**Montana Narrative Report 2016-17**

**State Leadership Funds**

**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).**

A primary use of leadership funds has been to further enhance career pathway integration into the adult education classroom in order to align with the employment and training services of our core partners. This career pathway initiative built upon the *Moving Career Pathways Project* launched in 2014 and has continued to remain in place. Programs continue to analyze instruction, number of hours per week available, names of commercially developed materials used, names of computer software used, and types of instructor developed material for each educational functioning level. This assists teachers in discovering how well the materials they use provide a scope and sequence that truly supports the college and career readiness standards and student transition to employment or postsecondary/training. Teachers have the opportunity to engage in a reflective activity that helps them understand how they are meeting core partner needs through adult education instructional activities. Core partner coordination, recruitment of diverse clients, intake, orientation, and client services remain integral to career pathway integration. Program staff utilize a visual called the Career Pathways Local System Model that local programs can use when visiting with core partners, other stakeholders, and clients. At a glance, the Career Pathways Local Systems Model demonstrates which partners are coordinating efforts to recruit and provide services to clients in a manner that results in occupational training, postsecondary education, or employment in a progressive career path.

The State recognizes the need to expand and strengthen existing components of career pathway instruction provided by all the local adult education programs. The State continues to use the state-wide career pathway curriculum via Montana Career Information System (MCIS) and our web-based math curriculum, EdReady. EdReady allows teachers to develop and use a variety of instructional strategies for lessons within this learning platform. Teachers across the State use lessons in order to positively impact student retention, high school equivalency attainment, and preparedness for postsecondary education/training. MCIS is a robust career planning tool which motivates students to think about their next steps beyond Adult Education and engages them in thoughtful short-and-long term planning for further education and job attainment. Teachers integrate these materials and learning activities into existing career counseling activities. The use of MCIS and EdReady creates a systemic approach to adult education instruction across programs.

The State Adult Education staff also continues to facilitate an interagency taskforce that is working to attain and sustain a Statewide, systemic approach to the career pathways. The taskforce is committed to creating an awareness, promoting, and supporting the relevance and expansion of the adult career pathways. Members of the Interagency Pathway Team include representatives from agencies such as: Office of Commissioner of Higher Education, Department of Labor, State Workforce Investment Board, Rural Employment Opportunity, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Public Instruction, Office of Tourism and Commerce, Veterans Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Office of the Governor. The quarterly meetings focus on activities that help all taskforce members develop a clear understanding of a career pathway system and to discuss how we could lend support to a state-wide career pathway system. The meetings have evolved into collaborative agendas that focus on keeping the agency representatives apprised of all pathway activities occurring in the State through presentations and open discussions. Throughout the year, members receive cutting-edge information on a variety of aspects applicable to our service of common clients. These meetings and presentations provide the agencies opportunity to share information with professional colleagues with the intention of creating strong linkage between State and local career pathway stakeholders.

* **Establishment or operation of a high quality professional development programs as**

**described in section 223(1)(b).**

The State determined that an essential element of a high quality professional development program was the establishment of rules regarding required hours for professional development and the ability to track teacher participation. Therefore, the State developed business language for a professional development tracking component which is included in our State student management system. This gives the State the ability to analyze teacher participation in professional development and its impact on student outcomes.

The State also develops procedures to elicit feedback from teachers to generate an understanding from their perspective on what is needed to support high quality professional development programs. The State encourages teacher reflection and opportunities via collaborative meetings and field surveys to identify critical professional development needs based on their program materials analysis. The State is also open to recommendations from the field that may lend themselves to professional development activities for the dissemination of information and promising best practices.

Additionally, the State will analyze our student information system data to determine instructional needs in reading and other academic areas. The State is committed to offering professional development opportunities that will meet the learning needs of our adult students.

* **Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section**

**223(1)(c).**

The State provided technical assistance to local programs as needed. State staff continually analyzed data, fielded questions/inquiries, and disseminated pertinent information to Adult Education providers.

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

As this was a transition year under WIOA, with anticipation of a RFP competition in Spring 2017, each program was monitored via desk audits. Monthly reports were required. The report had two sections; data analysis and an activity log. The data analysis required the programs to report and analyze data on the educational gains for each functioning level, the number of students exited, the number of students post-tested, total attendance hours, and the number of high school equivalency completers. The activity log documented the programs ongoing work with agency partners to support their career pathway integration. They were required to report on all monthly activities with current partners that were completed and identify new partner meetings and activities. For both groups, it was required that the program report on the outcome, or anticipated outcome, with the partner. The activity log also required that the programs document ongoing strategies for increasing educational gains and specify what recruitment activities were completed throughout the month.

