

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

- a. Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership activities) for each the following required activities:**
- i. Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Unified or Combined State Plan as described in section 223(a)(1)(A).**

Colorado and the Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) team were able to enroll learners in two Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs in 2020-21, both focused on retail sales, which is an area of high demand in Colorado according to the [2020-21 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report](#) that identified the shifts in emerging industries in the midst of the pandemic. Both IETs utilized the virtual National Retail Federation Certification Courses, industry-recognized credentials that, in particular, are relevant to the lower-level English language learners (ELL) enrolled in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education services (IELCE) in their respective local workforce regions. Because both the Retail Industry Fundamentals and the Customer Service and Sales certificates are online, they were able to continue, even during COVID-19 shutdowns. IETs were implemented in partnership with the Colorado Workforce Development Council and local workforce development centers, with shared objectives and co-enrollment in adult education language support classes.

In alignment with the November 2019 federal on-site monitoring report, AEI developed an IET toolkit and workgroup to be implemented in the following year. The toolkit has extensive resources as well as checkpoints for approval from AEI and a supporting workgroup to ensure that grantees are proceeding on a path toward viable and valuable IETs. At this time, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grantees are not co-located in one-stop centers. During 2020-21, alignment of partner services in the one-stop was achieved mainly through plan development discussions and activities of the [2020-24 Workforce innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Colorado State Plan](#), [2020-23 local and regional workforce development area plans](#) and the [Perkins V State Plan](#). Multiple stakeholder and public input opportunities occurred, and the plans were collaboratively written among the state partner agencies and local/regional workforce areas. The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) convenes all WIOA state agency partners and the local workforce center directors quarterly. All parties provide updates regarding WIOA State Plan implementation and discuss one-stop partner alignment. Other alignment activities included one-stop partner joint training activities for state agency staff.

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

With an investment from the state legislature, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) led the implementation of the [Colorado Career Conversations \(CCC\) Training Project](#) in 2019-20 and due to the popularity of the in-person training project, an online course was developed in 2020-21.

WIOA partners throughout Colorado worked collaboratively to increase knowledge around programmatic accessibility in the workforce system using funding from a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant. Colorado WIOA partners, through the Job Seeker Services Alignment Accessibility Team, developed training materials to support WIOA core program partners and help staff members understand programmatic access and have resources for implementation. The team consulted with Colorado's DEI stakeholders and decided to train Colorado's workforce system on this material through an online course. The training provides information related to WIOA Section 188, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Rehabilitation Act. The team also created a Programmatic Accessibility Self-Evaluation Toolkit designed for WIOA partners to evaluate progress on accessibility in their local areas. Between October 2019 and February 2020, the Programmatic Accessibility course was completed by more than 200 professionals in Colorado's workforce system. The course was also highlighted on the [Workforce GPS website](#). In 2020-21 the Program Accessibility course has grown with 385 state of Colorado

employees successfully completing the course, 40 of which are adult education leaders. A specific Moodle site for federal and state adult education programs was developed to encourage furthering knowledge of adult learners with disabilities.

During the 2020-21 program year, AEI met weekly with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System work group to discuss improvements to data sharing processes with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE). While no changes were able to be made to the data sharing agreements due to some turn-over and reorganization of the data privacy office, conversations moved forward to explore increasing efficiencies while maintaining data security. AEI met quarterly with the Regional Services Unit (RSU) at the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment to continue conversations around how best to support grantees and workforce centers in pursuing integrated service delivery, expanded access and recruitment across programs, and development of common intake systems. Although no state-level policy changes were made, we still saw an increase in co-enrollments of close to 5% from the previous year.

During the pandemic, technical assistance, including the use of state leadership funds, shifted focus to online implementation of adult education services, including re-evaluation of potential career pathways that would be attainable in a remote environment, discussed monthly in the IET Workgroups. Grantees were encouraged to utilize and refer learners to access remote workforce services as learners shifted to being more comfortable in the virtual environment, even as local workforce development centers were reopening. Grantees continued to utilize online meeting platforms to continue to collaborate with workforce stakeholders and online forms to identify barriers and refer learners to appropriate sources to support elimination of those barriers.

