



GOBIERNO DE PUERTO RICO

DEPARTAMENTO DE EDUCACIÓN
Subsecretaría para Asuntos Académicos
Secretaría Auxiliar Área de Educación Alternativa

Puerto Rico Department of Education
Adult Education Program 2019-2020 NRS Narrative Report

December 30, 2020



Table of Contents

1. **State Leadership Funds** (AEFLA Section 223)..... 3

- Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Unified State Plan as described in section 223(1)(a). 3
- Establishment or operation of a high-quality professional development programs as described in section 223(1)(b)..... 4
- Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223(1)(c). 5
- Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of adult education activities as NRS described in section 223(1)(d). 6

Performance Data Analysis..... 6

- The outcome reached..... 7
- COVID-19 pandemic impact..... 7
- Adult Education Participants' profile school year 2019-2020 8
- Quality and effectiveness of the funded eligible providers and any plans to further increase performance in future reporting years. 9

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. 9

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program (AEFLA Section 243) 11

Adult Education Standards 12

Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals (AEFLA Section 225)..... 12

Puerto Rico Department of Education
Adult Education Program 2019-2020 NRS Narrative Report
December 29, 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 of the following required activities:

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

The Puerto Rico Department of Education of Puerto Rico (PRDE) developed during the fiscal year 2019-2020 several strategies to align adult education and literacy activities with the WIOA core programs and one-stop partners. The staff of the Adult Education Program (AEP) participated actively in the following activities to coordinate services:

1. The development of the new **Unified State Plan for the period 2020-2023**.
2. Negotiation of the new memorandum of understanding with core WIOA partners – American Job Centers for services and shared infrastructure costs
3. Coordination for the implementation of a distance learning strategy for adult participants under the COVID pandemic situation
4. Promote that the population groups identified as the most in-need have easy access to services
5. Promote referrals between programs
6. Identify the data that should be shared among the programs
7. Develop joint efforts to comply with the primary indicators and objectives established in the PR Unified State Plan.
8. Development of a new assessment policy to include elements of assessment in learning using distance education by the strategy during the pandemic.
9. Professional development activities to eligible training services providers in the development of integrated education and training activities (IET) as per a requirement in the new **Unified Plan for the 2020-2023** program years period.
10. Initial coordination for the development of a new career pathways model for use by the eligible service providers education centers.

During the 2019-2020 PY all the face-to-face activities of the centers continued in suspended mode, since the Governor of Puerto Rico continued issuing amendments to an original previous Executive Order which established a curfew to work with the COVID-19 emergency.

The AEP used State Leadership funds to provoke a switch on scheduled professional development to virtual delivery and to provide training on high-quality distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, including professional development for remote instruction and administering remote assessments.

To continue with the services of the AEP, the teachers, service providers, administrative assistants and counselors of the centers were authorized to continue working remotely using electronic tools to offer the educational and support services to the participants. During the program year the AEP continued offering training to center directors and teachers to use the MS TEAMS, EDMODO and ZOOM platforms to continue classes through distance education.

It was necessary to adjust counselors' activities to continue implementing career pathways individual session on a virtual environment using several platforms. The AEP made an investment on technology to provide laptop to participants to make accessible the virtual platforms to them. The Program started to research and gather information on Best Plus and CASAS testing to acquire virtual testing for pre and post-test and training staff as virtual testing administrators for Best Plus and CASAS tests as innovative solutions to eligibility determination and conducting assessments during the pandemic.

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

The AEP program supports professional development (PD) activities that focus on a variety of areas of emphasis, including content standards implementation, career pathways, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, effective program management transition to postsecondary education and use of technology, among others.

During FY 2019-2020 several activities were designed to motivate, provide orientation and enrichment of the educational experience of the Adult participants. The following list describes the activities:

1. Several workshops on how to comply with the negotiated performance indicators. the fulfillment of the program objectives and the performance indicators. The AEP review the performance indicators tables on a quarterly basis to help the service providers assess their own results and stablish strategies to improve their performance.
2. Mentoring and coaching to history, Spanish, and sciences teachers to explore the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom and the literacy process, the

use of evaluation instruments, and identify key areas of improvement. The AEP offered one workshop on the topic of Career Pathways to local providers, counselors, and facilitators.

