

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Content Standards were finalized, meeting the requirement that, by July 1, 2016, TWC content standards for adult education align with state-adopted challenging academic content standards under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. TWC curriculum aligned with the new standards on October 1, 2016. These content standards align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) state-adopted academic content standards, as adopted under §1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as well as the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards; the high school End-of-Course Exams for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR); the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency; and the Texas Success Initiative, the Texas college readiness assessment.

TWC contracted to facilitate the addition of entry-level industry expectations to the AEL content standards. Four lead organizations, along with industry experts and adult educators, worked with TWC to align standards ~~to~~ with four target industries. The result of this project, which was completed in 2018, was the Texas Adult Education and Literacy Content Standards 2.0 (Standards 2.0), which updates and aligns the 2016 Texas Adult Education and Literacy Standards with the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in in-demand entry- and intermediate-level jobs in four industry clusters: advanced manufacturing; construction and extraction; health care sciences; and transportation, distribution, and logistics. While the 2016 content standards were unchanged with this update, Standards 2.0 aligns academic standards with jobs and provides a resource for workforce development specialists and educators to focus instruction and career guidance, guide the skills development needed for work, and to define skills and tasks not easily identified in academic standards.

In fall 2020, TWC began planning the next phase of content standards enhancement, the Standards 3.0 project, which adds Family Literacy and Civics Education benchmarks to the Standards 2.0. TWC developed training on implementing these benchmarks in adult education classrooms. TRAIN PD, the statewide professional development center, held regional training events in late spring 2021. With the publication of these Family Literacy and Civics Education standards, beginning Program Year 2021–2022 (PY'21–'22), AEL grants and TWC policy amendments required that all ESL coursework include a civics component.

For PY '19, Texas will amend the content standards to incorporate civics and community and family content competencies to the AEL Content Standards.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a

minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

In fall 2017, Texas conducted a statewide competition of services, under RFP 320-18-01, to fund contracts through June 30, 2020. Thirty-six AEL grant recipients were awarded grants. The grant period is for two years (that is, 24 months) with an option for TWC to renew the grant for an additional one-year period, as many as three times. The start date for the original two-year period (24-month period) was July 1, 2018, and TWC is currently renewing grants on a one-year basis through June 30, 2023. However, if TWC determines at the end of ~~the initial two-year~~ term each contract renewal period that the grantee is not performing or that the outcomes are not being achieved, TWC can allow the grant to expire. If the grantee is struggling and TWC has an enhanced technical assistance plan in place to support the grantee, TWC can authorize the grant for another year to ~~reassess~~ at the end of that year whether to continue to fund the grant.

In its Request for Proposals (RFP), Texas incorporated and specifically indicated the considerations specified in WIOA §231(e) as grant award requirements required of eligible providers. These considerations were scored as narrative questions in the RFP, and offerors were required to provide narrative detail to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration.

All grant recipients are required to implement the following AEL activities:

Adult Education, including activities based upon the State's AEL content standards and the statutory definition in WIOA, which include academic instruction and education services below

the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

- read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- transition to postsecondary education and training; and
- obtain employment.

AEL instruction must be organized through an organizational principle called an Academy to align AEL instruction, Career and College Planning, and Career Pathways services.

Literacy activities, including services for individuals with low-l levels of literacy. These activities are aligned ~~to~~ with the statutory definition in WIOA and include activities to support an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

English Language Acquisition (ELA) activities, as defined in WIOA to include programs of instruction that are designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language. ELA activities address transition requirements outlined in WIOA Regulation §463.31 and appropriately lead to:

- attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and
- transition to postsecondary education and training; or
- employment.

ELA activities include proven or evidence-based instructional techniques and learning strategies that support oral skills development for English language learners. AEL grant recipients will meet the requirements §463.31 through a variety of strategies including, but not limited to:

- offering educational and career counseling services through Career Pathways Navigator services offered under contract by each grant recipient that enable English language learners to transition to postsecondary education and training or employment;
- alignment of curricula to the state content standards and align to the reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension needs of English language learners; and
- enrollment in Career Pathways programs including IET and Integrated EL Civics.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education activities, as defined in WIOA, are aligned with education services provided to English language learners (ELLs) who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enable such adults to achieve in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include workforce training.

As outlined in AEL Letter 04-16, Change 1, which promulgated revised policy guidance on this issue, AEL grantees must use funds allocated under WIOA §243 to provide EL Civics services in combination with Integrated Education and Training (IET). Integrated EL Civics funds must be used to support the IET service approach outlined in AEL Letter 02-16, Change 1, including Workforce Training and Workforce Preparation Activities. Integrated EL Civics must:

- include instruction in literacy and English as a second language (ESL);
- include instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation;
- be provided in combination with IET, including AEL activities, Workforce Preparation Activities, and Workforce Training outlined in AEL Letter 02-16;
- be designed to prepare adult ELLs for and place them in unsubsidized employment in high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
- be integrated with Local Workforce Development Board (Board) and Workforce Solutions Office functions to carry out the activities of the program.

In PY'21-'22, TWC issued revisions to three AEL Letters requiring all ESL coursework to include civics instruction. Civics instruction must align with the Content Standards' civics standards. Contracts under the current AEL grants were also amended to reflect this policy change and require grantees to include civics in all ESL activities.

Integrated Education and Training (IET), as defined in WIOA, which provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for educational and career advancement. AEL grant recipients have been implementing and expanding IET programs as an option under required Career Pathways components and will continue these services. Projects are being implemented with the required elements of contextualized and concurrent AEL, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training.

Workforce Preparation Activities, as defined in WIOA, are activities, programs, and services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in using resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment.

AEL grant recipients are implementing Workforce Preparation Activities as part of contracted WIOA §243, Integrated EL Civics Education Services, and through IET.

Family Literacy Activities, as defined in WIOA, are activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family, and better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate each of the following activities:

- Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency
- Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children
- Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and how to be full partners in the education of their children
- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences

Family literacy activities are required under Texas law and are integrated into AEL contracts statewide.

Grantees are also required to implement one of three services models, referred to as “Intensive Services” models:

Workplace Adult Education and Literacy (Workplace AEL), as defined in WIOA, are adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Services for Internationally Trained English Language Learner Professionals provide services including, but not limited to:

- basic skills preparation for professional credentialing exams;
- specialized career advising;
- ESL services contextualized for targeted occupations; and/or
- professional opportunities.

