

Iowa Narrative Report 2018-2019
(July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019)

I. State Leadership Funds

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Title II Section 223(a) mandates that the eligible agency shall not use more than 12.5 percent of its grant funds for both required and optional activities for State Leadership activities. The activities, programs, and projects supported with State Leadership funds described below are the required elements under AEFLA and have been aligned as indicated.

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 Iowa's Unified State Plan as described in section 223 (1) (a).*

On March 15, 2017, the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE), Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation released a request for proposals for a three-year federal grant opportunity to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy (AEL) services in Iowa. As a requirement for funding, local workforce development boards reviewed applications for alignment of activities with local plans. IDOE allocated 25 percent of section 223 State Leadership funds to awarded providers for local implementation of plans developed in alignment with Iowa's Unified State Plan. Activities included participation in core partner meetings, training and cross-training of front-line staff, and the development of a referral process to co-enroll eligible applicants in all 15 local workforce development board (LWDB) regions.

The IDOE worked closely with the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) in the development of a Realignment Committee to provide recommendations for the reduction of local areas. The department is also represented on several standing committees, such as Disability Access and Youth. These committees implement key strategies of Iowa's Unified State Plan and the WIOA requirements.

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

Iowa's professional development system is designed to coordinate high quality professional development activities within Section 223(a), based on the required and permissible State Leadership activities. Activities are selected based on an evaluation of potential for statewide implementation, adoption, and infusion into AEL instructional strategies, methodologies, and curriculum; possibility for long-term improvement in program outcomes; and capacity for adult learners to effectively meet participant and program literacy goals.

The professional development system is managed by a state consultant in coordination with the Adult Literacy Professional Development Leadership Committee which includes administrators, instructors, and trainers representing AEL programs. A data-driven planning process was used to

identify needs and set priorities with an emphasis on literacy, math, and English language instruction; assessment; educational technology; learning disabilities; and distance learning.

STudent Achievement in Reading (STAR) – STudent Achievement in Reading (STAR) assisted eleven local providers in making systemic and instructional changes required to improve the reading achievement of intermediate-level adult learners (GLE 4.0-8.9) during PY 2019. STAR focuses on implementing evidence-based practices to provide adults with the reading skills they need to achieve their goals in school, the workplace, and their daily lives. .

Effective and Sustainable Math Teaching Strategies for Adult Learners – This math academy consisted of a two-day workshop, two webinars, and a summer workshop. The training targeted experienced AEL math instructors to increase their math skills and responsibilities. Topics included best practices in math instruction and “train the trainer” activities that empowered the instructors to implement local and/or regional trainings on best math practices. Participants also enrolled in Jo Boaler’s self-paced course “Mathematical Mindsets” to enhance their grounding in mathematical best practices and confidence in coordinating and presenting local AEL program trainings.

Writing for the HSET – This training equipped practitioners with strategies to prepare adult learners in meeting evidence-based writing requirements of the high school equivalency assessment. AEL practitioners across the state participated in activities that included the exploration of recent research on effective teaching of writing to adult learners; the shift from persuasive writing to evidence-based writing to ensure practitioner understanding; and examination of and practice with recommended instructional strategies for effective writing that are endorsed by research.

Teaching Grammar in a Contextualized Way – Participants in this training examined and practiced recommended instructional strategies for teaching grammar and contextualizing instruction. The workshop was designed for AEL and ESL instructors and delved into methodologies and strategies that can be used to teach grammar, regardless of the student, to kind of "rise above" the differentiation..

English Language Proficiency Standards – An English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards Institute was held in PY 2019 to support their implementation by local providers. The four-part series included two face to face meetings and two webinars. A community of practice framework joined 32 professionals across the state in a shared network identified by a strategic context that functioned to expand knowledge, share and create resources, and solve problems. Participants learned how programs were implementing the ELP Standards in classrooms, the implications of the standards for their instruction, and planned how to apply the standards in their programs.

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

State leadership funds continue to support technical assistance for AEL providers and core partners:

AEL Coordinators – The IDOE conducted the PY 2019 annual training for new and experienced program coordinators on October 18, 2018. State staff reviewed selected topics in the *Coordinator*

Handbook, including: WIOA Key Provisions; Policies, Program Operations, and Instructional Services; Participant Experience Model; Integrated Education and Training; Workforce Preparation, and Career Pathways. Program leaders also met face-to-face and via Zoom based webinars on a monthly basis throughout the calendar year.

