

Program Administration and Accountability (PAA): As the COVID-19 pandemic evolved, staff and student safety and protection were paramount, including adherence to federal, state, and local guidance. Communications from state-level KYSU staff underscored the importance of following state and local fiscal agent guidance on shutdowns, personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing, and any other directives related to safety and stanching the spread of the virus.

As a result of the challenges and adjustments necessary due to the pandemic crisis, local KYSU providers did not receive from KYSU, nor were they able to offer, usual and customary services. Adaptations were required and implemented quickly. Continuing services with existing students and reaching new students were not without their challenges, including full implementation of distance learning and instructional strategies and addressing barriers to access, e.g., inadequate technology, digital skills (both instructor and student), Internet access, and bandwidth.

Due to State and Federal mandates, KYSU providers were shut down from July 1, 2020 – May 2021. Program directors were required to submit Contingency Plans indicating how instruction and instructional strategies would be modified to serve students during suspended services. Each local program directors' Contingency Plan served as a continuity service plan, outlining activities to continue both academic and support services as the crisis evolved. The plans included staffing allocations, hours of operation, use of distance learning platform(s) and instructional resources, expectations for re-opening, and revised strategies to support students during the pandemic. Additionally, as learning centers began reopening, the PAA team conducted a KYSU COVID-19 Re-opening Impact Survey to encourage well-thought-out service plans, including the deployment of safety, PPE, and social distancing precautions. KYSU also shared Instructional Technology Frameworks with local program directors for ideas and instructions on how to use technology to overcome challenges related to distance learning.

The PAA team also released several guidance letters to the field to address OCTAE updates from Program Memorandums 20-3 and 20-4, adjustments to the FY19-20 KYSU performance funding model, instructions to Data Recognition Corporation's (DRC) remote testing opportunities, and test assessment and enrollment guidance. Additional guidance was provided to local program directors via webinars, FAQs, and in-demand technical assistance. Guidance letters and supporting resources were uploaded to KAERS' State Resources repository. All webinars were recorded and shared with local program directors. To maintain consistency with monitoring and compliance, the PAA team continued to conduct bi-monthly phone calls, evaluated performance outcomes weekly, and produced monthly Distance Learning Reports to examine attendance, distance learning hours, and digital courseware curricula usage (i.e., Burlington English, AZTEC, etc.). As KYSU works to identify best practices to support students and local providers under the ongoing COVID-19 circumstances, the PAA team endeavors to provide timely, targeted technical assistance, program compliance, and performance monitoring in FY20-21.

College and Career Preparation (CCP): Swift action was necessary to expedite the effective use of instructional technology and remote learning. During the crisis period, KYSU CCP team offered virtual professional learning (PL) sessions to the local

provider network intended to assist them in navigating remote instruction. These sessions included an initial, comprehensive distance learning webinar, Microlearning Monday sessions focused on building targeted skills necessary for remote instruction, and follow-up Workshop Wednesday sessions that allowed providers to engage in virtual, sandbox-style forums for practicing skills learned in Microlearning Monday sessions.

These weekly sessions were combined with a digital newsletter to reinforce learning and provide resources to recorded sessions/events. CCP's response to intervention (RTI) approach received national attention as a state-level best practices model.

Despite earning accolades for pandemic-driven PL interventions and making attempts at maintaining continuity, KYSU's local provider network reported that adult learners were particularly reticent about engaging in remote instruction and required significant digital literacy upskilling in advance of academic instruction. These challenges were compounded by the realities of Kentucky's digital divide, stymying providers and students because of inadequacies related to technology, Internet access, and bandwidth.

College and Career Navigation (CCN): *The COVID-19 pandemic also presented challenges for CCNs and their students. With rapidly shifting priorities – including childcare, supporting transitions to online instruction for their children, underemployment, and/or unemployment – recruiting, engaging, and retaining students has proven difficult at best. To complicate matters, limited access to technology, unreliable or non-existent Internet connectivity, and lack of digital skills have hindered relationship building and educational and workforce goal setting. Anxiety, depression, unreliable transportation, food insecurities, and, of late, "pandemic fatigue" has overwhelmed existing and potential students, leading to anemic enrollments, academic advancements, and transitions. Overall, lack of motivation was reported as the number one issue affecting recruitment, retention, and completion.*

CCNs searched for ways to stay connected and engaged with students during this unparalleled crisis. Navigators reached out to students using Zoom and phone sessions; mentored and encouraged students via social media channels and reverted to less digitally advanced methods to reach students, e.g., U.S. Postal Service and dropping off instructional materials directly to students.

State Leadership

Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 for each of the following required activities.

Alignment:

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 223(a)(1)(A).

Besides the ongoing threats of the COVID-19 pandemic Kentucky Skills U, Office of Adult Education (OAE) continued to experience other challenges. The Education and Workforce Development Cabinet's (EWDC) focus was diverted to unemployment insurance (UI) claims adjudication and fulfillment. KYSU's agency integration, among other agency priorities, was postponed until much later in the fiscal year. Most, if not all, of the Cabinet agencies, were asked to deploy staff members to support UI. This included KYSU, which dedicated three strategic partnership coordinators to the cause.

