adoption, and diffusion into adult education and literacy instructional strategies, methodologies, and curriculum infusion.
- Long-term improvement in program outcomes measured by the state and local programs' ability to continually meet negotiated benchmark levels.
- Adult learner assistance to effectively meet personal and program literacy goals.

Iowa's professional development system is coordinated by the state professional development specialist, who works with a team made up of administrators, instructors, and trainers from each funded program that establishes the **Adult Literacy Professional Development Leadership Committee**. A data-driven planning process is used to identify professional development needs and to set priorities for each year. Emphasis is given in a number of key areas, including literacy, math, and English language instruction; assessment; educational technology; learning disabilities; and distance learning.

There were additional areas that were not required (**Permissible Activities**) but were prioritized and funded in PY 2016 to support efforts in developing high quality instructors:

- 1) **Standards-In-Action 2.0** - The first area focused on the Standards-in-Action (SIA) materials and methods to support the implementation of content standards in adult education classrooms. Building upon the Standards-in-Action 1.0 training offered in PY 2013-2015, instructors were taught how to use the standards to design curriculum and lessons that transferred the content of the standards to the students. The Standards-in-Action structure was a natural fit to address the unpacking of the CCRS and to begin addressing implementation. The three institutes served fourteen participants and were held in Des Moines IA on 10/20-21/2015; Ankeny, IA on 3/2/2016; and Des Moines on 4/21-22/2016. Additionally, webinars were offered to programs to supplement the Standards-in-Action training by providing an alternative delivery to target additional instructors. See Adult Education Standards for additional details.
- 2) **Student Achievement in Reading (STAR)** - The second targeted area was the expansion of STAR. PY 2016 focused upon training two state STAR trainers for certification, with four programs accepted to be the recipients of the training via trainers-in-training and a national mentor coach provided by KRATOS, through a coaching package purchased by the state. Through this endeavor, our STAR sites are helping to promote not only additional evidence based reading instruction, assessment methods, but also a managed enrollment class structure. The additional diagnostic assessment tools and reading strategies for this population will greatly aid the instruction in achieving educational functioning level gains. There were a total of fifteen participants from PY 2016's four programs (NWICC, Indian Hills, WITCC and ICC). The three institutes were hosted in Des Moines on 10/1-2/2015,

11/12-13/2015 and 3/31/2016-4/1/2016.

- 3) Adult Numeracy Institute (ANI)** – Due to CCR Standards in Mathematics and increased rigor in the high school equivalency assessment, the need to address the math skills of instructors was identified as a high priority in PY 2016. ANI aligns standards while introducing throughout every level key mathematical concepts, including algebra and geometry. The goals of ANI were to increase math content knowledge among instructors and program administrators; increase instructional skills among instructors working with adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) levels; increase knowledge and use of math content standards; and build local program and state capacity to support adult numeracy instruction. The three institutes served 30 participants and were hosted in Des Moines on 9/10-11/2015, 11/9-10/2015, and 3/7-8/2016.

To effectively implement the administrative rules and instructor standards, Iowa implemented **My Learning Plan (MLP)**, a web-based professional development platform to capture, track and report individual professional development plans for all staff, hours of training and classroom observations. This professional development platform includes the capability of registering for professional development events both at the state and local level through an online system that tracks needs and effectiveness of delivery. The classroom observation tool includes the delivery of standards based instruction, technology and alignment with the instructor standards. Adult Education and Literacy consultants worked with program administrators in piloting MLP training prior to full on-boarding. By the end of PY 2016, 60 percent of Iowa’s AEL programs have been trained and implemented the system. In addition to the training provided for instructors, AEL consultants provided on-site professional development training specifically tailored to the needs of the program administrators.

State Leadership Activity(s): (1) the establishment or operation of professional development programs to improve the quality of instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under Section 231(b), including instruction incorporating phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension, and instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel of a state or outlying area; (8) other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of this title.

