**Montana Narrative Report 2018-2019**

**State Leadership Funds**

**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).**

A primary use of leadership funds has always been to further enhance the WIOA vision and mission such as including career pathway integration into the adult education classroom in order to align with the employment and training services of our core partners. A career pathway initiative launched in 2014 has remained in place and continues to evolve. Programs continue to analyze instruction, number of hours per week available, names of commercially developed materials used, names of computer software used, and types of instructor developed material for each educational functioning level. This assists teachers in discovering how well the materials they use provide contextualized learning experiences with a scope and sequence that truly supports the college and career readiness standards and student transition to employment, postsecondary education, and training. Teachers have the opportunity to engage in reflective activities that help them understand how they are meeting core partner needs through adult education instructional activities. Core partner coordination, recruitment of diverse clients, intake, orientation, and client services remain integral to career pathway integration. Coordination of services is crucial to recruit and provide services to clients in a manner that results in occupational training, postsecondary education, and employment in a progressive career path.

The State recognizes the need to expand and strengthen existing components of career pathway instruction provided by all local adult education programs. The State continues to use the state-wide career pathway curriculum via Montana Career Information System (MCIS) and our web-based math and English curriculum, EdReady. EdReady allows teachers to develop and use a variety of instructional strategies for lessons within this learning platform. Teachers across the State use lessons in order to positively impact student retention, high school equivalency attainment, and preparedness for postsecondary education and training. MCIS is a robust career planning tool which motivates students to think about their next steps beyond adult education and engages them in thoughtful short and long term planning for further education and job attainment. Teachers integrate these materials and learning activities into existing career counseling activities. The use of MCIS and EdReady creates a systemic approach to adult education instruction across programs. In addition, the State includes components relevant to career pathways during fall/spring meetings and adult education staff have opportunities to network and learn from colleagues throughout the State.

State adult education staff also continued to facilitate an interagency taskforce that is working to attain and sustain a state-wide, systemic approach to career pathways. The taskforce is committed to creating an awareness, promoting, and supporting the relevance and expansion of adult career pathways. Members of the Interagency Pathway Team include representatives from agencies such as: Office of Commissioner of Higher Education, Department of Labor, State Workforce Investment Board, Rural Employment Opportunity, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Public Instruction, Office of Tourism and Commerce, Veterans Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Office of the Governor. The quarterly meetings focus on activities that help all taskforce members develop a clear understanding of a career pathway system and to discuss how we could lend support to a state-wide approach. The meetings have evolved into collaborative agendas that focus on keeping agency representatives apprised of all pathway activities occurring in the State through presentations and open discussions. Throughout the year, members receive cutting-edge information on a variety of aspects applicable to our service of common clients. These meetings and presentations provide the agencies opportunity to share information with professional colleagues with the intention of creating strong linkage between State and local career pathway stakeholders.

* **Establishment or operation of a high quality professional development programs as**

**described in section 223(1)(b).**

The State determined that an essential element of a high quality professional development program was the establishment of rules regarding required hours for professional development and the ability to track teacher participation. Therefore, the State developed business language for a professional development tracking component which was included in our State student information system. This gives the State the ability to analyze teacher participation in professional development and its impact on student outcomes. All programs are expected to participate in State sponsored professional development activities as well as encouraged to seek out other professional development opportunities that align with their specific needs.

The State also develops procedures to elicit feedback from teachers to generate an understanding from their perspective on what is needed to support high quality professional development programs. The State encourages teacher reflection and opportunities via collaborative meetings and field surveys to identify critical professional development needs based on their program materials analysis. The State is also open to recommendations from the field that may lend themselves to professional development activities for the dissemination of information and promising best practices.

Additionally, the State will analyze our student information system data to determine instructional needs in reading and other academic areas. The State is committed to offering professional development opportunities that will meet the learning needs of our adult students. The State contracted with in a national trainer, Kathy St. John, to offer Essential Components of Reading Training to local program staff during the 2018-2019 program year. The training was well attended and well received. Instructors are implementing some of Kathy’s strategies in their classrooms.

