**Wyoming Narrative Report 2015-16**

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

(a) Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership activities) for each the following required activities:

*•* ***Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Unified or Combined State Plan as described in section 223(1)(a).***

Wyoming Adult Education (AE), Workforce Services and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) sent staff to the National Convening in January 2016. Planning and writing for the State Unified Plan had begun in October 2015 but the National Convening gave the team guidance on what to include in the plan. The Governor’s Vision, Goals and Strategies were incorporated in March, 2016 just before the State Unified Plan was due.

AE offered our local providers training on Career Pathways. Though an invitation went out to Workforce Services and VR staff at both the state and local levels to join the training, only AE providers attended. We used this training as a State AE certification in Career Pathways for our centers. The training consisted of: 1) Career Pathway Gap Analysis to be completed by the local Workforce Advisory Group (WAG), 2) a case study which followed a student/participant through the continuum of services ending with postsecondary education or skills training or employment and 3) the creation of a Sustainability Plan.

Early in the year we established the Workforce Advisory Groups (WAGs) with membership similar to a Local Workforce Investment Board but acting in an advisory capacity only. These groups began with core partner representation but several service areas grew to include economic development groups, creating stronger teams. The WAGs are being discussed at the Workforce Development Council level regarding how to best utilize them.

Multiple partnership meetings occurred during the 2015-16 grant year to build relationships with our partners and discuss common intake and strategies from the Unified State Plan. Little progress has been accomplished on the implementation since Workforce Services is waiting for guidance from USDOL before moving forward. The State’s “Local Plan” has not been written nor have any meetings occurred to take the Governor’s Vision, Goals and Strategies operationalize at the time of writing this report.

The common intake has moved forward with the aid of a grant recently obtained by the Department of Workforce Services. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is currently being written with the hope of a January 2017 release date.

***• Establishment or operation of a high quality professional development program(s) as described in section 223(1)(b).***

Professional Development (PD) is a joint effort between the AE State Office and the local providers. In a small state the funding is limited for PD. The Wyoming Association of Lifelong Learning coordinated training with Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) to bring in nationally known trainers in math and reading through the western region LINCS project: standards trainer, Meryl Becker-Prezocki; Career Pathways expert Jeff Fantine who utilized the Career Pathways Toolkit; and Dr. Laura Weisel to help with our “Align and Redesign” action research project to improve student persistence and retention.

Wyoming AE utilizes the PowerPoints obtained from the National Reporting System (NRS) trainings and state directors meetings to train local providers, modifying them as needed.

***• Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223(1)(c).***

Technical Assistance is provided in four ways:

1) Data collection and MIS system - Management Information System (MIS) training is delivered through three webinars and one face to face training from our vendor, LiteracyPro Systems. One webinar focuses on technical assistance ensuring data is clean. Technical assistance is given to data staff as needed. Transcripts of the webinars are sent out to the programs and posted on the Wyoming Community College Commission – Adult Education Tech Talk site;

2) During and after monitoring visits – additional time is planned into the visit to meet with program staff and supervisors to answer questions or offer training;.

3) During and after state shop talks to locals monthly – technical assistance may require additional conference calls or webinars to be scheduled; and

4) Emails, phone, face-to-face meetings – there is an open door policy which invites local directors to call or email at any time. At times this takes the form of coaching and at other times it is clarification and answering questions.

***• Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of adult education activities as described in section 223(1)(d).***

Each center is monitored every two years. During this grant year, four of the eight AEFLA funded programs were monitored and given technical assistance. Three programs were in compliance with no deficiencies found. One program was asked to keep more detail on time and task logs for an administrative assistant.

The quality and improvement of adult education activities are reflected in increased program performance; instructional activities including monitoring teachers for implementation of the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) in classes; and dissemination of promising practices through participatory learning, lesson planning and community of practice blog thru Wiggio. The State AE Manager monitors each center’s continuous improvement goals during the monitoring visits and through monthly and quarterly desk reviews.

