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**North Carolina**

2016 – 2017 Narrative Report

In 2016-2017 NC funded 77 providers who serve students in 100 counties. State Leadership Activities focused on providing assistance and support to local providers on Title ll regulations and on its impact on program practices. State leadership activities included:

* managing data to improve performance,
* partnering with local Workforce Development Boards,
* models for improving student transition to postsecondary,
* creating pathways for students with disabilities
* researching and adopting web based educational curriculum to accelerate transition.

Key Activities:

* Regional New Director Training – WIOA – the full day training included an overview of Title ll changes including a Core Partner Toolkit.
* Regional and virtual training – Data Management System and using Data management to improve instruction
* Developing and implementing hybrid delivery models for professional development
* Developing technology applications to improve system efficiencies by creating on demand short training videos and opening an online portal for for resources and interaction with providers.

1. State Leadership Activities (section 223)

*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).*

State leadership activities for section 223(1)(a) were organized around five strategic areas: professional development for state staff, technical assistance to providers, intra-agency collaboration, inter-agency collaboration, and dissemination of best practices. State office team members, participated in five national trainings on aligning with one-stop centers, developing MOUs, negotiating infrastructure costs, and working with local workforce development board plans. This training was revised and modified for presentations to local providers.

Intra-agency collaboration- The Director of Compliance and Partnerships participated regularly in the system office We Align4NCWorks initiative planning and information sessions. These sessions led to increased collaboration with CTE and training provider partners as well as sharing of information and initiatives.

Inter-agency collaboration- The director participated in a cross divisional national conference with personnel from CTE, Curriculum, Continuing Education and Student Services. This training conference, Next Gen Partnership, led to the implementation of their engagement process to foster collaboration with a variety of employment sectors. The process has enhanced and re-energized employer engagement and provided a platform for further collaboration with the Department of Commerce. A major emphasis has been strengthening the alignment with DHHS, particularly through VR. Joint planning has gone on throughout the year concerning developing options for integrated employment for persons with disabilities and creating and sharing best practices for successful transition for students with intellectual disabilities or other disabilities to post-secondary education. Additionally, through participation in the Education and Employment Opportunities for Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee, Title II staff have been working in a cross- agency team to develop legislative policy to support individuals into competitive employment and post-secondary opportunities.

Technical assistance and dissemination of best practices webinars have been provided throughout the year. Two key venues for this dissemination of best practices were the Continuing Education Leadership Institute and the IELCE planning grant regional presentations.

## *Establishment or operation of a high quality professional development programs as described in section 223(1)(b). Establishment or operation of a high quality professional development programs as described in section 223(1)(b).* Professional Development (PD) System for North Carolina

In 2012, the North Carolina Program and Professional Development Team established a credentialing system to train instructors in evidence-based teaching methodologies. These include the learning philosophies and frameworks that are unique to adult education and literacy activities. Research studies prove that the quality of instruction has the greatest impact on student performance. By program year 2018, North Carolina requires that 75% of paid instructors in Title II-funded programs must be credentialed within two years of hire.   The credentialing process is maintained by our contract with Appalachian State University.  Courses are reviewed by NC PD staff annually to assess quality and to ensure there is a sufficient blend of theory to application.  This year the main activities for this system included the following:

1. The system office subject matter experts redesigned and provided core courses for the NC Credential
2. Hybrid model of delivery – A major activity this year was to redesign the credentialing courses from a face-to-face model of delivery to hybrid.  The goal of this project was to improve access, to provide a model for hybrid delivery and to allow for more reflective training.
3. Development of hybrid model of delivery for ASE credential to be implemented in spring 18.
4. Assessing Essential Components of Reading training to develop a more flexible model of delivery.

