**Maryland Federal Narrative Report FY 2018**

During FY 2018, 26 programs received funding under Title II following a competitive application process held in the spring of 2017 to carry out the purpose of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the goals established in the Maryland WIOA State Plan. DLLR allocated funding distributions for Adult Education and Family Literacy Services Act (AEFLA) (sec 231) and Integrated English Language and Civics Education (Sec. 243). Twenty-seven applications were received and 26 grants were awarded to local jurisdictions and the Correctional Education Program. Seventeen programs received funding for IELCE.

The Adult Instructional Services (Title II) program experienced a change in leadership with the retirement of the Chief of Adult Instructional Services, Michelle Frazier, and the subsequent appointment of Ellen Beattie, Ph.D. to this position at mid-year. Also during the fiscal year, the Accountability Specialist, Melissa Desi, resigned to take a position with another state institution.

In FY 2018, the Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services (AELS), in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, assumed oversight of the Adult High School pilot initiative, created by House Bill 1381 in the 2017 Maryland General Assembly. The bill established an alternative pathway for adults over age 21 to earn a high school diploma based on the Maryland High School Graduation Requirements. Adult High School learners could opt an industry-recognized credential or postsecondary education credit while earning their high school diploma. A maximum of six pilot schools can be established by law. By the close of the year, one proposal was approved to establish an adult high school and another application is under review. Prospective pilots are required to identify funding to support their programs.

**State Leadership Funds**

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

***WIOA Implementation***

The Director and several staff members served on WIOA work groups with constituents representing WIOA and community partners in the areas of Alignment, Policy, Performance, Professional Development and the Data Dashboard groups. Recommendations of the work groups continue to inform policy decisions of the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) leadership.

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

***Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council***

The Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council (MALAC) continues to play a critical role in strengthening public and private partnerships by supporting a flexible and integrated education and training system for adult learners. The Council is co-chaired by the State Director of Adult Education and Literacy Services and an official of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Membership includes a broad geographic and demographic representation of the community, including government agencies, the Maryland legislature, community colleges, public schools, funders and community-based organizations. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis and discussions provide the perspectives of a broad base of constituents.  The Council serves as a significant resource to DLLR and DWDAL on matters pertaining to adult education initiatives. In FY 2018, the agenda focused on several issues including partnerships, cross-collaboration, GED®, WIOA, Maryland State Plan, Adult High School Program, diverse funding, and serving skilled immigrants.

***National/State Conferences***

DLLR adult education team members attended the following national conferences during FY 18: COABE, CASAS Summer Institute, National College Transition Network Conference, National Career Pathways Network Conference, TESOL, National Family Support Network, National Training Institute, National Meeting for Adult Education State Directors, Orientation for New State Directors, and the IDEAL Consortium. Members of the team also presented at COABE.

State conferences attended included MAACCE, and Raising the Bar (a workforce development conference), and WIOA Convenings. These are attended by WOIA partners and feature presentations from both workforce and adult education staff on topics of mutual interest.

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

The state utilizes a needs assessment model to prioritize professional learning needs at the local program level.

Introduction to TABE 9&10, LACES Beginning and Advanced Training and an Orientation for Intake and Assessment Specialist were held during this period. Professional development initiatives continue to address the need for training in competencies related to the GED® test. The state funded three local staff to participate in the GED® Testing Service (GEDTS) train-the-trainer opportunity at the annual GEDTS Conference.

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

During FY 2018, DLLR implemented a Professional Learning Coaching Pilot - GED® project. This initiative identified subject matter experts in the adult education field who would fill the role of Professional Learning Coaches. Instructional Specialists could request assistance from the coaches who would serve as a professional learning resource, help Instructional Specialists address professional learning challenges, and assist local programs with developing professional learning that meets their program needs.

***Local Leadership Team Workgroups***

Intake Assessment Specialist (IAS) staff meet quarterly to network with colleagues and address specific issues relevant to their intake and assessment. The group has also taken an active role in orienting and training new staff members.

