**State Leadership**

**Alignment:**

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

**Rebranding and Overall Alignment:**

To reflect the broader array of services available through locally-funded programs, Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) re-branded itself as KY Skills U on July 1, 2017. Much preparation was made in fiscal year 2016-17 for the rebranding, designed to better illustrate the expanse of both education and workforce preparation opportunities provided by KYSU in all 120 counties across the Commonwealth.

KYSU continued to emphasize the importance and contextualizing of standards-based academic instruction with workforce preparation (essential) skills by: requiring all staff in positions with instructional responsibilities to complete the Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) soft/essential skills courseware (introduced in 2015-16) and pass the summative assessment to earn a Kentucky Essential Skills Certificate (KESC) (signed by Governor Matt Bevin) no later than the end of FY18-19; ensuring students are enrolled in a blended, academic program of study to be awarded a KESC; including earning a KESC as an area for performance (number of certificates awarded); and encouraging earning a KESC as a student’s opportunity to secure an initial stackable credential.

KYSU and Department for Workforce Investment (DWI) purchased the WIN courseware and summative assessment to provide opportunities for KYSU students to experience research-recommended blended instruction by integrating soft/essential skills courseware modules and classroom instruction. For each module a student may earn a badge (Communication; Conveying Professionalism; Critical Thinking; and Collaboration) and with the passage and earning of all four module badges become eligible to take the summative assessment. Additionally, the WIN courseware offers modules for standards-based academic instruction and career readiness preparation [to earn a Kentucky Career Readiness Certificate (KCRC) or National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC)].

**Workforce and Other Partners:**

KYSU worked with the Office of Employment and Training (OET) to provide options for both students and clients. While KYSU wraps a blended, academic program of study around earning a KESC, OET’s Kentucky Career Centers’ [(KCC) also referred to as One-Stops] clients may choose to earn a badge associated with each module and/or qualify to take the summative assessment to earn a KESC. While students and clients may only earn a KESC after earning all four badges and taking the summative assessment, allowing KCC clients greater flexibility may help to be more responsive to employers. For example, if an employer is most interested in potential or incumbent employee’s communication skills, it may only require that the client earn a Communications module’s badge.

KYSU continues to collaborate with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners by supporting the **Paths 2 Promise initiative** [a U.S. Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training grant] in partnership with Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), Department for Community-Based Services (DCBS), Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), and OET. The grant is designed to study the influence of selected supportive services in preparing SNAP-benefit-receiving individuals for a career. Assistance with transportation and child care expenses are provided for participants as they concurrently receive workforce preparation contextualized academic instruction, coaching and career counseling from a college and career navigator and postsecondary education success coach, and opportunities for work-based activities; with the desired outcome that participants gain employment in a high-demand sector that provides a living wage. Each student randomly assigned to receive extended services is tracked for 36 months to determine the impact of these services on his/her persistence and career readiness. In June 2018, the grant concluded its second year of a three-year study.

KYSU has completed its second year as a partner in **Project CASE (Creating Access to Successful Employment)**, a $4.4 million, five-year federal grant that provides funding to help individuals with disabilities living in the Eastern Kentucky and Louisville Metro areas train and transition to employment. Led by Kentucky’s Office of the Blind (OFB) and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), the grant services focus on employment in the high-demand sectors of information technology, manufacturing, and healthcare.

Kentucky is one of four states to receive the grant, which is designed to increase participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways. It features dual enrollment in contextualized academic instruction and occupational training with intensive wrap-around services. The grant provides direct services to individuals in seven counties of Metro Louisville [Local Workforce Board (LWB) Kentuckiana Works] and another 23 rural counties in Eastern Kentucky’s local workforce board (EKCEP). Through the grant, both Metro Louisville and EKCEP have established case management systems. The case managers are specialists in advocating for and assisting with removing barriers to facilitate participants’ transition to education and/or employment.

Additionally, KYSU has united with OFB, OVR, DCBS, and OET to continue to pilot **SARA**, a client engagement tool. Kentucky, along with Nevada and Alaska, was selected to pilot the product through grants made possible by the Rehabilitation Services Agency, the federal OFB/OVR agency. SARA directly communicates with students via text and email messaging. Currently adult education providers in the TENCO local workforce area use the product. Once students enroll in KYSU local programs and set particular goals (e.g., earn a high school equivalency diploma, transition to college, etc.), they receive regularly scheduled messages/questions that perpetuate their engagement in the learning process. The messages and questions are interactive, and SARA replies with corresponding follow-up messages based on students’ responses. The correspondences are recorded within SARA as case notes and are accessible to local service providers. Students may also be referred to other participating agencies, and case notes may be shared across all agencies.

