



Connecticut Narrative Report 2020-2021

Introduction

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has successfully completed another year of implementing the goals outlined in its Unified State Plan as mandated by Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The CSDE has enhanced and supported programs and services that are more comprehensive, cost-effective and responsive to community needs by supplementing Connecticut's commitment of state and local adult education dollars with WIOA Title II dollars.

Sixty organizations including school districts, volunteer programs, community based organizations and other agencies provided adult education services in Connecticut by recruiting and retaining, educationally and economically disadvantaged adults. By focusing on the needs of learners, families, communities and employers, adult education programs succeeded in improving the skills of Connecticut's learners, enabling thousands of residents to attain a secondary school diploma, helping to close the skills gap in the workplace, assisting non-English speakers to learn English, easing the transition to post-secondary education, preparing residents to attain U.S. citizenship and helping families to break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.

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(1)(a).

Connecticut Adult Education aligned with the five Workforce Development Boards to offer adult education services in the American Job Centers throughout the state. Services include providing information on AJC services, assistance in registration of adult education students in CTHires (the Connecticut Department of Labor's website and database for all services which provides a complete set of employment tools and information for job seekers where individuals can search jobs, create resumes and access education and training). Space was provided for adult education services, including co-located adult education programs within the AJC facilities. Several AJC's created orientation videos posted on their websites along with other information on receiving services due to walk-in options being suspended due to COVID.

All grantees described the alignment between their proposed adult education services and the local WDB plan by demonstrating the extent to which the eligible provider aligned the proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners. Local boards conducted a required review of the local AEFLA

grant applications to determine whether the applications were consistent with the local plan and to make recommendations to the eligible agency to promote alignment with the local plan.

All adult education directors were invited to participate in the Governors Workforce Council Adult Education Working Group, which also included representatives from CTDOL, Workforce Development Boards and Higher Education. The purpose of this group is to improve communication between WIOA core partners, and to strengthen coordination of services for adult education students. This work will be ongoing through 2022.

Adult education providers have created Career Pathways that address the three primary initiatives of the Workforce Development Boards: Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing and IT. To support this work, the CSDE chairs the Career Pathways Taskforce which provided guidance to the field related to Career Pathways and has created a website dedicated to providing resources on each of the 16 Career Pathways, Career Awareness, Workers' Rights, Employability Skills and Career Interests. CSDE provides outreach to the field in use of this tool. CSDE has provided Professional Learning sessions on Employability Skills. Sessions on Workers' Rights and issues, which disproportionately affects the ESL population, were provided to all ESL instructors at the statewide CAACE Conference.

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

The CSDE delivers a majority of its state leadership and professional development services through one Regional Education Service Center (RESOC) organization, EdAdvance, as part of the Adult Training and Development Network (ATDN). The CSDE's professional development model supports the implementation of the goals of Connecticut's State Plan and consists of professional development basics and activities related to the implementation of College & Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). Professional Development is provided to local programs and services for One-Stop partners and other agencies through ATDN.

During fiscal year 2020-21, the COVID-19 pandemic continued which created alternative professional development program adjustments. These alternative programs were the results of various school programs operating in remote and/or classroom instruction. Before providing professional development workshops, we had to offer remote learning workshops teaching the use of software platforms like Zoom, Google, WebEx, etc. We operated synchronous and asynchronous workshops to accommodate these programs during the March 2020 to August 2020 program year. In 2020-2021, approximately 3632 practitioners attended 73 pre-planned training sessions, plus conference presentations, CAACE, the Annual Disability conference, NCTN, CONNTESOL and GEDTS conferences. Over ninety-five percent of all workshop evaluations returned were rated four or five on a five-point scale for overall quality. EdAdvance implemented these many varied training sessions, which included a two-day Summer Institute. Virtual sessions in differing formats, face to face, through web conferencing, or a combination of

all were presented throughout the year within these 100+ workshops. Continuing online, virtual trainings showed a huge increase in participation by teachers. Not having to travel and the need for training in the different platforms proved positive for ATDN training participation. ATDN has consequently also created a repository of on-demand sessions available for use by all adult education staff, which allows for anytime access to required professional learning on CCRS and ELP Standards.

