**New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

**Adult Literacy Programs**

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II**

***Narrative Report Program Year 2017***

***(July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018)***



**December 2018**

**New Jersey Narrative Report 2017-2018**

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) recognizes that the vital element to the success of Adult Education is the understanding that effective workforce development is truly a multi-faceted approach connecting all aspects of workforce, education, economic development, and business. New Jersey has taken a proactive approach to broadening the collaboration and alignment of Adult Education with all WIOA partners. To that end, New Jersey LWD seeks to continue the development of leadership skills for Adult Education providers, to demonstrate a greater commitment to excellence through best practices, and to further hone the knowledge, skills and abilities of all involved with Adult Education statewide.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development is dedicated to providing sustained support, education, and development to our comprehensive adult literacy providers. As a result, Program Year 2017 included an increase in professional development opportunities for literacy staff and adult education providers alike, as well as the continuation of partnerships and collaboration to align under the requirements of WIOA.

**State Leadership Funds** (AEFLA Section 223)

Consistent with WIOA Section 223, the NJ LWD has prioritized the following state leadership activities:

* The NJ LWD Adult Literacy Division continues to enhance opportunities for local providers of adult education to become well-situated in collaborating with Workforce Development Boards. To that end, LWD required all Title II grant applications to demonstrate consideration and collaboration with local Workforce Boards through the completion and submittal of a required data form. This review form tasked local workforce boards with reviewing and sharing whether the local education providers were aligned (or not) with industry and educational needs specific to their communities. All reviews were read and logged by NJ LWD literacy staff and shared with the panel convened to choose the Title II grant recipients for a three-year grant award period starting July 1, 2017.
* Delivery of professional development has been accomplished by way of Leadership funding which includes supported regional conferences, program specific local training, and online training. The extensive online resources at LINCS (Literacy and Information Communication System), with its resource collection, professional development training offerings, and online learning community have added to more robust Adult Education understandings in terms of the College and Career Readiness Standards, and Integrated Education and Training Programs.
* NJ LWD’s goal is to continue to deliver high quality professional development to our adult literacy programs in a way that is hands-on and relevant to the needs of our diverse populations and varied providers. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development has mandated that adoption/revision of curriculum be aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for literacy and mathematics. To ensure adoption, LWD contracted with Susan Pimentel of StandardsWork to build a model for sustainable, long term implementation of those standards. The team from StandardsWork provided two days of hands-on-training for the math portion of the CCR standards with LWD regional coordinators, lead directors, and instructors throughout the state of New Jersey in November 2017. The training objectives from November’s math CCR training included:
  + An opportunity for attendees to delve deeply into the contents of the CCR standards in math and their implications for adult education.
  + A hands-on approach to deliver practical information (methods and materials) about the key advances in instruction and curriculum that the CCR standards demand.
  + Access to expert coaches who know the CCR standards, training materials, and activities in-depth, and will help attendees think through how to use the key advances to transform curriculum and instruction.
  + Ready-to-use training materials in CCR math that will enable them to replicate institute activities with other adult educators.
  + At the conclusion of the CCR training all who participated were electronically surveyed for a review of the overall training and recommendations for next steps in regards to professional development and the CCRS.
* Technical assistance in regards to NRS approved testing was provided to lead agency grantees, their partners, and local One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) staff by DRC/TABE and CASAS representatives on two separate junctures. Each session consisted of an overview of the testing platform, digital testing, score alignment and questions/answers. This training was well received.
* NJ LWD continues to utilize LiteracyPro Systems’ LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System) software as the Management Information System (MIS). LACES is compliant with the National Reporting System (NRS) requirements. Training was provided to all WIOA Title II staff through in-person conferences and webinars. NJ LWD program staff analyze the LACES data on a monthly basis and look for trends and other areas that could be perceived as weaknesses. They communicate areas of concern/issues to be corrected to state regional coordinator staff who are often in the field working directly with Title II providers in addition to contacting and working directly with the programs to remedy these areas. Individual consortium trainings were customized by LiteracyPro staff and provided in-person throughout the state. These trainings focused on further areas of concern in regards to data collection, entry, and management, and specifically directed technical assistance was provided in order to help produce strong data.
* The monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of adult education activities as per 223(1)(d) continued in PY 2017. Regional coordinators work in tandem with internal NJ LWD literacy staff to complete desk audits of all Title II lead agency programs and partner agencies. Areas of focus for PY 2017 included budget/expenditure reviews, attendance at required consortium meetings, and an introduction to performance data reviews including checks and balances for program effectiveness.
* The central office in-house program administration staff at NJ LWD continue to analyze, review, and monitor the following: grantee budgets, contracts and modifications; expenditure reports and payment vouchers; NRS data input and output in LACES including but not limited to NRS Tables and customized desk audit reports and; professional development needs. Policy manuals/procedures, and guidance communication documents are created and updated to ensure compliance with WIOA and AEFLA requirements and State and Local program and fiscal regulations. In-house program administration staff and regional coordinators work hand-in-hand and regularly communicate the progress of said grantees. All grantees receive a detailed report card noting their consortia’s progress. Report cards were disseminated at the quarterly Roundtable Directors’ meeting in January 2017. These reports provide an overall “grade” as well as a ranking of each Title II consortia program statewide.

