Texas Workforce Commission
Adult Education and Literacy Guide

July 1, 2025

Table of Contents

Introduction

How to Read This Guide

The Texas Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Guide is one of several resources that AEL grantees (grantees), service providers, workforce partners, and other stakeholders can use to understand the structure, policies, procedures, and best practices in adult education.

Terms are defined in the [Definitions](#) section of this guide. Other resources that are essential to a full understanding of AEL in Texas are found in the [Resources](#) section at the end of this guide.

Welcome

The Texas Workforce System is designed to maximize innovation, create partnerships, and foster profitable business outcomes to realize a competitive advantage in the global economy for all Texans.

AEL helps achieve this by delivering basic skills, workforce preparation, training, and other career advancement services necessary to prepare Texans to support their families, careers, and communities. AEL supports growth in the state by improving programs for individuals with barriers to employment, identifying transferable skills valued by employers, and assisting individuals who want to complete postsecondary education and training to find employment in high-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Essential to the success of AEL is its strategic integration with workforce partners in the Texas Workforce System established under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Workforce partners such as Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), Workforce Solutions Offices, and vocational rehabilitation (VR) services staff support grantees to promote student success. Similarly, employers, community and faith-based organizations, libraries, and college developmental education programs

supply the system with students and expand the reach and services that AEL provides.

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) AEL services and activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Preparation for high school equivalency (HSE)

- English language acquisition (ELA)

- Digital literacy

- Workplace AEL activities

- Workforce preparation activities

- Integrated Education and Training (IET)

- Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)

- Family literacy activities

- Corrections education

Innovations in education and leveraging the strengths of education, training, support, and career development resources are critical to student success. AEL shares the goal of increasing the array of services for better assisting students with educational goals that support career development, higher education transition, and the tools that strengthen families and communities with workforce partners.

Adult Education and Literacy in Texas

Adult Education and Literacy Strategic Plan

In January 2021, TWC's three-member Commission (Commission) approved the second iteration of the AEL Strategic Plan, which includes a vision, mission, and strategy for the program.

Vision, Mission, and Strategy

Vision

The vision of the AEL program is to deliver education, workforce, and postsecondary education and training outcomes for students through innovative service delivery and partnerships that result in statewide alignments, efficiencies, and accountability.

Mission

The mission of the AEL program is to promote and support a responsive and accountable system that creates value and supports local solutions to addressing the educational and workforce development needs of AEL students, businesses, and community stakeholders.

Strategy

The AEL program aims to support increases in employment, postsecondary education and training transition, skills, and secondary school credential attainment through demonstrated approaches that integrate workforce system services and leverage local and state partnerships.

Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Workforce System

Local Workforce Development Areas

Texas has 28 Local Workforce Development Areas (workforce areas) by which it coordinates adult education and literacy, Workforce Solutions Offices and Vocational Rehabilitation services. Workforce areas are geographic designations developed to help TWC and workforce partners deliver integrated workforce development services.

Each AEL statewide grant is aligned with their Local Workforce Development Board (Board) plan. This alignment supports integrated service delivery and performance accountability.

By law, workforce areas must be composed of more than one contiguous unit of general local government, including at least one county, and the area must be of sufficient size to have the administrative resources necessary to effectively plan, manage, and deliver workforce development services. Other factors used in developing the workforce areas are each area's economic-development needs, analyses of local labor markets, the commuting patterns of its residents, and its community needs, including those of employers seeking skilled workers and individuals seeking jobs and skills training.

The Texas Workforce System

TWC is the state agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to employers and job seekers of Texas. It is the administrative agency that oversees the AEL program, the 28 Boards and their subrecipients, offices, and service providers.

The Texas Workforce System provides workforce development tools that help workers find and keep good jobs and help employers hire the skilled

workers they need to develop their businesses. Through Workforce Solutions Offices across the state and in collaboration with workforce partners, including providers, community colleges, local independent school districts (ISDs), economic development groups, and other state agencies, the Texas Workforce System provides services that support employers, workers, and job seekers. Collaboration across these agencies and local entities is critical to the success of the Texas Workforce System.

Through the integrated Texas Workforce System, TWC administers several federal programs, including all the following core programs under WIOA:

- Title I WIOA Adult program

- Title I WIOA Dislocated Worker program

- Title I WIOA Youth program

- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program

- Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA Title III

- Vocational Rehabilitation program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV

Other federal and state programs include the following:

- Senior Community Service Employment program

- Choices, the employment and training program for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

- Child Care and Development Block Grant Act/Child Care Development Fund programs

- Apprenticeship program

- Skills Development Fund training (customized training for businesses)

- Self-Sufficiency Fund training

- Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment program

Through this integrated system, TWC strengthens the state's workforce development system. The system enables more Texans to work, and it spurs skills and credential attainment, employment, retention, and the wage increases of learners, including those with barriers to employment. The system results in a higher-quality workforce, reduced public assistance, increased productivity, and economic advantage statewide.

The 28 workforce areas are identified and designated by the governor and overseen by the Boards. Boards manage many, but not all, TWC programs.

Adult Education and Literacy Integration with Boards and Workforce Solutions Contractors

The 28 Boards operate more than 180 local Workforce Solutions Offices in Texas. Each Board is responsible for developing, implementing, and modifying a four-year plan for convening and integrating all relevant programs identified as workforce systems–required partner programs. This plan analyzes their local workforce area and communicates the Board's strategy to meet job seekers' and employers' economic and employment needs.

AEL is a required workforce system program partner and one of the six core programs of the Texas Workforce System. Through collaboration and partnership with local Boards and Workforce Solutions Offices, AEL and local AEL grantees help ensure the shared customer base of businesses and job seekers have access to information and services that lead to positive educational and employment outcomes.

Local Boards are expected to support AEL grantees with strategic planning and a customer-centered approach to service delivery through the following:

- Analysis of employment statistics and local labor market information, regional economic development, and industry or occupational demand studies

- Identification of targeted high-growth or existing and emerging high-demand or targeted occupations or occupational clusters

- Prioritization or targeting of existing and emerging high-demand industry sectors and occupations to which Boards direct training resources

- Support of direct services for eligible individuals through referrals or coenrollment by aligning the education, training, employment, and support services provided through Workforce Solutions Offices with AEL service providers for individuals who are basic skills deficient and have barriers to employment

Memorandum of Understanding

Workforce system integration and alignment through Boards and Workforce Solutions Offices requires the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as detailed in the TWC WIOA Guide to Texas Workforce System Operations. The MOU should include at a minimum, the following provisions:

- Service delivery coordination

- Cost and/or funding

- Workforce partner referrals

- Serving individuals with barriers to employment

These provisions are detailed below.

Service Delivery Coordination

- This provision should describe the services to be provided and the way services will be coordinated and delivered through the local workforce

system with each workforce partner's responsibilities and the local workforce system design, including:

- identifying and describing the local workforce system customers; and

- identifying the services provided, including career services applicable to workforce partners.

Cost and/or Funding

This provision should describe the process by which the local workforce system will fund the provision of services and general operating costs to ensure a stable and equitable funding stream for ongoing workforce system operations, including sufficient funding of infrastructure costs (refer to the [Infrastructure Funding Agreement](#) section).

Workforce Partner Referrals

This provision should describe the methods used for referring individuals between Workforce Solutions Offices and AEL for appropriate services and activities, including:

- how to ensure quality customer service and a customer-centered focus; and

- how the local workforce system provides direct access to AEL.

Serving Individuals with Barriers to Employment

This provision should describe the methods used to ensure the needs of workers, youth, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with barriers to employment are addressed when providing necessary and appropriate access to the services available through the Texas Workforce System, including access to technology and materials.

Infrastructure Funding Agreement

Another required component of AEL and Board integration pertains to funding of shared infrastructure costs of the Texas workforce system as agreed upon in a local Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA).

Infrastructure costs are the shared non-personnel costs of operating the local one-stop delivery system. Under WIOA §121, its implementing regulations, and related federal guidance, the required partners must help fund these shared infrastructure costs. Grantees must work directly with Boards to establish the amount and how the grantee will fund the program's share. The program's share of allowable infrastructure costs can be charged to the grant award. In some cases, non-cash contributions and third-party, in-kind contributions provide additional funding methods.

For more information about the MOU and infrastructure cost requirements, refer to:

- WIOA §121(h) and (i);

- Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 463, Subpart J;

- federal guidance in Office of Career and Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) Program Memorandum 17-3, issued January 18, 2017, and titled "Infrastructure Funding of the One-Stop Delivery System";

- OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-4, issued June 16, 2017, and titled "One-Stop Operations Guidance for the American Job Center Network";

- the Workforce GPS Sample MOU and Infrastructure Costs Toolkit; and

- state guidance in Part D of TWC's WIOA Guide to Texas Workforce System Operations.

Texas Workforce Commission Adult Education and Literacy Requirements—Both Applications

Introduction

There are two distinct programs under TWC AEL: one that is funded with Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Section 231 funds and one funded with AEFLA Section 243 funds. The TWC AEL requirements in this section apply to both TWC AEL applications and subsequent grant awards.

Program Eligibility

Federal guidance requires certain federally funded programs to verify all program applicants' legal resident status and eligibility to participate in federally funded programs. This section explains the documentation verification process and management requirements.

Verification of Eligibility

Background Summary

Title IV of the [Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)](#), enacted into law as [Public Law 104-193](#) on August 22, 1996, and amended by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 ([Public Law 105-33](#)), generally limits eligibility for "federal public benefits" to U.S. citizens, U.S. noncitizen nationals, and certain categories of "qualified aliens." For programs that provide "federal public benefit[s]," providers are required to verify eligibility in order to comply with PRWORA.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) released a Notice of Interpretation[1] (NOI), titled "Clarification of Federal Public Benefits Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act[2]" on July 11, 2025, to revise and clarify its interpretation of "qualified aliens." This updated interpretation necessitates revisions in how Title II providers verify the eligibility of noncitizens before providing services.

Due to the NOI, grantees must update their procedures for verifying learner eligibility before providing AEFLA-funded services. Strict adherence to this updated guidance is crucial to avoid disallowed costs. Grantees are responsible for training all staff and ensuring subrecipients (for consortiums) implement these changes.

Any individual **enrolled and/or benefitting from** federally funded programs outlined in Federal Register NOI on or after August 9, 2025, are subject to verification of eligibility to participate in a federally funded program, which includes AEL.

Verification of Eligibility

Grantees are required to verify eligibility of potential students before enrollment as well as current students continuing enrollment to comply with PRWORA.

Although PRWORA primarily uses the term "qualified alien," its terminology has the same meaning as the defined terms found in Section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality (INA) (8 USC §1101). Per the INA, an "alien" is any person who is not a citizen or national of the United States.

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[1] NOI Federal Register Document Citation 90 FR 30896l Document Number 2025-12925
[2] Specifically referring to Title IV of PRWORA for the changes in interpretation of "qualified aliens."

In PRWORA, the term "qualified alien" generally refers to those noncitizens who have lawful immigration status allowing them to reside in the United States as well as immigrants holding specific humanitarian statuses.

Under PRWORA, a person who is not a "qualified alien" is ineligible for payment or assistance of any "federal public benefit." Federal public benefits, as defined in 8 USC 1611(c)(1)(A), include "any grant, contract, loan, professional license, or commercial license provided by an agency of the United States or by appropriated funds of the United States."

PRWORA further defines federal public benefits to include "any retirement, welfare, health, disability, public or assisted housing, postsecondary education, food assistance, unemployment benefit, or any other similar benefit for which payments or assistance are provided to an individual, household, or family eligibility unit by an agency of the United States or by appropriated funds of the United States" (8 USC 1611[c][1][B]). From this definition, AEL services are considered "federal public benefits," requiring providers to verify applicants' lawful presence status and eligibility to participate in federally funded programs.

PRWORA defines a "qualified alien" to mean:

- an alien who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 USC 1101);

- an alien who is granted asylum under section 208 of such Act (8 USC 1158);

- a refugee who is admitted to the United States under section 207 of such Act (8 USC 1157);

- an alien who is paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of such Act (8 USC 1182[d][5]) for a period of at least one year;

- an alien whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) of such Act (8 USC 1253);

- an alien who is granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of such Act ([8 USC 1153[a][7]](#)) as in effect prior to April 1, 1980;

- an alien who is a Cuban and Haitian entrant (as defined in section 501[e] of the [Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980](#)); or

- an individual who lawfully resides in the United States in accordance with a Compact of Free Association" ([8 USC 1641[b]](#)).

Verification and Documentation Requirements

Programs are responsible for collecting learner documentation (which can include more than one type of document) to verify two foundational concepts:

- The learner is lawfully present in the United States.

- The documents provided by the learner contain information that establishes eligibility to receive benefits or services from a federally funded program.