Throughout the program year, KYSU continually provided opportunities to connect local KYSU providers with local partners to enhance student access, support, and success. In July 2017, KYSU hosted all local KYSU program directors, who were addressed by Terry Manual, State Librarian and Commissioner of Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA). This session launched a partnership between KYSU, KDLA, and DWI entitled, **Library Economic Advantage Forum (LEAF)**. The partnership catalyzed collaborative efforts between local libraries, KYSU providers, and KCCs by challenging them to identify and implement innovative arrangements to serve more students/clients. Frequently, local libraries are places in the community where citizens feel comfortable and where donated space to conduct adult education classes or client consultations with KCC employment specialist staff might attract new patrons and/or encourage existing patrons to partake of services more often.

KYSU and partner staff members participated in a **WIOA Co-Enrollment Cohort**, a national technical assistance grant funded through the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) and facilitated by Maher & Maher. The purpose of the Cohort was to identify ways to enhance client/student co-enrollment across the four core Title agencies and other required partners. To accomplish increased co-enrollment, Cohort members understood improved access to a variety of services concurrently potentially reduces a participant’s time receiving assistance and services and increases their likelihood of positive employment and educational outcomes. Kentucky was one of six states and the District of Columbia to participate in the Cohort. Activities included state-level meetings, attendance at its national meeting, and the development of a state action plan. As of December 2018, states within the Cohort have accepted greater ownership of the initiative and continue their idea generation work with a mutually designated KYSU staff member as their national facilitator.

Later in September 2017, KYSU invited the **Deputy Secretary of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) and Executive Director of Community Action Kentucky** to its **program directors’ meeting**. During the session, the Deputy Secretary increased awareness of Kentucky’s pending Medicaid Waiver and how local KYSU providers could work with DCBS and KCC case managers to best serve able-bodied adults without dependents who would be affected by the waiver. The Executive Director’s address served to connect local KYSU providers with local Community Action agencies that provide support services such as childcare and transportation. (Some Community Action agencies, particularly in the eastern part of the state, serve as the Title I service provider.)

Additionally, the **Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board Executive Director** acquainted KYSU program directors with Kentucky’s certified Work Ready enterprise and explained how adult education can contribute to area certification processes and ultimately the health of their communities’ workforce. Kentucky’s counties are awarded the distinction based on meeting a set of criteria. The criteria most potentially affected by adult education includes: the percent of the working age population (18-64) without a high school diploma; the percent of working age adults with “some college” (as defined by the American Community Survey); and the number of adults who have earned essential skills and/or career readiness certificates.

In early December 2017, **Titles II, III, and IV facilitated a joint training** hosted by KYSU (Title II). During an afternoon session, the Commissioner of Workforce Investment and Vice President for Adult Education addressed the collective audience, which was comprised of all KYSU program directors, Title III regional and area managers, and Title IV regional and local case managers, with a cooperatively motivating message. Subsequently, each Title designee directed a 15-minute presentation, followed by questions and answers, as a means of better educating his/her contemporaries on their Title’s services, structure, and programming. This was followed by local area teams’ examination of specific case studies and routable discussions. Because this exercise provided local teams the opportunity to cooperatively manage through realistic scenarios on how to better integrate and streamline recipient services, it proved to be a beneficial experience.

**Professional Development:**

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

**Carl D. Perkins Leadership Funds:**

To supplement State Leadership funding, KYSU applied for and was awarded a Carl D. Perkins leadership grant for the last four years. In FY2017-18, funding was dedicated to securing a coordinator for The Kentucky College and Career Connection Coalition (KY3C) which was founded in 2013 by Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), and Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). Until 2017, the KY3C efforts were largely led by GEAR UP Kentucky (GUKY), until such time as the Board decided to hire a full-time coordinator. Braided funding was used to support the coordinator’s salary; GUKY contributed 50 percent and KYSU contributed 50 percent (using Perkins leadership grant funding). Strides were made under the direction of the coordinator, including the addition of new member organizations, re-design of the website, and the facilitation of KY3C-specific sessions at the CPE’s Student Success Summit. Ultimately, however, member agencies were unable to arrive at consensus to fully commit and continue to contribute to its sustainability – primarily due to agency funding cuts.