**Performance Data Analysis**

In PY 2017, our programs collectively met all of the 11 educational gain core indicators of performance. From PY 2016 to PY 2017 our programs demonstrated significant increases in seven of the Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs). The increases ranged from a 4% increase to a 9% increase.

Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gain performance targets for PY 2017 were established and agreed upon by the NJLWD adult education and literacy staff in collaboration with the United States Department of Education’s (USDOEs) Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). A comparison of New Jersey’s performance targets for PY 2015, 2016, and 2017 and our actual performance toward meeting the targets is provided in Chart 1 below.

**Chart 1: New Jersey Adult Education Performance for the last three years**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Objectives** | **PY15**  **Target** | **PY15**  **Performance** | **PY16**  **Target** | **PY16**  **Performance** | **PY17**  **Target** | **PY17**  **Performance** |
| ABE Level 1 | 44% | **48%** | 48% | **53%** | 48% | **53%** |
| ABE Level 2 | 36% | **47%** | 45% | **49%** | 46% | **54%** |
| ABE Level 3 | 37% | **43%** | 43% | **44%** | 44% | **53%** |
| ABE Level 4 | 27% | **35%** | 37% | **42%** | 38% | **51%** |
| ASE Level 5 | 34% | **36%** | 39% | **57%** | 39% | **56%** |
| ESL Level 1 | 40% | **49%** | 48% | **55%** | 49% | **61%** |
| ESL Level 2 | 47% | **59%** | 53% | **52%** | 54% | **60%** |
| ESL Level 3 | 49% | **60%** | 52% | **60%** | 53% | **60%** |
| ESL Level 4 | 42% | **56%** | 52% | **54%** | 53% | **58%** |
| ESL Level 5 | 34% | **43%** | 42% | **44%** | 43% | **49%** |
| ESL Level 6 | 25% | **37%** | 36% | **40%** | 36% | **40%** |
| Entered Employment | 53% | **51%** |  |  |  |  |
| Retained Employment | 70% | **98%** |  |  |  |  |
| HSE or Diploma | 76% | **91%** |  |  |  |  |
| Entered Postsecondary | 22% | **30%** |  |  |  |  |

This chart shows data over the past three years on educational gains in the areas of: Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Acquisition (ELA). Over the last three years, New Jersey has demonstrated significant improvement in all of the 11 EFL gain areas.

During PY 2017, educational services and instruction to adults were provided through a wide variety of program offerings including: ABE, ELA, volunteer literacy programs, adult high school programs, HSE test preparation, and programs at correctional facilities.