ESL services contextualized for targeted populations provide enough intensity to allow for rapid progress and use the appropriate English language assessment to determine whether a participant’s academic or professional English skills are sufficient for academic coursework.

Transition to Reentry and Post-Release Services as defined in WIOA are educational programs for transition to reentry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Grantees may provide services under this category that include educational counseling or casework to support individuals’ transitions to reentry and other post-release services.

TWC is committed to making long-term investments that enhance the capacity of providers to implement research-based models, including programs that support accelerated options, such as integrated education and training, Workplace AEL, distance learning, and service models that support the career advancement of ELLs, including Integrated EL Civics education. These services are required of all AEL grant recipients statewide and promote the employment and postsecondary education and training advancement of students. To these ends, TWC promotes innovative career pathways programs and opportunities for students to gain incremental marketable skills and reach their goals. The use of innovative strategies, often leveraging interagency collaborations, allows programs to generate positive employment and workforce training outcomes, while simultaneously serving more students at a range of functional levels.

TWC encourages activities that uphold the following priorities, including priorities that leverage the workforce development opportunities and efficiencies offered through concurrent enrollment:

- Expand integration with Boards and Workforce Solutions Offices (that is, one-stop centers) including concurrent enrollment in workforce system program under WIOA, TANF, the state child care program, Trade Act, vocational rehabilitation, and other Workforce Solutions services
- Establish or expand partnerships with community colleges and other training organizations that create greater opportunities for adult learners to transition to postsecondary education and workforce training programs, including concurrent enrollment in IET services
- Develop innovative strategies to meet the needs of adult learners based on local resources, including strategies that:

- enhance, support, and use educational delivery mechanisms that facilitate the immediate delivery of services to students; or
- facilitate the progress of students from standard AEL programs toward a service-delivery activity that results in employment, a training certificate or certification, or college degree.

Each program year, grantees are assigned enrollment targets for these different AEL services delivery models, which include IET and Intensive Services.

For the next statewide RFA, state staff will revise application items that were addressed during OCTAE's 2019 virtual monitoring review of Texas' grant application process, including separating the past effectiveness criteria (one of the 13 considerations) from demonstrated effectiveness. In the next RFA, demonstrated effectiveness of an applicant will be considered before the review of that application.

CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

TWC's AEL grant recipients use funds, as allowable, to provide educational programs for individuals in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals. Academic programs include the following:

- Basic education
- Special education programs as determined by the Texas Education Agency
- English literacy programs
- Secondary school credit programs
- IET

- Concurrent enrollment
- Peer tutoring
- Transition to reentry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism

Corrections is an optional activity for grantees, and the solicitation of \$225 funds is combined with the overall grant application, with grantees proposing corrections activities and associated funding. As part of the grant competition, TWC ensures that in areas of the state where correctional facilities are located, contracts are negotiated to include this activity.

~~To further support the expansion of allowable corrections activities under WIOA, TWC has received a discretionary grant from DOLETA to assist communities in planning and implementing comprehensive reentry programs to help adults who have been involved in the adult criminal justice system make successful transitions back to the community. Partnering with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), Boards, and Workforce Solutions Offices in the target area, TWC will implement programs and strategies that will improve coordination of post-release and pre-release services to eliminate the gap between release from prison and enrollment into a reentry program leading to employment with the goal of reducing recidivism.~~

TWC is continuously working to implement IET in correctional facilities (where permitted) to support the successful transition of individuals from prison to employment. In spring 2021, OCTAE accepted TWC AEL to participate in a national technical assistance initiative to develop IET in corrections models to support the expansion of such models in Texas. In September 2021, TWC approved a state-leadership--funded initiative to support the expansion of IET models in correctional facilities, through a contract with One example is the Accelerate Texas program's partnership with the Windham School District (the statewide school district serving incarcerated individuals) to develop and expand IET models for an estimated 500 incarcerated individuals who are within two years of pre-release, provide reentry and post-release services to those individuals, and disseminate best practices on developing such models for AEL and workforce system stakeholders. Both the national technical assistance project and the IET in corrections initiative will enable state staff to provide enhanced technical assistance to AEL programs on \$225-funded corrections programs.

~~C. improve incarcerated adults' basic skills and support the attainment of an industry-recognized Level 1 certificate before their release from prison.~~

INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, including how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section

243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

TWC requires the implementation of Integrated EL Civics education into all its statewide grants, ~~including assigning enrollment targets for Integrated EL Civics.~~

Starting in PY'21-'22, statewide contracts were amended to state that all ESL activities include a civics component. This change was supported through policy revisions via three AEL Letter updates that require all ESL coursework to include a civics component that aligns with the content standard's new civics standards.

Grant recipients deliver Integrated EL Civics education through a program of study delivered as follows:

- Instructional services in:
 - **English as a Second Language and literacy** instruction; and
 - **Civics** education instruction emphasizes the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and US history and government to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to become active and informed parents, workers, and community members;
- Delivery:
 - **In combination with Integrated Education and Training (IET)** in specific occupations or occupational clusters, provides workforce training opportunities for eligible participants
 - **to prepare and place participants in unsubsidized employment** in in-demand occupations that leads to economic self-sufficiency; and
 - **in collaboration with Boards** to carry out the activities of the program.

TWC's policy guidance letter on Integrated EL Civics education, AEL Letter 04-16, Change 1, Implementing Integrated Education and Training English Literacy and Civics Education—*Update*, outlines the ~~revised~~ programmatic and funding requirements of the program under WIOA. TWC requires all grant recipients to submit their Integrated EL Civics education models through an online Implementation Plan portal that allows the agency to review programmatic design and compliance and provide related technical assistance.

Additionally, as outlined in AEL Letter 07-17, [Change 1](#), TWC requires that grantees provide all participants with a syllabus that includes general information about the course, attendance requirements, and course objectives, in addition to the following (for all IET programs, including Integrated EL Civics):

- A description of each of the three core components of an IET program of study, including:
 - AEL activities;
 - Workforce Preparation Activities; and
 - Workforce Training;
- A single set of learning objectives that identifies specific adult education content,

Workforce Preparation Activities, and Workforce Training competencies

- The schedule for the IET program of study, showing how the core components are provided concurrently within the scope of the program
- Information about the recognized postsecondary credential for which participants will prepare, including how the credential is earned and which organization administers the credential

Grantees are required to enter participants who receive Integrated EL Civics services in combination with IET, into the statewide data system using a specific code to track these participants.

All ESL coursework, including Integrated EL Civics, must include a civics component starting in PY'21-'22, which aligns with the Content Standards' civics standards.