KYSU requested an amendment to the Perkins agreement to re-direct remaining funding to support WIN training. While the purchase agreement with WIN included a set number of training days, Perkins funds supported the development of instructional frameworks and contextualized lesson and unit plans produced by subject matter experts. Consequently, instructors could provide a blended approach to instruction using the WIN courseware and contextualized, standards-based lessons and units to prepare students for transitions to postsecondary education and training and/or careers.

The results of those efforts included the creation of 72 contextualized lessons to facilitate students’ engagement in pursuing career pathways. Additionally, instructional frameworks that emphasize the integration of digital literacy for the workplace.

Over recent years, through contributions tendered by KYSU’s vice president, who serves on its planning committee, the National Career Pathways Network (NCPN) Conference expanded its focus from primarily k-12 subject matter to more sessions oriented toward programs that serve adult learners.

In 2017, ten KYSU staff members attended the NCPN Conference in St. Louis, and all were either primary presenters or co-presenters in the adult learner strand. Perkins leadership funding provided program directors, from across the Commonwealth, an opportunity to attend the conference where relevant sessions on integrated education and training and other topics and occasions for networking are available.

KYSU continued to focus professional development (PD) for program directors and instructors on integrating technology and GED® test content preparation into relevant, contextualized academic instruction. It provided program staff comprehensive and intense PD, offering policy-required PD along with relevant elective options from which to choose. The framework encapsulated standards-based andragogy, academic content, contextualized instruction, digital literacy integration, effective instructional strategies, and instructional leadership.

Professional development was delivered in face-to-face, online, or blended formats by PD contractors from the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD) at the University of Kentucky, the Adult Education Academy at Morehead State University, the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL), and Kentucky Educational Television (KET).

**FY17-18 KY Skills U Professional Learning (PL) Model:** Strong administrative and instructional program leadership is a key element in producing successful student outcomes. To this end, all program directors were required to participate in a Program Director Institute, entitled *Reaching through Teaching*. Due to the release of the Request for Application (RFA) scheduled for January 2018, the Institute sessions were hosted in the summer and fall, to permit directors to devote time to responding to the RFA in the spring. As in previous years, the face-to-face Institute sessions were supported by online activities, which together entailed approximately 27 hours to complete assignments and strategize as to how to apply learned best practices.

The goal of the Institute was to equip program directors with practical tools to cultivate effective instructional leadership focused on providing quality instruction to optimize student success. The Institute allowed participants to explore existing resources and collaborate to create new strategies aligning with WIOA implementation expectations using data driven decision-making, collaborative approaches to problem-solving, and effective integration of instructional technology.

This Institute’s shared concrete applications of research-based, instructional best practices. Participants acquired ready-to-replicate strategies and tools for improving their role as instructional leaders and promoters of instructional efficacy. Special attention was given to program culture, observation tools, and contextualization.

In addition to the Institute, new program directors were required to participate in *Administration Orientation to Adult Education* and facilitated online courses including: *Orientation to Adult Education* and *Introduction to the GED® Test*. New English Language Acquisition (ELA) instructors were required to complete the *CASAS Implementation Test* training in lieu of the *TABE* training.

Experienced instructors’ requirements align with hours of work per program year:

* **Instructors working 1000+ hours/year** completed three, 12-hour courses from a list of online and blended choices in the KYSU Professional Learning (PL) Handbook, one of which was required to be blended.
* **All instructors working 500-999 hours/year** completed two, 12-hour courses from a list of online and blended choices in the KYSU PL Handbook.
* **Instructors working 200-499 hours/year** complete one, 12-hour course from the list of online and blended choices in the KYSU PL Handbook.
* **Instructors working less than 200 hours had no PD requirement.** They were invited to attend any training as a professional growth opportunity.

Professional development for experienced instructors focused on mathematical reasoning, workforce preparation, instructional technology, reasoning through language arts, ELA and special populations, including instruction in correctional settings, with students with learning differences/disabilities, and at-risk students. Each offering was coded to align with the criteria in the classroom observation tool categories and indicators, as well as identified NRS levels. This added feature was designed to facilitate for both instructors and directors selecting learning options that best aligned with the teaching assignment and growth needs of students. In this way, directors had improved information to guide staff to seek professional development to address areas of growth identified in their classroom observation.