* **Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section**

**223(1)(c).**

The State provided technical assistance to local programs as needed. State staff continually analyzed data, fielded questions/inquiries, and disseminated pertinent information to adult education providers. One local program was put on a detailed improvement plan during the 2018-2019 program year to improve enrollment and performance outcomes. This improvement plan came after monthly desk audits and an onsite monitoring visit.

The State staff also recognized the need for technical assistance support from the federal level. During the reporting period for the 2017-2018 program year, the State was in continuous communication with federal representatives for support. The State received technical assistance in regard to NRS reporting from Larry Condelli during the 2018-2019 program year. The State then worked through internal processes and procedures so that the reporting period for 2018-2019 went much smoother than the 2017-2018 reporting period.

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

During the 2018-2019 program year, each program was monitored via desk audits. These monthly reports were required. The reports had two sections; data analysis and a partner collaboration/activity log. The data analysis section required the programs to report and analyze data on the educational gains for each functioning level, the number of students exited, the number of students post-tested, total attendance hours, and the number of high school equivalency completers. The partner collaboration/activity log section documented the programs ongoing work with agency partners to support their career pathway integration and coordination of services. They were required to report on all monthly activities with current partners that were completed and identify new partner meetings and activities. In addition, it was required that the program report on the outcome, or anticipated outcome, with the partner. The partner collaboration/activity log also required that the programs document ongoing strategies for increasing educational gains and specify what recruitment activities were completed throughout the month. The partner collaboration/activity log will become the basis for identifying models of promising practices.

State staff also created a Monitoring Tool Taskforce during the 2017-2018 program year. This group of representatives from the field, facilitated by the State Director, created a guiding document to use for program monitoring that directly aligned to the original WIOA Adult Education RFP. The taskforce group met several times and presented the draft document along with recommendations to the field in spring 2018. That finalized monitoring tool was used to monitor all local programs either onsite or virtually during the 2018-2019 program year.

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

Other activities supported by leadership dollars included: Teacher/Director Fall and Spring Conferences, distribution of pertinent information, assessment training (TABE and BEST Plus), purchase of distance learning curriculum, and monthly Shop Talks for program directors. The State also secured a contract with a vendor during this program year for a new, robust data management system which will officially deploy July 1, 2019.

**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. 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**.

The core programs convened in 2016 to analyze each programs’ core indicators of performance. This was done by using the 2014-2015 data from each program. The Montana Department of Labor Research and Analysis Division used this data to data match for employment 2nd and 4th quarter after exit, median earnings 2nd quarter after exit, credential attainment rate, and measurable skill gain. Although, for adult education all but measureable skill gain data was baseline data collection, this glimpse at how adult education compared with the other core partners was very informative. The data was shared with the local programs, and it became a springboard for conversation on how adult education performed alongside our partners, but more importantly how we need to connect with the other core partners who outperformed us in certain areas. This was meant to be a tool to guide and inform instruction in the coming program years. It readily showed eligible providers where program improvement was needed; in the long-term this type of report will be the basis for assessing program quality and effectiveness. Related conversations continue to take place at various levels.

During the 2017-2018 year, it became apparent that the State internally built student information and data management system was not as robust as it needed to be. State staff had numerous internal and external conversations regarding this issue and began preparing for an RFP for a COTS vendor-supplied data management system. During the 2018-2019 program year, the State secured a contract for a robust COTS vendor-supplied data management system. That new data management system will officially deploy on July 1, 2019. In addition, during the reporting period for the 2017-2018 program year, the State determined the need to review data matching procedures and processes. State staff, comprised of only two individuals – Adult Education State Director and Adult Education Program Assistant, is relatively new and had limited access to background knowledge regarding data matching. Once again, the State staff recognized the need for technical assistance support from the federal level and the State received technical assistance from Larry Condelli during the 2018-2019 program year. This ensured more accurate data collection and data reporting period for the 2018-2019 program year. The State also worked through internal processes and the reporting period for 2018-2019 went much smoother than the 2017-2018 reporting period.

**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 Adult Education State Director is a member of the State Workforce Innovation Board and serves on the WIOA Committee for this board. In this capacity the State Director is directly involved in all one-stop decisions at the State level. This provides an opportunity to share the perspective of adult education in one-stop agenda topics.