For PY 2017, WIOA Title II programs served 18,167 adult participants*.* The populations served included 7,165 ABE Levels 1 - 4 participants, 825 ABE Levels 5 and 6 participants and 10,177 ELA participants. Chart 2 provides a breakdown of participants by EFL for PY 2016 and PY 2017 demonstrating some of the fluctuation that occurs in New Jersey’s WIOA Title II participants from one year to another.

**Chart 2: New Jersey Adult Education Participants**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational Functioning Level** | **PY 2016**  **Total Enrollment** | **PY 2017**  **Total Enrollment** |
| ABE Level 1 | 610 | 944 |
| ABE Level 2 | 1,713 | 1,828 |
| ABE Level 3 | 2,750 | 2,393 |
| ABE Level 4 | 2,413 | 2,000 |
| ABE Level 5 | 603 | 603 |
| ABE Level 6 | 275 | 222 |
| ESL Level 1 | 3,992 | 3,830 |
| ESL Level 2 | 2,691 | 2,534 |
| ESL Level 3 | 1,566 | 1,493 |
| ESL Level 4 | 1,191 | 1,116 |
| ESL Level 5 | 973 | 898 |
| ESL Level 6 | 342 | 306 |
| **Total** | **19,119** | **18,167** |

The ABE/ELA and Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE) program services were delivered through 17 consortia and lead agencies with multiple delivery sites throughout the counties coordinated by the individual consortium, community/technical colleges or public and private non-profit agencies and New Jersey State correctional institutions. Together, 85 agencies participated in delivering services in PY 2017.

The ELA programs are offered at many different venues from literacy-based volunteer programs to adult education programs. The programs provide services from ESL Beginning Literacy to Advanced Level ESL**.** For the volunteer-based programs, the majority of services are provided through the use of tutor-learner matches that deliver one-on-one or small-group instructional services.

The majority of the ELA students served (37%) were assessed at the ESL Level 1 EFL. This information is reflected in chart 3. The percentage of students served in each ESL EFL remained unchanged from PY 2016’s percentages. Our programs demonstrated a 6% EFL gain increase from PY 2016 to PY 2017 at the EFL ESL Level 1. This population may only understand isolated words or phrases, may have no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language, and functions minimally or not at all in English. A total of 18,167 students were served in the WIOA Title II program for PY 2017; 10,177 of them were English Language Learners (ELLs).

New Jersey met all of the ESL EFL gain targets for PY 2017. The improved performance can be attributed to several factors including technical assistance and targeted training focused on managed enrollment, accurate data entry, program and data analysis at various staff levels, improved inter-agency staff communication, case management and effective assessment procedures. Provider agencies were required to provide a system of support services (either on-site or through community referral) to allow adults the opportunity to participate in programs that would assist them in obtaining employment, entering postsecondary education and/or occupational training, attaining a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and/or attaining an industry-recognized credential.

In addition, ELLs enrolled in programs that received IELCE Section 243 funding were offered the opportunity to participate in Integrated Education and Training Programs (IETs). Twenty-seven percent of ELLs served with Section 243 IELCE funds participated in an IET.

**Chart 3: New Jersey Adult Education Participants in Programs for Adults with Limited English Proficiency**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational Functioning Level** | **Total Number of ELLs - PY 2017** | **Total Percentage of ELLs - PY 2017** |
| ESL Level 1 | 3,830 | 37% |
| ESL Level 2 | 2,534 | 25% |
| ESL Level 3 | 1,493 | 15% |
| ESL Level 4 | 1,116 | 11% |
| ESL Level 5 | 898 | 9% |
| ESL Level 6 | 306 | 3% |
| **Total** | 10,177 | 100% |

Educational opportunities were provided to adults via programs ranging from ABE Level 1 through ABE Level 6 and ESL Level 1 through ESL Level 6 to prepare adults to:

* enroll and participate in the appropriate level of an adult education program and receive ancillary support services if necessary;
* move to the next EFL;
* sit for an HSE exam and, if successful, receive a New Jersey state issued high school diploma; or graduate from an adult high school;
* obtain gainful employment;
* attain an industry-recognized credential(s).