Beginning with PY'21-'22, all AEL grants were amended to reflect revised AEL policy that requires all ESL coursework to include civics standards. Beginning in PY 2019, Texas will implement the process of incorporating civics competencies into all ESL curriculum. The process includes updates to the Texas AEL Content Standards, policy changes, and incorporation into statewide professional development and training.

Integrated EL Civics education is a required activity for AEL grantees. Related service delivery requirements are included in all statewide grants, with enrollment targets assigned to each grantee for this program model. These requirements were incorporated into the second statewide competition held in fall of 2017 for AEFLA funds, aligning with Subpart C in WIOA Title II, related to competition, direct and equitable access, same grant process, and use of the 13 considerations described in Section 231(e) of AEFLA Section 243. To support the integration of this model with IET, TWC developed a differential cost model, calculating a higher-cost-per-participant to allow the setting of targets for all career pathways models, including Integrated EL Civics. This additional funding is expected to help pay the costs of aligning the curriculum and help pay the participants' tuition in postsecondary education and training.

Integrated EL Civics education is a required activity for AEL grantees, with specific enrollment targets assigned to each grantee for each program year. To better prepare these Integrated EL Civics participants for unsubsidized employment, grantees are required to work with their Boards for the purposes of identifying and understanding labor market information, supporting participants with supplemental services to remove barriers from their educational goals, and identifying career opportunities. This is required for all program models, including Integrated EL Civics.

One area of growth is Integrated EL Civics models in entrepreneurial training. The training prepares individuals to successfully own and operate their own businesses, which many already are doing to some extent. By building the entrepreneurial training models into reputable businesses, TWC can better support the objectives of economic self-sufficiency and business growth in Texas. Several program providers have worked with their Boards to broaden the program's entrepreneurial curriculum and better serve participants in their region.

For example, the Dallas area AEL program has implemented an entrepreneurship program that provides ESL instruction and skills training for future entrepreneurs, collaborating with the Local Workforce Development Board, local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and other local organizations to ensure that students in the program have guided mentors and adequate workforce preparation for creating businesses.

As a requirement of all program implementation, including the Integrated EL Civics model, grantees are required to work with their Boards for the purposes of identifying and

~~understanding labor market information, supporting participants with supplemental services to remove barriers from their educational goals, and identifying career opportunities to support placement in in-demand jobs. Additionally, several programs have worked with their Boards to broaden the program's entrepreneurial curriculum, where applicable, to better serve participants in their region.~~

To further support the transition of English language learners into the United States and increase the enrollment pipeline into the Integrated EL Civics programs, Texas AEL requires all ESL coursework to include civics instruction that is aligned with the content standard's civics standards. ~~will begin the process of incorporating civics competencies into all ESL curriculum through updates to the Texas AEL Content Standards and related professional development on the standards and associated curriculum and instruction models.~~

D.C. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

TWC continues to use state leadership funds to support activities that strategically position the statewide system not only for continuous improvement across program outcomes but also for innovation in new directions related to full system integration with core programs and postsecondary education and training.

TWC will continue to focus the allowable grant funds made available under WIOA §222(a)(2) to carry out state leadership activities that enhance the quality and compliance of the AEL system and support the development of innovative models of service delivery. Updates provided in this Combined State Plan modification include initiatives that have since been approved by TWC's three-member Commission (Commission) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other strategies of statewide significance.

In April 2020, shortly after Governor Abbott declared Texas a disaster site in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission approved state leadership-funded initiatives to provide AEL grantees with additional resources needed as a result of the pandemic.

On June 30, 2021, the Commission earmarked AEL state leadership funds for a comprehensive statewide strategy to end the middle skills gap (SGM123 initiative strategy) in Texas to address job preparedness, connection, and progression to help put more Texas workers on a path toward a career in a rewarding middle skills job. Middle skills gap initiatives funded with state leadership funds are further described in this section and include the acronym SGM123.

Required projects under WIOA §223 for which TWC has designated State Leadership funds, and anticipated projects that will be continued or designated for development and implementation, are further described below.

Commission Approval of State Leadership-Funded Initiatives

Initiatives that are funded with AEL state-leadership WIOA §223 funds must be approved by the Commission; furthermore, Labor Code and Texas Administrative Code rules provide that the Commission must review and approve AEL grant awards, including state-leadership funded initiatives.

Sec. 223(a)(1)(A) for the alignment of AEL activities with other core programs

Both the Career Pathways Professional Development Center (CPPDC), previously known as the Career Pathways Expansion grant, and the Accelerate Texas initiatives support the continued development of content and delivery models that support career pathways as required under Section 223(a)(1)(A), supporting alignment with other core programs. The CPPDC, approved by the Commission in June 2021, -supports professional- development to improve AEL integration across WIOA Titles serving priority populations through cross training of stakeholder groups such as AEL grantees, Boards, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), and Career and Technical educational providers. The CPPDC will provide evidence-based professional development to stakeholders on:

- quality career pathways models,
- coenrollment across WIOA Titles, and
- strategies that support student success, system alignment, and improved performance outcomes.

In fall 2021, as part of the Commission's SGM123 initiative strategy, the CPPDC contract was amended to allow the grantee to develop curriculum for the construction trades, enhancing IET models for the trades statewide to support AEL programs and Boards as they work to upskill workers and job seekers in Texas.

Another initiative approved by the Commission in fall 2021 to address the middle skills gap and support integration through career pathways expands IET models in correctional facilities. Through this initiative, Windham School District will develop and expand IET models for an estimated 500 incarcerated individuals who are within two years of release, providing reentry and post-release services to those individuals, and sharing best practices with workforce stakeholders to build similar models.

and other assistance, including developing mentoring-related models that pair expert providers with providers that are emerging in their development of fully integrated career pathways-including alignment to Local Workforce Development Board services and informational resources. Similarly, the Accelerate Texas initiative supports the expansion of IET models and other postsecondary transition models, including workplace and apprenticeship projects with employers.

In fall 2021, as part of the agency's response to closing the middle skills gap in Texas, the Commission approved funds for a pre-apprenticeship bridge training program (SGM123), further expanding career pathways foundations in the state. This initiative will require grantees to provide remediated instruction to applicants entering building trades-related Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) to build and practice reading and math skills before transitioning into the first year of a RAP. Grant activities include reading and math support, workforce preparation activities, and digital literacy services to ensure that participants are prepared for the rigor of the RAP.

These initiatives increase the capacity to expand, develop, and implement IET models that focus on career pathways service approaches that include workforce training, development, and integration efforts with Texas Workforce Solutions, Texas community colleges, employers, and other system stakeholders.