Core Partners – Core partners formed a charter that stipulates frequent meetings to develop strategies to track performance, assess effectiveness, and monitor areas of implementation. The meetings have served as a forum to provide technical assistance on nuances in the law specific to Title II, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and GEPA as it applies to educational institutions, along with state policies that impact all partners of WIOA. Meetings are ongoing and required partners participate often.

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

The State Director and consultants monitored providers to assess their implementation of the Program Standards Framework. The framework is a tool for providers to assess their performance in providing quality instruction and services to adult learners. The standards, which include indicators and criteria of performance, help programs identify strengths, as well as areas needing improvement. They also help establish benchmarks that inform local decisions about the allocation of resources, professional development activities, and program capacity.

State staff used the standards to gauge program compliance with WIOA provisions; identify areas at risk of non-compliance; determine technical assistance needed to strengthen weaknesses and highlight innovation; and to pinpoint demonstrated best practices to share with other grantees. IDOE conducted four on-site visits to: Indian Hills Community College (3/14/19), Eastern Iowa Community College District (4/11/19), Kirkwood Community College (4/15/19), and Iowa Lakes Community College (6/5/19). The remaining 11 programs received virtual (desktop) monitoring.

State Leadership Activities: 223(1) (D) - The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.

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

In addition to working closely with core and required one-stop partners, the state AEL team partnered with organizations whose missions are aimed at improving the outcomes of underserved populations. Some of those organizations were the: Iowa Literacy Council; Coalition on Adult Basic Education; Des Moines Civil Rights Committee; Minority Unemployment Committee; and National Association of State Directors for Adult Education.

State Leadership Activity(s): 223(2) (b) - In carrying out this section, eligible agencies shall collaborate where possible, and avoid duplicating efforts, in order to maximize the impact of the activities described in subsection (a).

Professional Growth – Iowa utilized Frontline Education: Professional Growth, a web-based platform to implement administrative rules and instructor standards related to professional

development. The system captures, tracks, and generates reports on individual professional development plans; completed hours of training; and classroom observations. This platform is also capable of registering staff for professional development events, both at the state and local level, and collecting training evaluations. The evaluation component helped identify professional development needs through classroom observations that are aligned with the state's instructor standards.

Virtual Conference – Iowa held the AEL virtual conference for the fourth consecutive year. The event, titled *Expanding Possibilities*, highlighted innovative initiatives and showcased best practices in adult education. Keynote speaker, Dr Robert Stensrud, presented his research on the pervasive impact of disability on individuals and families and systemic interventions. Conference sessions addressed reading, writing, math, English language proficiency, sector partnerships, and workforce development collaboration to assist adult learners in their roles as workers, family members, and citizens. Invited participants included adult literacy, family literacy, and workforce development professionals.

Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Conference –The 2018 Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Conference, *Educate and Elevate Iowa: Adult Education and Literacy* featured over 70 speakers, eight session tracks, aimed at providing educators and workforce professionals with skills and knowledge to help AEL participants succeed in the 21st century. This year's session strands included: ESL/ELL; HSED; IET/IELCE; Innovative Practices; Learner Success; Program Enhancement; and Workforce Partnerships.

State Leadership Activities: 223(2) (K) - The development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new and promising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically valid research, where appropriate, and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievement levels.

Future Directions in PY 2020

Several professional development activities will take place including but not limited to:

Professional Development Facilitator (PDF) Project – The state AEL team will implement a statewide PDF system focused on local program need, state dissemination of products and information, and leadership development. Local AEL instructors from around the state will serve as PDFs. They will be responsible for developing local professional development plans in collaboration with program coordinators and coordinate state-level staff development activities identifying the greatest areas of opportunities for improvement and growth.

Online state training opportunities – The state AEL team, with the assistance of PDFs, will develop online an on-demand training opportunities that can be accessed at the convenience of local educators. These interactive courses will include, new instructor training, critical teaching skills for identifying and remediating reading difficulties, motivating the adult learner, blended learning models, integration of English language instruction with workplace education, and a continued focus on alignment of adult education activities with academic standards for reading, language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition.

Integrated Digital English Acceleration project (I-DEA) – This web-based training will introduce ESL instructors to a flipped classroom model of instruction with integrated curriculum. I-DEA faculty will lead participants through a series of activities to learn how to implement the I-DEA modules, which address English language skills in the context of college and careers.