As noted in last year's narrative report, the Executive Director retired, and the Cabinet named the Deputy Executive Director as Acting Executive Director. The agency continued to telecommute for most of the 2020-21 fiscal year. When the pandemic eased with widespread vaccine availability, agencies arranged to migrate to physical offices using hybrid telecommuting schedules. Additionally, KYSU had seven staff vacancies (including the executive director's), several that were pivotal inefficient operations of functional areas (e.g., fiscal management), for which staff hiring freezes and Cabinet preoccupations adversely impacted. Ultimately, UI was transitioned to the Labor Cabinet, along with segments of Employment and Training (renamed to Employer and Apprenticeship Services). Therefore, a period for effective integration into the Cabinet was significantly delayed, until spring of 2021 when the Cabinet hired a new Executive Director. Local providers were affected by the ongoing pandemic. However, KYSU continued to push out resources and supports for learning at a distance and encouraged those able to re-staff physical learning center locations to use blended and hybrid methods of instructional delivery to reach and engage as many prospective learners as possible.

For adults, widespread unemployment, childcare concerns, and digital divide issues took precedence over pursuing their own educational and workforce advancement goals. According to a study by Common Sense Media, more than one-third of Kentucky families do not have home Internet access capable of supporting online learning. In addition, inadequate bandwidth and equipment, cost of Wi-Fi services, and lack of digital skills also contributed to diminished accessibility. Recruiting, engaging, and retaining students became more difficult as the pandemic lingered and motivation among target populations waned. Mental and physical health entered the pandemic landscape as stressors and anxiety mounted.

Due to extensive COVID-19 outbreaks in correctional settings, external personnel were prohibited from entering facilities, therefore, local provider enrollment suffered as did potential student outcomes. Multiple providers made efforts to supply paper packets to jailers, who agreed to assist inmates with continuing their education at a distance. Other institutionalized facilities, e.g., recovery centers, were also closed to educators. Even as the pandemic crisis eased, employers continued to be affected by worker shortages. As supplements to UI continued to be extended and employment searches waived, prospective employees were slow to return to work.

The Lt. Governor was also appointed as Secretary of the EWDC and promulgates her philosophy based on a continuum of services from “cradle to career”. Cabinet leadership meetings with the Lt. Governor and Deputy Secretary were scheduled to provide a forum at which partner agencies shared information and updates.

Kentucky Career Centers (KCC): The KCCs were hit hard by the constraints of the pandemic. They were closed most of the fiscal year and when they did re-open, the process was cautious – beginning with appointment-only services. Their governance was also transitioned to the Labor Department. KYSU has always valued the relationship with KCCs. During usual and customary operations, their sites are regularly frequented by our strategic partnership coordinators (SPC) to ensure referral processes are in place, explore prospective partnership opportunities, and create awareness and promote the visibility of adult education services to both KCC staff and clients.

Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives (KDLA): Over the years, KYSU has forged a healthy relationship with KDLA. It strongly encourages local providers to partner with their local libraries in a variety of different ways, including referring learners to avail themselves of adult education services, and creating “Connection Points” (CP) where more formalized agreements may involve communicating services available at CPs, providing College and Career Navigation (CCN) services, accessing computers and online courseware and/or using space for activities like assessment. KYSU agency staff worked with KDLA and another arm of education to implement a Blackboard platform for multiple uses. Its first use for KYSU was digitizing professional learning through a learning management system (LMS). Plans include housing professional learning (PL) online electives and piloting and scaling up uses for student remote learning. KYSU staff also assisted with KDLA’s Request for Application (RFA) that solicited proposals for digital lending programs. Like several local KYSU providers’ actions, local libraries with innovative plans were awarded funding for activities like lending out laptops, hotspots, and licensing online courseware to alleviate some aspects of the digital divide. (See also Section: Instructional Technology)

Carl D. Perkins Leadership Grant Funds: KYSU was awarded leadership funds to advance its CCN support. KYSU policy requires providers to employ at least one full-time CCN (with few exceptions) and add more CCN services (hires) as enrollment dictates. As a reminder, CCNs assist students with mitigating barriers to their educational and workforce advancement pursuits (e.g., providing resources and referrals to public assistance, community-based organizations, etc.) and setting educational and workforce goals based on interests, workforce needs, post-secondary education, and/or training requirements. CCNs assist providers with building rapport with students and students, with developing a Career Pathway Plan.

The Perkins grant allowed KYSU to hire a state-level CCN coordinator to provide onboarding, training and development, and support to the local CCNs. The coordinator communicates with and provides platforms (e.g., Google docs. and classroom) in which to answer questions, share best practices, and monitor student activities and outcomes.

