**North Carolina (NC)**

2015 – 2016 Narrative Report

1. **State Leadership Activities**

During 2015-2016, NC System office analyzed organizational capacity to meet new expectations and requirements of WIOA legislation. We restructured and organized into three teams: 1. Professional Development and Instructional Support 2. Compliance and Partnership Development 3. Performance Accountability and Performance Measures. Subject matter experts in English language learning, reading instruction, serving adults with disabilities, and career pathways report to the team leads.

The teams work collaboratively to plan and implement required and permissible activities. The main areas of focus for activities performed for 2015-2016 program year fall into four categories: Transition to WIOA, Program Development, Instruction, Data Quality and Performance and Core Credential for Adult Education Instructors.

**Professional Development and Technical Assistance**

**Transition to WIOA**

The central theme was on unpacking WIOA requirements as they relate to program practice and performance. The following activities were implemented.

* 5 WIOA Transition Local Plan Application Training
* Weekly WIOA Webinars from August – December 2015
* 2 regional Sessions - WIOA Update – Program Practices
* Career Pathways – site visits and conference sessions on the nuts and bolts of career pathways
* Basic Skills Plus – training was provided NC community college tuition waiver program for students enrolled in IET.

**Program Development**

* Two state conferences focused on improving retention and using data to inform program policy.
* Regional trainings provided an understanding of performance data and how instructors can use data to manage their classes.
* Director’s Institute

**Research-based Instruction**

The focus for training centered around contextualized instruction and serving students at the lowest levels of literacy. In addition, training was provided on creating career pathways for students with disabilities.

* Regional workshop on serving students with disabilities and student at the lowest level of literacy
* Webinars on best practices for Integrated Education and Training pathways for low literacy level adults
* 12 regional workshops on how to contextualize instruction
* Career Infused lessons – Regional training on integrating career awareness into the ABE classroom
* STAR Research based reading instruction – Essential Components of Reading

**Data Quality and Performance Technical Assistance**

The focus has been on providing general webinars on collecting and entering data and specific site visits on assisting program in the analysis of data for information program practice. We leveraged a state wide initiative, NC Performance Summit, to assist programs with specific metrics and training.

* NC System-wide Performance Summit
* Western Region Workshop – Data Quality (13 programs)
* Central Region Workshop (10 programs)

**Core Credentials for Adult Education Instruction**

The College and Career Readiness section, in partnership with our training providers, Appalachian State University, Motheread, Inc., and several community college and community-based organization faculty, continues to provide a high quality credentialing system for our local instructors. In its fourth year of implementation, the system has awarded 398 NC Community College System Office credentials in 2015-2016.

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| Number | Credential |
| 156 | CORE |
| 42 | ASE General |
| 9 | ASE Language Arts/ Social Studies |
| 41 | ESOL |
| 60 | STAR (Student Achievement in Reading) |
| Summary | |
| A total of 2,385 individuals completed CEU-bearing courses. They represented 55 community college providers, and all 18 of the Title II- funded CBOs. The total rating in response to the prompt " the information from this course will improve instruction when implemented in the classroom" was 5.85 on a Likert scale with the number 6 indicating "strongly agree." The average rating per specific course ranged from 5.96 to 5.80. | |

**Program Monitoring (2015-2016)**

System Office staff conducted on-site program monitoring visits at fifteen local providers located throughout the state. This sampling represents twenty percent of our overall providers. All monitoring visits were based and evaluated on the required thirteen considerations. The visits focused on three main areas: program management, adult literacy instruction, and data quality and evaluation. Copies of the program monitoring reports are on file at the System Office along with any Corrective Action Plans that were required.

In addition to onsite monitoring, System Office staff also monitor program accountability through annual desktop monitoring reports and quarterly interim reports. These reports offer local programs insight that may be used to improve performance throughout the year or to generate change at the start of a new program year. The reports also allow System Office staff to conduct red flag monitoring and technical assistance for programs who show poor performance on either a quarterly or yearly basis.

**2. Performance Data Analysis**

* 70,701 students were served in Basic Skills in 2014-2015. This is a decrease of 6,382 students or 8% from 2013-2014.
* 37,941 students were served in ABE, a decrease of 5,228 students or 12% from 2013-2014.
* 11,012 students were served in ASE, a decrease of 994 students or 8% from 2013-2014.
* 21,757 students were served in ESL, a decrease of 160 students or 1% from 2013-2014.

