

South Dakota Narrative Report 2019-2020

➤ State Leadership Funds

- ❖ Describe how the State used funds [made available under Section 223] for each required Leadership activity.

With a total State Leadership budget of approximately \$157,000.00, South Dakota worked steadfastly throughout Program Year 2019 to provide appropriate guidance and quality professional development. In accordance with Section 223 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, South Dakota expended Leadership monies for the following activities, programs, initiatives, and projects:

- *Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and One-Stop partners to implement the strategy identified in the Unified State Plan, including the development of Career Pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.*

As the eligible agency, the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR), along with its Title II Program Staff [and occasionally the other core programs and local AEFLA providers], made the following efforts during PY2019-20 toward general and specific WIOA awareness, access, and alignment.

- Disseminated relevant information to DLR supervisors and WIOA colleagues gleaned from OCTAE's 2019 National Meeting for Adult Education State Directors
 - Participated in WIOA Core Programs' *Unified State Plan* work group [for the 2020 submission]
 - Attended quarterly Workforce Development Council Meetings
 - WIOA Title II presented at two of PY2019-20's meetings [to overview the 2020 AEFLA Grant Competition and to conduct the alignment/recommendations activities]
 - Participated in State's Core Partner Alignment Consortium Meetings
 - These meetings included executive, programmatic, and data representatives from all WIOA Core Programs
 - Facilitated dialogues with DLR Central Office staff (WIOA Titles I – III) and Executive Team supervisors on topics related to WIOA Joint Rules, Joint Reporting, co-enrollment tracking, assessment of basic skills, and the NRS Narrative Descriptors
 - Provided One-Stop Local Offices with Adult Education and High School Equivalency [preparation and testing] resources, guidance, and technical assistance
 - Participated in the state's largest One-Stop Local Office's Staff Meetings, monthly WIOA Core Program Meetings, and quarterly WIOA Community Partner Meetings
 - Led this Local Office in explorations for compliantly sharing AEFLA data (monthly) with WIOA Title I programs, as well as Title IV programming, for local Data Validation and case-management purposes
 - Solicited and collated Title II providers' informational materials/narratives related to Adult Education and Workforce Development [with supporting data sets]
 - Attended several federal/joint webinars on topics such as *Maximizing WIOA Data* from WorkforceGPS and *Increasing Post-Testing to Improve Measurable Skill Gains* from the National Reporting System
 - Represented AEFLA at community and area Workforce Development meetings
- *Establishment or operation of high-quality Professional Development programs to improve instruction.*

Summer Summit 2019

This 2019 conference featured several strands including Career Pathways, Disabilities, Distance Education, High School Equivalency, General Adult Education, General English Language Acquisition, Student Achievement in Reading, and Technology. Beyond the national, regional, state, and local experts, this 2.5-day conference was attended by a total of 72 agency directors, coordinators, instructors, and support staff from 7 AEFLA sub-recipient providers and 2 American Indian Tribal Colleges.

Adult Education Instructor Development Program (AE IDP)

State Leadership funds supported one cohort of the AE IDP during PY2019. This teacher training serves as an induction for new instructors, as well as a refresher for senior staff. The IDP's participants reviewed assessment

protocol (Tests of Adult Basic Education's 11&12 Series), ABE/ASE instructional methodologies, program structures, NRS, College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), lesson planning, LD issues, and persistence-related topics. During PY2019's iteration, the Title II program continued to incorporate R. Brockett's book entitled *Teaching Adults: A Practical Guide for New Teachers* as part of the training's reflection component, as well as *Improving Adult Literacy Instruction* series from the National Research Council.

English Language Instructor Development Program (EL IDP)

The EL IDP was in its ninth year during PY2019. The state agency, along with SD's sole IELCE sub-recipient, delivered a cohort of training which constituted a 2.5-day, face-to-face training of mentorship, collaboration, classroom practice, observation, and evaluation. (Beginning in PY2017-18, the EL IDP was extended a half-day based upon feedback from participants; the AEFLA program added a half-day to afford instructors additional time to observe Citizenship classes, Literacy classes, and Oral classes across student-levels.) Furthermore, BEST Plus Administrator Trainings [and recalibration-trainings] were delivered throughout the year for both new and senior ESL staff.

