These instructions provide descriptive information for the narrative items in the report. The maximum number of pages is 10. Please use the following outline in preparing the narrative part of the Annual Performance Report:

Colorado is pleased to submit the following narrative report, detailing activities and observed outcomes for fiscal year 2017 (July 1st, 2016-June 30th, 2017) for the adult education state-administered formula grant program.

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).

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Office of Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) utilizes State Leadership Funds to support a variety of State and local efforts to align adult education and family literacy activities with other core programs in support of the goals and strategies outlined Colorado's WIOA State Plan that was finalized and approved just prior to the start of the reporting period. In FY17 AEI focused primarily on providing accurate and timely information about WIOA, State Plan goals, and improved policies and procedures for Title II grantees to support system alignment. AEI also served as a thought partner with key stakeholders to implement strategies outlined in the State Plan.

WIOA Implementation Team: AEI staff attended monthly WIOA Implementation Team meetings comprised of representatives from all core programs and one-stop partners to provide guidance, coordination, and, where appropriate, to make commitments to act on WIOA implementation activities. Meeting topics centered on the five state goals outlined in the WIOA State Plan:
- Goal 1: Engage business and industry as a fulcrum to inform and align all elements of the demand driven system
- Goal 2: Establish a customer-centric and holistic focus to increase coordination, effectiveness, and access through shared data, tools, and resources
- Goal 3: Engage partner staff at every level for better system alignment
- Goal 4: Create and deliver a unified message for internal and external communication
- Goal 5: Drive meaningful outcomes through innovation, alignment of metrics, and accountability

Job Seeker Services (JSSA) Alignment Team: The JSSA is a subset of the WIOA Implementation Team comprised of leaders and subject matter experts from core partners, including multiple members from AEI. Workgroups collected data and developed common forms and tools around the following topics:
- The identification of primary Career Services across all partners
- 20%-50% reduction in duplication of services across all partners

- Streamlining of services offered and tracked by all partners in a common solution
- Improved clarity on the nature of service delivery partnerships and coordination (e.g. MOUs) that must be established in each workforce development area

Career Pathway Systems: The Colorado Workforce Development Council, in collaboration with CDE, released Building Industry-Driven Career Pathway Systems in Colorado, A Step-by-Step Guide in the fall of 2016. The guide outlines the steps to build regional industry-driven career pathways systems and is available to AEFLA grantees. CDE also collaborates with the CWDC around the 20+ sector partnerships and the Sector Partnerships Community of Practice (CoP) through membership in the State Technical Assistance Team (STAT).

Adult Workforce Partnerships Advisory Committee: To support sector partnerships and career pathways work in Colorado, AEI staff host Adult Workforce Partnerships Advisory Committee meetings with representation from the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), Colorado Community College System (CCCS), local education providers, postsecondary education and training providers, workforce development providers, and advocacy organizations. These meetings promote communication and collaboration among partners and produce guidance on Colorado's workforce development needs, the levels of unmet need for adult education, and input on grant competition requests for proposals.

Business Services Team Engagement: AEI is working with the statewide Business Services Team to advance the strategies and goals outlined in the State Plan. Efforts are focused on developing strategies and resources that adult education providers can use to better incorporate employer feedback into programming decisions. Ongoing work with the Business Service Team will focus on Adult Education's role in Colorado's talent development pipeline, how providers can better meet the needs of business, students, and job-seekers, and process for measuring the impact of adult education programs on businesses.

- Establishment or operation of a high quality professional development programs as described in section 223(1)(b).

AEI aims to provide effective professional learning activities that emphasize research-based practices and the integration of learning into local program practices. These values are encouraged at the local program level as well. FY17 professional development priorities included:

Adult Basic Education Authorization (ABEA):
While continuing to provide ABEA certification pathways for instructional staff through credit bearing courses via Colorado's and through prior learning portfolio options, AEI also piloted a tuition-free, online, introductory ABEA course that covered adult education theory, including the specific needs of adult learners, NRS level descriptors, and evidence-based instruction to engage and retain adults. The course was designed based on grantee feedback on the time and financial burdens instructional staff face when completing the courses for credit in the community college system. AEI estimates that this free course saved the field about $38,400. Feedback from this course and other grantee surveys has prompted a more intensive review of the ABEA competencies which took place at the end of FY17 and continues in the current program year.

