**Louisiana Narrative Report 2017-2018**

**Introduction:**

The WIOA State Plan for the State of Louisiana is built on the notion of recasting the expectations of our most important natural resource - our people. Louisiana’s comprehensive adult education system will align workforce, education and economic development systems to support access to high-quality, comprehensive workforce services for all individuals, including those with significant barriers to employment. Partnerships will build the foundation for efficient and effective coordination of services to deliver seamless, customer–focused services to prevent duplication of service and prepare our students with the skills necessary to compete for family sustainable employment and be contributing members in their communities.

In Louisiana, Titles I, III and IV are under the administration of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) while the WorkReady U (WRU) division of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) is responsible for the administration of Title II adult education. The governance of adult education under LCTCS has maintained the focus of the adult education delivery model to serve eligible adults but encouraged the K-12 system to focus on providing educational services to minors. During the fiscal year, 1 in 5 Adult Basic Education (ABE) students served were under 19 years of age (NRS Table 3) remaining the same as the previous year.

Amid the state’s continued budget crisis, the possibility of budget cuts were announced. Fortunately, higher education, which includes adult education, was not cut as severely as anticipated. In an effort to streamline adult education services at the state level a reorganization of WorkReady U staff resulted in staff being aligned with existing departments within LCTCS.

During fiscal year 2017-2018 the results of the competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) released in March 2017 became effective.

There were two categories in the RFP for which an applicant could apply for funding to establish and operate programs to provide the allowable activities, including activities that are offered concurrently.

* **Comprehensive Literacy program** shall be designed to provide ALL of the allowable Adult Education and Literacy program categories: Adult Education and Literacy (ABE/ASE); English Language Acquisition (ELA), Workforce Preparation; Workplace Literacy; Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) and partner with mission-driven programs to ensure all allowable program categories are available to eligible participants in the workforce region.
* **Mission-driven program** shall be designed to provide a limited number of the allowable Adult Education and Literacy program categories that align with the organization’s mission/purpose. Mission-driven programs shall partner with the regional Comprehensive Literacy program(s) to ensure all allowable program categories are available to eligible participants in the workforce region.

28 applicants were funded which included twenty-six (26) Adult Education and Literacy Programs, eight (8) IET/IELCE pilot programs and nine (9) Corrections Education and Education of of Other Institutionalized Individuals. One comprehensive center was funded in each of the eight workforce regions. The remaining twenty providers were funded as mission driven programs that support the comprehensive centers in the various worforce regions. There were additional programs that operated during FY 17-18 on carryover funds, that were not funded through this new grant cycle funding formula totaling 33 programs in all operating in FY 17-18.

With the establishment of the new adult education network under WIOA, WRU remained committed to providing comprehensive foundational services and opportunities for individuals to move toward self-sufficiency by providing high quality basic skills instruction, secondary credential attainment, and transitional services that lead to a seamless matriculation to post-secondary enrollment, technical skill mastery, and industry recognized credentialing. WRU is creating a model that will result in family sustainable employment. Statewide enrollment for FY 2017-2018 increased by 18.6% compared to 13.8% in the previous FY. The overall performance increased to 53% for students making a measured skill gain (MSG), which is an increase of 2.9% over the previous fiscal year (NRS Table 4). Performance increases can be attributed to the establishment of WRU 2020 (Louisiana, Title II, five year strategic plan) that outlined enrollment priorities, a focused professional development plan, targeted technical assistance, a strategic marketing plan targeted to the areas with highest concentration of low literacy adults based on the American Community Survey and a better understanding and effective application of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards.

A commitment by the LCTCS and its WRU provider network to deliver quality adult education and literacy services that are research-based best practices to the citizens of Louisiana remained strong as demonstrated by significant improvement of measurable skill gains (MSG) in all National Reporting System (NRS) recognized categories. A concentrated commitment to improve performance and exceed national averages is further demonstrated in Louisiana’s academic performance data showing that 77.5% of the students post-tested completed an EFL on NRS Table 4B.