The LACES Workgroup is primarily composed of local program Management Information System specialists (MIS) and administrators who have developed a strong interest and expertise in data management through the LACES system. The group provides input to the Accountability Specialist and state leadership team members on issues related to data quality and a venue for new MIS to develop in-depth knowledge of the state data management system.

***State Leadership Team Meeting***

In September 2017, DWDAL held its first annual State Leadership Team Meeting with 120 state and local staff attending. Four breakout workshops were offered in three concurrent sessions. This allowed those in leadership positions from local programs to network and hear information from state leadership. Sessions included GED® Test updates, the Maryland Adult High School Pilot Program, WIOA topics, and the Maryland Compulsory Attendance Age Law. Feedback from attendees reinforced the value of receiving professional development and updates as a local program leadership unit.

**Distance Learning**

In FY 2018, the Maryland i-Pathways program continued to serve learners at the adult secondary level who prefer an online learning experience to the traditional classroom. The i-Pathways website attracted 2104 new applications. Of these, 324 went to a local program for orientation and assessment and 48% were successful in meeting the qualifications for enrollment. The program served 196 new learners with 44 carrying over to the next fiscal year. Seventeen online class sessions were held, four of which continued from the previous fiscal year and three that began in FY 2018 and continued into FY 2019. Of the enrolled learners, 134 successfully completed the 15-week course.

The number of students who qualify for the MD i-Pathways program and choose to study entirely at a distance has decreased over the years. English language and ABE learners below the secondary level far exceed the numbers of enrollees at ABE levels 5 and 6. A Distance Learning Workgroup was convened last year to make recommendations to expand the scope of distance learning in Maryland in order to meet the needs of all students. Changes were made to the Distance Learning Policy to allow programs to count proxy hours and implement changes in curriculum to accommodate blended learning. The state became a member of the IDEAL Consortium and 10 programs participated in IDEAL 101, facilitated by Ed Tech. Nine programs implemented blended learning programs during the second half of the program. Notably, about half of the participants were from rural counties.

The Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services continued to work toward access to the State’s Cornerstone Learning Management System (LMS), the HUB, to provide the state with opportunities to develop online professional development and additional online and blended learning opportunities for students, which include the use of licensed and open educational resources (OER) for local programs. Additional efforts will be made during FY 2019 to increase both opportunities for learning in this critical need area.

**Career Pathways**

DLLR awarded $1 million in Governor’s WIOA Set Aside Funds for a grant to encourage local workforce areas to develop innovative career pathways that will increase adult learners’ access to training and/or career opportunities. Workforce areas wrote grants for up to $250,000 to develop demonstration projects with a consortium of local partners including adult education and business partners. A menu of recommended best practices were incorporated in the grant applications including registered apprenticeship/ pre-apprentice, IET, IELCE, transition support, English language acquisition and distance learning. Prince Georges County, Mid-Maryland and Baltimore City were awarded funding in the first round of grant proposals, and Anne Arundel County and Western Maryland were added in the second round. Two workforce areas accepted the offer of technical assistance to improve their proposals to participate in a future competition.

**Local Grantee Network**

Twenty-five local programs and Correctional Education received funding through the competitive grant. Maryland has a diverse group of providers that are currently 68% community college, 16% public schools, and 12% community-based organizations. Maryland also funds a public library system and the Maryland i-Pathways Distance Learning Program.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Adult education program specialists conducted program evaluation and monitoring throughout the reporting period through a combination of desk review of program data and information, review of trimester and final reports, and site visits.

Adult education program specialists visited local programs to monitor program and instructional practices, provide orientation to new leadership staff and to offer technical assistance for targeted issues including WIOA and IELCE implementation. Monthly conference calls for the grantee network provided information and updates of federal and state initiatives.

