# Virginia Department of Education Logo

# Virginia Adult Education Narrative Report 2020-2021

## This report is prepared and submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education pursuant to annual reporting requirements. This report and those from previous years are made available on the Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) [Data, Monitoring, and Evaluation](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/data_monitoring_evaluation/index.shtml) webpage.

## State Leadership Funds (AEFLA Section 223)

The VDOE uses state leadership funds to provide, directly and through cooperative agreement with the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) at Virginia Commonwealth University, opportunities for professional development (PD) and technical assistance to adult education and literacy practitioners throughout the Commonwealth.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(a), alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners,** the vision of the Virginia WIOA [Combined State Plan](https://virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Virginia_CSP_PYs_2020-2023-FINAL-Federally-Approved.pdf) is to *“improve economic opportunity for all Virginians by serving those who are not yet earning a sustainable wage and, as important, by focusing the resources and mechanisms of our workforce system to recruit people into the workforce and connecting them to businesses in high demand industries.”* To carry out this vision, the VDOE uses state leadership funds to provide technical assistance, training, advising, and resources to eligible providers for offering career pathways and IET programming to ensure that adult learners have equitable opportunities to acquire digital literacy skills, employability skills, academic skills, and employment or postsecondary education or training.

In collaboration with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), VALRC conducted a *College and Career Bridge Program* for individuals with disabilities with the goals of assisting participants in improving their career readiness skills and with the transition into their chosen education and training programs at local community colleges. VALRC facilitated a four-week virtual training for instructors in the bridge model and continued with weekly technical assistance throughout course implementation. DARS provided recruitment and enrollment services. VALRC authored a [*Sustainability Guide for DARS College and Career Bridge Program*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HfmAxOgOB0OMWoOrd3v5ZlChS-zE7nP_BezQuHSHQ4Q/edit#heading=h.jwmrpxbeeap8) to summarize lessons learned and recommendations for future implementation. The project was co-presented at two Virginia agency conferences and is being replicated and customized in PY2021-2022.

The VALRC continues to support the operationalization of *Virginia’s Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy* (SSCPA), an online learning academy for Virginia’s workforce professionals designed to align education and training programs and strengthen the leadership capacity of workforce system partners and practitioners with a goal of incorporating in every Virginia region the integral components of sector partnership and career pathway strategies and thinking. The VALRC’s support included serving on the SSCPA advisory committee, serving on the SSCPA evaluation plan workgroup to provide feedback and input on analyzing behavioral changes and outcomes related to SSCPA participation, and supporting six program managers in their roles as conveners for regional workgroups.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) invited Virginia WIOA Combined State Plan partners to participate in the pilot of an *IET Design Camp*, part of the *Enhancing IET Opportunities for Adults* technical assistance project. The VDOE and VALRC coordinated with cross-agency teams that had received *Road to Success in Virginia Program* (RSVP), which is funded through the Department of Social Services, and adult education funding to use the IET program model. The VALRC held individual team meetings throughout October and provided ongoing technical assistance as programs formalized an action plan for IET implementation.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(b), the establishment or operation of high-quality professional development (PD) programs,** the vision of the VDOE is for the continuous improvement of instruction in adult education and literacy and support for practitioners in all roles to provide high-quality programming and instruction. The VDOE, through its cooperative agreement with VALRC, supports both required and permissible state leadership activities as part of a high-quality PD program.

Historically, PD is disseminated through webinars and virtual events, facilitated online courses, facilitated professional learning communities (PLCs), self-paced online modules and tutorials, and face-to-face training. Virtual modalities dominated during the pandemic when time and convenience were a commodity; PLCs and virtual *Data Office Hours* became the preferred options for providing topic specific knowledge and strategy dissemination and social interaction need. Despite the pandemic’s impact on class size, class offerings, and the pivot to virtual modalities, in PY2020-2021, VALRC provided 116 PD and technical assistance events (a 16% increase over the previous year), over 518 event hours to 3,550 participants (a 17% increase over the previous year). PLCs and virtual office hours comprised 75% of the total events and 41% of the total participants. Open office hours for distance education were born of the intense spring 2020 weekly meetings and focused on priority topics identified through field polls. Twenty two bi-monthly *Data Office Hours* virtual meetings provided support to data specialists and administrators, and a math instructor online support group was created as a result of reviewing GED® pass-rate data, which revealed that math remains the subtest with the lowest completion rate. VALRC curated a new [remote learning resource bank](https://valrc.org/learning/remote/index.html) for adult education programs. Each section of the resource bank includes links to the tools’ websites as well as additional resources for implementation, instructional use, and student use.