The NJ LWD made a variety of investments to help individuals obtain their high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, improve their basic math, reading and writing skills, and attain basic English listening and speaking skills along with computer proficiencies necessary for employment. The NJ LWD utilizes state funding to enhance adult education alternatives directly related to welfare registrants, dislocated workers and other jobseekers.

There are 30 Workforce Learning Link (WLL) programs throughout the state. The majority of these programs are located at the One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs). Through a combined training approach and computer-based instruction, the WLLs provide services that include basic computer literacy including typing, financial literacy, job search and employability skills, ELA instruction, and HSE preparation and testing. This effort has allowed New Jersey to expand its literacy services to provide interactive training services that allow participants to address individual employment-related issues at their own pace. For PY 2017, the state’s 30 WLL facilities helped approximately 2,846 individuals raise their basic skill levels, obtain employment, enter occupational training, and obtain their HSE using computer labs in OSCCs throughout the state.

During the performance period, grantees were required to integrate an English language/civics education component for their Section 243 funded IELCE programs. The goal of this program is to create voluntary partnerships among federal, state and local agencies to develop, implement and improve English literacy and civics education services. These services are intended to help immigrants and others with limited English proficiency develop the skills and knowledge necessary to become active and informed parents, workers and community members and achieve in-demand training, credential attainment and employment leading to economic self-sufficiency.

Types of activities supported by these funds included:

* provision of experiential learning opportunities including completing employment forms, completing the voter registration process, engaging participants in volunteer opportunities and linkages with community resources;
* provision of computers and software for instruction;
* citizen preparation including visiting of polling places and government buildings in the state capital;
* field trips to promote American cultural awareness and skills; and
* preparation of curricula focusing on issues of importance to non-citizens such as preparation for becoming a U.S. citizen, job training and placement, housing, parenting and civics preparation.

New Jersey leads the nation in cultural diversity; there are over 140 spoken languages and various dialects spoken in the state. The IELCE programs support the immigrant community and other limited English proficient populations. During PY 2017, 3,783 participants were served through the IELCE program. The ELA population represented approximately 56% of all the students being served in the WIOA Title II program. This specific population may have limited reading or writing skills in any language and may function minimally or not at all in English. One hundred ninety-three of our ELLs passed their citizenship exam between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. The IELCE program emphasizes contextualized instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and U.S. history and government, in accordance with the *National Standards for Civics and Government.*

**Integration with One-Stop Partners**

* The One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs) were provided professional development by NJ LWD staff due to the fact that the OSCC provides all career planning services to enrolled participants of the Title II program. Thus, NJ LWD literacy staff created a virtual meeting via a Power Point presentation to all NJ OSCC staff and field representatives in PY 2017. The objective was twofold; to provide knowledge of Title II to new folks on staff and to better support the mission of Title II and to provide an update to the knowledge OSCC staff should have as they work with varied populations across titles. Additionally, One-Stop Career Centers continue to function as service delivery sites for the Title II program allowing for greater coordination of services and connections to career pathway opportunities.

* Under WIOA Title II a major requirement is to develop strong partnerships and program alignment within the community. In order to fulfill this requirement effective and efficient partnerships were required with local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and local One-Stop Career Centers. These partnerships were to be formalized through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). MOU’s shall include such topics as; availability and delivery of services, referral process, coordination and planning efforts, career pathway development, and others as deemed appropriate by the parties. As mandated in the 3-year Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO): If an MOU does not currently exist, or there is an existing MOU, it must be updated based on the new federal requirements, and all MOU’s were to be completed prior to January 1, 2018.
* The NJLWD literacy supervisor was a part of the Title I and Title II Workgroup which included representation from NJLWD Title I/Title II staff, the NJ SETC, local WDBs and Title II providers. The objective of the group focused on the need for resource coordination, an increased role for local workforce development boards in affected services, and the development of standards for staff professional development and technical assistance. The effort began with the development of a list of potential subjects. The group then ranked these subjects in a priority order. The workgroup discussed the priorities and agreed each subject would be a touchpoint for discussion. Six meetings were held with the workgroup in PY 2017.