**Provision of Technical Assistance:**

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

KYAE has six, state-level employees [four regional associates, one special projects, and one management information system (MIS) administrator] who provide technical assistance to KYSU-funded adult education providers in Kentucky. Each of the regional associates is responsible for local providers in a different region of the state. The special projects associate works with local providers and appropriate partners to facilitate specific initiatives, such as SNAP E & T, corrections education, etc. and the MIS administrator works with all providers with technical assistance related to our home-grown student information system called the Kentucky Adult Education Reporting System (KAERS).

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the regional associates and the KAERS administrator conducted technical assistance trainings (July 24, 2017 – August 3, 2017) related to KAERS and the state adult education implementation guidelines at six sites (i.e., Hazard, Madisonville, Somerset, Bowling Green, Lexington, and Louisville) across the state. These technical assistance trainings were offered to all individuals employed through AEFLA grant and Kentucky’s adult education funding. Each session focused on the state’s *Implementation Guidelines* and the newest KAERS functionalities. Additionally, the KAERS section focused on technical aspects, which included, but was not limited to: data quality and flow, defining data elements (with an emphasis on the barriers to employment), data collection, and data analysis. The training also included the use of the reporting tool in KAERS and how best to interpret and utilize reports for program improvement. Review of the Skills U *Implementation Guidelines* highlighted important policy-related matters, placing particular emphasis on the assessment policy and appropriate testing protocol, as set forth by test publisher guidelines. For example, KY Skills U and our WIOA core partners require any person administering a TABE test to be certified through the DRC/McGraw-Hill TABE testing certification process to ensure proper and consistent testing protocol.

During the 2017 program year, the KY Skills U administration and accountability team had one, one full-day (July 28) and two, two full-day (September 21-22 and December 7-8) face-to-face technical assistance trainings, including some professional development, for all Skills U directors. At these technical assistance trainings, a wide variety of items were discussed. As a highlight, the first training included information regarding the program contract and other program specific documentation (e.g., Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky) as well as additional KAERS and *Implementation Guidelines* training. The second (Sept. 21-22) and third (December 7-8) trainings were delivered in conjunction with professional development and the administration and accountability components were primarily focused on partnerships with WIOA and other partners (see Workforce and Other Partners section).

The administration and accountability team conducted a two-day (May 16-17) and one week (June 18-22) technical assistance training for successful RFA applicants. The May meeting covered the following topics: transitioning from WIA to WIOA,WIOA: Shared Accountability/Partnerships, Integrated Education and Training models, How to Staff a Service Area, Budgets and Staffing, the state funding model, and two special sessions, one for consortia directors and another for directors from the state’s community and technical college system. The week-long session meeting covered the following topics: Career Pathways, Managed Enrollment, Integrated Education and Training models, Change Management, Assessment Policy, the Kentucky Health waiver, SNAP E & T, the *Implementation Guidelines*, data quality, Barriers to Employment, co-enrollment, the One-Stop Delivery System, professional learning, and a variety of community partner presentations along with local providers “best practices” highlights.

            For the first six months of the program year, the regional associates convened regional meetings with adult education program directors in conjunction with the ten local workforce investment board (WIB) meetings (these meetings were not convened due to the RFA during the last six months of the program year). At these meetings, typically held every other month or quarterly, the associates provide, at minimum, three things: (1) technical assistance updates and new information, (2) up-to-date performance data for each program in attendance, and (3) an opportunity for an open question-and-answer session to address any issues identified by directors. Additionally, the agenda always included topics that were discussed at prior trainings. These meetings provided a means for face-to-face technical assistance and a feedback loop for the state office.

Throughout the year, new information relative to performance, WIOA, etc., was disseminated through mass e-mails and other forms of online communication. Regional associates also responded to program inquiries via telephone and e-mail and made single program visits as requested.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

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

            Throughout the year, funded local providers’ performance outcomes were evaluated on a weekly basis. A statewide report was shared every Monday with Skills U staff along with a county-level report among the administration and accountability team. These outcomes served as an indicator of quality services and an assessment tool for program improvement. Each week, regional associates generated up-to-date performance results and, based on performance and progress, provided technical assistance as necessary

A real time component of KAERS’ (i.e., updated every night) dashboard shows each local provider, at a county-level, the annual goal, weekly goal, and actual outcome for measures. Specifically, the dashboard displays three measures for total Measurable Skills Gains and total High School Equivalency Diplomas Earned. Additionally, Measureable Skills Gain Performance and total Participants are shared. The dashboard also displays a measure called “HSE Performance”, which is the same as Secondary Credential Attainment, but includes participants who enter at NRS ABE level 4, regardless if they progress into NRS ABE level 5 or 6.