COABE Virtual Conference 2019

Nearly two dozen administrators, instructors, and staff from statewide AEFLA providers attended sessions over the two-day period. The virtual sessions included topics related to numeracy, science, English language acquisition, immigrant integration, prisoner reentry, and digital literacy.

Closer Connections Conference

The 2019 Closer Connections Conference was a two-day offering comprised of a series of keynote speeches, breakout sessions, panels, and community-engagement sessions focused on providing the opportunity to learn from and share best practice strategies for English language learners. This conference was sponsored by Dakota Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (Dakota TESOL); the conference [venue] alternates between North Dakota and South Dakota every other year. The WIOA Title II Program's attendance and participation [for administrators and instructors] were supported with AEFLA Leadership funds.

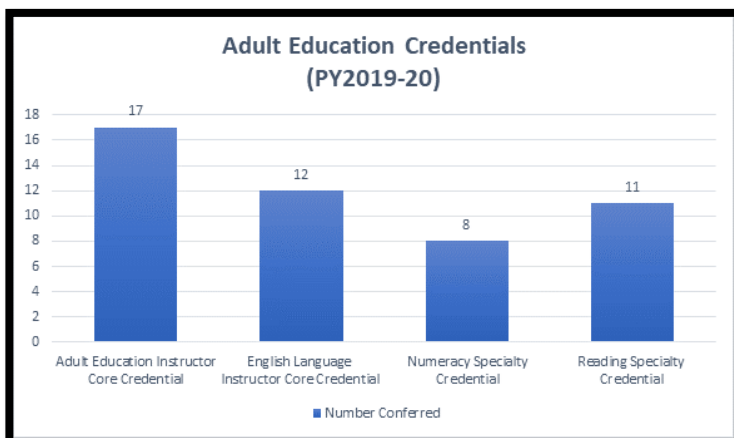
Teaching Skills That Matter (TSTM)

The agency, in coordination with the Professional Development Team, applied to the Teaching Skills That Matter project. In Q4 of PY2019, South Dakota learned it was selected to participate in Cohort II of this OCTAE/AIR Technical Assistance offering. The WIOA Title II Program Specialist and the TSTM team-members, in anticipation of the forthcoming opportunity, attended the 2020 TSTM Virtual Conference (June 16 – 17).

Adult Education Credentials

Because the quality of instruction has the greatest impact upon student performance, it has been the prerogative of the AEL Program and PD Team for some time to develop a credentialing system. PY2019 saw the launch of this endeavor with four initial credentials: 1) Adult Education Instructor Development Program Core Credential, 2) English Language Instructor Development Program Core Credential, 3) Numeracy Core Credential, and 4) Reading Specialty Core Credential.

These credentials are optional and require the consent of each local administrator. Currently two of the Adult Education Credentials are also available to the staff of WIOA partner-providers (i.e., Tribal Programs and Job Corps) upon approval of their respective program supervisor. In its inaugural year, the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation conferred 48 Adult Education Credentials.



- *Provision of Technical Assistance to AEFLA sub-recipients on topics including instructional and programmatic practices, staff training, One-Stop roles, and technology integration.*

Student Achievement in Reading (STAR 2.0)

South Dakota, as an original STAR pilot-state, launched its STAR 2.0 initiative during PY2018. All seven sub-recipient providers were involved, with approximately 30 inaugural participants. To maximize South Dakota's Leadership budget and providers' schedules, STAR's second and final face-to-face training was delivered in July as a strand at Summer Summit 2019.

To better track students receiving STAR-based instruction, a drop-down feature was added to the providers' Management Information System [interface] to afford the locals and the agency the ability to longitudinally analyze outcomes. Moreover, through the South Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning's partnership with the South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center, local AEFLA sub-recipients could yet apply for scholarships (e.g., instructor-stipends, travel costs, materials-purchases, and family engagement activities) into PY2019-20.