Connecticut Competency System (CCS) training sessions were offered several times during the year to practitioners from both adult education and the workforce development community. About 428 teacher/practitioners attended these 9 sessions. The CCS is an integral part of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) to connect curriculum, assessment and instruction that is able to capture progress made by adult education learners. CCS has incorporated the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for Adult Education into training. Since virtual instruction has been ongoing, we have also added participation in the pre-designed CASAS videos for certification and training. ATDN staff supports the network of CCS Program Facilitators – lead practitioners who ensure high quality CCS implementation – through regional networking sessions that provide updates, links to best practices, opportunities for sharing, an awareness of regional/national issues and encourage all local staff to attend CASAS News and Updates seminars. ATDN continues to work with the CSDE to host a required statewide meeting for CCS Program Facilitators as well as regional meetings in the fall. We added Excel and TOPSpro workshops with 30 participants. Currently, CT has two National/State Certified trainers for CCS, one of which has presented for CASAS at their Summer Institute.

GED and the GED® Test - As additional information about the subtests, newer student preparation material, On-Line (OP) testing became available, instructors eagerly incorporated all of them into their instructional settings. ATDN provided sessions that recognized instructor engagement with the GED Testing Service™ website, and the Official GED® Practice Test, as well as discussion of relevant new materials and resources. Two sessions in *GED®/ABE Writing: Planning the Extended Response* and *Intro to Creating GED Hyperdoc Lessons* were offered to 31 participants through EdAdvance’s professional staff. We also supported the Math and ELA areas of the GED which helps teachers find ways to use data across content areas, concentrating on resource sharing and deepening the problems used with students. Additionally, we held a GED® Day with 5 offerings in *Google Classroom Support; GED® Ready Analysis; Google Classroom Tips; Line Graphs* and *GEDTS Updates* for approximately 36 instructors with 129 enrollments. The GED Registrar’s workshop held once a year had 61 participants. The GED® programs offer an enhanced opportunity for discussion and writing related to career options and pathways for students to continue into either employment and/or further educational situations. We also encouraged teachers to attend the GED® Tuesdays for Teachers workshops throughout the school year.

College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education Four years ago, the CSDE required full implementation of the CCRS for Adult Education which continues to be the

focal point for our state's professional development particularly in reading, writing, and math. ATDN Trainers for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math provided training and review of required completion activities to ensure teachers were able to implement CCRS in their lesson planning. We have actively used our recently developed CCRS 100 Series videos to be used for new instructors or those wanting refresher training. The videos have been very successful during the pandemic, allowing for continued teacher training in CCRS. ELA trainers offered 9 sessions with over 40 participants while the Math trainers conducted about 9 sessions for 27 participants. To date, more than 831 practitioners have completed the ELA 100's series and 64 for the ELA 200's series. Over 300 practitioners completed the Math 100's series as well as 17 for the Math 200's series. Several CCRS related sessions were presented at CAACE (the state adult education conference) in both reading and math. Additionally, we have been training presenters in the CCRS Advanced Series (our 201,202, 203 & 204) in cooperation with SABES staff in Boston. Our focus for the upcoming year continues to be offering ELA201 & 202 workshops and Math 201, 202 and 203 workshops to continue the 200 series of CCRS.

Teacher Evaluation: Required by the CSDE since 2017, an evaluation plan was implemented in order to create a consistency of expectations and accountability across adult education programs. This program, modeled after the CT SEED Model used in the K-12 field but focuses solely on the Teacher Performance & Practice components of SEED and observations on Learning Environment and

Instruction domains from the Common Core of Teaching rubric. It uses a holistic approach to rating rather than SEED's 4 weighted components and has much greater flexibility in the type and number of observations and reviews of practice. In order to accomplish this program, all adult education directors (092 certification required) and/or evaluators are required to attend 2 workshops modified on the CSDE Foundational Skills for Evaluators of Teachers. One workshop, called Adopting Evaluation for Adult Education Professionals or Teacher Evaluation Part I is the plan overview and orientation. The second workshop, Effective Feedback for Adult Education Instruction or Teacher Evaluation Part 2 focused on data collection, matching data to the rubric and providing high quality feedback. Certifications were issued to 9 administrators that successfully completed both workshops during the year. Currently, the Governor of CT has temporarily suspended the requirement for teacher evaluation during this COVID-19 pandemic. However, over 159 participants have completed these trainings. A teacher evaluation Roundtable was offered for 16 administrators who wanted to share ideas, materials, processes for this evaluation system and discuss evaluating distance learning instruction. Plans to develop virtual trainings and videos in Teacher Evaluation are currently in production.

