

Section 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 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 following activities describe the state-level work around alignment with one-stop partners.

Governor's Workforce Development Board Career Pathways Partnership Committee

The ABE Transitions Specialist participates in quarterly GWDB's Career Pathways Partnership meetings. This partnership works to establish and guide Minnesota's career pathways system. The CPP focuses on programming that develops the skills of all job seekers concentrating on those with the greatest barriers to employment.

Governor's Workforce Development Board Career Pathways Sub-committee on Co-enrollment and Referrals

The ABE Transitions Specialist co-leads monthly meetings with a Local Workforce Development Board director. The goal is to verify if co-enrollment provides better outcomes for clients. The committee is finalizing a report.

Navigating and Advising Grants

WIOA emphasizes career pathways. Minnesota has been offering variations of career pathways for over a decade and the piece that has been found essential is "navigating", which is difficult to fund. The 2016 Minnesota legislature appropriated \$100,000 to support [navigating and advising pilots](#). These pilots ended in June 2019.

Regional Transitions Coordination

Minnesota has ten Adult Basic Education transitions regions. Each region has a single point of contact who facilitates the development of a regional transitions plan. All the local ABE managers in the region create this plan. There are several purposes for the plan. However, there are two themes 1) career pathway programming and 2) relationship building between WIOA partners, CBOs, and public postsecondary institutions. It is a continuous improvement strategy toward the creation of sustainable and effective transitions for adult learners.

Adult Basic Education and Career and Technical Education

The state ABE Director and four ABE specialists were involved on committees to inform the Perkins V plan. CTE, with ABE guidance, developed a brief on The State of Adult Basic Education in the Allied Health Fields Professions for ABE/CTE. Efforts to combine professional development will continue. CTE is part of Minnesota's WIOA plan.

Adult Basic Education and Developmental Education

As one of the main training providers, the public two-year community college plays a vital role in career pathway development. Each Local Workforce Development Board has a representative from this system but not necessarily from developmental education. ABE is a strategic partner in the current redesign of developmental ed in the state and has been working to help transition ABE learners directly into college-level, credit-bearing classes.

Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB)

The ABE Transitions Specialist attends monthly Job Seeker Services meetings hosted by the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards. Each WIOA core program provides an update on data and programming. Each

meeting highlights a one-stop partner best practice. This past year there was discussion around the change in ABE assessments. The time needed to take the assessments has caused concern for local providers.

Universal Form Working Group

The ABE Transitions Specialist is a member of this group working to streamline intake among all core WIOA partners. Quarterly meetings address referrals among partners and the new CareerForce website.

WIOA State Plan 2020-2024 Development Meeting

The State ABE Director has been involved in meetings that focused on the submission of the 2020 WIOA state plan. This plan helps guide one-stop providers in aligning their work to statewide goals.

Workforce Innovation Cohorts

Minnesota participated in two technical assistance opportunities through Maher. Innovation in Peer-to-Peer Learning “brings together peers for collaborative learning and problem solving. Cohorts are designed to drill-down on a topic, combining “team time” (state or region) with cross-state/regional collaboration”. The two cohorts were 1) Customer Service Cohort and 2) Maximizing WIOA and other non-WIOA Performance Data. The cohorts had a representative from each WIOA title. This built camaraderie among WIOA programs.

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

State leadership funds were used during 2018-19 to support one Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education position (the professional development specialist) to coordinate statewide professional development (PD) activities and assist local ABE program staff in designing and implementing effective PD. In addition, a statewide ABE professional development (PD) advisory committee convened quarterly to identify key present and future PD needs, develop PD plans and resources, identify and implement best practices in PD, and coordinate and align PD activities for an efficient and effective PD system. This advisory committee has approximately 25 members, including state ABE staff, PD providers and local ABE instructors and administrators.

