**Maryland Federal Narrative Report FY 2016-2017**

During Fiscal Year 2017, the adult education program provided state leadership to 25 local grantees and the Correctional Education Program. Although enrollment in the program continued to decline during the fiscal year, the state saw an increase in student retention.

A competitive application was released in February 2017 and reallocated funding distributions in accordance with population changes and local enrollment trends. The RFP established funding under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Services Act (AEFLA) (Sec 202) and the Integrated English Language and Civics Education Program (IELCE) (Sec. 243) to carry out the purpose of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the goals established in the Maryland WIOA State Plan. Twenty-three providers were selected to receive AEFLA funding in FY 2018.

The Adult Education program experienced a change in leadership with the retirement of the State Director Patricia Tyler and the subsequent appointment of Terry Gilleland to this position at mid-year.

**State Leadership Funds**

**Alignment of Adult Education with Other One-Stop Required Partners to Implement the Strategies in the Combined State Plan**.

***Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB)***

The Adult Education Director is a member of the Governor’s Workforce Development Board’s Interagency Subcommittee which is charged with coordinating workforce development programs and policies to meet the needs of high demand industry. The Director and several staff members served on WIOA work groups with constituents representing WIOA and community partners in the areas of Alignment, Career Pathways, Policy, Performance, and Professional Development. Recommendations of the work groups continue to inform policy for the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) leadership.

***WIOA Convening***

The Department held the WIOA State Convening in July 2016. The event was a major kick off of implementing Maryland’s Combined State Workforce Plan. Representatives from all 12 local WIOA areas, DHR, DORS, community colleges and other community based partners gathered to have discussions regarding the realignment of the workforce system in Maryland. The 12 local WIOA areas met individually to developed short and long term goals.

***Assessment Policy Workgroup***

The Basic Education Skills and English Language Assessment Policy Workgroup meets annually to review and update the policy document. Maryland requires that all partners follow the same procedures for conducting assessments and avoid duplicative testing among co-enrolled participants. Local Workforce Development Plans included a section describing alignment of assessment processes including training for test administrators.

***Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council***

The Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council (MALAC) continues to play a critical role in strengthening public and private partnerships by supporting a flexible and integrated education and training system for adult learners. The Council is co-chaired by the Adult Education Director and an official of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Membership includes a broad geographic and demographic representation of the community, including government agencies, the Maryland legislature, community colleges, public schools, funders and community-based organizations. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis and discussions provide the perspectives of a broad base of constituents. The Council serves as a significant resource to DLLR and DWDAL on matters pertaining to adult education initiatives. In FY 2017, the agenda focused on several issues including services for youth, TANF and the 2Gen approach, serving immigrant learners and the research and subsequent proposal for Maryland Adult High School pilots.

***Task Force to Study the Adult High School Concept***

The Task Force to Study the Adult High School Concept was created by House Bill 1406 by the 2016 Maryland General Assembly. Co-chaired by a Delegate and the Assistant Secretary of DWAL, members consisted of representatives from the State Senate and House of Delegates, DLLR, MSDE, MALAC, GWDB, adult education grantee organizations and various community stakeholders. The committee was charged with researching, making recommendations and summarizing the group’s findings in a report to the Governor and the General Assembly by June 30, 2017. During the course of the task force’s work, a pilot was approved by the State Legislature to create an additional way for adults to earn a high school diploma. The selection and implementation of the pilots is expected to begin in FY 2018.

**Establishment/ Operation of High Quality Professional Development Programs**

The state utilizes a needs assessment model to prioritize professional learning needs at the local program level. During FY 2017, four regional leadership meetings were facilitated by the State Office to address lagging performance issues and explore strategies for program improvement. The sessions provided an opportunity for local program teams to discuss challenges and ideas both within their programs and in the larger state context. During follow-up webinars with Delaware and Pennsylvania, leadership teams examined best practices and strategies that were successfully used in LACES states with similar demographics.

