

## 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:
  - i. 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(a)(1)(A).

Colorado and the Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) team was able to implement its first integrated education and training (IET) program in 2019-20. The IET aligned with the [2018-19](#) and [2019-20](#) Colorado Talent Pipeline Reports that identified the need to support skills-based hiring. The IET utilized the virtual National Retail Federation Certification Course, an industry-recognized credential that, in particular, is relevant to the lower-level English language learners (ELL) enrolled in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education services (IELCE) in that local workforce region. It also supported the regional workforce need for customer service representatives, identified as one of the top five in-demand online occupations posted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the certificate was online, it was able to continue, even during COVID-19 shutdowns. Ten certificate seats were purchased for a total cost of \$500, and the IET was implemented in partnership with the local workforce development center, with shared objectives and co-enrollment in adult education language support classes.

Colorado is regularly exploring viable training programs and strategies in order to further support learners. In the coming months (and in alignment with the November 2019 federal on-site monitoring report and resulting corrective action plan) there will be a fully developed IET toolkit that all grantees will have access to as well as a fully vetted training program.

At this time, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grantees are not co-located in one-stop centers. During 2019-20, alignment of partner services in the one-stop were achieved mainly through plan development discussions and activities of the [2020-24 Workforce innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Colorado State Plan](#), [2020-23 local and regional workforce development area plans](#) and the [Perkins V State Plan](#). Multiple stakeholder and public input opportunities occurred, and the plans were collaboratively written among the state partner agencies and local/regional workforce areas. The Colorado Workforce Development Council also convenes a quarterly WIOA Implementation Team meeting that includes all WIOA state agency partners and the local workforce center directors. All parties provide updates regarding WIOA State Plan implementation and discuss one-stop partner alignment. Other alignment activities included the following one-stop partner joint training activities.

Training modules for both state agency and frontline local workforce development center staff have been developed and deployed through an [online learning management system](#), hosted through Moodle, funded by AEFLA State Leadership dollars. These modules provide training for brand new employees as well as refresher training for veteran employees.

With an investment from the state legislature, the Colorado Department of Education led the implementation of the Colorado Career Conversations (CCC) Training Project in 2019-20. The purpose of the project was to provide free, high-quality professional development to individuals throughout the state who are positioned to have career conversations with students, job seekers, clients, or others who may need support navigating career decisions. The training and career conversations framework were built in partnership with Colorado's Education Leadership Council, the Colorado Education Initiative, the Colorado Workforce Development Council, and the Colorado Departments of Education, Higher Education, and Labor and Employment. The professional development experience was intended for anyone who might have a career conversation, including stakeholders from pre-K, K-12, higher education, adult education, workforce, and beyond who are part of the career advising ecosystem. More than 2,500 staff participated in the training as of June 2020, greatly expanding the number of skilled advisors able to deliver a consistent career advising experience.

Beginning in the winter of 2019, WIOA partners throughout Colorado worked collaboratively to increase knowledge around programmatic accessibility in the workforce system using funding from a Disability Employment

Initiative (DEI) grant. Colorado WIOA partners, through the Job Seeker Services Alignment Accessibility Team, developed training materials to support WIOA core program partners and help staff members understand programmatic access and have resources for implementation. The team consulted with Colorado's DEI stakeholders and decided to train Colorado's workforce system on this material through an online course. The training provides information related to WIOA Section 188, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Rehabilitation Act. The team also created a Programmatic Accessibility Self-Evaluation Toolkit designed for WIOA partners to evaluate progress on accessibility in their local areas. Between October 2019 and February 2020, the Programmatic Accessibility course was completed by more than 200 professionals in Colorado's workforce system. The course was also highlighted on the [Workforce GPS website](#).

AEI met with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) Workforce Development Programs and Vocational Rehabilitation in the spring of 2020 to revise and renew the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) under which MSG, employment, wage, and co-enrollment data is shared. AEI experienced fewer delays and complications in receiving the match data from CDLE for the 2019-20 Annual Performance Report data submission. A similar meeting was held with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) to revise and renew the DSA under which post-secondary entrance and credential attainment data is shared and saw similar improvements to the reduction of delays and complications in receiving the match data. AEI is involved in a Statewide Longitudinal Data System project that may result in increasing the automation and frequency of this data sharing and plans to work closely with CDLE and CDHE to update DSAs as needed. No progress was made on integrated service delivery, expanded access and recruitment across programs, development of common intake systems, or common reporting standards in 2019-20.

