



November 2020



Technical Assistance Guide: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

Annual Narrative Report

Issued by the Office of Career, Technical,
and Adult Education

U.S. Department of Education

AEFLA Annual Narrative Report Technical Assistance Guide

Annual performance reporting requirements for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) includes the submission of a narrative report that addresses six narrative questions. The information submitted in the narrative report provides the opportunity for States to submit qualitative information about their progress in implementing the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) during the reporting period. Narrative reports are reviewed by OCTAE during the desk monitoring process and during program monitoring and technical assistance reviews. Additionally, the information in narrative reports may be analyzed collectively to produce national level reports that tell a more complete story of State accomplishments in implementing the WIOA.

This technical assistance guide provides suggestions for a State to consider when developing its annual narrative report. The guide further explains statutory or regulatory references in the narrative questions in plain language. The requirement explanation is followed by **suggestions** for the types of responses that can **potentially** address the question. The suggestions are intended to stimulate thinking about possible responses that may be appropriate for the State, and not all suggestions are intended to be included in the response, nor are suggestions intended to be a complete listing of possible responses.

Italicized text is the wording of the six Narrative Report items from the *NRS Annual Reporting Instructions for Program Year (PY) 2019* dated August 21, 2020.

1. State Leadership Funds (AEFLA Section 223)

The Requirement: AEFLA requires that each eligible agency use funds provided under section 223 (State Leadership Activities) to develop or enhance the adult education system in four required areas identified below.

The following question is designed to capture qualitative information specific to the State's efforts to use AEFLA State Leadership funds to fulfill the four required activities.

a. Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership Activities) for each the following required activities:

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

The Requirement: AEFLA requires States to use State Leadership funds to align adult education and literacy with other core programs and one-stop partners, including developing career pathways to provide access to education and training services for adult education participants.

State responses may provide information related to the implementation of the strategies in the Plan, rather than repeating the information without further detail about the actual implementation progress in the reporting period. The State may also include new information that was not provided in the Plan.

- State responses may address how integrated education and training (IET) programs were used as an overall alignment strategy, including examples of IETs that provided access to other workforce development services.
- This section may include information about the development or implementation of career pathways as it relates to overall workforce strategy and alignment with local and regional workforce needs. State responses may include information about how adult education services were included in overall career pathways strategies and the extent to which they provided access to adult education participants.
- State responses may describe how co-location of adult education and literacy services in the one-stop center facilitated the alignment of services among one -stop partners.
- State responses may identify how the results of specific State initiatives that are aimed at promoting alignment of partner services in the one-stop are encouraged.
- Examples of alignment activities may include joint trainings, such as through conferences or other professional development activities, and/or other ways State agencies/local programs

are partnering with their one-stop partners. State responses may provide specific examples of efforts to promote alignment and may include joint trainings and other activities that grew out of committees and workgroups.

- States may discuss progress towards development of data sharing processes; extensive and coordinated cross-agency referrals; integrated service delivery activities; expanded access and recruitment across programs; development of common intake systems; and/or common reporting standards.

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

The Requirement: AEFLA requires that States use State Leadership funds to establish and operate high quality professional development programs to improve instruction in AEFLA-funded programs.

State responses should address the following areas that are specified in the requirement.

- Instruction incorporating the essential components of reading as these components relate to adults
- Instruction related to the specific needs of adults
- Instruction provided by volunteers or by paid personnel
- Dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to AEFLA funded programs.

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

State responses should address the activities that the State is implementing to provide technical assistance to its eligible providers specific to the following three required areas.

- How the State is developing and disseminating instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training.
- Fulfilling their role to provide access to employment, education, and training services as required one-stop partners.
- Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.

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

The Requirement: AEFLA requires that State Leadership funds are used to monitor and evaluate the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and to disseminate information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.

State responses may discuss implementation of monitoring and evaluation during the program year it was addressed in the State plan, rather than repeating the information from the plan without further clarification. The State may also include new information about progress or advances that was not provided about monitoring and evaluation and not included in the State plan.

Implementation information may include:

- Progress towards developing or improving risk-based tools
- Advances to improving monitoring procedures, including procedures to measure the quality of activities
- Accomplishments related to completed vs. planned monitoring and evaluation
- Innovations related to the use of dashboards or report cards
- Information about how monitoring and evaluation results were used in the reporting period to improve activities and programs
- Information about evaluations of special initiatives or targeted activities, such as IET implementation
- Information about how monitoring and evaluation activities identify models and promising practices and how they are disseminated to other eligible providers, such as through conference spotlights, publications, or websites.

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

2. Performance Data Analysis

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

State responses may address the following areas that are specified in the requirement.