In support of the VDOE Educational Equity [priorities](http://www.virginiaisforlearners.virginia.gov/edequityva/) (EdEquityVA), training and resources to integrate culturally responsive and inclusive practices into instruction were developed and disseminated. These artifacts were integrated into VALRC’s *Meaning Skills and Print Skills* online reading courses, the online *ESOL Beginning Literacy* course, and the *New Teacher Foundations Checklist*. The [Accessibility and Inclusion](https://valrc.org/learning/remote/udl.html) resource page was added to VALRC’s website, and an updated “508 Accessibility and Universal Design for Learning” tip sheets and a template to be used when developing online courses were integrated into the *Quality Teaching Online* course documents.

Online professional learning communities were formed for National External Diploma Program (NEDP) assessors, Teaching Skills that Matter (TSTM) coaches, data advisory specialists, teacher leader and peer coach cohorts, and IET teachers and administrators. The PY2020-2021 teacher leader PLC consisted of a 20-member virtual professional learning community now in its third year. Facilitated by the VALRC staff, these teachers met to share their practices and build on one another’s knowledge and experiences as they developed skills to handle changing situations as a leader. Two areas of concentration, based on emerging academic and social context needs during the pandemic, were peer coaching and culturally responsive education. *The Impact Cycle* by Jim Knight, provided by Learning Forward, and *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond were chosen as the frameworks for PLC study.

Supported by the state’s membership in the Innovating Distance Education in Adult Learning (IDEAL) Consortium, four Virginia teams completed the *IDEAL 101: Foundations of Distance Education and Blended Learning* course. A virtual PLC model was incorporated to support programs through development, implementation, and feedback on blended learning courses and program design. As a complement to the IDEAL course, *Quality Teaching Online* was developed and offered as a six-week PLC to focus on best practices for designing coherent and effective online courses. Bimonthly virtual *Open Discussion on Distance Education* webinars covered topics such as teacher observation, best online instructional practices, recruitment and orientation practices, buy-in and benefits of online learning, and quality resources and approved distance education curricula.

The virtual [2020-2021 Adult Education and Literacy (AE&L) Conference Remix](https://sites.google.com/vcu.edu/ael-conference/home) provided an opportunity to model project-based learning and create an engaging online learning experience for participants by using multimodal approaches and a variety of technology tools. With inspiration from the concept of flipped classrooms, the AE&L Conference Remix spread conference components over six months. Two primary components of the conference were challenge teams and a speaker series. Ninety participants, across ten cross-regional and cross- functional challenge teams formed around common interests in tackling authentic, shared issues and used project-based learning (PBL) methodology as an immersive professional development context. A key component of the team challenge success was the incorporation of peer coaches drawn from the statewide teacher leader PLC. Four periodic virtual plenary sessions took place over the course of the six months and engaged 450 participants. VALRC contracted with a diverse set of keynote speakers aligned with the primary learning objectives of the overall conference with the goal of highlighting diverse thought leaders in the field. Each speaker series session also offered time for reflection and networking in “think tanks” that were facilitated by peer coaches. The culminating event of the AE&L Conference Remix took place virtually over two days in mid-April. The Team Challenge Showcase presented the work of the ten challenge teams, providing actionable solutions for Virginia’s adult educators (see [PROGRESS, June 2021](https://valrc.org/about/issues/June2021.html)).

One team that was formed during the Challenge resulted in the creation of a statewide team of community-based literacy organizations (CBLO) leaders who were seeking to engage a more diverse tutor pool that reflected the population served in their area. Their efforts resulted in an increase in the number of younger, more diverse tutors (one CBLO reported that as a result of their efforts, 60% of the new tutors were under the age of 45 and a shift in racial demographics from almost 100% White to 66% White, 15% Asian, 9% Black, and 9% Multiracial). The VDOE encourages the strengthening of CBLO and AEFLA partnerships that can provide additional time and personalization with learners to reinforce classroom instruction and enhance students’ comprehension and goal attainment.