**State Leadership Funds:**

During FY 2017-2018, WRU was dedicated to challenging the status quo and supporting innovative services based on the needs of the provider network to fully implement the WRU vision and mission. Leadership funds were used to support the following: continued strengthening of the relationship with our one-stop partners, operation of high quality professional development programs, provision of technical assistance and the monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of adult education activities.

**One-Stop Partners:**

WorkReady U continued to work with local stakeholders and other partnering agencies to facilitate new methods of service delivery, increase secondary credential attainment opportunities, expand instructional content and delivery techniques to include college and career readiness standards, utilize technology to enhance educational opportunities, and transition from career pathway pilot initiatives to Integrated Education and Training (IET) opportunities through Louisiana Career Pathways.

**Professional Development:**

WorkReady U continued its commitment to excellence by offering professional development activities during FY 2017-2018 to ensure professional growth opportunities were offered to support the State Plan and the WRU vision and mission. WRU state staff continued its quest to offer the highest quality professional development opportunities by consulting with national professional development experts in order to streamline and focus professional development efforts on areas of value to the system – data analysis, recruitment & retention, teacher effectiveness, curriculum development, and partnership development/solidification.

Professional development activities included, but were not limited to:

* WIOA Communication Planning for Adult Education Administrators
* NRS Targeted Training
* Building Opportunities through IELCE
* CCRS
* Essential Grant Skills
* WRU Instructor Certification Course
* Louisiana Association for Public, Community and Adult Education (LAPCAE) conference
* LCTCS conference
* Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) conference
* Recruitment and Retention
* Data System upgrades

Louisiana had 98 local administrators/support staff, 408 adult education instructors, 71 instructional assistants, and 13 counselors in FY 2017-2018 (NRS Table 7).

All new instructional staff participated in the 8-week online, facilitated WRU Instructor Certification course. The course provided an introduction to teaching in adult education with a specific focus on Louisiana’s WRU program.

**Technical Assistance and Monitoring**

State Leadership funds were utilized to promote assessment policy awareness, professional development for data quality, policy, and compliance monitoring, in addition to an added focus on using data for decisions, retention techniques, and overall best-practices for instructional delivery.

Accountability in adult education in Louisiana is framed by WIOA and the National Reporting System (NRS). State Leadership funds are being used to continue development for enhancing the web-based data collection/management system that is used by all federally-funded adult education programs.

The following are activities and initiatives used to connect assessment and accountability in Louisiana as referenced in the State Plan for Title II of WIOA.

* The LCTCS adopted a performance-based funding formula for adult education that is aligned to performance indicators with the NRS and WRU prioritized outcomes.
* Louisiana continued its commitment to reach the individuals who are basic skills deficient by targeting federal funds to students working below an 8.9 grade level equivalent. During the fiscal year, just over 91% of the total students served were the adults with low levels of literacy and/or in need of English Language Acquisition: 72.5% of the students served were ABE level students and 18.9% of the students served were English Language Acquisition (ELA) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) students. (NRS Tables 3).
* During the reorganization of WRU, a statewide compliance team was established. The LCTCS’s monitoring procedures included analysis of data and program performance through monthly data submissions and desk reviews. Based upon desk reviews, state staff requested local data documentation according to a risk assessment determination. Follow-up onsite visits were conducted when warranted.
* During 2017-2018, Louisiana’s onsite monitoring instrument and philosophy utilized a risk-assessment model that incorporates six vital modules - data, recruitment/retention, classroom activities, records/reports, partnerships, and finance in an effort to model the USDE/OCTAE instrument and place emphasis on what is valued and consistent with the WRU blueprint. Onsite visits included an examination of student files, student attendance records, and program data submitted through the statewide data management system. Monitoring reports were prepared after each onsite monitoring visit. Sites that were non-compliant/had findings received recommendations for program improvements. Programs were given 30 days to prepare and submit a written plan of action describing the plan of resolution. State staff were assigned to ensure all plans are adhered to and non-compliance addressed in a detailed follow-up process to ensure that a resolution has been determined and put into effect.
* Technical assistance was ongoing to all projects, with a focus on and follow-up given to sites with indicated findings and low performance outcomes. Future funding may be impacted for sub-grantees who fail to meet corrective compliance measures or continue to perform poorly.