Provision of Technical Assistance as Described in 223(1)(C)

In addition, state leadership continues to fund the following activities and initiatives:

A full day of **New Program Coordinator Training** was held on August 20, 2015. Topics included program targets, financial claims, data management, program monitoring, and the transition to WIOA. Additionally, regular coordinator meetings and data specialist trainings were also held online and face-to-face throughout the year as well that provided technical assistance on topics such as enrollments; reviewing the AEFLA applications, forms, and submission guidelines; assessment policies; financial reporting; fiscal reporting; developing budgets, claims, the RFP process; retention of students; strategic planning; and Iowagrants.gov. Two handbooks produced by the state includes a Coordinator Handbook and an Instructor Handbook to serve as guidelines to drive high quality professional development for all staff associated with adult education and literacy in Iowa.

State Leadership Activity(s): (3) the provision of technology assistance, including staff training,

to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities to enable the eligible providers to improve the quality of such activities;

Continuing in PY 2016 was professional development aimed at expanding the work of **Career Pathways** through the offering of three trainings on integrating career pathways with state funded initiatives - Pace and GAP programs. Additional work in career pathway and bridging programs was delivered through study circles and focused webinars with *Moving Pathways Forward*.

WIOA focused technical assistance involving the core partners was held in Des Moines on September 10, 2015 to develop an Action Plan to implement the **WIOA Partnership at the Local Level**. Core partners reviewed the WIOA partnership requirements and translated them into immediate and near-term, tangible action steps for local implementation.

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Summer Conference -- The Professional Development Leadership Committee also assists in planning the annual Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Summer Conference, which for PY 2016 was held on July 15-17, 2015 in Ames, IA. The “Kaleidoscope Connections” conference was hosted by the Iowa Department of Education in conjunction with the Commission on Adult Basic Education serving approximately 300 participants. The theme, “Kaleidoscope of Collaboration,” was based on the idea of providing an environment where conference participants could establish new relationships or rekindle existing friendships while gathering new ideas from colleagues and launching a “new beginning” of service delivery by “blending” together and partnering our services through collaboration to best meet the needs of those we serve.

State Leadership Activity(s): (10) integration of literacy instruction and occupational skill training, and promoting linkages with employers.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Quality and Improvement of Adult Education 223(1)(d)

Monitoring Visits to Colleges – The Adult Education and Literacy State Director and consultants monitored community college programs from September 2015 through April 2016. These included five on-site visits (Iowa Central Community College, 9/15/2015; Iowa Western Community College, 10/22/2015; Indian Hills Community College, 11/4/2015; Northeast Iowa Community College, 3/23/2016; and Iowa Lakes Community College, 4/5/2016). The remaining ten programs received desktop monitoring. All five on-site monitoring visits included an option for community colleges to have a peer reviewer to observe their programs in addition to state adult education and literacy staff. The monitoring tool used for both site and desktop monitoring events addresses data collection, instructional practice, benchmark gains, curriculum and lesson plan development, assessment practices, and fiscal management.

State Leadership Activity(s): (5) the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and improvement in, adult education and literacy activities;

Future Direction in PY 2017

Training will continue targeting specific evidence based reading strategies for low level English Language Learners (ELL) - **Diagnostics Training for Alphabetics and Vocabulary** to show instructors how to use a diagnostic assessment to identify specific reading skill deficiencies and guide explicit instruction for individuals whose reading assessments score below the 4th grade level. Additionally, **Diagnostics Training for Fluency and Comprehension** will be offered for

those readers who test above the 8th grade level and who are not yet prepared for career or college reading tasks.

The focus on standards supported instruction, **College and Career Readiness Standards** training, will be offered in both English Language Arts (ELA), English as a Second Language (ESL) and Mathematics. The goal of these training institutes will be to help instructors understand the fundamental advances in instruction that the CCR standards demand. Hands-on training expert support on ways to incorporate these advances will be offered. Instructors will receive practical information (methods and materials) about the CCR standards with a strong focus on the key advances in instruction and curriculum that the standards demand.

