

**1.) State Leadership Funds (AEFLA Section 223) - (a) Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership activities) for each of the following required activities:**

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

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Office of Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) utilizes State Leadership funds to support a variety of state and local efforts to align adult education and family literacy activities with other core programs in support of the goals and strategies outlined in Colorado's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan. AEI worked with core partners and the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) to monitor progress against the goals outlined in the State Plan.

In FY19, AEI focused primarily on providing accurate and timely information about WIOA, State Plan goals, and improved policies and procedures for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grantees to support system alignment, in particular timely and accurate grantee data collection in LACES.

**WIOA Implementation Team:** AEI staff attended WIOA Implementation Team meetings comprised of representatives from all core programs and one-stop partners to provide guidance, coordination, and, where appropriate, to make commitments to act on WIOA implementation activities. Meeting topics centered on the five state goals outlined in the WIOA State Plan:

- Goal 1: Engage business and industry as a fulcrum to inform and align all elements of the demand driven system
- Goal 2: Establish a customer-centric and holistic focus to increase coordination, effectiveness, and access through shared data, tools, and resources
- Goal 3: Engage partner staff at every level for better system alignment
- Goal 4: Create and deliver a unified message for internal and external communication
- Goal 5: Drive meaningful outcomes through innovation, alignment of metrics, and accountability

In July 2018, adult education grantees joined other workforce stakeholders at the two day Workforce 2020 Summit to accelerate local partnerships and engage communities in action planning and system design to address the realities of local workforce areas. Nine grantees and multiple AEI team members attended the summit, participating in both general and local area sessions focused on identifying workforce challenges and developing actionable plans and timelines to address the challenges.

**Job Seeker Services (JSSA) Alignment Team:** The JSSA is a subset of the WIOA Implementation Team and is comprised of leaders and subject matter experts from core partners, including multiple AEI staff members. In FY19, AEI took the lead on multiple alignment efforts, including the purchase of an online learning management system (Moodle) and training for all core partner staff to develop internal and cross-partner courses. Colorado is particularly proud of the development of an online programmatic accessibility course that became available to all WIOA partners in September 2019 (supporting goals 2 and 3 above) and was featured in nationwide U.S. Department of Labor webinars.

**Career Pathway Systems:** In October 2017, Colorado received a \$2.25 million Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The purpose of the grant is to improve the education, training, and employment outcomes of adults with disabilities by refining and expanding already successful workforce strategies. DEI focuses on the career pathways framework and strategies to make the existing career pathway system more inclusive and accessible to individuals with disabilities, and helps address the needs for adults with significant disabilities for more individualized services through linkages with the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Ticket to Work (TTW) program. Three local workforce areas containing nine AEFLA grantees are participating in the project. AEI team members are active members of the project team and have disseminated information to better serve adult learners with disabilities as a result of the project.

**Business Services Team Engagement:** AEI is working with the statewide Business Services Team to advance the strategies and goals outlined in the State Plan. Efforts are focused on developing strategies and resources that adult education providers can use to better incorporate employer feedback into programming decisions. Ongoing work with the Business Service Team will focus on Adult Education's role in Colorado's talent development pipeline, how providers can better meet the needs of business, students, and job-seekers, and process for measuring the impact of adult education programs on businesses.

**National Governors Association Collaborative State Consortium to Understand and Support the On-Demand Workforce:** AEI was invited by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment to participate in a cross-agency collaborative with other ten other states. Through research, workgroup participation and sharing of best and promising practices, AEI is working to better understand the on-demand economy in Colorado and how to best support and protect on-demand workers through adult education. The work continues in FY20.

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

In FY19, AEI focused on understanding the needs from grantees for professional learning and development in the state. In an effort to best serve the 300,000 identified individuals in need of adult education services and in recognition that the Colorado AEFLA outcomes fell below the negotiated Measurable skill gains (MSG) target, AEI held five visioning sessions throughout the state and, with generous support from OCTAE, utilized the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct interviews and survey AEFLA stakeholders around communications from AEI. Based on an analysis from the AIR report and the outcome of meetings, surveys, and interviews with grantees and AEI staff, the resulting report recommended providing additional professional learning opportunities for grantee staff. These requests for support included grant management around the following topics: teacher qualifications, data-driven decisions, support of individuals with disabilities, assessment, further understanding of state required policies, and furthering the use of College and Career Readiness and English Language Proficiency Standards.