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

* NJ LWD Title II grantees entered a second continuation year of the three-year grant award which included IELCE program funding. Literacy staff utilized desk audits and visits in the field to support grantees by way of initial IET/IELCE monitoring and information gathering. In May 2018, lead agency program directors were presented a draft of the NJ LWD IET monitoring tool with a timeline for implementation for FY19/FY20.
* The requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training (IET) activities was detailed in the competitive NGO. For the second year of this grant cycle, grantees were asked to have two different IET classes. Areas that could justify they met with local boards and needed two of the same IET class were granted exceptions and only example of this occurred in a geographic area with a very specific industry demand.
* For PY 2017, NJ LWD utilized observations of IET classes to develop and disseminate best practices. In May 2018, all lead agency directors viewed a presentation created by NJ LWD literacy staff detailing some of the best practices and successes for IET courses in the first year of the grant cycle. This was well-received and will be ongoing as IET courses are refined and/or changed.
* NJ LWD is progressing towards program goals of ensuring that IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system by way of a required MOU which details the collaboration and pathway for literacy activities between the One-stop, WDB, and Title II lead agencies/partners.

* To that end, a requirement of the NGO was the inclusion of a statement of need which speaks to the literacy service needs of the local WDB area, as outlined in the local WDB plan, for Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), English Language Acquisition (ELA) and Civic instruction.
* NJ LWD literacy staff and three NJ Title II lead grantee directors participated in the virtual IELCE Collaborative and shared their experiences and information learned at both the January 2017 and June 2017 Directors’ Roundtable Meetings held with all Title II grantees at NJ LWD. This engaging effort on behalf of US DOE/Manhattan Strategy Group provided technical assistance and connection for information sharing between paired states. Additionally, feedback and insight from the project team was instrumental in helping develop the Title II IET monitoring tool.

**Adult Education Standards**

* New Jersey LWD continues to utilize the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for adult education. LWD adult literacy Regional Coordinators regularly review grantee/partner curriculum and monitor instruction to ensure the CCR Standards are being effectively met. Additionally, throughout the summer of 2017, the three Regional Coordinators provided a condensed version of Literacy CCR turnkey training to all grantees and partner agencies on-site in an effort to follow-up from the formal CCR Literacy training provided in PY 2016.
* As referenced previously, NJ LWD contracted with Susan Pimentel of StandardsWork to firstly train NJ LWD Regional Coordinators and lead instructors/directors representing all NJ LWD Title II grantees in the area of CCR math in November 2017. Electronic surveys indicate this training was much needed and appreciated, and further requests for more math CCR were investigated in PY 2017.

**Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals** (AEFLA Section 225)

* The NJ LWD was informed by the Research and Evaluation unit at the New Jersey Department of Corrections that the most recent recidivism data was published and dated 2013 and can be found on the Department’s website <https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2013_Release_Recidivism_Report.pdf>
* The report includes the methodology used to determine the recidivism outcomes with more recent data being forthcoming. This recidivism report is not disaggregated, but rather for the entire population. “In 2013, the State of New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC) had lower adult recidivism rates from 2012 for rearrest post-release (i.e., 52.3%), reconviction post-release (38.2%) and reincarceration post-release (29.8%). Approximately 70% of adult inmates released in 2013 did not return to prison within the three-year follow-up period of analysis utilized in this report.”
* In PY 2017, NJ LWD continued to work with NJ Department of Corrections staff on the implementation of IETs and correctly logging participant data into the LACES database.

In conclusion, NJ LWD will continue to ensure that its reach across AEFLA and Title II Adult Literacy continues to enable individuals to access greater economic opportunity and educational skillsets which lead to stronger families, communities, and well-defined career pathways. Through the continued building of partnerships, collaboration, and a focused-effort on professional development, NJ LWD will continue to support and build upon its strong foundation to impact as many people as possible.