The State continues to work collaboratively with the other core partners to provide one-stop services in each of our 12 Montana Association of County (MACo) Districts. Through a variety of meetings, representatives from each core partner agency continue to utilize a WIOA Collaborative Agreement previously developed which describes our overarching one-stop mission, the specific services of each core partner and how they are to be integrated, a proposed service delivery model, the role of the community management team, and outreach to employers. The collaborative agreement has been sent to core partner staff working in each MACo District to guide them in delivering one-stop services. This agreement will be the foundation for future core-partner meetings and discussions of services.

In August 2015, the State agency worked with the other core partners to co-host a WIOA Kickoff. Representation from each agency in the MACo Districts were brought together for technical assistance and training. The goal of the kickoff was to ensure that all WIOA local providers were prepared to support the one-stop requirements of WIOA. The agenda included: a motivational speaker on Leadership and Change, a presentation from the leadership of each core partner agency explaining the program services, a Montana Department of Labor (DOL) presentation on connecting clients with the Montana Career Information Services, and a panel discussion on career pathway opportunities and sector strategies. The conference participants were then broken into workforce districts for facilitated discussions on what was learned and how they could begin to prepare for changes that will strengthen their one-stop delivery services.

In the Adult Education RFP Competition in Spring 2017, all eligible providers were required to respond to specific questions documenting how they would be responsible for meeting the one-stop requirements that the State would delegate to them. The eligible providers were required to provide basic, individual, and follow-up career services. Basic services include the wide range of services from assessment to referrals with other programs and services. All adult education teachers have completed activities on accessing and understanding labor market data; so all teachers have a working knowledge of labor market data that will be essential for delivering the career services. In our State Plan, all core partners committed to use the Montana Career Information System (MCIS) to provide individual career services. All WIOA clients will set up a career portfolio that can be seamlessly transferred from one agency to another. The portfolio will include skills inventories, specialized assessments, and short and long term employment goals that are relevant for the client’s chosen career pathway. This state-wide systemic approach to meeting individual career services will provide clients with streamlined career services with no duplication of activities to be completed. Regardless of the core partner that begins the individual career services, the client can be assured that all planning and information will be readily available to all agencies who are providing core partner services.

At the beginning of the 2017-2018 program year, an initial MOU regarding the infrastructure costs was initiated, drafted, and signed by core partner agencies. In May 2018, the leading State agency worked with the other core partners to co-host a state-wide WIOA Convening. Representation from each agency in the MACo Districts were brought together for technical assistance and training. The goal of the convening was to ensure that all WIOA local providers were making progress providing WIOA services. The agenda included: Agency Updates from WIOA Core Partners, Collaboration Project Updates, Navigating Poverty Exercise, plus a motivational trainer who focused on system coordination, business services, and regional goal setting. These efforts evolved and were continued throughout the 2018-2019 program year.

**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.**

During the Adult Education RFP Competition in Spring 2017 under WIOA, two providers were awarded the IELCE funds for the 2017-2018 program year. Extension applications were submitted for subsequent years. The next Adult Education RFP Competition is scheduled for Spring 2020.

* **Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in**

**combination with integrated education and training activities**.

In order to understand the IELCE requirement and provide services under WIOA, the State was in continuous contact with the two IELCE providers. The purpose was to assist those two local programs and ELL teachers in developing an understanding of how they could expand their existing services to provide required IELCE services. The following modules are utilized with ELL students: Exploring MCIS, Student Skills Inventories and Interest Profiler, Exploring Occupations, and Researching Education and Training. The two IELCE providers are two of our largest and most successful programs in the State. Their personnel is highly qualified and effective when working with this population of adult learners.

Over the past program year, the ELL teachers have been participants in all State-level workshops. Their participation allowed them to work with the adult education teachers in the creation of standards-based lesson plans and contextualized learning plans. This provided them the opportunity to see the planning required to prepare students for secondary credential attainment or transition to postsecondary education, training, and employment.