Below are the credentials awarded by NC and the number of credentials earned during the 2016-2017 program year:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  | **Credentials**  **Awarded** |
| 1. CORE - Face-to-Face |  |  |  | 103 |
| 1. CORE - Hybrid - 10-weeks |  |  |  | 28 |
| 1. Adult Secondary Education |  |  |  | 54 |
| 1. ESOL Specialty |  |  |  | 45 |
| 1. STAR/Reading - 6 days each |  |  |  | 63 |

**In addition to the credentials supported and awarded through the NC PD System. State leadership has provided many trainings and PD opportunities that were provided via webinar, Moodle, and face-to-face. A summary of those PD activities is provided below:**

* Community College/Community Based Organization site visits & presentations as needed or requested to ensure continual program improvement.
* A number of Conference Presentations ranging in topics from transitions to program management
* Webinars-Including such topics as financial monitoring, new LEIS form, new NRS measures, Time and Effort process
* Development of work-based learning programs targeting students with disabilities

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

In 2016-2017, the State Office formally identified three Regional Representatives (RR) to serve approximately 25 Providers each. Primary responsibilities for RR is provided below:

* CCR first point of contact, form a professional relationship
* Assist, review, and provide feedback for Corrective Action plans and assist with program monitoring
* Attend regional meetings and facilitate trainings as needed
* Additional programmatic needs as requested or identified by the state or provider
* Review all program aspects to determine if technical assistance is needed

A major emphasis this year has been on providing support and technical assistance to providers for implementing effective transition/employment programs for students with disabilities. Below is a list of technical assistance or our involvement in partnership building to address this area:

* The Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP) helped providers pursue systems change to fully implement the Employment First approach and make supports for integrated employment the primary service provision option for people with the most significant disabilities.
* The Vision Quest Policy Team worked to develop a Unified Plan that focuses on promoting partnerships with Workforce Development in implementing Employment First while incorporating WIOA.
* NC Member of the Post-Secondary Education Alliance-a collaboration between NC Higher Education System and the different state education and health and human service agencies to promote the successful transition of students with intellectual disabilities or other developmental disabilities to higher education.
* NC Representative of the Capacity Building Team: Interdisciplinary state team (DPI and VR) work together to enhance effective interagency collaboration for secondary transition programs including evidence-based intervention and implementation strategies to improve students’ postsecondary outcomes.
* NC Representative for Disability Services Advisory Board provides leadership, to facilitate communication in best practices and procedures statewide, and to distribute information for all disability service providers in the North Carolina Community College System.
* NC Representative of the Education and Employment Opportunities for Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee to assist legislative policy to support individuals with disabilities into competitive employment and post-secondary education opportunities.

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

Approximately, twenty-one Providers were monitored during the 2016-2017 program year. This number represents 25% of North Carolina’s current providers. The System Office staff conducted on-site program monitoring visits for twenty-one providers located throughout the state. All monitoring visits were based and evaluated on the required thirteen considerations while focusing on three primary areas:

1. Program Management

2. Adult literacy instruction

3. Data quality and evaluation

Follow-up concerning the CAPs, are ongoing and are facilitated by the regional representative for that Provider.

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

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

During 2016-2017 NC focused permissible activities on initiatives of significant statewide commitment. The overreaching theme that frames these activities is the use of technology to improve data management systems to assist programs in meeting State adjusted levels of performance and to create guided pathways and models for improving transition from adult education to post-secondary.

Adult Education collaborated with the community college system in their system wide approach to improve college ready skills for all students in K-12 system, adult education and in community college remedial programs. The plan connects K-12, community college and adult education to define college skills and knowledge needed to ensure students are college and career ready immediately upon entry into postsecondary. Several initiatives are operating simultaneously to leverage partners’ resources. NC community college system is phasing out its placement exam with multiple measures protocol. Adult education is working on creating a multiple path to earning a NC high school diploma. This credential would be recognized by NC community colleges as part of the multiple measure for entry into college. Adult education is part of a community college system wide team to research and pilot programs and curriculum that specifically targets students at the ASE level or who are in developmental/remedial education program whose goals are to enroll in college. We are piloting a “transition” model that provides career contextualized online and face-to-face instruction and provides intensive advising on getting into and being successful in college.

1. NROC EdReady Partnership - We are collaborating with community college partners to identify online learning options to prepare students to enter directly into gateway math and English college courses with career awareness and a projected career path. Staff attended NROC training on their online programs and web based tools and developed a plan to 1. extend the reach of adult education to students facing barriers to attendance, 2. provide more opportunities for learners to access instruction outside of class 3. develop wraparound support for NROC’s online, media rich, personalized instruction to prepare students to transition to post-secondary occupational programs.
2. Basic Skills Plus- Title ll revised policies and procedures for Basic Skills Plus to be more in keeping with Integrated Education and Training requirements.