AEI aims to provide effective professional learning (PL) activities that emphasize research-based practices and the integration of learning into local program practices. These values are encouraged at the local program level as well. PL resources are shared with all grantees via weekly email communications. FY19 professional development priorities are further explained below:

**Adult Basic Education Authorization (ABEA):** During FY19, AEI continued to provide ABEA

certification pathways for instructional staff through credit bearing courses via partner colleges, and through prior learning portfolio options—including updating and streamlining the portfolio process and supporting documentation in response to feedback. In spring of 2019, AEI offered an online introductory ABEA course, EDU 131, for free. The course provides the initial training and explains basic requirements for instructing adult learners. Thirty-three grantee instructors participated in this course last spring.

AEI also continued its intensive internal review of the ABEA competencies, which was completed at the end of 2018. AEI began the process of soliciting contractors to develop self-paced online modules based around the new ABEA competencies with the goal of offering them for free to adult education instructors in Colorado to meet licensing requirements and serve as a resource for continued professional development. This work has continued into FY19 with plans to finish developing the various modules during FY20.

**College and Career Readiness Standards:** Standards in Action (SIA) training opportunities were offered to AEFLA grantees. Since grantees were at different levels of standards implementation, grantees were provided the opportunity to request professional development from AEI to meet specific program needs. Requested sessions concentrated on lesson alignment with College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) that allowed instructional staff to focus on assignments and student work. Instructors throughout the state of Colorado were trained and encouraged to share their professional learning with others in the field. Programs continue to report challenges with NRS-approved assessments not aligning with the more rigorous, standards-based instructional changes they are making in classrooms and AEI is working to develop further TA around this in the future. CCRS is a focus of the ABEA online courses that will be developed in FY20.

**COABE Virtual Conference:** In October 2018, AEI purchased state-wide access to the COABE Virtual Conference. Through this, 41 adult education staff members from various programs in Colorado participated in the two-day online conference covering a variety of topics related to adult education.

**CAEPA Conference:** In October 2018, AEI staff supported the Colorado Adult Education Professional Association (CAEPA) in the planning and delivery of the annual conference that was held in Denver. A total of 176 people attended the annual conference, with sessions focusing on data-driven instruction and assessment. The AEI director and staff presented findings from the AIR report during the conference. This three-hour presentation allowed adult education professionals to consider the state of adult education in light of the report findings. Additionally, AEI hosted a day-long pre-conference “Adult Learner Ambassador” train-the-trainer with twenty-seven adult learners, program coordinators, and adult education instructors from across the state, focused on developing and telling personal stories and connected to CCRS and ELP standards.

**AEFLA Directors Meeting:** In October 2018, AEI held the annual AEFLA Directors Meeting. Fifty directors and grantee program staff participated in the two-day training. Content included grantee innovations, analyzing local program data, success stories, grants fiscal updates and brainstorming solutions for issues summarized in the AIR report.

**New Director Training:** AEI provided personalized technical assistance for the four directors new to their positions during FY19. Supports included additional LACES data system training, local policy creation/implementation assistance and frequent check-in calls. Training was differentiated by the new directors’ level of familiarity with the grant. To better support grantees during these important staff transition times, AEI hired a part-time employee in FY19 to support new directors;

this position will also develop a new directors handbook that will help new directors prioritize AEFLA grant requirements and will be particularly useful at the start of the new grant cycle in FY21.

**Annual Assessment Training:** Assessment trainings are hosted online for all grantee staff members that administer educational functioning level assessments. The trainings provide an opportunity for authorizing new administrators or as a refresher training for certified administrators to remain current with the latest assessment administration protocols. AEI requires local programs to maintain records of staff trained as administrators and to ensure administrators attend these trainings as required.

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

AEI staffs three Adult Education Program Coordinators whose primary job duties include offering TA to local programs to support and promote the continuous quality improvement of AEFLA services available across the state. AEI's capacity to develop and deliver TA in FY19 was limited by multiple staff medical issues and a staff vacancy.

In FY19 the Adult Education Program Coordinators maintained their knowledgebase of effective instructional and programmatic practices through research, attendance at state and national conferences, collaboration with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC), and through the collection of promising practices from local program observation, conversation, and data analysis. Dissemination of promising practices occurred through weekly email communications from AEI, monthly "Director Talks" webinars, online Moodle courses developed with WIOA partners, and "Click," an email distribution list managed by AEI that allows programs to easily share opportunities with each other.

To address the role of adult education providers as a one-stop partners, AEI partnered with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and the CWDC on various initiatives throughout the year. Of particular note was AEI staff participation in Job Seeker Services Alignment (JSSA) taskforce meetings aimed at various system-wide goals including cross-agency online courses.