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

Training was provided on Career Pathways Toolkit and each program developed a Career Pathways gap analysis with core partners in newly created WAGs. During this time programs began to look at piloting Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs but the numbers were too small to continue or there was no interest by students or partners. There is much more training needed on the IET component but it may not be feasible to require programs to run them. I believe we can make them available in time in some programs by combining both AE students and English language learners..

**2. Performance Data Analysis**

***Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based on the core indicators of performance. Discuss how the assessment was used to improve quality and effectiveness of the funded eligible providers and any plans to further increase performance in future reporting years.***

*Educational Gain* - While the measurable skill gains (MSG) under the new WIOA rules were not tracked for the 2015-16 year, the old Table 4 Educational Functioning Level Gain demonstrated an overall gain across the state of 50% on completing a level. It was up from 45% in 2014-15. Programs implemented the state training provided on CCRS, participatory learning strategies, Start Smart courses, and career pathways awareness and exploration into their schedules, all of which resulted in increased performance. I believe this would have been higher if the Wyoming legislature had not eliminated the Family Literacy funding, forcing students and teachers to drop from the program beginning in February and March of 2016.

*Entered and Retained Employment* – These indicators were collected on the 1st and 3rd quarters after exit so are not in alignment with the WIOA 2nd and 4th quarters. The performance is very similar to previous years. The data collected for 1st and 3rd quarter data for 2015-16 show a 52% Entered Employment rate and a 61% rate for Retained Employment. In 2014-15 the Entered Employment rate was 52% and the Retained employment was 79%. The downturn in Wyoming’s economy due to reductions in oil and coal production has repeated a boom and bust cycle and affected attendance in Adult Education programs across the state. Many of the employees and their families in those industries left the state as jobs were eliminated.

*Entered Postsecondary* – This measure was up from 13% in 2014-15 to 18.9% in 2015-16. Local AE programs have been working with their community college partners to educate students regarding the opportunities more education and training would afford them. The AE classroom climate is additional workforce system oriented and preparation for a career or entry into postsecondary education or training is forefront in our approach.

*High School Equivalency* – While we have done a data match for the candidates who completed, the data has not migrated to data tables under the WIOA rules. We can say 94.59% of those attempting the tests passed and were issued the high school equivalency certificate.

The training discussed under Educational Gain has helped local programs see greater retention of students. In the past 3 years we have seen the average hours per student rise from 55 hours in 2013-14 to 64 hours in 2015-16. These types of visible improvement and performance motivate the local program staff to continue to find ways to improve. The State AE office produces a statewide report comparing programs and ranking them for performance, size, and post-test rates. This is distributed to the local directors annually. Future plans to increase performance will include training on the new guidance given for WIOA performance and data analysis for local directors to help them understand what influences may be seen as barriers to performance.

Local training based on the Learn Explore Assess Plan (LEAP) national workshops is planned for late fall. The new concepts of periods of participation, how measurable skill gain works under the new system and how they will see outcomes measured, especially around the high school equivalency, will be covered.

**3. 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.***

Wyoming has not completed specific training for the local adult education program directors on their roles and responsibilities of being a one-stop partner. We are planning targeted training on this topic during December 2016 with Lennox McLendon as the presenter. Continued training will occur during monthly conference calls and webinars to make sure program directors understand this requirement.

***Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system.***

The career services to be provided in the one-stop system are still being discussed. Local workforce service offices are asking to wait until more guidance comes from USDOL. Through the WAGs in the local areas some progress is being made. As the meetings among the local partners are deepening, a stronger understanding in how to work together in an unduplicated service model is emerging.

***Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through State and local options.***

At this time there have been no discussions on infrastructure costs. Our state is a single area state so the state Workforce Development Council and core partners will discuss this in upcoming meetings. Any monetary exchange will happen at the state level. In-kind services will be provided at the local level.

**4. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program (AEFLA Section 243**)

***Describe how the state is using funds under Section 243 to support the following activities under the IELCE program:***

***• Describe when your State held a competition [the latest competition] for IELCE program funds and the number of grants awarded by your State to support IELCE programs.***

Wyoming has not competed IELCE. We are planning to hold a competition in Spring 2017 for a pilot project to determine the feasibility of implementing IELCE. We do not have a statewide “Local Plan” at this time and are awaiting a timeline or guidance from USDOL through our Workforce Services partner. The Workforce Development Council has not given direction or information to identify the sectors for employment and in-demand jobs that we can target. Once more information is available, which is expected in the spring, plans to move forward with the pilot will begin.