NC adult education is committed to improving the economic mobility of adults who lack basic academic skills and employability skills and preparing them for and enrollment in certificate or credit bearing training in high demand industry sectors. To reach that goal, in 2015, NC legislated a model that waives tuition for credit bearing courses approved for an adult education pathway programs. The program, Basic Skills Plus requires community colleges to apply for approval to offer Basic Skills Plus pathways. In 2016-17, the regulations for Basic Skills Plus were revised to be aligned to Title ll Integrated Education and Training model. An advisory committee was convened to guide the updates, communication and training. A state-wide survey was administered to get input on challenges, opportunities and training needs on setting up a Basic Skills Plus pathway. Based on survey results, state staff provided training on key components of Basic Skills Plus/ IET models. A web portal was created to serve as the one-point of service for Basic Skills Plus applications and resources.

1. Data Improvement Plan - Major projects were launched to make programs aware of and the need to use data to improve performance.
2. To incent performance, a Performance Based Funding committee was convened to research and develop a funding allocation method that would incent programs to improve performance on students in the lowest levels of literacy, retention and completion. The committee representing urban, rural, large and small providers created and recommended a formula that is in process of being approved by the NCCCS Board.
3. The NCCCS supported a complete reprograming of the current data management system to account for the new NRS guidelines. The technology and system support team attended NRS training to ensure programming met new requirements and provide real time reports for providers to use for program improvement. Beta programs were identified to test and provide feedback on the efficiencies of new programs.

2. Performance Data Analysis

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*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.*

ABE/ASE

Our aggregate Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) levels overall exceeded the 35% target for the 2016-17 reporting year with a performance of 36.1%. Our ABE Levels 4 and 5 exceeded the target and ABE Levels 2 and 3 fell below the target. Our ABE Level 1 met the target. ABE Levels 1 through 5 performed at 36.5%. ABE Level 6 had 32.1% MSGs. Even with the inclusion of ABE Level 6, the 36.1% performance is a significant increase over our prior year’s 30% performance level.

Of the overall measurable skill gains (MSG), most of the gains were from pre/post-test educational functioning level (EFL) gains and secondary diploma/equivalency with approximately 22% and 10% respectively with the remaining gains from the other MSG categories.

ESL

Our aggregate English as a Second Language (ESL) fell short of our 37% target for the 2016-17 year with an actual performance of 34.2%. Our most significant shortfalls occurred at ESL Levels 2, 3 and 4. Our ESL level 6 exceeded the target. Our 34.2% performance was a slight improvement over the prior reporting year.

The vast majority of the MSGs were from pre/post-testing EFL gains which accounted for approximately 33% of the gains with exit/entry into post-secondary and high school equivalency credentials accounting for the remainder.

The additional ways that students may earn MSGs was a contributing factor to the ABE/ASE levels outperforming ESL overall.

Combined Program Performance

Factoring in periods of participation (PoP) for the 2016-17 reporting year, our overall MSGs were 35.5% which was a significant improvement over the prior program year’s 31% performance, but fell slightly short of our 36% target. Our participant population for ABE/ASE was approximately 67% and ESL accounted for 33% of our participants. The number of participants in ABE levels 1 - 5 decreased from the prior program year with ESL and ABE Level 6 remaining consistent. The average contact hours were also in alignment with the prior program year.

During the 2016-17 program year, regional trainings were conducted to improve awareness of NRS changes with an emphasis on developing understanding of evaluating performance especially with respect to the various performance indicators. We have introduced and disseminated to our providers new monitoring tools and additional feedback and guidance of data analysis and program performance.

For the 2017-18 program year, we have worked with IT to customize and enhance our student information system database. Part of this programming includes the creation of additional tools and reports to aid providers in proactively monitoring their data and performance. In addition, our Research and Performance Management department is now playing an instrumental role in creating new data monitoring tools and evaluating performance with respect to our funding models.