Sec. 223(a)(1)(B) for the establishment or operation of high-quality professional development programs

Funds for Texas' -currently has a three statewide- professional development centers- were -

earmarked by the Commission in summer 2020; ~~the~~ statewide professional development center supports high-quality statewide professional development to AEL providers and other system stakeholders and provides:

- data-driven professional planning services and implementation delivered through a structure of professional development institutes of routine and concentrated support to AEL providers;
- maintenance of the Texas AEL contract trainer database;
- event planning for statewide, regional, or local conference or business events;
- research activities to evaluate professional development effectiveness; and
- information resources (including an AEL professional development web page, toll-free AEL hotline, and a resource library collection of curricula and other materials).

~~expansion effort support in other areas, such as the statewide rollout of the AEL Content Standards 2.0.~~ Funds provided by ~~through this center~~ are dedicated ~~for to~~ both supporting volunteer-based providers and developing administrative and instructional leadership among AEL practitioners through the Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA), and ~~for to the Standards Alignment to Industry Clusters Expansion~~ enhancing the Content Standards in order to help facilitate the publication of, and training on, content developed ~~through the Standards Alignments to Industry Clusters grant~~ aimed at improving the Content Standards. In 2021, the statewide professional development center trained AEL administrators and instructors on the Standards 3.0 updates, which included the addition of Family Literacy and Civics standards.

~~The Career Pathways Expansion project also supports the dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices as required in §223(a)(1)(B) in reading, math, and ESL, and is a state leadership initiative currently awarded to a community college.~~ The CPPDC will develop professional development modules for instructors and stakeholders, host yearly statewide institutes and academies, expand the statewide trainer database of on-call subject matter experts, train-the-trainer events, and development of a research-based project each year.

The Distance Education Professional Development Center (DEPDC), awarded in fall 2021, will create a statewide system to deliver distance education and remote learning training, technical assistance, and capacity building services for AEL grantees, workforce system stakeholders, and students.

Sec. 223(a)(1)(C) for the provision of technical assistance to eligible AEL providers

While TWC staff continues to use strategic evaluation and monitoring processes that allow staff to provide just-in-time technical assistance, several state leadership projects ~~are planned to~~ augment the state technical assistance efforts as required under §223(a)(1)(C).

The statewide professional development center ~~and projects~~ described above supports the following:

- The development and dissemination of instructional programmatic practices and related technical assistance as required under §223(a)(1)(C)(i) and based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate to support eligible providers in implementing reading, writing, mathematics, career pathways, ELA, and distance learning
- development and training of civics and family and community standards into the AEL Content Standards ~~Training to providers on content~~

- The development of Leadership Excellence Academies for instructors and administrators
- ~~coordination~~ Coordination of activities with ~~other the CPPDC and DEPDC~~ professional development capacity projects funded by AEL
- ~~distance~~ Distance learning and technology development, deployment, and support as required under §223(a)(1)(C)(iii), including increased distance learning professional development and a statewide learning management system to provide online professional development for staff training, which continues and is planned through the Distance Learning and Technology Integration Institute at the statewide through the professional development center to enhance the development and implementation of technology applications, including increased distance learning and the expansion of a statewide learning management system to provide online professional development for staff training.
- Data-driven professional development planning, services, and implementation
- Routine and concentrated support to AEL grantees and providers
- ~~management~~ Management and development of the Learning Management System (LMS), the Texas AEL ~~personal development (PD)~~ Portal, including information on contract trainers vetted and often trained by ~~TRAIN PD~~ the professional development center
- ~~management~~ Management and development of the agency-provided LMS (Texas AEL PD Portal)
- ~~event~~ Event planning for statewide, regional, or local conference or business events
- ~~research~~ Research activities to evaluate professional development effectiveness and for other purposes as approved by TWC
- ~~provision~~ Provision of information resources ~~for to~~ the public, educators, and students
- Development of virtual learning resources in the areas of basic education, digital literacy, workforce preparation, and job search assistance, to provide additional learning resources in response to the pandemic

The statewide professional development center manages the LEA program and builds leadership capacity within AEL local-grantee management, with the objective to develop, implement, and sustain LEAs that provide access to LEA workshops, webcasts, online courses, technical assistance, and electronic portfolios. TWC will continue to provide access to both an Instructional LEA and an Administrator LEA to support providers through an intensive, year-long professional development opportunity to support program growth and performance.

Additionally, the DEPDC provides support to providers on technology and remote learning practices.

Activities to develop and disseminate instructional and programmatic practices are based on scientifically valid research under §223(a)(1)(C)(i) include the Focus on the Basics initiative, which focuses on research and development to expand best practices in reading, math, and English as a second language

Sec. 223(a)(1)(D) Activities to support the monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of services and innovation expansion ~~as required under section 223(a)(1)(D).~~

Evaluation of local provider services is a priority for the AEL program. TWC staff has worked to develop a strategic evaluation and monitoring process that draws from best practices

developed across TWC's divisions. Each of the professional development center grants requires an evaluation of the effectiveness of the professional development provided through the grant.

Texas AEL is exploring the possibility of funding additional evaluative studies to further support quality program development, which may be considered and approved by the Commission.

Career Pathways Evaluation Study

One such initiative may evaluate the current status of workforce integration WIOA Titles I, II, and IV programs providing local delivery; facilitate regional discussions with workforce system partners to identify ways to improve integration efforts, including career pathways development; provide state-level and evidence-based recommendations to further support a "One Workforce" system (as promoted by DOL in TEN 13-20) in Texas; and develop resources related to regional career pathways ladders.

To support student success and continuous program improvement, Texas is implementing a program quality model ~~to support student success~~ that links deployment of WIOA program enhancements, evaluation of monthly program performance, and information and findings from ~~the~~ TWC's monitoring department to just-in-time technical assistance and the deployment of targeted professional development ~~to support continuous program improvement.~~ WIOA §Section 223 funds support activities within this quality improvement model, including and include the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State through section 223 funded mentoring and professional development projects. In July 2020, the Commission approved funding for a Quality Performance Enhancement Initiative to support continued performance improvement and operational effectiveness statewide. This Request for Proposals was released in winter 2020, but TWC received no applications for this grant.

Wide-Scale Update on Evaluation of the Quality of Comprehensive Intake Services Adult Education Services

In addition to regular programmatic monitoring and evaluation, TWC AEL staff is working with the TWC ~~Division of Operational Insight~~ 3 -division on a large-scale evaluation process that will analyze the effectiveness of comprehensive intake services, professional development activities as well such as student intake, orientation, and onboarding, as they relate to programmatic outcomes.