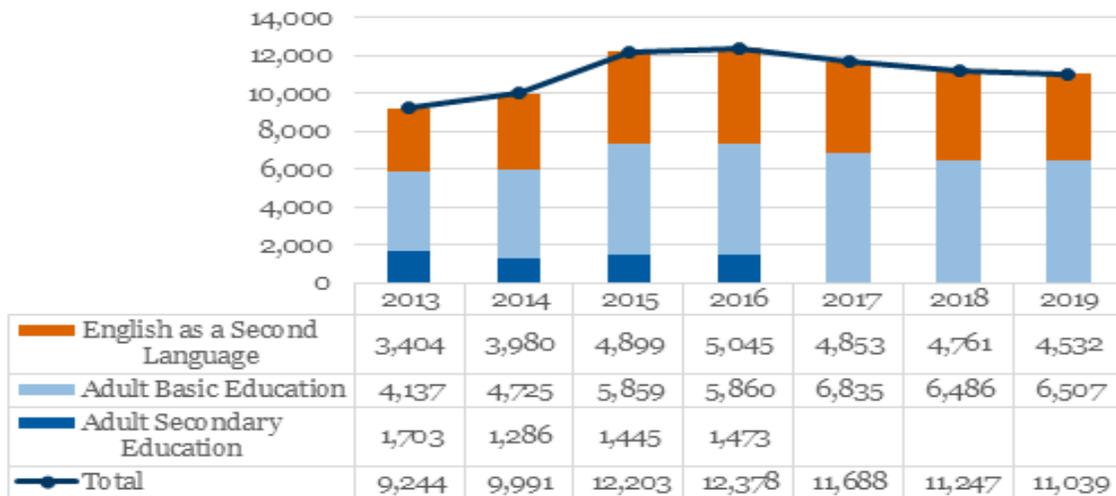
II. Performance Data Analysis

- a. **Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based on the core indicators of performance.**

The typical adult education and literacy student served in program year 2018-19 was male, employed, average age 25-44 years, identified as a minority, and the highest year of school completed was 9-12th grade without a high school diploma. Typically, females have had slightly higher enrollment but, this year, males enrolled at the higher rate of 50.4 percent. While 34.1 percent of participants identified as white, the remaining 65.9 percent identified as a minority.

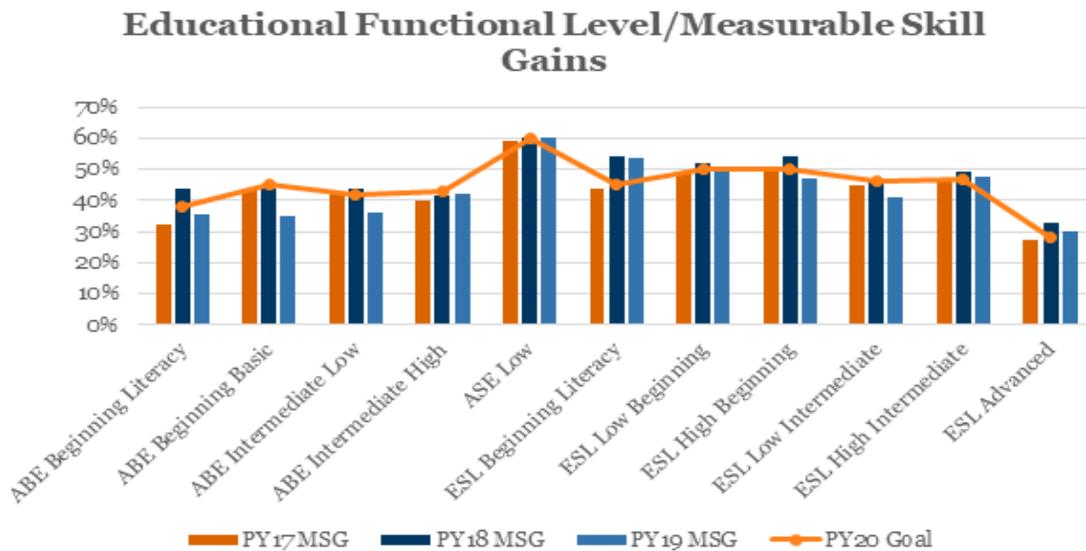
Iowa’s Adult Education and Literacy Enrollment – Enrollment in PY 2019 (n=11,039) decreased compared to PY 2018 (n=11,247). Of the total number of participants (11,039) who met the NRS guidelines, students in Adult Basic Education (ABE), including ABE Levels 1-6, were the largest group by program type with 58.9 percent (n=6,507) of the total learners served. Students enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL), including ESL Levels 1-6, decreased again to 41.0 percent (n=4,532).

