

Oregon Narrative Report Program Year 2019-2020

1. State Leadership Funds (AEFLA Section 223)

(a) Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership activities) for each the following required activities:

- Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Unified or Combined State Plan as described in section 223(1)(a).*

The Oregon State Adult Basic Skills (ABS) Director actively participated in the Governor's Workforce System Executive Team (WSET). The work of the WSET is directed and supported by the Oregon Workforce Cabinet and the Governor's Office. The WSET supports the Workforce Cabinet and the Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board to implement the alignment of workforce investment, education and economic development system. The WSET provides joint guidance and criteria for the integration of the workforce system, commits resources for system priorities and makes recommendations to agency leadership on policies, programs and funding priorities.

During the early stages of the pandemic, the WSET collaborated to provide joint guidance to local one-stop centers regarding customer service and safety protocols, while staying in alignment with Center for Disease Control, Oregon Health Authority, and Oregon Governor Executive Order(s) Guidance. In partnership with the WSET and local workforce board directors, the State ABS Team continues to provide technical assistance for the field regarding the implementation of the WIOA Memorandums of Understanding and Infrastructure Cost Sharing Agreements.

The Oregon Adult Basic Skills Team along with local ABS Program Directors actively engaged in the development of the State of Oregon's Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act plan. Because of this engagement, adult basic skills is called out as an important component of CTE career pathways.

The ABS State Director also meets on a regular basis with the State Directors of Title I, Career and Technical Education, and the state Workforce System's Alignment Manager. The purpose of the group is to work on alignment in key areas such as adult education and training, work-based learning, and apprenticeship.

The Oregon Council of Adult Basic Skills Development (OCABSD) meets quarterly. A portion of these meetings are dedicated to understanding WIOA performance requirements, Integrated Education and Training (IET), Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE), and how to engage workforce partners in these areas. During the spring of 2020, the group continued to meet and topics included instructional delivery and barriers to service delivery during the pandemic.

During the 2019-2020 program year, the State ABS Team regularly engaged adult education and literacy providers in planning and preparing for implementation of WIOA. CCWD continued to support discussion and information dissemination with the state adult education and literacy providers. Dissemination included providing state plan implementation updates during quarterly OCABSD meetings, continued distribution of the newsletter titled "T2 News" which includes updates regarding training and technical assistance opportunities at both state and national levels.

OCABSD members discussed state and local planning, sharing perspectives on alignment with learning standards, program delivery, and data policies. The State ABS Team prioritized state leadership funding to support projects that advanced WIOA implementation, such as the creation and adoption of Oregon's Adult College and Career Readiness Standards (OACCRS) and Oregon Adult English Language Proficiency Standards (OAELPS). In addition, the team provided training to local providers on the importance of measurable skill gains and developed a Performance Based Funding Model to incentivize partnership and performance.

• Establishment or operation of a high quality professional development program(s) as described in section 223(1)(b).

Professional Development. Professional development is an area of continuous focus and importance in Oregon. The series of training events entitled the "Oregon Leadership Academy" (OLA) which started during program year 2017-18 and continued into 2019-20. A survey where Program Directors were asked to prioritize training needs determined that areas of concern included meeting targets with respect to posttesting percentages and Measurable Skill Gains (MSG), together with preparation for Federal Monitoring. OLA workshops were tailored to address these needs.

In October 2019, each program was represented by a team of instructors, administrators and data professionals at a face-to-face workshop on MSGs. This workshop focused on the impact of quality instruction, coaching instructors, and MSGs in the context of state initiatives and performance measures. In February 2020 programs created a data worksheet to inform the improvement of posttest percentages in collaboration with the CCWD Research Analyst. In March 2020, training preparation involved the perusal of NRS Tables 4A and 4B from the last 2-3 years and the viewing of a YouTube video focusing on student persistence and test readiness. This was followed by a web-meeting on March 31 to discuss posttesting policies and procedures. On May 1, 2020 the OLA held a virtual posttesting improvement workshop which was attended by more than 70 participants from Oregon's 17 Title II programs. A final virtual workshop, "Preparing for Federal Monitoring", was offered on June 18, 2020.

CCWD also posted a new interactive PowerPoint orientation to the Oregon Adult College and Career Readiness Standards (OACCRS - adopted for PY19-20) on its website, together with detailed Math and Language Arts OACCRS Handbooks and an accompanying workbook. A self-paced training module and workbook focusing on the needs of adult learners, which was specifically designed by faculty trainers under contract to CCWD, was also posted on the website.