A requirement of the Perkins funding encourages continuous innovation. Therefore, the 2020-21 grant award focused on introducing tools and resources to CCNs to continuously improve service to adult education students. Initially, the plan was to host a one-day, in-person convening with KYSU CCNs, Kentucky Community and Technical College (KCTCS) Success Coaches, community partners, and key employers. Due to the continued effects of the pandemic, the session was canceled in place of a series of virtual learning opportunities hosted by KYSU’s College and Career Prep (CCP) team. Additionally, KYSU partnered with EdTech @ World Education to customize a Kentucky-specific version of their Navigating Pathways to Opportunities, a facilitated online course, featuring advanced career navigation best practices. Four cohorts of participants, totaling nearly 75 CCNs, KYSU staff members, and KCTCS system office staff and success coaches engaged in this professional learning opportunity. The CCN Coordinator continued to provide technical assistance to CCNs in the field and to share relevant research, best practices, resources, and tools. CCNs worked with students to set short- and long-term goals, conduct personal SWOT analyses, research local and regional Labor Market Information (LMI), and prepare for

entry into the workforce and/or post-secondary education. Activity Logs submitted and monitored by the CCN Coordinator continued to provide valuable data about how CCNs are spending their time, what subjects and issues are most important to students, and what methods of communications adult students prefer.

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB): With the new administration, the Deputy Executive Director was appointed as a member of the KWIB. KYSU directors serve on eight of the ten LWIBs and several KWIB committees including, Workforce Participation and Sustainability and Education and Employer Services, Work Ready Communities, and Youth and Employer Engagement. These memberships allow greater alignment with regional and local initiatives and help connect KYSU local providers with partnership opportunities, e.g., community-based organizations, local government, and employers. The dashboard created by **Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)**, in cooperation with individual agencies, is typically used to report several metrics of interest to the KWIB. Adult education is one of the agencies. The KWIB's strategic plan also guides state plan developments and modifications.

Employers: KYSU partnered with Amazon as a Kentucky employer. It initiated a program that allows for conditional hiring with the understanding that a prospective, permanent employee will earn his/her GED within 11 months. Local provider partners may offer courses on-site at the distribution centers. Amazon and KYSU plan to scale up programs to include all 9 distribution locations in Kentucky.

(See also segment on SPC under Integration of One-Stop Partners.)

Professional Learning:

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

Professional Learning Model: In FY20-21, KYSU sustained for a second full year, a professional learning model that had been originally piloted in FY18-19. This model emphasizes internal, continuous, job-embedded communities of inquiry dedicated to monitoring data and other program information to improve student outcomes. As indicated in the Kentucky State Plan (KSP), the model is predicated on professional learning communities (PLCs) emphasizing student focus, provider voice, and local innovation. FY20-21 PLCs concentrated on instructional technology and distance learning as an extension of the first full-year launch of the model in FY19-20. Partners continue to include the Adult Education Academy at Morehead State University, National Center for Families Learning, and Kentucky Educational Television.

The second full year of the KYSU PL Model continued and expanded an emphasis on the digital upskilling of KYSU's 27 providers. Further, it also continued to support Innovation Fund projects (as a reminder, earmarked funds assisted providers with integrating innovation and technology to engage existing and potential students), which highlighted instructional technology and expanded use of digital tools to overcome traditional adult education instructional barriers.

In the first full year of implementation, FY19-20, two foundational instructional technology tools were introduced statewide – the use of videoconferencing platforms for synchronous distance learning and the use of Google Classroom as a free Learning Management System (LMS) for asynchronous distance learning. In the second full year of implementation, FY20-21, it became apparent that this unprecedented year warranted more professional learning support in addition to an expansion of the previous year's foundational resources. Therefore, in FY20-21, we broadened a

microlearning approach to professional learning and featured a specific provider(s) who had implemented some successful edtech-based strategy via a short-duration, virtual professional learning session.

These sessions became known as Microlearning Mondays and Workshop Wednesdays. Throughout FY20-21, the CCP Team hosted 35 Microlearning Monday and Workshop Wednesday sessions with 3,044 total participants in attendance. The format consisted of an ed-tech strategy being introduced at a high level in each Monday session, followed by a "sandbox-style" interactive Wednesday session to allow participants the opportunity to practice becoming proficient with the featured strategy with the help of skilled facilitators. These sessions were no more than an hour each and were promoted via an electronic newsletter sent to the entire provider network.

In addition to the microlearning approach, KYSU also incorporated deeper virtual PL "dives" in the form of Virtual Professional Learning Boot Camps. These five boot camps were no more than a half-day and targeted performance-related instructional challenges. For example, the Mobile Phone-Friendly Instructional Resources Boot Camp emphasized quality standards-aligned digital curricula that could be used on any smartphone with limited residential internet access. Further, the Intensive GED® Math Boot Camp drilled down on high-impact GED® assessment items that typically confound students. The CCP Team hosted five virtual instructional boot camps with 309 total participants in attendance.