Crisis to Clarity Training

In response to COVID-19's effects upon AEFLA students, administrators, teachers, and support staff, South Dakota's Professional Development Team worked with local providers in early spring 2020 to identify the most pressing staff-needs. Resultantly, AEFLA Leadership funds supported a three-part webinar series delivered in late April into mid-May by a Licensed Professional Counselor and Human Services professional. The intent was to not only provide AEFLA instructors with some resources and techniques to help adult learners in crisis, but also to assist our AEFLA staff in dealing with their own stressors, changing workloads, urgent transitions, and related challenges. The trainings featured Cognitive Behavioral Therapy approaches, trauma-informed practices, classroom interventions and boundaries, resilience, as well as goal-setting methods.

Distance Education Special Project

DLR's Distance Education Special Project was designed to provide incumbent workers, geographically isolated adults, and individuals with various barriers to participating in traditional Adult Education instruction (e.g., transportation, childcare, health issues, etc.) with some meaningful [synchronous and asynchronous] distance education opportunities. This endeavor was not only meant to benefit the aforementioned participants and other Title II providers, but to also advantage DLR One-Stop local offices in appropriate circumstances. While this project served as an allowable Statewide Employment and Training Activity under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (§134), Title II Leadership funds were expended to provide coordination, technical assistance, and support.

The agency, along with the Professional Development Team and the [local] Distance Education Coordinator, continued to provide outreach to AEFLA sub-recipients (Directors, Coordinators, Instructors, and Support Staff), and One-Stop/American Job Center operators (Managers, Employment Specialists, Workforce Training staff, TANF staff, and Career Navigators). The outreach consisted of informational overviews pertinent to the respective audience, as well as training in both how to access the different modules and how to coordinate services available as a participant in Distance Education.

Resultant of the COVID-19 pandemic, this project proved integral during PY2019. The Distance Education Special Project not only provided access for existing students [who possessed the broadband, devices, and requisite digital literacy], but also served as a transitional offering for other statewide providers' students as local sub-recipients grappled with the necessity and protocol of operating their own level of remote instruction and alternative modes of offsite participation.

Data Quality & NRS Forum

South Dakota's WIOA Title II Program Specialist delivered a 1.5-hour *Data Quality & NRS Forum* to six of seven AEFLA sub-recipients in June 2020. The forum's topics included past performance, present challenges to Data Quality, and future Targets. The attendees delved OCTAE's Statewide Performance Reports, U.S. Department of Labor's WIOA Annual Results, and disaggregated/localized NRS Tables. Given the effects of COVID-19 upon PY2019's AEFLA participation and performance, there were also discussions regarding the Statistical Adjustment Model and the 90% Rule.

Web-Based Platform for Sub-Recipient Access

Resultant of the agency's streamlining efforts, the WIOA Title II Program transitioned the providers at the beginning of PY2019 to submit their monthly AEFLA Vouchers [and documentation] through a secured, permissions-based SharePoint folder unique to each provider. With these changes, both DLR Fiscal and Program Staff have digital access to review the vouchers. This project has saved paper, reduced the time for reimbursement, and provided new insights and opportunities for targeted Technical Assistance—both from Fiscal and Programmatic perspectives.

Additionally, in recognizing the potential for this web-based platform, the State Director of Adult Education suggested a permissions-level SharePoint folder for *all* AEFLA providers whereby WIOA Title II could house the materials and resources which are not necessary or appropriate to place on the public websites. Now providers have access to *Title II's Document Library* where they can find information on Assessments (e.g., Assessment Policy, Virtual Assessment Guidance, Certification Training), Fiscal (e.g., Cost Allocation Plan FAQ, Cost Principles Policy and Procedure Template, Administrative vs. Instructional Guidance), NRS (e.g., TA Guide, Performance Targets, Barriers Tip-Sheet, Benchmarks), archived MIS trainings/references, and OCTAE Memoranda.

- *Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities.*

Onsite Monitoring

During PY2019, the agency conducted one onsite monitor for both fiscal and programmatic facets of the grant-award. During this sub-recipient monitor, the local provider coordinated a student panel whereby ABE, ASE, and ESL students shared with the Monitoring Team their circumstances, programs of study, and current situations as they relate to their AEFLA instruction and services.

During the monitor, the local provider also helped facilitate a roundtable discussion amongst the members of the Monitor Team, local administrators, instructors, and two Employment Specialists from the area One-Stop. During these interviews, the DLR staff highlighted how they regularly visit the AEFLA provider to co-enroll participants into Workforce Training and support the Integrated Resource Team meetings with Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Corps, and Tribal Partners.