In addition to the above trainings, professional development updates are a standing agenda item for OCABSD meetings. Topics in the past year have included IET planning, the implementation of national and state adult learning standards, how to facilitate the Professional Learning Communities which, since 2018, have been a requirement of all programs, and how to find and access relevant online resources (for example through LINCS or COABE). In response to the current pandemic, a webinar on how to teach in the virtual classroom has also been recorded and is available on demand. Instructors involved in various Learning Standards Training projects also get an opportunity to provide input and receive updates during monthly virtual meetings with the ABE State Leadership Coordinator.

ABS Directors received additional training in 2019-20, delivered through conference calls and online formats. Topics included information regarding CASAS remote testing protocols for programs unable to hold on site classes.

In March of 2020, CCWD renewed its large-group membership of the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) for all Title II programs in Oregon, thereby giving faculty and staff access to a wide range of professional development resources and webinars. CCWD also registered for COABE's virtual conference in October 2019, thus permitting programs to participate in real-time conference presentations or access archived recordings.

Assessment Certification Training. Oregon requires state certification in order to administer and score state-approved assessment tools for state and federal reporting. State assessment certification comprises the completion of CASAS Implementation Training (online) and familiarization with Oregon assessment policies and procedures as published in the ABS Policy Manual. During 2019-20, the State ABS Team facilitated test administrator training for CASAS e-Tests and TOPSpro Enterprise. BEST Plus 2.0 training which is usually offered in April was postponed until September of 2020, owing to the need to redesign the training into a virtual format. Sixty-five practitioners from Title II programs and the Department of Corrections were certified for these assessments. CASAS recertification is required every three years through the CASAS Online training modules CASAS Implementation Training and Beyond Implementation Training. BEST Plus 2.0 recalibration – which is the responsibility of local programs - is required annually.

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

During the 2019-20 reporting period, CCWD engaged in a variety of technical assistance activities that occurred both in-person and remotely. These activities included facilitating research-based and responsive trainings at the OLA, attending the OCABSD quarterly conferences, site visits, a provider specific Risk Assessment and Program Improvement Plan process, as well as regular web conferences with both ABS directors and ABS data professionals from across the state.

CCWD continued to participate in quarterly OCABSD meetings, bringing together ABS directors and ABS staff. These meetings often dovetailed with the OLA, where high-quality trainings were delivered to local ABS Directors and data professionals. At the Fall 2019 meeting, the State ABS Team delivered a learning standards update. At the Winter 2020 meeting the State ABS Team delivered a training on Oregon's TII Performance Based Funding Model (PBFM). At the Spring 2020 meeting, held remotely, the State ABS Team delivered budget and contract assistance to prepare local programs for the upcoming budgeting process for the 2020-21 program year.

From February 2020 to May 2020 the State Adult Basic Skills Specialist completed in person (February) and online (March-May) site visits with each of Oregon's seventeen local ABS providers. These meetings focused on local program administration and teaching and learning practices, as well as local compliance with state and federal requirements.

Following the site visits, the State ABS Team created a customized Risk Assessment for each local ABS provider, incorporating a Financial Risk Assessment component and a Program Performance Risk Assessment component. Following recommendations from the American Institutes for Research (AIR), these risk assessments incorporated disaggregated data focusing on provider-specific measurable skill gain (MSG) data. Local ABS Directors then wrote Program Improvement Plans (PIPs), incorporating program administration and teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of students. These PIPs were discussed during phone conferences with the State ABS Team, at which time the State ABS Team was able to offer feedback and support for each local ABS Director's proposed deliverables and strategies.

Throughout the year, monthly conference calls were held for data professionals with a focus on data integrity and performance reporting. An additional set of monthly calls were also held for local ABS Directors. The members of the State ABS Team were continually available via email, phone call, web conference, or in-person, as needed, for local ABS Directors and staff who desired assistance with ABS administration and activities.

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

The State ABS Team carried out a variety of monitoring activities during the 2019-20 reporting period. These activities included standard grant monitoring activities, use of program-specific tools and templates, meetings with grantees, creation of monitoring reports, creation of corrective action plans, grantee involvement in monitoring reports.

Standard grant monitoring activities included document submission, desk monitoring and in-person monitoring activities. Each local ABS program submitted a Final Financial Status Report, Federal NRS Tables (through TOPSpro Enterprise), TOPSpro Enterprise Data Integrity Reports, and additional TOPSpro Enterprise reports as requested.