- **Process:** Describe the process the State used to analyze the performance data reported this year. How was the process conducted at the State and local levels? How were anomalies identified and resolved? How were errors identified and resolved?
- **Results:** How did the State perform with regard to its negotiated levels of performance for each indicator? If local programs had performance targets, how did they perform? Were there any outliers? If so, describe how the State addressed them.
- **Analysis:** Discuss any changes in the performance data, both decreases and increases, compared with the previous program year. What were the causes for performance success or failure? Were any changes due to one large local program, several programs, or something with a broader impact?
- **Action:** How did the State address local program performance issues? What was the immediate approach? How does the State plan to address these issues going forward? If unexplained anomalies were identified, what action will the State take (i.e., additional analysis or data collection)? How does the State expect performance to change in the next program year?

3. Integration with One-stop Partners

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

The Requirements: The State Eligible Agency (SEA) is the required one-stop partner for AEFLA. The SEA may delegate its one-stop responsibilities to one or more eligible providers or a consortium of eligible providers for a particular program in each local area. This designation allows the SEA to fulfill its duties throughout the State in each local workforce area. These duties include providing access to adult education and literacy programs and services; using funds to provide career services and fund infrastructure costs; entering into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the operation of the one-stop; participating in the operation of the one-stop; and providing representation on the local board and its committees (as needed).

The requirement to provide access to career services through the one-stop delivery system can happen one of three ways:

- Have AEFLA program staff physically present at the one-stop
- Have appropriately trained partner staff physically present at the one stop
- Have direct linkage through technology to program staff who can provide meaningful information or services

It is important to note that not all career services listed in the WIOA definition are applicable to the AEFLA program.¹ The applicable career services for the AEFLA program include:

- Outreach, intake, and orientation information
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities, and supportive services needs
- Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of education, training, and workforce services by program and type of provider
- Provision of information on availability of supportive services or assistance and appropriate referrals (including child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's

¹ OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2: Performance Accountability Guidance for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV Core programs (published August 23, 2017) provides a list of the applicable career and training services for the WIOA Title II AEFLA Program. Available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/octae-program-memo-17-2.pdf> (Attachment 7 - Table C).

Medicaid program and CHIP; SNAP benefits; EITC; assistance under TANF, and other supportive services and transportation).

State responses should address if the State has made designations and how the designations were made. Responses may also include how the State has communicated the roles and responsibilities carried out in the delegation. For example, a State may describe:

- How it accomplished the designation, for example, through the assurance statements in the grant award, statements in its competition application, requiring narrative responses in the application narrative, or through a stand-alone communication, such as a letter or policy statement.
- If it has delegated some responsibilities and retained other responsibilities.
- How it has communicated the requirements an eligible agency has as a required one-stop partner (i.e., has the State provided technical assistance or other communications on how to fulfill the roles and responsibilities as one-stop partners; training on partnership development; etc.).
- How it determines that the delegated eligible provider is carrying out its roles and responsibilities, such as reviewing MOU and infrastructure funding agreements (IFAs), requiring narrative reports, or establishing monitoring procedures.

State responses should address how local programs provided access to career services and the types of services provided through the one-stop system. State responses may include:

- How local programs are providing access to career services through the one-stop system (staff on-site; cross-training; and/or direct linkage?)
- A description of the types of career services provided through the one-stop system (rather than providing a list of services, States may provide a discussion of the types of services provided and how the services respond to local one-stop center and community needs)
- How the State provides guidance or technical assistance to local programs on fulfilling this requirement and how the State determines if the requirement is being met (i.e., does the State provide technical assistance to local programs; does the State monitor local programs on this one-stop requirement?)

State responses should address how infrastructure costs are being supported through the local option. Responses may address such issues as:

- The State's role in reviewing IFAs. Was there a joint process for reviewing IFAs among State workforce partners?
- The extent to which the State office was involved in the local negotiations
- The primary methods used to determine proportionate share and relative benefit (square footage of co-location space in one-stop center, actual use, etc.)
- Any changes to IFA policies or guidance during the program year
- Challenges and successes/progress in negotiating the IFAs.

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

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

- *Describe when your State held a competition [the latest competition] for IELCE program funds and the number of grants awarded by your State to support IELCE programs.*

The Requirements: The same requirements apply to competing section 243 funds as with section 222 funds. These requirements are detailed in here: Subpart C and include conducting a multi-year competitive grant process, ensuring direct and equitable access and considering 13 required factors in the award of those grants.

State responses may address:

- The most current award year and the length of the multi-year award
 - The number of grantees funded and may include the range of grant size
 - Strategies used in the RFP to target services to specific subpopulations, including professionals with degrees and credentials in native countries.
- *Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training activities:*

The Requirements: Educational services in the IELCE program are required to be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities. A program that receives IELCE funds may meet the IET requirement by co-enrolling participants in an IET program that is funded from sources other than section 243, such as IET programs already established in the local or workforce area, including IET programs established with AEFLA funds. It may also meet the requirement by using section 243 funds to establish and operate an IET program. Not all students enrolled in a IELCE program are required to be enrolled in an IET, however, all IELCE participants who can benefit from an IET program, must have access to an IET program through the IELCE program. This means that a funded eligible provider must offer the IELCE program in combination with IET.