Grantees can verify eligibility using the following approved methods:

- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements ([SAVE](#)) program

- Review of U.S. birth certificates

- Review of unexpired/current [REAL ID](#)–compliant identification cards

- Unexpired/current DHS-issued documentation verifying immigration status

AEL grantees are responsible for determining the immigration status and federal benefits eligibility of the learner based on the documentation they

submit. Various forms of DHS-issued documentation have different category[1] codes and restrictions in granting the holder federal benefits, including services provided with Title II funds. Depending on the category code, the learner may or may not be eligible to benefit from federally funded programs. Learners should be aware of whether they are eligible to receive federal benefits or not.

Approved methods of documentation will be updated on the learner's **Personal Information** page in the state's data system. Refer to Data Management System Entry Requirements for more information on data entry requirements.

There is no exhaustive list of documents. To prove U.S. citizenship or legal permanent resident status, applicants must provide one valid, unexpired document from the list below. This list is not comprehensive, and TWC does not provide funding for individuals to obtain these documents.

Acceptable documentation of citizenship or legal permanent resident status includes, but is not limited to:

- REAL ID (not Limited-Term REAL ID)
- U.S. Birth Certificate
- U.S. Passport
- Consular Report of Birth Abroad
- Form N-550, Certificate of Naturalization
- Form N-570, Certificate of Naturalization
- Form N-560, Certificate of Citizenship

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[1] A list of examples of different types of categories for lawful presence in the United States along with acceptable documentation to verify status for each specific category can be found in "Verifying Lawful Presence Guide," which is a DPS-issued guide. This list shows that several documents (such as the I-94) can have different category codes, which determine a person's eligibility to benefit from a federally funded program like AEL.

- Form N-561, Certificate of Citizenship

- Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)

- Temporary I-551, Machine Readable Immigrant Visa

- Temporary I-551, Permanent Resident Stamp

Consideration for Corrections

Due to the challenges of collecting documentation for individuals being served in corrections, programs should create guidance that outlines how they are working with institutional staff to determine learner eligibility based on PRWORA guidelines and criteria. Learner eligibility must be determined using one of the required forms of documentation outlined in the Verification and Documentation Requirements subsection.

The MOU with the institutional facility and the program's standard operating procedures (SOPs) should detail how institutional staff verifies that learners have legal presence in the United States and are eligible to participate in a federally funded program. Although programs have flexibility in determining processes and procedures, including forms to be used (if relevant), with their partner institutions, the following information at minimum should be included in the MOU:

- Clear verbiage that outlines the two criteria that AEL programs must fulfill (legal status and ability to participate in a federally funded program) and the verification options available (e.g., U.S. Birth Certificate, SAVE, REAL ID, and DHS Documents) to fulfill them

- Details explaining how the institutional facility will report to the AEL program each learner's eligibility determination and which verification option was used to determine eligibility

  ➢ This information will be used when completing the learner's **Personal Information** page in the data management system.

- Explanation on how learner eligibility will be reverified at least every three months and how learners who are deemed ineligible will be removed from services

- Details outlining how learner information will be shared and stored to ensure PII compliance

- Clear verbiage stating that individuals who are on an ICE hold or those who do not have legal status in the United States are not eligible for services

Since it is understood that providers are typically unable to obtain actual copies of official documentation for individuals receiving corrections services, they must document that the institution's records will be used as eligibility verification in the learner's **Participant Notes** page within the data management system. This process needs to be clearly described in the provider's SOP for monitoring purposes.

Monitoring Requirements

Grantees must implement a process for obtaining a copy of an approved form of identification during the comprehensive assessment process and before providing services to the learner. This process must be clearly documented in the grantee's SOPs for comprehensive assessment, including the following:

- **Verification Prior to Services:** Grantees must verify eligibility to receive services from federally funded programs for individuals who otherwise meet population eligibility requirements before delivering any services.

- **Acceptable Documentation:** Citizenship or immigration status must be verified by submission/collection of current, unexpired (if an expiration date exists) documentation that contains required information outlined in [Verification and Documentation Requirements](#) and from one of the listed resources. A copy of the current documentation must be maintained in the learner's file, a secure centralized location, or a digital location for monitoring purposes as outlined in the grantee's SOP.

- **Nondiscrimination:** Grantees must comply with the nondiscrimination provisions in WIOA §188 and its implementing

regulations. Grantees must ask all learners to submit and provide proof of eligibility to receive services from federally funded programs.

- **Regular Verification:** For each new period of participation, grantees must verify citizenship/immigration status prior to reenrollment in services to ensure learners are still eligible to receive services from federally funded programs. Eligibility documentation for all active learners must be reverified at least every three months from the time the learner enters services and undergoes the first verification to ensure the documentation has not expired.

- **Reports for Verification:** Report options in the data management system have been modified to include Eligibility Verification information that is entered into a learner's profile. These reports will include the documentation type received, the expiration date, and a countdown to the expiration date to help programs reverify and track which active learners have documentation that is about to expire.

Grantees must train all relevant staff in the updated procedures for documentation collection. The lead organization in a consortium is responsible for ensuring that all subrecipients update their guidance and SOPs for collecting documentation of benefit eligibility and that all appropriate staff are trained in the new processes.

Updated SOPs and all eligibility documentation must be available to monitors at the time they request the information for verification. Monitors will refer to the updated interpretation and guidance in the NOI to determine grantee compliance. Grantees' quality assurance team members must refer to the same guidance when conducting regular audits.

Grantees must adhere to the requirements on handling PII, such as eligibility documentation, set forth in WD Letter 02-18, Change 1, issued March 18, 2024, and titled, "Handling Sensitive Personal Information and Other Confidential Information—Update," and subsequent issuances. These requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sending, receiving, processing, accessing, and storing PII must be performed only on approved computers and not on personal mobile or computer devices

- Photocopy machines and scanners used to copy PII must be in a secured or restricted area

- Only authorized users may access or photocopy PII.

Please refer to additional information under Personally Identifiable Information, which is under the subsection Customer Profile and Required Data Collection.

Data Management System Entry Requirements

All collected documentation for eligibility must be entered into TWC's data management system. Without exception, verification based on received documentation must be entered for every learner on the learner's **Personal Information** page. If there is a unique identifier (document number) on the verification document provided to the grantee, it must be entered into the data management system.

Customer Profile in Data Management System

In the state's current data management system, grantees must enter three key sources of information on the **Personal Information** page, as shown in Figure 1:

- SSN or SSN Not Disclosed

- REAL ID or No REAL ID

- Eligibility Verification Documentation

While the new data system is being updated to reflect recently released guidance, grantees must do the following:

- **SSN Collection**—Grantees must continue to ask for an SSN upon program entry and enter it into the data system if provided. This assists the state with data matching and grantee performance. Figure 1 shows where this information should be entered in the data management system.

- **Verification of Benefit Eligibility**—Grantees must document and input the type of documentation received in the "Eligibility Verification Document" textbox under the **Personal Information** page in the state's data system based on the type of approved method (SAVE, U.S. birth certificate, REAL ID, or DHS-issued documentation) provided by the participant. If the DHS-issued documentation option is chosen from the dropdown, the grantee must also enter the name/type of document that was received. Enter the document number and expiration date, if applicable. Figure 1 shows where this information must be entered in the data management system.

Figure 1: Personal Information Page in TEAMS

Grantees may refer to Table 1 to determine if documentation collected from established students and entered into TEAMS is acceptable according to the updated NOI guidance outlined in this guide. It is the grantees' responsibility to determine if existing documentation is current and contains the information necessary to determine if the learner is eligible to participate in federally funded programs or if new documentation needs to be collected. Grantees must develop a process for verifying active learners' existing documentation and clearly state the process in their SOP for Comprehensive Assessments. The process should include entering the initials of the person verifying the documentation as well as the date verified in the data management system. Grantees must ensure relevant staff and subrecipients (if applicable) are trained and implementing the process.

If an acceptable and current form of documentation that contains information verifying lawful presence and eligibility to participate in federally funded services for an existing and current learner was received, no additional documentation needs to be requested. The "Verified By" and "Verification Date" fields on the **Personal Information** page must be completed. A note may be added in the **Participants Note** page in the data management system.

If a form of documentation that was initially received from an existing and active learner is expired or does not contain information verifying lawful presence and eligibility to participate in federally funded services, grantees should do the following:

- Learner information in the data management system must not be deleted whether or not an acceptable form of documentation is received; **and**

- one of the following updates must be made:

  ➢ If a current/unexpired form of documentation verifying lawful presence and eligibility to benefit from a federally funded program **is unable to be obtained**, a note must be made in the **Participant Note** page in the data management system, and AEL

services must cease. Grantees are encouraged to note if the participant was referred to another organization for services; **or**

➤ If a current/unexpired form of documentation verifying lawful presence and eligibility to benefit from a federally funded program **is obtained**, all information on the **Personal Information** page must be completed to confirm benefit eligibility was verified.

Table 1: Crosswalk of Previously Accepted Documents and Updated NOI Document Guidance for Verifying Eligibility to Benefit from a Federally Funded Program

List of *Previously Received Documentation *Provider must determine if previously received identity documentation meets current NOI guidance for benefit eligibility criteria.	NOI Documentation Guidance for Benefit Eligibility
Driver's license or state ID A regular driver's license or a regular state ID is not a REAL ID	U.S. REAL ID • No substitute or regular ID • Limited Term REAL IDs are not permissible
Birth certificate	U.S. Birth Certificate only
No substitute	DHS Systemic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program

List of *Previously Received Documentation	NOI Documentation Guidance for Benefit Eligibility
*Provider must determine if previously received identity documentation meets current NOI guidance for benefit eligibility criteria.	
• Federal, state, or local government identification card • U.S. Passport • Public assistance/social services records • Work permit • Native American tribal document (Tribe must be registered in the Federal Register. If not registered, an approved form of documentation must be provided.)	Must be DHS-issued[1] documentation[2] verifying citizenship or immigration status showing: • lawful presence and eligibility to benefit from federally funded programs

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[1] Current/Unexpired U.S. Passports are acceptable even though they are issued by the U.S. Department of State.

[2] Descriptions and photographic examples of documents can be found on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service website. Not all documents in the list are acceptable to confirm citizen, eligible noncitizen, or registered alien status. Programs are to use linked resources to discern, based on received documentation and the category code (if applicable), a learner's lawful presence and eligibility to benefit from a federally funded program.

List of *Previously Received Documentation *Provider must determine if previously received identity documentation meets current NOI guidance for benefit eligibility criteria.	NOI Documentation Guidance for Benefit Eligibility
• Baptismal record • School records • School identification card • Other official documents issued by a foreign government agency, such as a consular identification card • Unable to obtain documentation— extenuating circumstance noted in file • Hospital record of birth • Record showing date of birth	If one of these following options was chosen in TEAMS for an existing and currently active student, the student will need to submit an updated approved form of documentation for compliance with the updated NOI. If a student cannot provide an approved form of documentation, services must be discontinued or else the program may be subject to disallowed costs.

Grantees can find descriptions of some of the qualifying documents on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) Commonly Used Immigration Documents. If additional documentation is collected from established students to meet the updated NOI requirements, grantees must

make a copy of the documentation and store it according to their updated SOPs as previously outlined in the [Monitoring Requirements](#) section.

If potential students are awaiting the renewal of a document (have a receipt showing they paid for an application to receive a document), they should be asked for a different form of documentation that is current due to the requirement that documentation must be current and unexpired. The receipt is not approved to use for verification of benefit eligibility, so students should not be enrolled to receive services.

If current, active students are awaiting the renewal of a document (have a receipt showing they paid for an application to receive a document), they should be asked for a different form of documentation that is current due to the requirement that documentation must be current and unexpired. The receipt is not approved to use for verification of benefit eligibility. If they are unable to provide another document that is approved to verify eligibility, they may be placed into a planned gap to avoid exiting services if they will be able to provide the necessary documentation within the planned gap time frame. Whether a planned gap option is chosen, services must not continue to be provided until appropriate documentation is received.

Eligible Population to Be Served

The eligible population to be served with funds awarded by TWC for the purpose of carrying out any WIOA Title II program consists of eligible individuals who have attained 16 years of age and who are not enrolled (or required to be enrolled) in secondary school under state law (Title 2, Texas Education Code [TEC], Chapter 25, §25.085), and who:

- are basic skills deficient;

- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or

- are English Language Learners (ELLs).

Grantees must ensure that individuals who have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent are eligible for AEL services if those individuals are basic skills deficient or are ELLs.

Additionally, grantees must ensure that a learner applying for entrance into an institution of higher education (IHE) is considered eligible to receive AEL services if the individual:

- meets the definition of an eligible individual based on tests administered following the TWC AEL Testing Guide; and

- scores into National Reporting System (NRS) levels 1–3 on the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) 2.0 for college placement in any area—reading, writing, or mathematics.