This onsite monitor [and the resultant technical assistance] were well received. Moreover, the AEFLA provider developed a video to highlight the resilience of some of these GED® graduates and their subsequent work-readiness: <https://youtu.be/MjQpFYIdHKw>.

Desk Monitoring

State staff provided continuous technical assistance through telephonic and electronic correspondence, desk monitors, conference calls, webinars, video teleconferencing, and site visits. Furthermore, local administrators, instructors, and data specialists took advantage of the fact they could contact state staff with any questions regarding programmatic policies and data-quality issues with the assurance they would receive timely responses.

Adult Education's web-based Administrator Meetings also provided opportunities to review participation rates, performance, data quality, policy changes, and program-goal updates. The Quarterly Reports assisted state staff with monitoring new or ongoing issues while concurrently providing agencies with more meaningful documentation and evaluative processes; the consistent submission of quarterly data-sets affords the local sub-grantee providers and the agency easy access to longitudinal comparisons across different points of the program year.

Evaluation of Quality and Improvement

South Dakota's Adult Education and Literacy Program continues to consider the challenges to and efficacy of juxtaposing outcomes of co-enrolled participants with those enrolled in only one WIOA Core Program. With the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications' assistance, DLR and the Department of Human Services began to make progress in late PY2019 related to the uploading of case-management information and Joint PIRL data's potential interoperability for the agencies' respective Management Information Systems.

Furthermore, South Dakota's WIOA Title II Program Specialist continues to make AEFLA data readily available to DLR's Data and Evaluation Specialist, Policy and Data Analyst, and Executive Team. Additionally, the Workforce Development Council Members, WIOA Core Programs, WIOA Required Partners, and the One-Stop Managers are regularly encouraged to review South Dakota's Statewide Performance Report(s) and NRS Tables, as well as submit any other AEFLA-related data queries to the agency.

National Study of the Implementation of Adult Education Under WIOA

The WIOA Title II Program Specialist staunchly reinforced with the local providers the importance of [participating in] the U.S. Department of Education's *National Study of the Implementation of Adult Education Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*. Additionally, the agency sent to the American Institutes for Research the initial Local Provider Contact information. Thereafter, DLR provided PY2018's Enrollment by Program Type, Enrollment by Educational Functioning Level, Integrated Education and Training Enrollment, and funding information.

- ❖ Describe how the State used *Leadership* funds for permissible activities.

National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE)

State Leadership grant monies paid South Dakota's 2019-20 membership dues to NASDAE. Additionally, South Dakota's WIOA Title II Program Specialist served as a Subject Matter Expert for NASDAE's project with American Institutes for Research—the LEAD Institute. In late spring of 2020, the Program Specialist was elected to serve another term as Secretary/Treasurer on NASDAE's Board of Directors.

Management Information System

The Leadership funds supported the State's Management Information System for WIOA Title II under the National Reporting System. The monies covered the Hosting Fees, the Annual Maintenance Agreements for Local Providers, and the State's Annual Maintenance Agreement. The Leadership dollars also supported vendor-hosted webinar trainings. Four plenary webinars were held during the program year. These trainings addressed both general and specific aspects of data collection, entry, follow-up, reporting, analysis, and security.

Although attendance at the MIS trainings has been articulated for years in the sub-recipient agreements as "required," the agency realized this mandate was neither really feasible nor enforceable. Therefore, in Q4 of PY2018-19, the agency and its MIS vendor decided to begin delivering the web-based trainings via Voice over Internet Protocol. Not only did this decision allow the program to save money [telephonically], but it also afforded us the ability to record and archive the web-based trainings so staff not in attendance could review the material when their schedule allowed.

The program has since learned that even staff who were in attendance appreciate having the ability to revisit certain sections of the webinar with the follow-along visuals, rather than just a written transcript and screenshots. Subsequently, for PY2019-20, the agency changed the language in the sub-recipient agreement to read that if data specialists cannot attend a training, the recorded webinar must be promptly viewed thereafter.