Maryland’s train-the-trainer model prepares local leadership with required foundation skills that are then delivered to their program staff. Introduction to TABE 9&10, LACES Beginning and Advanced Training and an Orientation for Intake and Assessment Specialist were held during this period. Professional development initiatives continue to address the need for training in competencies related to the GED® test. The state funded three local staff to participate in the GED® Testing Service (GEDTS) train-the-trainer opportunity at the annual GEDTS Conference.

While we continue to support the train-the-trainer model, a new construct for training/learning was implemented at the local level at the recommendation of the Professional Development Workgroup. This model uses a flipped framework where participants are given content material from which they build out local professional development.

The Professional Development Specialist leads the work groups for Standards Implementation, GED® Training and Professional Development for Title II providers. She co-chairs the WIOA Professional Development Workgroup which is charged with systematizing, identifying and planning professional development for all WIOA partners to promote alignment of programs and cohesion in the workforce system.

As the state moves toward increasing online learning options, we have begun to utilize curriculum designers, including an intern, to develop online coursework in priority areas identified by program needs assessment. Three content areas are scheduled for development in 2018: Essential Components of Reading, Adult Learning Theory, and the Assessment Policy.

***LACES Workgroup***

The LACES Workgroup led by the Accountability Specialist, is composed of a variety of local leadership staff including Management Information Systems (MIS) Specialists, Administrators, Intake/Assessment Specialist (IAS), and Instructional Specialists (IS) who seek a more in-depth knowledge of our state data management system. During FY 2017, the workgroup completed updates for the Data Definition Dictionary the Data Quality Checklist and the Learner Intake and Enrollment Form to reflect federal changes. A resource document and handbook were created to assist with onboarding new MIS staff.

In April 2017, the MIS began to collect data on the number of enrolled adult education learners who have also entered pre-apprenticeships in Maryland. This number is now collected quarterly and shared with the Director of Apprenticeship and Training at DLLR.

***ESL Pro***

Eight programs utilized training from the initial ESL Pro project to design instructional frameworks and professional development activities to improve instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs). A broad range of topics were chosen including college & career readiness, critical thinking, integrated skills, civic education, numeracy and digital literacy. ESL Pro materials are versatile and allow for flexibility in meeting each program’s unique professional development needs.

***Distance Learning***

In FY 2017, the Maryland i-Pathways program continued to serve learners at the adult secondary level who prefer an online learning experience to the traditional classroom. The i-Pathways website attracted 2110 new applications. Of these, 400 went to a local program for orientation and assessment and 211 were successful in meeting the qualifications for enrollment. The program served 228 new learners with 57 carrying over to the next fiscal year. Sixteen online class sessions were held, two of which continued from the previous fiscal year. Of the enrolled learners, 76% successfully completed the 15-week course.

The number of students who qualify for the MD i-Pathways program and choose to study entirely at a distance has decreased over the years. English language and ABE learners below the secondary level far exceed the numbers of enrollees at the ASE level. A workgroup was formed during the fiscal year to explore an expansion of the distance learning program in Maryland to meet the needs of this growing population. For many students, a blended learning option would provide an optimal educational environment, allowing flexibility and independence as well as the support of the classroom experience.

The workgroup was tasked with researching and recommending curriculum options and revising the Distance Learning Policy. Maryland joined the IDEAL Consortium during this time and will coordinate with the Consortium to develop resources and plan for continued professional development. Adult Education also initiated steps to gain access to the State’s Cornerstone Learning Management System (LMS), the HUB. It is anticipated that the LMS will provide the state with opportunities to develop online professional development and Open Educational Resources (OER) for local programs.

**Local Grantee Network**

Twenty-five local programs and Correctional Education received funding through the continuation grant. A competition was held for Calvert County and was awarded to an existing grantee, The College of Southern Maryland. Maryland has a diverse group of providers with and which are currently 64% community college, 25% public schools, and 12% community-based

organizations. Maryland also funds a public library system and the State Correctional Education Program.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Adult education program managers conducted program evaluation and monitoring throughout the reporting period through a combination of desk review of program data and information, review of quarterly, midyear, and final reports, and site visits. Program managers visited local programs to monitor program and instructional practices, provide orientation to new leadership staff and to offer technical assistance for targeted issues including WIOA implementation. Monthly conference calls for the grantee network provided information and updates of federal and state initiatives.