Local provider performance was a topic of discussion at state meetings and an ongoing conversations between the regional associates and the local Skills U program directors.

At the end of the second quarter and fiscal-year end, local program performance data was e-mailed and mailed to local providers’ fiscal agent heads and Skills U Directors. The end-of-the-year letter was accompanied with a local provider score card. The score card provided descriptive data related to the program and students as well as end-of-year performance data; specifically, metrics used in the state performance funding formula, which is primarily comprised of the three means of making a measurable skills gain (i.e., percentage of students earning a GED® diploma, pre-test/post-test level gains, and adult education students transitioning to postsecondary education and training). The score card is available to program staff through the KAERS system year-round and some program staff share their score cards with local partners.

Regional associates conducted on-site compliance visits to local providers to assess record keeping, data quality, adherence to policies, etc. In addition, independent audits were conducted by the Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts at programs in 30 Kentucky counties (25% of the state). Both programmatic and financial records were reviewed, along with policy compliance. Findings and/or recommendations were subsequently followed-up by appropriate regional associates’ contact in order to rectify any anomalies or non-compliance matters.

**B) Permissible State Leadership Activities:**

**As applicable, describe how the State has used funds for additional permissible activities in section 223(a)(2). The development and implementation of technology applications, translation technology, or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology.**

(See Professional Development above.) Professional development was delivered in face-to-face, online, or blended formats by PD contractors from the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD) at the University of Kentucky, the Adult Education Academy at Morehead State University, the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL), and Kentucky Educational Television (KET).

**Professional Development Instructional Technology Assistance:**

In FY2017-18, KYSU commissioned a report on the state of instructional technology integration in all providers across the Commonwealth. The report summarized the impact of a three-year project implemented in 2015 to increase awareness and use of instructional technology both in the classroom and at a distance. In partnership with KET, KYSU developed a technology self-assessment and rubric for local service providers. All staff in all programs completed the self-assessment; the aggregated information established a baseline to identify strategies needed for statewide integration. Each program submitted a technology implementation plan based on assessment results.

Each program’s plan outlined the steps the program would take to achieve full integration of technology into their classroom instruction within three years. Full integration is measured by the students’ – not the instructors’ – use of technology in the classroom and remotely.

Throughout the three-year integration, an instructional technologist contracted through KET provided technical assistance to providers for planning and implementation of action plans leading to proficient use of technology. The technologist also conducted needs assessments for planning and realizing instructional technology PD offerings.

In FY2017-18 KYSU offered several professional learning opportunities focused on increasing the use of instructional technology, these included: “Creating Instructional Videos”, “Flip Your Classroom with Burlington English”, “How to Make Distance Learning Work Using EdReady and NROC English”, Introduction to the Flipped Classroom- Math”, and “Introduction to the Flipped Classroom – English”.

**See also One-Stop Integration and IELCE for technology used in the classroom and at a distance (i.e., WIN summative assessment and Burlington English).**

**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.**

This was the second year in which Measureable Skills Gain Performance (formerly “academic performance”) was based on one overall percentage rather than negotiating each ABE/ASE and ESL NRS level, a change that occurred with the start of WIOA performance reporting. The single Measureable Skills Gain Performance measure incorporated three means by which a participant may make a measureable skill gain (i.e., A pre-test/post-test or exit adult education and enter postsecondary education or training level gain, or by earning a high school equivalency diploma). In this second year of WIOA performance reporting, this was the first year that the additional WIOA Common Measures were reported; either for the full program year cohort (i.e., Employment in the Second Quarter after Exit and Median Earnings Second Quarter after Exit) or half of the program year cohort (i.e., Employment Fourth Quarter after Exit and Credential Attainment). The most recent measures provide a baseline for which to compare future WIOA Common Measures Performance, while Measureable Skills Gain Performance can be compared to the prior year.