College and Career Readiness Standards: Building on the state's participation in the Standards–in–Action (SIA) national TA initiative in the prior year, AEI staff offered eight SIA trainings in each region of the state in FY17. Each SIA training was delivered in two, single-day face-to-face sessions, one in the fall and one in the spring with associated pre- and post-work. Each one-day session focused on either English Language Arts or Mathematics based on the needs of grantees within the region. 72 instructors attended these trainings. State staff also delivered 2 introductory webinar trainings on the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards and ran an ELP CoP of 8 instructors which provided participants the opportunity to build and teach a lesson, report on the outcomes, and receive feedback on lesson implementation.

New Director Training: New program directors received training through the New Directors' Support initiative. Training was designed to support new program leadership in understanding the vision and mission of CDE/AEI and the requirements of the AEFLA and EL/Civics grant. Emphasis was placed on WIOA, career pathways, State policies, PD, grants fiscal resources, and data collection and reporting. New directors received ongoing support from State staff in response to their questions or concerns and to support their growth as local leaders and innovators.

Annual Assessment Training: Assessment trainings are held each year for all those proctoring educational functioning level tests. The trainings provide an opportunity for authorizing new proctors or as refresher training for current proctors to remain current with the latest test administration protocols. The AEI Office requires local programs to maintain records of staff trained as proctors and to ensure proctors attend these annual events.

In addition to the initiatives above, the AEI Office hosted an annual AEFLA Program Directors' Meeting to inform programs about current initiatives, trends, and opportunities. State staff also presented on a variety of researched-based topics at the Colorado Adult Education Professional Association (CAEPA) annual conference. One-off trainings based on needs expressed by grantees were also delivered and covered the following topics: culturally responsive instruction, including evidence-based strategies to engage learners of a variety of different backgrounds in motivational and respectful learning communities; purposeful learning, including evidence-based practices to motivate and engage adult learners, as well as retain and support them in achieving their goals; and the needs of adults with disabilities, relevant laws and requirements for serving individuals with disabilities, and ways to leverage research-based practices like universal design to benefit all students regardless of the barriers they may face.

All PD resources generated are shared with all grantees via bi-weekly email communications. Based on an analysis of website use and grantee survey feedback, the AEI Office began reorganizing the AEI website at the end of FY17 which had previously housed all professional development materials. The team has removed outdated and unused PD resources from the website and is currently reviewing the remainder for quality and basis in evidence.

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

AEI includes three regional specialists whose primary job duties include offering TA to local programs to support and promote the continuous quality improvement of the adult education and family literacy services available across the State. In FY17 these regional specialists maintained their knowledge base of effective instructional and programmatic practices through research, attendance at State and national conferences, collaboration with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Literacy Coalition of Colorado, and through collection of proven practices from local program observation, conversation, and data analysis. Dissemination of proven practices occurred through bi-weekly email communications from the AEI Office staff, through quarterly "Office Hours" webinars, and through "Click," an email distribution list provided by AEI that allows programs to easily share opportunities with each other.

To address the role of adult education providers as a one-stop partners, AEI partnered with the Colorado Department of Labor (CDLE) to host four WIOA cross-training webinars that helped local staff better understand each partner's responsibilities and requirements under WIOA and moved forward the work of system alignment. The AEI Office collaborated with CDLE on the development and dissemination of MOU and infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) guidance documents and support tools for WIOA local partners. AEI also hosted a day-long training in June of the program year to provide specific support to adult education grantees in understanding and completing their MOU and IFA requirements. Over 30 leadership staff from local programs attended this training either in-person or virtually with representation from all grantees that received a grant award for the next funding cycle.

The AEI office ran a Distance Learning CoP in which eight grantees participated. The CoP met quarterly to review distance learning platforms, discuss best practices for distance and hybrid instruction, and address challenges with supporting learner persistence in online learning environments.