All ELL teachers have been participants in MCIS training, so they can provide educational and career counseling that is aligned with the State approved career planning system. They also take part in pathway planning with students.

* **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.**

The State previously sent an ELL lead teacher to Salt Lake City to participate in a three day Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) training presented by Miriam Burt. The teacher returned to Montana as a train-the-trainer to share cutting edge strategies on how to incorporate workforce strategies into the ESOL classroom. The strategies were based on the CCR standards with a focus on integration that connects reading, writing, and vocabulary using workplace situations. Additionally, there was a focus on soft skills and building background so students have a cultural basis for reading exercises and workplace information.

The ELL lead teacher remains a strong and reliable resource for other ELL teachers throughout the State. She also continues to serve as the lead trainer for Best Plus and other ELL related trainings. She provided a Best Plus training in August 2018.

The State ELL teachers have also had presentations from Citizenship and Immigration Services. The presentations have focused on employment issues and barriers to employment for students with Visas/Green Cards. These trainings laid the foundation for ELL teachers to be better prepared to help an ELL student transition to unsubsidized employment. The State will be able to analyze the performance results and challenges in the coming program years using our student data information system.

One local program, an IELCE grant recipient, participated in an extensive professional development pilot project – NIFL Project – to improve their ELL program during the 2018-2019 year. They developed tools and assessments to help these ELL students succeed. They plan to present their experience and take-aways to adult educators in our State as well as present at the national level during Fall 2019.

* **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.**

MCIS, which the ELL teachers have been trained to use with their students, has all the current State workforce information. This gives the teachers all labor market data and workforce information for the State. The State previously contracted with a lead teacher to build an adult/ELL student checklist within the MCIS system. Through this customization, the teachers are able to integrate relevant workforce activities into their instructional practice.

**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.**

The Montana Board of Public Education, upon recommendation from the Superintendent of Public Instruction, adopted the Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics, on November 4, 2011. These standards, along with Science standards adopted in 2016, ensure that when secondary students have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the 21st century economy. Skills include problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, team work, research, and the use of technology.

In February 2015, the Adult Education (AE) Unit at the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) adopted the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for Adult Education. These standards identify the essential CCR components required to be incorporated into the adult education classroom. By adopting these standards, Montana’s AE programs will have student expectations that are consistent with K-12 students. Additionally, AE programs will have access to K-12 tools and materials that support student learning.

* **Optional – Describe implementation efforts, challenges, and any lessons learned**

The State previously sent two adult education lead teachers and a professional development coordinator to the OCTAE 2016 CCR Standards Implementation Institute in Dallas. The team brought all the information back to adult education and ELL teachers by presenting a two-day Summer Institute that gave all participants the occasion to delve deeply into the standards in order to understand key advances in their content areas. These individuals still serve as valuable resources for the other adult education teachers throughout the State. In fact, one of these teachers worked diligently to create an online course for mathematic standards in adult education during the 2018-2019 program year. This online course is now available for adult educators in our State, free of charge.

**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.**

The Montana Department of Corrections follows the Association of State Correctional Administrator’s (ASCA) definition of recidivism.

Recidivism rate– the rate at which adult offenders return to prison in Montana for any reason within three years of their release from prison. Each release can have only one corresponding return.

Given this definition, we would need to wait three full years before we could calculate a recidivism rate. With a 6/30/2019 end date, a recidivism rate for this group participants would not be available until sometime after 6/30/2022.

Some general statistics provided by our Corrections WIOA Title II Program housed at the Montana State Prison:

* + 65% of all inmates into Montana State Prison do not have a verified high school education.
  + 78% of those incoming inmates complete the HiSET and move on to job, post-secondary education or training program inside the prison or in the community within 18-24 months.

The most current recidivism rate available via the Montana Department of Corrections 2019 Biennial Report:

* 2015 – Male Three Year Prison Recidivism Rate
  + Total Recidivism Rate – 38.6%
  + Violation – 33.7%
  + New Crime – 4.9%
* 2015 – Female Three Year Prison Recidivism Rate
  + Total Recidivism Rate – 24.4%
  + Violation – 21.9%
  + New Crime – 2.5%