***Maine Narrative Report PY 2020***

1. ***State Leadership Funds***

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

Each of the state’s three workforce boards’ one-stop operators host regular meetings for one-stop partners. Meetings were held remotely and agenda items continued to focus on how to best address needs exacerbated by COVID-19 amidst the added challenges of diminished staff.

Hoping to build on the progress made in PY19, local adult education providers found their efforts with the community colleges on pause. With most students going remote, the adult education center on a community college campus did not serve as many students there as anticipated and our state level work on implementing free classes for adults and Ability to Benefit stalled. To help meet the demand for entry level healthcare providers, the community college system did contract adult education programs to deliver additional courses and our collaborative work with the university system on micro-credentials and implementation of the Computer Support Specialist IT micro-credential pilots continued.

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

The State Office’s goals for the professional development system in PY20 were to increase technical assistance related to distance/blended learning, digital literacy, learner resilience, and to leverage the expertise in the field to deliver high-quality PD opportunities that improve adult education services for learners.

Our statewide professional development advisory committee made up of adult education staff representing a diversity of roles and providers, built on their work from PY19. Members expanded the priorities for PY20 to include developing a structure for regional hubs that fosters local instructional leadership, building a high-quality library of human and instructional resources, and creating professional learnings pathways for effective online teaching and learning. Workgroups tackled each of the goals throughout the year in regular meetings and continue to work on implementing their plans in PY21.

The State Office solicited proposals to serve as: facilitators for webinars, mini-courses, or instructional strategies workshops. Mini-courses and instructional strategies workshops were to be grounded in research-based strategies and result in a practical application for participants. For example, participants in a distance learning instruction and assessment course used backwards design to develop their online or blended course, and participants in a social-emotional learning course developed an action plan for integrating social-emotional learning skills in their classrooms.

All professional development in PY20 was delivered through Schoology or Zoom. The State Office has a well-established system for delivering professional development virtually, and before the pandemic, professional development offerings were mostly online to support the primarily part-time staff and the geographical and logistical challenges local providers face in rural Maine. Professional development, both facilitated and self-paced, focused on improving instructional strategies, including the Adult Numeracy Instruction workshops, Reading Apprenticeship, courses in distance learning instruction and assessment, social emotional learning and advising, and CCRS-SIA and ELPS trainings. Course facilitators adjusted course content to consider remote learning contexts in addition to traditional in-person learning.

Staff trainings that were typically offered in-person before the pandemic moved to Zoom or were developed as on-demand, online modules resulting in greater participation and access. The CASAS implementation trainings, including new modules for analyzing TopsPro reports for instruction, and the Introduction to the English Language Proficiency Standards, using the LINCS modules, were delivered remotely. The HiSET Test Center Administrator training was developed as an on-demand training making it more accessible for local providers to train new staff. Most of the virtual trainings were recorded and shared in the state Schoology groups for later or repeated viewing.

To support the field with strategies for remote and online learning, the State Office prioritized professional development and technical assistance in integrating technology and developing digital resilience among staff and students. Leveraging our state license for the IC3 Digital Literacy credential, we offered 20 adult education staff the opportunity to complete the credential with facilitated support. A part-time, contracted position focused on coordinating and developing technology related professional development. This included development of a series of distance learning basics courses using the IDEAL Distance and Blended Learning Handbook as the foundation: Distance Learning Basics—unpacks the state’s distance education guidance and NRS requirements (self-paced and on-demand); Distance Learning Basics: Instruction & Assessment—developing high-quality online and blended courses (facilitated), and Distance Learning Basics: Recruitment, Intake and Orientation—developing processes for distance learners (facilitated). We also launched a twice monthly webinar series, Tech Talks, featuring adult education staff sharing how they use technology in their roles. Once a month the webinar focused on technology in instruction, and the second of the month highlighted digital skills applicable to any staff role. Topics included using document cameras, organizing your Google Drive, using breakout rooms, and Excel spreadsheet tips and tricks. Maine’s IDEAL consortium membership ensured that we had access to high-quality distance learning resources to share and access to technical assistance from the EdTech Center. We partnered with the EdTech Center to develop a Remote Instruction Observation Tool to assist the field with assessing effective remote teaching. As IDEAL members, we also offered introductory courses in blended and mobile learning and open educational resources through WorldEd’s elearning platform.