TA on the use of technology to improve system efficiencies continued to be centered on supporting local adult education providers' use of the State's data collection and reporting system, LACES, as well as the development and execution of grantee SMART goals around the use of technology for delivering instruction. On a monthly basis, grantees received data monitoring reports with data reporting errors for corrections and key performance metrics for use in making improvements to program design and instructional quality. AEI also utilized Moodle, an online learning management system, for the purposes of increasing grantee access to TA and professional learning opportunities. Modules continue to be added to Moodle around additional topics.

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

Continuous quality improvement of adult education activities delivered in Colorado remains a priority for AEI. The FY19 grant continuation application required applicants to describe local program SMART goals around various topics, including managed enrollment strategies, intensity

and duration of instructional activities, Colorado ABEA teacher credentialing compliance, strategies to meet performance targets, utilizing evidence-based practices and strategies for continuous improvement. Grantee continuation application responses provided key items that AEI used when conducting program monitoring, targeted TA, and professional development.

In FY19, AEI continued implementation of the risk-based monitoring tool and utilizing the multi-day on-site visit tool. AEI also implemented a more robust monthly desktop data monitoring process through a customized LACES data dashboard. AEI revised mid- and end-of-year progress reporting that more closely aligned with WIOA requirements and priorities. AEI conducted multiple on-site visits, reviewing grantee programmatic, instructional, and fiscal documentation and practices to both ensure compliance with state and federal requirements and to identify areas of growth and success. AEI added onsite paper-based assessment monitoring for grantees who had consistent data/assessment program improvement plans.

State staff used research journals, national trainings and events and online resource repositories from trusted organizations to identify and share best practices and innovative strategies. These best practices were communicated with local providers through monthly “Director Talks”, weekly “AEI Updates” email communications, AEI’s website, and at training events. Local providers were encouraged to share and support one another in continuous improvement through “Click” email communications, an email distribution list provided by AEI that allows programs to easily share opportunities with each other. AEI continued to update and maintain technical assistance resources in a single online grantee handbook as a tool for local program staff.

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

In regards to additional permissible activities, AEI focused primarily on researching content and models for Integrated Education and Training (IET) and career pathways at both national training events and through collaboratives with the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) and the CWDC. For grantees that are colleges, TA was focused on understanding and developing viable pathways from ABE/ASE instruction to college-level certificate and/or credit-bearing courses, resulting in sample crosswalks. For non-college grantees, TA focused on building connections with local one-stop providers and Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) organizations to identify building blocks for designing IET programming.

**2.) Performance Data Analysis - Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based on the core indicators of performance.**

In FY19, Colorado served 8,460 adult learners through programs administered by 23 grantees. Of those learners, the majority, 47%, were enrolled in English language acquisition (ELA) programs; 37% were in adult basic education (ABE) programs; 6% enrolled in adult secondary education (ASE) programs; and 10% were enrolled in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs. The majority of participants in FY19 entered at ABE Level 3 and ESL Level 4 educational functioning levels similar to the previous year. Statewide enrollment was down just slightly from the prior year.

In FY19, Colorado did not meet its 35% measurable skill gains (MSG) target. The overall statewide MSG rate dropped from 30.79% in the prior year to 30.47% in FY19. Although statewide the MSG target was not met, six of the 23 grantees achieved an MSG rate above 35%, the highest being 49%,

and another five of the grantees achieved MSG rates within 5% of the 35% target. Unlike the previous year, where the ABE MSG rate was lowest at ABE Level 1, in FY19 learners entering at ABE Level 3 had the lowest MSG rate statewide (29.82%), down close to 1.5% from the prior year. MSG rates at ABE Level 1 increased by roughly 6% from FY17, and MSG rates at all other ABE educational functioning levels (EFL) also increased from FY17. Similar to last year, among the ESL EFLs, the lowest MSG rates statewide were at ESL Levels 5 & 6, but the MSG rate at ESL level 5 increased roughly 3% over the previous year. MSG rates at ESL Levels 3 & 4 notably dropped close to 3-4%, respectively, from the previous year, and AEI is still analyzing causes for these drops.

The majority of measurable skill gains at all levels were achieved through pre- and post-testing (81%). HSE attainment made up 15% of all MSGs and post-secondary entrance made up 4% of all gains. Pre- and post-test gains were up at the ABE EFLs from the prior year but down for ESL EFLs from the prior year. Conversely, HSE attainment was down for ABE EFLs from the prior year and up slightly for ESL EFLs.

Employment for exiters in the second quarter after exit was 40.95% and 42.37% in the fourth quarter after exit. Median earnings in the second quarter after exit were \$4,051.03. While the data were not reported the same way for the previous year, the rates were not surprising as they were close to the rates of learner self-reported employment status at entry. Notably, grantees reported in their annual performance reports that part-time and gig economy work, particularly among English language learners, were not reflected in these figures owing to the data match methodology and criteria.