Additionally, fiscal monitoring and enrollment data verification audits are performed through the DWDAL Office of Monitoring and Compliance (OMC). In FY 2017, monitors from OMC conducted enrollment data verification at every local program. This audit, begun in FY 2015, revealed sources of data accuracy issues and led to greater consistency of data collection methods in local programs. Programs that failed to meet data quality standards were required to submit correction action plans and provide professional development that involved all staff in understanding the importance of consistent data collection methods. Verification of program enrollment data will be conducted annually.

Six local programs were identified for fiscal monitoring in FY 2017 and all were able to demonstrate sound fiscal practices. Although a risk analysis tool is used to prioritize monitoring needs, all grantees will be monitored routinely on a three-year rotational cycle. DWDAL’s fiscal monitors meet with the local program administrator and financial agent to conduct the audit. The adult education program manager may participate as needed

**Performance Data Analysis**

***Enrollment***

Enrollment numbers decreased slightly from 28,689 learners in FY 2016 to 28,047 in FY 2017. English Language Learners represent the majority of the learner population (55% in FY 2017) with Hispanic/Latino learners representing the largest segment of learners at 40%. The portion of ASE decreased from 10% in FY 2016 to 7% in FY 2017. The representation of ABE learners remains unchanged at 39%. For age related demographics, the working adults ages 25-44 remain the largest group of the adult education population (54%).

***Retention***

Although enrollment decreased slightly from the previous fiscal year, retention in FY 2017 increased to 46% compared to 42% in FY 2016. Programs report that although they are seeing fewer students, those that enroll are staying for longer periods of time. Students averaged 84 contact hours during FY 2017. By category, the ABE population had the highest retention rate at 56%, with ESL at 53% and ASE at 43%. Although student retention is still a significant concern, we are encouraged by the upward trend which we attribute to a stronger emphasis on instruction that is aligned with student goals. Programs report that enforcing program attendance policies has had a positive effect on classroom dynamics and class completions. Additionally, the use of academic counselors and transition specialists have been instrumental in providing students with academic strategies to improve learner persistence.

***Literacy Attainment***

Thirty-five percent (35%) of the enrolled students increased an educational functional level in FY 2017 compared to 36% in FY 2016. By category, the ESL population showed the highest completion rate at 41%, with ABE at 30% and ASE at 29%. Of the students who remained long enough to post test, 55% completed a level, an increase from 53% in FY 2016. By category, the ESL population showed the highest completion rate of those who post-tested at 58% and ABE/ASE at 50%.

***Matched Literacy Level Attainment***

The matched assessment percentage was 64% slightly down from FY 16 (66%). By category, ESL has the highest pre-post test match at 71% and ABE/ASE at 54%. The percentage of students who separated before completing a level dropped from 57% to 54%.

***Diploma Attainment***

The total number of high school diplomas awarded to enrolled participants was 1,138 during the FY 2017. Professional development efforts have impacted instructional design and delivery. Programs have adjusted curriculum offerings to provide shorter and more intensive single-subject classes to meet the needs of learners who have passed sections of the GED® test. Programs that have used TABE 9 and 10 report a better alignment with skills needed to prepare for the GED® test.

The Maryland state legislature continues to provide funding to reduce the cost of the GED® test for Maryland residents. With the state contribution, testers pay a reduced fee of $11.25 per section or $45.00 for the entire test.

During FY 2017, 237 (35%) NEDP® participants successfully completed the requirements for a Maryland High School Diploma. This number represents a 6% increase over the previous fiscal year. Programs have adapted to the more challenging requirements of the new NEDP® program and implemented tutoring and instruction to help prospective students bridge the gap in skills required for qualification, particularly in math and writing.