AEI updated its Assessment Policy in 2020-21 allowing remote testing per test publisher guidelines and implementing the use of CAL's BestPlus. AEI provided technical assistance to grantees interested in assessing learners remotely and ensured grantees also completed training from test publishers (CASAS, Data Recognition Corps (DRC), and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)) before rolling out remote testing with learners. Over half of AEI's AEFLA grantees continue to offer remote assessment to meet the needs of the learners and remove barriers to enrollment and attendance.

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

In March 2020, the week prior to the statewide stay-at-home order, AEI held a one day Leadership Institute for local program directors and administrators; 22 grantee staff members were in attendance, though a number cancelled their trips due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Topics covered included: effective enrollment and retention strategies, IELCE services, grants fiscal training, and grant closeout procedures. As a result of the pandemic, in 2020-21 AEI pivoted to a distance learning training schedule by conducting a month-long professional learning event early in the year. The AEI Virtual Learning Institute spanned four weeks in June covering a wide variety of topics, including: College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), statewide database training, career planning by college pathways partners, Northstar digital literacy assessments and math and literacy instructional strategies. One session included Guided Reading utilizing strategies of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Sixty-seven people registered for the event and all presentations were recorded and are available through the statewide online learning management system, Moodle. Ninety percent of those surveyed believed that the institute provided a good venue for learning about state initiatives, and eighty-six percent believed that the session provided real-time usable information. State funds were used to support Moodle and applied toward hiring contractors to deliver presentations around CCRS, reading principals, digital literacy and college and career planning. AEI continues to develop and operate courses that lead toward the Adult Basic Education Authorization (ABEA). The ABEA courses are high-quality distance learning courses run through the Colorado WIOA Moodle, and were developed to address the specific needs of adult learners and share promising practices. Additionally, a group of practitioners attended the Teaching Skills that Matter conference and the English

Proficiency Standards in Action in spring of 2021. These events supported activities that incorporated the knowledge and best strategies for working with adult learners.

AEI continued to offer Directors' Talk, a monthly collaborative opportunity for local program directors to meet and discuss current best practices in adult education. Topics included: distance learning; disability services; career pathways and partnership; recruitment and intake (including orientation, collecting demographic information and assessment); growth models; effective staff and volunteer hiring/recruitment; IELCE, including IET; workforce boards and employers; and effective English Language Acquisition (ELA) instruction. Training included presentations from local programs and other WIOA partners and paid training on CCRS observation methods.

In a combined effort to support the Colorado WIOA system, workforce, libraries, and adult education programs were offered the opportunity to utilize Northstar Digital Literacy assessments. Northstar provides seamless services to many of our learners who migrate throughout the state, with the goal of providing all Colorado adult learners with digital learning experiences. AEI hosted several training events on how to use Northstar, which included about 80 participants across the various trainings.

As part of AEI's commitment to further increase access to high quality Professional Development, AEI established an assurance that all AEFLA grantees have a coordinator for professional learning. The duty of this coordinator is to support the grantee staff in finding and providing appropriate training and supporting the documentation of both individual and grantee training at the local level. To support the coordinators, AEI offered monthly meetings in 2020-21 called Professional Learning to Chew On. These meetings were attended by coordinators and program directors and the outcome was the development of an individual Professional Learning Plan template.

To support the accessible design coordinators who are responsible for the implementation of policies and procedures for individuals with disabilities, AEI held monthly Designers' Club meetings. AEI provided an online accessible design course, resource toolkit and evaluation tool for their programs, in addition to Universal Design training.