Essential Education

AEFLA's Leadership funds supported a contract with Essential Education, the vendor for the GED Academy™. This stand-alone, self-paced preparation program for ABE instruction and GED-preparation was delivered both online and offline. The offline version was made available specifically for our Correctional Education sites within the South Dakota Department of Corrections. The Title II Program maintained the contract's scope [for both offline and online license] in PY2019-20 to meet the increased usage resultant of the Distance Education Special Project and DOC's expansion of the offline pilot.

Computer-Based Assessments for Corrections Education

The agency, along with the South Dakota Department of Corrections and Bureau of Information and Telecommunications, began the statewide implementation of computer-based TABE 11&12 Series early April 2019. Due to several challenges related to security, firewalls, Local Area Networks, proxy machines, and installation-configurations, these efforts took a significant portion of PY2019 to successfully complete and operationalize.

➤ Performance Data Analysis

- ❖ Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based upon 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 South Dakota's WIOA Title II program served approximately 2,300 participants in PY2018, PY2019 saw only about 1,400 participants [for a 39% reduction in participation]. The Adult Education Program evidenced nearly 41% Measurable Skill Gains in PY2018, while PY2019 finished a little better than 25% MSG [for a 39% reduction in

performance]. Furthermore, the number of GED® credentials reported on PY2018's MSG Table numbered 365; however, PY2019 evidenced only 116 GED® credentials [for a 68% reduction in High School Equivalencies]. (Although the phenomenon has long been realized and accommodated—if not reinforced—with scheduling, the pandemic clearly highlighted how a significant portion of our students earn their HSEs during the last few months of a program/school year.)

Per Director Cheryl Keenan of OCTAE's Division of Adult Education and Literacy, WIOA Title II priorities during this global pandemic include 1) engaging students in meaningful ways, 2) keeping local AEFLA providers operational, and 3) focusing on [students' and instructors'] Digital Literacy. South Dakota's AEL Program has enthusiastically shared Director Keenan's directives with the field. Again, the mandate is to focus on our learners' needs through high-quality instruction, relevant services, and effective partnerships.

Of course, when discussing WIOA Title II and Digital Literacy, these topics naturally intersects with the subject of Distance Education. Therefore, it seems paramount to note the tripartite nature of Distance Education: 1) Hardware Access, 2) Broadband Access, and 3) Digital Literacy. During PY2019, South Dakota's WIOA Title II providers statewide unequivocally rose to the occasion—Digital Literacy is certainly now within the purview of WIOA Title II. Therefore, the AEL Program intends to focus on collaborating with the other WIOA Core Programs (i.e., WIOA Titles I, III, IV) and strengthening partnerships with Public Libraries, Tribal Colleges, Job Corps, Housing, businesses, community-based or faith-based organizations, and other nonprofits to better address the issues of Hardware Access and Broadband Access.

For learners able to access Distance Education programming, the pandemic has underscored how remote learning provides opportunities because some of these adults could not previously attend onsite instruction due to lack of transportation, lack of childcare, and conflicting or demanding work schedules. However, there exists genuine concern that policymakers will too easily forget about the majority of WIOA Title II's students who have the potential to become even further marginalized because they do not have a smartphone, a tablet, a laptop, internet access, or the necessary digital literacy to function in today's society.

Themes that the AEL Program and sub-recipient providers have been discussing and exploring include 1) recalibrating expectations for local participation-levels, 2) revisiting managed enrollment as we reconsider service delivery, and 3) balancing access for our most-in-need learners with the available resources. Moving forward, we must explore how the AEL Program can integrate blended, hybrid, and flipped-classroom models with traditional onsite offerings. We need to contend with the question of how we best serve our learners in a Digital Age when many of our participants do not possess the requisite hardware access, broadband access, and digital literacy.

The statewide field of Adult Education has new perspective and insights as to what our adult students might be able to accomplish remotely—especially our English language learners. And the pandemic has definitely reminded South Dakota's AEL instructors just how adroit their own learning and teaching skills can prove!

➤ **Integration with One-Stop Partners**

- ❖ Describe how the State eligible agency executes its required One-Stop roles to eligible providers. Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the One-Stop system. Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through State and local options.