The program activity log will become the basis for identifying models of promising practices.

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

Other activities supported by leadership dollars included: Teacher/Director Fall Conference, distribution of a weekly newsletter and other pertinent information, assessment training (TABE and BEST Plus), purchase of distance learning curriculum, and monthly Shop Talks for program directors.

**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**.

The core programs convened in 2016 to analyze each programs’ core indicators of performance. We did this by using the 2014-15 data from each program. The Montana Department of Labor Research and Analysis Division used this data to data match this for employment 2nd and 4th quarter after exit, median earnings 2nd quarter after exit, credential attainment rate, and measurable skill gain. Although, for adult education all but measureable skill gain data is currently baseline data collection, this glimpse at how adult education compared with the other core partners was very informative. The data has been shared with the local programs, and it became a springboard for conversation on how adult education performed alongside our partners, but more importantly how we need to connect with the other core partners who outperformed us in certain areas. This was meant to be a tool to guide and inform instruction in the coming next program years. It readily showed eligible providers where program improvement was needed; in the long-term this type of report will be the basis for assessing program quality and effectiveness.

**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.**

The State Adult Education Director is a member of the State Workforce Innovation Board. In this capacity the State Director is directly involved in all one-stop decisions at the State level. This provides an opportunity to share the perspective of Adult Education in one-stop agenda topics.

The State continues to work collaboratively with the other core partners to provide one-stop services in each of our 12 Montana Association of County (MACo) districts. Through a variety of meetings, representatives from each core partner agency continue to utilize a WIOA Collaborative Agreement previously developed which describes our overarching one-stop mission, the specific services of each core partner and how they are to be integrated, a proposed service delivery model, the role of the community management team, and outreach to employers. The Collaborative Agreement has been sent to core partners staff working in each MACo district to guide them in delivering one-stop services. This agreement will be the foundation for future core-partner meetings and discussions of services.

In August 2015, the State agency worked with the other core partners to co-host a WIOA Kickoff. Representation from each agency in the MACo districts were brought together for technical assistance and training. The goal of the kickoff was to ensure that all WIOA local providers were prepared to support the one-stop requirements in WIOA. The agenda included: a motivational speaker on Leadership and Change, a presentation from the leadership of each core partnering explaining the program services, a Montana Department of Labor (DOL) presentation on connecting clients with the Montana Career Information Services, and a panel discussions on career pathway opportunities and sector strategies. The conference participants were then broken into workforce districts for facilitated discussions on what was learned and how they could begin to prepare for changes that will strengthen their one-stop delivery services.

Following the WIOA Kickoff, the Montana Department of Labor (DOL) convened a meeting of State and local core partner staff to decide how the State could organize and prepare for writing the combined State plan. The group decided that the first step would be to decide on significant challenges across the programs and form workgroups to address how the partners could work together to address the challenges. The meeting participants identified three primary challenges that crossed the agencies: effectively working with youth, working with clients who have barriers to employment, and engaging employers. Three workgroups were established to determine how these specific challenges could be addressed in our State plan. The workgroups met over the span of weeks to create documentation on how each agency worked with the identified populations and made recommendations on how we would bring quality services to each group under WIOA. The documents from each workgroup had a two-fold mission; provide information for components of the State plan and reinforce the one-stop mission for eligible providers.

In the Adult Education RFP competition in spring 2017, all eligible providers were required to respond to specific questions documenting how they will be responsible for meeting the one-stop requirements that the State will delegate to them. The eligible providers will be required to provide basic, individual, and follow-up career services. Basic services will include the wide range of services from assessment to referrals with other programs and services. Through the Montana Career Pathways Project, all adult education teachers have completed activities on accessing and understanding labor market data; so all teachers have a working knowledge of labor market data that will be essential for delivering the career services. In our State Plan, all core partners committed to use the Montana Career Information System (MCIS) to provide individual career services. All WIOA clients will set up a career portfolio that can be seamlessly transferred from one agency to another. The portfolio will include skills inventories, specialized assessments, and short and long-term employment goals that are relevant for the client’s chosen career pathway. This Statewide systemic approach to meeting individual career services will provide clients with streamlined career services with no duplication of activities to be completed. Regardless of the core partner that begins the individual career services, the client can be assured that all planning and information will be readily available to all agencies who are providing core partner services.