Technical Trainings to practitioners were crucial during our pandemic trainings in the proper use of remote/distance learning as well as tech platforms like WebEx, Zoom and others were developed to help instructors be successful should the need be there. We provided targeted trainings on relevant topics in digital literacy, which provide basic skills in digital literacy for instructors and technology integration. An ATDN webpage continues to house and support the many adult education offerings and resources including PowerPoint presentations, videos,

webinars and workshop materials throughout the year. Materials from presenters after our annual conference(s) are also maintained there for all field personnel to access at any time. We supported a Schoology site for practitioners as a communication tool for the field and utilized more than 8 Schoology program group codes but will be migrating this material and communication tool to the CANVAS platform. During the school year, we promoted and delivered a Digital Learning Day with 5 technology related workshops. There were 36 educators and 94 enrollments for Digital Learning Day. Throughout the year we offered 6 technology-based workshops attended by 158 participants. Continued plans to use a learning management system called Canvas is being developed for use by educators and students. EdAdvance will deliver and coordinate a separate Statewide Technical Assistance & Project grant with CREC and EASTCONN next year.

English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) and EL Civics teachers were provided multiple professional development opportunities for all levels of ESL instruction. EL Civics teachers meet and share how they have integrated Workforce Readiness and preparation into classes and shared lessons around work readiness. Continuing the emphasis on ELP in Adult Education the ELP Standards I Zoom training was held for 63 educators. An ESL Day was offered for 115 participants with an overview of the ELP Standards along with the standards for advanced users demonstrated by Betsy Parrish with Hamline School of Education. The ESL Best Practices seminar had 16 participants while the ESL Lead Teacher meeting with 60 participants offered discussions on how teachers can use the resources for planning instruction and using technology to help their students in the classroom. Video training for the ELP Standards I content was developed and implemented to 39 participants.

CSDE provided additional professional learning to the field. The ESL Advisory Committee convened by CSDE staff held monthly sessions for ESL Lead Teachers dedicated to supporting the field in providing effective virtual classrooms, outreach and engagement.

The National External Diploma Program (**NEDP**) continues to provide training and technical assistance to all of Connecticut's National External Diploma sites on an as-needed basis, as well as providing portfolio review for newly trained NEDP staff. The NEDP Team developed a revised approach to training due to the Corona virus with support and expertise in the education field. An Evaluation Workshop was held in May with eight participants. The new Advisor/Assessor training was developed using the Canvas learning platform and delivered online with 3 Zoom meetings for 12 participants. The NEDP Administrative Policies and Practices meeting was held in March. The NEDP Center has reviewed and provided feedback to CASAS regarding program research and development of program changes. In total, approximately 131 NEDP practitioners attended these sessions. The NEDP trainers assisted CSDE with the NEDP Director Meeting as well. Two NEDP trainers presented at the NEDPC Conference in April to a national audience of NEDP Advisors/Assessors.

Workforce Development and Career Pathways regional forums/meeting on topics relevant to Adult Education were held at some of the Workforce Development Board sites. A Transition to Post Secondary meeting/Roundtable will be held next year.

The **28th Annual Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities** was held entirely virtually due to COVID for about 416 educators with 1,102 enrollments. Five workshops were offered in areas of Dyslexia; Disability Bias; Disability Rights; Current Trends in Street Drug & Prescription Medication Abuse; and the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Beegle, on Improving Services for People in Poverty with Special Needs.

The ATDN staff developed and presented to 139 adult educators, two workshops, “Dealing with Serial Change: Navigating Without a Compass” and “Maintaining Boundaries in a Virtual World.” The Disability Contact Person training was held in November for new and experienced disability contacts, totaling over 71 participants. Consultations with Adult Ed and Literacy programs occurred at the rate of several per month around the state. The Disability Focus Group met four times.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: George Floyd’s death and the Black Lives Matter movement along with the recognition of the disproportionate effect of the COVID pandemic on the students of color and immigrant population in our adult education programs were the impetus for the convening of a Racial Equity Taskforce. The Taskforce, chaired by a CSDE consultant, is comprised of a racially/ethnically diverse group of adult education directors. Under the guidance of the Taskforce, a Mission Statement was adopted and monthly meetings with all directors commenced in November of 2020. The purpose of the work was to promote self-reflection leading to concrete action on the journey to racial equity and justice. Professional learning sessions have been provided to adult educators as directors prepared to begin the work with staff in 2021-22. This work is ongoing.

CSDE has taken opportunities to enroll in professional development sessions offered by OCTAE through AIR on Standards in Action. A team of adult education ESL instructors with a CSDE Lead participated in the series of workshops and plan to roll out lessons learned to the field during the 2021-22 educational year.

Through the CSDE, providers were also made aware of the re-Think Adult Education Challenge, and one of the providers applied, although they were not selected. As a result, they have been working more closely with the apprenticeship representative from CTDOL.