Additionally, fiscal monitoring and enrollment data verification audits are performed through the DWDAL Office of Monitoring and Compliance (OMC). In FY 2018, monitors from OMC conducted enrollment data verification at every local program. This audit, begun in FY 2015, revealed sources of data accuracy issues and led to greater consistency of data collection methods in local programs. Programs that failed to meet data quality standards were required to submit correction action plans and provide professional development that involved all staff in understanding the importance of consistent data collection methods. Verification of program enrollment data will be conducted annually.

Five local programs were identified for fiscal monitoring in FY 2018 and all were able to demonstrate sound fiscal practices. Although a risk analysis tool is used to prioritize monitoring needs, all grantees will be monitored routinely on a three-year rotational cycle. DWDAL’s fiscal monitors meet with the local program administrator and financial agent to conduct the audit. The adult education program specialist may participate as needed.

**Performance Data Analysis**

***Enrollment***

Enrollment numbers decreased slightly from 28,047 learners in FY 2017 to 26,536 in FY 2018. This decrease follows the national trend. English Language Learners represent the majority of the learner population (56% in FY 2018) with Hispanic/Latino learners representing the largest segment of learners at 44%. The portion of ASE decreased from 7% in FY 2017 to 6% in FY 2018. The representation of ABE learners decreased slightly from 39% in FY 2017 to 38% in FY 2018. For age related demographics, the working adults ages 25-44 remain the largest group of the adult education population (55%).

***Retention***

Although enrollment decreased from the previous fiscal year, retention in FY 2018 increased to 59% compared to 46% in FY 2017. Programs report that although they are seeing fewer students, those that enroll are staying for longer periods of time. Students averaged 81 contact hours during FY 2018. By category, the ASE population had the highest retention rate at 64%, with ABE at 61% and ESL at 59%. Although student retention is still a significant concern, we are encouraged by the upward trend which we attribute to a stronger emphasis on instruction that is aligned with student goals. Programs report that enforcing program attendance policies has had a positive effect on classroom dynamics and class completions. Additionally, the use of academic counselors and transition specialists have been instrumental in providing students with academic strategies to improve learner persistence.

***Literacy Attainment***

41% of the enrolled students increased an educational functional level in FY 2018 compared to 35% in FY 2017. By category, the ESL population showed the highest completion rate at 44%, with ABE at 43% and ASE at 37%. Of the students who remained long enough to post test, 61% completed a level, an increase from 55% in FY 2017. By category, the ESL population showed the highest completion rate of those who post-tested at 61% and ABE/ASE at 60%.

***Matched Literacy Level Attainment***

The matched assessment percentage was the same in FY 2018 as it was in FY 2017 at 64%. By category, ESL has the highest pre-post test match at 72% and ABE/ASE at 55%. The percentage of students who separated before completing a level dropped from 54% to 41%.

***Diploma Attainment***

The total number of high school diplomas awarded to enrolled participants was 909 during the FY 2018. Professional development efforts have impacted instructional design and delivery. Programs have adjusted curriculum offerings to provide shorter and more intensive single-subject classes to meet the needs of learners who have passed sections of the GED® test. Programs that have used TABE 9 and 10 report a better alignment with skills needed to prepare for the GED® test.

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

During FY 2018, 145 NEDP® participants successfully completed the requirements for a Maryland High School Diploma. This represents a significant decrease (39%) in total diploma attainment over the previous fiscal year (237 in FY17). Although NEDP® programs have adapted to the more challenging requirements of the NEDP® program implemented in 2014, they are experiencing some difficulty building a pipeline of potential clients and retaining enrolled clients through graduation. Local programs may be able to benefit from an increased emphasis on promoting awareness about the program, a focus on professional development for NEDP practitioners, and overall digital learning opportunities that support online and blended learning modalities.