Virginia trained 24 adult education practitioners in the *Virginia Career Coach Certification* course. This virtual course consisted of self-paced modules and the facilitation of synchronous group sessions. This course provided the first of two components required prior to application for the Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) credential, which is administered by the Center for Credentialing in Education (CCE), and the Certified Career Services Provider (CCSP) credential administered by the National Career Development Association (NCDA). Twenty participants are continuing their involvement towards certification in the PY2021-2022 year. These practitioners are already serving as career coaches in their adult education programs.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(c), the provision of technical assistance**, the VDOE provides technical assistance and guidance to eligible providers by sharing promising practices on high-quality, research-based instruction and programming; program accountability; and serving effectively as a one-stop partner. Technical assistance needs are solicited from program managers throughout the year and are informed by the results of the VDOE’s monitoring and evaluation efforts, described below.

The VALRC partners with the VDOE in providing technical assistance. VALRC disseminates resources through its publications, websites, and listservs. Primary areas of focus include standards based instruction (SBI) and implementation guidance; distance education; data reporting, analysis, and use; digital media; career pathways; program management; high school equivalency; English language acquisition; numeracy; and learning disabilities. In PY2020-2021, the VALRC began the process of a website redesign to promote greater interactivity and updated and maintained four other resource websites, four listservs, and the [GED® Helpline](https://vaged.vcu.edu/). Publications and communications produced by VALRC include a quarterly newsletter called [*PROGRESS*](https://valrc.org/about/progress.html), a [podcast series](https://valrc.org/communities/podcasts.html), a monthly [TechTools publication](https://valrc.org/learning/techtools/index.html), and a [YouTube channel](https://valrc.org/learning/techtools/index.html). This year’s addition of a five-part “Voices from the Field” [video podcast series](https://ietblueprint.com/supporting-ells-in-iet/), as part of the IET Blueprint, highlights specific strategies that practitioners are implementing to support English language learners in their Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs.

The VDOE developed and disseminated the [*Adult Education Program Responsibilities Manual*](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/program_policy_guidance/index.shtml) in PY2020-2021. This manual provides a reference guide to federal and state policies, compliance principles, key citations, and technical assistance resources for Virginia adult education program managers.

Thirty adult education program administrators were sponsored to participate in the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE) and the American Institutes for Research’s (AIR) Leadership Excellence and Development (LEAD) Institute. The LEAD Institute is an eight-month, state-specific, cohort-based PD opportunity for current, new, and aspiring adult education administrators seeking to develop and strengthen their leadership skills.  This interactive, practice-based leadership development training focused on developing participants’ skills and knowledge across four key domains: (1) transformational organizational leadership, (2) learner-centered leadership, (3) data- and research-based decision making, and (4) workforce alignment. Through a blended, project-based learning approach, participants engaged in synchronous and asynchronous content and developed a Leadership-in-Action (LIA) project plan for their program. The LIA projects included action plans for increasing enrollment and persistence, innovating student recruitment efforts, and engaging learners through effective IETs. The VALRC will coordinate sustaining activities for sharing and evaluating these efforts through PY2021-2022.

In response to the positive reception by students of online learning options during the pandemic, the VDOE expanded distance learning policy to accommodate instructor-developed, blended learning courses. Informed by a months-long Distance Education Subject Matter Expert Advisory Group, an [Adult Education Indicator of Quality Online Course Rubric](https://valrc.org/learning/tipsheets/AEQualityOnlineCoursesRubric04272021_a.pdf) was published as a development guide and evaluation tool for such courses. The rubric includes a worksheet for accounting for student hours using blended and distance learning according to the [*Assessment and Distance Education Policy*](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/data_monitoring_evaluation/index.shtml) *for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs*. The rubric was piloted during the *Canvas Bootcamp* course and the *Quality Teaching Online* PLC. The [Distance Education](http://www.valrc.org/leadership/distance.html) page of the VALRC website was updated to include new resources, the list of approved distance education curricula, the curriculum submission form, and publisher contact information.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(d), monitoring and evaluation of quality, VDOE uses state leadership and administrative funds to support monitoring and evaluation activities**, which include not only evaluating the quality of and improvement in local adult education activities but also the effectiveness of efforts by the VALRC. The requirement to disseminate information about models and proven and/or promising adult education practices within the state is discussed as an integral component of the work that the VALRC delivers as PD and technical support under 223(a)(1)(b).