At this time, an initial MOU regarding the infrastructure costs has been initiated, drafted, and sent to core partner agencies for review.

**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.**

The State of Montana had not had a grant competition for these funds. The five providers awarded EL/Civics grants under WIA had completed extension applications since the original grant competition. That includes program year 2016-17.

During the Adult Education RFP competition in spring 2017 under WIOA, two providers were awarded the IELCE funds for program year 2017-18.

* **Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in**

**combination with integrated education and training activities**;

In order to understand the IELCE requirement under WIOA, the State contracted with two ELA teacher leaders to facilitate a Career Pathway Project for the five providers. The purpose of the project was to assist ELA teachers in developing an understanding of how they could expand their existing services to provide required IELCE services. The project included the following modules: Exploring MCIS, Student Skills Inventories and Interest Profiler, Exploring Occupations, and Researching Education and Training.

Over the past program year, the ELA teachers have been participants in all State-level College and Career Readiness (CCR) workshops. Their participation allowed them to work with the Adult Education teachers in the creation of standards-based lesson plans for the State CCR website. This provided them the opportunity to see the planning required to prepare students for secondary credential attainment or transition to postsecondary education/training/employment.

All ELA teachers have been participants in MCIS training, so they can provide educational and career counseling that is aligned with the State approved career planning system.

* **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;**

The State previously sent an ELA lead teacher to Salt Lake City to participate in a three day Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) training presented by Miriam Burt. The teacher returned to Montana as a train-the-trainer to share cutting edge strategies on how to incorporate workforce strategies into the ESOL classroom. The strategies were based on the CCR standards with a focus on integration that connects reading, writing, and vocabulary using workplace situations. Additionally, there was a focus on soft skills and building background so students have a cultural basis for reading exercises and workplace information.

Following this training, all the State ELA teachers had a presentation from Citizenship and Immigration Services. The presentation focused on employment issues and barriers to employment for students with Visas/green cards.

These two trainings laid the foundation for ELA teachers to be better prepared to help an ELL student transition to unsubsidized employment. The State will be able to analyze the performance results and challenges in the next program year using our student data information system.

The ELA lead teacher remains a strong and reliable resource for other ELA teachers throughout the State. She also continues to serve as the lead trainer for Best Plus and other ELA related trainings.

* **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.**

The State MCIS that the ELA teachers have been trained to use with their students has all the current State workforce information. This gives the teachers all labor market data and workforce information for the State. The State previously contracted with a lead teacher to build an adult/ELL student checklist within the MCIS system. Through this customization, the teachers are able to integrate relevant workforce activities into their instructional practice.

**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.**

The Montana State Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Common Core Standards (CCR) were adopted on November 4, 2011, with Montana being the last of 46 States to adopt these standards for K-12 education. These standards ensure that secondary students graduate prepared for college and the workforce, as they reflect the knowledge and skills that students need to be successful in the 21st century economy such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, teamwork, research and use of technology.

In February 2015, the Adult Education (AE) unit at the OPI adopted the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.* These standards have identified the essential K-12 CCR standards that need to be incorporated into the adult education classroom. By adopting these standards, the Montana AE programs will have student expectations that are consistent with K-12 students. Additionally, AE programs will have access to K-12 tools and materials that support student learning.

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

The State sent two adult education lead teachers and a professional development coordinator to the OCTAE 2016 CCR Standards Implementation Institute in Dallas. The team brought all the information back to adult education and ELA teachers by presenting a two-day Summer Institute that gave all participants the occasion to delve deeply into the standards in order to understand key advances in their content areas. Teaches left the Institute with the framework to implement the CCR standards in their classrooms. The Institute was well-received, and through observation and whole group discussion, the State team was able to determine the next step for state-wide professional development. The next state-wide Institute will build upon this and provide technical assistance on writing lesson plans aligned to the CCR standards.

**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 Montana Department of Corrections follows the Association of State Correctional Administrator’s (ASCA) definition of recidivism.

Recidivism rate– the rate at which adult offenders return to prison in Montana for any reason within three years of their release from prison. Each release can have only one corresponding return.

Given this definition, we must wait three full years before we can calculate a recidivism rate. With a 6/30/2016 end date, a recidivism rate for this group would not be available until after 6/30/2019.