State responses may address:

- Whether it used section 243 funds to establish IET programs or whether funded eligible providers used IET programs established with funds other than section 243 funds. When a State is able to identify that both methods (or a combination) were used, the State is encouraged to provide information that describes the extent to which each method was used.

- Describing the design of IELCE programs that address the requirement to provide education services in combination with IET. Responses can address changes made to design, lessons learned, and challenges that remain.
 - Any professional development or technical assistance it provides funded, eligible providers to clarify the requirements of the IELCE program. Responses may address progress made and challenges that remain in assisting programs to understand the requirements of the IELCE program.
 - Efforts to include dedicated State staff oversight of the IELCE program.
 - Examples of promising practices that funded eligible providers have implemented within their IELCE programs to support IELCE and IET participants (e.g., funded positions such as career navigators or counselors).
 - Specific examples of successful initiatives or promising practices that exemplify successful efforts to provide IELCE in combination with IET (e.g., successful efforts to target specific sub-populations of English learners and/or specific occupations or industry sectors).
 - Challenges or lessons learned in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE in combination with IET.
- *Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency as described in section 243(c)(1) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.*

State responses may:

- Describe how funded eligible providers establish partnerships with employers, workforce boards, and other stakeholders. Responses may also include the States and/or funded eligible providers coordination efforts with other available education, training, and social service resources.
- Describe the number and types of IELCE/IET sector pathways that are available and accessible to IELCE program participants.
- Describe how funded eligible providers have developed support services (e.g., career navigator positions) to assist in the successes of IELCE/IET program participants. Responses may also include examples of promising practices that offer educational and career counseling services that assist IELCE/IET participants with transition to postsecondary education or employment.
- Describe performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing program goals.
- Report job placement results, where it has such data. Responses that describe how it overcame challenges to implement job placement requirements, including the partnerships put in place to achieve results are encouraged.
- How pre-apprenticeship programs are helping to meet the program goals to prepare and place participants in unsubsidized employment.

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

State responses may:

- Describe the results of its process for submitting applications to workforce boards allowing the boards to make recommendations for improved alignment with the local plan.
- Describe IELCE representation on local workforce boards.
- Describe efforts to connect the IELCE program with larger State workforce initiatives, such as apprenticeship initiatives.
- Include efforts to cross-train local staff in one-stop systems. Responses may also describe referral efforts between WIOA partners and increased efforts to co-enroll students.
- Include how it contributed to meeting the primary indicators of performance in the State's Unified or Combined State Plan. Responses may also describe performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing program goals.

5. Adult Education Standards

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

State responses may:

- Address any changes it has made to its Adult Education content standards during the program year.
- Address how it aligned any changes to content standards for Adult Education with the State's content standards for K-12.
- Provide a link to its Adult Education content standards.

Optional – Describe implementation efforts, challenges, and any lessons learned.

- Describe any State requirements, guidance, and policies related to grantees' implementation of State-adopted standards-based instruction issued in the program year.
- Describe how it monitors the implementation of standards-based instruction at the program- and classroom-levels
- Describe how it is providing English learners' access to core academic content in conjunction with their learning English, including how it ensures Adult Basic Education (ABE) curricula include supports/scaffolds for English learners
- Describe how it is ensuring curricula align to your State-adopted standards; recognizing when existing curricula should be replaced
- Describe the impact of participation in Standards-in-Action initiatives and your State's ongoing sustainability efforts
- Describe its state-level professional development and technical assistance related to standards-implementation, including on-line resources.

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

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

The Requirement: AEFLA requires that States provide corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals (Section 225). Corrections education is for criminal offenders (any individual who is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense) who reside in correctional institutions. Other institutionalized individuals are not defined in WIOA, but examples might include persons who reside in facilities operated by a State mental health agency or individuals in civil confinement institutions. States must report for programs of corrections education and the education of other institutionalized individuals their progress in carrying out these programs, “including the relative rate of recidivism for the criminal offenders served.”

State response: A sample response could include the who (agencies, educational entities, correctional facilities, and other NGO’s involved), the what (what programming is being delivered, and by whom), the where (the specific locations program funding is supporting), the when (the time frame both for programming as well as an explanation of the recidivism measure being used), and the why (what the rate of recidivism is as well as other program outcomes if available).

Questions for a jurisdiction to consider which may help to answer the relative rate of recidivism prompt include:

- What measure is your State using for recidivism? Is it new arrests? New commitments to local jail or State or federal prison?
- It may be helpful to define how you are measuring recidivism (The National Institute of Justice definition and details are available here <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/corrections/recidivism>) and the population that you are serving.
- What offenders are you serving? How are you defining offender? Is your population being served in jails, prisons, or is your population on parole or probation?
- What agencies need to be included in successful RFPs in order to collect this information? Are there MOUs with criminal justice agencies for data collection? It might make sense to use the definition for recidivism that your criminal justice agency partners are using.
- What programs are you providing under Section 225? What is the rate of recidivism for individuals participating in those programs? If the data is available, it may be useful to report by program (i.e., IELCE program recidivism is 43% three years after release, ABE program is 56%, etc.).