Specific PD events conducted included: a state summer ABE professional development conference, a new ABE staff orientation (ABE Foundations), a state adult language and literacy institute, a state ABE math conference, a state support staff conference, regional ABE trainings, assessment trainings, and volunteer trainings. Event numbers and attendance totals for these 2018-19 trainings are listed below:

Professional Development Event	Number of Events	Attendance Totals
Statewide ABE Summer Institute	1 3-day event	508
ABE Foundations	2	97
Regional Training Events	5	402
Adult Language and Literacy Institute (ESL and ABE)	1 2-day event	138
ABE Math Institute	1	65
Support Staff Conference	1 2-day event	149
Assessment Trainings	33	741
Trainings for volunteers working in ABE programs	80	1728
ABE Volunteer Management Conference	1	50

In addition, PD was provided through a number of long-term job-embedded activities, including:

- **CCRS Implementation Cohort:** Training for local program teams focused on understanding and implementing the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education
 - **Evidence-Based Reading Instruction (EBRI):** Study Circles and Training (both in-person and online sessions)
 - **Adult Career Pathway Program Development:** Training and coaching for ABE administrators in developing adult career pathway programming
 - **Adult Career Pathway Course Design:** Training and support for instructors or curriculum writers in developing or strengthening adult career pathway courses
 - **ACES (Academic, Career, and Employability Skills):** Training to ensure that ABE programs are providing contextualized instruction integrating post-secondary education and training readiness, employability skills, and career readiness at all levels
 - **Technology Integration Initiative:** Training and support for instructors on integrating digital literacy instruction and technology into lessons
 - **Technology Leadership Academy:** Coaching and support for programs around increased technology integration for staff and students
 - **Language Instruction Study Circles:** A suite of facilitated study circles focused on 1) working with ESL learners with limited literacy, 2) integrating numeracy and language instruction, and 3) teaching pronunciation
- *Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223(1)(c).*

Federal state leadership funds are used to support state-level technical assistance and to provide administrative and professional development services necessary to operate the ABE system in Minnesota. Resources helped to provide essential areas of technical assistance, such as: maintaining the Minnesota Adult Basic Education website (www.mnabe.org); providing frequent communication with local program staff through quarterly webinars, fall meetings with ABE managers, spring grant application meetings, regional Q and A sessions, and trainings at the annual ABE Summer Institute; providing direct guidance through thousands of individual emails and calls from local program staff; and disseminating a weekly electronic PD newsletter with information about training opportunities, instructional resources and promising practices.

Technical assistance also supports funded eligible providers in the following specific ways:

(1) Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of PD activities and associated technical assistance such as: support to programs using the STAR model; Evidence-Based Reading Instruction study circles and online courses; annual Language and Literacy Institute; Adult ESL Study Circles; participation in the Minnesota Teachers of Mathematics Conference; MN distance learning website; Distance Learning Basics online course; and online resource libraries in the areas of ACES (academic, career, and employability skills), adult career pathways, CCR standards, ESL, numeracy, project-based learning, reading, social studies and civics, and writing. These libraries can be found at <https://atlasabe.org/resources/>.

(2) Enabling providers to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers via training on navigation, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for post-secondary enrollment or employment.

(3) Using technology to improve program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education. The Minnesota Department of Education ABE office contracted to

provide professional development in the area of educational technology through face-to-face and online training. More information about current technology training can be found at: <https://mnliteracy.org/techservices>. In addition, online training was provided in a variety of areas, including educational technology, digital literacy instruction, and distance learning. A list of current courses available can be found at: <http://online.themlc.org/>. Training and technical assistance around distance education and digital literacy is also offered through the same provider. More information about distance learning current training and resources can be found at: <http://www.mnabe-distancelearning.org/>

In addition, other training and technical assistance focused on the effective use of statewide data system to maintain accurate data and continuously improve programming. This support was offered through face-to-face training at conferences and regional events as well as through online synchronous and asynchronous training.

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

The state ABE leadership team monitored the quality of adult education activities through the following: ongoing data system development and training to better equip local and state staff to monitor ABE data; review of NRS data; expenditure verification via submission of audit certified expenditure reports; site visits to local ABE programs; annual submission of assurances by grantees; implementation of the annual “report card”; Program Improvement cohort participation for low-performing consortia as identified on the “report card” In addition, accountability training was provided at the following events: support services conference, ABE summer institute, fall and spring “regional” events, statewide local administrator meetings, quarterly webinars, and other events. Additional details can be found online at: <http://www.mnabe.org/accountability-reporting>

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

Volunteer Training and Support: As specified in the Minnesota state plan for Adult Basic Education, the Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education (ABE) office continues to collaborate with and provide state leadership resources to the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) (www.mnliteracy.org) to provide literacy volunteer training in Minnesota. That collaboration and support yields a substantial capacity to deliver volunteer tutor training statewide including through innovative projects such as online training. The MLC also supports volunteer tutors through their “Tutor Tip” e-mails and website archive. Most tutors work in settings where their work supports that of a licensed ABE teacher.