3. Mentoring and coaching and a workshop to service providers education centers emphasizing techniques to implement the curriculum and prepare the teaching work plans.
 4. Several professional developments workshops to centers directors, teachers, and counselors on the following activities:
 - Techniques to access participants learning
 - Orientation on curriculum, educational content, and classroom activities
 - Integration of andragogic principles in teaching strategies to the adult participant
 - Integration of employability skills in the learning process
 - Teaching strategies for the adult student
 - Differentiated education strategies serving adults with disabilities
- Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223(1)(c).

The PRDE provided technical assistance to eligible providers as described in section 223(1)(c)

The PRDE-AEP implemented during the program year several programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available in ESL language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training. In relation to ESL and staff training, the AEP Program started to research and gather information on Best Plus and CASAS testing to acquire virtual testing for pre and post-test and training staff as virtual testing administrators for Best Plus and CASAS tests.

In addition, as a measure to adjust the services to the COVID-19 pandemic the AEP implemented a professional development effort to aid in the use of technology, including staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology on distance education platforms to improve system efficiencies and continue providing the education services to the onboard participants.

To enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner, the AEP provided technical assistance to eligible providers. Specific areas of focus during 2019-2020 included:

1. Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of English language acquisition.

2. The use of technology in improving program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to enhance instruction using the distance education platforms.

The AEP implemented technical assistance activities focused on the effective use of the Adult Information System(AIS) at AEP which purpose is to maintain accurate student data and continuous improvement in data quality Training was offered to staff members, service providers, counselors, centers directors through workshops, focusing on key issues such as how to gather and save data, data quality validation, data usefulness to demonstrate services effectiveness, performance levels standards negotiated with NRS and follow-up to performance indicators.

Technical assistance was provided through phone calls and electronic mail. Issues were attended through the AIS call center. Several workshops were developed at central AEP offices to guide local providers in the daily operations of the data collection and on the use of best practices to carry out adult education activities. The PRDE-AEP employed a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models were disseminated to eligible providers and practitioners working in the ABE system. Among these methods were: local program site visits and sessions at State workshops for professional development.

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

During the 2019-2020 PY, the PRDE-AEP continued reviewing programs through a desk review process in which measures such as: average attendance hours, educational functioning level gains, and number of participants post-tested, among other were reported and reviewed. The desk audits also allow programs to review their operational aspects such as: percentage of funds expended, completion of required professional development, and completed personnel activity reports. This review process allows program staff and the PRDE's AEP director to thoroughly assess program operations, classroom instruction, and review State and federal laws and policies.

The COVID pandemic made the monitoring process difficult. Monitoring is usually performed at the end of the year and the COVID affected it, since the staff works remotely. The activities with each single management centers were difficult because they stopped operating in person and have operated remotely.

Performance Data Analysis

- Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based on the core indicators of performance. Discuss how the assessment was used to improve quality and effectiveness of the funded eligible providers and any plans to further increase performance in future reporting years.

The AEP performed an analysis of the performance data reported this year. To perform that analysis the process conducted at the State and local levels was based on the data collection done by the service providers and uploaded to the Adult Information System (AIS) at AEP central level. A detailed data review and validation for each data indicator was performed by the central office. The specific anomalies identified were checked for corrections. The errors, when identified were resolved by telephone calls and discussion of the raw data indicators with the education centers directors, teachers and counselors at each center.

The outcome reached

The State performed adequately regarding its negotiated levels of performance and outcomes for each indicator for PY2019. The targets and outcomes are the following:

Performance indicator	PY 2019 negotiated level (%)	PY 2019 outcome level (%)
Measurable skills gains	61.0	56.5

COVID-19 pandemic impact

The services were severely impacted by the pandemic COVID-19. There were difficulties in recruitment as result of the lock-down of government schools and the whole economic system. In addition, Puerto Rico was impacted by a sequence of earthquakes during the period of December 2019 January to March 2020, as the higher point, but up to date the earthquakes continue in a lower intensity. The Southwest part of Puerto Rico was the most impacted region. After the school system shutdown in March because of the COVID pandemic the impact on services was greater. The Department of Education Adult education program made a shift to distance education for participants. There was a professional development effort on training teachers, counselors, and education centers directors on the use of remote/distance education platforms and new learning tools to continue providing the services. The program invested in laptops to provide connectivity for participants, but the digital divide reality in different zones of the Puerto Rico Island prevented a large group of participants from access to an adequate internet signal. This situation provoked a large drop in enrollment of participants during the period of March to June 2020. In addition, the service providers severe difficulties for recruiting new participants in the scenario of the pandemic.

Some participants were enrolled using eligibility methods other than standardized assessments and some participants were not post-tested due to COVID-19 shutdown. The AEP initiated the needs analysis to acquire virtual Best Plus and CASAS assessment tests and to train teachers as test administrators for this modality of tests.

