

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).

State Leadership funds in Ohio continue to facilitate a culture of sustained learning and to provide evidence-based, high-quality professional development to enhance the adult education system as a core partner in Ohio's Combined State Plan. In PY 2018, State Leadership funds were used to support the Professional Development Network (PDN), comprised of a collaboration with the ODHE Aspire office, Kent State University (KSU), and the Ohio State University (OSU). State leadership funds were also used to contract with national, state, and local content experts to provide high-quality PD. The Aspire state director directly supervised all state leadership activities to ensure alignment with activities identified in the Combined State Plan.

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

The PDN consists of highly qualified trainers and content experts. State leadership funds supported a variety of trainings, some required, that focus on improving the instruction of local adult education and literacy activities. Examples of required trainings include Orientation by job role (teacher, support staff, administrator), LINCS Learning to Achieve modules, Distance Education Basics, Assessment Fundamentals, and Understanding and Accessing ABLELink, Ohio's data management system. In the first few years of WIOA implementation, Ohio state leadership funds supported all administrators and a teacher from each program to complete an intensive six-month career pathways training to develop and implement a local Career Pathways Plan. In PY 2018, Aspire state leadership funds were used to assist local programs to build upon the WIOA foundations established in the first few years, including expanding career pathways models and a continued emphasis on improving performance outcomes. Ohio Aspire offered the national Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) training to improve reading instruction throughout the state. Thirteen practitioners, representing five local programs, completed the STAR training in PY 2018. The ODHE continues to use a data-driven planning and evaluation process to determine the needs of the local providers and to develop trainings and disseminate information and models of promising practices to address these needs.

PD activities emphasized research-based features for effective PD such as longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for participation and application of new skills. Statewide and regional opportunities were provided for adult educators to develop and share their knowledge through peer-sharing discussion lists, statewide conferences, online courses, and webinars.

PD in PY 2018

Main topic	Participant Count	Total hours
Accountability	72	124
Assessment	900	2814
Career pathways	42	74
Culture	10	110
Curriculum	59	153
Distance education	143	192
ESOL	132	522
General interest	303	2114
Instructional strategies	96	239
Math	44	168
New to Aspire Program	570	1737
management	125	605
Reading	28	1010
Special needs	134	655
Technology	19	39
Transitions	2	5
Writing	4	66
Grand Total	2683	10627

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

To increase program effectiveness and meet the obligations of a one-stop partner, the state office provided technical assistance in several ways:

(1) Research-based programmatic and instructional practices were disseminated to the field, using nationally known resources, such as STAR and LINCS, and the Ohio PDN. Ohio Aspire offered a variety of required and non-required professional development in-person and online for all job roles. Technical assistance was provided through the PDN hotline, email, and instant messenger. The PDN responded to 2000+ technical assistance requests in PY 2018. Also, the PDN provided technical assistance through various email distribution lists such as Ohiolit, ESOL list, and HSE list. Resources and event information was also disseminated through PDN social media channels on Facebook and Twitter.

(2) The Title II state director attended monthly state Workforce Directors Board meetings, assisted in local MOU discussions, and presented to and provided resources for the WDB directors about Title II services and NRS test requirements. These interactions allowed for relationship building with the area directors and opportunities to address specific questions they had about their local Aspire partners. Aspire providers participated in more WIOA webinars offered by the Office of Workforce Development/Ohio's DOL partner. Aspire and Voc Rehab collaborated to provide Braille Literacy

classes in two major metropolitan cities and partnered to offer a unique online Deaf Literacy class, helping to improve the print literacy of deaf and hard of hearing adults statewide.

There is more work to be done around the collaboration of services, yet, the WIOA partnerships continue to strengthen each year; all partners have the same goal of streamlining the workforce system in order to provide Ohioans access to employment, education and training.

(3) Training and technical assistance continued to be provided face-to-face and online to all Aspire staff regarding technology use. Ohio Aspire instituted Technology Standards years ago for all Aspire practitioners. Teachers were required, per a grant assurance, to use technology in the classroom to enhance instruction. Students were also required, through a grant assurance, to have access to technology in the classroom. All providers were required to offer distance education. Data entry staff were required to complete training on using the statewide data management system before they were provided access to their program data. All of these technology requirements were established years ago and Ohio Aspire will continue to expand technology use in order to improve learner and program efficiencies.