Grantees must collect and maintain a documented TSIA 2.0 score from an IHE to provide AEL services, and grantees must verify eligibility of students referred from an IHE for AEL services using tests administered according to the TWC AEL Testing Guide.

Grantees must ensure that intake procedures include requirements that staff requests SSNs at intake as described in AEL Letter 02-19, issued August 8, 2019, and titled "Collection of Certain Participant Information for Performance Reporting" for data-matching purposes.

Programs serving individuals 16–18 years of age must ensure each student meets an exemption to compulsory attendance under TEC §25.086 before serving them. Such exemptions may include the following:

- Individuals without a high school diploma or its equivalent who are 16 years of age and are recommended to take an HSE course of instruction by a public agency that has supervision or custody of the child under a court order

- Individuals who are at least 17 years of age without a high school diploma or its equivalent and:

- ➢ have the permission of their parent or guardian to attend the course;

- ➢ are required by court order to attend the course;

- ➢ have established a residence separate and apart from their parent, guardian, or other person having lawful control of the child; or

- ➢ are homeless as defined by 42 United States Code (USC) §11302.

Programs serving individuals within compulsory attendance must collect evidence that an exemption can be met. Refer to the section on [Comprehensive Assessment and Orientation](#) for information on [Self Attestation](#).

16-Year-Old Court-Ordered Population

AEL grantees must obtain a court order before enrolling an individual who is 16 years old in AEL services as required by TEC §25.086(6), and must:

- keep the documentation in the learner's file; and

- obtain a signature or letter from the public agency that has supervision or custody of the 16-year-old individual under a court order approving the use of that individual's information and acknowledging the validity of the individual's information on the enrollment form.

For information on handling and storing this information, refer to the subsections [Collection of Eligibility Documentation](#) and [Personally Identifiable Information](#).

Standard Operating Procedures

There are seven standard operating procedures (SOPs) required for all grants. Grantees may develop additional SOPs to help with local oversight and control, but, at a minimum, each grantee regardless of application type must develop an SOP for the following:

- Strategic Outreach and Recruitment

- Comprehensive Assessment and Orientation

- Customer Profile and Required Data Collection

- Referral and Coenrollment with WIOA core partners

- Support Service Policy

- Exit and Follow-up Service Tracking

- High School Equivalency Subsidy Use and Tracking

Grantees must also disseminate, train, and monitor program and partner staff on SOPs and compliance.

Annual Review

AEL grantees must review their SOPs each year for needed updates or anytime there is a specific challenge related to program implementation (for example, timeliness of data entry). Grantees must train and provide follow-up training to program staff regularly to ensure that SOPs are understood, followed, and working as intended. Updated SOPs must be submitted to TWC, which can be done any time through the program year.

Strategic Outreach and Recruitment

As part of the connection phase of service delivery, providers must ensure that they are using a recruitment strategy designed to reach eligible customers, including:

- those identified as most in need of literacy services;

- those desiring services to advance their careers; and

- those who may not be making progress in, but are paying for, college developmental education.

Requirements

Using a recruitment strategy requires creating an SOP to ensure the following:

- Using consistent, asset-focused, and empowering messaging in all recruitment communications

- Using branding as stipulated in provider grants

- Providing multilingual communications in recruitment efforts based on a survey of major language groups in the communities served

- Enlisting the aid of multiple organizations, such as Workforce Solutions Offices, schools, businesses, faith- and community-based organizations (CBOs), community colleges, health services, and other relevant entities in recruitment efforts

- Recruiting and serving the contracted number of students in each contracted category (at a minimum) and ensuring that recruitment efforts are customized according to the target student population

Proactive Strategic Outreach

While student outreach and recruitment are critical activities to support performance outcomes for meeting the economic needs of students and their communities, these activities are some of the most underdeveloped or overlooked areas of service to new customers. Best practices show that strategic recruitment identifies the best customers for the services offered in AEL and aligns with improved program performance.

A model of developing services and waiting for customers to arrive has proven to be unsuccessful in growing a program to meet the needs of the community and fails to provide options for students in need of services and who can take advantage of programs such as Career Pathways.

Increasingly, AEL programs in Texas are asked to focus on meeting outcomes related to college and career preparation and transition. This is because the options that traditional service delivery offered did not attract

the populations that can benefit from AEL services to enter training, find employment, or facilitate a career boost.

All recruitment efforts should be based on an alignment of local area need for AEL, program objectives, performance measures, and customer goals and objectives.

Waitlist Management

Providers should avoid waitlists. AEL customers need and seek immediate services to address often-pressing economic and educational objectives.

AEL providers must ensure they have adequate scheduling, direct service, and distance learning offerings to avoid having a waitlist. However, all programs also must have a written procedure for waitlist management that includes:

- alternate educational and/or workforce development activities customers may participate in while waiting for services;

- a plan for enrolling students in distance learning activities; and

- follow-up contact procedures to enroll waitlisted customers when space becomes available.

Comprehensive Assessment and Orientation

Comprehensive assessment is a critical part of successful program management. The term "comprehensive assessment" implies that the process consists of more than the required eligibility testing. Comprehensive assessment not only determines the eligibility of learners, but also identifies their goals, educational and employment background, potential barriers with which the customer may need support to ensure retention and completion, and it also includes disability accommodation needs, if applicable.

Requirements

All providers must ensure they have a written SOP for comprehensive assessment and orientation that, at minimum, includes the following components:

- Enrollment form/signed release of information

- Verification of eligibility

- Digital Literacy and Equity questionnaire

- Individual Training Education and Career (ITEC) plan

- Testing and placement

- Support service needs determination

Testing and Placement

AEL providers must follow the requirements for testing and placement stated in the Texas AEL Testing Guide. Providers should defer to the AEL Testing Guide for official policy and guidance. A summary of these requirements follows:

- Texas requires that learners be assessed using an NRS-approved test instrument as outlined in the AEL Testing Guide before they can be enrolled in a class if they are not utilizing the Alternative Placement policy.

- The testing process must be transparent and explained in advance to learners. Before testing, test takers must be told why they will be tested and what the test results will be used for.

- As soon as possible after testing, learners must be informed of the test results with a thorough explanation of the results and the associated performance levels.

Providers must ensure that a learner's test results are used to inform other comprehensive assessment activities, such as development of an ITEC plan, which should include goal setting.

Assessing English Language Learners

For individuals identified as ELLs, AEL grantees must determine the most appropriate assessment test to administer based on the individual's English language proficiency and goals. If the AEL grantee determines through comprehensive assessment that an ELL is adequately proficient in English to meet the set goals, the AEL grantee must document how English proficiency was determined in the student's file.

Examples of the facts on which a determination of proficiency is based include the following:

- The student tested out of range on a state-approved English as a Second Language (ESL) test.

- The student completed an alternate ESL assessment, which may include locally developed assessments that verified sufficient English proficiency for the student to meet desired goals.

For Adult Basic Education (ABE) or Adult Secondary Education (ASE) baseline assessment for ELLs, AEL grantees may use any test approved in the Texas AEL Testing Guide as the pretest for ELLs, including tests approved for ABE or ASE levels, if the grantee has made and documented a determination of English proficiency in the learner's file. ABE- or ASE-approved tests may be used for reporting Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs) for ELLs through pre- and posttesting. The learners will be considered ABE or ASE students in the NRS and must make appropriate gains on an NRS-approved test or must gain another of the appropriate measurable skills as outlined in the Texas AEL Testing Guide.

For exceptions to testing in all subject areas, grantees must administer pretests that include all subject areas of an assessment, unless the grantee has a documented reason for not doing so that is based on the learner's goals and the program objectives. If a grantee does not administer pretests that include all subject areas, the grantee must document the reason for the exception and maintain documentation in the learner's file. Grantees must

adhere to the pretesting requirements as outlined in the Texas AEL Testing Guide.

Customization for Program Type

To allow providers flexibility in structuring services and designing comprehensive assessment processes, grantees have flexibility to design student orientations based on the type of service model the student is enrolling.

Like comprehensive assessment, orientation is part of the entry phase of service delivery. Learners must attend a student orientation at the beginning of each period of participation (POP) even if they have more than one POP in a program year, and this process must be described in an SOP document. Learners' attendance at orientation must be documented in TWC's data management system under **Career Services**.

The duration of orientation should correlate to a learner's goals and desired outcomes, as well as be customized for the different types of AEL services provided. For instance, a workplace AEL class at an employment site might require a short orientation, because the goals and objectives are designed jointly by the employer and the provider before the class starts and the outcome is predetermined. An orientation for a learner entering an IET may be longer and lead to an on-ramp prior to the IET.

An established AEL participant (a student with 12 or more direct hours) who will enter into an IET or workplace AEL class must also attend the scheduled orientation specific to the IET or workplace literacy program to receive all relevant information and participate in the intake process for that particular class or program.

In general, all orientations should be customized for the activity for which the orientation is designed. Elements that most orientations contain include the following:

- Information about the specific program the learner is entering (for example, IET, IELCE, or Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency [TxCHSE])

- Review of attendance policy and class participation expectations

- Referral to available support and partner services

- Information about learning styles, learning strategies, and skills for success

- Emergency evacuation procedures

- Grievance procedures

- Rights and responsibilities of learners

- Program code of conduct

Programs should ensure that all learners, including ELLs and individuals with disabilities, understand and have access to program information.

Enrollment Form and Signed Release of Information

AEL providers must collect certain demographic and personal information from individuals seeking AEL services to comply with federal and state requirements. AEL provider staff collecting this information must be trained to obtain, maintain and protect personally identifiable information (PII). Students may request a copy of local privacy policies at any time.

Refer to the subsection [16-Year-Old Court Ordered Population](#) for guidance on collecting an enrollment form and a signature for release of information.

Standardized Enrollment Form

The state has created an enrollment form that contains all the required personal and demographic elements for data collection. The WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) consists of 24 common WIOA elements that all WIOA partners must collect. The enrollment form and enrollment instructions can be found on the TWC Adult Education & Literacy Teachers & Providers web page.

Signed Release Information

Each student file must have a release of information form that the student has signed so that relevant information can be shared as necessary with other entities. This release includes entering information into TWC's data management system. The signed release must address the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), information release protections, and must include:

- information about the specific types of records that may be released;

- names of entities authorized to release the information, including TWC;

- names of entities authorized to receive information, including TWC; and

- the purpose of information released to each recipient.

The signed release of information form may be designed locally, but it must provide a way to ensure that students understand the consent that they are giving when enrolling in AEL services.

If AEL providers desire to participate in research studies or other evidence-based initiatives conducted at the state or national level, they should consider additional forms or consent language that would allow them to determine students' interest in participating.

Collection of Eligibility Documentation

AEL providers must ensure that eligibility screening is performed before a learner is enrolled in a class. One way to ensure that all necessary documents have been received is to create a checklist for use during the intake process to ensure that each learner is eligible for the orientation process. Checklist items should include the following at a minimum:

- Enrollment form—state-designed form

- Release of information—one release form that incorporates all the language required to share learner data and acknowledge the learner's consent

- Forms that are in a legible font, contain sufficient space for requested information, and are created in a way that protects the student's PII.

Student eligibility requirements for AEL include the following:

- Proof of basic skills deficiency or of being an ELL in the form of an approved NRS test or alternative placement policy as outlined in the AEL Testing Guide

- Lack of high school diploma or its recognized equivalent

All individuals under 19 years of age who lack a high school diploma must first self-attest that they are not currently enrolled in a Texas secondary education program and are specifically exempt from compulsory school attendance per TEC §25.086.

Once this has been established, AEL providers must then determine if the student meets one of the exemptions outlined in TEC §25.086 (refer to Table 1 for more information).

Table 2: Age-Related Eligibility Documentation

Age	Required Documentation
16	Recommendation to take the course of instruction by a public agency that has supervision or custody of the child under a court order (Refer to the subsection 16-Year-Old Court Ordered Population.)

Age	Required Documentation
17–18	**Any** of the following: • Parent permission (on enrollment form) or self-attestation • Court order or referral from public agency that has supervision or custody of the child under a court order • Proof and/or self-attestation that individual lives separate from parent and/or guardian • Proof and/or self-attestation of homelessness

Self-Attestation

AEL grantees may enroll an individual within the compulsory age of attendance in the AEL program without a parent's permission if the individual is 17 or 18 years of age, does not have a high school diploma or HSE, and has been determined eligible by a local grantee in accordance with TEC §25.086.

AEL grantees must first try to obtain permission from the parent or guardian when determining eligibility for a 17- to 18-year-old individual. AEL grantees must document a parent's or guardian's permission with a signature and keep the signed documentation in the individual's file.

AEL grantees may create their own self-attestation form to determine whether an individual who is 17 or 18 years of age and who cannot obtain a parent's or guardian's permission meets the criteria for receiving a qualified exemption under TEC §25.086. However, the following information is required to be included on the self-attestation form. Additional information the grantee wishes to collect may be included on the same form.