During the pandemic, technical assistance, including the use of state leadership funds, shifted focus to online implementation of adult education services, including re-evaluation of potential career pathways that would be attainable in a remote environment. Grantees were encouraged to utilize and refer learners to access remote workforce services as local workforce development centers had to close in-person services. Grantees utilized online meeting platforms to continue to meet with workforce stakeholders and developed online forms to identify barriers and refer learners to appropriate sources to support elimination of those barriers. Grantees also tried innovative assessment administration ideas, including offering proctored assessments in separate vehicles within one parking lot to maximize social distancing while still observing test-takers.

AEI updated its Assessment Policy in spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, temporarily granting COVID-19 post-test exemptions and allowing remote testing per test publisher guidelines. AEI provided technical assistance to grantees interested in assessing learners remotely and ensured grantees also completed training from test publishers (CASAS, Data Recognition Corps (DRC), and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)) before rolling out remote testing with learners. Over half of AEI's AEFLA grantees (8 of 15) prepared to implement assessments remotely once AEI approved the new format.

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

AEI was able to conduct two in-person professional learning events prior to the pandemic. In September 2019, the AEI team held a 2.5-day Learning Institute for program directors and their staff. 65 grantee staff participated, with representation from every grantee. Several topics were covered, including: SMART goal development and tracking; reading performance measures; career pathways models; apprenticeships; accessible design strategies; the Adult Basic Education Authorization (ABEA) portfolio process; assessment data analysis; library resources and activities for adult learners; grantee innovations; grants fiscal updates; and the Programmatic Accessibility course. In March 2020, the week prior to the statewide stay-at-home order, AEI held a 1-day Leadership Institute for local program directors and administrators; 22 grantee staff members were in attendance (more were expected but cancelled trips due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic). Topics covered included: effective enrollment and retention strategies; IELCE services; grants fiscal training; and grant closeout procedures.

AEI continued to offer Directors' Talk in 2019-20, a monthly collaborative opportunity for grantee program directors to meet and discuss current topics. 2019-20 topics included: disability services; career pathways and partnership; recruitment and intake (including orientation, collecting demographic information, and assessment); effective staff and volunteer hiring/recruitment; the 2020 Census; IELCE, workforce boards and employers; and effective English Language Acquisition (ELA) instruction. Directors' Talk ended in March due to COVID-19 to allow grantees to focus energies on developing strategies for continuing programming during the pandemic.

In March 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic began to disrupt the professional learning opportunities planned for the remainder of the year, AEI created a virtual distance learning space in its online learning management system, Moodle, to direct grantees to virtual trainings being offered through national and state partners (including LINCS, COABE, TESOL and Minnesota Literacy) to support the large shift to distance learning. Discussion forums within online platform helped instructors and director's network, collaborate and troubleshoot challenges they faced.

**iii. Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223(a)(1)(C).**

For technical assistance, State leadership funds were used to implement the online Moodle resource discussed above with information about distance learning platforms, federal and state level requirements and suggestions around COVID-19 safety precautions, and the discussion forum for programs to ask and respond to each other, sharing information about effective practices in instruction, assessment, enrollment, and retention. Some promising practices identified were grantees offering drive-up assessments, conducting intake and enrollment over the phone, creating online enrollment forms, and developing instruction to assist low-level learners in using distance learning software. In order to address equity, AEI provided technical assistance to grantees to address ways to redirect funds to purchase devices and hotspots to allow more learners access to online learning. AEI approved remote testing as it was released by the test publishers, and added the BEST Plus assessment to allow for testing ELLs who may face multiple barriers to using remote testing technologies.

AEI provided several additional online professional learning courses in 2019-20 to disseminate best practices. The EDU 131 course supported instructional and programmatic best practices through the use of studies and articles from LINCS, Rocky Mountain Plains Adult Education Association, TESOL, and COABE specifically in the areas of persistence, retention, and universal design for learning. The Programmatic Accessibility course mentioned earlier was another best practices resource.