Distance Learning and Digital Literacy - Building Adults’ Technology Skills: Leadership resources helped the Minnesota Literacy Council ensure that technical assistance and training was available for programs so they can help ABE students access numerous distance learning options through their local ABE sites. The Minnesota Literacy Council also conducted trainings with ABE staff to support their integration of digital literacy skill instruction and assessment of students using the Northstar Digital Literacy Standards and Assessments.

Serving Students with Disabilities: Leadership resources supported the delivery of professional development and technical assistance in the arena of serving adults with disabilities and maintenance of a disabilities website <http://mn.abedisabilities.org>. The disabilities service provider also provided training on using Universal Design for Learning principles and strategies to address the varied needs of adult learners.

Section 2: Performance Data Analyses

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

Minnesota National Reporting System (NRS) Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) Outcomes (in %)

NRS Level	FY 2015-2016		FY 2016-2017		FY 2017-2018		FY 2018-2019	
	Target	Actual	Target	Target	Actual	Target	Target	Actual
ABE Level 1	67	77	78	59	78	62	61	56.92
ABE Level 2	62	65	67	46	67	47	48	42.84
ABE Level 3	55	45	51	39	52	44	43	46.96
ABE Level 4	46	30	34	36	35	39	40	49.57
ABE Level 5	46	22	26	40	27	41	46	55.86
ABE Level 6				28		24	36	34.69
ABE Total							43	46.53
ESL Level 1	59	45	48	43	49	43	45	40.44
ESL Level 2	73	55	58	54	58	53	56	50.13
ESL Level 3	66	48	51	44	52	44	47	44.75
ESL Level 4	56	37	39	38	40	37	42	35.84
ESL Level 5	55	31	35	34	36	32	37	32.10
ESL Level 6	33	14	16	23	17	23	25	21.63
ESL Total							43	38.34
Grand Total								42.56

Minnesota ABE outcomes on additional WIOA measures

Measure	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019
Measurable skill gain	39.73%	42.56%
Employment at second quarter after exit	33.87%	37.59%
Employment at fourth quarter after exit	33.44% (partial)	33.54%
Median quarterly earnings at second quarter after exit	\$5,583	\$5,660
Credential Attainment Plus (and Entering Postsecondary or Employment)	12.4% (partial)	22.88%

The tables above provides core performance information for the current and past (up to four) years for Minnesota ABE programs. Minnesota’s recent results continue to reflect the exceptionally low unemployment rate (less than 3% for the past couple years), much lower immigration rates than in recent years and continued low GED prep participation. Key data points for Minnesota ABE include:

- MSG outcomes overall were within 0.5% of the negotiated target;
- Outcomes increased in all WIOA measures from 2017-18 to 2018-19;
- MSG in ABE levels exceeded federal targets;

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.

Approved assessments for NRS purposes include: BEST Plus, CASAS Life and Work, CASAS GOALS, TABE 9-10 and TABE 11-12. The assessment results were used in assessing program quality as part of the state grant application and review process. The core federal performance indicators are also the primary data used in Minnesota ABE Statewide Report Card and the Report Card is used to identify grantees for participation in Minnesota's ABE Program Improvement Process. Minnesota continues to provide extensive professional development in standards implementation, instructional methodology, instruction, technology/distance education, use of volunteers, adult career pathway programming and contextualized instruction and we expect that the resulting improvements in program quality will continue to be reflected by gains in Minnesota's core performance indicators.

Section 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.

The State eligible agency is the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). MDE delegates the required one-stop roles to forty-one eligible providers.

The career services provided in the one-stop center system vary greatly across the state. Decisions regarding which entity offers which career service is determined locally among partners. AELFA programs offer initial and comprehensive assessments, referrals to programs, and financial aid and financial literacy information. More comprehensively, the AELFA eligible providers offer workforce preparation and English language acquisition. Some providers offer the education portion of an integrated education and training program.

MDE made the decision to support infrastructure costs through local agreements. ABE providers worked with their partners in developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the one-stop system.

In addition to the above integration activities, all local workforce development areas have an ABE representative on the local board. ABE providers also serve on the local youth committees and some even facilitate newly formed career pathway committees.