Measurable Skills Gain Performance declined from 55.17% to 54.89, a difference of 0.28 percentage points (ppt). Our decline was greatest in ABE level 1 (7 ppt) and ESL level 2 (8 ppt). While these were our greatest levels of decline, they are two of our three smallest cohorts of students. Our largest cohorts of students (i.e., ABE levels 3 and 4) also declined 2 ppt and 1 ppt respectively. Our greatest increases were in ABE level 6 (3 ppt), ESL level 3 (3 ppt), and ESL level 4 (4 ppt). In terms of performance, the state met its negotiated target for Measureable Skills Gain (54%); however, the state slightly declined in its overall performance (54.89%) compared to the previous year (55.17%). The general trends in Measureable Skills Gain Performance is local providers are 1) more likely to be successful with students who are in the higher ABE levels (with the exception of level 6) and 2) less likely to be successful with students who are in the lower ESL levels. Also, assessing this performance is difficult when considering the barriers to employment data. In this program year (i.e. second full year of reporting barriers to employment data), the local providers reported an increase of 20% more barriers to employment data. Thus, it is apparent that local providers had greater intent to collect this data and received technical assistance as to how to define these data points. Therefore, the slight decline could be attributable to the participant characteristics from one year to the next. Nonetheless, Skills U state staff are implementing two new protocols to ensure higher levels of performance.

First, all local providers have been asked to complete an “Outreach and Recruiting Strategic Plan”. This plan details all outreach and recruiting efforts noting responsible staff, necessary resources, etc, as well as tracks the actual participants that were garnered from the effort. These plans are submitted to the staff office for evaluation to ensure that the duration and intensity of the efforts should result in a number of participants to meet federal and state goals.

Second, each local Skills U Director will participate in a bi-monthly (i.e., every other month) phone call with their regional associate. Prior to the phone call, the Skills U Director completes a worksheet (based on their KAERS data and reports) on which they list their current performance for a number of measures. Additionally, they list specific strategies related to these measures. For each strategy, the director self-assesses the outcome of the strategy. Based on these self-assessments, the Skills U Director is asked to consider adding more strategies on how s/he could improve upon the current strategies, if the strategies are not producing the desired outcomes that would lead to meeting performance goals.

Regarding the most recently submitted measures, 51.63% of all exiters were employed in the Second Quarter after Exit, 52.04% were employed in the Fourth Quarter after Exit (half of the program year cohort), the Median Earnings of the exiters Employed in the Second Quarter after exit was $6,008.  Of the participants who earned a secondary school equivalency diploma 21.57% were enrolled in postsecondary education or training within one year after exit and 20.07% were employed within one year after exit.

In an effort to increase all of these measures, Kentucky Skills U has partnered with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and created a new program called “GED+”, The GED+ Program targets working age adults who do not have a high school diploma. The program co-enrolls participants seeking a high school equivalency diploma in Kentucky Skills U and in one of the states’ top five industry sectors, so participants may earn both a high school equivalency diploma and a short-term (i.e., one 16-week semester or less) certificate.

**One-Stop Integration/RFA**

**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 support through State and local options.**

MOUs and Infrastructure Agreements (IFA) continue to be negotiated at the local level. However, state KYSU has contributed to infrastructure costs statewide by purchasing online TABE test (which local program staff typically administer) and employing Strategic Partnership Coordinators (see description below) as conduits between local KYSU providers and strategic partnerships.

KYSU agreed to purchase enough online TABE tests to provide access to partners, including use in the KCCs. The purchase proved more cost effective and contributes to a more informed referral system (students may TABE test and be appropriately referred to KYSU, reducing occasions of over testing) and greater access to testing for employers.

KYSU local providers also provide and report career services at comprehensive and affiliate KCCs, including outreach, intake, and orientation; initial assessments; referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services; provision of performance and program cost information on eligible providers and information on availability of supportive services or assistance; and integrated education and training programs.

Kentucky had been provided an extension by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) to the WIOA requirement to conduct a Request for Application (RFA) process. This decision permitted KYSU to conduct a process in the spring of FY17-18. However, as part of the agreement, providers were expected to design program models that included greater expectations aligned with the reauthorization of WIOA.

During the RFA process one key program position was introduced and each service area was required to employ, as staff at the local KYSU provider, at least one College and Career Navigator (CCN). A suggested student to CCN ratio was predicated on secondary education guidelines as no more than 240 students to one CCN. Many CCNs will not experience those kinds of student numbers.