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

In 2019-20, AEI continued to monitor grantee data monthly, identifying concerns about enrollment, post-testing, and measurable skills gains. AEI utilizes a custom virtual grantee dashboard in the state data system, LACES. This monitoring was used to provide technical assistance to grantees to support improved performance and accuracy in data reporting. AEI also participated in the development of the IET program, working with the grantee to ensure compliance at every level, starting with industry selection, development of shared objectives, and implementation of co-enrollment. AEI observed the adult education portion of the IET program and maintains documentation of the full terms' lesson plans to demonstrate alignment between the IET program and the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). In addition, AEI conducted onsite monitoring early in 2019-20, so no monitoring was cancelled due to the pandemic. The grantees who were monitored in 2019-20 were those who were lowest risk, and were the only programs remaining who had had an onsite monitoring visit in the first two years of the grant cycle. Results of the monitoring visits were used to identify areas of both technical assistance and excellence to share out with other grantees, including a grantee panel at the in-person Leadership Institute and connecting grantees so they could provide each other with peer-to-peer support.

State Leadership Funds were used to support AEI staff time in developing and delivering additional guidance around reporting approved distance learning hours in LACES as well as staff time spent working with the data system vendor, LiteracyPro Systems, to add data elements to track post-testing exemptions permitted due to

COVID-19 in-person testing restrictions and the delay in transitioning to remote testing. AEI staff also conducted a weekly study of attendance hours reported in LACES beginning in March 2019 and concluding in June 2020. The purpose of the study was to ensure that distance learning instructional hours were being reported accurately in LACES, to measure progress grantees were making in transitioning traditionally in-person learners to distance instruction, to document impacts on learner engagement and retention and to identify areas for technical assistance or best practices across the state.

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

AEI continued to use ABEA competencies collaboratively developed with the field in 2018-19 to develop free online courses. In 2019-20, AEI began the process of developing courses as well as soliciting contractors to develop self-paced online modules based around the new ABEA competencies with the goal of offering them for free to adult education instructors in Colorado to meet licensing requirements and serve as a resource for continued professional development. This work has continued, with plans to launch the full set of four courses by in 2022.

AEI also provided ABEA credential pathways for instructional staff through credit bearing courses via partner colleges, and through prior learning portfolio options—including updating and streamlining the portfolio process and supporting documentation in response to feedback. In spring of 2019, AEI offered several opportunities for the online introductory ABEA course, supporting 85 instructors over three class offerings.

As mentioned earlier, in-person Colorado Career Conversations training were provided to AEFLA grantees throughout the state. Later in the year and in response to COVID-19, a new online course was developed for free online training that replaced the in-person training.

In October 2019, AEI purchased state-wide access to the COABE Virtual Conference. Through this, 41 adult education staff members from various programs in Colorado participated in the 2-day online conference covering a variety of topics related to adult education.

In October 2019, AEI staff supported Colorado Adult Education Professional (CAEPA) in the planning and delivery of the annual conference that was held in Denver. A total of 70 people attended, with sessions focusing on data-driven instruction and assessment, digital learning, reading and literacy support. The AEI director and staff presented information about the office and the new Programmatic Accessibility course. Additionally, adult learners who were part of the Learner Ambassador Program presented activities connected with the College and Career Readiness and English Language Proficiency standards.

AEI provided personalized technical assistance to the four directors new to their positions during 2019-20. Supports included additional LACES data system training, local policy creation/implementation assistance and frequent check-in calls. Training was differentiated by the new directors' level of familiarity with the grant. To better support grantees during these important staff transition times, AEI utilized a part-time employee to support these new directors.

Each test vendor's assessment training is hosted online for all grantee staff members that administer educational functioning level assessments. The training provides an opportunity for authorizing new administrators or as a refresher training for certified administrators to remain current with the latest assessment administration protocols. AEI requires local programs to maintain records of staff trained as administrators and to ensure administrators attend these required training sessions.

As identified in the Corrective Action Plan in response to the November 2019 federal on-site review, AEI began addressing the need to create a detailed IET toolkit to guide grantees through the IET development process. This toolkit will include development from initiation of utilizing local workforce data, learner survey, and WIOA partners to determine viable and in-demand career pathways, creation of shared objectives, assurance of concurrent co-

enrollment with contextualized curriculum, development of workforce and industry workplace partnerships, implementation of the program, data collection and evaluation of outcomes.