The State Office continued to share information and resources through the group feature of Schoology, the statewide listserv, and a weekly ICYMI (In Case You Missed It) newsletter. Recordings of Tech Talks and other webinars/meetings, updates to guidance, reporting templates, etc. are shared in topic specific groups, such as State Office Technical Assistance, HiSET, eCASAS, and Data/MaineSTARS. We continued to use the statewide listserv (over 300 members) to disseminate promising practices and to share listings for upcoming professional development opportunities sponsored by the State Office and our partners. The weekly ICYMI newsletter highlights key updates, upcoming professional development, links to articles or other resources, and successes from the field.

Monthly office hours connected as a means to connect staff from around the state. They are facilitated by local practitioners and offered for specific program roles (advising, data, ESOL teachers, math, and ELA/Literacy teachers). Office hours attendees determine the topics for discussion, and resources and notes are shared in Schoology.

State Office personnel attend relevant and appropriate federal and regional technical assistance training: National Reporting System on-line trainings; OCTAE Shop Talks;, LINCS webinars; the NASDAE National Training Institute; IDEAL consortium summer institute; CASAS trainings; Teaching the Skills that Matter; and ASDM. Attendees then report back to local service providers with information, materials, and guidance on impacts from participation. The online trainings allowed State Office personnel to participate in opportunities that were usually not available due to travel costs.

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

The State Office provides Title II technical assistance to meet the criteria of WIOA integrated into the needs of local providers.

Updated Maine Adult Education Guidance for Distance Education was released in PY20 to reflect the most recent guidance from OCTAE and NRS, to share information about assessing learners remotely, to clarify language around tracking attendance and reporting, and to encourage a collaborative approach to distance education among local providers. A recorded webinar and on-demand course gave an overview of the guidance and changes. The implementation plan was also updated to reflect the changes to the guidance and to allow for additional details to be added to the course information, especially for teacher verification courses.

To increase equity of access to technology and to build the digital skills and resilience of staff and students, the State Office provides the IC3 Digital Literacy credential curriculum to all local providers and offers support for implementation. Providers used the IC3 Digital Literacy curriculum with staff and students. Tech Talk webinars highlighted best practices for using technology in the classroom and workplace.

Additionally, the State Office offered the following PY20 events based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate:

* **Reading, writing, speaking:** CCRS-SIA ELA/Literacy Implementation; Reading Apprenticeship, Part 1 & 2; Reading Apprenticeship in Writing
* **Mathematics:** CCRS-SIA Mathematics Implementation; Adult Numeracy Instruction Series
* **English Language Acquisition:** ELPS, Module 1: Introduction to the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adults; ELPS, Module 2: Analyzing Student Tasks in Relation to Content Demands
* **Technology:** Digital Citizenship: Preparing the 21st Century Citizen for the 21st Century World; Distance Learning Basics: Instruction and Assessment; Distance Learning Basics: Recruitment, Intake, and Orientation; Tech Talk webinar series; Onboarding Students to Schoology and Zoom; IC3 Digital Literacy for Adult Education Staff; IDEAL courses—Introduction to Blended Learning, Introduction to Mobile Learning, Introduction to Open Educational Resources
* **Instructional Strategies:** Workshops: Designing Online Assessments and Adapting Workbook Problems in Math; Learner Accessibility; Slideshows that Perform
* **Advising:** Approaches to Advising; Best Practices for Supporting Our Advisees; Identifying Executive Functioning Strengths and Weaknesses; Learning Moments of Mindfulness: Managing Difficult Situations; Using a Functional-Based Thinking Approach for Social-Emotional Learning
* **Staff Training:** World of Work Inventory Level 1 Training; WorkReady Facilitator Training; eCASAS Basic Implementation Training; CASAS Basics: eTests; CASAS: Test Results and Reports for Teachers; HiSET Test Center Administrator training; MaineSTARS data training (collecting, analyzing, reporting); MaineSTARS: Best Practices for Back to School; AEFLA Budgeting Best Practices; new program administrator training