The CCN role was described as providing transition services that include a continuum of personal and instructional strategies and collaborative support to enhance the awareness of and access to a network of community resources that supports individual career and educational goals. Intended to perpetuate retention and transitions, CCN roles and responsibilities include: referrals to community resources, building rapport with students, exploring careers and required skill sets, setting milestones leading to accomplishable goals, etc.

The other position introduced as a concerted attempt to ensure KCC and KYSU program integration is the Strategic Partnership Coordinator, who reports to the Director of Strategic Partnerships at the KYSU state office. Responsible for providing coordination, information, and direction to KYSU providers, local workforce area partners, and other strategic partners. The coordinator will facilitate outreach, referral systems, and innovative connectivity within the service areas. While employed at the state level, geographically disbursed coordinators located in four (4) regional workforce innovation areas will act as conduits between workforce and other partners to identify external opportunities for program directors to engage as ways to achieve alignment, integration, and seamless services to students and clients

KYSU and its partners in Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky (AOKY), Department of Workforce Investment and KCTCS, reinvigorated AOKY so that all programs’ eligible students may participate in the program, regardless of the presence of a KCTCS institution in their county. County programs that refer a student to an adjacent or nearby county for technical training while providing adult education in the student’s “home county” will be able to reap performance outcomes, as well as the program in the county in which the student is dually enrolled in technical courses.

Additionally, an employer-driven AOKY Fast Track was introduced. AOKY Fast Track is a partnership initiative between the KCTCS, KCC, KYAE Skills U that provides eligible adults the opportunity to earn a HSE (passing the GED test) and/or achieve academic gains through workforce contextualized, standards-based instruction while participating in a training program that leads to a short-term postsecondary credential needed by a local employer. Through AOKY Fast Track, local employers are able to engage in the community while building the pool they need. When an employer hires an AOKY Fast Track graduate, they are hiring someone who has a proven track record of success and the skills that employers are seeking.

Focus was re-established on serving potential students without a high school credential or its equivalent through AOKY by developing and sharing industry sector, occupationally contextualized curricula, as well as embedding a career pathways philosophy in professional development. As a result, programs are finding ways to advance students educationally and partner with Kentucky Career Centers (KCC) to provide career counseling and placement in family-sustaining-wage jobs.

**Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program**

**Describe: When state competition was held and number of grants awarded; efforts in meeting the requirement to provide integrated education and training; how progressing toward: goal of placing in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries (performance results, challenges, lesson learned) and goal of ensuring program activities are integrated with local workforce development system and its functions (performance results, challenges, lessons learned).**

In FY17-18, Kentucky Skills U served 782 English language learners (ELLs) and attained 486 measureable skills gains through the following eleven Kentucky counties: Barren, Daviess, Franklin, Graves, Hardin, Jefferson, Jessamine, Logan, McCracken, Shelby, and Warren. Five IELCE counties from FY16-17 decided not to seek Section 243 funding in FY17-18. (Although Kentucky received an extension for the RFA process, IELCE programs who wished to be refunded had to agree to WIOA expectations, e.g., unsubsidized employment.)

In FY17-18 providers set goals for the number of students in their IELCE program, including, (1) the number of ELLs to successfully transition from English language acquisition to adult basic or secondary education, (2) the number of ELLs to attain citizenship, and (3) the number of ELLs to attain a measurable skill gain. During the FY17-18 year, six ELLs passed their GED® tests.

For eligible IELCE applicants of the RFA, the service area for which they were applying for core services funds must have met a minimum of 2,000 ELLs. Applicants were required to submit separate forms describing the program’s plan of service and indicate how resources would be allocated in the budget and budget narrative. The eligible applicants were required to provide: the three (3) most recent fiscal years’ data indicating the ELL total population; number of ELLs enrolled the previous three (3) years: and projected number of ELL enrollments.

Program director meetings further explained integrated education and training and requirements of unsubsidized employment. Therefore, KYSU recognized the need to integrate clearer parameters and require corresponding descriptions of programming in the RFA released in spring of 2018. Eligible applicants were asked to describe: the student experience, including recruitment, intake and orientation, program design, classes, curriculum, use of technology, roles and responsibilities of staff and partner service providers; education services, including literacy and ELA and integrated instruction on rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civics participation; student transition from ELA to ABE and integrated education and training opportunities and employment outcomes; standards-based instruction, including workforce preparation, earning a KESC, sector occupational contextualizing, co-enrollment workforce training and placement opportunities; in-demand sector pathway, why it was selected and who would provide workforce training; recognized credential associated with occupational training or student’s educational and/or career advancement; employer investment; and the process for workforce partners to place students into unsubsidized employment.