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

The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education in Aspire programs was done primarily by ODHE Aspire program managers with support from the Kent State University data management team. State staff directly monitored local programs' data and, in collaboration with the PDN, recommended or required technical assistance or professional development via the local Program Improvement Consultation Plan (PICP). The PICP is a prescriptive continuous improvement tool designed to assist local program administrators as they examine program areas for improvement and implement strategies and action steps to address improvement. The PICP keeps the state staff directly connected to the local program with a quarterly data check-in, either in person, via phone, or most often, via web conference. In addition to the PICPs, the PDN and the state staff determined future PD offerings based on data in the statewide database and from Aspire personnel via surveys and a statewide advisory committee.

The state office and PD providers used a variety of methods to ensure information about evidence-based practices and promising models were disseminated to Aspire practitioners. These methods included:

- Offered "just-in-time" trainings at the local level and reduced state face-to-face trainings. By focusing on the specific needs of the program and meeting at their site, more local staff were able to participate. Our goal was to include more local staff and personalize the training to their program data and needs, as program improvement is a collective process.
- Sent a weekly electronic digest with information about training opportunities and quality resources.
- Provided more peer-facilitated best practices webinars, web-chats, and facilitated practitioner discussion listservs.

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

Ohio continued to support one state literacy resource center located at Kent State University. The resource center houses a lending library where resources, such as sets of books and math manipulatives, are mailed to teachers, and low-use/high-cost items such as the TABE test in braille are kept on reserve. The Kent State University added a new component to the ABLELink database system, Teacher ABLELink, which allows teachers to view their classroom participants' progress via a dashboard without compromising students' personal information. Other state leadership permissible activities provided through Kent State University included distance education and technology support to the local programs and customer service for the PDN system. Ohio State University provided research, training, technical assistance, and curriculum development, including alignments to the new ELP standards.

The state continued to support training that addressed specific subject areas such as mathematics, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Content for integrated education and training models and career pathways continued to be developed as implementation expanded throughout the state in PY 2018.

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. 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.

Highlights from the Achievements of the Core Indicators of Performance

- Ohio ranked in the **4th Quartile nationally for achieving MSGs** (OCTAE WIOA MSG Worksheet PY 18-19): 3rd nationally in ABE MSG, 10th ESL MSG, and 5th overall MSG. Although we missed our target of 63% by achieving 61.9% in PY 2018, there is still much to celebrate regarding student achievement and being a high-performing state.
- 8% of the total participants **enrolled in postsecondary education/training** within the program year.
- 103 more students obtained a **secondary credential** from the previous year.
- 14% of students participated in **distance education** and attended classes. Students who participated in distance education acquired, on average, an additional 12 hours of instruction.
- Ohio met 4 of 6 **ESL MSG statewide level targets**, a significant increase from meeting 0 ESL MSG level targets the previous year.

Areas for Improvement

Ohio Aspire has experienced a slight decline in the number of participants each year for the past five years, resulting in an overall decline of 16%.

	PY13	PY14	PY15	PY16	PY17	PY18
	32,650	29,751	29,548	29,472	28,918	27,470
difference		-2,899	-203	-76	-554	-1,448

The Ohio Department of Higher Education State Aspire Program provided multiple opportunities for both the state staff and the local program staff to assess and monitor the achievements of the programs based on the core indicators of performance.

The State Aspire office conducted **Local Program Desk Reviews** on all funded programs. The Desk Review is a high-stakes accountability document that measures programs' levels of achievement against state targets in participants' measurable skill gain and follow-up outcomes. It also evaluates assessments being used, pre and post testing rates, as well as compliance with other grant requirements. Desk Reviews scores are calculated in to the Risk Assessment tool that is used to determine levels of monitoring needed.

100% of the Aspire providers submitted an annual **Local Program Data Certification Checklist** which is modeled after the federal checklist. This document verifies program compliance with NRS and state follow-up survey requirements. Aspire staff monitor compliance with this and other federal and state requirements during on-site reviews.