AEL grantees must include the following prompts and questions on the self-attestation form to determine whether an AEL services candidate is already attending secondary school:

- Last name:

- First name:

- SSN:

- Local phone number:

- Birth date (MM/DD/YYYY):

- Are you attending school?

- What is the name of your school?

- What is the last date that you attended school?

- Are you enrolled for next semester?

If any of the candidate's responses indicate that the candidate is enrolled in secondary school, the candidate is not eligible for AEL services.

AEL grantees must include the following prompts and questions on the self-attestation form to determine whether an AEL services candidate is living with a parent:

- Do you live in a home that your parent owns or rents? (If the candidate answers "Yes," then the candidate needs the parent's permission.)

- Where do you usually sleep at night (street address, apartment number, city, ZIP code)?

- How long have you been at that address?

- Do you pay or receive bills in your name?

- What bills do you pay or receive?

- To what address are the bills delivered?

- What is your parent's or legal guardian's address if it is different from the address where you sleep at night?

- When was the last time you slept at your parent's or legal guardian's address?

If AEL grantees determine that a candidate has an established residence separate and apart from the candidate's parent, legal guardian, or legal ward (that is, an individual other than the parent or guardian who has lawful control over the candidate), then the grantees can enroll the candidate in AEL services with or without the permission of a parent, guardian, or ward.

AEL grantees must include following prompts and questions on the self-attestation form to determine whether an AEL services candidate is homeless as defined in 42 USC §11302:

- Do you live in a place that has no windows, doors, running water, heat, or electricity?

- Are you living in a place that is overcrowded?

- Are you staying with a friend or relative because of a loss of housing or economic hardship, or for a similar reason? (Examples include eviction, foreclosure, fire, flood, divorce, domestic violence, the loss of a job, being told to leave by your parent, or running away from home.)

- Are you living in a shelter? (Examples include a family shelter, a domestic violence shelter, a shelter for children or youth, or housing funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.)

- Are you living in an unsheltered location? (Examples include living in a tent, in a vehicle, in an abandoned building, at a campground, in a park, or in a bus or train station.)

- Are you living in a hotel or motel because of a loss of housing or economic hardship? (Examples include eviction, foreclosure, flood, fire, hurricane, and lack of money to pay deposits for a permanent home.)

- Are you living in transitional housing? (That is housing that is available as part of a program, is offered for a specific length of time only, and is partly or completely paid for by a church, a nonprofit organization, a governmental agency, or another type of organization.)

If responses determine that the candidate meets the criteria for homelessness, the grantees may enroll the candidate with or without the permission of the parent, guardian, or ward.

AEL grantees must keep completed and signed self-attestation forms in the student's file. Both the candidate and AEL representative must sign and date the form. Once a candidate is enrolled in the AEL program, grantees must transfer information from the self-attestation form to the individual's profile in TWC's data management system.

Digital Literacy Access Questionnaire

AEL grantees must develop and implement a process to obtain the state's standardized digital literacy and equity questionnaire as part of their comprehensive assessment. The questionnaire must contain, at a minimum, questions with the predetermined responses that are housed in the state's data management system under the learner's **Education Plan**.

Individual Training, Education, and Career Plans

Orientation must include a process for establishing short- and long-term goals with students for student success and retention. These goals establish the basis for the required Individual Training, Education, and Career plan (ITEC plan).

While the development of the ITEC plan may begin during comprehensive assessment, providers should ensure that this goal-setting process is completed during the orientation prior to specialized services and that it informs placement decisions. The ITEC plan is similar to the Employment Training Plan (ETP) that a learner may be required to complete if receiving services under WIOA Title I. An individual referred from Title I who has

already completed a comparable individualized plan with another core partner will not need to complete a new ITEC plan. However, AEL grantees must collect and retain a copy of the plan.

The ITEC plan is not a static, one-time-only document, but one that may be used throughout an individual's participation in services, reflecting updates and changes that may be relevant to changing circumstances and goals. The goal of the ITEC plan is to identify and prioritize long-term and short-term academic and career goals.

TWC is in the process of developing further guidance and data system enhancements to standardized ITEC plan components.

Customer Profile and Required Data Collection

Requirements

Providers must ensure that they collect information required by the state and federal governments as outlined in AEL Letter 04-21, issued June 7, 2021, and titled "AEL Enrollment and Data Validation Requirements," including applicable attachments and subsequent issuances.

Data collection and verification require the sharing of PII. Programs must develop data review procedures that ensure protection of all PII.

Staff must collect, record, and secure information on locally developed intake and other data collection forms and ensure that the information is noted in TWC's data management system in a timely manner. Staff must also use best practices for protecting PII and establish SOPs on customer profile data collection, PII, and data management as required. All collected forms must be available for monitoring.

All TWC information holders, including TWC employees, grantees, contractors, sub-contractors, and others, must maintain sensitive PII consistently according to the law applicable to the context in which the PII

was collected or held. This requires knowing the source of the information and the context in which that information is held.

Personally Identifiable Information

AEL providers must ensure compliance with the minimum requirements outlined in TWC privacy policy and WD Letter 02-18, Change 1, issued March 18, 2024, and titled "Handling Sensitive Personal Information and Other Confidential Information—Update," and subsequent issuances, for protecting PII. Policies and procedures related to PII are to be followed by every TWC contractor, grantee, employee, agent, and consultant who handles PII on behalf of TWC. TWC policy requires that these individuals abide by the following guidelines:

- Collect sensitive PII only as authorized.

- Classify data.

- Limit use of sensitive PII.

- Minimize proliferation of sensitive PII.

- Secure sensitive PII.

Report suspected and known violations or breaches of PII per WD Letter 02-18, Change 1.

Referral for Coenrollment with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Core Partners and Programs

Requirements

It is important for providers to understand their student populations in ways that go beyond their educational levels. If a program has a large population of students who are not in the workforce or are casually attending class for social integration and only a small number of students who are there for

college and career transitions, that information is useful when developing a strategy for recruitment.

While individuals who do not have career or college objectives may continue to receive services, providers will achieve better performance results if they expand outreach beyond these populations. A program recruitment strategy that reaches a diverse customer base depends on the depth and diversity of the program's partnerships. Employers make powerful allies and provide opportunities to reach students who are working and need services to progress in their careers.

Additionally, most communities—urban, rural, large, or small—have multiple organizations serving similar populations, and students often use services from more than one agency. Rather than programs using passive recruitment methods (or none at all) to recruit students directly, providers should form strategic partnerships that include cross-referral from the Texas workforce system, VR services, social services agencies, and college developmental education departments to help bring students, including those with career and college goals, to the programs.

Support Services Policy

AEL grantees must develop and implement a support service policy that includes transportation assistance and child care.

Support Services Needs Determination

Many students could benefit from the knowledge of support services that are available either through the AEL provider or through partnership with other organizations, such as Workforce Solutions Offices. At a minimum, AEL providers must determine need for support services with each individual and appropriate referrals must be made to ensure that students have access to the resources needed to successfully participate in the program.

Funding Support Services

OCTAE Program Memorandum 24-3, issued January 31, 2024, and titled "Use of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Funds for Participant Child and Dependent Care and Transportation Costs – Frequently Asked Questions," outlines the parameters for the use of AEFLA funds to carryout support services. AEL providers must develop a procedure for the distribution of transportation and child care support services for AEL learners. AEL providers will work closely with other organizations within their service areas to develop referral systems for additional support services including, but not limited to:

- utility assistance;

- medical expenses;

- housing emergencies;

- legal issues;

- food insecurity; and

- other needs-related payments that are not an allowable use of funds under AEFLA.

Using AEFLA funds to pay child and dependent care and/or transportation costs in order to ensure that adult learners are able to attend and participate in AEFLA-funded programs is allowed so long as these costs are reasonable, necessary, allocable, and otherwise allowable under the cost principles in 2 CFR Part 200. For example, these costs may be necessary to implement AEFLA programs if they are expended to meet the child and dependent care and/or transportation needs of an adult learner who is not able to pay these costs, or for which other sources of funding could not be obtained, and the adult learner could not otherwise participate regularly in an AEFLA-funded program if these needs are not met.

AEL grantees must report transportation and child care expenses in the corresponding cost category in the Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system.

Transportation Assistance

AEFLA funds can provide the following transportation expenses for AEL learners:

- Bus or other public transit passes, tokens, or tickets

- Prepaid vouchers for ride-sharing services

- Prepaid gas cards

- Service contracts between the AEL grantee and shuttle services or transit providers to provide transportation services for AEL learners

As part of the local procedures, AEL grantees must ensure that there are no available federal, state, or local funds for transportation support services before using AEFLA funds for this purpose, as required by the "supplement not supplant" rule found in WIOA §241(a).

AEL grantees must keep documentation justifying support services in the learner's file and in TWC's data management system's **Support Service** page, accompanied by a participant note, including the date the AEL grantee approves the justification and signed acknowledgment form, type of transportation service being provided, and how long the transportation services will be available to the learner.

For the monitoring, internal controls, and accountability of transportation transactions and documentation to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local policies, AEL grantees should reference the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR Part 200, and TWC's Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts (FMGC).

In addition to allowable transportation services, grantees must partner with other organizations to ensure that additional support services are available

through referral for AEL students. The local comprehensive support services policy should include what will be funded using AEL grant funds, what other sources are available, and how the grantee will access them for the benefit of the student.

Child Care Expenses

In assessing the reasonableness of child care costs, among other factors, market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area are an important consideration under 2 CFR §200.404. The National Database of Child Care Prices published by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor is one resource that may be used to learn about the local market prices of child care. Child and dependent care costs may be allocable to an AEFLA grant or subgrant if they are incurred to implement the AEFLA-funded program and are necessary to enable an adult learner who needs assistance with these costs to participate in an AEFLA-funded program. Costs must be allocated according to the relative benefits received by the AEFLA-funded program.

For example, if an adult education class is two hours long, an AEFLA-funded program may pay child care costs for two hours, plus the time needed by the learner to travel to and from the site where child care is being provided.

Referral to Other Support Services

Providers must have strong referral systems to ensure that a learner's needs are met by another organization when necessary. This includes having:

- a referral system for adults who are not eligible for AEL services or who will benefit more from other services, for example, learners who are college ready;

- identification of learner areas that require further assessment and review, including, but not limited to:

  ➢ homelessness;

  ➢ substance abuse;

- counseling needs;

- identified or suspected disabilities; and

- determination of whether a high-level limited English proficiency adult should be assessed using tests for ESL or ABE, or ASE populations; and

- eligibility for college remedial or developmental education services.

Exit and Follow-up Service Tracking

Requirements

AEL grantees are required to collect post-exit information on educational outcomes, employment earnings, enrollment and progress in postsecondary education or training, and credential attainment for exit reporting.

Follow-up activities include, but are not limited to, the following, which may be provided in an in-person or virtual setting:

- Support for students in the completion of a TxCHSE or entering postsecondary education or training

- Support for participant enrollment in WorkInTexas.com

- Services that provide labor market and employment information about high-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the workforce area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services

- Regular contact with participants and/or their employers to verify employment or help with work-related problems

- Counseling for participants about workplace culture and expectations

- Financial literacy education

- Peer support groups for job-search activities to support employment or postsecondary education or training success

- Mentoring

- Support service referrals

- Leadership development opportunities

- Assistance in securing better-paying jobs, career pathway development, and further education or training

Standard Operating Procedures

AEL grantees must develop and maintain an SOP document that outlines workforce integration and follow-up services and addresses specifically how the grantee will:

- implement workforce integration services, including referrals to Boards and VR employment services and enrollments in postsecondary education or training services; and

- ensure follow-up services through 365 days after exit to collect information on:

  - ➢ educational outcomes;

  - ➢ employment, earnings;

  - ➢ enrollment and progress in postsecondary education and training; and

  - ➢ credential attainment.

AEL grantees must prioritize follow-up information collection on participant earnings and employment information for participants who have not provided an SSN. AEL grantees may assign workforce integration and follow-up duties to career navigators. AEL grantees must be aware that, as one method of student support provided under the AEL program, workforce integration and follow-up services must be explained to the individual:

- during the individual's comprehensive assessment; and

- after the individual exits.

AEL grantees must be aware that follow-up services do not extend a POP if the participant is no longer attending classes and no direct contact hours are being reported. Similarly, follow-up services do not trigger a change in the exit date or delay an exit flag. Grantees must begin providing follow-up services to participants who have not had a direct contact hour for 30 days or if they have indicated that they are obtaining employment, changing employment, or entering postsecondary education, postsecondary training, or the military.