While the decrease in students is not as pronounced in 2015-16 as it was in 2016-17, this decrease indicates that North Carolina needs to continue to focus on student retention, increase student outreach and recruitment strategies. The most substantial change was in the ABE/ASE program areas, with the least amount of change in ESL.

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| **Federal Core Indicators** | **Projected Outcome Measures (Targets)** | **2015-2016 Outcomes** |
| **Indicator #1: Demonstrated Improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.** | **31%** of beginning literacy learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **20%** completed |
| **40%** of beginning ABE learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **36%** completed |
| **41%** of low intermediate ABE learners will acquire the level of basic skill needed to complete the EFL. | **35%** completed |
| **39%** of high intermediate ABE learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **34%** completed |
| **34%** of Low Adult Secondary learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **35%** completed |
| **40%** of ESL literacy learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **37%** completed |
| **47%** of low beginning ESL learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **40%** completed |
| **46%** of high beginning ESL learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **41%** completed |
| **37%** of low intermediate ESL learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **34%** completed |
| **34%** of high intermediate ESL learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **33%** completed |
| **22%** of advanced ESL learners will acquire the level of basic skills needed to complete the EFL. | **21%** completed |
| **Indicator #2:**  **Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.** | **36**% of adult learners who exit the program during the current program year after either (1) obtaining a high school equivalency (HSE), or (2) have an HSE upon entry, or are enrolled in a transition program will transition into postsecondary education | **26%** Enrolled in postsecondary Ed |
| % of adult learners who exit the program during the prior program year after either (1) obtaining a high school equivalency (HSE), or (2) have an HSE upon entry, or are enrolled in a transition program will transition into postsecondary education. | **36%** Enrolled in postsecondary ed |
| **41%** of unemployed adult learners enrolled, who are in the workforce, will obtain employment by the end of the first quarter after the program exit. | **40%** attained employment |
| **63%** of adult learners who either enter the program employed or successfully achieve employment after exit will be retained on the job or advance on the job 3 quarters after exit. | **57%** retained employment |
| **Indicator 3:**  **Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.** | **90%** of adult learners who either take all components of their HSE test or are enrolled in adult high school programs with an entry level of ASE Low of High will earn a diploma or its equivalent. | **82%** earned a high school diploma or its equivalent |

In 2015-16, North Carolina met one of the outcome measures for progressing students from one educational functioning level (EFL) to the next, Low Adult Secondary Education. In two EFL’s, the state fell short by only 1% from the target. From 2014-15, North Carolina showed an increase in performance in all EFL’s from 2014-15. There is still work to be done in educational gains as evidenced by the number of targets the state did not reach this year.

North Carolina began a data initiative in 2012, in which the mission was to look at the data being collected and improve the data quality through extensive validations with programs, trainings, and in some cases new programming in the state MIS. The work of the group, that was comprised of both local program experts and state level staff, was completed in 2014 with the last programming change coming out in early 2015. As we hypothesized in 2012-13, the level completions would increase over the next 3 – 5 years. While there was a drop in some EFL’s in the 2014-15 program year, the rates for most EFL’s have increased back to or surpassing where they were in 2013-14. In 2016, the state has put even more focus on the importance of meeting the federal measures; and thus look forward to seeing the impact this will have on the next several years of outcomes.

In 2015-16, North Carolina did not meet any of the follow up outcome targets. From the 2014-2015 to the 2015-2016 program year, North Carolina increased in the Entered Employment follow-up outcome (35% to 40%). The Retained Employment and Entered Postsecondary Education or Training for the current year measures each went down 2%. The Entered Postsecondary Education or Training for the prior year cohort went down, but only by 1%. The most notable difference between 2014-15 and 2015-16 was in the Obtained a High School Equivalency, and further disaggregation of the data found that the decline was in our correctional students. Due to circumstances out of our control, there were six months between the time the Transfer Waiver Program of the GED 2002 series ending and HiSET testing began in prisons. Thus we had a full 6 months (January – June 2016) in which no correctional education students could take HSE tests. Pass rates for the 2014 series GED as well as HiSET show NC to be at or surpassing national pass rates. Preliminary reports of correctional testing using HiSET in the last half of 2016, show an increase in pass rates by about 10%.