AEI Hosted online bi-monthly meetings, AEI Office Hours, for program directors and support leads in 2020-21 to replace the formerly in-person, multi-day trainings. Meetings included updates from AEI team members such as announcements from the State Director, grants management information and additional grant opportunities from the state. There were also updates on assessment, IETs, memorandums of understanding, professional learning activities and data. Training was provided on topics that were solicited by surveying the grantees. Evaluations of the presentations informed the office that most program leads were grateful for these meetings and were able to better manage and adapt to changes in the grant.

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

State leadership funds were used to continue development of the the online Moodle resources discussed above with information about distance learning platforms, federal and state level requirements and suggestions around COVID-19 safety precautions, and provided a discussion forum for programs to ask and respond to each other, sharing information about effective practices in instruction, assessment, enrollment, and retention. These topics are also extensively discussed during bi-monthly AEI Office Hours. These meetings include training, best practices and resources from subject matter experts on topics including CCRS-aligned instruction, social and emotional learning, data analysis and strategies around enrollment and retention, equity and diversity, technology for distance learning, assessment and the use of Northstar Digital Literacy assessments.

AEI provided several additional online professional learning courses and trainings in 2020-21 to disseminate best practices. EDU 131: Learning about ABE/ASE Learners supports high-quality, research-based instruction through articles from professional sources such as LINCS, TEAL, Rocky Mountain Plains Adult Education, TESOL, and COABE to instruct about universal design and activities that help learners with persistence. Distance Learning in the Time  
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of COVID was an additional Moodle course that provided information on different online distance learning courses from COABE, LINCS, and Literacy Minnesota. Training in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English Language Acquisition and distance education were made available to AEFLA grantee staff through this course.

In order to provide more equity in digital literacy and technology, AEI committed funds for the purchase of Northstar Digital Literacy assessments and partnered with the Colorado Department of Labor to further provide digital assessments and training throughout the state. Local workforce centers were given the opportunity to partner with adult education programs in providing digital literacy. Additionally, this partnership continues to explore further support for refugee and immigrant populations. Finally, AEI and grantee staff participated in the Teaching Skills that Matter cohort and some grantees also attended the Standards in Action training in 2020-21.

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

In 2020-21, AEI continued to monitor grantee data monthly, identifying concerns about enrollment, post-testing, and measurable skill gains (MSG). AEI utilizes a custom virtual grantee dashboard in the statewide data system, LACES. This monitoring was used to provide technical assistance to grantees to support improved performance and accuracy in data reporting. AEI also increased awareness around the importance of data by highlighting specific data topics in each bi-monthly office hours and monthly in the AEI Updates emails that are sent to grantees. This focus helped to drive an over 20% increase in MSG from the previous year. AEI also participated in the implementation of two IET programs, working with the grantees to ensure compliance at every level, starting with industry selection, development of shared objectives, and implementation of co-enrollment. AEI's IET toolkit ensures alignment between the IET program and CCRS. AEI did not conduct onsite monitoring in 2020-21 due to COVID-related restrictions. Instead, AEI conducted monthly desktop data monitoring and quarterly monitoring calls with all grantees to ensure alignment with AEFLA requirements and to solicit information about best practices and innovative activities in programming. This collected information was provided to grantees in follow-up reports and Office Hours and other technical assistance topics were determined based on these conversations.

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

AEI created a new assurance for professional learning. The assurance includes a professional learning coordinator mandate for each grantee to support professional learning activities for all AEFLA staff. AEI worked in conjunction with the professional learning coordinators to develop a statewide template to document each grantee staff member's professional learning. The coordinator also supports instructional staff through the initial and renewal process of the Adult Basic Education Authorization (ABEA).

AEI worked with CDE Licensing to take the proposed changes for the ABEA to the State Board of Education to approve changes and improvements to the ABEA process. AEI continued to use ABEA competencies collaboratively developed with the field in 2018-19 to develop free online courses. In 2020-21, AEI began the process of developing courses as well as soliciting contractors to develop self-paced online modules based around the new ABEA competencies with the goal of offering them for free to adult education instructors in Colorado to meet licensing requirements and serve as a resource for continued professional development. This work has continued, with plans to launch the full set of four courses by 2022.