TWC has invested heavily in providing technical assistance and professional development to ~~teachers in the AEL system program.~~ DOI-13 will be working with AEL to see whether TWC can measure the effectiveness of having more comprehensive assessment services professional development by looking at student engagement, retention, and outcomes, and by comparing students who received more key services as part of a comprehensive assessment to those who received less comprehensive assessment services. before and after the teachers participate in professional development. It is not clear yet whether TWC will have a enough students to evaluate before and after the professional development. However, at some point, TWC expects to have enough data; therefore, even if the project is delayed, TWC's initial analysis and planning should ultimately prove useful.

TWC has been accepted into the PY'19 American Institute for Research National Reporting System Evaluation Learning Community sponsored by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) to develop enhanced ~~evaluation~~ models based on principles of evaluation and learn how to ~~conduct~~ valid evaluations to answer critical questions around program

practices and procedures. [TWC participated in the showcase of our findings through The Evaluation- Learning Community project via webinar hosted by American Institute for Research. The findings were published by TWC in April 2021 and can be found at https://twc.texas.gov/files/agency/ael-intake-services-study-twc.pdf. These findings were shared in a session at TWC's AEL summer institute in August 2021.](https://twc.texas.gov/files/agency/ael-intake-services-study-twc.pdf)

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

[Additionally, the](#)The Commission may designate other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of WIOA, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Assistance to local providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve WIOA's objectives, and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving the objectives, including meeting state performance
- Promotion of workplace AEL activities
- Continued development and dissemination of curriculum frameworks
- Continued rollout and professional development on [the content standards updates](#)
- Outreach, develop, and pilot strategies for improving teacher quality and retention
- Development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adults with learning disabilities or limited English-language proficiency
- Performance enhancement mentor initiatives to support performance accountability
- Performance follow-up and case management activities
- Support and promotion of integration efforts between workforce system partners
- [Promotion and support for reaching special populations in receiving AEL services](#)
- [Expansion of family literacy activities](#)
- [Other activities of statewide significance that promote or support AEL activities](#)

The following descriptions [below](#) provide more detail on allowable state leadership activities for which the Commission [has approved and designated](#) Section 223 funds [and may continue to provide funds and potential new initiatives. As with all AEFLA-funded grant activities, staff may present initiatives for Commission consideration and approval.](#)

AEL Performance Quality Improvement Awards

The Performance Quality Improvement Awards support [Adult Education and Literacy \(AEL\)](#) grant recipient project performance and innovation through dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices in the state. These awards recognize AEL grant recipients' overall program performance [and coenrollment efforts with WIOA Title I programs, and efforts in employer partnerships.](#)

Pell Grant Ability to Benefit Capacity Expansion [\(potential initiative\)](#)

The Ability to Benefit initiative provides funding to support colleges in developing services

for students who lack a high school diploma or high school equivalency and qualify for Pell Grants under new federal Ability-to-Benefit provisions in federal financial aid regulations. [The Commission has previously approved funds for Ability-to-Benefit program models, and the most recent grants ended in fall 2021.](#)

Student Support ~~The Math Assistance~~ Call Center

The purpose of the [Math Assistance Call Center \(MACC\), an update to the previously funded Student Support Call Center](#), is to support AEL students with a focus on high school equivalency mathematics instruction. [This initiative was funded by TWC's Commission in April 2020 in order to provide additional learning resources in response to the pandemic. The objective of the MACC is to provide just-in-time math assistance to students enrolled in AEL programs who are preparing for the mathematics portion of the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency \(TxCHSE\) exam or who lack sufficient skills in mathematics to participate effectively in employment, community, and/or home settings. The MACC, which went live in fall 2020, provides 20-30-minute sessions of one-to-one virtual math support to AEL participants via phone calls, screen sharing, and virtual whiteboards. The call center operates within the infrastructure of TWC's call center phone system and is staffed by individuals trained to provide remote mathematics support. In addition to phone support, call center staff uses online tutoring software to provide visual support to students as they work through questions.](#)

Professional Development Center

The Professional Development (PD) Center is a statewide support system for AEL grant recipients and service providers, Boards, and community- and faith-based organizations engaged in AEL services. The PD Center provides a comprehensive statewide support system that includes, but is not limited to:

- ~~statewide PD training for more than 6,000 local AEL staff and partner agencies;~~
- ~~trainers located in different regions of Texas to ensure relevance and responsiveness;~~
- ~~ongoing recruitment and vetting of PD subject matter expert trainers and maintenance of an online, searchable trainer index;~~
- ~~development, conversion, and adaptation of curricula and multimedia course content;~~
- ~~management of an online learning management system;~~
- ~~event management;~~
- ~~statewide purchases of PD services; and~~
- ~~statewide and local needs analyses and research to improve local performance, promote innovation, and strengthen service quality to students and staff.~~

Learning Management System

The Learning Management System (LMS) is a cloud-based, full-featured, off-the-shelf secure system with course registration and management for in-person, hybrid, and online training events. Funds support access to a cloud-based course library and interactive resources, a web conferencing integrated add-in, and training fees to sufficiently accommodate instructors, administrators, and software content to provide a full array of professional development services across Texas. The LMS:

- enables the [statewide PD Center professional development center](#) to deliver training using a variety of ~~modalities~~[methods](#), including online, face-to-face, and hybrid;

- allows for content authoring, training materials storage, and content import/export;
- centralizes and automates the registration, management, and tracking of both external and internal professional development trainings and certifications at individual, subrecipient, grant recipient, and statewide levels;
- provides transcripts for staff trained through the AEL system; and
- provides a 24/7 option for professional development, increasing skills, knowledge, and abilities for AEL staff and stakeholders.

Distance Learning Mentor Initiative

~~This initiative provides funding to implement consortia to build capacity, expand, and/or improve performance of AEL Distance Learning (DL) initiatives throughout Texas. Consortia take advantage of the economy of scale by creating a larger network of resources and encouraging relationships, so organizations are not working in isolation but instead identifying common needs, goals, and resolutions. Mentor sites:~~

- ~~• serve as single point of contact to AEL on DL initiatives;~~
- ~~• support mentee pilots;~~
- ~~• develop DL curricula and blended learning models; and~~
- ~~• establish and maintain a resource platform for AEL providers who are new to DL in Texas.~~

Professional Development for Nonprofit Adult Literacy Organizations

Professional Development for Nonprofit Adult Literacy Organizations include professional development services for tutors, instructors, program administrative staff, and trainers of nonprofit adult literacy organizations. These services include:

- training on literacy volunteer management, which may include volunteer recruitment, training, placement, monitoring, and retention;
- low literacy instruction/tutoring for either native English or nonnative English speakers;
- development of collaborative partnerships and data sharing relationships with AEL grant recipients, libraries, Boards, and VR;
- data sharing relationships with collaborating entities; and
- other services based on the results of a statewide needs assessment and in collaboration with TWC.