3. Integration with One-stop Partners

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*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 three agencies responsible for the core programs under WIOA- the Community College System, Department of Commerce, and Department of Health and Human Services- have worked this past year to align core programs and one-stop partner services via the NCWorks Initiative. By focusing on common goals and building on each other’s strengths, the state has begun to develop the organizational tools, structures and cross-agency protocols needed to support the vision of WIOA.

NC Works Commission does not have unique representation by Title ll on the state board, and only a small percentage of local boards have met this requirement. This requirement has been difficult to accomplish due to resistance from the commission’s lead agency, Department of Commerce. Dialogue continues in an effort to meet this requirement. Title ll did not delegate its one-stop requirement responsibilities to local providers.

Integration with One-stop partners

Title II has worked through the Council of Workforce Development Board Directors to promote compliance and alignment within the one-stop system. On a survey conducted of Title II providers by the Compliance and Partnership Director, the following overview of integration with one-stop partners was compiled.

1. Title II was represented on local workforce development boards by 51% of responding Title II agencies.
2. A total of 73% of respondents were familiar with the local workforce plan and priorities.
3. A total of 32% had an office at the one-stop.
4. A total of 31% had a one-stop center located at their agency.
5. A total of 60% of title II providers assigned an employee to work at the one-stop on either testing, recruiting, or teaching workforce preparation classes on a regular, weekly basis.

The following services are provided at the one-stop centers for the benefit of Title II students: on-the-job training, internship placement, job placement, testing, career counseling, instruction, transportation, childcare, financial assistance, emergency services, workforce preparation activities, and other supportive services.

The infrastructure costs for local one-stops were negotiated by representatives of the one-stop system and representatives of Title II over a period of six months. The final decision was to allocate a total of 1.5% from each Title II funded agency to contribute to infrastructure costs of the system. This allocation was taken from the 5% allowable local administrative funds, thereby reducing Title II local providers’ administrative funds to 3.5% of their federal award.

4. Integrated English Literacy/Civics Education

*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.*

North Carolina was awarded a total of $1,090, 460 for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) activities. For the 2016-2017 program year, North Carolina did not hold an open competition, but continued funding to current providers. As a part of the continuation award process, programs were required to submit an application outlining activities IELCE requirements. A total of 43 programs were approved by the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges on July 15, 2016. North Carolina held the last state competition for IELCE program funds during the 2013-2014 program year.

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

North Carolina has developed various mechanisms to implement the required Integrated Education and Training (IET) component of the Federal grant. The programs collaborated with community college departments that offer credit-bearing or industry recognized certificates. Programs have reformed their process for assisting students with career navigation and counseling. Several programs have allotted a portion of their IELCE award to supporting a Transition Advisor position. The Transition Advisor serves as the liaison between the training providers, NC Works Center (American Job Centers) and other state and local agencies. The advisors provided IELCE students with instructions on the requirements for various career pathways. Additionally, the advisors connected adult learners with the staff and tools required to co-enroll in specific programs.

Providers have devoted a substantial amount of time to developing comprehensive curriculum that will support the IELCE program model. During the application process, funded providers were required to report how their curriculum will directly align with the requirements of an IET program. Several providers have developed curriculum in conjunction with local employers. By creating curriculum with the employers, providers are able prepare students with content that is contextualized and transferable to real-world scenarios. Additionally, during the program year providers worked in teams to streamline and disseminate best practices about curriculum and successful implementation of IET programming.

Providers offered diverse types of support services. As students co-enroll in various programs, support services must be provided to help students complete the program. Funded providers worked with various on-site and external partners to provide support such as childcare, transportation and tutoring services to program participants. Furthermore, several programs have expanded the number of course offerings and hours to accommodate the needs of the adult learners participating in the IELCE 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;*

All funded programs have completed research on the in-demand industries located in their service area. By completing the in-demand research, providers have been able to target the employers that will directly align with specified career pathways. To increase the number of students that are prepared to enter unsubsidized employment, providers have created unique partnerships with employers. For example, many providers have worked with employers to develop job shadowing opportunities, field trips, guest speaker activities and on-site hiring opportunities for program participants. Several providers have created pipelines with local employers to ensure that adult learners are able to secure employment. Furthermore, providers have partnered with their local Small Business Centers, Workforce Development Boards and Job Corps to provide employment options for adult learners.