High School Subsidy Use and Tracking

Program Description and Background

TEC §48.302, Subsidy for High School Equivalency Examination for Certain Individuals, requires the TEA enter into a MOU with TWC when transferring funds to provide a subsidy for the cost of a HSE exam for individuals who are 21 years of age or older. TWC has adopted rules addressing program implementation and eligibility requirements for this program at 40 TAC Chapter 805 Adult Education and Literacy rules, Subchapter E, High School Equivalency Subsidy Program.

Currently, the publisher of the general equivalency diploma (GED) exam (GED Testing Service, LLC) is the only HSE exam vendor approved by the State Board of Education to operate in Texas. Test-takers who pass this exam are issued a TxCHSE.

High School Equivalency Subsidy Program Implementation

HSE vouchers may be used only to pay for individual GED tests, including the regular and retake options for online-proctored and computer-based tests.

An HSE subsidy provided to an eligible subsidy recipient may not exceed the cost of a GED exam. Visit the TEA's GED Information web page for the cost of a full battery of the GED exam.

The TWC three-member Commission may redistribute—either midyear or at a time deemed appropriate by staff—the number of HSE vouchers initially approved to that grantee based on the use and demand of HSE vouchers in the grantee's service delivery area. HSE vouchers must not be used to pay for a test-readiness assessment, such as the GED Ready Test.

High School Equivalency Voucher Standard Operating Procedures

AEL grantees are responsible for the management and local implementation of the HSE subsidy program by following the rules in 40 TAC Chapter 805, Subchapter E. AEL grantees must develop SOPs for the implementation of the HSE subsidy program that address the following:

- Eligibility determination of subsidy recipient that includes test-readiness

- The process for distributing vouchers to current, former, and non-AEL learners, including referral of non-AEL learners to AEL

- The process for tracking vouchers offered to state leadership–funded AEL program partners such as Accelerate Texas, Employer Engagement, or other discretionary-funded projects and for distributing vouchers to AEL learners in those programs

- Tracking voucher usage using the TWC-issued HSE Voucher Tracker and TWC's data management system

- Verification and reconciliation of voucher usage

- Tracking performance through GED Manager™ and notifying TWC if an earned credential is not showing in data match

When requested by TWC AEL staff, an accurate list of redeemed vouchers via the HSE Voucher Tracker must be submitted.

Initial Voucher Distribution

AEL grantees must be aware that the initial number of vouchers that are available to the grantee is approved by the Commission annually. TWC staff will notify AEL grantees of the initial amount of funds available to each grantee and request that the AEL grantees indicate the type of vouchers needed for the GED exam, as follows:

- The number of regular or retake online-proctored test vouchers

- The number of regular computer-based test vouchers

- The number of retake and computer-based test vouchers

The voucher request may not exceed the initial amount of funding available as approved by the Commission. AEL staff will send the requested GED voucher codes to the AEL director in the HSE Voucher Tracker.

Subsidy Eligibility and Distribution

AEL grantees are required to ensure that subsidy recipients are eligible per 40 TAC §805.71.

Subsidy recipients must:

- be 21 years of age or older;

- lack a high school diploma or its equivalent;

- be a Texas resident;

- be determined HSE test-ready prior to receiving a subsidy;

- have a current government-issued (state, national, or foreign) photo ID; and

- have proof of residency per TEA's HSE test-taking requirements.

If an individual does not have the required documentation for taking an HSE exam as determined by TEA, then that individual is not eligible to receive an HSE voucher.

AEL grantees must include eligibility determination as part of their SOPs. Distribution of HSE vouchers to ineligible individuals may result in disallowed costs.

AEL grantees must prioritize the distribution of HSE vouchers to current AEL participants and to former AEL participants within 365 days of exit, including participants enrolled in state leadership–funded initiatives such as Accelerate Texas.

AEL grantees must have a process to distribute the HSE subsidy to eligible non-AEL learners, which must include collection of the minimum information needed to create a student record in TWC's data management system. AEL grantees should refer non-AEL learners seeking HSE vouchers to the AEL program that is responsible for processing voucher requests (if relevant).

The grantee must determine eligibility for individuals who deem they completed homeschool but do not have an accredited homeschool diploma (TEA does not accredit homeschool diplomas) and only want to take the HSE exams. If the individual is eligible for a voucher, the grantee must enter a student profile in the state's data management system with the following foundational information:

- Name

- Date of birth

- Sex

- Citizenship verification

The student profile must reflect "No Educational Level Completed," and a note must be made in the Participant Note field along with a Support Service entry. If an educational level is documented (such as HSE complete), the data system will flag the individual as ineligible to receive an HSE voucher.

AEL grantees **do not** need to verify a non-AEL learner's eligibility to participate in a federally funded program, which is a PRWORA requirement, as long as the non-AEL learner is only requesting an HSE voucher and will not be participating in AEL activities or receiving AEL services.

Test Readiness

Before distributing a voucher to a subsidy recipient, AEL grantees must ensure that the subsidy recipient is HSE test-ready by using an assessment tool. The subsidy recipient's instructor or assigned AEL program staff member will:

- determine whether the subsidy recipient is test-ready based on an assessment tool score; and

- confirm that the subsidy recipient is eligible to take the GED test according to the vendor's retest policies (for retake tests).

If a subsidy recipient is test-ready, the instructor or staff member will recommend to the AEL director or designated staff that the individual can receive an HSE voucher. AEL grantees may distribute more than one voucher at a time if the subsidy recipient is deemed test-ready.

AEL grantees may use an assessment tool suitable for determining a subsidy recipient's readiness to take an HSE test, such as the GED Ready practice test or other assessments.

Local Distribution of Vouchers

AEL grantees must enter all subsidy recipients, including non-AEL learners, into TWC's data management system to create a unique user ID. Current and former AEL participants will already have an assigned user ID, which must be used for HSE voucher tracking purposes and for registering the student for the GED test.

AEL grantees must develop a form for subsidy recipients to sign and acknowledge what they must do to participate in the HSE subsidy program. At a minimum, the form must state that the subsidy recipients agree to:

- use the voucher only for themselves and that the voucher must be used within 30 days;

- notify the AEL grantees if they are receiving vouchers from other programs;

- enter the TWC's data management system's unique user ID into their GED account; and

- give the AEL grantees permission to view testing information.

Upon the AEL director or a designated staff member's approval of the release of a voucher to a subsidy recipient, the AEL director or designated staff member must enter the subsidy recipient's assigned GED voucher code on the **Support Services** page in the data management system and track the data management system's unique ID and GED voucher code on the HSE Voucher Tracker.

AEL grantees may refer to the data management system's **Support Services** page to assess how many vouchers have been redeemed by one individual.

Test Registration

Once a subsidy recipient is approved to receive a voucher, the subsidy recipient's AEL instructor or other assigned staff member must help the subsidy recipient register for the HSE test online to ensure that the test is scheduled within 30 days based on the availability of test dates and that TWC's data management system unique user ID is entered into the appropriate field when registering for the test.

Voucher Tracking

AEL grantees must track voucher usage. Once a subsidy recipient takes the scheduled test, the voucher that was used to register for the test is considered redeemed and is counted toward the subsidy recipient's use of the HSE subsidy.

If a subsidy recipient is a no-show for a scheduled test, then the voucher code is also considered redeemed and will count toward the subsidy amount.

However, if the scheduled test is canceled according to GED's cancellation policy, and is not charged, then the voucher is not considered redeemed. AEL grantees must ensure that the amount of subsidy given to a subsidy recipient does not exceed the cost of one full exam.

AEL grantees that are distributing vouchers for GED tests must obtain access to the GED Manager™ by emailing the GED Manager™ point of contact: Jonna Forsyth at jonna.mcdonough@ged.com. This will enable grantees to view all scheduled tests for subsidy recipients and tests paid for with an HSE voucher, as well as status of tests taken using the voucher. By the monthly data validation date, grantees must ensure that required data entered into the TWC's data management system's **Support Services** page is accurate for all redeemed vouchers and verify whether subsidy recipients have redeemed a voucher by taking the GED test or whether the released voucher was never redeemed (in other words, the test was canceled or the voucher was never used to schedule a test). Additionally, AEL grantees must verify that the total value of vouchers granted to a subsidy recipient has not exceeded the cost of the HSE exam.

Data Entry of Vouchers

AEL grantees must be aware that TWC's data management system requires grantees to enter the following voucher information in a learner's record on the **Support Services** page:

- HSE voucher code

- Test type

- Test subject

- Test format

- Voucher amount

AEL grantees must enter all required voucher information in TWC's data management system under the **Support Services** page for both AEL

learners and non-AEL learners by the 15th of each month, as outlined in the Texas AEL Testing Guide.

State Support

AEL grantees may email their questions regarding the HSE subsidy program to TWC.TxCHSE@twc.texas.gov. They may also email the GED Manager™ point of contact, Jonna Forsyth at jonna.mcdonough@ged.com) for any questions regarding GED Manager™ or issues with voucher codes.

If all the initial voucher allotment has been used, grantees may request more vouchers if at least 70 percent of assigned vouchers of any particular type (computer tests, retakes, online proctored) have been used. Grantees must submit their reconciled voucher tracker when making additional requests for vouchers.

Program Design and Implementation

34 CFR §463.20 outlines 13 considerations that states must use when awarding AEFLA funds. This section will focus on meeting state requirements, as outlined in the grant award, as well as recommendations for program success based on proven practices gathered from previous grant cycles.

Managed Enrollment

Grantees must provide a variety of class offerings based on geographical and demographical needs that account for desired outcomes of students and include:

- in-person services;

- remote learning and distance learning options; and

- varied modalities.

Grantees must demonstrate enrollment management strategies by developing a retention and recruitment plan that outlines key action steps and activities designed to meet students' instructional needs.

Instructional Design

Grantees must incorporate essential components of reading instruction based on rigorous evidence-based instructional practices to optimize student-learning gains.

Grantees' instruction and curriculum lead staff member must ensure that the reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and ELA instruction being delivered is based on the best practices derived from the most-rigorous research available, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.

Grantees must implement instructional and other service delivery that:

- organizes instructional and other programs, services, or activities using evidence-based research that align AEL instruction and career and college planning to career pathways;

- uses an evidence-based approach to implement andragogy learning theories that enhance effective instructional design and instructional strategies for adults;

- ensures instructors use information and data from comprehensive assessment and testing for instructional purposes;

- includes a workforce preparation activities curriculum in all levels of ABE, ASE, and ESL instruction that includes critical thinking skills, learning frameworks, digital literacy, financial literacy, and learner leadership skills; and

- aligns with the Texas AEL content standards.

Grantees must also implement instructional strategies that effectively meet the educational needs of students with special learning needs, including those with learning disabilities.

Syllabus Design for Adult Education and Literacy Instruction

WIOA expands and clarifies the variety of programs, activities, and services required under AEFLA, including program objectives for ESL, HSE, and IET, and establishes rigorous performance requirements. Under AEFLA, TWC must ensure that AEL grantees align their courses with the Texas AEL Content Standards v. 4. A syllabus provides information on course content, course requirements, provider policies, and student responsibilities, and TWC uses the syllabus as a means by which AEL grantees can document how the services they deliver address the federal requirements.

Minimum Syllabus Elements

AEL grantees must provide all learners with a syllabus for each class in which they are enrolled that includes, at a minimum, the following elements:

- General information, including any fees or costs related to the course

- Information about the instructor, including the instructor's name and contact information

- The course's location

- The course calendar, including class hours, start and end dates, and holidays

- The course objectives and how they align with the content standards

- The attendance policy, including methods for making up missed classes or completing missed work

- The expectations for course participation, homework, and outside instructional support such as distance learning

- The methodology for evaluation and/or grading

- A list of the necessary learning tools and resources (such as textbooks, digital resources and applications, laptops, and calculators) and information on which of these resources are provided by the program and which must be acquired by the student

- A list of additional forms of support for students, such as:

  ➢ contacts for career navigators and counselors;

  ➢ contacts for TWC resources, such as VR and Workforce Solutions Offices; and

  ➢ contacts for services offered by collaborating organizations.

Additional Requirements for an English as a Second Language Syllabus

In addition to the minimum syllabus elements, AEL grantees must include information in the syllabus for each course in an ESL program showing how the course addresses the AEFLA requirements to:

- align with the content standards, including a civics component that aligns with AEL content civics standards;

- fit into a sequence of courses leading to attainment of a HSE certificate and/or enrollment in postsecondary education, training, or employment; or

- be part of a career pathway.

Additional Elements for a High School Equivalency Preparation Syllabus

In addition to the minimum syllabus elements, AEL grantees must explain in the HSE program course syllabus how, within one year after exit, the courses address the AEFLA requirement of leading to:

- employment; or

- enrollment in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential.

HSE preparation course syllabi must also describe how course outcome objectives address WIOA performance criteria.