On a quarterly basis, Aspire program managers met face-to-face or electronically with the local directors to review program data in the data management system, ABLELink. Information from the Local Program Desk Review and quarterly data monitoring drives the development of the **Local Program Improvement Consultation Plan (PICP)**. 100% of the Aspire programs receive quarterly data check-ins with the state staff and completed a PICP.

On-Site Reviews are multi-day intensive reviews involving administrators, teachers, and students. The Local Aspire Program Review Instrument consists of three content areas: Administration, Staff Development, and Student Experience Model. A final report citing Noteworthy Practices, Findings, and Recommendations was sent to the agency chief administrator following the review. Any area with a finding or recommendation must be responded to with a corrective action plan. The corrective actions were examined and then verified as completed by the state staff. During program year 2018, ten programs received on-site reviews which represented 20% of the local programs.

While Ohio Aspire has formal processes in place like mentioned above, two years ago we implemented a risk management model to view the programs more holistically. Program managers started doing more **targeted technical assistance based on risk** instead of time and began doing more unannounced class observations.

All of these tools for monitoring programs help the state staff and PD staff work collaboratively with the local programs to implement strategies for program improvement.

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.

All of the Ohio one-stops, called OhioMeansJobs Centers, had local Aspire/Title II program services accessible to their customers as part of their menu of services. Career services that were provided in the one-stop system include:

Outreach, intake, and orientation

Assessment of skill levels

Referrals

Provider performance and program cost information

Supportive services information

Specialized assessments

In PY 2018, 31 of 49 local Title II Aspire programs paid cash contributions totaling \$102,928 to support the OhioMeansJobs Centers' infrastructure costs.

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

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 Ohio Department of Higher Education held a competition for WIOA Title II funds in PY 2017. Providers awarded 231 funds could also apply for 243 funds, as the IELCE funds were not a separate competition. In PY 2018, five of the 35 grantees with an ESL component offered multiple IELCE programs, including STNA, Hospitality Services, and IT/MS certification.

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

In PY 2018, we offered two opportunities for programs to apply for 243 funding, in July and again in December. In order to meet the requirements to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training activities, Ohio designated a state staff program manager to oversee IELCE, cross train the other state staff, and provide training and technical support to the providers. The program manager participated in the Building Opportunities through Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Collaborative with MSG. Ohio was slow to roll out IELCE programs in the early years of WIOA because we wanted to learn more to ensure that funds were supporting allowable

activities and that all components of an IELCE program were occurring. All programs intending to offer an IELCE program must first complete the IELCE Checklist, modeled from the OCTAE IELCE checklist. If all required components are complete in the plan, the state office will approve the IELCE program. In PY 2017 and PY 2018, the state office created 1-page fact sheets as resource guides, recommended PD opportunities, presented on this topic at conferences and trainings, provided site visits, and contracted with a national trainer to work with the administrators and teachers on the topic of career pathways and what different IET models look like. Now that we have several providers with solid IELCE programs, we are using those teachers to provide peer trainings on the topic. Even though IELCE programs have been around a few years now, we are glad we rolled this out slowly as the quality of the IELCE programs are impressive and students are obtaining certificates, credentials, and jobs.

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;

Local programs submit an IET checklist to be considered for 243 funding. Programs complete questions of the application that pertain to placing program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand occupations, alignment to a career pathway, connection to a local workforce plan, and that there are solid existing employment opportunities for participants. The state continues to see an increase in the number of programs that are applying to use 243 funds as local Aspire programs continue to seek out new partnerships and create concurrent and seamless IET models.

The state addressed many of challenges from the previous years through training, presentations, state and federal guidance, and field best practices. The challenge seems to be to “just do it.” Providers who have been successful in IELCE programming continue to provide and expand services. Those that have not tried it are still reluctant because it does take a lot of planning and collaboration for successful programming.

Performance results include the expansion of IET models and the development of occupational skills training to include internships, on the job training, and contextualized experiences such as working at a local nursing home and working at a local restaurant within a non-profit community organization.