The VDOE’s system for assessing the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities is based on five major activities, which can occur both consecutively and concurrently throughout the program year: (1) a program self-assessment survey completed by each provider, (2) the distribution and review of an annual risk rubric for each program, (3) ongoing data monitoring of information entered by each program in the state Management Information System (MIS) and the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) fiscal system throughout the program year, (4) technical assistance calls, the content of which is based on 1-3 above, between the VDOE and each funded program, and (5) the identification of programs for site-visit reviews, based on information collected in activities 1-3 above.

In PY2020-2021, the activities listed above were successfully completed, starting with the distribution of the Program Self-Assessment Survey, which is designed to allow a means for programs to document their leadership and management processes and assist the VALRC and state office staff in the development of program-specific technical assistance plans. Risk rubrics were created from various data related to program operations and performance and distributed to all funded programs, and technical assistance calls were then conducted with all funded programs. These direct conversations with program staff allow the VDOE to combine the quantitative analysis provided by the risk rubrics with the more qualitative nature of the responses provided on the program self-assessment survey and serve a primary role in ascertaining the specific technical assistance needs of individual programs.

Because of travel restrictions put into place by the VDOE as a result of the pandemic, no on-site site visits were conducted in PY2020-2021. In late summer of 2020, steps were taken to develop a virtual monitoring process. The monitoring protocol used for on-site visits was adapted for monitoring in a virtual environment. This new virtual site-visit process was put into place in November 2020 when the office conducted a virtual monitoring pilot effort using the adapted virtual site-visit protocol with one of the adult education regional programs in the southwestern part of the state. Continued refinement of the site-visit protocol resulted in more a focused virtual monitoring tool that was used during two additional virtual site visits that occurred in the Middle Peninsula area in April 2021 and the Northern Virginia area in May 2021. The virtual site-visit team was expanded in PY2020-2021 to include subject matter experts from the VALRC staff, who joined with the core VDOE team to become familiar with the monitoring process and to assume some of the monitoring responsibilities and further streamline the process so that the length of time for each site visit is reduced.

The Virginia team participating in the National Reporting System (NRS) Evaluation Learning Community continued gathering and analyzing data through a College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) instructional practices survey. *Exploring Relationships Between Standards-based Training, Instructional Practices, and Learner Outcomes,* examining relationships between training, instructional practice, and learner outcomes to support impactful PD, was presented during the American Institutes for Research December 2020 webinar.

## Performance Data Analysis

Performance for PY2020-2021 was adversely affected by ongoing pandemic-related restrictions and limitations. See the recorded presentation*,* [*A Look at Virginia’s Adult Education Programs in PY2020-2021*](https://youtu.be/F2HNN1sRX1c)*,* that presents the demographics and program year information.

Although programs were able to continue offering services, a number of classes were paused or discontinued, and programs struggled to offer pre- and post-assessments either in-person or via online proctoring. In keeping with federal guidance distributed to state adult education agencies, Virginia continued its re-configuration of its MIS to recognize new students as participants without requiring an NRS-approved pre-test and permit programs to assign an NRS-approved post-test when students reached the minimum required number of attendance hours for post-testing. For both situations, program staff selected a placeholder assessment name so that the state could track the impact of the restrictions on reporting.

Virginia continued to track the impact of COVID-related restrictions on testing in 2020-2021 (see Table 1). Not only did the number of test administrations and the number of test takers directly impacted dramatically increase from the previous year, but overall enrollment and, therefore, the number of all test administrations and the number of test takers decreased. The combination of trends resulted in an increase in the percentage of placeholder test administrations from 7.7 percent in 2019-2020 to 38.1 percent a year later. Not surprisingly, the percentage of test takers marked with COVID placeholders experienced a similar increase in the percentage of test takers from 12.9 percent to 46.8 percent.

Table 1: The Impact of COVID-19 Restrictions on Testing in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

| Program Year | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | Difference |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of Test Administrations | 37,135 | 21,705 | -15,430 |
| Number of Test Administrations with a COVID Placeholder | 2,856 | 8,278 | +5,422 |
| Number of Unique Test Takers | 18,655 | 12,318 | -6,337 |
| Number of Test Takers with a COVID Placeholder | 2,412 | 5,765 | +3,353 |

The Data Advisory PLC engaged in a November session to discuss the PY2020-2021 state aggregate reports and interpret the impact of pandemic-related closures and disruptions. This conversation with data specialists who serve on the Data Advisory PLC assisted the state office in exploring how regional and IELCE programs experienced the trends identified at the state level. In particular, program representatives of the Data PLC discussed how virtual instruction options diminished the need for child care and transportation, contributing to a 66.6 percent retention rate and an average 69.7 hours of attendance, and how improved efforts for capturing supplemental data boosted the transition to postsecondary education and training gains. The state’s performance data is also presented annually in October to the Advisory Committee for Adult Education and Literacy for discussion by the committee members.