**Integration with One Stop Partners**

The Maryland WIOA State Plan articulates a system dedicated to placing people before performance. Collaboration between WIOA partners is a key driver in policy development. Local workforce plans are required to articulate integration with the Title II in key areas to include: coordination of services including through career pathways; streamlining assessment practices and sharing test data for co-enrolled participants; representation by Title II on the Local Workforce Development Board; and the provision of adult basic skills services in the American Job Center.

In FY 2018, a group of adult education providers were invited to participate in a pilot called Project IMPROVE. The project was designed to promote greater integration of services by expanding capacity for frontline staff to access customer data in the workforce data system, Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE).

Other best practices in local areas include shared referral systems and orientation information sessions providing a seamless “no wrong door” model and reducing barriers to co-enrollment. Programs piloted shared intake including basic skills assessment and assigned specific staff to facilitate referrals between agencies. Staff are cross-trained to understand eligibility requirements and identify students who are ready to benefit from referrals.

Although individuals with limited skills including English language learners are a priority population in Maryland, in practice, referrals between systems have been infrequent. Adult education learners often lack a diploma or the basic literacy skills needed to qualify for job training or employment. In order to facilitate co-enrollment and create replicable interventions that can be tailored to local workforce areas, DLLR released the Career Pathways Grants in late 2017. The Request for Proposals specifically targeted low skilled jobseekers including individuals with limited English proficiency, low literacy skills and those who may lack a high school credential. (Please refer to the Career Pathways section for additional information.)

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

Following the competitive application in FY 2017, 20 local providers were awarded funding to implement IELCE/IET programming. After further consideration of the program requirements and resources needed to provide the program, three grantees opted not to accept the funds, reducing the number of programs to 17.

The state provided technical assistance to grantees through individual conference calls and three state-wide meetings. Efforts focused on assisting providers to understand the WIOA Section 243 funding line and adhere to its requirements. In some cases, this required programs to reexamine their current practices and to consider which learners might best be served in an IELCE/IET Program, in addition to giving consideration to whether their ESL population had sufficient work-eligible learners to participate in IELCE. In the next application cycle, 12 of the 17 providers opted to continue the program. We anticipate that ongoing training and support will be needed to ensure that programs are on track to deliver programming that meets Sec. 243 requirements.

Beginning in FY 2018, Maryland participated in the Building Opportunities Technical Assistance Project and received guidance through the Manhattan Strategy Group (MSG). Both the state and our local partner engaged in a collaborative process with the MSG coach and our partner state, Wisconsin. Information and resources were shared with IELCE funded grantees. The guidance from MSG will continue through FY 2019.

**Adult Education Standards**

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

In FY 2018 the Professional Development Specialist, in collaboration with Curriculum Standards Specialist, began work on a toolkit to develop standards implementation for Adult Basic Education and began the revision of the *Maryland Adult Education Technology Standards*.

The online course, *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*, by The Center for Families Learning has been a valuable resource for Instructional Specialists (IS) in promoting a better understanding of the standards and how to integrate them in curriculum.

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

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) follows the rules established by the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) for use in their Performance Based Measures System (PBMS). When the last mainframe became unstable, a new Offender Case Management System (OCMS) was placed in production. However, a migration decision to only migrate the inmate’s last release prevents calculation of recidivism for previous years. While OCMS went into production in July 2014, the intake and release data did not stabilize until change notes were implemented in the fall of 2014.

Correctional Education reports that a University of Maryland Researcher has made considerable progress in developing the new recidivism application that is currently under review. The DPSCS is on schedule to process a three-year recidivism report for the FY 16 release cohort in September of 2019. While the recidivism rate for students released in a current fiscal year will be available three years after that fiscal year, partial information indicates that those participating in Correctional Education have a lower rate of recidivism than other inmates.

A release cohort is created after the end of a fiscal year and processed against the Offender Case Management System (OCMS). An inmate whose new sentence after release has an offense date that is prior to the release date is excluded from cohort processing. Split consecutive sentencing is the most common reason for this exclusion.

Recidivism is counted for the following events:

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

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