WRU continued to utilize established techniques for providing technical assistance to programs. The procedures included: performance target requirements, continued use of a risk assessment model and continued data review. Program performance negotiations jointly analyzed individual program data and established baseline performance goals for the fiscal year. The risk assessment model was used to identify programs with low performance data and guided the State in providing targeted technical assistance. Enhanced database dashboards were added to assist programs in tracking their progress in meeting the benchmarks and standards. Providers continued to be ranked in the state by benchmarks, pre-post testing and recruiting. This system was put in place to help both WRU and program staff identify program strengths, areas for improvement, technical assistance, and professional development needs.

* The LCTCS Internal Audit Division conducted onsite fiscal monitoring during FY 2017-2018. Based upon fiscal desk audits which examined program budgets and reimbursement claims, a risk assessment was determined. Onsite visits were scheduled with identified recipients to determine if expenses were reasonable, allocable, and allowable as required by the U.S. Education Department’s Office of Inspector General (OIG), Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE), AEFLA, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 C.F.R. Part 200 or Part 200).
* Providers were trained on the WRU Recipient Grant Management Handbook. The purpose of the handbook is to provide recipients with a single point of reference for managing/expending all federal AEFLA funds and to set forth the policies, procedures and guidelines intended to assist in the proper administration programs at the local level. The handbook provides programmatic information on how AEFLA funds are to be used at the local level. It includes information on the process used by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) to review budget information; the process by which successful applicants request reimbursement; how to determine whether a cost is allowable; required fiscal and programmatic reports and their respective due dates; and the process used by WRU to monitor eligible recipients for compliance.
* In FY 2017-2018 WRU began utilizing an electronic grants management system (eGrants). Recipients entered all budgets, revisions, and reimbursement requests in this system.

**Additional Permissible Activities**

Leadership funds were used to support grants to scale innovative practices to include local program implementation, continuous improvement, integration, alignment and capacity building activities within our network and with the workforce system.

During FY 2017-2018, WRU moved to the next phase of the implementation of a statewide distance learning pilot project, eLearn Project. The eLearn Project provides an interactive comprehensive curriculum aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRS). The scope of the project is to expand service offerings and provide teaching and learning modules in a distance or traditional classroom setting. Thirteen (13) class modules that are supported by success coaches during the students’ lifecycle have been developed. The project provides the opportunity to place students at the center of learning where they have the ability to create, collaborate, reflect, and communicate in a modern, digital environment. The project on-boarded five (5) WRU programs in FY 17-18 with the goal of on-boarding more programs each quarter so that organizations, large and small, can shape the future of distance learning in Louisiana.

**Performance Data Analyses:**

WorkReady U served 42,081 undereducated and underemployed citizens in FY 2017-2018 with 21,588 students participating in basic skill instruction (NRS Tables 4). As part of the LCTCS 2020 strategic plan an emphasis was placed on workforce preparation and training activities thus explaining the significant increase in total students served versus those that populated to the NRS tables. Data reveals that 53% of those who participated in academic services during the FY 2017-2018 program year made a measured skill gain (MSG) (NRS Table 4). Effective instruction at the local level is evident by the fact that 77.5% of students post-tested (NRS Table 4B) demonstrated an EFL gain.

The total amount of federal and state funds expended by LCTCS and local programs was $11,468,223.61. This amount includes Federal Funds of $7,136,114.97 and $4,332,108.64 of State Funds for 2017-2018.

The total number of participants served statewide across all groups and at all levels was 42,081. In FY 2017-2018, the total number of student attendance hours was 2,014,385 (Program Gains Report), which equates to the following:

Average cost per adult education student………..$272.53

Cost per contact hour…………….…………… $5.69

During a reorganization, the WRU department was merged with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) department under the umbrella of External Affairs within LCTCS. This resulted in the creation of a grants management division and a compliance division. Staff members from Institutional Research and Academic Affairs also provide assistance to the WRU team with data management/analysis and professional development.