A lesson that has been both learned and disseminated during the program year is the importance of aligning classroom content with employer needs. Many programs have worked tirelessly to ensure that their academic content is contextualized and meets the needs of local employers. Thus, by aligning the content with employer requirements, students acquire the skill-sets needed to fully integrate into the workforce. One of the challenges for some of the programs located in economically depressed, rural areas of the state is identifying in-demand industries that provide family sustaining wages and or are nationally recognized.

*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.*

All 43 funded IELCE providers actively partnered with their local Workforce Development Board. Several of the providers serve on their local Workforce Development Board and host classes at the local NC Work Centers. The providers and workforce system have created a partnership that includes assistance with marketing, recruitment and retention. Furthermore, some providers have developed a strong referral network with their Workforce Development Boards and community constituents. By creating strong partnerships, this allows students to receive both the academic and employment supports required to integrate within the workforce. Many of the providers have utilized custom designed employment curriculum such as NC Career Clusters, Working Smart, Mastering Soft Skills, Career Awareness and Employability Skills.

To provide comprehensive oversight of the IELCE program, providers are required to submit an annual report. The annual report focused on the important tenets of the program to include recruitment strategies, curriculum design, support services, implementation of IET programming, occupational training and partnership development. Furthermore, during the program year, providers engaged in informational webinars in which they can share experiences and lessons learned. During the program year, each funded provider received technical assistance regarding the full implementation of the IELCE program. The technical assistance focused on data quality, implementation of IET programming and proper assessments for adult learners.

5. NC Adult Content 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 North Carolina Adult Education Content Standards (NCAECS) represent a proactive effort by North Carolina Adult Educators to ensure rigor and consistency in program content and student outcomes for adult learners across the state. There are 5 primary content areas: reading, writing, math, technology, and speaking and listening. The NCAECS range from ABE level 1 to ASE level 5. Teams of state staff, adult educators, and expertise in the field worked together to write these world-class standards that are customized for adult learners. The NCAECS were also reviewed and aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards in 2014 as part of the OCTAE alignment project. A professional development team from North Carolina attended the Content Standards training in Arizona to ensure our NCAECS are aligned to both the K-12 & CCR content standards.

### 6. Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals

*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.*

Sixty percent of North Carolina’s literacy providers offered basic skills instruction in 64 NC Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) adult correctional facilities.  Additional educational programming was provided at seven detention centers, four local jails, and five youth development centers.  Educational programming in our correctional facilities was successful with 11% of all corrections students earning a high school equivalency credential.

The NCDPS housed 37,438 offenders on June 30, 2017, as reported on the Prison Month End Population table <http://randp.doc.state.nc.us/kimdocs/0003560.htm>. At the direction of the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA), the Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission (SPAC), housed within the NC Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC), defines and measures the rates of recidivism for criminal offenders involved in state-supported correctional programs. North Carolina General Statute (N.C.G.S.) mandates the Commission to calculate and report biennially on the recidivism of offenders in the adult criminal justice and juvenile justice systems. The first report on adult recidivism required by N.C.G.S. 164-47 was published in 2000; since then, reports for adult recidivism have been calculated and published in each even-numbered year.

Due to the current N.C.G.S. requirements, recidivism is only calculated by the Commission and for only r the fiscal year that allows for the utilization of the Commission’s established fixed lookback period of two years. Additionally, the recidivism calculations are inclusive of all academic educational programs (non-vocational) offered, including adult literacy and post-secondary educational programs. The most recent recidivist data available is for FY 2013 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013), which was reported in April 2016. It is important to note that by statute, recidivism is only calculated every other year, and that rates are presently only calculated for adult offenders released in odd fiscal years.

The NC legislation defines recidivism as “repeat criminal behavior” and utilizes that broad definition for measuring recidivism as a way of evaluating correctional programs and sanctions. As such, the Commission uses arrests as the primary measure of recidivism, supplemented by information on convictions and incarcerations, to assess the extent of an offender’s repeat involvement in the criminal justice system. The most recent recidivist data that NC has is for 2013, as noted below:

* + 48% for arrests
  + 26% for convictions
  + 21% for incarcerations

NC Community College System (NCCCS) has requested from NC Department of Public Safety (NCDPS), disaggregated annual reporting for adult education students.