No statewide training was delivered in 2019-20 specifically to assist grantees in meeting the AEFLA performance targets. The AEI team prioritized the end of grant cycle on-site monitoring, running the most recent AEFLA competition as outlined in the federal corrective action plan and addressing COVID-19 related barriers and challenges over statewide training. Brief analysis of 2018-19 data was discussed at the AEI Learning Institute held in September 2019. While all of those activities supported grantees in implementing AEFLA programs and measuring their successes, they were not necessarily specifically aimed at these objectives. To improve in this area, the AEI team has implemented a series of monthly to quarterly professional learning activities, all currently taking place virtually which include Director Talk, Accessible Design Club, Professional Learning to Chew on, Data Talks, and Office Hours. Ad hoc training is also being delivered to support this work including LACES refresher training, Performance Measures Question & Answer sessions, Table 4 Deep Dive training, Table 5 Deep Dive training, LACES reports training, and a larger professional learning event for teachers tentatively planned for the Summer 2021 depending on in-person meeting restrictions.

**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.**

At the local level, grantees are required to conduct end-of-year data reporting no later than the second Friday in July. Although data entered in LACES by grantees is monitored monthly for errors, AEI staff run a final diagnostic report of learner data after that second Friday in July. Any errors identified are sent to grantees for correction in LACES by the end of July to officially close out the data reporting. Once the data is finalized and frozen, grantees were required to complete an Annual Performance Report (APR) either in writing or collaboratively through a virtual meeting. A majority of grantees elected to complete the APR collaboratively and these meetings took place in July and August of 2020. The APR requires local grantees to analyze enrollment, post-testing, and measurable skill gain (MSG) outcomes across program types, Educational Functioning Level (EFLs), and classes across program years to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Grantees are encouraged to document in the report outliers and anomalies as well as any plans for further research and improvement. Additionally, the APR asked grantees to reflect on the impact COVID-19 stresses and barriers had on performance outcomes for the year.

Grantees are limited in analyzing performance owing to privacy restrictions which currently prevent match data from being reported in LACES where grantees can access it to better understand the impact of the services they deliver. To address this, once final aggregate data is submitted to OCTAE, AEI staff prepare statewide comparison data and grantee-specific reports including their aggregate match data. These are shared in several ways. The 2018-19 Statewide MSG rate, average, and MSG rates by grantee were shared at professional learning events at the beginning of 2019. The 2019-20 rates were shared with grantees during the first of a series of bi-monthly Office Hours held beginning in October of 2020. Each grantee also received an updated Table 4 and 5 in November 2020 which included match data from CDLE and CDHE in the aggregate counts on those tables. This data was shared in combination with NRS Table 4 training that took place in November 2020 and NRS Table 5 training scheduled to take place in January 2021.

The AEI team is sharing current year-to-date grantee MSG rates quarterly through Office Hours meetings to provide more opportunities for grantees to visualize where their performance ranks across the state. Each grantee is also receiving an individual report each quarter to show how their data compares to statewide totals and averages on a series of progress measures and outcomes including enrollment, retention to 12 hours, average instructional hours, post-testing rates, and MSG rates by level.

At the state level, the AEI team met in October of 2020 to review the preliminary statewide comparison report and discussed lessons learned and key take-aways. While few anomalies were identified, no conclusions were able to

be drawn about causes owing to unprecedented disruptions in services from both the pandemic and the results of the AEFLA competition which ran from January through June of 2020. The pandemic brought uncertainty and new challenges to all grantees and learners statewide, and the most recent AEFLA competition heavily impacted the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter performance of the 10 grantees that learned they did not meet the application's demonstrated effectiveness requirements in February of 2020.

The statewide MSG rate for 2019-20 was 23.3%. Excluding the grantees that did not meet the eligibility criteria to apply for funds in the new AEFLA grant cycle, the statewide MSG rate for 2019-20 was 27.4%. Both were below the negotiated federal performance target of 37%. Promisingly, two grantees exceeded the 37% target. One is a smaller program in Pueblo, CO serving primarily mid- to high-level adult education learners with an MSG rate of 43% and the other is a larger program with sites primarily located in the Denver metro area serving Correctional Education participants with a rate of 39%. Another grantee operating a smaller program in south-central Colorado which also serves primarily mid- to high-level adult education learners achieved a 36% MSG rate, which was above the 33% threshold used in determining demonstrated effectiveness in the most recent AEFLA competition. Another three grantees across the state achieved MSG rates above 30% in 2019-20. Together these represent nearly half of the 13 current grantees in the 2020-21 program year.