The professional background of these staff members ranges from K-12 and adult education teaching experience, finance, and correctional and higher education administration experience. Staff members have participated in professional development activities including NRS workshops and OCTAE-sponsored meetings. Close alignments were maintained with the Department of Corrections, the Workforce Commission, Workforce Investment Council, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Louisiana Board of Regents and the Department of Education.

In 2017-2018, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System expended federal funding at the following levels (including carry-over federal funds from the prior year):

State Leadership . . . . . $1,100,019.82

Administration. . . . . . $585,283.42

Basic Grant to Local Providers . . . . . $7,136,114.97

Total. . $8,821,418.21

After a thorough review of the 2017-2018 adult education performance data, it is clear that the continued implementation of the WRU philosophy was beneficial to the students as the state experienced increases in the following areas:

* the number of students served with one hour increased by 18.6%;
* the percentage of students post-tested increased by 2.3%
* the percentage of students with a MSG increased by 2.9% with over 53% making a gain; and
* the number of ESL students with a MSG increased by 4.5%

Much of the success in student outcomes was due to local programs expanding their menu of services in order to better meet the needs of the community. Additionally, a focus on instructional cycles that are offered at times conducive to the learner in lieu of the traditional K-12 model, drove student performance outcomes and attendance.

WRU core follow-up outcomes (Table 5) were not reported for program 2016-2017 due to changes in National Reporting System (NRS) and WIOA reporting requirements and timelines. The first year report for FY 17-18 shows a success rate of 35% of students being employed at the end of the 2nd quarter and 35% still employed in the 4th quarter after exit. 28.8% of the students in the ASE program earned their High School Equivalency diploma and entered employment or post-secondary education.

The collaborative efforts of the Louisiana Department of Education and the LCTCS continued to focus on lowering the percentage of 16-18 year olds that were being served in adult education. Through clearer defined state mandatory attendance laws and more diverse alternative programs being offered in the K-12 system, Louisiana was working hard to address the dropout rate. Louisiana was also committed to ensuring that all individuals who were undereducated and underemployed had an opportunity to receive basic skill remediation and an opportunity toward self-sufficiency as evidenced by Table 3 that reflects approximately 91% of the students served were Adult Basic Education or English-as-a-Second Language learners. This long-term commitment was yet another measure that WRU was dedicated to building the Louisiana of tomorrow by providing comprehensive adult educational services to Louisiana’s most at-risk citizens.

**Integration with One-Stop Partners**

The LCTCS supported the integration of activities sponsored under the AEFLA in multiple areas relative to adult education, career development, and employment and training activities.

WRU and One-Stop centers coordinated partnerships in an effort to provide shared, unduplicated services. WRU partnered with each of the 15 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to nominate local adult education supervisors and have representatives appointed to each board. This coordination and communication provided opportunities for Title II representatives to serve on the local workforce development boards and act as a conduit for the exchange of information. LCTCS leadership participated in all appropriate committee and board activities with regard to the State agencies responsible for Workforce, Corrections, Higher Education, and Economic Development.

In accordance with WIOA regulations, shared infrastructure costs of the One-Stop Delivery System was accomplished through technology equipment contribution at the local level. The WorkReady U Adult Education comprehensive literacy center in each region provided an interactive kiosk at each LWDB comprehensive center. The interactive kiosk is in real-time, provides direct telephone access and chat feature for on-demand assistance to trained enrollment management specialists. Phase I of the kiosk content design was completed for the AEFLA basic program information and post-secondary career and technical education (CTE) activities authorized under Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. Phase I has the capability to collect basic intake information so that an individual’s needs can be assessed and immediate referrals to one-stop partners and/or business services are available. Phases II and III will be completed in 2019. These phases will provide regional specific information on adult education, CTE programming, and non-core partner information. The Title II infrastructure contribution will be evaluated on a periodic and/or annual basis to determine effectiveness.