Of interest within our data, on several outcome measures IET students outperformed the state aggregate measures in PY2020-2021. IET student records show 38.33 percent employed in the second quarter after exit and 39.49 percent in the fourth quarter compared to the state’s overall rates of 22.53 percent and 23.93 percent, respectively. The rate of attaining a postsecondary credential within one year of exit for IET students was 59.2 percent, compared to the state’s overall rate of 28.18 percent.

In PY2020-2021, 28 percent of the state’s total GED® graduates attended adult education classes (452 out of 1,619, which excludes in-school youth and local and regional inmates). Virginia’s “Test for Free” campaign continued to promote enrollment in adult education and provide an opportunity for students to earn free testing vouchers. Virginia had a 77 percent pass rate, mirroring the national pass rate for GED® completion during the same time period.

The number of National External Diploma Program (NEDP) participants decreased from 186 in PY2019-2020 to 174 in PY2020-2021, and the completion rate decreased from 20 percent (38 graduates) in PY2019-2020 to 15 percent (26 graduates) in PY2020-2021. During PY2020-2021, NEDP practitioners participated in a series of PLCs focused on enhancing program outreach and supporting learner persistence. The VDOE and the VALRC, in collaboration with CASAS, will continue to provide professional development opportunities and individualized technical assistance to program managers and practitioners.

## Integration with One-Stop Partners

In PY2016-2017, the state delegated the roles and responsibilities for addressing one-stop requirements under 34 CFR part 463, subpart J, to the regional program managers and their fiscal agents. Those programs work closely with their local workforce development boards (LWDB) and one-stop operators to coordinate services, identify regional workforce needs, and facilitate access to adult education services through the one-stops, called Virginia Career Works Centers. Virginia has over 50 comprehensive and affiliate Center locations in the 15 workforce regions. In PY2020-2021, 16 regional programs contributed to their Centers either in direct funds or in-kind contributions toward infrastructure in accordance with the MOU established by each LWDB. Most Centers offered online virtual services or very little in-person service for the entire program year, limiting the types of coordination that usually occurs among the WIOA title programs.

During the COVID-related closures, communication across partner entities was critical, and agencies as well as local boards began communicating much more frequently about which programs were open for which services and how individuals could request appointments or referrals. For example, the VDOE alerted the LWDB directors and one-stop operators of the assessment flexibilities approved for adult education and emphasized that adult education programs were able to enroll and serve students even in the absence of an assessment. The LWDB network assisted in the promotion of the GED® “Test for Free” campaign and the messaging around the importance of completing a secondary credential.

The [Common Referral Portal](https://app.virginia.myjourney.com/), launched in May 2020, is a web-based, mobile-friendly tool that can refer users to services that are designed to assist them in finding training, certification, education, and employment services. Individuals seeking services can create an account, answer common intake questions, choose referral recommendations, and begin connecting with services. Currently supported by six state agencies, including the VDOE with AEFLA state leadership funds, the portal is a “no wrong door” approach to service referrals among workforce development agencies and is supported by a Data Trust that allows for the sharing of unique identifiers. Training for adult education practitioners to assist learners in the use of the Portal as a career service continues to be delivered through webinars, newsletter articles, and email blasts. Enhancements to the Portal include the implementation of a Professional Center through which career coaches and navigators can be more directly involved in offering career services and making referrals.

## Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program (AEFLA Section 243)

The VDOE held a multi-year competition in 2020 for PY2020-2023 awards and was able to maintain the proposed timeline despite the COVID-related closures. Announcements of the competition were posted in eight newspapers, and a pre-bidder’s webinar was held in January 2020. The competition presented two opportunities: applications to offer adult education (Section 231) with corrections education and other institutionalized individuals (Section 225) programs and applications to offer integrated English literacy and civics education (Section 243) programs. Seventeen IELCE applicants were awarded for the three-year cycle. The IELCE programs are clustered in the high-immigrant population areas of Northern Virginia, Richmond City, Charlottesville, and the Hampton Roads area. Four additional programs are in the rural agricultural areas of the New River Valley, Shenandoah Valley, and Eastern Shore. IELCE applicants were required to offer or partner to offer an IET in an industry aligned to their local workforce development board’s strategic plan or regional economic analysis. Applicants mapped their plans and partners’ contributions onto the [IET Planning Tool](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/professional_development/iet-planning-tool.docx), a graphic organizer required for all IETs.

In PY2020-2021, there were 2,489 IELCE participants statewide, 280 of whom participated in IET programs. The IET enrollment represents 11 percent of the total IELCE enrollment and 24 percent of the state’s total IET enrollment. Aligning occupational training to the language capabilities of English language learners remains a challenge for programs; some programs continue to create opportunities that scaffold the foundational skills necessary to be successful in occupational training. IET programs in PY2020-2021 were offered for students from all program types in occupational clusters including child care, technology, transportation, trades, healthcare, manufacturing, hospitality, and customer service. Credentials earned included Certified Nursing Assistant, Certified Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, ServSafe Manager, National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) Core, Child Development Associate Level 1, Microsoft Office Specialist, Guest Service Professional, Welding, and Commercial Driver’s License.

A video tutorial was produced and disseminated through a collaborative effort between the VDOE, VALRC, and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) to share innovations and important considerations for IET design and delivery. The [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWMpTj3gemY&feature=youtu.be) covers how IETs fit into Virginia’s vision of the Combined State Plan, the benefits of using IETs to offer transformative learning for adults, considerations with IET students, funding opportunities, and technical assistance with IET planning tools. In August 2020, the VDOE and VALRC facilitated a two-day IET summit, *Redesigning IET*, for all adult education programs to focus on redesigning IETs for new distance-oriented learning environments. The meeting focused on virtual and distance instructional delivery, online credential options, support for English language learners in IETs, and workshopping the [IET Planning Tool](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/professional_development/iet-planning-tool-ada.docx) to develop fully integrated IET programs. Many programs were able to identify credentials that could be earned online via hybrid arrangements or confirm a plan with their training partners to allow for socially-distanced training. Outcomes of the summit were shared on the [Redesigning IET Technical Assistance Resourcespage](https://ietblueprint.com/redesigning-iet/) of the *IET Blueprint* which was demonstrated during a subsequent program manager meeting. IET/IELCE implementation technical assistance was provided through phone, email, Zoom, webinars, and the redesign of the IET Blueprint.

Programs consult with their LWDB plans to prepare and place students for in-demand occupations and provide career services to students either by a program-based career navigator or by hosting regular access to a career coach from the local community college or Career Works Center. These services continued to be offered remotely through teleconferencing and individual appointments. Programs also serve businesses in their communities by announcing and promoting job openings to students and hosting recruitment activities such as career fairs, many of which were held virtually. These activities are reported to the VDOE quarterly.

The VDOE recognized that programs needed additional training on preparing to report post-exit indicators. A three-day mandatory training for program managers and data specialists, *Understanding and Improving Performance Indicators*, was delivered in fall of 2020 based on the NRS materials on the importance of collecting barriers to employment and social security numbers for student follow-up. The purpose of the training was to provide program staff with a deeper understanding of the performance indicators identified in WIOA to develop and articulate a plan for improving program performance. Training attendees spent time identifying strategies for expanding their data collection efforts, such as providing multiple opportunities to solicit this information. Continuation-year applications, submitted in April 2021, asked grantees to describe their data management processes, documenting changes based on the training. One result is an uptick in the percentage of students who shared their social security numbers (SSN) for employment matching; in PY2020-2021, 50 percent of students shared their SSN, up from 43 percent the previous year. Post-exit indicators reported in PY2020-2021 for IELCE students in the follow-up cohort indicate that 15.86 percent were employed in the second quarter after exit, 17.97 percent were employed in the fourth quarter after exit, and 11.9 percent attained a recognized postsecondary credential within one year of exit.