Schoology, a learning management system, continues to be the primary vehicle to provide both a model of online learning and a repository for educational and programmatic materials and resources. Consortia of local providers have started using the Schoology group feature to create online professional learning communities where instructors and advisors across the consortia can share resources and best practices.

2020-2021 Professional Development Opportunities by Category\*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Number of events** |
| Assessment | 4 |
| College and Career Readiness | 13 |
| Instructional Practice | 13 |
| Data Collection and Analysis | 3 |
| Advising | 8 |
| Administrator/Leadership | 8 |
| Distance Education/Technology | 11 |
| WorkReady | 3 |
| WIOA/AEFLA | 3 |
| Office Hours | 63 |

\* This table does not reflect the self-paced courses offered throughout the year. Events were categorized by primary purpose, but several could be classified with other categories.

We continue to rely on desk monitoring, the submission of standardized quarterly reports, targeted technical assistance to address any issues coming up in reports (i.e. SSN collection, data sharing agreements, etc.), evaluations of professional development courses offered, and limited one-on-one visits initiated by a program or the state office as needed. With the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, we have determined it necessary to make use of available resources from other states to develop a fully remote monitoring system.

**Permissible Activities**

The State Office contracts with outside agencies and individuals to conduct state leadership activities. These contracts, funded through the leadership activities portion of the AEFLA grant, provide a variety of services to support the grantees. The contracts are in the areas of:

1. **Assessment and Accountability:** Tracking the progress and successes of students and the performance of local programs through a standardized assessment system allows the State Office to determine if programs are meeting their goals and objectives. Use of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) provides a common assessment for all levels of ABE, ELL, and ASE/HSE, including IET programs. Local service providers can access program-specific data results and are given technical assistance on analyzing the data for local reporting, program planning, and instructional purposes. The State Office also offers regular CASAS basic implementation training, as well as training in using assessment results and TopsPRO results to inform instruction.
2. **Technology and Distance Learning:** The State Office promotes, models, and provides support around technology integration at the program administration and classroom levels. A contract with Schoology, a statewide learning management system, provides a space for online and blended professional development instruction, a repository for resources, and for local service providers to develop student-level online learning opportunities. Membership in the IDEAL consortium provides the State Office access to professional development materials, including a summer institute for members, on-demand courses in blended and mobile learning and open educational resources, and technical assistance.
3. **Professional Development:** Leadership funds supported contracts that delivered high-quality professional development. The State Office contracted a part-time professional development assistant to support the development and coordination of PD and technical assistance in technology and distance learning. Funds also supported members of the statewide professional development advisory committee and other experienced, high-performing practitioners at the local level who facilitated course in FY21. The State Office also invests in high-performing practitioners’ training so that professional development efforts and priorities can be supported regionally, as needed, including the Teaching the Skills that Matter in Adult Education federal training, and the Adult Numeracy Instruction series.
4. ***Performance Data Analysis***

Maine Adult Education’s core performance indicators for PY20 revealed both positive and negative data trends and demonstrated the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both adult learners and the local programs who serve them. NRS enrollment for both ABE and ESL level learners continues to decline and overall NRS enrollment has decreased 30.80% from the pre-pandemic levels of PY18. However, the effect on specific programming areas has been uneven.

years. Workforce training and development programming has seen the greatest decline (over 35%), while college transitions programming has held steady and high school completion programming has even seen a slight increase in enrollments.