In FY20-21, 11 KYSU PLC Coaches remained the core team providing professional learning for the senior-most instructional leaders of all 27 KYSU providers. (Program Directors, Assistant Program Directors, Experienced Instructors working 500+ hours per year, and College/Career Navigators were all required to participate in 27 Provider-based PLCs.) As in FY19-20, the PLC Coaches continue to be veteran educators with instructional leadership experience in adult, K-12, and/or post-secondary education. The CCP Team conducted a two-day, virtual KYSU PLC Coach Train-the-Trainer event to fully orient all coaches to KYSU's PLC Model. However, instead of relying on PLC Coaches to assist with live, regional KYSU PLC kickoff events as we had in FY19-20, we transitioned FY20-21 PLC kickoffs to five virtual events.

For FY20-21, PLCs met at least seven times, primarily via videoconferencing, to chart progress toward successful implementation of local innovations. Documentation of progress was required, culminating in generating a product/process that included a summary and evaluation designed to problem-solve PLC-identified program issue(s), emphasizing the effective use of technology and distance learning. Once finalized, PLC products/processes were uploaded to a new KYSU Professional Learning Website, which serves as a searchable repository of professional learning products/processes intended to provide "road-tested" innovations modifiable to local needs. Overall, FY20-21 PLC work was an extension of the FY19-20 PLC innovation support.

Additionally, new digital curriculum products were piloted via professional learning, and three new curriculum products were purchased and onboarded via professional learning in FY20-21. Edgenuity, New Readers Press, and Purpose Prep were piloted based on positive provider feedback. IXL, Northstar, and Brainchild Study Buddies were purchased because of CCP Team research, KYSU leadership recommendations, and positive provider feedback. These concerted attempts to test and acquire new digital curriculum products were a direct result of "traditional"

instructional methods proving more challenging to sustain during the pandemic. Distance Learning Leads (DLLs) were established in all 27 programs to serve as on-site support for piloted and purchased products. Moreover, DLLs were vetted with specific selection criteria, including a high level of digital literacy, to maximize the opportunity to champion broader-based adoption of digital instructional tools and leverage new-found proficiency in the use of digital tools in service of improving student outcomes.

Provider perceptions of the second full year of the KYSU PL Model were monitored throughout the year and overall feedback remains positive. However, many new professional learning interventions continue to be necessitated by the pandemic.

Introduction to Technical Assistance and Monitoring:

During the provisional year, the Program Administration and Accountability (PAA) team provided the same level of targeted technical assistance, program compliance, and performance monitoring in FY20-21. On July 1, 2020, the PAA team conducted a revised KYSU COVID-19 Re-opening Impact Survey to solicit feedback from the local providers regarding their plans to re-open and phase-in face-to-face, in-person instruction, distance/virtual learning, and/or a blend of both approaches. The survey served to inform KYSU of the state's local provider network reopening plans that included prioritizing health and safety protocols while remaining responsive and flexible by offering continued services, and maximizing face-to-face, distant, and blended instructional best practices. Based on the survey, KYSU developed a Local Programs Operating Status Report. The report allowed KYSU to gain a better understanding of the current operating status of local adult education programming in each county, observe COVID-19 impact on services, and identify what issues the local providers were experiencing (enrollment, retention, technology limitations, etc.) to which PAA and other agency units could bring to bear support, guidance, and assistance. Key findings from the revised KYSU COVID-19 Re-opening Impact Survey and Local Programs Operating Status Report included:

- Programs operating at reduced class size limited to three people in classroom and lab due to COVID restrictions
- Barriers to attendance, childcare, COVID-19 health and safety climate, etc.
- Reduced enrollment
- Digital divide issues, internet access, inadequate equipment, costs, etc.
- Businesses hiring without High-School Diploma or Equivalency
- Varying fiscal agents' restrictions on re-opening facilities or face-to-face activities (e.g., campuses, school boards, etc.)
- Corrections' classes resumed 7/7/20 but the class size was limited to three students each session and shutdowns occurred due to COVID outbreaks
- Parents prioritizing school-age children's educational pursuits and daycare nearly non-existent

To support students and local providers under the ongoing COVID-19 circumstances, the PAA team continued offering in-demand technical assistance, providing more virtual training and webinars based on trending requests, and sharing guidance and best practices proliferated by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education and other national sources offering resources and tools to combat effects of

COVID-19 on enrollment and engagement of adult education students. The PAA conducted bi-monthly phone calls, evaluated performance outcomes weekly, and produced monthly Distance Learning Reports to examine and encourage viable solutions to increase attendance, distance learning hours, and digital courseware curricula usage (i.e., Burlington English, AZTEC, eTesting [CASAS]).