Section 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.*

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Adult Basic Education office held a competition for IELCE program funds March-May of 2019. Twelve grants were awarded in July of 2019.

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

All current grantees are required to use the integrated education and training approach in combination with English literacy and civics education. There have been some questions regarding what qualifies as the training piece of IET but the state is trying to work through these questions by working with our Department of Employment and Economic Development and Career and Technical Education partners. Probably the biggest barrier to implementing this model is recognizing certain credentials that are only attainable to a relatively small portion of the ABE population in Minnesota.

- *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*

Through the grant process, IELCE funds programs for immigrants, refugees and other English Language Learners that include the four parts identified in WIOA:

1. **English Language Acquisition;**
2. **Civics Education** (in Minnesota, defined as including at least one of the 4 pillars of Civics: U.S. Government; U.S. History; Citizenship; and Community Engagement);
3. **Workforce Preparation** (programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment; in Minnesota, this means embedding the Academic, Careers and Employability Skills (ACES) Transitions Integration Framework); and
4. **Work Training** (a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and training for an occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement, which can include postsecondary preparation, training, certification courses, internships, apprenticeships, or other forms of transitions programming).

These four parts were required in the grant application and were essential elements to receive a grant. Applications were rated and selected on a competitive basis to alignment with local, regional and state WIOA plans, preparing adults for in-demand occupations and career pathways, and quality of IET

programming to allow local focus on collaborating with the workforce development system partners, including one-stop centers, employers, and postsecondary institutions.

The main challenge Minnesota faces in developing IELCE programming is identifying in demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency for NRS ESL levels 1-6. Since IELCE grantees must offer IET and since IET must fit into a career pathway and since a career pathway must end in at least one postsecondary credential it seems to be a stretch for the majority of English language learners in current programming. We have been trying some job shadowing and other training opportunities.

- *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.*

The Minnesota Department of Education is working with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development to:

- Utilize market analysis to identify in-demand industries that will be reflected in state, regional and local WIOA plans;
- Work on determining how unsubsidized employment can be tracked statewide and reported both at a state- and local-level through data matching agreements; and
- Train local programs on understanding Integrated Education and Training.

Grantees reported challenges in developing IELCE and IET programming and integrating with their workforce partners. From our grantees, this was due to: the need for more intensive resources; need for additional time to develop programming; partners focused on developing local and regional WIOA plans but not yet ready to implement strategies with IELCE grantees; low numbers due to low unemployment in Minnesota; and partners having numerous recent staffing changes. With those lessons learned, we are considering moving to a 3-year competitive grant cycle starting this year to allow for more comprehensive collaborating and sustainable program development, as partners are now ready to implement the WIOA plan strategies.

Section 5: Adult Education Standards

Minnesota has adopted three sets of content standards for Adult Basic Education (ABE): 1) the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRS) for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics; 2) the MN ACES Transitions Integration Framework (TIF) (available at <https://atlasabe.org/key-activities/aces/>) for professional or “soft skills”; and 3) the Northstar Digital Literacy Standards (available at www.digitalliteracyassessment.org) for digital literacy skills.

Minnesota has adopted the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards for K-12. While the Minnesota K-12 Mathematics standards were developed prior to the Common Core and are not due to be revised until 2021-22, it has been determined that they have a strong alignment with the Common Core. The College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education being used for Minnesota ABE are drawn from the Common Core State Standards, and therefore have strong alignment with the Minnesota K-12 standards.

CCRS Foundations, introductory six-hour standards workshops providing an overview of the CCR ELA or Math standards and associated instructional shifts, were offered at a variety of statewide conferences, including the August 2018 ABE Summer Institute, the January 2019 Language and Literacy Institute. In addition, practitioners were able to access a CCRS Foundations online course.

From March 2015 to September 2016, Minnesota participated in the OCTAE-sponsored *College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action* initiative. As a result of that participation and subsequent pilots, a year-long *CCRS Implementation Cohort Training* was designed to support implementation of the standards at the local program level. In 2018-19, approximately 34 staff from 8 programs were accepted to participate in the cohort. Through a combination of workshops, webinars, online communication, and local implementation activities, teams learned to evaluate and improve the CCRS-alignment of lessons, resources, assignments, and instruction. In addition, they developed a multi-year CCRS implementation plan for their program, and provided leadership and training for standards implementation to their colleagues. These programs are continuing to receive technical assistance and training to support their standards implementation efforts.