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

New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC): Connecticut is a member of the NELRC board which meets three times per year with other New England states. The Board is made up of the State Adult Education Director, Professional Development staff, local program

providers and teachers. Each state has 4 members. NELRC offers each state customized regional professional development, from webinars to intensive initiatives, based on NELRC board priorities; cross-state collaboration and sharing about practice and policy through board meetings and quarterly meetings of the professional developers, and free online access to The Change Agent magazine, teaching resources, and archives for all adult educators in our state. Several of our adult education students were published.

ATDN provided assistance to local programs in technology applications, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology. Training and technology assistance to local programs in technology applications, especially in the area of web based communications are provided as well as assistance in finding access to computers. The ATDN webpage provides a resource page for all of our professional development workshops and events that can be accessed. This has helped many educators during this COVID-19 period.

We support activities for the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training (IEL), including promoting linkages with employers. Local programs can be assisted by sharing effective models, assisting local programs in engaging employers and how to partner successfully with other agencies to place students in employment.

Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for credit courses in post-secondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education are supported by the State. Training staff on learning styles and needs, facilitating adult learning, planning for instruction and monitoring student progress is ongoing.

We continue to provide professional development to local programs for improved program quality. Training is designed to improve instruction in the essential components of reading, instruction related to specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or paid personnel and the dissemination of information about models and promising practices. Participants are asked to evaluate the training sessions to determine if the sessions fit their needs. This is done both manually and electronically. Changes are made to future workshops based on the evaluations completed.

Looking forward to 2022, ATDN hired a statewide distance learning coordinator who will continue to support our local providers with technical assistance and professional development specific to technology related topics.

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

Program Monitoring

Adult Education providers are expected to be in compliance with all State and Federal regulations. In order to effectively inform programs, the Adult Education Unit holds Policy Forums in September, January and May each year. The purpose is to inform Adult Education Directors and other key personnel on policy or procedural changes and provide updates regarding State and Federal regulations and requirements. Prior to each Forum, an Operations Memorandum (OpMemo) is sent to all Adult Education Directors detailing the information that will be presented. At the conclusion of each Policy Forum, a copy of the presentation and the OpMemos are emailed to all local directors.

Program Quality and Compliance Review (PQCR)

The Adult Education Program Quality and Compliance Review (PQCR) is a comprehensive on-site monitoring process. The review is an opportunity to focus on program quality and improvement, as well as ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements. Selection for review involves a process that combines the analysis of adult education data via the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (LACES) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) focus on program quality and performance.

The criteria for selecting districts for review involves a process that combines the analysis of adult education data via the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (LACES) and the Department's focus on program quality and performance. The selection process also accounts for the size of the program and the date of the last official site visit by the CSDE.

CSDE consultants regularly review all grants for their respective TA regions and provide guidance to the directors. All grantees submit both mid-year and end-of-year reports, which are reviewed by the consultants. In addition, data is reviewed for the Priority Areas. Together, that information is used to guide grant awards for the following program year. Programs are selected on a rotating basis for more in-depth reviews in which all aspects of the providers are reviewed for compliance with both State and Federal requirements.

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

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), together with Connecticut Children's and other healthcare providers, hosted a virtual meeting to answer questions for parents about what to expect and how to prepare for a safe and successful return to school. Attendees were able to join pediatricians, school medical experts, and other healthcare providers to get answers to your questions about mask wearing, vaccinations, social distancing, hand washing, health assessments (physicals), social-emotional supports, and any other concerns.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), together with Connecticut Children's and the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, hosted another webinar on to share the latest medical information for keeping students safe, healthy and in school during the

winter months. This session was recorded and posted online with closed captioning in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic.

Educators understand more than ever that the key to engaging parents is to make their schools feel “like family.” Schools that extend a genuine welcome to parents have stronger partners in the education process. The CT Welcoming Schools Initiative was developed to enhance partnerships among families, schools, and the community. This workshop incorporated hands-on activities and practice using the Welcoming Tool. The Tool focuses on the physical environment, family engagement practice, policy, and communication indicators to assess the climate and culture of the school.

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.

Number of Students Enrolled: The total number of students enrolled in fiscal year 2020-21 declined from the previous year with all age cohorts dropping off. The following chart shows our performance from FY 2019, FY 2020 and FY 2021. This shows that performance substantially decreased as a result of COVID-19. These numbers can be attributed to the sudden school closures in March 2020 which continued through the next fiscal year. Remote proctored testing was initially a challenge since not all agencies has training nor devices. Students also had difficulty with a lack of devices and connectivity. Almost 20% of students were unable to take a post-test as a direct result of the pandemic. Although some agencies in Connecticut have been using CASAS eTests for several years, COVID has led to increased interest in and more providers wanting to use eTesting in the coming year.