Leadership Excellence Academy

~~The Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA) program builds leadership capacity within AEL local-grantee management, with the objective to develop, implement, and sustain LEAs that provide access to LEA workshops, webcasts, online courses, technical assistance, and electronic portfolios. TWC will continue to provide access to both an Instructional LEA and Administrator LEA to support providers through an intensive, year-long professional development opportunity to support program growth and performance.~~

To further the alignment of Adult Education and Literacy competencies in demand by employers, TWC contracted to facilitate the addition of entry-level industry skill requirements to the AEL Content Standards. Four lead organizations, along with industry experts and adult educators, worked with TWC to align standards to four target industries. The result of this project, which was completed in 2018, was the Texas Adult Education and Literacy Content Standards 2.0 (Standards 2.0), which updates and aligns the 2016 Texas Adult Education and Literacy Standards with the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in in-demand entry- and intermediate-level jobs in four industry clusters: advanced manufacturing; construction and extraction; health care sciences; and transportation, distribution, and logistics. While the 2016 content standards were unchanged with this update, Standards 2.0 aligns academic standards with jobs and provides a resource for workforce development specialists and educators to focus instruction and career guidance, guide the skills development needed for work, and to define skills and tasks not easily identified in academic standards.

Beginning in PY'19, Texas ~~will continue to advance~~advanced the standards by incorporating civics and community and family content competencies to the standards to ensure that all facets of AEL activity ~~have alignment to~~are aligned with recognized proficiencies. The Commission may approve enhancements to the Content Standards to include additional competencies in the future.

Performance Follow-Up and Case Management

The Performance Follow-Up and Case Management program supports performance data on exit-based measures. Funds support an allocation for grant recipients to provide staff time for follow-up and case management or to purchase such services from entities, including Workforce Boards for students who are not coenrolled in Board services. Funds are allocated through a proportionate distribution with a base amount. This grant expired in 2021, although Texas AEL may consider future funding opportunities for this initiative's purpose.

Performance Enhancement Mentor Initiative

The Performance Enhancement Mentor Initiative supports poor-performing providers through intensive program support and mentoring delivered by the initiative, with high-performing peer providers. This RFA received no applicants, although the Commission may consider future funding opportunities for this initiative's purpose.

Integration Funding (potential initiative)

The objective of the Integration Funding initiative is to promote and facilitate integration efforts between WIOA core programs and other workforce system partners. ~~TWC's~~ The Commission has funded these integration initiatives in previous program years, most recently with the Workforce Integration Initiative to support referrals between Boards and AEL programs and post-exit tracking, and will pursue continuous improvement around integration in the future.

Potential Initiatives for Special Populations

~~This initiative~~ The Commission may consider creating special initiatives that and supports efforts to reach special populations in receiving AEL services, such as, but not limited to, serving opportunity youth and, serving skilled immigrants, ~~expansion of~~expanding reentry and post-release service models, and providing capacity-building activities for workplace AEL models.

Employer Engagement Initiative

In fall 2021, as part of TWC's response to closing the middle skills gap in Texas, the Commission approved funds for an employer engagement initiative (SGM123) to further

workplace literacy models in the state. Grantees will offer workplace literacy activities, workplace literacy activities with employer-provided training, and workplace literacy activities with integrated education and training, leading to industry-recognized credentials through this grant. Grantees are required to develop curricula for workplace programs as a deliverable, which will be disseminated to workforce system stakeholders as educational resources for job readiness and progression within the industry sector.

Family Literacy Supports

Another initiative approved by the Commission to support closing the middle skills gap in Texas (SGM123) is a math family literacy initiative, which enhances and develops math supports for families in Texas by:

- supporting English language learners and their family members' advancements in math;
- offering interactive math services through interactive instruction conducted via telephone or online applications for English language learners and their children;
- being accessible to eligible adult education participants with their children throughout Texas, both online and to those with limited broadband connection; and
- enhancing students' digital skill building.

Adult Educator Teacher Academy (potential initiative)

This initiative responds to an ongoing teacher shortage in Texas and supports the certification of adult educators who provide instruction in AEL statewide, the majority of whom work part-time and/or have a K-12 teaching background. AEL program administrators report high turnover, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which provides a great challenge in creating set class schedules and retaining students. An adult educator support initiative would support the increase of the number of AEL instructors certified to teach adult education. The Commission may consider such an initiative for funding approval.

Statewide Virtual Provider Pilot

This initiative was approved by the Commission in fall 2021, and supports TWC AEL's goal of increasing the number of adults in Texas with a high school diploma or its equivalent. The initiative provides an option for adults in Texas to connect to educational services virtually to attain such credentials.

Digital Inclusion (potential initiatives)

Texas AEL will continue to explore ways to incorporate digital literacy activities in AEL instruction in order to increase Texans' ability to access AEL services, regardless of geographic location in the state. The Commission may consider such initiatives for funding approval.

E.D. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

Ongoing Program Monitoring and Oversight

Evaluation of local provider services is a priority for the AEL program. TWC staff has worked to

develop a strategic evaluation and monitoring process that draws from best practices developed across TWC's divisions. Texas is implementing a program quality model to support student success that links evaluation of monthly program performance and information and findings from the agency's monitoring department to just-in-time technical assistance and the deployment of targeted professional development to support continuous program improvement.

The AEL Department provides a Monthly Performance Report (MPR) to the director of the Workforce Development Division. The MPR meeting is facilitated by AEL program and contract management staff and led by the AEL director and AEL program supervisor. It includes a monthly snapshot of both program and financial performance across all AEFLA programs, including section 223 projects.

The MPR is the result of a multiphase process that uses timely data gathered from the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) to measure program performance against contract deliverables as well as state and federal performance targets. TEAMS is Texas' state-of-the-art, web-enabled system that maintains student-level data, including demographic, assessment, and outcome data, as well as class, site, program, and provider information. TEAMS users can analyze class, site, or program information using standard reports generated at the user level. TEAMS provides a wide range of information about adult education, including snapshots of student and program performance, personnel qualifications, and staff development activities.