The significant decline in workforce training enrollments sent local programs scrambling both to recruit more learners for their workforce courses and to find distance options for the workforce training programs they could no longer hold in person. The learning curve for developing distance workforce training programming has been substantial. Local providers needed to coordinate with partner agencies and employers – many of whom did not have the capacity to continue with the partnership during the pandemic. Revamped workforce programming, though, is stronger than ever with distance options and virtual programming that allows cohorts to be filled with adult learners throughout Maine.

Considering the significant impact Covid-19 has had on adult education enrollment, programming, and services, it seems to have had only minimal effect on Maine’s performance data. Employment and postsecondary measures have held steady and even improved over the past year resulting in Maine meeting four out of five target measures. However, both the fourth quarter employment rate and credential rate are based on pre-pandemic data (January 1, 2019 thru December 31, 2019). The second quarter employment rate does include data from the beginning of the pandemic (July 1, 2019 thru June 30, 2020) and is the only measure that did not meet the negotiated target. The median wage increased significantly from the previous year perhaps due in part to Covid-19 and the increased hourly pay rates and extra hours worked.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Federal Level Adult Education Learner Outcomes | PY20 Target (2020-2021) | PY20 Actual (2020-2021) |
| Employment Rate (Q2) | *34.00%* | 33.22% |
| Employment Rate (Q4) | *32.00%* | 32.10% |
| Median Wage (Q2) | *$4,250.00* | $5,270.94 |
| Credential Rate (Secondary School Attain. & Postsecondary Enroll. or Employ.) | *32.00%* | 48.07% |
| Measurable Skill Gains Rate  | *36.00%* | 37.62% |

Maine’s Measurable Skill Gains rate exceeded its target and is the highest it has been in three years (37.62%). The data suggests that two key improvement initiatives may be responsible for Maine being able to meet it targets- a focus, on better reporting of high school credential attainment and a focus on improving the State data match rate.

By confirming that every high school completion credential was entered and counting correctly in the State’s managed information system, we were able to achieve a 41.89% measurable skill gain rate for ABE learners even though the posttesting rate remained low.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  **Additional Performance Outcomes -ALL PoPs**  | **PY18 (FY19)** | **PY19 (FY20)** | **PY20 (FY21)** |  **Percent +/- from PY18** |
| **NRS Enrollment- ABE** | 3,783 | 2,935 | 2,678 | -29.21% |
| **NRS Enrollment- ESL** | 2,101 | 1,940 | 1,394 | -33.65% |
| **Annual NRS Enrollment- ALL** | 5,884 | 4,875 | 4,072 | -30.80% |
| **\* SSN Release Rate - ABE** | 79.64% | 86.41% | 91.40% | 14.77% |
| **\* SSN Release Rate - ESL** | 28.82% | 32.35% | 49.10% | 70.37% |
|  **\* Annual SSN Release Rate - ALL** | 63.20% | 67.76% | 78.28% | 23.86% |
| **Posttest Rate- ABE** | 50.28% | 31.55% | 35.29% | -29.81% |
| **Posttest Rate- ESL** | 59.07% | 21.08% | 44.77% | -24.21% |
| **Annual Posttest Rate - ALL** | 53.42% | 27.38% | 38.53% | -27.87% |
| **Measurable Skill Gain Rate - ABE** | 35.84% | 29.40% | 41.89% | 16.88% |
| **Measurable Skill Gain Rate - ESL** | 30.08% | 7.42% | 29.41% | -2.23% |
| **Annual Measurable Skill Gain Rate - ALL** | 33.78% | 20.65% | 37.62% | 11.37% |

Increasing the data match rate proved equally important in helping Maine demonstrate its effectiveness in serving adult learners. The State adult education office launched a data match improvement initiative in 2019 and set a state data match target of 90% or higher data. The current rate of 78.28% is the highest it has ever been and a 24% increase from PY18. It may be that the second quarter unemployment rate would have been much lower due to Covid-19, but because we are matching so many more learners, the impact was diminished.