- **Distance learning enrollment trend –**
 - Participation in distance education has increased over the past few years at an exponential rate.
 - Post-pandemic participation in distance learning is greater for ABE than pre-pandemic ABE. The total number of ABE reported as distance learners were 238 in FY19-20 compared to 3215 reported for FY 20-21.
 - Post-pandemic participation in distance learning skyrocketed for ESL than pre-pandemic ESL compared to their percentage of ABE participants. The total number of ESL reported as distance learners FY19-20 was 38 compared to 2587 reported for FY20-21

MEASURE ABE/GED	2018-19 PERFORMANCE	2019-20 PERFORMANCE	2020-21 PERFORMANCE
Level 1	51%	26%	27%
Level 2	40%	37%	32%
Level 3	35%	35%	27%
Level 4	38%	27%	28%
Level 5	32%	15%	28%
Level 6	48%	17%	34%
MEASURE ESL	2018-19 PERFORMANCE	2019-20 PERFORMANCE	2020-21 PERFORMANCE
ESL Beginning Literacy	51%	42%	33%
ESL Low Beginning	60%	39%	48%
ESL High Beginning	55%	36%	38%
ESL Low Intermediate	44%	28%	24%
ESL High Intermediate	43%	31%	25%
ESL Advanced	23%	12%	13%

Percentage of Unemployed Learners

The Unemployment rate in Connecticut went from 11.48% in July 2020 to 7.7% in June 2021 up significantly from 3.6% the previous year. Connecticut’s minimum wage is \$13.00 per hour. In the chart below, the percent of learners based on employment status at entry has remained consistent for the past three years. This could be attributed to those who enrolled before the COVID shutdown.

Percent of Learners Based on Employment Status at Entry

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Employed	42%	42%	42%
Unemployed - Seeking Employment	34%	34%	37%
Unemployed - Not Seeking Employment	24%	23%	21%

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 State and local options.

WIOA Title II funds enabled the CSDE to effectively supplement Connecticut's legislatively mandated adult education system. Adult education providers were able to offer more comprehensive and cost-effective services to their eligible residents and expand their network to offer more locally responsive programming. Collaborative relationships have been developed between the CSDE, local adult education providers, community colleges, community based organizations, other state agencies and the workforce development system to greatly expand educational, support and training services to the target populations in the state. CSDE staff and local practitioners also worked closely with regional literacy councils to strengthen the connections between CSDE funded adult education programs and other literacy related programs in the community. Overall, providers receiving WIOA Title II grants demonstrated strong learner outcomes on the core indicators of performance.

Some notable accomplishments included the following:

- National External Diploma Program (NEDP) expansion enabled providers to offer another high school completion option for adult learners and/or expand the program further into their region.
- Non-traditional adult education services grants promoted quality and increased accessibility to adult education programs for learners in halfway houses, homeless shelters and in work release programs needing ABE/GED instruction as well as ESL instruction.
- Family literacy grants integrated parent literacy training leading to economic self-sufficiency; appropriate education for children; training for parents regarding how to be the primary teachers and full partners in the education of their children; and interactive literacy activities between parents and children. Funds were used to support the adult education component in order to provide basic skills and ESL in an integrated learning environment. During the full school shutdown, while children were attending classes remotely, some adult education teachers were helping them along with their parents. And the inverse of that, children were helping their parents with the technology as they all learned how to use devices and learn at home.
- The Connecticut Adult Virtual High School (CTAVHS) continued to facilitate greater coordination among adult education programs and increased access to learning opportunities by offering high quality mentored online courses taught by state certified instructors to learners statewide.

The CSDE continued to design three priority areas through its federally funded competitive grants to adult education providers specifically focused on critical aspects of career pathways for adult students: Workforce Readiness, Post- secondary Education and Training and Integrated Education and Training (IET).

- Workforce grantees integrated career readiness activities including career portfolios, resume workshops, computer proficiency checklists, skill certification courses and community service experiences into their adult education programming. Students were

exposed to labor market information, visited one-stop centers and learned about career pathways as part of their contextualized classroom instruction..

- Transition to Post-secondary Education and Training grantees bridged the “transition gap” by raising students’ standards/expectations, partnered with higher education institutions, aligned curricula, coached learners about postsecondary options and targeted instructional strategies to help them transition successfully to post-secondary education/training programs. Transition programs also featured written agreements between the adult education provider and its post-secondary partner(s) and a solid referral and support process.
- The Integrated Education and Training (IET) grantees provided specific career pathways for adult students by utilizing a co-teaching model that included basic education/diploma attainment and training in a specific skill that led to an industry recognized credential. Some examples include Certified Nursing Assistant, Culinary Arts, and Advanced Manufacturing. In most cases, these have occurred virtually due to COVID. In others, clinical practices were delayed.