AEL program providers are required to validate their data monthly and submit quarterly Data Sign-off Reports through TEAMS. The Data Sign-off Report requires program providers to describe areas of strength as well as concern. Program providers also are required to submit monthly expenditure reports in TWC's Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system and quarterly narrative reports using a predetermined template that requests information on specific TWC objectives and overall program objectives.

AEL contract deliverables reflect TWC's commitment to strong performance and accountability. These deliverables include a combination of program and financial accountability and encourage program providers to exhibit strong planning through the development of project plans, continuous improvement plans, and standard operating procedures.

To prepare for the MPR, AEL program staff members meet, weekly, at a minimum, to evaluate the overall health of each program, which is measured against contract deliverables; progress toward measures; state performance measures; and expenditures. Program staff members discuss trends in data and issues of concern and develop support plans to address those issues. Because services are aligned to workforce areas, staff can see where specific issues are isolated throughout the state. This provides a structure under which staff can engage TWC's Statewide Professional Development Center and other Section 223-funded professional development and technical assistance support projects to address concerns.

If a program does not show improvement after being placed on a support plan, TWC places it on a Technical Assistance Plan (TAP). TAPs use a timeline of deliverables to improve and support program function. TAP actions may include additional targeted professional development support, one-on-one training in specific areas of weakness or concern, and technical assistance visits by TWC staff to meet and address issues. Members must meet specific benchmarks for a period of four consecutive months to have a TAP lifted. Programs that consistently fail to meet contract deliverables once placed on a TAP are placed on a Corrective Action Plan. Programs that fail to meet objectives beyond this point are subject to sanctions and deobligation of program funds. [TWC Chapter 800 General Administration rules on the deobligation and reallocation of AEL funds outline the deobligation criteria and time frames when TWC may](#)

deobligate from an AEL grantee that is not expending funds or meeting performance, as well as the criteria grantees must meet in order to receive reallocated funds. TWC is reviewing these rules and considering amendments that may provide the agency with greater flexibility to ensure that AEFLA funds are used efficiently during the statewide grant cycle.

Responsive professional development efforts funded under section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA is a central component of the quality model. TWC AEL assesses the quality and responsiveness of professional development through multiple approaches, including the review of local program improvement and remediation of deficiencies that may result after professional development and technical assistance efforts.

For example, through the quality model, a provider that month to month shows poor performance in reading or oral language scores will be advised by their TWC AEL program support specialist or assigned professional development specialist to schedule professional development in these areas. Once the program receives professional development services, the AEL department monitors program improvement to report in the MPR. Professional development is only one remedy to address program improvement and is deployed with other forms of technical assistance.

While changes in local program improvement is perhaps the most direct means of assessing the quality and effectiveness of professional development, it is not the only method of quality review in place. Professional development trainers are required to meet established quality and professional criteria developed and assessed by the state PD Center and AEL staff; training is reviewed by AEL staff to assure alignment with agency objectives and best practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available. Specific professional development efforts funded under section 223 focus on developing curricula and training, including training-of-trainer models on ensuring support for instruction in the essential components of reading instruction and instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners. The Literacy Institute within the state PD Center is focused on professional development in the essential components of reading instruction and instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners. TWC AEL reviews both training curricula deliverables and training for these projects against best practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available. Section 223-funded projects, such as Literacy Texas and the Career Pathways Professional Development Center and Career Pathways Expansion, focus on specifically training volunteers in the content areas, including reading and career pathways implementation and quality. These projects all have deliverables supporting the dissemination of information about relevant models and promising practices.

Additionally, all professional development events include session evaluations and these evaluations are provided to the AEL office, which reviews them monthly.

Subrecipient Monitoring

TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring (SRM) department works with TWC AEL staff to ensure that all 36-37 grantees are compliant and are serving as good stewards of federal funds. Grantees are selected annually for on-site reviews based on a robust risk analysis that includes both objective criteria and input from AEL. All AEL grantees are monitored either in person or through a desk review, with all programs receiving on-site monitoring once every three or four years.

While on-site, SRM reviews expenditures that include, but are not limited to disbursements, cash management, financial reporting, and records management (including eligibility and assessment documentation). To ensure that the grantee has adequate internal controls, staff will conduct interviews with key staff to confirm that internal processes for participant intake, screening, and placement comply with TWC's AEL policy. Testing

samples are identified using the Texas Educating Adult Management System (TEAMS) database and compared with on-site records, testing will include the review of student test scores, credentials, and Measurable SkillGains.

SRM hosts a preplanning meeting with TWC AEL staff to discuss any potential issues before the on-site visit. This gives SRM the opportunity to ask questions about specific items of interest identified during the desk review. It also provides SRM with any technical assistance items that AEL staff has reviewed and discussed with the grantee, including performance issues. The process ensures that SRM obtains an accurate review of program and financial activity and any ongoing issues

Before a review, SRM will request that the grantee submit documents for SRM to conduct a review and analysis to determine each area that will be tested on-site. At the end of the on-site review, SRM conducts an exit conference with the grantee, in which staff identifies any findings or areas of concern that will be identified later in an official report.

The results of SRM reviews improve the technical assistance targeted to local projects. [In addition to these annual reviews, SRM also conducts data validation annually of select grantees, as coordinated with AEL staff and as required by OCTAE PM 19-1.](#)

Data Validation

[Annually TWC SRM conducts data validation per OCTAE Memo 19-1 to provide accurate joint reporting requirements established in OCTAE Memo 17-2. TWC SRM also conducts the same monitoring or other WIOA titles, providing consistent processes and implementation of this requirement across WIOA partner programs. This coordinated effort ensures that reported performance maintains TWC integrity standards.](#)

Deobligation of Funds

TWC is keenly focused on performance to ensure that funds are used effectively to serve customers and produce positive results. Contracted performance benchmarks and performance standards highlight TWC's expectation that grantees will maintain or exceed performance standards through effective service delivery and innovation. TWC rule §800.78, ~~which was amended December 2018,~~ allows funds to be deobligated, including voluntarily, if they are not being used effectively and at expected levels at specified time frames to serve individuals who need AEL services. However, TWC staff works diligently with grantees to provide technical support and assistance in developing strategies to ensure that funds are used to serve customers efficiently and effectively, thereby mitigating risks. [TWC is reviewing these rules and considering amendments that may provide the agency with greater flexibility to ensure that AEFLA funds are used efficiently during the statewide grant cycle.](#)

~~Under current budgetary conditions—as in the past—the need for AEL services exceeds Texas' available resources, and no workforce area is funded to fully meet its needs. TWC expects that AEL grant recipients will identify, and coordinate with, all available organizations and programs in their workforce areas to expand and leverage deliverable services beyond those provided solely through AEL funding.~~

Self-Evaluation and Monitoring of Local Programs

As part of their deliverables, all TWC grant recipients (sole providers and lead grant recipients for consortia of providers) are required to:

- submit a detailed project plan and expenditure projections for AEL-funded activities;

- submit a detailed local professional development plan;
- develop and maintain a procedure that outlines a process for continuous monitoring of subrecipients; and
- if applicable, use TEAMS to regularly monitor program performance across all providers.