**3. Integration with One-stop Partners**

NC Works Centers (One-Stop Centers) play an integral and multi-faceted role in delivery of services. This year we focused on becoming familiar with functions and operations of the 23 Workforce Development Boards and the operation of the NC Works Centers. We established a working relationship with state Workforce Development Board leadership. Currently, providers work with their NC Works Centers by having services provided at centers by the provider and or through a referral system. The most common services provided are literacy and numeracy assessment and advising on transition to education and training.  With a total of 77 Title II providers working across the 23 workforce regions, there are numerous opportunities for program and outcome alignment as well as collaboration and resource enhancement.

**4. Integrated English Literacy/Civics Education**

North Carolina was awarded a total of $1,103,764 to conduct Integrated English Literacy/Civics Education activities. For the 2015-2016 transition program year, North Carolina did not hold an open application process, but continued funding to the colleges and community-based organizations which received funding in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. As part of the 2015 application process, eligible providers updated their current plan and responded to specific Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) transitional planning strategies. All thirty-three current providers submitted continuation plans and were approved by the NC State Board of Community Colleges on July 17, 2015.

Below are responses how North Carolina used funds to support activities under Section 243:

**IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training**:

* Providers transitioned from English language acquisition classes with primarily civics education and citizenship content to program models that focused on integrated education and training and career pathways. Providers began to identify the in-demand industries in their metro and regional areas and some programs began to develop contextualized lesson plans and new curriculum for the identified occupational and career areas. Providers developed:
  + ESL Career and College Readiness Academy modules for NRS levels 2, 3, and 4 that assisted students with college/career planning, advising, and training in technology.
  + Bridge to STEM for ESL learners for NRS level 6 that prepared students for credit bearing courses and certificate programs
  + Half of the programs revised their intake protocol to include an advising or career coaching component. For some programs, a transition specialist was part of the intake re-design. An intentional intake process was designed to more accurately assess the true skills, knowledge, and abilities of the students.
  + Manufacturing vocabulary lessons that supported the attainment of the Manufacturing Certificate for the local industry. Another program engaged in an entrepreneurial project to assist students who wished to start their own small businesses.
  + New relationships with internal and external partners, including human resource development, that assisted with employability skills training, volunteer and pre-apprenticeship opportunities, and other support and training resources.
  + Enhanced curriculum that included digital literacy skills, interviewing skills, resume writing, occupational exploration and the navigation of related websites, workplace skills and “soft” skills training, Integrated Career Awareness curriculum, Career Readiness Certificate training, and more.

**Progression towards preparing and placing IELCE students in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and performance results, challenges, and lessons learned**:

* Providers made steps in researching local industries and their specific training and education associated with the respective in-demand field of employment. Providers recognized some basic and immediate challenges and re-tooled instruction that aligned with the needs of the employer and with the gaps in preparation of the student.

**Progression towards ensuring IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system and any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned**:

* Almost all providers became active partners with their job center network, NC Works Career Center. On-site classes were created at the NC Works Center and/or students registered and regularly visited there. Some performance outcomes include the development of a workshop on the job center, revised curriculum including the NC Career Clusters, and developed lessons on Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success.

NC Adult Content Standards

In 2007, North Carolina began developing their own set of adult content standards. In 2013, the NC Content Standards were aligned with the College and Career Readiness Adult Education Content Standards from the Office of Career and Technical Adult Education (OCTAE).

The following events occurred during 2015-2016 to support and ensure that the NCAES are implemented in all adult literacy instruction:

* All colleges and community based organizations have copies of the NCAES either by hardcopy or on CD
* Provided various on-site technical assistance visits to local providers as requested
* Made presentation at the Director’s Institute in October 2015 at the North Carolina Community College System Conference
* Continue to revise the NCAES learning activities to include content that implements contextualized instruction
* All CORE & ASE Courses stress the importance of implementing the NCAES in all levels of instruction
* All sixteen of the face-to-face monitoring visits were evaluated on the implementation of the NCAES

Programs for Corrections Education and Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals

Officially NC Department of Public Safety does not calculate recidivism rates. It’s statutorily required of the NC Sentencing Commission, NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission. However, we have been in communication with NC Department of Public Safety to ascertain if they can get data on recidivism rates for participants who attended Basic Skills instruction. They agreed to research ways to calculate a return-to-prison rates on inmates who participated in Basic Skills.