As a result of the RFA, it was evident providers thoughtfully considered their target populations and student interests/goals (e.g., several local providers stated they served spouses of already employed workers and their interests focused on English speaking and acclimating their children rather than seeking employment). One program was particularly successful integrating standards-based academic instruction and civics and citizenship skills concurrently with informational technology occupational training and continued its efforts as an approved IELCE grant program. Other programs experienced challenges when no technical skills were offered in their service area. Three providers applied for the IELCE program for FY2018-19. This was an indication to KYSU that potential providers strategized to determine if and how best to serve this population within IELCE programming specifications. While multiple program director meetings were hosted by KYSU in FY2017-18 and specific training and case studies reviewed - illustrating appropriate IELCE and IET program models – KYSU will continue to pursue opportunities to educate, clarify, and share best practices in the future,

KYSU purchased Burlington English to be piloted initially and integrated in IELCE programs in particular. The courseware is CASAS aligned and provides academic instruction for ELL students. Of particular interest, was its inclusion of soft skills, career courses, and comprehensive technical/professional learning support services.

**Adult Education Standards**

**Standards-Based Classroom Observation Tool:** The College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) served as the foundation for the newly-revised Kentucky Skills U (KYSU) Classroom Observation Tool. The KYSU Classroom Observation Tool and associated resources assist program directors in monitoring for consistency of standards implementation across classrooms, determining professional development needs, uncovering staff apprehensions, identifying strength in standards-based instruction, and promoting professional dialogue. The newly-revised KYSU Observation Tool borrows not only from the College and Career Readiness Standards in Action (CCR SIA), but also from OCTAE’s Adult Education Teacher Competencies.

In 2017-18, the KYSU Observation Tool was streamlined to include an aggregate spreadsheet that affords directors greater ease of use in compiling results from program-wide classroom observations. A hyperlink-enhanced master observation tool was also designed to be used as a comprehensive standards-based resource for directors to coach staff post observation. As part of their 2017-18 professional development requirement, program directors were required to use new and existing observation resources to conduct observations of all new instructors.

**KYSU Lesson Bank:** The KYSU Lesson Bank serves as a web-based repository for rigorously vetted, standards-based lessons developed by Kentucky adult educators. The lesson bank launched in 2016-17, but several post-launch upgrades were made to the KYSU Lesson Bank in 2017-18 to ensure user appeal and ease of use. These upgrades included the addition of streamlined “Grab and Go” lessons to complement the existing full-length standards-based lessons; two new standards-based lesson plan categories titled, “Student Retention and Persistence,” and “Money Management/Financial Literacy;” new “At-A-Glance” RLA and Mathematics lesson plan lists to expedite searches; and new “At-A-Glance crosswalks between GED® High Impact Indicators (HIIs), CCRS, and correlating lesson bank lesson plans.

**Programs for Correction**

Unfortunately, KYSU and the Kentucky Department of Corrections (DOC) have been unable to finalize an MOU that would allow for a data exchange that is necessary to calculate the recidivism rate for incarcerated individuals that receive adult education services. This conversation continues between the legal personnel at both agencies. Once this MOU is in place, it does state that the recidivism rate will be calculated for prior years as well, so a trend analysis may be conducted to better inform the state’s situation.

**Kentucky Young Adults Diversion Partnership:**

In February 2018, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education selected Kentucky to participate in a technical assistance initiative to strengthen diversion services for justice-involved youth with diversion programs that include career and technical education, special education, and workforce development. Through the initiative, KYSU has invited potential local, regional, and state organizations to participate in the development of the Kentucky Young Adults Diversion Partnership.

The Partnership’s members view this initiative as a means for the state’s corrections, education, and supportive services organizations to establish and maintain a strong network to supportive services for young adults at risk or currently involved in the court system. KYSU led the Partnership in developing the following mission statement, goals, and objectives.

**Future Plans:**

While the report describes activities from FY17-18, it is important to share that positive discussions are taking place and can be reported next year. KYSU staff has entered into a partnership with the current administration’s newly refocused re-entry efforts. Additionally, conversations with DOC and Cabinet for Education and Workforce have begun to examine ways in which more inmates and ex-offenders can earn GED® diplomas, including capacity-building, outsourcing KYSU instructors, referrals to adult education providers upon release, etc.