Technical Assistance:

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

As a reminder, KYSU's PAA team has four state-level staff (one program Director, two Regional Associates, and one Kentucky Adult Education Reporting System [KAERS] administrator) who provide technical assistance to KYSU-funded adult education providers. Each of the four state-level staff serves the technical assistance and policy and procedural interpretational needs of local providers. The KAERS administrator works with all local providers to provide technical assistance related to KYSU's student information system called the KAERS. To facilitate a smooth transition from FY20 to FY21, the PAA team hosted four, two-hour, virtual training with local program directors (August 1, 2020 – August 29, 2020). Sessions focused on provisional changes to the IG, FY21 Performance Goals (with emphasis on OCTAE updates from Program Memorandums 20-3 and 20-4), revisions to the Quarterly Performance Summary Report and Desktop Compliance Monitoring (with emphasis on virtual compliance policies), KAERS updates (with emphasis on data quality and accurate reporting of distance learning activities), updates to program compliance and on-site virtual monitoring requirements, and Fiscal Stewardship.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

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

To ensure continuous quality improvement, the PAA team scheduled monitoring and compliance requirements (desk audits, bi-monthly meetings, IELCE check-ins, and quarterly performance check-ins) from face-to-face to virtual. The elements selected for the audit were based on indicators that (1) reflected meaningful and measurable achievement, (2) were aligned with state and/or federal goals, and (3) were accessible through the state's data system. Encrypted documents, or documents with Personal Identification Information (PII) removed, were submitted to the PAA team electronically, via a secure repository called MOVEIT. To protect client information and data collected, the PAA team also updated KYSU's FERPA Compliance statement and created a Data Access and Security Policy. During the bi-monthly phone calls with all local program directors,

Regional Associates reviewed performance data and strategies for improving outcomes and initiated calls that allowed the directors to address successes, barriers, and challenges to implementation. Local program directors were also required to update their Local Programs Operating Status Report and Contingency Plans every quarter. Throughout the year, new information relative to performance (e.g., TABE and CASAS testing protocols), state and federal expectations, policy guidance, etc. were disseminated through quarterly program director meetings, mass e-mails, guidance letters, and other forms of online communication. The PAA team also updated the KAERS State Resources Repository quarterly to ensure effective and timely communication of state and federal expectations. Regional Associates also responded

to program inquiries via telephone, SKYPE, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and e-mail and made individual virtual program visits as requested (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021).

Secondary data analysis was conducted to identify anomalies or outliers in indicators of performance from quarter to quarter. Subsequently, a Key Findings Report was created to document data elements for further investigations. Local program directors were contacted to discuss key findings, and, if necessary, develop an action plan to correct any issues. During the provisional year, local providers who did not achieve at least 30% of their performance goals were not required to complete a Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) but met with the PAA team virtually to discuss specific actions the provider would take to improve performance outcomes in the future. Additionally, local providers with performance less than 50% of all performance goals at the end of the fiscal year, were not placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). Independent audits were conducted by the Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts at programs in 30 Kentucky counties (25% of the state). Both programmatic and financial records were reviewed, along with policy compliance. Findings and/or recommendations were followed up by appropriate personnel to rectify any anomalies or non-compliance. At mid-year, statewide program performance data was e-mailed to local providers' fiscal agents and local KYSU program directors. The mid-year guidance letter provided descriptive data related to mid-year performance data (specifically, metrics used in the state performance funding formula, which is primarily composed of the three means of making a measurable skills gain - i.e., percentage of students earning a GED® diploma, pre-test/post-test level gains, and adult education students transitioning to postsecondary education and training). Due to the provisional year and upcoming RFA cycle, KYSU did not send an end-of-year performance letter and scorecard to local providers' fiscal agents and local KYSU program directors. Instead, KYSU focused efforts on programs and performance areas that were most in need of assistance (e.g., enrollment, MSGs, GED attainment, transition to employment, etc.).

Instructional Technology:

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

As KYSU continues our collective digital upskilling, the need for a new statewide Learning Management System became apparent. The CCP Team, in collaboration with the Office of Technology Services, KDLA, and the KCCs, entered a full-year build of a customized version of Blackboard (LMS) and Blackboard Genius (associated student information system). The new two-part system will be shared by three agencies utilizing a single sign-on portal. (Follow this link to view portal homepage:

<https://kyeducourses.ky.gov/PublicWelcome.aspx>)

During FY20-21, the CCP Team built 59 new course shells and associated professional learning support resources in anticipation of the FY21-22 live launch of the system. The goal is to utilize the Blackboard Genius registration features in FY21-22 and pilot four year-long courses fully in Blackboard (LMS). In FY22-23, KYSU anticipates a full migration of all professional learning to the new two-part platform.

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

Performance numbers demonstrate that providers prior offered a full complement of services for approximately 8.5 months prior to the pandemic, at which time the COVID-19 pandemic caused learning center shutdowns. While technology was used to continue services to students, enrollment, and retention suffered and adversely affected performance metrics. Prior to the suspension of services due to the pandemic, 1,964 students had 40+ hours and were eligible to post-test, but ultimately did not achieve a level gain. Of the 1,718 active students in the system, 432 were eligible to post-test at the time of closure, and 234 clients had no initial test. An additional 458 students enrolled in services during the pandemic crisis, with 212 of those students enrolling using eligibility methods other than standardized assessments (TABE Locator estimate).