My Learning Plan (MLP) on-site trainings will be offered to the six remaining programs that have not yet received this instruction. Furthermore, training will be expanded to include adult education instructors working in the Department of Corrections. Additionally, the system's classroom observation tracking tool will be developed, piloted and on boarded throughout the year.

A **Virtual Conference** will be piloted that incorporates and encourages the use of technology into the classroom will be planned for PY 2017. Part-time instructors will be targeted to attend this event to increase access and sharing of best practices.

II. PERFORMANCE DATA ANALYSES

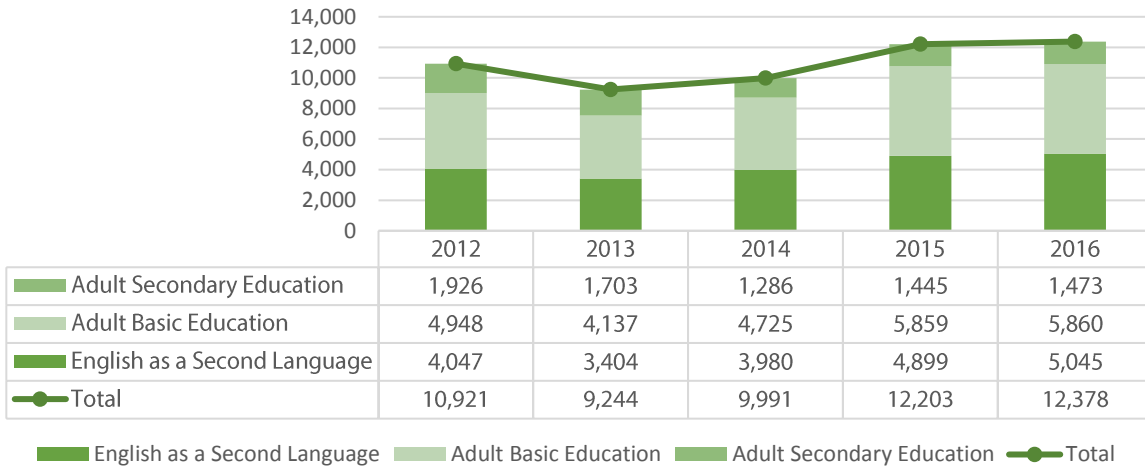
PY 2016 indicated that the typical adult education and literacy student served was unemployed, white, averaging 25-44 years of age, with the highest year of school completed 9-12th grade without a high school diploma.

Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy Enrollment

Enrollment increased in the number of reportable adult learners (n=12,378) for PY 2016 as compared to PY 2015 (n=12,203). Of the total number of learners (12,378) that met the NRS guidelines, students in Adult Basic Education (ABE) comprised the single largest group by program type with 47 percent (n=5,860) of the total learners served. Students enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) increased slightly to 41 percent (n=5,045) enrolled and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) remained at 12 percent (n=1,473) enrolled.

Student retention is critical to the process of accessing progress. Persistence and sufficient hours has improved again from PY 2015 67 percent. In PY 2016, 71 percent (12,378) of the 17,502 enrollees persisted for a minimum of 12 or more hours of instruction. Average hours of instruction for the 12,378 enrollees federally reported remained the same as PY 2015 at 87 hours. ESL averaged the highest with 97 while ASE level enrollees only averaged 62 hours. ABE increased from 83 to 85 over the previous program year; ASE decreased from 68 to 62 and ESL remained the same.