Integration of Activities

The Department of Labor and Regulation considers Adult Education a key component to Workforce Development; therefore, DLR works to reinforce Title II's efficacy by highlighting Adult Education services within its workforce and training programs such as National Career Readiness Certificate, Career Pathways, Registered Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, Soft Skills Training, Job Search Assistance Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; through this integration, partnerships have been formed and nurtured to best serve residents of South Dakota. Because many of DLR's clients have not been in school for years, they often need brush-up or remediation in Reading and Mathematics to have success in job training or postsecondary education.

Local field offices and the Adult Education programs continue to work closely to meet the needs of our clients. The strong partnership between the One-Stop and Adult Education is especially evident with the Integrated Resource Teams (IRT) concept being promoted across WIOA Core Programs and required One-Stop partners. The IRT model functions at the administrative level whereby staff communicate, coordinate, and collaborate; this IRT model

also operates at the participant-level whereby the client meets with staff from the pertinent, involved programs within the One-Stop system.

Workforce Development Council

The Workforce Development Council serves as South Dakota's single-area statewide Workforce Investment Board. With the Council's support, Adult Education issues are addressed, and program initiatives are integrated or aligned with other statewide efforts. Labor and Regulation's Director of Workforce Training [who also acts as the State Director of Adult Education] has involvement in setting the Council's agenda, while the Cabinet Secretary serves the Council as DLR's voting member.

Within the Council's statutory obligations, local offices provide assistance with job searches, employment guidance and counseling, as well as referrals to appropriate services which benefit individuals under all WIOA Titles. The local offices support not only those seeking jobs and training, but also businesses and industries.

The One-Stop System of Delivery

Furthermore, the Titles I – III Program Specialists [all as DLR employees] work together to coordinate professional development and training activities, communicate performance expectations and procedural understandings, and collaborate to best assist the mutual program participants.

Regarding the applicable career services provided at the One-Stop, South Dakota's core programs compiled a master reference of all [locally] available services and supports (including required One-Stop partners) to increase awareness, facilitate referrals, promote enrollments, reinforce shared case-management, identify training opportunities, and formalize programmatic documentation. Moreover, the One-Stop provides the Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, Supportive Services, Follow-Up Services, and Training as detailed in Program Memorandum OCTAE 17-2.

Indirect costs from WIOA Titles I – III, and Title IV in some locales, help support the One-Stop system. Time is allocated according to function and an established percentage approved by DLR, as well as approved by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education.

As to WIOA infrastructure costs, the Agency instituted a fee schedule [for co-location] based upon square-footage and shared utility costs effective July 01, 2017; this cost-sharing plan was informed by the federal Joint One-Stop Infrastructure Funding Guidance. Infrastructure costs include (but are not necessarily limited to) janitorial, electrical, garbage, sewer, water, heating, landscaping, and snow-removal costs. The co-located sub-recipient also agrees to sign and comply with a *Facilities Use Agreement Indemnification* and an *Insurance Clause*.

➤ **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program**

❖ Describe how the State is using funds under Section 243 to support these activities.

- Describe when your State held a competition for IELCE program funds and the number of grants awarded by your State to support IELCE programs.

South Dakota's WIOA Title II Program conducted a multiyear grant competition in spring 2020. The agency ensured that eligible applicants used the same process and had direct, equitable access to compete for these federal funds. However, before formally announcing this 2020 Request for Proposal (RFP), in coordination with OCTAE's Division of Adult Education and Literacy, South Dakota's Adult Education and Literacy Program underwent a *Virtual Monitor*. The Virtual Monitor targeting South Dakota's 2017 RFP commenced in autumn 2019; the resulting Technical Assistance from this federal monitor assured a compliant 2020 RFP.

Resultant of the competition, one local provider was awarded the entirety of South Dakota's Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education pass-through funding. (While other providers deliver English Literacy and Civics Education, most of these services are considered "activities" rather than full-fledged IELCE "programs" due to the Integrated Education and Training [IET] requirements.)

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

In PY2019-20, the sole IELCE funding-recipient provided an adult English Language Acquisition (ELA) program which served 261 adults in the Sioux Falls area in order to develop learners' basic skills (reading and writing, speaking and listening, and numeracy) leading to self-sufficiency and success in community life, employment, further education/training, citizenship, and civic participation. This program integrated civics/citizenship activities into existing English language classes from the Beginning Literacy level to the Advanced level, as well as provided instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, including American history and American systems of government. This ELA programming was delivered concurrently and contextually with Integrated Education and Training activities [including Workforce Preparation and Workforce Training].