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 local programs work with the community partners, such as other training providers, OhioMeansJobs centers, employers, and support service agencies to provide IELCE activities that align with the local workforce needs. One of the required questions on the IET checklist for Ohio asks how the IET program reflects the criteria of being a part of a career pathway aligned to the local workforce plan and how it supports the requirements that a career pathway helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster. The Integration of the OCTAE IELCE Self-Assessment Tool helps programs self-evaluate if they are integrating IELCE program activities

that meet the needs of the local workforce development system. In PY 2018, we continued to see more local programs meeting with other organizations to build strategic partnerships to meet the needs of the local workforce board.

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.

Ohio's adult education program has a long history, over 25 years, of standards-based education. In 2014, the ODHE Aspire program adopted the rigorous College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for Adult Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2013) for use in all ABE/ASE classes. In 2018, the Aspire program adopted and adapted the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELP) for Adult Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) for use in all ESOL classes. The ELP standards have correspondences to the CCR standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. By utilizing national standards, Ohio Aspire programs are situated to meet the academic rigor outlined in WIOA. The CCR standards were developed and aligned to the Common Core State Standards, which were adopted by the Ohio Department of Education. The CCR standards are evidence-based standards intended to provide all adult students with the opportunity to be prepared for postsecondary education/training and the workforce without needing basic skills remediation. All Aspire programs are required to implement these standards as a requirement of their funding.

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

When Ohio Aspire first rolled out the new standards in 2014, we held teacher academies, with assistance from the PDN, prior to introducing the materials. The following year we expanded on the previous year's academies. These trainings focused on standards-based lesson planning and strategies for active and differentiated instruction. Now, five years later, all Aspire programs are using the CCR standards to some degree. It continues to be a challenge with many teachers wanting to teach directly to a standardized test and often they do not fully understand the value of standards-based education. With all of the professional development and support that went into the initial CCR standards roll out, implementing the ELP standards has been a smoother process because we already had the supports in place, yet, similar challenges exist with some ESL teachers too.

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.

In Ohio, we do not use AEFLA funds to fund the state prisons. Twenty-seven of the 49 Ohio AEFLA grantees reported having a corrections education program in PY 2018; the majority are with the community-based correctional facilities (CBCFs) and jails. Thirteen percent of all Aspire participants in PY 2018 were served in correctional institutions.

The state AEFLA director contacted the Chief at the Bureau of Community Sanctions for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to ask about a recidivism report for community

corrections since the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (DRC) recidivism reports do not include community corrections or jails, only the state prisons. If we are trying to see the impact that AEFLA classes has on corrections education, Chief Galli sent me a report:

CBCF, Halfway House and ISP-407 Recidivism Report – 2015

After checking back with him again in October 2019, Chief Galli said this is still the most current data available. These studies are costly and are not done annually. There are no recidivism reports available on inmates in Ohio jails. Here are the highlights from the 2015 report:

The data in the report document the 1, 2 and 3 year recidivism rates for offenders who terminated from a CBCF/HWH/ISP-407 program in Calendar Year 2011, a 1 and 2 year recidivism rate for offenders who terminated in Calendar Year 2012 and a 1 year recidivism rate for offenders who terminated in Calendar Year 2013.

While DRC typically uses the term “recidivism” to imply “return to prison after release from prison,” the term is used differently in this report. By and large these offenders are on some form of community control, and they were placed on that status directly after sentencing by the felony court. They have not been to prison before being placed in these programs. Thus, in these circumstances, the generic term “recidivism” should be interpreted as “failed supervision or a community placement and that failure resulted in placement in Ohio’s prisons” within the specified time frame.

Findings from the Report:

- It is consistently the case that those offenders who completed these programs have a much lower recidivism than those who do not, with differences generally between 35 to 45 percentage points. Thus one can easily come to the conclusion that helping offenders to complete the program should be an important part of judging the effectiveness of that program. When evaluating the effectiveness of any program, it is prudent to include an analysis looking at offender’s risk. Only by comparing risk score with program recidivism rate can we truly understand the effectiveness of any given program. This report did not look at the relationship between risk score/level and program recidivism rate. Accordingly, it should not be used as a measure of program performance.
- For all program participants, the one year recidivism rate (placement in prison) in CY 2011 was 23.8%. The recidivism rate increased slightly in CY 2012 to 25.6% and in CY 2013 it was 25.4%.
- Looking at the program completion rate, nearly two thirds of the participants completed the community program successfully.