Each local ABS program communicated with the State ABS Team via routine emails and phone calls, as well as submitting records of local staff professional development, submission of invoices and on-site reviews of program operations.

The State ABS Team maintained documentation of monitoring efforts and provided feedback to each local ABS program, citing each program's strengths and areas for improvement. The State ABS team also provided responsive training and technical assistance, thus ensuring that each local ABS program took appropriate actions to address deficiencies.

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

Oregon uses an approach to ABS professional development administered through workshops, conferences, certification, special projects, and technical assistance. Content and format of services are updated to incorporate new research and promising practices in the field. In 2017, the State Leadership Coordinator began a new comprehensive planning process to develop a framework for professional development. Two temporary staff positions were also funded to assist with WIOA implementation, including professional development requirements. The State Team continued to facilitate development of workshops and training and manage logistics. The State Team also encouraged and funded attendance by state and local program staff at multiple national conferences, for example COABE, and other events such as state director meetings, and the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE) National Training Institute. State and local program staff also attended trainings related to the alignment of national and state learning standards, and National Reporting System (NRS) trainings in order to enhance continued data improvement efforts.

These activities build on previous leadership activities in carrying out the objectives of the state plan in support of continuous program improvement and professional development to enhance ABS in Oregon.

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.

While Oregon met or exceeded federal targets in ten Education Functioning Levels (EFLs) in 2018-19, the state did not meet federal targets in any EFLs in 2019-20, likely due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, presenting significant barriers to conducting pre- and post-testing.

| Educational Functioning Level | 2018-2019 Actual Performance | 2019-2020 Performance | | Change from 2018-2019 Actual Performance |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--|
| | | Goal | Actual | |
| ABE Level 1 | 50% | 49% | 33% | -17% |
| ABE Level 2 | 50% | 53% | 30% | -20% |
| ABE Level 3 | 48% | 46% | 30% | -18% |
| ABE Level 4 | 44% | 42% | 33% | -11% |
| ABE Level 5 | 54% | 54% | 38% | -16% |
| ASE Level 6 | 40% | 44% | 40% | 0% |
| ABE/ASE Total | 47% | | 34% | -13% |
| ESL Level 1 | 52% | 45% | 44% | -8% |
| ESL Level 2 | 60% | 52% | 49% | -11% |
| ESL Level 3 | 57% | 52% | 46% | -11% |
| ESL Level 4 | 50% | 47% | 38% | -12% |
| ESL Level 5 | 48% | 41% | 34% | -14% |
| ESL Level 6 | 27% | 21% | 19% | -8% |
| ESL Total | 48% | | 37% | -11% |

**Met or exceeded federal targets*

Overall, performance in ABE/ASE measurable skill gains dropped by 13% in 2019-2020. While performance in ABE/ASE Levels 1-5 dropped between 11% and 20%, performance in ASE Level 6 remained consistent to 2018-19 actual performance at 40% of students earning a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG). While federal targets were not met in ABE/ASE levels, analysis indicates only 24 additional students achieving a measurable skill gain in ABE Level 1 (federal target missed by 16%) and 38 additional students in ASE Level 6 (federal target missed by 4%) were needed to meet federal targets.

Performance in ESL was better than that of ABE/ASE: measurable skill gains dropped by 11% overall in 2019-2020. While performance in ESL Levels 2-5 dropped between 11% and 14%, performance in ESL Levels 1 and 6 declined only 8% each. Analysis indicates only three additional students achieving a measurable skill gain in ESL Level 1 (federal target missed by 1%) and 12 additional students in ESL Levels 2 and 6 (federal target missed by 3% and 2%, respectively) were needed to meet federal targets.

Feedback from program directors provided insights into some of the highlights from the 2019-20 program year:

- Some programs were able to maintain enrollment due in part to increased outreach efforts and maintaining connections with students. Additionally, some programs saw students in rural areas were able to attend remote classes where previously, they could not attend in person.
- Some programs were able to offer the same courses during the pandemic as in previous terms and had similar attendance as in previous terms.
- Some programs noticed the biggest barriers to student participation, including childcare and transportation, were no longer barriers with distance learning from home.
- Programs worked to distribute technology to their students, including Chromebooks, laptops, and WIFI hotspots so students were able to participate in remote classes. Some programs worked with other WIOA partners to provide distance learning equipment. For those without access to the right equipment, programs worked to provide paper packets so instruction could continue.
- Some programs were able to transition quickly and seamlessly to a distance learning environment because the infrastructure for remote learning was already in place before the pandemic.
- Some programs used additional grants, beyond Title II funding, to support students and provide wrap-around services.
- Workforce preparation was a significant presence in many Title II classes; some instructors were using a work-ready rubric to bring work preparedness skills into the curriculum and in other classes, Title I staff participated in the classroom and led workforce prep activities, including resume writing. These partnerships also create a pathway for ABS students to become familiar and comfortable with WorkSource Oregon.