Enrollment Comparison PY2014 to PY2019



Retention – Persistence and sufficient hours of instruction remained at 72 percent. In PY 2019, 11,039 of the 15,364 individuals seeking services persisted for a minimum of 12 or more hours of instruction and a pre-test. The average hours of instruction for the 11,039 reported enrollees decreased to 72 hours. This is a significant decrease from last year when the average was 124 hours. ESL participants averaged the highest number of hours of instruction with 78 hours, while average ABE hours decreased from 111 in PY 2018 to 67 hours in PY 2019. These hours now include the total hours for the period of participation. Based on ABE Levels 1-5 and ESL levels 1-6, the post test rate dropped to 54%.

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) – Iowa had 11,265 periods of participation for 11,039 participants in PY 2019. Participants also made MSGs in 44 percent (4,939) of the periods of participation. This is a three percent decrease from PY 2018 and one percent short of our target.



Primary Indicators of Performance – Iowa utilizes a data match process to determine whether targets have been met for follow-up core measures. Employment in the 2nd quarter after exit increased from 2.7 percent last year to 49.2 percent in PY 2019. Median quarterly wage earnings for the 2nd quarter after exit also increased, up 7.3 percent from last year to \$5,472. IELCE participants had the highest quarterly earnings (\$9,301), while IET participants had the highest rate of employment (63.0 percent). Employment in the 4th quarter after exit was 41.3 percent.

- b. **Discuss how the assessment was used to improve quality and effectiveness of the funded eligible providers.**

The IDOE initiated and prioritized quarterly reporting for programs. We met seven of twelve MSGs based on education function level with ABE level 6 at 69 percent. The addition of alternative high school equivalency (HSE) pathways resulted in an additional 39 HSE this year.

Future Directions in PY 2020

Iowa will focus on returning to a 65 percent post-test rate by placing increased emphasis and urgency on quarterly reports. We are planning training in PY 2020 to ensure data quality and we will stress the importance of managed enrollment, intensity, and post testing to performance.

III. Integration with One-Stop Partners

As core partners under Title II of WIOA, Iowa’s AEL providers contributed to the development of local plans that described regional needs and strategies to assist in the streamlining of services as a deliverable of strategic planning and value mapping work groups.

- a. 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.**

As the state eligible agency for Title II, the IDOE did not delegate one-stop responsibilities to eligible providers but supported their efforts to implement WIOA with core partners. Iowa adopted this approach due to the realignment of local areas, establishment of new local boards, development of local plans for the areas, and to address WIOA implementation, in general.

- b. Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system.**

Local AEL providers offer career services at one-stop centers and/or via direct linkages. These include outreach, intake, and orientation; skills and supportive services needs assessment; program coordination and referral; training provider performance and cost information; and information on the availability of supportive services and referrals. Some providers offer direct access to such services as workforce preparation and training at one-stops or nearby classes.

The applicable career services provided in the one-stop system are documented with WIOA partners and tracked locally to help identify duplication, streamlining efforts, and cost sharing information needed for the Memorandum of Understanding. There was an interruption in the competitive procurement of a one-stop operator during PY 2019 because a realignment task force was reviewing the number of local workforce development boards needed to serve Iowa.

- c. Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through state and local options.**

Infrastructure costs are not currently supported by local agreements. State agencies responsible for WIOA have not yet intervened in the local negotiations. The state AEL team has provided, and will continue to offer, technical assistance on relevant federal laws and regulations.

Future Direction in PY 2020

Local AEL providers will work with designated comprehensive one-stops based on the newly designated local areas' recommendations. All providers will ensure access to career services remain available. They will also support the process of designating a single representative to serve on local workforce boards or standing committees if an area includes multiple providers.

IV. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program

- a. 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.*

The IDOE is in the final year of a three-year federal grant opportunity for Section 243 funds. An IELCE implementation grant competition in PY 2019 resulted in awards to eight of twelve applicants. The grants ranged from \$15,000-\$40,000 and were based on the number of eligible

participants the programs committed to serve per program year. The IDOE is providing grantees technical assistance and guidance about IELCE design, activities, programs, and partnerships.

- *Describe your state efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with IET activities.*

During PY 2019, the IDOE continued to work with awarded providers to support the efforts of implementing IELCE services in combination with IET activities. The IDOE provided relevant professional development with an emphasis on employer engagement and partnerships. These opportunities were designed to provide staff with information and strategies necessary to develop and deliver high quality IELCE programs.