The 2019-20 overall statewide MSG rate dropped from 31% in the prior year. We saw a slightly smaller drop from the prior year across all six Adult Basic Education (ABE) levels and slightly higher drop from the prior year across all six English as a Second Language (ESL) levels. As the majority of enrollment and gains in Colorado are traditionally achieved in the six ESL levels, we believe that the pandemic had a larger negative impact on ELLs in programs across the state than learners in the six ABE levels. This is supported by instructional hours data collected as well.

Across the six ESL levels we saw the largest drops from the prior year at ESL Levels 3 and 5. Across the 6 ABE levels, we saw the largest drops from prior years at ABE Levels 2 and 4. We surprisingly saw increases from the prior year at ABE Levels 1 and 6. While we did not anticipate this, we believe the increase at ABE Level 1 is potentially due to a large drop in enrollments at that level. We have not identified the cause or causes of the increase at ABE Level 6. We know that high school equivalency (HSE) testing volume statewide was reduced in 2019-20 due to the pandemic. Information from grantee APRs indicated that some grantees focused on collecting social security numbers (SSN) and correct names and dates of birth from learners at intake for the purposes of high school equivalency credential data matching, but because we did not see an increase in AEFLA participant HSE testing volume or match rate from the prior year, we are not confident this had any major impact. At this time, it is not an area we intend to explore further.

Grantees reported that drops in overall MSG rates were entirely due to COVID-19 closures at their traditionally in-person program sites. They reported at the start of the pandemic that their students and staff were not ready for a rapid transition to fully distance instruction. Some also reported that students and staff were not ready for even a more gradual transition to distance learning. Due to variations in local public health orders, grantees were not able to transition back to hybrid and in-person learning with COVID-19 safety precautions in place at the same pace statewide. All programs faced disruptions in instruction temporarily in March of 2020. The majority (13) were only closed for both in-person and distance instruction for 1-2 weeks; however, another 5 grantees were closed for a longer period of 3-5 weeks, and another 5 experienced extensive closures of 10 or more weeks where none or very limited distance instruction was delivered.

Grantees also reported that both learners and staff were fearful of returning to in-person interactions, and that many could not return because of their own health concerns, due to living with vulnerable populations, and other disruptions in childcare and work. Grantees were not able to retain or re-engage comparable numbers of learners served prior to the pandemic. Statewide, 1,788 fewer learners participated in programming in the March – June 2020 compared to the same time period in 2019. Average instructional hours per learner statewide also dropped significantly from 32 hours to 20 hours from the prior year for the same March – June time period. In addition to fewer instructional hours offered and attended, more learners separated in 2019-20 than the prior year. The majority of learners that separated also did so earlier than the prior year. Statewide, 1,504 learners separated in

March 2020 alone. In total, 74% of all separations in 2019-20 occurred between June 2019 and March 2020 compared to just 56% for the same time-period in the prior year. In 2019-20 English as a Second Language (ESL) learners separated without a gain at higher rates than Adult Basic Education (ABE) learners with 74% of ESL learners exiting with no gain compared to just 66% of ABE learners. This contrasts to last year where roughly 55% of learners separated with no gain in ABE and ESL.

Some advances were made in distance learning as grantees transitioned to more remote instructional offerings during the pandemic. 11 more grantees offered any distance learning in 2019-20 than in 2018-19 and total distance learning hours recorded increased from 2,502 in 2018-19 to 67,890.75 in 2019-20. Participant inclusion on Table 4C, 50% or more hours recorded as distance, increased from 2% in 2018-19 to 6% in 2019-20. Inclusion of both ESL and ABE learners on Table 4C increased from the prior year with the ESL increase being slightly lower than was seen for ABE. Because post-testing was largely unavailable between March – June 2020, we are not yet able to measure how effective the distance learning provided during that time-period was. We are hopeful that the growing pains grantees experienced either establishing or increasing distance learning offerings during the pandemic will pay off once vaccines are more widely administered and will help the state increase weekly instructional hours offered as well as provide more flexible schedules to better meet the changing needs of adult learners.