CSDE provided continuation grants for Title II funds FY 20-21. The Program Enhancement Projects’ (PEP) priority areas provide funding opportunities for adult education providers to offer programs and services for adults who lack the level of basic skills and literacy necessary for effective citizenship and productive employment and to build a comprehensive continuum of lifelong learning.

Collaborations with Workforce Development Boards (WDB), One-Stop Centers, the Connecticut Department of Labor and the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

In fiscal year 2020-21, the CSDE provided direct and equitable distribution of financial support to all one-stop centers for infrastructure costs in the amount of \$78,688 (1.5% of the state’s total federal allotment). These funds are awarded by the State Department of Education to support the local providers’ presence in their respective One-Stop Centers. Memoranda of Understanding with Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFA) are in place with each area Workforce Development Board (WDB) regarding the roles and responsibilities of adult education as its partner. As part of our continuing collaboration, the CSDE has continued to ensure that its needs assessment process aligns with the service delivery goals and objectives of each WDB as a means of enhancing adult education’s service delivery strategies. The CSDE continues to offer staff of all the one-stop centers the training, technical assistance and assessment materials necessary to utilize CASAS appraisals and computer-based CASAS testing to gauge customers’ literacy skills during the intake process. During 2020-21, guided by new administration in place at the Department of Labor (DOL), current CASAS tests were not utilized. DOL administration chose to use expired CASAS Life and Work tests. Since COVID, there has been an interest in using the correct tests for e-testing.

The CSDE has been working collaboratively with the State Workforce Development Board, newly formed and named the Governor’s Workforce Council, to ensure that career pathways development is connected with labor market needs and reflective of the certificate and credit-

bearing courses offered at Connecticut's twelve community colleges. The employment outcomes achieved by adult education learners are reported alongside those from higher education and employment and training programs, thus providing greater visibility and credibility on the impact of adult education in Connecticut.

CSDE staff members served on all five local workforce development boards and subcommittees as appointed. The CSDE remains committed to strengthening connections among adult education, social service organizations and the workforce system.

Twenty-five adult education providers have a Workforce Readiness grant. Some of the activities included trips to the local One-Stops and participation in career fairs. In some cases, the staff from the One-Stops do sessions in resume writing, career search, and mock job interviews at the program's site. Many providers are members of their local Chambers of Commerce.

Connecticut has had a long-standing Disability Focus Group (DFG) whose membership includes staff from the Department of Labor, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Education. We have an annual Disabilities Conference which is supported financially and morally by those agencies. In addition, the DFG assists with developing professional development sessions involving disabilities in adult education. This past year, CSDE participated in a virtual Disabilities Resource Fair coordinated by the Hartford American Job Center.

Connecticut State Department of Education Adult Education staff attend regular meetings of all Workforce Development Boards, and each staff member sits on the Executive Board in her respective TA area. Infrastructure Funds are provided which support the co-location of adult education services within all AJCs. Co-located services include GED preparation, ESL instruction and other services as requested/needed by AJC clients.

Adult education students attended presentations on the AJC's WDB initiatives, workplace skills and general AJC services. AJC and WDB personnel have made regular visits to adult education students to provide information on current job and training opportunities and to offer information on available services. Through the ATDN/CSDE Summer Institute, sessions by CTDOL on Job Growth Trends in Connecticut, Workers' Rights and Employability Skills were provided to over 300 participants.

The CSDE provides annually three Policy Forums for all adult education directors. At these meetings, CSDE regularly includes representatives from Core Partners and community-based organizations which provide wrap-around services. Some of these include CT Rides, the state-wide transportation service, 2-1-1 CT, a free, confidential information and referral service connecting people to essential health and human services, as well as other information on services and benefits that adult education students may qualify for.

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

Describe how the state is using funds under Section 243 to support the following activities under the IELCE program:

- 1. 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.*
- 2. Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training activities;*
- 3. Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency as described in section 243(c)(1) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals; and*
- 4. 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.*

A grant continuation was held in the spring of 2020 and twenty-one grants were awarded for IELCE projects. We have continued to provide our own professional development by bringing all 21 grantees together to focus on the guide for IELCE programs. In addition, CSDE has held technical assistance visits and done observations at most programs. In FY20-21, one of our planned grantees' meetings was postponed due to COVID. Once schools began to re-open in the fall, we were able to meet virtually and in-person to continue our site visits.