MSG performance declined from 51.10% to 40.14%, a difference of 10.96 percentage points (ppt). The greatest decline occurred within ABE level 5 (14 ppt) and ESL level 1 (20 ppt). However, these were also two of the three smallest cohorts of students. The two largest cohorts of students (i.e., ABE levels 2 and 3) decreased 10 ppt and 7 ppt respectively, while the only gain was with ABE level 6 (12 ppt). In terms of performance, the KYSU did not meet its negotiated MSG target (56%). Furthermore, it did not meet its state performance targets to enroll 20,000 participants without a high school diploma or equivalent (achieved 48% of goal) or attain 5,000 GED® credentials (58% of target).

Regarding the employment measures, 35.88% of all exiters gained employment in the Second Quarter after Exit, along with 34.18% in the Fourth Quarter after Exit. The Median Earnings of the exiters employed in the Second Quarter after exit was \$4,138. The overall Credential Rate decreased 28 ppt, from 48.33% to 20.40%.

With the understanding that performance outcomes were truncated due to suspension of services, KYSU adopted 8.5 months of service sliding-scale performance model to account for program closures from March 2020 – June 2020. The revision to the performance model allowed higher-ranking programs (those who reached their scaled performance goals) to receive performance funding. KYSU sent a guidance letter and hosted a webinar for local program directors to inform them of the change. After the webinar, an FAQ was created to address local program director questions, along with the opportunity to meet one-on-one, virtually or via phone, with their Regional Coordinator to discuss program performance. To accommodate for further potential pandemic impact on performance, KYSU decided to adjust its FY20-21 State Performance Funding Model from a 90/10 base-performance split to a 95/5 model, giving programs a larger base of funds to operate from. Additionally, a new state policy allowing providers to fast-track students at NRS levels 4-6 to the GED® Ready test likely resulted in higher-functioning students taking and passing the GED® test with minimal instruction. KYSU also invested in a free first-time GED® test-taker promotion, which was made visible through support from the Governor and Lt. Governor as well as marketing material, social media, and radio spots.

Integration of One-Stop Partners

Describe how the State eligible agency, as the entity responsible for meeting one-stop requirements under 34 CFR 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.

As indicated in last year's annual narrative, KYSU negotiated Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with the ten LWIBs. While some adult education providers are co-located physically, all have come to agreements to avail services on site and/or contributed to infrastructure costs statewide by purchasing online TABE test (which local provider staff typically administer) and access to Worldwide Integrated Network (WIN) Learning System's digital courseware and corresponding cumulative assessments for use within local provider programs and KCCs. State staff and LWIBs mutually agreed to cost out KYSU products (e.g., TABE tests) and services, e.g., Strategic Partnership Coordinators' (SPCs) and College and Career Navigators' (CNNs) time and service to contribute to infrastructure costs. With the transition to the EWDC, the MOUs were deemed not legally binding and several infrastructure costs, through mutually agreed upon through the MOUs to be costed out through products/services, were paid to KCC(s) at the behest of the Cabinet.

While SPCs are expected to travel and network, they are frequently co-located at KCCs to stimulate and unite education and workforce services. They work closely with LWIBs and KCC operators to coordinate services and facilitate collaboration with KYSU local providers. The SPCs' direct outreach to individuals and organizations, create awareness of both educational and workforce services. Successful partnerships include expanded services to recovery centers in several locations across the state. Unfortunately, KCCs were closed to the public and partners. Relationships were built and maintained during this period via Microsoft Teams and Zoom, conference calls, and email correspondence.

KYSU local providers also report career services, provided at comprehensive and affiliate KCCs, to the PAA team including outreach, intake, orientation, initial assessments, referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, provision of performance and program cost information on eligible providers, information on availability of supportive services and or assistance, and integrated education and training programs.

Based on the FY20-21 KYSU Enrollment Source Report from KAERS, KYSU has received roughly 6,000 referrals from employers, community agencies, and WIOA core partners, accounting for approximately 10.6% of overall enrollments.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program

Describe when your State held a competition for IELCE program funds, and the number of grants awarded by your State to support IELCE programs. Describe your state's efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training, and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.

In FY20-21, KYSU served 426 IELCE English language learners (ELLs) and attained 143 measurable skills gains across the three Kentucky IELCE counties: Fayette, Jefferson, and Warren. During 2020-21, the PAA team conducted two, one-hour virtual monitoring and compliance check-ins with the three local KYSU IELCE programs (September 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020, and January 1, 2021 – January 30, 2021). Common agenda items for the sessions included: program updates; budget review; program design (i.e., offerings, partnerships, staffing, barriers to implementation, etc.); effective implementation of workforce preparation and sector occupational contextualizing and co-enrollment in workforce training; and recruitment and retention strategies. After the workshop, the PAA team scheduled individual technical assistance (TA) training with each of the IELCE providers to address any issues and provide recommendations for improvement.

The PAA team used the following resources to guide the programmatic review: “Building Opportunities through Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education: IELCE Self-Assessment Too;” “Quick-Reference Guide to Using LINCS;” and Program Memorandums OCTAE/DAEL 15-7, 17-2, and 19-2. As a result of our in-depth training and targeted TA sessions for the three local providers, all three IELCE providers demonstrated a better understanding of how best to implement the IELCE program and integrate English Language Acquisition, workforce, civics, and citizenship preparation, and access to occupational sector co-enrollment opportunities.