**Integration with One Stop Partners**

Title II partners at the state and local level were actively involved in providing input to the Local Workforce Development Plans which were submitted in September 2016 and approved in January 2017. The local plans were required to articulate integration with the Title II in key areas to include: coordination of services including through career pathways; streamlining assessment practices and sharing test data for co-enrolled participants; representation by Title II on the Local Workforce Development Board; and the provision of adult basic skills services in the American Job Center. Resource Sharing Agreements were negotiated at the state level during this period based on adult education students’ use of the American Job Center.

DWDAL initiated several workgroups for implementation of WIOA and the State Plan. Both state and local Title II were widely represented as members and co-chairs.

**Integration English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program (AEFLA Section 243)**

A total of 19 programs were awarded EL Civics funds through the statewide FY 2011 AEFLA competitive application process. Maryland’s State Plan allowed for a continuation of EL/Civics programming during the FY 2017 transition period. During FY 2017, 5,885 learners enrolled in EL/Civics programming.

Following the competitive application in FY 2017, 20 programs were awarded funding to implement IELCE programming. During the transition period, the state provided technical assistance and webinars to prepare programs for the requirements of this funding line and the three IELCE components. In some cases, this required programs to reexamine their current practices and consider which learners might best be served in an IELCE program. The state anticipates that ongoing training and support will be needed to ensure that programs are on track to meet the requirements of this funding line. The State office requested and received guidance to ensure that we were providing appropriate directions to grantees as they plan activities under this funding stream. Maryland will participate in the Building Opportunities Technical Assistance Project in FY 2018.

**Adult Education Standards**

Maryland adopted the Career and College Readiness Standards for Adult Education to provide a consistent and shared expectation across all adult education programs of the knowledge, skills, and abilities need to provide a seamless transition into post-secondary education and the workforce and align with the K-12 Common Core State Standards implementation. Adult students earn a Maryland High School Diploma that is jointly signed by the Secretary of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation and the President of the State Board of Education and the high school credentialing paths, the 2014 GED® test and NEDP® are aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards.

A Standards Workgroup led by the Professional Development Specialist has begun work on a toolkit to assist programs as they develop skills in standards implementation. The online course, *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*, by The Center for Families Learning has been a valuable resource for Instructional Specialists (IS) in promoting a better understanding of the standards and how to integrate them in curriculum.

**Programs for Corrections Education and Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals**

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) will be unable to release a full year’s recidivism rate until July of 2018, based on their method of calculation for each fiscal year. Recidivism numbers for each event are compiled for each fiscal year, for three years after release. For FY 2017 the last released inmate from the cohort is June 30, 2017.

Although a partial year’s recidivism rate was run, actual numbers cannot be released externally until the information is complete. From the data that was collected, the inmates in LACES show a very low rate or recidivism when compared to the overall population, indicating a successful program.

DPSCS follows the rules established by the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) for use in their Performance Based Measures System (PBMS). Fiscal Year 2017 DPSCS is the second year DPSCS will be able to calculate inmate recidivism for the following reasons: the last mainframe-based recidivism program, RISC, became unstable. The last cohort processed from RISC was FY 2009. The three year results were published in 2013; a new Offender Case Management System (OCMS) was placed in production but a migration decision to only migrate the inmate’s lasts release prevents calculation of recidivism for previous years; while OCMS went into production in July 2014, the intake and release data did not stabilize until change notes were implemented in the fall of 2014. A release cohort is created after the end of a fiscal year and processed against OCMS. An inmate whose new sentence after release has an offense date that is prior to the release date is excluded from cohort processing. The most common reason for this is split consecutive sentencing. Recidivism is counted for the following events:

* The inmate has a technical violation while on Community Supervision and is returned to DOC custody.
* The inmate is found guilty of a new offense and court paroled to Community Supervision.
* The inmate is found guilty of a new offense and sentenced to DOC custody.

When one of these events occurs, the inmate is no longer processed for that cohort. If the inmate is released again, the new release will be added to the cohort for that fiscal year.