In our continuation application for the federal grant, the following requirements were included in the Integrated English Literacy/Civics Education (IEL/Civics) priority area for funding:

- A. Program design and goals that focus on preparing adults for employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency;
- B. Curriculum focus on skills that will provide information and support in the skills necessary for the workplace;
- C. Coordination with the local workforce system;
- D. Activities provided in combination with integrated education/training (IET) activities

In addition to the requirements listed above, the grantees utilized these resources to improve literacy skills including speaking, reading, writing and numeracy for immigrants and other limited English proficient populations and to provide contextualized instruction in civics education. Approximately 1100 individuals learned about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation and U.S. history and government. Program outcomes included increases in learners' mean gains in program year-end reports, the development of functional language abilities in receptive and expressive oral and written English, improvement in numeracy/computation skills and a growing competence in idiomatic speech. Instruction pivoted to virtual delivery via Zoom, What's App and Burlington English.

Some program activities directly related to the use of these funds included:

- participation in career pathways exploration and activities such as visits to different businesses and presentations from American Job Center staff that impacted competence in the workplace;
- Digital Literacy: Due to COVID: Increase in technology use and skill development, loaning of devices, Google Suite, Google Applied Digital Skills, Burlington English, Zoom, Northstar (digital literacy certificates)
- utilization of various technologies including tablets, smart phones, iPads, Microsoft Office, Internet, Nearpod, Google and Schoology,;
- integration of English Language Proficiency Standards into curriculum;
- integration of workplace language and conversation practice;
- visits to the local American Job Centers and participation in Career Fairs;
- knowledge of the American education system with special focus on addressing the needs of families new to the U.S. school system;
- collaborations with local libraries;
- cross cultural perspectives, civic responsibility, democracy topics and community projects; and
- attainment of industry recognized certificates in Customer Service, different medical areas including CNA, and ServSafe Food Handler
- Workforce Readiness: many guest speakers on in-demand occupations, local community college tours
- Civics: Increase in virtual field trips (Washington, D.C., Plymouth Plantation, Statue of Liberty, 9/11 memorial, Ford’s Theater/Lincoln’s Assassination Presentation; Pearl Harbor; Monuments of Washington D.C.; and a D-Day Presentation, etc.), creation of Civics Club (Stamford)
- Additional civics topics in the classroom: Election, racial equity, Census (New London AE recognized by the United States Census Bureau as an “invaluable member of the 2020 Census Community Partnership and Engagement Program”)

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.

Due to the GED test and the NEDP being aligned to College and Career Standards (CCRS), and after several years of research, CSDE recognized the need to support a set of standards relevant to adult learners. The integration of CCRS into adult education programs is intended to provide all adult students with the opportunity to be prepared for postsecondary training without needing remediation. CT was selected to be part of OCTAE’s CCRS Technical Assistance project. With

our coaches, we developed a sustainability plan and required full implementation of the CCRS by July 1, 2017.

CSDE has required all adult education teachers to participate in the CCRS training. We expect providers to identify “lead” teachers to expand and sustain this effort within their programs. This will also help programs who have a turnover of teachers to keep the new ones informed of the CCRS. Training videos were developed to assist teachers with limited scheduling ability for face to face trainings. When the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) were released, CT trainers delivered face to face trainings. Additionally, ELPS training videos were developed and offered to teachers. Since the loss of both of our ELA trainers, we have reached out to a trainer from Massachusetts’ SABES to assist us with continuing current training and “train the trainer” sessions.

When the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards were approved, CSDE and ATDN in concert with the ESL Advisory Committee created professional learning outreach to all ESL instructors. All ESL instructors who had not received previous training in CCRS, and all new ESL hires are now required to attend ELP Standards I and II training sessions provided by ATDN.

Directors are required to include use of either CCRS or ELP Standards in their annual reviews of practice for all adult education instructors. It is the expectation of the CSDE that all lessons and activities are aligned with the appropriate standards for the instructional area.

To enhance and support the CCRS implementation effort, CSDE had formed an advisory group for implementation of the CCRS. This group was formed and met just before the COVID shutdown. Action steps were not carried out due to sudden shutdown of classes from COVID. CSDE’s adult education unit and ATDN have done outreach to stakeholders such as CAACE (CT Adult and Continuing Education Association), NELRC (New England Literacy Resource Center), the RESC which supports the delivery of CT’s professional development system as well as to content curriculum specialists at CSDE. Evaluation consists of ongoing technical assistance from trainers and CSDE which include trainers’ observations, submissions of documents, participating in webinars, postings in Schoology, presentations at meetings, and contributions to the learning resource library.