Testing volume was significantly impacted due to the pandemic. Remote testing was not approved federally until later in the spring of 2020, and despite great efforts, test vendors also experienced delays in rolling out remote testing until later in the spring and summer of 2020. Additionally, in Colorado few grantees had experience with computer-based testing which was the only option initially for remote testing among the test vendors approved in Colorado. Because of this, remote testing was not implemented in Colorado until 2020-21. The state also determined that developing and training grantees on a complex system for provisional EFL placement and monitoring to ensure testing eventually took place on NRS approved assessments was not viable during the 2019-20 year, so no students were enrolled using eligibility methods other than standardized assessments.

Testing volume between March – June 2020 dropped from 7,338 tests in 2018-19 to 1,638 tests in 2019-20. Overall testing volume for the year decreased 18% from the prior year. 1,868 learners were coded in LACES as “COVID-19 Post-test Exempt,” a flag added to the data system to track learners who were eligible but could not be post-tested due to COVID-19 closures, health risks, and other disruptions related to the pandemic. 1,442 of those learners had not already made a pre- and post-test gain earlier in the 2019-20 year, and although their instructional experience between March – June 2020 differed from earlier in the year, local grantees reported they believed these learners would make gains at relatively the same rate as earlier in the year had they been able to post-test. If that assumption is true, statewide approximately 690 pre- and post-test gains were lost due to the inability to post-test students and a potential increase in MSG rates to 33%. Although this is not at or above the state’s 37% MSG rate target for 2019-20, when considering the decreases in enrollments, instructional hours, and testing volume altogether due to COVID-19, local grantees reported that they and the state were on track to meet or exceed the target had the year not been so drastically disrupted.

We did not see large impacts on MSGs attained through HSE credential attainment and post-secondary entrance as these gains were and have been nominal compared to pre- and post-test gains. AEI intends to continue to work with grantees to increase learner participation in HSE testing and post-secondary entrance. Because targets were not yet established for the other WIOA performance indicators in 2019-20, less time was spent analyzing performance on NRS Table 5. AEI is looking at those numbers and the current targets for 2020-21, and efforts to ensure those outcomes are achieved primarily center around increasing data match rates, frequency and automation to provide better technical assistance and professional learning to grantees.

Simultaneously AEI continues to support grantees during ongoing waves of the pandemic and shifting public health restrictions locally and statewide. The focus is on all grantees, both those at or near performance targets as well as those that are not, on increasing access to distance learning technology, improving the quality of distance instruction, increasing learner engagement in distance learning, prioritizing the retention or re-engagement of

current learners as far into the 2020-21 program year as possible, and implementing plans for remote or in-person testing that comply with COVID-19 safety requirements. The state expects a statewide MSG rate at or above 33% for the 2020-21 program year. Once COVID-related concerns decrease, AEI will focus more intensely on technical assistance to grantees not meeting targets and on statewide efforts to improve MSG as ABE Levels 2-4 and ESL levels 3-5 (depending on enrollment trends and MSG at these levels).

**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 the local option. In the event the local option was not used in a local area, indicate that the State option was triggered.**

For WIOA Title II, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is the required one-stop partner responsible administering or supervising policy for adult education and literacy activities in the State. As outlined in the jointly developed [Colorado Policy Guidance Letter#: WIOA-2016-02, Change 2](#), published on May 11, 2017 by CDLE, CDE delegated its one-stop partner responsibilities to each of the AEFLA-funded local providers in 2016-17 and set the expectation (through grant agreements) that each provider negotiate and sign an MOU that addresses the service delivery elements required by WIOA with the local workforce development boards (LWDB) in each local area in which adult education services are provided. Each required one-stop partner is responsible for identifying the career services that are relevant to their programs and making those services available through the comprehensive workforce center.

During 2019-20, AEI collected the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between local workforce development boards and grantees. These outline the infrastructure agreements with the centers, per the [Colorado One-Stop System Policy Guidance Letter#: WIOA- 2016-03, Change 1](#) published on May 2, 2017.

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

AEI worked with workforce partners on initiatives to utilize additional funds provided to Title I through additional emergency grants during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, grantees utilized virtual services to provide career services and referrals to one-stop partners. They have also worked to identify in-demand industries that have been impacted by the pandemic.

**4. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program**

**a. 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.**

2019-20 was the final year of the grant cycle that began in 2017-18. The request for proposals was released on December 7, 2016. Applications were due February 21, 2017 and tentative award amounts were publicly released on June 5, 2017. Grantees were evaluated on their applications which required evidence of need in local areas and proposed outreach services to target populations.