While highlights from the program year are many, there were also some significant challenges facing programs as a result of the pandemic. Feedback from program directors provided insight into some of these challenges:

- The pace of transitioning to distance learning presented a significant challenge to program staff, instructors, and students, especially with distance learning and remote instruction strategies and the technological know-how of students and instructors.
- Lack of remote testing options at the beginning of the pandemic and then, once developed, a lack of resources (e.g. staff, technology and WIFI, digital literacy) to conduct remote testing
- Some programs saw a significant drop in enrollment in Spring 2020 due to the pandemic.
- Some programs had to lay off adjunct instructors due to low enrollment in classes.

During the 2019-20 program year, the State ABS Team intentionally emphasized technical support with more frequent, consistent communication with directors and interaction with programs. The State ABS Team focused on how best to support local programs once the pandemic hit:

- Offering additional professional development funds to programs for the purchase of technology for students and staff time to develop online learning. Over 90% of the programs took advantage of this offer for a total of \$465,000 state leadership funds.
- Hosting the Oregon Leadership Academy via Zoom focusing on strengthening student persistence, student readiness for posttesting, and implementing posttesting policies and procedures, with over 100 directors, data professionals, and instructors in attendance.
- Hosting “Support and Share” twice-weekly Zoom calls to support instructors during transition to distance learning and provide a space to share resources among peers.

- Posting online resources in response to the pandemic, culling resources from the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE), the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE), the U.S. Department of Education, GED^(R) Testing Services, ED Tech Center World Education, and Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN).

Title II providers were required to:

- Report on past effectiveness in performance indicators.
- Provide documentation of achievements and activities that demonstrated capacity and expertise to in delivering adult education and literacy activities.
- Commit to local MSG performance targets for 2020-2021. Providers were required to justify any targets that were below state targets.

During the 2019-20 program year, Oregon emphasized performance through several activities:

- Publishing an annual ABS Policy Manual which clarifies procedures for assessment, data collection, and data management.
- Implementing a monitoring process that addresses both risk management and program improvement, as well as performance monitoring of Title II targets set by grantees in their applications.
- Continuing a strong statewide focus on data quality through quarterly data audits and monthly calls with local provider data professionals.
- Developing a new funding formula with a portion of funds awarded based on performance.
- Continuing the OLA to emphasize strengthening student persistence, student readiness for posttesting, and implementing posttesting policies and procedures and continued use of data for program improvement at the local level.
- Distributing a weekly Title II newsletter to program directors with details on upcoming events and webinars, state deadlines, and other important information pertinent to Title II programs in Oregon.

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.

Oregon's ABS programs have been actively engaged in integration with one-stop partners. This engagement occurs at the state level through membership and participation at the state Workforce System Executive Team which includes representation from all WIOA Titles, Department of Human Services Self-Sufficiency programs, and the Governor's Office of Labor and Workforce Policy. At the local level, Title II programs are engaged in the coordination of services, programs, and funding with WorkSource Oregon (WSO) partners to ensure accountability and alignment in support of a seamless public system. This is achieved through local Title II provider participation in Local Workforce Boards and Local Leadership Teams. All programs are providing access through technology at their local comprehensive workforce centers and many are actually providing on-site services including offering ABE classes.

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

CCWD has entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with all nine of Oregon's workforce areas on behalf of local Title II providers. These MOUs provide a baseline for access to Title II activities, including career services, and defines cost-sharing responsibilities. Negotiations continue at the state level regarding the definition and payment for career-services. Due to recent state restrictions regarding COVID 19, negotiations regarding Career Services have been delayed.

Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through State and local options.

Infrastructure costs are supported via Infrastructure Cost Sharing Agreements which have been negotiated by the State ABS Director. For the 2019-20 year, each local area completed their cost sharing calculations, which were reviewed and approved by the ABS State Director and then if required, paid for at the local level with local level administrative funds.

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.***
- Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training activities;***
- Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency as described in section 243(c)(1) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals; and***

• 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.