TA on the use of technology to improve system efficiencies was centered on supporting local adult education providers' use of the State's new data collection and reporting system, LACES. Two full day in-person trainings were held in the fall to support programs with both use of LACES and new NRS data collection and reporting rules. Over the course of the winter and spring the AEI Office provided three, one-hour video trainings each paired with two live, virtual question and answer sessions to continue supporting grantees with implementation of NRS reporting changes.

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

Continuous quality improvement of adult education activities delivered in Colorado remains a priority for AEI. The FY17 grant continuation application required applicants to describe local program goals, the intensity and duration of instructional activities, Colorado ABEA teacher credentialing compliance, strategies to meet performance targets, and plans for implementation of WIOA activities. Program responses provided key items on which AEI staff followed up through program monitoring, targeted TA, and ongoing professional development.

In FY17 each local program received an on-site monitoring visit, a monthly data monitoring report and technical assistance conference call, and quarterly monitoring calls to review progress on all grant activities.

State staff regularly used research journals, national trainings and events, and online resource repositories from trusted organizations to identify and share best practices and innovative strategies. These best practices were communicated with local providers through quarterly "Office Hours" webinars, bi-weekly "AEI Updates" email communications, the AEI website, and through training. Local providers are always encouraged to share and support one another in continuous improvement through "Click" email communications, an email distribution list provided by AEI that allows programs to easily share opportunities with each other. AEI also invested time and resources in curating key technical assistance resources into a single online grantee handbook as a resource for local programs.

Monitoring and evaluation was addressed in the WIOA grant competition with questions to assess applicants' utilization of evidence–based practices and strategies for continuous improvement. Responses from funded applicants are being used to inform FY18 monitoring and evaluation activities.

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

AEI hosted a webinar about effective distance learning and distance teaching practices, which included a portion about sharing best practices. This served as a launch point for the Distance Learning CoP mentioned earlier.

AEI also hosted a webinar about Employability Skills and Habits of Mind that built off of the OCTAE-funded Employability Skills Framework. AEI also hosted a WIOA partner webinar series and a WIOA IET webinar, all of which provided opportunities for grantees to share how they were partnering with businesses, workforce, and vocational rehabilitation.

Based on requests from the field, AEI hosted multiple webinars for the field around learning needs, low cost accommodations, and universal design. Supporting materials like the Learning Needs Guide were also provided in conjunction with the webinars and made available to all grantees.

AEI adapted many of the webinars mentioned in this section and in earlier sections for interactive sessions at the Colorado Adult Education Professional Association (CAEPA) annual fall conference.

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.

In FY17, Colorado served 8,960 adult learners through programs administered by 30 grantees. Of those learners, 41% were enrolled in English language acquisition (ELA) programs; 37% were in adult basic education (ABE) programs; 8% enrolled in adult secondary education (ASE) programs; and 14% were enrolled in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs. The majority of participants in FY17 entered at ABE and ESL Intermediate Low and High educational functioning levels. Statewide enrollment was up slightly from the prior year, primarily in participants aged 25-44.

For FY17 Colorado did not meet its 34% measurable skill gain target; however, measurable skill gain performance increased from 28% (level gain) in FY16 to 31% (measurable skill gain) in FY17. Statewide, learners entering at ABE Level 1 (25%) and ESL Level 1 (28%) had the lowest measurable skill gain rates. Learners at ESL Levels 4-6 also had lower measurable skill gain rates than at other levels. Lower measurable skill gain rates for ESL learners may have been affected by the lower rate of social security number (SSN) reporting for these learners; AEI uses SSN to attain post-secondary matriculation and High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma gains, but the lower pre- and post-test level gain rates at these same Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) is concerning considering those levels also have the highest post-testing rates statewide. AEI will target professional development and technical assistance to address instructional quality and elimination of barriers for learners at these levels.

AEI also plans to work for improvements statewide in two specific areas in order to meet future measurable skill gain targets. Nearly half of all learners separated before achieving a measurable skill gain in FY17. That group of learners averaged 43 instructional hours compared to averages of 107 hours and 84 hours for learners making EFL gains and earning HSE Diplomas respectively. Most local programs only make available 6-9 instructional hours in a given subject area and level each week, and few offer distance learning opportunities at this point. Additionally, the majority of programs take significant breaks in programming in both December and again in May through August annually which further reduces the access to instruction for adult learners in Colorado. AEI is working with local programs to monitor average weekly contact hours and attendance gaps to identify causes of separation and strategies to increase student persistence to reduce the rate of learners separating with no measurable skills gain. AEI is also hiring a Re-Engagement Coordinator that can provide targeted technical assistance around learner retention.