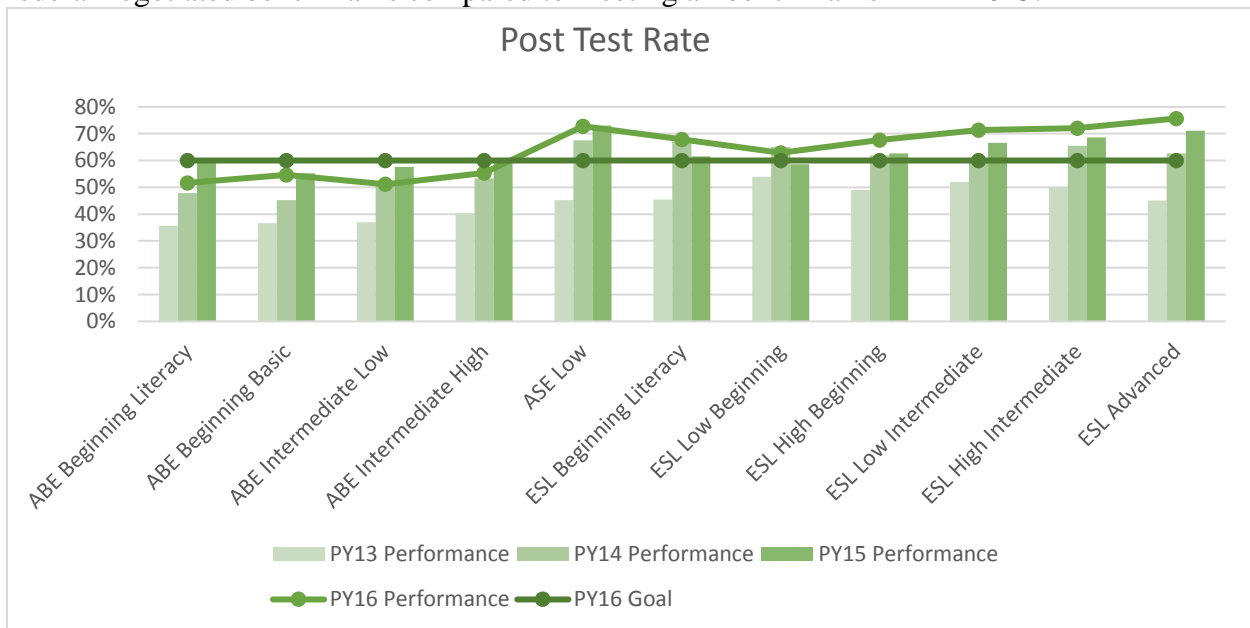
Enrollment Comparison PY 2012 to PY 2016



Iowa utilizes a data match process to determine if performance targets have been met for the follow-up core measures. Achieving educational functioning level (EFL) gains has been an area of increased focus in PY 2016.

Performance Measure I – Demonstrated Improvements in EFL

Iowa’s aggregate pre/post test match remained the same at 63 percent in PY 2016. Of the 12,378 eligible participants, 7,773 were pre and post tested. Of those pre and post tested, 70 percent (5,453) made an educational functioning level gain. In PY 2016 Iowa met seven of the eleven federal negotiated benchmarks compared to meeting all benchmarks in PY 2015.



Performance Measure II – High School Completion

Iowa issued 1,866 high school equivalence diplomas between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

The HiSET® replaced the GED® in January 2014. To qualify for the cohort, the participant must have completed all five sub-tests, have a qualified enrollment of 11th or 12th grade, and have exited from the program. The eligible cohort consisted of 1,925 participants of which (1,866) 97 percent were matched as having achieved their high school equivalence diploma.

Performance Measure III – Entered Postsecondary Education or Training

In this measure the participant must have achieved their High School Equivalency Diploma while enrolled in adult education and literacy programs or have a secondary credential at entry, and exit the program. The participant must then enroll in a transition or postsecondary course or a training program within the program year. In PY 2016, there were 2,416 participants eligible for this cohort. With an 87 percent match rate, 1,728 (82 percent) entered postsecondary education or training.

Performance Measure IV – Entered Employment

Upon enrollment in adult education and literacy programs, participants are required to indicate employment status. Of the 12,378 participants reported in the NRS, 2,106 were not seeking employment. Forty-two percent of the remaining enrollees self-reported as unemployed. To qualify for follow-up within this cohort to NRS, a participant must also exit the program, either by completing instruction or no longer participating. There were 3,445 participants that qualified for consideration in this cohort. Iowa participates as a data match state by partnering with Iowa Workforce Development for employment wage information. Twenty-one percent of the cohort was not able to be matched due to missing data. However, of the 79 percent that was matched, 1,365 participants were identified as achieving employment within one quarter of exiting the adult education and literacy program.