A *CCRS Implementation Cohort Training* will likely be held on an annual or biannual basis until all consortia have received training, or as long as there is a perceived need. Components of the training are also being delivered at other training venues for those who cannot commit to the full-year cohort experience. In addition, a CCRS Instructional Leader Summit is planned for spring 2020 to provide resources and training to those who are providing support around the standards at the program or regional level.

Section 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.

According to the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MN DOC), the state's adult prison population was 9,607 offenders as of July 1, 2019. 94.4% are held in state prisons, and the remaining 5.6% reside either in county jails, a state juvenile facility, or other facilities. Of the new admissions during the year (July 2018-June 2019), 40.2% were release returns. In 2018, MN DOC calculated that 74% of offenders do not return to prison (MN DOC 2018 Performance Report).

MN DOC utilizes the federal recidivism rate calculation, based on a three-year follow up period after release from prison. Minnesota's rate of recidivism is 25%, according to MN DOC in the latest data available. In a 2013 study ([*The Effects of Minnesota Prison-Based Educational Programming on Recidivism and Employment*](#) by Duwe and Clark), obtaining secondary credentials helped offenders enter postsecondary education and gain employment, but diplomas alone were not the primary factor to reduce recidivism. The study found that "obtaining a [diploma] in prison significantly increased the odds of securing post-release employment by 59%." Post-release employment data show that 60% of offenders who earned diplomas in prison found employment within the first two years compared to 50% in the comparison group. The study found that "earning a postsecondary degree in prison... was associated with greater number of hours worked, higher overall wages, and less recidivism." Earning a diploma is also critical as a prerequisite to postsecondary education. Obtaining

postsecondary credentials in corrections resulted in reduced recidivism, higher numbers of hours worked, and increased wages. Obtaining a postsecondary credential reduced re-arrest by 14%, reconviction by 16%, and new offense re-incarceration by 24%. The employment rate for offenders who earned post-secondary degrees (71%) was slightly higher than that of the prisoners in the comparison group (68%). The study was completed with offenders released in 2007 and 2008, which gives enough time to determine meaningful outcomes post-release. For learners served in corrections systems during this program year, it is difficult to determine recidivism rates as many are still incarcerated and others have been released only recently.

Roughly 25.3% of people in corrections in Minnesota do not have a secondary credential. In the 2018-19 program year, 22 of Minnesota's 41 AEFLA grantees offered services in correctional settings including 9 state prisons and at least 21 county jails. 9,171 offender enrollees were served in Minnesota; 5,538 participants were served with 5,905 total periods of participation. Enrollees in corrections ABE programs generated 773,520 contact hours. 40.77% of Minnesota's correctional ABE participants and 38.54% of correctional periods of participation achieved a measurable skill gain.

MN DOC has an education-first policy, which means that individuals who do not have a secondary credential (high school diploma) are required to enroll in ABE and achieve a high school credential through one of three options: GED, a MN high school diploma, or the MN State Adult High School Diploma. In 2016, MN DOC added another option for the incarcerated population, the MN State Adult High School Diploma. Thus, the third "competency-based" adult high school diploma credential option has enabled individuals to achieve their secondary credential. Once MN DOC individuals complete a secondary credential, they are then eligible for work programs within the facility or enter post-secondary and/or career technology opportunities.

150 Standard Adult High School Diplomas issued in 2018-19 were earned by ABE students in Minnesota correctional facilities. ABE students in Minnesota's correctional facilities also perform well on the GED exam with 359 test-based high school equivalency diplomas issued in 2018-19. The GED passing rate for MN DOC programs is 92%, one of the highest in nation, according to GED Testing Service. Beyond secondary credentials, MN DOC is implementing in-demand career pathway programming for students who have or achieve a diploma to work towards a postsecondary degree or training while still incarcerated.

MN DOC's intensive educational and training programs provide the opportunity for individuals to bridge into postsecondary career pathways options. MN DOC also offers mental health services and other support services to facilitate stability. These policies and strategies promote a robust system of ABE within MN prisons. MN DOC funds their education program with ABE funding and also with supplemental corrections funding.