Additional Integrated Education and Training Syllabus Elements

In addition to the minimum syllabus elements, AEL grantees must provide the following in the course syllabus for an IET program of study:

- A description of each of the three following core components, including the total number of hours spent in each component:

  ➢ AEL activities

  ➢ Workforce preparation activities

  ➢ 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 at points within the overall scope of the program

- Information on the recognized postsecondary credential that learners will prepare for, including how the credential is earned and what organization administers the credential

- Information on how learners will demonstrate progress throughout the course

- A description of the civics component that aligns with AEL content standards' civics standards for IETs for ELLs

Syllabus Distribution

AEL grantees must distribute the syllabus to students on the first or second day of class, or, in the case of distance learners, within one week after completing the first hour of distance learning or the student's first proxy hour.

Educational Technology and Distance Education

Grantees must ensure AEL activities effectively use technology services and delivery systems, including distance education, in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning, and how they lead to improved program performance.

Grantees must:

- develop, execute, and maintain a distance learning plan that adheres to the state distance education guidance as described in this guide and the Texas AEL Testing Guide and includes implementation of one or more options for distance learning using TWC AEL-approved distance learning curricula;

- integrate the use of educational technology to support instruction to include software, internet resources, and hardware such as smartphones, whiteboards, and other resources; and

- use technology to provide digital literacy instruction.

Grantees may serve individuals who reside outside of their service area if specifically identified in their distance learning plan and agreed upon through coordination with the area grantees where the student resides. Duplicated enrollments will be monitored closely by TWC.

Distance Education

Distance education is a formal learning activity in which learners and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for most of the instructional period. Distance learning materials come in a variety of media, including, but not limited to, web-based programs, print, audio recordings, videos, broadcasts, computer software, and other online technology. Teachers support distance education learners through various methods, including, but not limited to, communication by:

- mail,

- telephone,

- email,

- online technologies and software, and

- face-to-face.

Requirement for Direct Contact Hours

Distance education learners must have at least 12 direct contact hours with the program before they can be counted for federal reporting purposes. Direct contact hours involve interaction between the learner and program staff in real time. This can be a combination of face-to-face contact and contact by telephone, video, teleconference, or online communication in which the provider can verify the identity of the learner and the amount of time expended on the activity.

Live online discussions, telephone conference calls, and live video broadcasts to remote locations are examples of direct contact hours that count under this definition. Distance learners with a POP that crosses a PY only need one direct-contact hour in the new PY to continue as distance education learners in that PY.

Proxy Contact Hours

In addition to direct contact hours, programs may also report proxy contact hours to track time that learners spend on distance learning activities. Proxy hours differ from direct contact hours in that the identity of the learner and/or the exact amount of time spent on a learning activity cannot always be verified directly. Proxy hours are tied to an approved curriculum for distance learning and are noted in TWC's data management system separately from direct contact hours. All proxy hours must be documented using the method described by the approved distance learning curriculum.

Distance Learning Participants

For federal reporting purposes, a distance education learner is an individual who has more proxy hours than direct contact hours at the end of the PY.

A remote learner is someone engaging in synchronous learning transmitted via technology (email, chat, discussion boards, video conference, or audio) so that no physical presence in the classroom is required. Unlike distance education, remote learning must occur synchronously in real time. Contact hours for remote learning are counted as direct hours if they are greater than 15 minutes. Remote learning does not use approved distance learning curriculum, because that would be considered distance education, and the hours counted as proxy hours.

Distance Learning Curriculum Models

To determine a learner's proxy hours, a program must use an approved distance learning curriculum that employs one of the following models:

- The clock time model

- The teacher certification model

- The learner mastery model

Clock Time Model

The clock time model assigns proxy hours based on the time that a learner is connected to or engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.

The clock time model curriculum electronically tracks the time that the learner spends interacting with instructional material and stops counting idle time after a preset period of inactivity.

Teacher Certification Model

The teacher certification model assigns a predetermined number of proxy hours for each activity completed at an acceptable quality level, as verified by the instructor.

Proxy hours for teacher certification model curricula are awarded based on the teacher's certification of a learner's completion of assignments. Teachers may award full proxy-hour credit if the assignment is completed and, in the teacher's judgment, demonstrates competence. Teachers may award half of the full proxy-hour credit if the assignment is only partially completed but still demonstrates competence. Assignments that do not demonstrate competence must be resubmitted by the learners to be counted for proxy-hour time.

Learner Mastery Model

The learner mastery model assigns a predetermined number of proxy hours based on learner mastery of each lesson or unit in the distance learning curriculum.

Proxy hours for learner mastery model curricula are awarded based on a passing score on an assessment of content for an assignment, lesson, or unit. The passing rate is set at a minimum of 70 percent, unless otherwise recommended during the curriculum-approval process.

Currently, there is no approved distance learning curriculum for the IET workforce training component.

Data Management and Documentation

This section outlines requirements and best practices for data collection and integrity, data entry, and document collection and retention to ensure accuracy and compliance with TWC requirements.

General Requirements

AEL grantees, providers, and state leadership projects that provide services to students must follow the data management and documentation requirements as outlined in the AEL Testing Guide, the AEL Performance Guide, and as detailed below.

Statewide Management Information System

In Texas, grantees (including state leadership grantees) are required to track data in TWC's data management system. AEL providers must ensure that the AEL program directors validate data in TWC's data management system by the 15th of each month for activity in the previous month.

Data entry into the data management system should occur at least every two weeks, with no more than a two-week delay between actual activity and activity reported in the data management system. All data must be validated monthly (no later than the 15th of each month) unless this is extended by the TWC AEL director due to extenuating circumstances. After this deadline, the data management system locks certain data elements, such as test scores and contact hours. Refer to AEL Letter 04-21, issued June 7, 2021, and titled "AEL Enrollment and Data Validation Requirements," and subsequent issuances, for further information and guidance.

To support program performance, program directors may assign data management system read-only access to teachers and staff who do not perform data entry. All teachers are required to have either access to TWC's data management system or regular and direct access to its data.

Directors must also ensure that all staff have initial and ongoing training using TWC's data management system.

Standard Forms for Collecting Data

Staff must:

- collect, record, and secure information on locally developed or state-required intake and other data-collection forms;

- ensure that the information is noted in TWC's data management system in a timely manner; and

- use best practices for protecting PII.

Staff must establish SOPs on customer profile data collection, PII, and data management as required in the AEL Testing Guide and AEL Letter 04-21. All collected forms must be available for monitoring.

Error Checking and Quality Control

AEL programs must have procedures for checking data for completeness and accuracy following a prescribed schedule with clear deadlines. An appropriate number of staff members should be assigned to perform these data-checking functions. Programs may have a data coordinator to fulfill this duty. Staff assigned to review data must review all data forms as soon as possible for completeness and accuracy and obtain error reports from the database and review immediately after data entry. To do their jobs, staff members assigned to review data must have access to all staff members—teachers, intake staff, data entry staff, and administrative staff—and the authority to obtain their cooperation and to access test information and student data.

Analysis of Data for Program Monitoring and Improvement

For program monitoring and program improvement purposes, AEL providers must review student data and outcomes, including variables like number of instructional hours received, length of enrollment, the instructors and classes enrolled, learner educational functioning level, and data sign-off. This type of analysis is available in TWC's data management system through a variety of reports. Pre-recorded and other data management trainings are available in the state professional development (PD) portal.

Timely Data Entry

Program procedures for data entry must specify at least one individual to enter learner and class information into TWC's data management system. All staff members should know this individual's role, and that individual should have the authority to request clarification or resolution of errors. Data-entry procedures must also include a prompt, organized way to identify and resolve errors.

All data should be collected and entered at least every two weeks, with no more than two weeks between an activity and the activity being reported in the data management system. Contact hours must be validated monthly. Data sign-off reports are due quarterly and require grantee directors to certify the validity of the data. The data sign-off reports are due 15 days after the end of each quarter (October 15, January 15, April 15, and July 15). A final data sign-off report that represents the PY data is due July 15.

There are no exceptions when the 15th falls on a weekend, holiday, vacation, or institutional break, so appropriate arrangements should be in place to ensure staff meets the deadline.

Staff Member Roles in Data Collection

Collecting, managing, and using learner assessment information and associated data involves every staff member in a program. Therefore, programs must provide staff development with respect to SOPs for program-data management and documentation to ensure that all staff members understand their roles and responsibilities.

All staff members must understand the kinds of data collected, how that data is collected and used, and how the data must be secured and transported to comply with PII security requirements. For each data item, local procedures must include a precise, written definition compatible with state definitions.

Document Collection and Management

AEL providers must ensure all items collected for purposes of eligibility determination are retained in a student file for the retention period stated in their contracts.

The following items can be retained as electronic copies of documents:

- Pretests and posttests

- Sign-in sheets

- TANF eligibility documentation

- Documentation of eligibility

- Age documentation

- Additional verification for individuals who are 16 to 18 years old as required

- Signed information release form

- Signed information collection verification and/or enrollment form

Generally, all hard-copy documentation must match data entry in TWC's data management system. For example, a learner's direct contact hours, as verified by sign-in sheets, should match exactly the contact hours in the data management system. All assessments given to a learner should match all assessments noted in the data-management system, including test form, score, and date. Part of the data-validation process must include verifying that all data has been entered, and all data entered matches the data in the participant's file.

Professional Development

This section outlines Texas' PD requirements and resources.

Texas' multifaceted PD efforts address the following objectives:

- Ensuring that students get the most value from their experience by making sure program staff understand and respond to student objectives and needs

- Improving student performance related to academic, personal, and professional goals and objectives

- Improving program operations through structured and interactive capacity-building efforts

- Ensuring programs are of sufficient intensity and quality, based on the most rigorous research available, and using instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction so that learners achieve substantial learning gains

- Improving data integrity and strategic use of data at the instructional level to increase academic performance

- Increasing and simplifying student support services through workforce and community collaborations

- Increasing the application and transfer of learning through distance learning and Educational Technology

Grantees have a contractual responsibility to deliver local, daily PD training and to continue improving instructional strategies. Additionally, grantees are responsible for providing training based on a local analysis of performance and staffing needs.

Professional Development Centers

Statewide Professional Development Center

The Texas Research-based Adult Instruction Network [(TRAIN) PD @ TCALL](#) is the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) project funded by TWC to serve as Texas AEL's statewide PD and resource center. In that role, TRAIN PD is the hub for the TWC AEL Training, Resource and Innovation Network for Texas ([TRAIN Tex](#)) strategy. For more information, refer to the [TCALL History & Purpose](#) web page.
Note: "TRAIN PD @ TCALL" is the project name only, not an e-mail address.

TRAIN PD @ TCALL is responsible for providing training-of-trainer events, informational resources, and other training support to local programs, students, and stakeholders. PD Center staff, including PD specialists, are responsible for deploying statewide PD activities, identifying and recruiting additional contract trainers, developing and delivering training throughout the state, ensuring online accessibility, and assisting AEL grantees and other providers with PD planning and services provisions, as follows:

- Data-driven PD planning, services, and implementation

- The Texas AEL Contract Trainer Database (with ongoing recruitment/development of trainers)

- Management and development of TWC-provided Learning Management System (LMS) (Texas AEL PD portal)

- Event planning for statewide, regional, or local conference or business events

- Research activities to evaluate PD effectiveness and for other purposes as approved by TWC

- Assisting AEL grantees and other providers with PD development planning and services provision.

Distance Education Professional Development Center

The Distance Education Professional Development Center (DE PDC) offers a Distance Learning & Technology Integration Institute that provides evidence-based professional development for distance learning, digital literacy, and the integration of educational technology. The institute's focus is to help educators use and apply technology tools, techniques, and processes for facilitating learning and assessment as well as supporting teaching practices to improve learning outcomes for learners.

Along with the Institute, the DE PDC at TCALL operates a Distance Education Call Center for Texas AEL students and educators. The call center is open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Agents are available to answer questions from students and instructors about distance learning programs, Zoom, LMSs, and other technical issues related to distance education. These resources help to expand and support digital equity and access across the state. More information is available at the [project website](#) or via phone at 1+ (833) 498-2255.

Career Pathway Professional Development Center

The Career Pathway Professional Development Center (CP PDC) delivers professional learning opportunities to create, expand, and disseminate career pathway models and workforce system integration best practices for Texas. The CP PDC provides evidence-based PD services and PD planning, design, and implementation through a variety of strategies, models, and delivery methods such as webinars, in-person institutes, regional learning opportunities, and consultative services. The CP PDC works to offer concentrated and sustained PD opportunities that support the Texas AEL

career pathway models below with the goal to improve federal and state reporting metrics. The Texas models include:

- IET

- Intensive services (Section 231 funding) like the following:

  - ➢ Workplace literacy and employer engagement

  - ➢ Services to ELLs who are internationally trained professionals

  - ➢ Post-release services for second-chance individuals

- IELCE and IET Models (Section 243 funding)

The CP PDC's work supports workforce system alignment through an annual Career Pathway Symposium and Stakeholder Integration Academy to enhance performance gains, employment, and postsecondary outcomes and enhance joint reporting for core partners. Services are provided to AEL grantees, state leadership grantees such as Accelerate Texas, employer engagement initiatives, or other special initiatives that are focused on career pathways and may include workforce and WIOA program partners and stakeholders throughout the year.