Performance Measure V – Retained Employment

In PY 2016, 5,102 of the 12,378 participants in the adult education and literacy program, as reported to NRS, self-identified as employed. To qualify for follow-up within this cohort to NRS, a participant must also exit the program, either by completing instruction or no longer participating. In addition, all successfully employed participants from the entered employment cohort (1365) are added. Therefore, 4,205 participants qualified for consideration in this cohort. With an 86.7 percent match rate, 3,162 (86.7 percent) participants retained their employment three quarters later after their exit from the adult education and literacy program.

Future Directions in PY 2017

Iowa will continue to meet EFL benchmarks while maintaining a 60% post-test rate. Collaboration through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will support referrals and alignment of activities to support the core measures.

III. INTEGRATION WITH ONE-STOP PARTNERS

The integration to improve access to comprehensive services and to enhance and streamline career services has been advanced through the cooperation, collaboration, and coordination of efforts among the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and Iowa Department for the Blind to establish common goals and objectives. While the local workforce development boards have not conducted the selection of a one-stop operator and are still in the process of becoming WIOA compliant boards, the state has

maintained the responsibilities as the local one-stop partner in the majority of the local areas. Delegation has been only done in areas in which the boards are fully WIOA compliant.

By using the Department of Labor, Education and Training Administrations, WIOA Quick Start Action Planner throughout the past two program years, local adult education and literacy programs have been able to track progress in implementing strategies to address implementation in policy, alignment and service delivery. These areas of action have been used to help guide the state and local programs plan technical assistance and continuous quality improvement.

The AEL programs are currently engaged in creating stronger and renewed partnerships for program alignment including intake, case management, and data system integration between partners to allow for more efficient access to high-quality career services, education and training supportive services for those with the greatest barriers to employment. One challenge that has become a priority is the multiple MIS systems in place which do not interact cohesively with other systems and prevent an organized review of on-going assistance and progress. Programs are working to be more effective in the future, as they work to develop a more formal referral system which builds on the excellent partnerships that exist allowing for better documentation and tracking of educational and employment successes.

The Local Service Plan (LSP), a Service Agreement and the Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) between core and regional partners identifying infrastructure costs is still under development. Career service deliverables vary between regions and among partners. The service agreement process, both for the LSP and MOU is being used to discern what services and what deliverables will available by location (One-Stop Comprehensive Center or affiliated site), who is responsible for the action and what costs will be associated with the service. While not all of the comprehensive career services listed under WIOA are actively available, each region under the direction of their local workforce development board and as part of the One-Stop System Certification is working toward identifying gaps and implementing the services needed to fulfill the requirement of a comprehensive and seamless one-stop customer experience.

Future Direction in PY 2017

With the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), greater alignment and engagement of the core partners is occurring. Integrated educational training activities, career pathways, sector partnerships and Iowa's Unified State Plan continue to assist in collaboration and integration. More work is still needed across agencies as we continue integrating adult education with the One-Stops.

IV. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY/CIVICS EDUCATION (IELCE) PROGRAM

During PY 2016, English as a second language (ESL) enrollment consisted of 5,405 (41 percent) of AEFLA enrolled participants. As a result of continuous growth, programs have used the majority of allocated IELCE funds to increase access and effectiveness of literacy, English language acquisition (ELA) and civics education instruction. To achieve this the state and local programs have hired staff aimed to support the integration of civics education with English literacy. While Iowa has not conducted a competition for funds received under Section 243, the currently (15) funded programs covering all areas of our state are in the process of transitioning to the requirements of IELCE as defined by WIOA.

Pilots of Integrated Education and Training has been conducted in two programs targeting the specific workforce needs as identified through sector partnerships, Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing. One of the pilots included ELA, workforce preparation and training certification as a CNC machinist. Experiences during the pilots is guiding the development of additional technical assistance, tools and worksheets to solidify effective implementation of IELCE.