AEI also provided ABEA credential pathways for instructional staff through credit bearing courses via partner colleges, and through prior learning portfolio options—including updating and streamlining the portfolio process and supporting documentation in response to feedback.

Colorado Career Conversations training was provided to AEFLA grantees throughout the state. In response to

COVID-19, an online course was developed for free online training that replaced the in-person training.

AEI provided personalized technical assistance for the four directors new to their positions during 2020-21. Supports included additional LACES data system training, local policy creation/implementation assistance and frequent check-in calls. Training was differentiated by the new directors' level of familiarity with the grant. To better support grantees during these important staff transition times, AEI utilized a part-time employee to support these new directors.

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

As identified in the Corrective Action Plan in response to the November 2019 federal on-site review, AEI created an IET toolkit to guide grantees through the IET development process. The toolkit focuses around four main development stages: sector identification, required elements, integration, development and implementation. In 2021-22, AEI plans to add information about the NRS Table 11 IET-specific outcomes to the IET toolkit.

AEI also reviewed all MOUs with workforce development partners in 2020-21 to ensure the strategic implementation of skills training activities with partners. AEI designated a program coordinator to lead discussions with workforce partners about these activities and the potential of expanded services. These partnerships included virtual visits from workforce--including employers--with adult learners, sharing information around skills training and employment, and improved referral systems to promote use of the one-stop system.

Several LACES webinar trainings were provided in the 2020-21 program year to assist grantees in meeting the AEFLA performance targets. Three LACES user trainings were held between August and September to address the training of new users and refresher training for existing users with access to the data system. Over 70 local users attended from 12 of the 14 AEFLA grantees. A webinar recording covering 2020-21 AEFLA performance targets was released in October 2021 followed by two, hour-long question and answer sessions during which grantees had opportunities to ask questions around the performance targets and best practices in reaching them. Over 20 local users attended from 11 of the 14 AEFLA grantees. Intensive, three-hour Table 4 and Table 5 training sessions were offered in November and January. Over 30 individuals from 11 of the 14 AEFLA grant-funded programs attended.

An additional new LACES user training was offered in April to address staff turn-over and new hiring as vaccine roll-out provided for more in-person instruction. Over 20 local users attended from six of the 14 AEFLA-funded grant programs. LACES assessment and attendance report training, as well as training on using data to analyze equity gaps, was offered in May. Nearly 50 local users attended the two trainings representing 12 of the 14 AEFLA grantees. Three mini-conference sessions were offered at the AEI Virtual Learning Institute in June. These training sessions focused on reporting exit exclusions in LACES, tracking supplemental employment and wage data in LACES, and reporting IET measurable skill gains in LACES. Close to 30 local users from eight of the 14 AEFLA grant-funded programs attended these conference sessions. Recordings of all webinar training sessions were made available to those who were unable to attend the live training sessions.

Quarterly, grantees received a statewide data summary report which includes MSG and other key data showing their data year-to-date compared to the statewide totals and averages across all federal grantees. Additionally, to support these technical assistance events, program-level MSG and related persistence data was shared monthly with all grantees via the AEI team's weekly newsletter as well as during the team's bi-monthly office hours webinars.

AEI, and broader CDE team members, participated in various state agency-level workgroups to implement a system

to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education. Frequent meetings with the Colorado Community College System, Colorado Workforce Development Council, Colorado Department of Higher Education, etc. resulted in linkages with postsecondary education and institutions of higher education. AEI hosted and participated in multiple conversations to improve outreach to instructors, students, and employers.