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

As a result of the competitive RFP process, WRU provided funding to eight (8) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program (IELCE) pilot programs. The eight funded pilot programs ensured that adult English language learners, including professionals withdegrees and credentials in their native countries are provided instruction in literacy and English language acquisition, math, and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation with the opportunity to access workforce training/preparation activities. In 2017-2018 we served 2341 students (NRS Table 3), a 19.3% increase in the number of students served by the IELCE over the prior year

English Language Learners (ELLs) had the opportunity to participate in Louisiana Career Pathways and workforce preparation activities during the fiscal year. WRU began offering these activities as the ideal way to engage a new audience and expose them to the scope of services available to prepare them for the high-skilled workforce through integrated education and training opportunities. WRU workforce preparation activities stress the importance of career exploration, workforce navigation, and transitional support utilizing all core partner services.

WorkReady U took a proactive approach to keeping up with national trends by providing unique professional development (PD) opportunities. Historically, WRU has underserved the English Language Learner (ELL) population and trailed behind the national average for EFL gains with the ESL population. The performance and enrollment focus area was on increasing service to this population. During FY 17-18, the ESL population enrolled with at least one hour of service increased by 1.25% (Program Gain Report) with the number of ESL participants increasing by 6.7 % (Table 3). ESL students making a measured skill gain (Table 4) increased from 40.5% in 16-17 to 45.1% in 17-18.

LCTCS and the Terrebonne Parish WorkReady U program were selected to participate in the Building Opportunities through Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education project sponsored by OCTAE and LINCS. Terrebonne was selected to pilot and provide feedback to our national coach on the IELCE self-assessment tool. Lessons learned from participation in this project will benefit all eight IELCE programs in the state.

**Adult Education Standards:**

Louisiana continued to make great strides in FY 2017-2018 with College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) use in the adult education classroom. WorkReady made an investment to our network by building a lesson plan database – The WRU Lesson Plan Vault. In January 2018, comprehensive training for ELA and math teachers in CCRS-based lesson planning was provided in addition to instruction on how to navigate the newly developed WRU lesson plan repository.

The WRU Lesson Plan Vault is a database that is searchable by keyword, subject, lesson level, and standard.  After implementation of a Train the Trainer model, we were able to collect and review contextualized CCRS lesson plans to include in the repository. Local instructors from across the state participated in a vetting process that allowed us to carefully select lesson plans for entry into the database.  The vault allows instructors to access readily available CCRS-aligned, contextualized lessons.

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

During FY 2016-2017, the competitive RFP was released for Corrections Education & Other Institutionalized Individuals (WIOA §225). As a result of the application process conducted in FY16-17, the WRU network funded a total of nine (9) Corrections Education and Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals programs providing adult education services in 2017-2018.

Correctional education is a fundamental component of rehabilitative programming offered in juvenile justice confinement facilities, prisons, jails and detention centers. Previously, the incarceration capital of the nation, Louisiana dropped from first place to second place behind Oklahoma. This was accomplished by a historic bipartisan criminal justice reform package which included ten (10) bills. These measures focused on steering people convicted of less serious crimes away from prison, strengthening incarceration alternatives, reducing prison terms for those who can be safely supervised in the community and removing barriers to re-entry.

The money saved from reducing the incarceration rate was reinvested in re-entry initiatives including bolstering education programs within the prison systems throughout the state. Eighty-one percent (81%) of people entering prison do not have a high school diploma which makes the WRU mission of providing quality educational programs that helps incarcerated adults obtain the skills needed to acquire a high school equivalency diploma and transition to postsecondary education or training more important than ever.

The partnership between LA Department of Public Safety & Corrections and LCTCS enabled a better alignment of services for incarcerated individuals with career & technical education programs. Within the local and state correctional facilities, a total of 4,522 adults (Table 10) were served; 786 correctional students earned the High School Equivalency while incarcerated (Program Gains Report).

The most current recidivism rate reported by Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections (LA DPS&C) is 2016 data. The rate reported is for state offenders released from adult institutions, local facilities, and transitional work programs that have completed an education class while incarcerated in a state facility.



<https://www.doc.la.gov/media/1/Briefing%20Book/July%2018/3.recidivism.admissions.releases.pdf>