The availability of implementation grant funds and professional development opportunities combined to increase providers' knowledge of federal IELCE requirements and their awareness of approaches to developing services that meet IELCE goals.

- *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.*

Sector partnerships are increasingly recognized as an effective method for aligning education, economic, and workforce development systems to address industry-identified labor market needs. By participating in such collaborations, Iowa's IELCE providers are closely aligned to local in-demand industries and occupations. IELCE providers rely on labor market information, such as number of recently posted vacancies, expected growth, and median wages, to drive local decisions and ensure IELCE program participants are being prepared

Iowa's IELCE providers have included collaborative partnerships with employers in delivering IET activities. These partnerships have engaged businesses in the development of customized employer training concurrently with English language acquisition, civic education, and workforce preparation activities.

- *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.*

During PY 2019, one-stop center front-line staff were offered professional development on IELCE implementation guidelines during regional meetings and state-wide conferences. The IDOE also offered regional technical assistance for core partners to explore ways to support on-the-job training opportunities and other strategies aimed at incorporating blended funding.

IELCE providers have learned that successful implementation can look very different across regions and by occupation or industry. While the required core elements exist in each program, the content and topics covered will vary, depending on the participants being served and adjustments to activities are needed for almost every cohort.

Future Direction in PY 2020

The IDOE will continue to work with recipients of section 243 IELCE funds. Professional development opportunities will be extended to eligible providers, with the goal of building rigorous and aligned IELCE activities that support the local workforce development needs of Iowa.

V. Adult Education Standards

In 2010, Iowa adopted the Common Core State Standards (Iowa Core Standards) for K-12, which were articulated vertically through all grade levels. All federally funded adult education programs in Iowa are required to institute the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), as per Iowa's Administrative Rule 23.7(1), adopted January 14, 2015:

23.7(1)(c) Appropriate reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training practices aligned with content standards for adult education.

In PY 2017, Iowa updated and aligned the AEL monitoring process to include program standards that address WIOA implementation, along with developing a quality assurance system that ensures participant performance improvement, financial accountability, program quality, and regulatory compliance of local providers. Iowa uses monitoring to track implementation of the CCRS in lesson plans, curriculum, and assessment for preparation in transitioning participants to further education or employment.

a. Describe how your adult education content standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.

National trainers provided Iowa program personnel with CCRS training in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Clear expectations for standards implementation were incorporated into the 2017-2020 AEFLA grant competition and given high priority in the review of applications. Iowa also developed a program standards framework consisting of: 1) Learner Success, which includes standards and criteria for supporting learners' progress towards next steps in postsecondary education, training, and/or employment leading to a family-sustaining wage; and 2) Organizational Capacity, which includes standards and criteria for supporting staff and guiding directors in the administration of quality programs. Against these standards programs are reviewed for compliance and effectiveness in implementing content standards in their instruction.

Future Direction in PY 2020

Local educational programs will maintain their commitment to providing standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment focusing on the skills that enable learners to participate more fully as citizens, workers, and family members. PDFs will assist the state AEL team in supporting local programs by identifying and delivering opportunities to provide additional training on the academic content standards. IDOE will use monitoring to track CCRS implementation in lesson plans, curriculum and assessment for participant transition to further education or employment.

VI. Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals

a. Describe the relative rate of recidivism for criminal offenders served and the methods and factors used in the calculation.

The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) developed definitions and terms used in Iowa's reporting on recidivism to establish standard performance measures. They defined a measure of recidivism—the return rate to prison—as the percent of offenders released from prison who return within three years. The releases tracked include parole; discharges due to end of sentence; and sex offender releases to special sentence supervision. The recidivism rate for PY 2018 in Iowa was 37.8%., with twenty-two percent due to new convictions.

Iowa's AEFLA funded providers enroll participants at state correctional institutions and local correctional and institutionalized facilities. Based on the terms of an MOU and the use of shared state leadership funds, all correctional education programs are accountable to the required WIOA performance, except when excluded, and they are subject to Iowa's assessment policies. In PY 2019, corrections and institutionalized individuals constituted 16 percent (1,836) of the total periods of participation in adult education and 44.5% of them achieved a measurable skill gain.

Future Direction in PY 2020

Iowa's AEL team will continue to work with the Iowa Department of Corrections to explore the delivery of IET opportunities in support of the recently awarded Second Chance Pell Grant experimental site, as well as the expansion of Department of Labor approved apprenticeship programming. As part of recent grants focused on expanding access and optimizing postsecondary education, Iowa's AEL will connect the services of basic education to ensure correctional education participants are college ready.