Workforce Preparation activities were provided through monthly English language units aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards, as well as quarterly IET topical units focused on specific transitional skills or occupational communication skills for an in-demand career pathway. Short-term managed-enrollment classes in employability skills such as Job Interviewing, Digital Literacy, or Resume-Writing were embedded in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.

Workforce Training activities were offered one to two times per quarter through sector-specific training courses across in-demand occupations/industries. ELA participants were invited to co-enroll in these Skills That Employ People (STEP) classes; the STEP classes included basic skills instruction in the context of sector-specific Workforce Training and used occupationally relevant instructional materials developed in partnership and collaboration with local employers. STEP-class participants were also enrolled in weekly Workforce Preparation classes/workshops such as Job Interviewing, Resume Writing, and Online Job-Applications. Resultant of COVID-19, all English Language, Workforce Preparation, and Workforce Training classes were redesigned for virtual instruction.

Promising practices included offering Workforce Training that was both in-demand with local employers and aligned with the career aspirations of the cultural groups of our region. Workforce Development professionals, such as Employment Specialists, provide valuable and current insight into labor market needs and recent job openings. Conversations with adult English learners and demonstrated interest in certain sector-specific trainings have shown medical and manufacturing careers best met the needs of both employers and adult learners. This kind of ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders, specifically businesses and learners, is an essential practice.

The provision of a Career Navigator position is also a promising practice. The navigator-role provides coaching through an individualized career development plan, advises on education and training needed in the chosen career pathway, connects the learner to job opportunities, and assists in the job application process. The Career Navigator acts as an advocate and cultural translator, effectively bridging adult English learners from Workforce Training to appropriate employment opportunities.

Partnership with local employers has been paramount to the development of occupationally relevant instructional materials. Employers provide insight to the skills and qualities they value in their workforce; moreover, businesses are invested in the success of the Workforce Training participants as they seek to fill open positions with trained and talented IET participants. One of these PY2019 partnerships facilitated the development of a new *Advanced Manufacturing Skills and Safety Class*.

- *Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants into unsubsidized employment within high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.*

The IELCE program delivered Integrated Education and Training activities through the provision of English Language Acquisition concurrently and contextually with Workforce Preparation Activities (i.e., transition skills), which included basic academics, critical thinking, digital literacy, self-management, resource-utilization, teamwork, and systems-navigation. The program integrated transition skills into English language classes in conjunction with the State ESL Competency Checklists and CCRS across all levels of English language instruction [as appropriate respective to Student Performance Levels].

The IELCE program also provided short-term managed-enrollment Workforce Preparation classes on Fridays, Monday evenings, and weekday afternoons as needed; these classes included Integrated Digital Literacy, Basic Computer Skills, Keyboarding, Job Interviews, Resume Writing, and Job Applications. A new course was developed in Advanced Test Taking Skills for students preparing to transition to higher education and training opportunities.

The IELCE program delivered Integrated Education and Training activities through the provision of English Language Acquisition concurrently and contextually with Workforce Training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, integrated with the local workforce development system and its functions to implement program activities. Every other quarter, instructors developed and delivered an IET unit on Workforce Training; these Workforce Training units, entitled *Workplace English for Specific Occupations*, highlighted in-demand industries and occupations aligned with the current needs of local employers. Moreover, one IET unit, entitled *Workplace Communication for Healthcare Careers*, was offered to all IELCE program participants provided basic skills in the context of Workforce Training.

English language learners had opportunities each quarter to co-enroll in Title II's Adult Education classes and STEP Classes. The STEP Classes were offered quarterly to provide sector-specific Workforce Training in areas such as Commercial Housekeeping, Retail Customer Service, Landscaping & Gardening, Manufacturing Safety, Childcare Training, Food Service & Safety, and Introduction to Patient Care. These intensive, two-week [to four-week] classes focused on in-demand occupations. Additional classes and curriculum enhancements were developed as needed to meet local workforce needs.