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

At the local level, grantees are required to conduct end-of-year data reporting no later than the second Friday in July. Although data entered in LACES by grantees is monitored monthly for errors, AEI staff run a final diagnostic report of learner data after that second Friday in July. Any errors identified are sent to grantees for correction in LACES by the end of July to officially close out the data reporting. Once the data is finalized and frozen, grantees were required to complete an Annual Performance Report (APR) either in writing or collaboratively through a virtual meeting. A majority of grantees elected to complete the APR collaboratively and these meetings took place in July and August of 2021. The APR requires local grantees to analyze enrollment, post-testing, and MSG outcomes across program types, Educational Functioning Level (EFLs), and classes across program years to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Grantees are encouraged to document in the report outliers and anomalies as well as any plans for further research and improvement.

Grantees received their program-level Table 5 match data in November 2021. Owing to privacy restrictions which currently prevent match data from being ingested in LACES, grantees were only given Table 5 data at the aggregate level for their programs. They were encouraged to compare their Table 5 data to statewide totals and the performance of other AEFLA-funded programs during a bi-monthly Office Hours virtual meeting, as well as a Table 5 webinar training in November.

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

At the state level, the AEI team met quarterly throughout the 2020-2021 program year to compare performance data statewide. The team met in August and again in October to review match data from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and the outcomes associated with those match data. Conversations focused on how the pandemic may have led to a reduction in enrollment, but that increases in average contact hours, post-tested learners, and measurable skill gains may have been an unforeseen benefit of lower instructor to adult learner ratios. Conversation also took place around which learners may have been excluded from programming in 2020-2021 due to having fewer resources or lacking the technology needed to fully participate.

Enrollments dropped to 2,973 in 2020-21 from 7,284 in 2019-20. The statewide MSG rate increased from 23.3% in 2019-2020 to 44.2% in 2020-2021. All but one grantee met or exceeded the 37% MSG target for the 2020-21 program year. The grantee not meeting the target is receiving corrective action technical assistance from the AEI Program Coordinator. The average MSG rate across all 14 AEFLA-funded grant programs was 44.6%. We saw MSG rate increases across all 12 ABE and ESL levels. ESL Level 6 remains an area for improvement, and the team is working toward an MSG rate increase at this level as more IETs are implemented statewide.

The pandemic had and continues to have a negative impact on employment across Colorado, the entry employment status of learners remained fairly stable from the 2019-20 program year into the 2020-21 program

year. There was a four percent decline in the percent of learners employed at program entry from the prior year. In terms of entry educational level, there was a slight, six percent, increase in learners entering with less than a high school diploma with slight decreases in the number of learners entering with secondary or postsecondary credentials or some college education. The adult learner population in Colorado remained at 51 percent ESL and 49 percent ABE from the prior year. We saw an eight percent drop in participants reporting their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino and a 5 percent increase in participants reporting their race as White with small increases in learners reporting their race as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Black or African-American. We have not yet been able to discern if the drop in participation among Hispanic/Latino learners was the result of barriers to entering or remaining in adult education programming, if this population of learners faced more impacts from the pandemic, or if this decrease was the result of the change in grantees receiving the AEFLA award from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021.

We saw a 40 percent increase in the average hours per ABE learner and 58 percent increase in the average hours per ESL learner. Along with this increase in average contact hours, we saw an increase of 22 percent in the rate of learners post-tested. Grantees reported that the pandemic-related barriers to testing in 2019-20 were largely solved statewide by the second quarter of the 2020-21 program year. AEFLA-funded programs made great strides in the delivery of instruction via distance technology. Whereas just 6 percent of all participants attended 50 percent or more of their instructional hours via distance learning in 2019-20, in 2020-21, just over 63 percent of all participants attended 50 percent or more of their hours via distance learning. Distance learning also supported the increase in average instructional hours per learner and increases in Educational Functioning Level gains through post-testing.