1. ***Integration with One-stop Partners***

IFA conversations started in the fall of 2020. The state office participated in the initial conversations with other state-level representatives of other one-stop agencies. With career centers either closed to the public or with very limited in-person hours it was a challenge to determine IFA costs based on use of space or foot-traffic. Discussions focused on space usage when the centers are more fully operational and how remote service delivery can be part of the equation in the present and going forward. State office staff met with local adult education providers in each of the three workforce board areas to review IFA expectations and purposes, review the plan and gather their feedback. Final IFA amounts were decided upon, MOUs were signed, and the local programs now meet their financial commitment using AEFLA funds. In consideration of the pandemic, the IFA will be reviewed next year for any necessary adjustments. In-person and/or remote career services include, but are not limited to: intake, eligibility determination, initial assessments, advising, development of career plans, referrals to other workforce system providers as appropriate, work force preparation, and job search assistance. As a result of donations and some redirected state and local funds, the state office and local providers were able to continue the distribution of 100s of computers to learners for the continuation of classes, enrollments, and advising services.

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

Maine competed for IELCE funds in February 2019. Two programs applied and were funded. Initial grant period was two years with two additional, 2-year extensions**.** In the RFP, programs were asked to develop at least one IELCE IET.

The two providers served a total of 82 learners in IELCE-IET programs. Of those, 56 completed their programs, 40 earned industry recognized credentials and 25 were employed at the time year-end reports were submitted. IET areas were CAN, Teller Training, ELL Customer Service and Employability Skills, and Customer Support Specialist earning a CompTia A++. All programs were online except for the lab and sills component of CNA which were held onsite at facilities. These industries were chosen due to local demand for employees and willing employer partners.

CNA students faced the challenge of waiting until until clinical sites reopened to complete. Due to an emergency order by the Governor, CNA students were allowed to take the state test and if it was passed, be hired by facilities in non-CNA roles. While the Teller Training saw increased enrollments due to online and benefitted from additional guest speakers, a major drawback was the lack of networking opportunities. Some teachers struggled transitioning their materials to an effective online format, some students were without reliable devices and connectivity and one of the IET sub-grantees faced a 7-month delay in Chromebook shipments. In response to COVID-19, additional personal contacts and supports were offered to students to maintain the health and safety of the collective community, maintain morale and motivation, manage the shifting needs of individuals and families (who had to be responsive to employment changes, childcare and school closings), keep pervasive fear in check, and practice daily persistence.

Despite facing the challenges and providing additional supports noted above, students remained engaged and earning credentials.

1. ***Adult Education Standards***

Maine continues to provide professional development in implementation of state adopted College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. In PY20, the State Office also offered trainings in the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). We continue to explore how to evaluate the local providers’ implementation of standards and meet the needs of experienced practitioners.

***6. Programs for Correction and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals***

Learners are tagged in the MDOC data system (CORIS) for adult education participation, program completion, and credential attainment. When a former participant returns to custody, CORIS captures that information.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Release Year | Return to CustodyYear 1 | Return to CustodyYear 2 | Return to CustodyYear 3 |
| 2016 | 7.8% | 23.4% | 31.3% |
| 2017 | 8.9% | 22.8% | 31.7% |
| 2018 | 8.3% | 17.4% |   |
| 2019 | 7.3% |   |   |

Adult education instruction in MDOC facilities has been impacted by Covid-19, resulting in a significant reduction in the number of residents earning their HiSET or high school diploma in the last year. While 61 High School Equivalency Diplomas (HSED) were awarded in 2019, 35 HSEDs were awarded in 2020. Movement of residents within facilities were limited and visits from outside volunteers / guests were prohibited. Quarantine measures resulted in students having sporadic and/or less access to educational resources, including in-person instruction and library access. Approved tablets did provide access to high school completion content.