The statewide PD center, the DE PDC, and the CP PDC form a three-tiered approach to PD across Texas to improve services to AEL grantees through professional learning opportunities for program and instructional staff. The centers contribute to integration across the workforce system by the cross training of AEL providers and stakeholder groups such as Boards, IHEs, and career and technical education entities to meet the state's strategic learning goals for all Texans.

Staff Qualifications and Training Requirements

Staff qualifications and training requirements are governed by 40 TAC §805.21.

Test administrators and certain key staff members who use distance learning have specific training requirements, as summarized in this section [Training for Test Administrators and Distance Learning Programs](). The requirements are more fully outlined in the AEL Testing Guide.

Exceptions to All Professional Development

PD requirements apply to all AEL staff hired after July 1, 2013, except for clerical and janitorial staff.

Waivers for Professional Development

On a case-by-case basis, grantees may reduce requirements for PD if there is an exceptional circumstance, such as a medical leave of absence or emergency familial responsibilities that prevent the employee from completing the required hours of PD for the PY. Such circumstances must be documented through a formal exemption request to TWC prior to the individual being placed in a position and before the start on the new PY (40 TAC §805.21(4)). Approved exemptions must be maintained on file with grantees for monitoring purposes. A high number of exemption requests could potentially result in an adverse action, such as a Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) or Corrective Action Plan (CAP) which are outlined in 40 TAC Chapter 802.

The following is an example of an exceptional circumstance:

> Jane Doe was hired in November. Because of an unexpected and extensive medical leave of absence, she received only four hours of PD before June 30. Upon returning to work in August of the following PY, her employer (a grantee) must submit a staff exemption for PD to waive her PD requirements that went unmet while on medical leave.

Documentation

Records of staff qualifications and PD hours obtained must be maintained by each grantee and be made available for TWC monitors when requested.

Documentation for qualifications and PD maintained in personnel file includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- A certificate of completion generated by the PD portal

- A copy of the sign-in and sign-out sheet for a training event

- An agenda that includes the number of PD hours earned

- Materials that show the relevance of the training to the staff member's job duties

- Approved exemption from PD requirement, if applicable

- Approved exemption from staff qualification requirement, if applicable

- Proof of educational qualifications (high school diploma or its equivalent, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and beyond).

Aides, Administrative, Data Entry, Test Proctors, and Supportive Staff

The requirements in this section apply to aides, administrative, data entry, proctoring staff, and staff providing support or employment services to students per 40 TAC §805.21. Examples of positions these requirements apply to includes career navigators, data entry staff, and test proctors.

Educational Requirement and Documentation Required

Staff in these positions must have at least a high school diploma or HSE certificate. Documentation of their high school diploma or HSE must be kept in the staff member's personnel file for monitoring purposes.

Professional Development Hours Requirement

Staff must have three hours of PD related to their primary job duties each PY. For example, data entry staff must have TWC's data management

system training. Each PY, test proctors or data entry staff must earn at least three hours of PD related to their primary job duties.

All staff members paid with AEL grant funds that provide support services or college and career transitional support (such as career navigators), must earn at least three hours of PD each PY.

Supervisors, Directors, and Management

The requirements in this section apply to directors, supervisors, and staff that oversee program assessment services and/or overall program accountability, and instructors, including substitutes, in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and ESL per 40 TAC §805.21.

Educational Requirement and Documentation Required

Staff in these positions must have at least a bachelor's degree. Documentation of the staff member's bachelor's degree must be kept in the personnel file for monitoring purposes.

Professional Development Hours Requirement and Exceptions

Each PY, all AEL directors, supervisors, and other staff with program oversight or coordination responsibilities must receive 15 clock hours of PD. However, staff hired on or after January 1 of a PY are required to receive only half of the PD time required for that PY. For example, if a director is hired December 15, 2024, that director must receive 15 hours of PD. If a director is hired on January 2, 2025, the director is required to receive half of the 15 hours.

Adult Education and Literary Instructional Staff, Volunteers, and Substitutes

The requirements in this section apply to all instructors, volunteers, and substitutes in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and ESL, unless otherwise noted per 40 TAC §805.21.

Educational Requirement and Documentation Required

Instructors, volunteers, and substitutes in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and ELA must have at least a bachelor's degree. Documentation of the staff member's bachelor's degree must be kept in their personnel file for monitoring purposes.

Professional Development Hours Requirement and Exceptions

All AEL instructional staff (except substitutes) paid with AEL grant funds or who acquire direct student contact hours (including volunteers), must earn at least 15 PD hours each PY, with some exceptions as indicated in this section.

At least three of these 15 PD hours must be in principles of adult learning and at least another six hours must be in relevant areas of literacy instruction. If the AEL instructional staff or volunteer is new to the AEL program or to providing direct student services, all six hours of PD must be earned within 30 calendar days of providing instructional activities. The six hours include the required three hours of principles of adult learning and three hours of the relevant areas of literacy instruction. Waiving the requirements for staff members new to direct student services must be approved by TWC AEL staff before the individual provides any instructional services.

The remaining six hours of PD must be in content areas at the discretion of the program, but the content must be related and relevant to the purpose of the program that enables adults to:

- acquire the basic educational skills necessary for literate functioning;

- participate in job training and retraining programs;

- obtain and retain employment; and

- continue their education to at least secondary school completion and postsecondary education preparation.

Exceptions

If an individual has 18 or more college semester undergraduate or graduate credit hours in relevant areas of literacy instruction, that individual is not required to earn the six hours of PD in a content area. Such an individual is still required to earn PD hours in adult learning and in relevant areas of instruction.

AEL instructors and volunteers, except for substitutes, hired on or after January 1 of a PY, are required to earn only half of the PD time required for that PY. PD hours must include three hours of training in principles of adult learning and three hours in the relevant areas of literacy instruction.

Workforce Training Instructors

Workforce training instructors providing occupational training as part of an IET must meet the CTE requirements of the associated accrediting or credentialing entity and/or the hiring institution.

For AEL programs that pay tuition to a postsecondary institution or other entity or vendor for the workforce training component of an IET, AEL grantees must use the basic skills instructor's information in TWC's data management system as the instructor of record and may add the workforce training instructor. For workforce training instructors contracted and paid directly with AEFLA funds, the grantee must enter the workforce training

instructor's information in the data management system and assign them to corresponding classes in which they are generating training hours.

Workforce training instructors are exempt from the AEL PD requirement, as training hours do not count as direct hours, and the instructor is not tasked with teaching reading, writing, math, or ESL. A workforce training instructor tasked with teaching basic skills (reading, writing, ESL, math or other basic skills as the AEL activity) must complete the required 15 hours of PD.

Training for Test Administrators and Distance Learning Programs

Test Administrator Training

Texas requires that test administrators be properly trained before administering standardized tests. All programs must meet and comply with all training requirements established by the publisher of the test instrument, including education and other minimum requirements.

Training requirements for each test are stated in the AEL testing guide. Local programs can train their staff as test administrators through the test publisher or by contracting with a certified or qualified test administration trainer.

More information on training requirements for test administrators can be found in the AEL testing guide.

Distance Learning Training

The Distance Learning Academy is a three-part course that supports programs and staff implementing distance learning. Module 1 focuses on state policy and guidance concerning distance learning. Module 2 helps staff in the selection of distance learning curricula. Module 3 provides the tools to develop an agency plan for implementing and maintaining distance learning programs.

Modules 1 and 3 of the Distance Learning Academy are required for key administrative, teaching, and support staff engaged in distance learning, including any class teacher reporting proxy hours in Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS). Module 1 is an introductory course that explains the state guidance for distance learning in Texas and how distance learning is tracked, documented, and noted in TEAMS. Module 1 must be completed before engaging in distance learning education. Module 2 of the Distance Learning Academy is not required but is highly recommended before selecting an approved distance learning curriculum.

Module 3 covers best practices for developing and using a distance learning program specific to AEL customers' needs. By the end of Module 3, learners will have completed either a detailed analysis of their current agency distance learning plan or a draft of a new agency plan.

More information on training requirements related to distance learning can be found in the AEL testing guide.

Program Monitoring and Improvement

AEL grantees must develop their own local-level monitoring plan based on the results of the risk assessment. This monitoring plan must incorporate the following:

- A schedule or timetable for monitoring TWC-funded activities

- Identification of the type of review planned, such as:

  ➢ on-site review;

  ➢ comparative financial analysis;

  ➢ desk review;

  ➢ staff analysis; or

  ➢ other type of appropriate review.

AEL grantees may perform monitoring reviews either formally or informally and must incorporate the risk assessment results in scheduling decisions.

Controls over Monitoring

To ensure comprehensive and effective monitoring, AEL grantees must:

- require periodic reports from their AEL service providers that outline monitoring reviews, noncompliance issues, and the status of corrective actions;

- provide a briefing about monitoring activities and findings to the Board or appropriate Board subcommittee at regularly scheduled meetings, or to AEL consortium members, as applicable;

- require an annual evaluation of the monitoring function to determine its effectiveness by an individual or entity independent of the monitoring function; and

- develop a written monitoring procedure for monitoring program and fiscal operations.

Reporting and Resolution Requirements

AEL grantees must ensure that monitoring reports:

- identify instances of noncompliance with federal and state laws and regulations and with TWC policies; and

- provide recommendations for corrective action and program improvements.

AEL grantees must ensure that timelines are established for the completion of corrective actions based on the severity of the deficiency and must work with workforce or AEL service providers to ensure implementation of corrective actions.

Fiscal Management

Per 40 TAC §800.68 Adult Education and Literacy, AEL funds for Section 231 activities are available to the Commission to provide services under AEFLA and WIOA Title II, together with associated state general revenue matching funds and federal TANF funds. Funding for Section 243 activities consists of federal AEFLA funds for IELCE only.

Unless TWC specifies otherwise, TWC will issue funding in annual increments each July. Funding levels are ordinarily announced each spring. Actual annual funding levels and timelines depend on federal allotments and other factors. TWC may issue additional funds based on performance, de-obligation and reallocation procedures, carry-forward funds, and other factors.

AEL Letter 01-23, issued February 14, 2023, and titled "Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting System Instructions for Adult Education and Literacy Grant Awards," and its Attachment 1, provide AEL grantees with the information and guidance on the use of TWC's CDER System as well as descriptions of AEL's CDER cost categories. Relevant personnel should refer to this letter and its attachment for in-depth instructions on:

- using the CDER System;

- pertinent fiscal reporting due dates; and

- allocating funds to appropriate cost categories.

CDER is an online system application that TWC uses to:

- collect expenditure reports;

- make payments; and

- perform the financial closeout for grant awards pursuant to:

  - ➢ Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR Part 200;

  - ➢ federal and state reporting instructions and requirements; and

  - ➢ 40 TAC Chapter 800 General Administration rules §800.52 and §800.72.

Designated AEL grantee staff receive CDER system accounts from TWC. It is strongly encouraged that program directors have at least read-only access to the CDER System to track grant funds.

Each month, AEL grantees must complete and certify a monthly expenditure report showing accurate amounts of the prior month's obligations, accrued expenditures, and program income (if any) by the 20th calendar day. The report must also include any leverage or match required to be reported under the grant award (if any). If a grant award has no activity during a reporting month, AEL grantees must enter and certify $0.00 amounts.

If a grantee fails to certify a monthly, final, or revised final expenditure report or closeout within five days of the due date, the cash draw feature will be turned off for all the AEL grantee's TWC grant awards until the late report is submitted.

Cost Allocation Plan and Spending Priority

AEL entities must develop a cost allocation plan for the use of AEL funds.

A cost allocation plan summarizes, in writing, the methods and procedures that an organization uses to allocate costs to grants and programs. Grantees must ensure that the cost allocation plan includes all costs to be claimed as allocated costs under federal or state awards. All costs and other data used to distribute the costs in the plan should be supported by formal accounting and other records that will support the propriety of the costs assigned to federal or state awards.

AEL entities must be aware that AEL grantees are funded by various funding streams. Therefore, it is important to understand the concepts of cost allocation, budget, and spending priorities. Budget development and the coding of expenditures, which should be included in the cost allocation plan, should follow the cost allocation principles found in the reference FMGC Chapter 11.

Expenditures must be reported to the appropriate cost categories to properly track the funds for the services being provided.