Programs use the detailed project plan as an opportunity to analyze their performance, determine the cause of areas of weakness or concern, and develop strategies for improvement in the coming year. Programs are required to tie their professional development activities to this plan to ensure adequate training and support for program improvements.

TWC AEL staff also holds regular conference calls and biannual meetings for program members to share challenges as well as best practices. These forums build on what is working in the field and provide peer-mentoring opportunities.

Additionally, programs are required to regularly solicit student evaluations to assess satisfaction with curricula, instructors, and institutions.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

| The State Plan must include | Include |
|--|---------|
| 1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan; | Yes |
| 2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program; | Yes |
| 3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan; | Yes |
| 4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law; | Yes |
| 5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan; | Yes |
| 6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan; | Yes |
| 7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and | Yes |
| 8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program; | Yes |

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

| The State Plan must include | Include |
|---|---------|
| 1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement); | Yes |
| 2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA; | Yes |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA; | Yes |
| 4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. | Yes |
| 5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303). | Yes |

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the

required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to wioa@ed.gov at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

| | |
|--|--|
| APPLICANT’S ORGANIZATION | Enter information in this column |
| Applicant’s Organization | Texas Workforce Commission |
| PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE | Enter information in this column |
| First Name | Edward |
| Last Name | Serna |
| Title | Executive Director |
| Email | Edward.serna@twc.texas.gov |

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

In the text box below, describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the following instructions posted at <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc>.

TWC grants for AEFLA-funded activities, including the 2017 AEL statewide grants, which began July 1, 2018, adhere to §231(c) and ensure that eligible providers have equitable access to apply and compete for grants and contracts. All TWC AELFA-funded grants and contract opportunities are published on two statewide websites: the Texas SmartBuy-Electronic State Business Daily Search and Texas.gov eGrants Application to ensure equal access to application information. Furthermore, TWC provides notifications to public parties that wish to be notified of these grant and procurement opportunities via email notification, which they may register for on the TWC website.

TWC also ensures equitable access to and participation in all projects and activities conducted with federal adult education funds. The 2017 statewide AEFLA grant required offerors to describe how they effectively met the 13 considerations under WIOA, which includes how responsive the offeror is to serving individuals in need of AEL services and the ability to serve individuals with disabilities. Before awarding contracts, which went into effect July 1, 2018, for the AEL statewide grant, TWC required AEFLA grantees to describe the steps to be taken to address the access needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers to equitable participation. Barriers addressed were those based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age.

Additionally, general contract terms for all AEL contractors, including those funded under AEFLA §223 (state leadership activities) and §231, are required to comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. General contract terms for all AEFLA-funded contracts require grantees not to discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, or beneficiary because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, temporary medical condition, political affiliation or belief, or citizenship, and to ensure that the treatment of employees and applicants are free of discrimination.

Regarding AEFLA administrative funds, which fund TWC staff administering the AEFLA program in Texas, TWC's equal opportunity policy conforms to all applicable federal and state laws to provide equal opportunity in employment and maintains processes to ensure nondiscriminatory practices are enforced within the agency's hiring practices. AEFLA-funded staff and TWC staff are required to take training on diversity, equal opportunity employment, and discrimination prevention.

Programs must address the special challenges that students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries face in overcoming barriers to participation and are required to describe how individuals will benefit from equitable access to services, including access in the areas of facilities, assessment, orientation, and overall service delivery.

TWC ensures equal opportunities for all eligible students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to participate in any project or activity carried out under the applicable programs, including AEL, and promotes the ability of such students, teachers, and beneficiaries to meet high standards. AEL grantees are required to provide accessible, safe, and convenient instructional facilities that are ADA-accessible, near public transportation, close to free parking, and secure and safe.

TWC ensures that local providers give equal access to, and afford equitable participation in, all such projects and activities through the monitoring and technical assistance process, and that they follow the applicable laws.

2022 Statewide RFA

For the next statewide RFA, which will be published in fall 2022 for grant awards to be effective July 1, 2023, state staff will revise application items that were addressed during OCTAE's 2019 virtual monitoring review of Texas' grant application process. This includes separating the past effectiveness criteria, one of the 13 considerations, from demonstrated effectiveness, ensuring all applicants meet provider eligibility requirements. Demonstrated effectiveness of an applicant will be considered before the review of that application. All statewide grants will ensure that GEPA requirements are met.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data

reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

| Performance Indicators | PY 202 20 <u>Proposed/Expected Level</u> | PY 202 20 <u>Negotiated/Adjusted Level</u> | PY 202 31 <u>Proposed/Expected Level</u> | PY 202 31 <u>Negotiated/Adjusted Level</u> |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Employment (Second Quarter After Exit) | 32.7 <u>37.0</u> % | 34.2 <u>34.2</u> % | 39.0 <u>27.7</u> % | 34.2 <u>34.2</u> % |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit) | 36.0 <u>30.3</u> % | 30.3 <u>30.3</u> % | 38.0 <u>30.3</u> % | 30.3 <u>30.3</u> % |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit) | \$5,150 <u>\$4,854</u> | \$4,854 <u>\$4,854</u> | \$5,200 <u>\$4,854</u> | \$4,854 <u>\$4,854</u> |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 35.0 <u>34.1</u> % | 34.1 <u>34.1</u> % | 41.0 <u>34.1</u> % | 34.1 <u>34.1</u> % |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 43.0 <u>44.1</u> % | 44.1 <u>44.1</u> % | 45.0 <u>44.1</u> % | 44.1 <u>44.1</u> % |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers | Not Applicable ¹ | Not Applicable ¹ | Not Applicable ¹ | Not Applicable ¹ |

¹ “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 202~~0~~2 State Plans.