Eight programs were awarded and received funds. Continuation applications for these same eight grantees were due June 28, 2019. All eight programs continued to be awarded funds in 2019-20.

During 2019-20, AEI held a competition for 2020-21, and the competition materials, including the Request for Applications, were reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, as outlined in the Corrective Action Plan in response to the October 2018 virtual review. The request for proposals was released on January 31, 2020. Eligibility confirmations (for demonstrated effectiveness) were due



February 24, 2020. Due to COVID-19, the competition was temporarily paused and eligible providers were required to submit applications by June 8, 2020. Intents to Award were released on July 27, 2020. Six grantees were awarded IELCE funding and received funds for 2020-21 totaling \$917,622.

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

In 2019-20, AEI offered individualized technical assistance to grantees to support IELCE in combination with IET activities. In those efforts, AEI discovered deficiencies in the IET offerings, with programs failing to meet all required components of IET. Realizing these deficiencies, AEI implemented an IET working group in FY2019-20 for grantees who received IELCE funds. This group met monthly to discuss required components of IET and how to meet those requirements, implementation strategies, execution strategies, promising practices, and other topics identified by the work group members in a survey presented early in 2019-20. In addition, AEI worked closely with one grantee program to develop a retail IET program for implementation in 2020-21.

**c. 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.**

In 2019-20, 933 adult learners participated in IELCE programs administered by 8 grantees. There were 9 IET participants. Narrative questions in the 2019-20 IELCE grant continuation application emphasized program design and goal setting. These were designed to guide grantees in building IETs that better resulted in unsubsidized employment. State staff worked with grantees to align existing programming with IELCE and IET requirements. Grantees continue to struggle with when contextualized instruction should take place, at what point workforce preparation activities should be included, and how best to leverage partnerships to offer the workforce training component of the IET.

**d. Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of ensuring that IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system and its functions as described in section 243(c)(2) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.**

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

Grant continuation applications submitted for 2019-20 asked applicants receiving IELCE funds how they were implementing programs to meet all required elements and to set goals around IELCE implementation. Responses in those applications were used to identify areas for technical assistance, including strategies for integration with the local workforce development system. Concerns expressed by grantees have included access to training programs for IET implementation, particularly in rural areas. To address this, AEI is working with grantees to develop online IET programs which support existing certificate programs in an online format that can be accessed across the state. Grantees continue to express concerns about the ability to create cohorts with enough participants at high enough levels to offer industry-specific training. AEI plans to address these concerns, as well as other components of developing programs under IELCE through IET working groups.

**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.**

AEI views standards implementation as a critical component of developing programming to equip adult learners with the skills and knowledge needed for success in postsecondary education, employment, and beyond. The College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education were adopted for use by local providers in 2014, kicking off AEI's standards-based instruction initiative. This adoption also signified alignment with the existing Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). In 2015 the state additionally adopted the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). These standards are being implemented as part of online courses for the ABEA, a required certificate for AEFLA instruction.

Implementation of these standards has been done through the revised SIA model. During the spring of 2018, the Colorado State Board of Education approved revisions to the CAS, as required by state statute. This approval completed the first four phases of the standards review and revision timeline, moving Colorado into the final two phases ending in full implementation of the CAS by the end of 2019-20. Training and initial implementation of the K-12 standards in school districts began in 2018-19. Due to this timeframe, AEI staff did not have the ability to engage in an alignment process, as initial school district training was the priority. AEI expects to work in 2020-21 to further align the standards used in adult education to the CAS. CCRS is a focus of the ABEA online courses that will be developed in 2021-22.

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

AEI did not track rates of recidivism on correctional education participants in 2019-20. The team anticipated the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) as well as the Division of Youth Services would be grantees beginning in the 2020-21 program year because they submitted intents to apply and were determined to have met the demonstrated effectiveness criteria to apply; however, after the pandemic reached Colorado, both decided to discontinue the application process. AEI had planned to work with the new grantees to establish data sharing agreements that would allow AEI to report the relative rate of recidivism for correctional education participants. CDOC defines recidivism as a return to prison or inmate status in Colorado within three years of release, for either new criminal activity or a technical violation of parole, probation or non-departmental community placement. CDOC uses methodology from the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) performance-based measurement system for calculating recidivism rates. AEI expects to continue work to establish data sharing agreement with the necessary State agencies in 2020-21 for the purpose of tracking AEFLA participant recidivism in the future.