The rate for attainment of a Secondary School Diploma/Equivalent and Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training within one year of exit was 1.43%; the rate for attainment of a Secondary School Diploma/Equivalent and Employed within one year of exit was 3.65%; and, the rate for attainment of a Postsecondary Credential while enrolled or within one year of exit was at 12.5%.

With half of grantees being either Local Educational Agencies or Institutions of Higher Education, we expected that performance measures including post-secondary matriculation and credential attainment would be higher, and are working with grantees to identify barriers to achieving those outcomes.

Please note that Colorado uses social security numbers (SSN) for data matching, and with the SSN reporting rate around 50% and is exploring other data matching options for the future with WIOA partners.

### **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.**

In the third year of using LACES as the data collection and reporting system, AEFLA grantees in Colorado continued to experience significant programming errors with the data system. For the majority of the year, grantees did not have a way to quickly identify post-test eligibility in subject area tests. Required NRS changes continued to be sporadically added to LACES throughout the year. AEI had been and continues to try and address these errors and frustrations through closer monitoring of NRS reporting rules, requiring the LACES system to update testing and implement custom, more simple, comprehensible, class-level reports for grantees.

As a result of performance data analysis, AEI implemented more detailed NRS goal setting and class reporting requirements in both the continuation application and in LACES for FY19. These changes

facilitated technical assistance delivered to grantees around increasing the intensity and decreasing the duration of instructional units delivered to learners as prior year data indicated that, on average, pre- and post-test gains increase when the time (calendar days) between tests is less and the number of instructional hours available and achieved within the same time period/instructional unit is at or above test publisher recommendations. The changes also supported grantees in their work to meet the FY19 MSG performance target.

TA in current and future years will focus in part on identifying critical separation points and causes as nearly half of all learners in Colorado separate before making a measurable skill gain. TA will also address strategies for increasing post-testing rates, the frequency of use of LACES reports/NRS data and alignment of instruction to standards and approved assessments. Additionally, unlike in previous years, AEI has made available to grantees aggregate program level employment, credential attainment and postsecondary matriculation data match results. These data will support grantees in improving all non-pre- and post-test gain outcomes.

**3.) Integration with One-stop Partners - Describe how the State eligible agency, as the entity responsible for meeting one-stop requirements under 34 CFR part 463, subpart J, carries out or delegates its required one-stop roles to eligible providers. Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system. Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through State and local options.**

For WIOA Title II, CDE is the required one-stop partner responsible administering or supervising policy for adult education and literacy activities in the State. As outlined in the jointly developed [Colorado Policy Guidance Letter#: WIOA-2016-02, Change 2](#), published on May 11, 2017 by CDLE, CDE delegated its one-stop partner responsibilities to each of the AEFLA-funded local providers in FY17 and set the expectation (through grant agreements) that each provider negotiate and sign an MOU that addresses the service delivery elements required by WIOA with the local workforce development boards (LWDBs) in each local area in which adult education services are provided. Each required one-stop partner is responsible for identifying the career services that are relevant to their programs and making those services available through the comprehensive workforce center.

During FY19, AEI collected the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with local workforce development boards from grantees. The MOUs for these grantees outline the infrastructure agreements with the centers, per the [Colorado One-Stop System Policy Guidance Letter#: WIOA-2016-03, Change 1](#) published on May 2, 2017.

The applicable career services provided in the one-stop system provide services to assist employers and job seekers, including job listings; computer and internet access; career counseling and training for job seekers; recruitment of workers; and pre-screening and referral services. In addition, the one-stops provide electronic job support through [Connecting Colorado](#), CDLE's job seeker-facing online portal.

**4.) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program (AEFLA Section 243) – Describe how the state is using funds under Section 243 to support the following activities under the IELCE program:**

**Describe when your State held a competition [the latest competition] for IELCE program funds and the number of grants awarded by your State to support IELCE programs.**

Colorado's most recent IELCE grant competition was held in the conjunction with the AEFLA competition. The request for proposals was released on December 7, 2016. Applications were due February 21, 2017 and tentative award amounts were publicly released on June 5, 2017.

Eight programs were awarded and received funds for FY19. Continuation applications for these same eight grantees were due June 11, 2018. All eight programs continued to be awarded funds in FY19.

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

In FY19, AEI offered individualized TA to grantees to support IELCE in combination with IET activities. In those efforts, AEI discovered deficiencies in the IET offerings, with programs failing to meet all required components of IET. Realizing these deficiencies, AEI implemented an IET working group in FY19 for grantees who receive IELCE funds. This group met monthly to discuss required components of IET and how to meet those requirements, implementation strategies, execution strategies and best practices, and other topics identified by the work group members in a survey presented early in FY19. In addition, AEI worked closely with a program to develop a retail IET program for implementation in FY20.

**Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency as described in section 243(c)(1) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals; and**

In FY19, 1,228 adult learners participated in IELCE programs administered by 8 grantees. The majority of those IELCE participants (62%) were ages 25-44. There were 0 IET participants.

Of the IELCE participants, 18%--an increase of 14% from FY19--were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit based on the wage data match. This increase may reflect the success of goal-setting around employment indicators.

Deficiencies were discovered in self-reporting participation in IELCE services in combination with IET activities. In addition to data reporting, narrative questions in the FY19 IELCE grant continuation application emphasized program design and goal setting. These were required to guide grantees in progressing learners to participation in an IET and placement into unsubsidized employment. State staff worked with grantees to align existing programming with IELCE requirements.

Implementation questions still exist around when contextualized instruction should take place, at what point workforce preparation activities should be introduced, and how best to leverage partnerships to offer the workforce training component of the IET. These questions are being addressed through performance data analysis, including review of employment outcomes as they are available through data match.

**Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of ensuring that IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system and its functions as**

**described in section 243(c)(2) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.**

AEI participates in state-level work groups and committees to support core partners in each local area in their coordination of services so that clients are placed at the center of the system, including IELCE participants. An example of this state level collaboration was AEI and AEFLA grantee participation in the July 2019 Workforce 2020 Summit, where participants focused on building partnerships that could support competency-based, industry-led, work-based learning opportunities.

Local adult education programs have representation on each local workforce development board to ensure IELCE is integrated with the workforce development system. Additionally, the grant continuation applications submitted for FY19 asked applicants receiving IELCE funds how they are implementing programs to meet all required elements and to set goals around IELCE implementation. Responses in those applications have been used by the AEI team to identify areas for technical assistance, including strategies for integration with the local workforce development system. Concerns expressed by grantees have included access to training programs for IET implementation, particularly in rural areas. To address this, AEI is working with grantees to develop online IET that supports existing certificate programs in an online format that can be accessed across the state. Grantees continue to express concerns about the ability to create cohorts with enough participants at high enough levels to offer industry-specific training. These concerns, as well as other components of developing IET under IELCE were addressed in FY19 through the IET working group developed by AEI and will continue to be addressed through a grantee-led IELCE group in FY20.

**5.) Adult Education Standards - If your State has adopted new challenging K-12 standards under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, describe how your Adult Education content standards are aligned with those K-12 standards. Optional – Describe implementation efforts, challenges, and any lessons learned.**

AEI views standards implementation as a critical component of developing programming to equip adult learners with the skills and knowledge needed for success in postsecondary education, employment, and beyond. The College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education were adopted for use by local providers in 2014, kicking off AEI's standards-based instruction initiative. This adoption also signified alignment with Colorado Academic Standards.

Implementation of these standards has been done through the revised Standards in Action (SIA) model. During the spring of 2018, the Colorado State Board of Education approved revisions to the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS), as required by state statute. This approval completed the first four phases of the standards review and revision timeline, moving Colorado into the final two phases ending in full implementation of the CAS by the end of FY20. During FY19, SIS began training and initial implementation of the K-12 standards in school districts. Due to this timeframe, AEI staff did not have the ability to engage in an alignment process, as the SIS team needed to prioritize initial school district training. AEI expects to work with SIS in FY20 to align the standards.

**6.) Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals (AEFLA Section 225) - What was the relative rate of recidivism for criminal offenders served? Please describe the methods and factors used in calculating the rate for this reporting period.**

AEI did not track rates of recidivism on correctional education participants in FY19. The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice's Office of Research and Statistics under the Colorado Department of Public Safety and the Colorado Department of Corrections' (CDOC) Office of Planning and Analysis (OPA) annually track and report on recidivism rates on offenders in community corrections and correctional facilities, including offenders in the Youth Offender System (YOS).

CDOC defines recidivism as a return to prison or inmate status in Colorado within three years of release, for either new criminal activity or a technical violation of parole, probation or non-departmental community placement. CDOC uses methodology from the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) performance-based measurement system for calculating recidivism rates.

Due to AEI and CDOC staff transitions during FY19, including a gubernatorial transition, a data sharing agreement with CDOC and CDPS was not finalized that would allow AEI to report the relative rate of recidivism for correctional education participants. AEI expects to finalize the data sharing agreement with the necessary State agencies in FY19 for the purpose of tracking AEFLA participant recidivism in the future.