Oregon awarded Section 243 funds to four providers as of July 1, 2017. The awards were made separately from the Comprehensive Grants. Grantees committed to offer IET activities and to collaborate with the local workforce system as defined in the final regulations.

As the State ABS Team continues its work to prepare and place IELCE program participants in employment opportunities that lead to economic self-sufficiency, communication and collaboration between the four IELCE providers continues. Using the quarterly OCABSD meetings and the monthly Directors Calls as a forum, the state team helped facilitate the sharing of promising practices. This collaboration is an ongoing process. In addition, the State ABS Team and one of the IELCE providers (Mt Hood Community College) are actively engaged in the Expanding Opportunities Technical Assistance calls. Information gained from these conversations was (and continues to be) shared with the local providers.

The State ABS Director meets with the Directors of the Local Workforce Boards in an effort to gain continued alignment and address challenges associated with program implementation both at the state and local level.

Due to a re-competition of IELCE funds and an increase in grant funding to local providers, the state was able to remedy the pattern of underspending in IELCE grant funds from the 2017-18 grant year, which resulted in full expenditure of these funds for PY 2018-19. The State ABS Team continues to monitor fund expenditures closely and is working with local providers regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on program spending and services.

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 Page 4 of 5 standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.

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

The Oregon ABS Learning Standards Initiative, adopted by OCABSD in April 2010, reflected a common vision of what adults needed to know and be able to do in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and math to carry out their life goals and purposes. The OALS were aligned with the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards of the Common Core State Standards. In 2014, on the advice of OCTAE, CCWD undertook a project to align the Oregon Adult Learning Standards with the CCR Standards for Adult Education in order to ensure that adults are ready to transition to a career and/or postsecondary education and training upon exit from ABS. OCTAE recommended several national experts who were well-versed in the CCR standards to perform gap analyses and identify where the Oregon Adult Learning Standards Frameworks needed to increase rigor, focus, and scope. These national experts drafted revised frameworks which teams of Oregon standards experts then finalized and published. The newly aligned Oregon Adult Learning Standards, adopted by OCABSD, became effective

July 1, 2016. Training for faculty and administrators on the aligned Oregon Adult Learning Standards began in July 2016 and was offered on an ongoing basis until the end of 2018-19.

Pursuant to a recommendation from OCABSD in October 2018, Oregon ABS programs chose to transition from the Oregon-specific OALS to the nationally recognized College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). The objective was to preserve certain elements of the Oregon Adult Learning Standards and consolidate them into the Oregon Adult College and Career Readiness Standards (OACCRS). The rationale behind this recommendation was the alignment of the CCRS with the new CASAS Reading and Math GOALS which are the required assessments in Oregon, together with access to the many resources and materials available nationally to support implementation of CCRS. During program year 2018-19, a Learning Standards Reconciliation Project took place whereby a group of expert trainers, many of whom had previously developed Oregon's Adult Learning Standards, created Mathematics and Language Arts Handbooks to accompany the implementation of OACCRS. In addition, a training module (OACCRS Orientation Module) was created and posted on the CCWD website in September 2019. This module became part of the "OACCRS Foundation Training" required of all faculty and academic administrators. It was designed to be completed either individually in self-paced mode, or in groups with an in-person or virtual facilitator. There is also an accompanying workbook. During PY 2019-20 further OACCRS training modules focusing on Language Arts and Mathematics were under development.

With regard to English for Speakers of other Languages, in February, 2020, OCABSD voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Learning Standards Implementation Committee which comprised faculty trainers, program directors and members of the state ABS team, to adopt the national English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), with the following additions:

- a) Include the Oregon Process Standards, as incorporated into the current Oregon Adult College and Career Readiness Standards- Language Arts, creating the Oregon English Language Proficiency Standards (OAELPS)
- b) Format the OAELPS handbook to align with the OACCRS-LA handbook
- c) Add a toolbox to OAELPS that is similar to OACCRS-LA, helping instructors use the standards and detailing transition points between OAELPS and OACCRS-LA.
- d) Add the CCRS Listening and Speaking standards along with the process skills and toolbox to the current OACCRS-LA in order to be in complete alignment with the national CCRS.

Work on the above projects began in the spring of PY2019-2020 and is currently in progress.

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.

Of the 2,883 learners served by the Department of Corrections Title II-funded programs in PY2019-2020, 513 earned a GED certificate. Of those, 112 were released from incarceration with 4 (3.57%) being re-incarcerated.

This information was provided by our State Department of Corrections using their standard recidivism calculation formula.