Statewide just 33% of ABE and ASE learners and 53% ESL learners were post-tested in FY17. While similar to the post-testing rates statewide in FY16, these rates are still well below the 70% post-testing rate target outlined in Colorado's Assessment Policy. Post-testing rates at several local programs fell below 20% in FY17 and in spite of both face to face and webinar technical assistance the AEI Office had little success in increasing testing rates at these program even for learners with the requisite number of instructional hours. In the second half of the program year post-testing rates were affected by both uncertainties about and later the results of the grant competition as programs which were not awarded funds in the next cycle did very little to post-test learners once those awards were announced. That alone does not explain the low post-testing rates. Many local programs explained in their annual report narratives that both learners and teachers do not value the TABE and CASAS assessments or their results and consider the time spent testing as a detraction to instruction. AEI plans to work with local programs to address the role of these assessments within the local program to change the perception of the tests from a burden to a useful instructional tool. AEI also

plans to closely monitor post-testing rates in FY18, implementing corrective action plans as necessary.

There is also much work to be done to decreasing the average instructional hours it takes for learners to make level gains, but much of this limited by the state's data system, LACES. In FY17, local programs began using LACES in October and found that while LACES was more reliable in the collection and storage of data than the state's prior data system, it was less helpful in providing simple, comprehensible, class-level reports without which programs struggled to use data to inform programming and instruction. Additionally, NRS reporting rules were sporadically added to LACES throughout FY16 and most were not finalized until the fall of the next program year. This made it very difficult for AEI to use the data system to deliver technical assistance to local programs. AEI plans to address these shortcomings through closer monitoring of NRS reporting rules, requiring the LACES system to update testing, and implementing custom reports for local programs.

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. Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system. Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through State and local options.

For WIOA Title II, CDE is the required one-stop partner responsible for administering or supervising policy for adult education and literacy activities in the State. As outlined in the jointly developed Colorado Policy Guidance Letter#: WIOA-2016-02, Change 2, published on May 11, 2017 by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, CDE delegated its one-stop partner responsibilities to each of the AEFLA-funded local providers in FY17 and set the expectation (through grant agreements) that each provider negotiate and sign an MOU that addresses the service delivery elements required by WIOA with the local workforce development boards (LWDBs) in each local area in which adult education services are provided. Each required one-stop partner is responsible for identifying the career services that are relevant to their programs and making those services available through the comprehensive workforce center.

During FY17, AEI was waiting for additional guidance from OCTAE on WIOA-defined career services allowable under Title II and how to track costs associated with those services (which was provided after FY17 on August 23, 2017). As FY17 was the last year of a grant cycle and guidance around the definitions of career services and how to track them was not available yet from OCTAE, infrastructure agreements were not required in Memorandums of Understanding between LWDBs and AEFLA grantees. Workgroups at the local level began conversations about infrastructure agreements and one workgroup developed MOU and IFA templates that can be utilized by AEFLA grantees and LWDBs in the FY18 program year. The Colorado One-Stop System Policy Guidance Letter#: WIOA-2016-03, Change 1 published on May 2, 2017 outlined MOU and IFA requirements for FY18.

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.

Colorado's most recent IELCE grant competition was held in the conjunction with the AEFLA competition. The request for proposal was released on December 7, 2016. Applications were due February 21, 2017 and tentative award amounts were publicly released on June 5, 2017. Eight programs were awarded and received funds for the 2017-18 program year.

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

Historically, Colorado's IELCE programs have blended civics and English literacy skills at all levels by using core curriculum and materials designed specifically to help adult English Language Learners with literacy, ELA and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. Local providers add experiential learning activities such as field trips, guest speakers, role plays, workshops, mock voting & elections, and community service projects to enrich and deepen the instruction offered.