## Adult Education Standards

Since the adoption of the CCRS in 2016, the VDOE and the VALRC have been implementing training and technical assistance and institutionalizing the use of SBI through practices and grant requirements. Virginia is now in what Susan Pimentel, in the *Handbook for Sustaining Standards-based Instruction in Adult Education* (2014), describes as Stage Four implementation, “Initiating a Scale-Up Plan: Sustaining Momentum, Progress, and Creative Renewal.” The VDOE competitive grant requirements promote large-scale replication while the VALRC provides a variety of options for successful implementation in anticipation of management and instructor turnover.

An annual review and update of the *Implementing Standards-Based Instruction in Virginia: A Technical Assistance Roadmap*, available on the SBI resource [webpage](https://www.valrc.org/learning/sbi/index.html) of the VALRC website, defines “full implementation” of SBI and provides technical assistance in the key areas of program design, instruction, and PD. An increased focus on implementation of the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) occurred during 2020-21, primarily on using the Virginia SBI Observation Tool in remote settings.

Virginia continued its virtual participation in disseminating the [*Teaching the Skills that Matter* (TSTM)](https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education) nine essential “skills that matter” in standards-aligned practices. VALRC provided a stipend for year-two support, an online community of practice, and technical assistance for implementation and expansion for TSTM teachers. Their work included coaching, facilitating one-to-one work with teachers in various areas of the Commonwealth, observing teacher instructional practices and providing feedback, and conducting webinars for the AE&L Remix and a Virginia Association Adult & Continuing Education (VAACE) conference presentation. Their work culminated in a showcase where participants shared their TSTM projects and discussed results and further implementation strategies for Virginia.

## Programs for Corrections Education and Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals

During PY2020-2021, there was no methodology in place for matching the recidivism rate for criminal offenders or released individuals served in programs supported with Section 225 funds. However, the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) has published state definitions and formulas for setting the state rate of recidivism of re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration at intervals of 6, 12, 18, 24, and 36 months. On May 26, 2021,Governor Ralph Northam announced that Virginia continues to have one of the lowest recidivism rates in the country at 23.9 percent. This is the fifth year in a row that the Commonwealth has had the lowest or second lowest recidivism rate in the nation. Recidivism refers to an individual committing a new offense within a specified follow-up period that results in a new sentence.

Virginia’s recidivism rate was the second lowest of the 42 states that report re-incarceration of state responsible inmates within three years of their release. “Virginia’s recidivism rate has remained low because of the hard work of both correctional staff and inmates,” said Virginia Department of Corrections Director Harold Clarke. “Especially important is the evidence-based programming offered to inmates, probationers, and parolees, from cognitive skills programming to academic and vocational education to substance abuse treatment, and the best practices followed in our facilities and district offices.”

In PY2020-2021, the state also analyzed the [recidivism rate](https://vadoc.virginia.gov/media/1681/vadoc-recidivism-re-arrest-rates-report-2016.pdf) for “state responsible (SR) offenders” who served their entire sentences in local jails, a setting that is more likely to have had educational services funded through the adult education program than through the VADOC. Inmates who spent their entire SR term in jail had higher re‐incarceration and re‐arrest rates (26.9% and 58.9%, respectively) than those who spent at least part of their SR incarceration in a DOC facility (21.0% and 49.7%, respectively). The VADOC analysis shows that an increase in technical violations among the re-entry population in Virginia is correlated with the opioid crisis that continues in the Commonwealth. Additionally, the VADOC found that re-incarceration rates were higher for those with mental health impairments, particularly those who served their sentence in local jails where the provision of mental health services while incarcerated was less consistently available. Furthermore, the VADOC posits that the greater intensity of re-entry services and educational and occupational programming available for offenders in VADOC facilities but not always available in local and regional jails contributes to a lower re-incarceration rate for those who served their sentence or a part of their sentence in DOC facilities.

Although correctional education services were extremely limited in PY2020-2021, some regional programs were able to offer educational services in local and regional jails, community institutions, and community re-entry programs, including through distance education materials. A few IET programs in PY2020-2021 were offered in correctional facilities in the occupational clusters of customer service and hospitality; credentials earned included ServSafe Manager and the National Retail Federation’s (NRF) Retail Industry Fundamentals. In PY2020-2021, these facilities experienced a 79 percent decrease in the number of GED® passers due to a lack of access to academic preparation and testing during the pandemic. In total, 37 individuals earned a secondary credential, and this population maintained a 79 percent pass rate, which is slightly higher than the GED® national pass rate.