To ensure that the IELCE is aligned with self-sustaining employment opportunities, the state and local programs have partnered in the development of regional sector partnerships. These partnerships are recognized as an effective method for aligning education, economic, and workforce development systems to address industry-identified labor market needs. One deliverable from the sector partnership should include a career pathway with defined entry and exit points for adults and ESL participants. Adult education will continue to support and partner with others to promote the inclusion of ELA participants as IELCE is expanded in the state.

Future Direction in PY 2017

Iowa will to continue to offer technical assistance and guidance documents will be provided to aid in building effective IELCE activities and services to providers. Best practices will be shared and experiences related to the piloting will be used to build upon. Iowa's competition will require evidence of all IELCE elements in each provider's application.

V. ADULT EDUCATION STANDARDS

In 2010, Iowa adopted the Common Core State Standards (Iowa Core Standards) for K-12, which were articulated vertically through all grade levels. Additionally, all of Iowa's federally funded adult education programs are required to institute the College and Career Readiness Standards, as per Iowa's administrative rule 23.7(1) adopted January 14, 2015:

23.7(1)(c) Appropriate reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training practices aligned with content standards for adult education.

Adult Education Standards - The first initiative focused on the unpacking of the standards through **Standards-in-Action (SIA)**. SIA in PY 2013-2015 and then SIA 2.0 in PY 2016 included materials and methods to support the implementation of content standards in adult education classrooms. The Standards-in-Action structure was a natural fit to address the unpacking of the CCRS and to begin addressing implementation. Additionally, webinars were offered to programs to supplement the Standards-in-Action training by providing an alternative delivery to target additional instructors.

Implementing College and Career Readiness Standards and the need to address standards based instruction was seen as an imperative for Iowa's adult education and literacy programs. A team of adult education and literacy consultants and instructors attended the **CCR Standards Implementation Institute** in Dallas on March 22-23, 2016 and Nashville on April 27-28, 2016. The institute aimed to provide an opportunity for participants to delve deeply into the contents of the college and career readiness (CCR) standards in literacy and mathematics and their implications for adult education.

Participants were given hands-on opportunities to use the key advances to transform curriculum and instruction. The same team of instructors and consultants presented a session at the WIOA

Partners' Conference in June of 2016 where they replicated institute activities and shared their learning experiences, resources, and materials with other conference attendees. These same instructors have agreed to be table coaches when the CCR standards training is brought to Iowa in PY 2017.

Future Direction in PY 2017

To continue building on the implementation of standards based instruction and designing units of instruction, additional CCR Standards training in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and possibly ESL will be offered in Des Moines for instructors to attend. Best practices will be identified in the next year and highlighted. In addition, a sharing method for developed and vetted lesson plans will be explored to reduce the need to re-invent or duplicate efforts.

VI. PROGRAMS FOR CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND THE EDUCATION OF OTHER INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) has developed standard definitions of performance measures which Iowa's Department of Corrections follows when reporting data, which includes the measure of tracking recidivism rates. A benefit of using this standardized method allows states adopting these measures to compare their performance with similar states, and set benchmarks for improvement. ASCA has defined a measure of recidivism -- the return rate to prison -- which describes the percent of offenders released from prison who return within three years. The releases tracked are paroles, discharges due to end of sentence, and sex offender releases to special sentence supervision. The recidivism rate may be further defined by the reason for the prison return: new convictions with sentences to prison; and technical returns. The FY 2014 (October 1, 2013-September 30, 2014) reporting year describes recidivism for offenders leaving prison in FY 2011 and tracked 3,917 offenders and found 728 (18.6 percent) returned to prison due to new conviction and 435 (11.1 percent) returned to prison for technical reasons. This totals a 29.7 percent recidivism rate for Iowa.

Future Direction in PY 2017

While Iowa has the capability to track a three year return rate, the release dates for adult education participants has not been tracked in the data management system resulting in some adjustments being made to better identify from the cohort those individuals served. This will result in being able to track a subset of the recidivism rate inclusive of the 1,669 reported correctional AEL participants those that meet the requirement of discharge and release their return to prison rate effective in PY 2017.