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

The pilots for IET in adult education were not successful this past year. No effort was put forward to include the English literacy students since neither the colleges nor our Workforce Services office would accept undocumented students. Of the 416 English Language Learners in Wyoming, 314 (or 75%) report no social security number or were undocumented and the remaining 102 are so scattered across the state with varying levels of proficiency, (51 were beginning levels 1-), that the economy of scale is too small for this service. It was difficult to get enough students to establish an IET program.

• **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**

This has not begun for the same reasons stated above. We are revisiting this issue and will begin strategizing on a single pilot program with the $60,000 given to our state for this program.

**• 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.**

There are no performance results since there was no program last year. Workforce services does not offer services to undocumented students.. The integration with local workforce offices is going slowly since many are waiting for the State Workforce Services office to give them further direction. This population has been underserved due to being harder to place.

**5. 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 Page 4 of 5 standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.**

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

Wyoming AE adopted the CCRS and Wyoming’s K-12 system adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Wyoming AE program began alignment efforts three years ago when the National Center for Family Literacy staff did training on unpacking the CCSS with our teachers and local directors. Some programs took the initiative to align their instruction immediately and required lesson plans aligned to the standards. Others were less successful in implementing them. A new initiative was developed and implemented in April 2014 called Align and Redesign: align with the standards and redesign your instruction and program to reflect greater persistence.

WY AE hired Meryl Becker-Prezocki, an expert CCRS trainer from Kentucky, to do CCRS training in 2014 to help programs understand the standards. Last year she returned to work with local directors to create a checklist of what they should be observing if teachers are implementing the standards. The checklist utilized “Standards in Action” topics and additional Wyoming observations created by the local program directors. Directors were required to do observations of their teachers last year. I believe because they were involved in creating the tool, the local directors had more buy-in to utilize it.

**6. 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 Wyoming Department of Corrections did not have an adult education AEFLA grant with us last year. However as reported in the September 2015 “Earned Redemption – Why and how to reduce Wyoming’s soaring prison population”, WY’s recidivism rate is approximately 33%. The following is an excerpt from that report.

“While Wyoming’s lower than national average recidivism rate should be applauded, the actual number is quite likely 33% and should be viewed in context. Wyoming’s truth in sentencing laws require that criminal offenders serve a majority of their sentence incarcerated rather than on parole. The BOP (Board of Parole) only paroles about 57 percent of eligible prisoners while the remaining 43 percent of parole eligible prisoners finish their sentence in prison. This means that the parole board is only releasing those who they perceive as low risk while higher risk prisoners are eventually released without any supervision, called “maxed out.”

In addition, by requiring prisoners to spend most of their sentence in prison, their time on supervised parole is much less than other states proportionally. This statistic means that discharged parolees are free to leave the state, as many do, where any future criminal convictions are not accounted for in Wyoming’s recidivism rate. And, Wyoming’s recidivism rate may be deceptively lower than the national average due to the fact that it has a much higher rate of incarceration based on a lower crime rate per capita. By sentencing a higher rate of low risk prisoners to prison rather than diversionary programs such as probation or residential treatment programs compared to other states, Wyoming’s recidivism rate will be much lower. Obviously, incarcerating low risk prisoners will equate to a lower recidivism rate.”

Mark Harris, Wyoming Department of Corrections Research Manager, provided the following information regarding measurement:

“In regards to the annual report, we measure it in two ways:

First, we calculate the percentage of return to prison with a new felony conviction within three years of termination of sentence or release to parole/probation. Probation is for boot camp graduates. Typically, this runs about 10% per fiscal year cohort. This one is the only one that is published in the annual report.

Second, we calculate the percentage of return to prison for any reason within three year of termination of sentence or release to parole/probation. Typically, this ranges from about 25% to 30% per fiscal year cohort.”