Following the individual TA sessions, each of the three local providers was required to submit a one-page proposal outlining their revised program design, program goals, curriculum and course syllabi, staffing allocations, partnerships to support workforce preparation and training needs, and budget updates. The purpose of the revised one-page proposals was to address their plans to support students and local providers under the ongoing COVID-19 circumstances.

The PAA team conducted bi-monthly check-ins (March 2021 and May 2021) to ensure strategies were being implemented and producing the desired outcomes. At fiscal year-end (2020-21), each IELCE provider submitted a one-page narrative to show evidence of demonstrated effectiveness. The revised one-page proposal and end-of-year narrative served as a monitoring tool for the PAA team to assess performance outcomes, ensure compliance, address barriers to implementation, provide TA, and identify key strategies and best practices to support IELCE programming.

KYSU's statewide purchase of Burlington English and CASAS e-tests appeared to contribute positively to IELCE participants' blended instructional experience, civics education, and career exploration. Through TA, KYSU will help these programs to become experts in the test proctoring skills needed to work with the ELL population and identify best practices and strategies to provide robust IELCE program services.

Describe how the State is progressing toward 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).

KYSU continually provides opportunities to connect local providers with local partners to enhance student access, support, and success. Each fiscal year, KYSU hosts collaborative training and workshops between local libraries, LWIBs, and KCCs (and other WIOA core partners and business and industry) to encourage them to identify and implement innovative strategies to serve adult learners, support area certification processes, and identify ways to improve the health of their communities' workforce. All IELCE program students have access to GED®+Plus, which is a co-enrollment integrated education and training program offered in partnership with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). The GED®+Plus program co-enrolls participants seeking a high school equivalency (HSE)/GED® diploma in a KYSU program and one of the state's top five in-demand industry sectors, allowing participants to earn both an HSE/GED® diploma and a short-term (i.e., one 16-week semester or less) certificate. GED®+Plus participants qualify for scholarships through the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship (WRKS) initiative to pay for their tuition in college classes. Skills U has 27 local providers who collaborate with the 16 KCTCS colleges to offer programs designed to meet labor market needs and increase credential attainment for adults. The PAA team, in conjunction with Strategic Partnerships and

Executive leadership, met quarterly with the KCTCS/ KYSU GED+Plus advisory team to discuss enrollment trends; marketing initiatives; retention, persistence, and graduation rates; barriers to enrollment/completion; financial barriers to enrollment and student success outcomes for GED®+Plus participants. In FY20-21, 20 of the 27 local providers participated in the GED+Plus program, enrolling 102 total clients, achieving 67 MSGs, awarding 29 GED® credentials and (x) KCTCS credentials. The top five KCTCS credentials awarded across the high-five industry sectors were (1)

During FY20-21, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in limited access to KYSU programs and KCTCS colleges, greatly impacting outcomes from the GED+Plus program. To eliminate barriers to implementation and access, KYSU continued to collaborate with KCTCS during quarterly advisory team meetings to improve processes. To remove barriers and increase overall enrollment, completion, employment, and/or matriculation to the next credential, KYSU and KCTCS created two advisory subcommittees – strategic and operational. The strategic committee explored workforce needs and explored local commitments from business and industry to provide GED® Plus completers a pathway to more gainful employment, while the operational committee assessed the current GED® Plus model and recommended a reimagined approach to successfully enroll, remove barriers, and graduate GED® Plus students. Each committee met monthly over three months (March 2021 – May 2021). After the advisory committee's work, the committee made three recommendations to support GED® Plus student's program completion. To maintain continuity of services, the PAA team works closely with KCTCS and KYSU local program directors to monitor GED+Plus enrollments, GED® and KCTCS credential attainment, and students' transitions to nine KY postsecondary education institutions and/or employment. Moving forward, KYSU wants to grow and expand the concept of IET in Kentucky beyond GED®+Plus to include prospective collaborations with employers, pre-apprenticeship programs, public and private four-year universities, etc., to support the occupational training element of an IET model by offering a variety of ways students can accelerate their educational and career accomplishments.

Adult Education Standards

Describe how AE content standards are aligned with state standards.

Throughout FY20-21, KYSU continued to promote the use of KYSU's *Instructional Framework Series*. The frameworks were designed to provide a common instructional foundation for all of Kentucky's adult education providers. Mathematics, Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA), and English Language Proficiency (ELP) Instructional Frameworks were constructed to provide uniformity and ease to effectively deploy standards-based academic instruction and instructional strategies. A College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) Key was placed in the Mathematics and RLA Framework introductions to assist users in understanding standards abbreviations. Color-coding was also used to signify the type and percentage of standards-based content at each TABE level, and a horizontal crosswalk was created to illustrate specific CCRS applications aligned with specific hyperlinked instructional resources. The ELPS Framework was based on the five proficiency levels identified in the LINC'S ELPS for Adult Education. As with the previous frameworks, the ELPS Framework was designed to ensure conformity in standards-based instruction.