Statewide, Colorado did not meet our 23.7 percent employment in the second quarter after exit target, falling roughly two percent below the target, but with a similar rate to the 2019-20 program year. Similarly, we did not meet our 25 percent employment in the second quarter after exit target, falling nearly 14 percent below the target. We are still working with CDLE to determine why the decrease in employment in the fourth quarter after exit employment rate was so much lower, dropping 9% from the prior year, but initial considerations have focused on pandemic-related unemployment owing to the timeframe in which employment was measured for the 2020-21 Table 5 employment cohorts. In spite of the drops in employment rates, Colorado was able to meet the median wage target of \$5,123; however, the median wage did drop from 2019-2020. We were also able to exceed our 11% credential attainment rate target, increasing roughly seven percent from the prior year, though we are looking into improvements to increase post-secondary entrance and credential attainment.

The team is currently having conversations around how to best support grantees who were not able to meet or exceed the Table 5 targets. Current considerations include adding Table 5 targets to the state's risk assessment and monitoring tools; implementing supplemental employment and wage data collection; increasing the frequency of the CDLE data match; and ongoing work with grantees on Social Security Number data collection.

**3. Integration with One-stop Partners: Describe how the State eligible agency, as the entity responsible for meeting one-stop requirements under 34 CFR part 463, subpart J, carries out or delegates its required one-stop roles to eligible providers. Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system. Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through the local option. In the event the local option was not used in a local area, indicate that the State option was triggered.**

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

education services are provided. Each required one-stop partner is responsible for identifying the career services that are relevant to their programs and making those services available through the comprehensive workforce center.

During 2020-21, AEI collected the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between local workforce development boards and grantees. These outline the infrastructure agreements with the centers, per the [Colorado One-Stop System Policy Guidance Letter#: WIOA- 2016-03, Change 1](#) published on May 2, 2017. These MOU were reviewed extensively by a designated AEI program coordinator who ensured they adhered to the Policy Guidance Letter and to all WIOA requirements. As it was the beginning of the grant cycle, AEI took the opportunity to facilitate conversations with contacts at all workforce development centers and adult education grantees to discuss improvements to one-stop services. These conversations helped to build the relationships between partners. In addition, AEI began quarterly meetings with our CDLE partners to collaborate on initiatives at the state level that would impact grantees. These meetings led to a greater understanding of monitoring practices and discussions of best practices in partnerships.

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

AEI worked with workforce partners on initiatives to utilize additional funds provided to Title I through additional emergency grants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Grantees utilized virtual services to provide career services and referrals to one-stop partners, especially to address in-demand industries impacted by the pandemic.

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

##### **b. 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.**

Six programs were awarded and received funds for IELCE. AEI held the competition for 2020-24 in 2019-20 and the competition materials, including the Request for Applications, were reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, as outlined in the Corrective Action Plan in response to the October 2018 virtual review. The request for proposals was released on January 31, 2020. Eligibility confirmations (for demonstrated effectiveness) were due February 24, 2020. Due to COVID-19, the competition was temporarily paused and eligible providers were required to submit applications by June 8, 2020. Intents to Award were released on July 27, 2020. Grantees were evaluated on their applications which required demonstration of effectiveness, evidence of need in local areas, proposed instructional services, satisfaction of IET components and integration with the local workforce system. Six grantees were awarded IELCE funding and received funds for 2020-21 totaling \$917,622.

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

In 2020-21, AEI used section 243 funds to establish IET programs. No section 231 funds were used for IET in 2020-21. Two of the six IELCE-funded programs were able to implement IET programming in the first year of the grant cycle. All grantees participated in (and continue to participate in) the IET Workgroup to support the completion of the IET toolkit and the development and implementation of IETs. In 2020-21, AEI dedicated a program coordinator to support all IELCE grantees. This program coordinator had previous experience in WIOA Title I, so was able to contribute a workforce perspective for the adult education grantees.

Through quarterly monitoring conversations and the monthly IET workgroup, grantees have identified the two

greatest areas that are still challenging in developing IETs. These include having enough learners with similar interests to create a specific IET and, because of the pandemic, finding workforce training programs that are online, which allow learners to attend, even while physical spaces are shut down. Both successfully run IETs provided adult education and workforce preparation activities in support of workforce training provided by the [National Retail Federation's certificates](#). The online certificates allowed the IETs to continue running throughout the pandemic with online support from the adult education programs. Grantees were able to reflect on how these types of programs can also solve the issue of having "enough" learners to make the IET worthwhile, because the curriculum can be disseminated to students remotely, increasing the audience.