AEI introduced IELCE to local Adult Education providers through a series of allowable activities webinars, through workshop presentations at the CAEPA annual conference, and in follow up TA conducted on career pathways and WIOA transition goals. The AEI Office shared the guidance provided during the LEAP trainings to clarify that while IELCE programs must be designed to lead to Integrated Education and Training (IET) activities, not all program participants need to take part in the IET component of IELCE.

At the request of grantees, the AEI Office also held two, 2-hour refresher webinar trainings on the implementation of IELCE and IET programming aligned with WIOA requirements prior to the grant competition. Both webinars were recorded as resources for grantee use.

- 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

In FY17, 1,213 adult learners participated in IELCE programs administered by 14 grantees. The majority of those IELCE participants (65%) were ages 25-44. There were 37 IET participants.

Providing IELCE services in combination with IET activities was largely addressed through required narrative questions in the FY17 IELCE grant application, with emphasis on program design that leads learners to, when ready, participation in an IET and placement into unsubsidized employment. State staff worked with grantees to align existing programming with IELCE requirements.

To support programs with the increased emphasis on employment, the AEI Office provided seven trainings at local programs about partnership opportunities through Ability to Benefit in an effort to grow co-enrollment options for IELCE participants.

Implementation questions still exist around when contextualized instruction should take place, at what point workforce preparation activities should be introduced, how to offer workforce preparation activities for those who are IET ready without making it compulsory for all learners in a class, and how best to leverage partnerships to offer the workforce training component of the IET. These questions are being addressed through performance data analysis, including review of employment outcomes as they are available through data match.

- 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.

AEI participates in State-level work groups and committees to support core partners in each local area in their coordination of services so that clients are placed at the center of the system, including IELCE participants. Local adult education programs have representation on each LWDB to ensure IELCE is integrated with the workforce development system. Additionally, the grant competition held in the spring of 2017 asked applicants applying for IELCE funds how they would design programs to meet all required elements. Responses in those applications have been used by the AEI team to identify areas of need and promise. Grantees not located near community college and workforce center locations reported concerns about providing the workforce training component of an IET program and their struggles to provide access to workforce center services. Grantees more closely located to those partners reported concerns about their ability to create cohorts of learners pursuing training in similar industries and the referral processes needed to track learners as they attend programming with various WIOA partners.

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 standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.

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

AEI views standards implementation as a critical component of developing programming to equip adult learners with the skills and knowledge needed for success in postsecondary education, employment, and beyond. The College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education were adopted for use by local providers in 2014, kicking off the AEI Office's standards–based instruction initiative. This adoption also signified alignment with Colorado Academic Standards. Implementation of these standards has been done through the revised SIA model

SIA trainings were delivered in two, single-day face-to-face sessions, one in the fall and one in the spring with associated pre- and post-work. Each one-day session focused on either English Language Arts or Mathematics based on the needs of grantees within the region. 72 instructors attended these trainings. State staff also delivered 2 introductory webinar trainings on the ELP Standards and ran an associated CoP of 8 instructors which provided participants an opportunity to build and teach a lesson, report on the outcomes, and receive feedback on lesson implementation.

Programs continue to report challenges with NRS approved assessments not aligning with the more rigorous, standards-based instructional changes they are making in classrooms.

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 AEI Office did not track rates of recidivism on correctional education participants in FY17. The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice's Office of Research and Statistics under the Colorado Department of Public Safety and the Colorado Department of Corrections' (CDOC) Office of Planning and Analysis (OPA) annually track and report on recidivism rates on offenders in community corrections and correctional facilities, including offenders in the Youth Offender System (YOS).

CDOC defines recidivism as a return to prison or inmate status in Colorado with-in three years of release, for either new criminal activity or a technical violation of parole, probation or non-departmental community placement. CDOC uses methodology from the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) performance-based measurement system for calculating recidivism rates.

Due to AEI staff transitions during FY17, a data sharing agreement with CDOC and CDPS was not finalized that would allow AEI to report the relative rate of recidivism for correctional education participants. The AEI Office is prepared for conversations that would allow the finalization of a data sharing agreement with the necessary State agencies for the purpose of tracking AEFLA participant recidivism in the future.