Another FY20-21 standards-based initiative involved the creation of clonable, student-facing Google Classrooms containing standards-aligned Math resources and instructor-facing RLA and Math Google Classrooms loaded with standards-aligned resources for instructor upskilling. Further, the KYSU Lesson Bank continues to serve as a searchable agency repository for standards-aligned digital lesson plans.

Programs for Corrections

Department of Corrections (DOC): DOC employs and directs adult education within its state institutions. However, with agreement from the local jailers (elected officials), all local KYSU providers are required to offer adult education to inmates. Due to extensive COVID-19 outbreaks in correctional settings, external personnel were prohibited from entering facilities, therefore, local provider enrollment suffered as did potential student outcomes. Multiple providers made efforts to supply paper packets to jailers, who agreed to assist inmates with continuing their education at a distance. Other institutionalized facilities, e.g., recovery centers, were also closed to educators. Even as the pandemic crisis eased, employers continued to be affected by worker shortages. As supplements to UI continued to be extended and employment searches waived, prospective employees were slow to return to work.

Corrections PLC: FY19-20 marked the inaugural year of a statewide KYSU Corrections Professional Learning Community (PLC). FY 20-21 marked the second year of the statewide KYSU Corrections Professional Learning Community (PLC) and the first year the PLC was a joint venture between KYSU and the Kentucky Department of Corrections (KY DOC). This interagency PLC was comprised of 17 veteran KYSU Instructors who work at least 500+ hours per year with nearly 100% of their instructional time in jails and prisons offering GED® prep instruction; 6 veteran, full-time KY DOC instructors who work in prisons; and 2 KY DOC instructional supervisors. The PLC was coached by a national adult education consultant who specializes in GED® instructional strategies and provides contracted professional development to the Federal Bureau of Prisons. This joint KYSU/KY DOC project marked the beginning of closer instructional professional learning coordination between agencies and included shared instructional technology review; regularly scheduled planning meetings; KY DOC-facilitated training of KYSU Program Directors on new KY DOC-initiated instructional guidance; and a culminating guidance document distinguishing KYSU instructional incentives and processes from those of KY DOC.

Despite broad-based Corrections instructional stoppages caused by the pandemic, the joint statewide Corrections PLC used the collaboration to level set in areas such as developing a master list of allowable instructional incentives by Corrections context and location; a master list of instructional services provided and by whom; and PLC-wide introductory training on the use of Brainchild Study Buddies as a Corrections-approved form of instructional technology to facilitate GED® attainment. All PLC members were equipped with at least one Study Buddy console and a set of four GED® prep cartridges aligned to each of the four GED® operational test components. Brainchild Study Buddies allow for digital, mobile, gamified GED® instruction in a Corrections context.

Kentucky Young Adults Diversion Partnership: The largest industries in the state are hospitality, education, and healthcare. The Kentucky Young Adults Diversion

Partnership consists of a network of state, regional, and local agencies. It aims to successfully transition at-risk youth and justice-involved young adults into adulthood and economic self-sufficiency by supporting the attainment of academic and employment success through collective diversion strategies.

Goals and objectives include 1. Engage young adults and at-risk youth with academic and employment opportunities to gain economic self-sufficiency; 2. Increase attainment of GED, GED Plus, and high school diplomas for at-risk young adults and youth; and 3. Increase information and data sharing across partners to create a “warm handoff” for youth transitioning across services.

The partnership is led by Kentucky Skills U and the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice. Kentucky Skills U is an initiative of the state Department of Workforce Investment that provides free adult education services across the state. The Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice operates six detention centers and seven treatment-oriented youth development centers in the state. Other partners include the Kentucky Department of Education; Kentucky Career Center; Kentucky Community and Technical College System Across; Department of Corrections; Department of Corrections including Re-Entry and Probation and Parole which specifically targets strategies to avoid recidivism.

Additionally, the partnership had representation from the Department of Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Office of the Secretary, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, Job Corps, and Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children.

The Kentucky partnership faced an evolving policy and programmatic context throughout this initiative, including substantial legislative and leadership changes. The partners discovered that some of the goals and methods outlined at the outset of this initiative no longer aligned with the most up-to-date requirements and preferred approaches. Additionally, as they familiarized themselves with each partner, the partners uncovered major roadblocks that changed basic assumptions about how the partnership would work. For example, while the partnership initially set out to serve justice-involved youth between the ages of 16-24 with a single comprehensive program, the partners discovered that two separate, but closely aligned programs, would be necessary because of differential legislative restrictions for minors versus young adults.

To effectively meet the needs of the target population given this new information and other similar policy developments, the partnership decided to first take a step back and establish the basic structures and relationships necessary to build the foundation for a strong partnership. The partners have identified two key initiatives to set the stage for the partnership (see Next Steps below for more detail).