Adult Education Participants' profile school year 2019-2020

1. Enrollment distribution by program and gender: The Adult Education Program served, during 2019-2020 school year, an active enrollment of 1,366 participants. The previous year the enrollment was significantly higher, with 5,289 participants onboard. This decrease in participants served represent a 74% decrease in the number of participants served, because of the pandemic and earthquakes.
2. The distribution by gender in participants served was as follows: 883 males and 483 females. Participants by services was as follows: Basic Education 105 (ABE 1 thru ABE 4), 877 Secondary Education (ABE-5 thru ABE-6 and Equivalency Exam Tutoring), 384 Conversational English. A total of 559 were served while in the correctional education program or in rehabilitation.
3. Demographic Characteristics and Participants Status Composition of participants by age, during school year 2019--2020, showed that:
 - 1) The greatest participation in the program was among participants between 25-44 years of age, a total of 584 participants which represented 42.8% of the enrollment.
 - 2) The 2nd group in relative importance was the 16-18 years of age for a total of 362 participants making up 26.5% of the enrollment.
 - 3) The 3rd group was the 45-54 years of age group with 182 participants, representing 13.3%.
 - 4) The 4th group in relative importance was the group age of 19-24 with 119 participants representing 8.7% of the total.
 - 5) The 5th and 6th groups were the 60+ age representing 48 participants (5.2%) and age 55-59, with 48 participants (3.5%)

These groups represented the 100% of the participants served.

The 99.9% of the participants identified themselves as Hispanics or Latinos.

The employment rate was 11.9% with 163 participants employed. The unemployed were 282, representing 20.6% and the not in the labor force were 921, representing 67.4% of the total participants served.

The level of schooling of the participants before registering in AEP is divided in nine schooling levels. The largest frequency was in the 9th-12th grade with no high school diploma. This group included 722 participants, representing this represented 52.9%% for a total of the total participants. The second most important group was the grades 6-8, with 195 participants, representing 14.3%. The third group in relative importance was postsecondary or professional degree, with 131 participants, representing 9.6%. The fourth group was the secondary school diploma or alternate credential, with 110 participants, representing 8.0%. These four groups represented 84.8% of the total participants served.

The number of participants with an unknown schooling levels were 71, representing 5.1% of the total. Those with some post-secondary education, but no degree accounted 46, representing 3.4% and those with schooling grade 4-5 were 45 participants representing 3.3%. There were 10 participants with no schooling representing 0.7% and 5 participants

with a secondary school recognized equivalent representing 0.4%. The number of participants with a non-US schooling were 31, representing 2.3%. These other groups of participants represented the remaining 15.2% of the total participants served.

Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) achieved.

The Adult Education Program achieved the general objectives in skill gains: A total of 425 participants, (31.1%) achieved at least one functioning level of measurable skills gains, ABE and ESL level. (Table 4 NRS).

A total of 272 participants, out of 384 on ELS program, equivalent to 70.8%, achieved an average level of ESL measurable skills gains. (Table 4 NRS). In ABE the percent of MSG is 50.91%. The number of participants who passed at ABE levels was 500 participants (347 graduated and 153 passed from the different levels from ABE1 to ABE 5. In ABE there were 982 students in total.

Overall MSG total for ABE and ESL is 56.5.

Quality and effectiveness of the funded eligible providers and any plans to further increase performance in future reporting years.

The Adult Education Program (AEP) implemented a plan to improve quality. The plan is based on a quarterly review and inform each provider on their performance. Each service provider must submit a plan explaining how it propose to improve the services.

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.

The AEP continued during the program year partially executing the MOU from the previous year, while the infrastructure costs for the current year were being negotiated. The AEP participated in a joint process for reviewing IFAs among State workforce partners and was directly involved in an intensive local level negotiation. In the MOUs negotiation, the primary methods used to determine proportionate share and relative benefit was square footage of location space in one-stop center, actual use, and staff involved. The negotiation process has been a big challenge and negotiations involved several months during the Program Year.

In the competition application the AEP has communicated to education services providers the requirements that, each eligible agency must fulfill the roles and responsibilities as one-stop partners.

To determine that the delegated eligible provider is carrying out its roles and responsibilities, the AEP provides to each eligible service provider a copy of the MOU's with the corresponding One Stop partners and review with them the MOU and

infrastructure funding agreement. Also, the AEP program requires a narrative report to each service provider about the activities performed and has established a monitoring procedure, that is implemented by the Federal Funds Division of the Department of Education. The Program do desk review monitoring on how local programs provide access to career services and the types of services provided through the one-stop system.

Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system and how infrastructure costs are supported through State and local options.

The services available in the AJC One Stop Centers in partnership between the AEP and the AJCs will be:

1. Determination of eligibility to receive services under the activities of the WIOA Title II Adult Program, of the Adult Education Program of the Department of Education.
2. Initial evaluation of the person's skill levels, including aspects related to literary and numerical skills and level of fluency in English as a second language, as well as initial evaluation of the aptitudes, attitudes and needs of support services.
3. Services to change an individual's employment status ("Labor Exchange Service"), including job search and placement services and when an individual needs it, career counseling services, including providing information on industrial sectors and occupations in demand; and provide you with information on job opportunities in non-traditional sectors.
4. Services with referrals for service activities with other programs available in the AJCs, such as the Partner Programs, and if appropriate, on other work development programs.
5. Information on the characteristics and conditions of the labor market, including statistical information on the local, regional, and state employment market, such as:
 - 1) List of vacant occupations in the labor markets.
 - 2) Information on the employment skills necessary to obtain a job described in the job vacancy listing.
 - 3) Information related to occupations in demand in labor markets and income levels, required skills and opportunities to access and obtain these occupations.
6. Provide information on the level of unemployment and costs on training activities for service providers.
7. Provide information on the unemployment level of the Local Area in the corresponding implementation measures, as well as any other unemployment information related to the Local Area CGU.
8. Provide information on available support services and assistance and the due process for their referral.
9. Assistance in meeting the eligibility requirements for programs that provide financial assistance for training and educational activities and that are not provided under WIOA.

10. Provide information and assistance related to filling out applications for services under the Unemployment Insurance Program.

During FY 2019-2020, the PRDE negotiated infrastructure costs with each one of the Local Workforce Development Boards. The 2019 MOU continued in force until the new MOU become effective in December 2020.

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.*

PRDE held the latest competition Fiscal Year which will extend up to 2021, in a three-year competition. The awards to service providers are in hold, pending the new funding release as per USDE decision to appoint a third-party administrator for the PEDE federal funding.

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

During FY 2019-2020, PRDE did not offer IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training (IET) 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 programs goals.*

During the program year 2019-2020 de PRDE-AEP did not offer IELCE activities. The agency included in the 2020 – 2023 Unified Plan a series of activities for IELCE, to be implemented during PY 2021, including a new career pathways operational plan and IELCE/IET activities in coordination with post-secondary education institutions to place IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment of in-demand industries and occupations.

- *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 PRDE is involved in an improvement effort to ensure that IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system participant placement according to performance levels. The agency included g in the 2020 – 2023 Unified Plan a series of activities for IELCE, to be implemented during 2021, including a new career pathways operational plan and IELCE/IET activities in coordination with post-secondary education institutions.

Adult Education Standards

If your State has adopted new challenging K-12 standards under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, describe how your Adult Education content standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.

The Adult Education Program of the PRDE is assessing the curriculum in line with the State plans and expects to start in 2022 and finish before 2024.

Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals (AEFLA Section 225)

The DE-AEP implement a robust adult education effort for justice involved persons, island-wide in Puerto Rico. During the 2019-2020 program year a total of eight (8) prisons had adult education services for inmates, including the following:

1. Ponce Correctional facility
2. Guayama, Correctional facility - 1000
3. Guayama, Correctional facility - 500
4. Guayama, Correctional facility - 296
5. Rio Grande, Zarzal, Correctional facility
6. Mayagüez Correctional facility
7. Aguadilla, Correctional facility
8. Arecibo, Sabana Hoyos, Correctional facility-216

The AEP has an operations agreement with the Puerto Rico Correction Department to provide services to these adult participants. The services are provided to inmates who are expected to leave the correction institution in less than five (5) years. All the academic and career services provided to the regular participants are offered to this population, including ABE, ESL High School Equivalency testing and career services. After the pandemic COVID-19 in March this area of services suffered a severe impact because

visits to prisons were suspended and the distance education alternative was not a viable strategy because inmates are not allowed to use internet connection. The AEP used data provided by the PR Department of Correction and Rehabilitation generated by their own statistical procedures. During the PY2019 there was zero recidivism rate in justice involved offenders served.

Submitted by:

Dr. Yarilis Santiago, Ed.D.
Executive Director Adult Education Program

End of this report