Adult High School Credit Diploma (AHSCD):

The Adult High School Credit Diploma program is a prescribed plan, process and structure for earning a required number of academic and elective credits. The provider must be a local education agency (LEA) or Regional Education Service Center (RESC). An adult who successfully completes the required credits of the AHSCD program is awarded a high school diploma by the providing LEA or RESC.

Credits toward a local diploma must be obtained through a prescribed plan that requires a minimum of 20 credits in academic and elective areas. Credits for work or military experience,

independent study projects and online courses are additional ways to obtain credit. Also, CSDE offers an Adult Virtual High School (AVHS) program which provides a collaborative statewide system that delivers supplemental online courses aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards for students enrolled in a CT Adult Education Center's AHSCD or GED program. Online courseware are taught by CT certified teachers with a web-based tutoring service and a seven day help desk. The program operates from July to June and is sustained by an established infrastructure and management team with trained and experienced teachers and mentors. Each provider/town can enhance the basic AHSCD program but must adhere to the minimum state requirements:

1. use certified teachers and counselors;
2. adhere to State Department of Education requirements regarding assessment, enrollment, and accountability and reporting;
3. meet required credit standards; and 4) ensure that a one credit course offers a minimum of 48 instructional hours.

Credits are required to be distributed as follows:

- 4 English
- 3 Social Studies (including 1 credit in US/American History and half credit in Civics/Government)
- 3 Math
- 2 Science
- 1 Arts/Vocational Education
- 7 Electives

National External Diploma Program (NEDP):

The NEDP is a web-based applied performance assessment program that assesses the high school level skills of adults and out-of-school youth. The NEDP evaluates the reading, writing, math and workforce readiness skills of participants in life and work contexts. It is aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards and evaluates competencies in ten content areas including Financial Literacy, Health Literacy, Civic Literacy, Geography, History, Science, and Twenty- First Century Workplace. An adult who successfully completes all components of the assessment, as required, is awarded a local high school diploma by the providing LEA or RESC. When programs were closed in the spring due to COVID, CASAS piloted the remote delivery of the NEDP. This pilot was successful and enabled learners to complete their work and earn their diplomas. CASAS now has added the option of a fully remote delivery along with face to face.

General Educational Development (GED):

Adults who have not completed high school must demonstrate the attainment of academic skills and concepts normally acquired through completion of a high school program. They do this through the GED examination that includes four subject-area modules: Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA), Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies. The GED Tests are also aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards and measures both high school equivalency as well as readiness for career and college. Applicants for this

examination must be at least 17 years of age and officially withdrawn from school for at least six months. Individuals who pass the GED Tests are awarded a Connecticut State High School Diploma. GED instructional programs, provided throughout the state in local school districts and a variety of other instructional sites, help individuals to prepare for this rigorous examination. When the COVID shutdown began, Connecticut initially piloted GED online testing for students who had completed and passed 2 of 4 tests. Now, all students 18 and older are able to participate in online Proctored GED testing. Test takers need to have a GED Ready “Green” Likely-to-Pass score on the subject tests within the past 60 days. Test-takers are also required to have a laptop or computer with a camera/microphone, a stable internet connection and a closed, private/quiet room.

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

What was the relative rate of recidivism for criminal offenders served? Please describe the methods and factors used in calculating the rate for this reporting period.

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) in the state is responsible for producing annual recidivism studies of offenders released from prisons in Connecticut. In recent years, the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) has been in discussion with OPM to develop a methodology to calculate relative recidivism of offenders who participated in education programs against those that did not. A number of practical considerations have side-lined these efforts. With major budget cuts, some Corrections’ facilities have been closed, leadership has changed and staff has been reduced.

Due to these factors, CSDE has not collected that information and the state DOC has not been able to calculate the recidivism rate in relationship to education. However, OPM assured us that they hope to work with us in the near term to satisfy the request for data related to recidivism outcomes.

During the 2020-2021 school-year, the enrollment of students decreased significantly. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Corrections released many citizens early to provide safer environments for those who were serving lengthy sentences. Class sizes have been reduced based on the overall DOC population. For several months in 2020, DOC moved to a remote learning model where assignments were delivered to students who were not allowed to attend school in the traditional setting due to the pandemic. Apart from a few days, education was not interrupted. When facilities re-opened, allowing for non-restrictive movement, in-person classes resumed. Currently, several facilities are working on internet wiring, which will assist in teachers being able to virtually connect with their students if facility infections lead to the need for remote learning in the future.