In addition to IET, grantees receiving IELCE funds also used classroom activities and workshops to connect parent learners with their children's learning platforms, supporting remote learning. Through partnerships with local K-12 districts, adult education programs were able to provide technology and software support to assist parents in engaging digital literacy.

**c. Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency as described in section 243(c)(1) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.**

In 2020-21, 298 adult learners participated in IELCE programs administered by seven grantees. There were seven IET participants who participated in healthcare and retail industry IETs.

In 2020-21, additional IELCE grantees began preparations for IETs in the food industry, early childhood education, healthcare and manufacturing for implementation in 2021-22. The retail partnerships were established with the local workforce centers who worked with the National Retail Federation to promote the certificate programs. The additional partnerships are being established with local community colleges, some of which have adult education grantees on site, and employment partners. All IELCE grantees offering IET utilize staff to develop curriculum that aligns to the workforce training and have career navigators who help learners develop educational and career plans to work toward goals. The navigators not only help learners connect with services, but help them identify what steps need to be taken to reach goals. Due to the pandemic and the additional strains placed on learners, only three of the seven IET learners completed the IET and workforce training, which can be frustrating for grantees. In 2020-21, AEI emphasized the importance of offering an IET that meets all requirements under WIOA, even if there were not a large number of participants. The offering of these programs was seen as a success, as Colorado has previously struggled in getting IETs off the ground. With the additional planning done in the IET Workgroup in 2020-21, AEI is hopeful that there will be more diverse IETs offered and more participants in 2021-22.

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

The competition for the 2020-24 grant cycle included the review of local applications by their respective local workforce development boards. Applicants were reviewed for alignment with regional needs, strategies and goals identified in the local plan; proposed activities to reduce barriers to employment; one-stop partnership responsibilities and referral processes. The boards were given the opportunity to make recommendations to promote alignment during the review process.

AEI participates in state-level work groups and committees to support core partners in each local area in their coordination of services so that clients are placed at the center of the system, including IELCE participants. In 2020-21, AEI worked with the Colorado Department of Labor to hold quarterly meetings to discuss policies, strategies,

and best-practices for learner engagement across WIOA partner agencies, including IELCE learners. From these meetings, topics were incorporated into grantee technical assistance regarding one-stop responsibilities and best-practices. The [2020-21 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report](#) indicated that the emerging industries in demand during the pandemic included retail and healthcare, both of which are developed or developing areas for IELCE IETs in 2020-21. The partnerships formed with workforce to offer these IETs are addressing critical reemployment needs.

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

In 2020, the director of the State K-12 system reviewed the current CCRS and ELP standards and verbally agreed that these match the current Colorado K-12 standards.

AEI recently attended the Standards in Action (SIA) for English Language Proficiency Standards in spring 2021, that supported the rigor required for English Language Classroom. Due to attending the federal SIA training further support is being offered to the programs in the field. A special training was held to help instructional leads and coordinators to learn about CCRS to increase the knowledge of program administrators on the specific requirements and supports that need to be in place for AEFLA programming.

A three-day training that was offered for all AEFLA program staff. In these training events program staff learned strategies and methods to utilize CCRS/ELPS further in curriculum and lessons and align with state assessments.

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

AEI has not been able to track rates of recidivism on correctional education participants in 2020-2021 or in prior years. The Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) defines recidivism as a return to prison or inmate status in Colorado within three years of release, for either new criminal activity or a technical violation of parole, probation or non-departmental community placement. The team has not yet coordinated with CDOC to track prior year participants at this three-year mark to determine how many recidivated. Based on exit exclusions reported for correctional education participants in 2020-2021, so far less than five percent of correctional education participants recidivated.