During PY2019, three STEP classes were offered throughout the program year. These trainings included one iteration of Advanced Manufacturing Skills and Safety and two iterations of General Production Skills & Safety. Through a blend of funding streams, including Section 243 funds, 44 adult English learners participated in sector-specific Workforce Training during the program year.

The placements of these learners into unsubsidized employment were accomplished through communication and collaboration with employers, the integration of occupationally relevant materials, as well as career counseling and job search support from the Career Navigator's role. As one example, the Advanced Manufacturing Skills and Safety Class concluded just before the onset of the pandemic. Though employers needed to pause their hiring, 4 of these IET students received a job upgrade and 1 got his first job since arriving to the United States. A local high-tech manufacturing company co-sponsored the class from start to finish and provided onsite interviews to all the students who completed this intensive [six-week] sector-specific training. Such partnerships are a promising practice for IELCE programming in South Dakota.

- *Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of ensuring that IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.*

The IELCE sub-recipient's Education Coordinator consulted local workforce development experts, employment specialists, and businesses to identify and create opportunities for collaborative efforts in providing integrated solutions to workforce needs. In partnership with the local DLR office, the IELCE sub-recipient's coordinator also participated in monthly WIOA Core Partners' meetings and quarterly One-Stop Partner Meetings. Additionally, this coordinator communicated monthly with various employers and stakeholders to discuss which in-demand occupational trainings best met the current needs of local businesses. During PY2019, these quarterly sector-specific training courses included General and Advanced Manufacturing Skills and Safety.

The IELCE sub-recipient regularly corresponded with the local One-Stop to facilitate referrals of clients to English Language Acquisition, STEP, and Workforce Preparation classes. Referral efforts also encompass annual trainings of staff regarding the programs, eligibility requirements, and enrollment processes for Title II and Title I programs. The IELCE provider, the WIOA Title II Program Specialist, and WIOA Title I's leadership have discussed the challenges related to referrals of English language learners, as well as the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's emphasis that English language learners must be included in the priority populations for the Title I Adult program [per TEGL 19-16]). Dialogue and staff training opportunities will continue in an effort to promote more referrals and increase co-enrollments.

➤ **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, describe how your Adult Education content standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.

The following is noted on the South Dakota Department of Education's website.

South Dakota Content Standards serve as expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. The review, revision, development, and feedback process involves stakeholders throughout the state of South Dakota and is an ongoing and critical component to ensure South Dakota students in every classroom receive current and relevant learning experiences.

The goal is that all students will graduate college, career, and life ready.

<https://doe.sd.gov/contentstandards/>

South Dakota educators and content specialists participated in the review, revision, development, and feedback processes; in fact, one of WIOA Title II's current AEFLA-funded teachers, as well as one of DLR's One-Stop managers, previously participated in these standards-development processes. Furthermore, the South Dakota Department of Education, the South Dakota Board of Regents, and a member of the Board of Technical Education are voting representatives on the State's Workforce Development Council (i.e., single-area Workforce Investment Board).

The South Dakota Department of Education also determines the State's recognized High School Equivalencies; these secondary credentials have too aligned to meet the expectations of the College and Career Readiness Standards. Over the past number of years, the WIOA Title II program has worked diligently to recalibrate its instruction and activities to align with the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. Per the WIOA mandate in Section 102, the State's Title II Program formally adopted a validated set of standards for its delivery of AEFLA instruction, activities, and services. As noted within South Dakota's Unified State Plan, the implementation became effective July 01, 2016.

➤ **Programs for Corrections Education and 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.

The South Dakota Department of Corrections has the capacity to track recidivism data by program/fiscal year. DOC can isolate its release-data by those inmates who completed their High School Equivalency at any point while incarcerated, and who then were released during a particular program year. Therefore, the relative rate of recidivism for criminal offenders who earned a GED® credential while incarcerated in South Dakota, and who then were released at any point during PY2019-20, was 18.7%.

This figure (i.e., 18.7%) includes HSE-completers who served an expired or suspended sentence, as well as those granted parole in PY2019. *Releases* include those discharges having completed their sentence and those conditionally released to parole supervision; *recidivists* include those returning to custody upon conviction for a new felony [and resentenced to prison], as well as those with their parole revoked for a technical violation.