AEL entities must ensure that in a multiyear award, Year 1 funds are expended prior to Year 2 funding, regardless of funding type.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Cost Allocation

Some TWC AEL grants contain TANF funds. Currently, TWC completes a back end data match to ensure that needy parents are benefiting from TANF funding as outlined in the state's TANF State Plan. To ensure that TANF funds are appropriately allocated to needy parents, AEL grantees receiving TANF funds must include an SOP in their cost allocation plan for how they will allocate expenditures to TANF grant funds in the event that back end TANF match becomes unavailable.

TWC is in the process of developing a new state data system that will allow grantees to easily determine needy parent status and run reports for the purpose of cost allocating TANF expenditures. Once the system is online, more guidance and technical assistance will be provided, and the current combined funding stream may be separated to allow for more transparent reporting on the use of TANF funds.

Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting Cost Categories

Grant awards that TWC issues to AEL local providers under AEFLA Section 231 and Section 243 may be required to use all or most of the cost categories described herein, depending on the allowable services provided within the scope of the Section 231 and Section 243 grants.

Available cost categories for Section 231 grants are as follows:

- Administration

- Program

- IET

- Career Services

- Support Services*

- Corrections*

- Infrastructure*

Available cost categories for Section 243 are as follows:

- Administration

- Program

- IET

- Career Services

- Support Services*

- Infrastructure*

*Funds are not required to be allocated to the cost categories marked with an asterisk (*) unless services, as described in each cost categories below, are being provided. For an in-depth explanation, and to explore examples for each cost category, refer to AEL Letter 01-23, Attachment 1: Cost Category Descriptions.

Administration

The CDER cost category name for Section 231 grants is "Combined Admin." For Section 243 grants, the CDER cost category name is "IELCE Administration."

Administration costs are direct and indirect costs that are subject to the administrative cost limit of a particular grant award or fund source as defined by the applicable federal law, regulation, or grant award. For these funds, administrative costs are described in AEFLA §233(a)(2) and 34 CFR §463.26.

Costs associated with PD must be allocated to the "Administration" cost category.

AEL grantees that receive an AEL provider grant award under AEFLA Section 231 may exercise the special rule in AEFLA §233(b) and negotiate with TWC to determine an adequate level of funds to be used for noninstructional purposes in cases where the 5 percent administrative cost limit established by AEFLA §233(a) is too restrictive to allow for the administrative activities described in AEFLA §233(a)(2).

Program

The CDER cost category name for Section 231 grants is "Combined Program." For Section 243 grants, the CDER cost category name is "IELCE Program Costs."

Program costs are non-administrative program costs that are not reported in other cost categories.

Integrated Education and Training

The CDER cost category name for Section 231 grants is "Combined Training." For Section 243 grants, the CDER cost category name is "IELCE Training Costs."

Based on AEFLA §203(11) and 34 CFR §463.35, "IET" is an overall scope of services designed for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for educational and career advancement, which includes the three IET components: AEL activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training, delivered through integrated services. IET programs ensure that learners gain the skills needed to succeed in a workforce training program by attaining a recognized postsecondary credential, entering or advancing in employment, or advancing in postsecondary education and training.

Costs associated with the direct training in an IET should be charged to the training cost category. Examples of allowable training costs are:

- tuition for classes and/or programs related to training;

- costs related to the workforce training classes that are necessary and/or required for successfully completing the course, such as:

  ➢ uniforms and tools, including eyeglasses and protective eye gear;

  ➢ books, fees, school supplies and other necessary items for students enrolled in workforce training; and

  ➢ employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications; and

- technical training instructor salary.

Note: Training instructors must meet the requirements of the institution and/or the associated accrediting or credential entity.

AEL IET funds must not be used to pay for supportive services. AEL grantees must use AEL Section 231 funds that have been allocated to the support services cost category for supportive services, such as transportation or child care, or they must collaborate with other Texas workforce partners and other entities to coordinate access to appropriate supportive services.

Career Services

The CDER cost category name for Section 231 grants is "Combined Career Services." For Section 243 grants, the CDER cost category name is "IELCE Career Services."

Per OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2, issued June 11, 2024, and titled "Performance Accountability Guidance for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Core Programs," "career services" for AEFLA, Title II are services provided by an AEL program to an individual seeking or enrolled in AEL services that include any of the following activities:

- Outreach, intake, and orientation

- Initial assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities, and support 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 type and type of provider

- Provision of information on available of support services or assistance and appropriate referrals including child care, child support, medical or child health assistance available through the state's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), SNAP benefits, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), assistance under TANF, and other support services and transportation)

Examples of costs to include in this category include the following:

- Salary, wages and fringe benefits for time that provider staff spends providing career services directly to AEFLA learners (and, where applicable, to prospective AEFLA learners), such as:

  - ➤ conducting outreach;

  - ➤ conducting intake;

  - ➤ holding orientation sessions;

  - ➤ administering or proctoring tests used to perform an initial assessment of skill levels;

  - ➤ identifying AEFLA learners' supportive services needs during initial intake and as needs arise during participation;

  - ➤ providing information on the availability of supportive services;

  - ➤ completing referral forms or contacting other entities to make referrals for support services (as appropriate); and

- providing performance information and program cost information.

- A portion of salary, wages and fringe benefits for provider staff that supervises the aforementioned personnel

- Outsourced printing costs incurred for the provision of career services (such as brochures or other outreach handouts, intake or referral forms, performance and program cost information, and information about supportive services)

- Costs of tests used in performing an initial assessment of skill levels and associated external proctoring fees (if any)

- Booth fees, banners for program identification, and local travel costs (such as mileage reimbursement) incurred for staff to be present at local job fairs or other appropriate events for local outreach for the program

- Billboard, newspaper, television, and radio announcements for program outreach (if necessary, reasonable, and not available as a free-of-charge public service announcement)

- Production costs to develop online videos or webinars used solely for program outreach or for orientation or other AEFLA career services

Examples of costs to exclude from this category include the following:

- Workforce preparation activities and ELA programs (excluded per OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2) and any other WIOA-defined career services not listed in OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2.

- Identifying supportive services providers with which the AEFLA program does not have an existing/established relationship;

- contacting those supportive services providers to introduce the AEFLA program and to establish points of contacts and referral mechanisms;

- developing MOUs with those supportive services providers, if needed; and

- incurring local travel costs (such as mileage reimbursement) to meet with those supportive services providers, if necessary

- The AEFLA program's allocable share of any portion of shared infrastructure costs owed under WIOA §121 (under AEFLA, these costs are AEFLA administrative costs) and any other AEFLA administrative costs

- Portions of a provider's own space, equipment, supplies, and software costs used in the delivery of career services (not shared American Job Center (AJC) costs), such as:

  ➢ rent for space leased by a provider where provider staff delivers career services, or a mix of career services and other AEFLA services;

- depreciation for space owned by a provider where provider staff delivers career services or a mix of career services and other AEFLA services;

- utilities, phone, and internet costs incurred by a provider at a provider location where provider staff delivers career services or a mix of career services and other AEFLA services;

- general office supplies (such as folders, writing utensils, staplers and staples, writing tablets, sticky notes, tape, and so on) purchased by a provider for use by provider staff in the delivery of career services or a mix of career services and other AEFLA services;

- computers purchased or leased by an AEFLA provider (and associated software, computer repair, and computer support costs) to enable provider staff to deliver career services or a mix of career services and other AEFLA services;

- printers or copiers purchased or leased by an AEFLA provider (and associated costs for copy paper, toner, and support or repair) to enable provider staff to deliver career services or a mix of career services and other AEFLA services; and

- software licenses used to conduct remote meetings with AEFLA program learners (such as for orientation and other purposes).

Supportive Services

The CDER cost category name for Section 231 grants is "Combined Support Services." For Section 243 grants, the CDER cost category name is "IELCE Support Services."

Per WIOA §3(59), "support services" means services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments, that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in services under WIOA.

Per OCTAE Program Memorandum 24-3, issued January 31, 2024, and titled "Use of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Funds for Participant Child and Dependent Care and Transportation Costs – Frequently Asked Questions," not all support services under WIOA's definition are allowable or necessary to support an AEL's learner's progress in an AEL program; however, transportation and child care services, for AEL learners, that are deemed necessary, reasonable, and allocable by TWC may be considered allowable as a support service.

AEL grantees must report AEL supportive services expenditures to the appropriate supportive services CDER cost category (based on the awarded grant) when offering support services such as transportation. Support services must be reported as expenditures through the appropriate support services CDER cost category. Support services must not be reported through any other cost category.

AEFLA funds can provide the following transportation expenses for AEL learners:

- Bus or other public transit passes, tokens, tickets, and the like

- Prepaid vouchers for ride-sharing services

- Prepaid gas cards

- Service contracts between the AEL grantee and shuttle services or transit providers to provide transportation services for AEL learners

AEL grantees must ensure that there are no available federal, state, or local funds for transportation support services before using AEFLA funds for this purpose, as required by the "supplement not supplant" rule found at WIOA §241(a).

AEL grantees must develop a transportation support service acknowledgment form to be signed and dated by the individual receiving the services, which contains:

- an acknowledgment of the purpose of transportation services;

- a statement establishing the allowable use of transportation services for the AEL program;

- an assurance that the individual has not received transportation services from another AEL program for the same purpose; and

- an assurance that the individual will use transportation services as explained by the AEL grantee.

The AEL grantee must maintain this form in the learner's file.

AEL grantees must create a transportation support services standard operating procedure that addresses the following elements:

- Which AEL program staff members are responsible for the disbursement, oversight, and management of transportation services to AEL learners

- How the grantee will determine when transportation services will be offered to a learner and for how long services will be available to a learner

- With what frequency the grantee will reassess the support service needs of an AEL learner and modify the referral to support services or provision of transportation support services, as appropriate

- What maximum dollar amount of transportation expense funds a learner may receive within a given time frame (Example: "To support program participation, an AEL learner may receive a maximum of $25 each week in transportation expenses, which could include prepaid gas cards or bus passes.")

- What controls are in place to minimize waste or loss of transportation cards, tokens, and so forth

- What internal controls are in place for determining that any transportation costs are:

  ➢ necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the AEFLA grant; and

- based on a learner's need for transportation assistance to support program participation and/or completion

- Documentation justifying support services in the learner's file and in the TEAMS system, including the following:

  - The date the AEL grantee approves the justification

  - Documentation of the AEL learner's signed acknowledgment form on allowable use of transportation service

  - The type of transportation service being provided

  - Why transportation services are needed for the learner to be successful in the AEL program

  - How long the transportation services will be available to the learner

  - Monitoring, internal controls, and accountability of transportation transactions documentation to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local policies, including 2 CFR Part 200

- A reconciliation of distributed transportation services against the CDER System by the monthly data validation date.

AEL grantees must track transportation services in the CDER System in the transportation assistance supplemental cost category under program costs when it becomes available in the CDER System.

AEL grantees may partner with community agencies or nonprofit organizations through a vehicle resource cost-sharing agreement to provide transportation services based on fixed routes that connect AEL learners to:

- AEL classes;

- workforce training sites;

- Workforce Solutions Offices; and

- locations offering support services for AEL learners.

Infrastructure

The CDER cost category name for Section 231 grants is "Combined Infrastructure." For Section 243 grants, the CDER cost category name is "IELCE Infrastructure Costs."

Infrastructure costs are an AEL program's allocable share of the infrastructure costs of the one-stop delivery system pursuant to WIOA as set out and agreed upon in an MOU and local IFA entered into with the respective Board. For more information, refer to WIOA §121, 34 CFR §§463.300–463.900, and OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-3, issued January 18, 2017, and titled "Infrastructure Funding of the One-Stop Delivery System," and any subsequent issuances of this memorandum as well as the sources provided under the [Infrastructure Funding Agreement](#) section of this guide.

Corrections

The CDER cost category name for Section 231 grants is "Combined Corrections." No Corrections cost category is available for Section 243 grants since corrections services are only provided under Section 231 grants.

Corrections expenditures are costs for programs for corrections education per AEFLA §225. Not more than 20 percent of funds may be used for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals (AEFLA §222(a)(1)).

Refer to [Post-Release Services for Second-Chance Individuals](#) under Intensive Services in this guide for more information.

Supplanting versus Supplementing

WIOA §241(a) states: "SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds made available for adult education and literacy activities under this title shall supplement

and not supplant other state or local public funds expended for adult education and literacy activities."

Supplementing and not supplanting reflects that AEL funds are intended to supplement existing AEL activities. Federal funds must not be used to replace funds (state, local, other grant, and so forth).

Budget Adjustments and Budget Amendments

Budget Adjustment

A budget adjustment is when a grantee requests to move funds between cost categories. Budget adjustments are used when the total requested amount to be moved is less than 20 percent of the total grant amount.

Grantees must email AELContracts@twc.texas.gov to request a budget adjustment and provide the following information in the email:

- Grant identification number

- Total amount being requested to move

- Amounts to be taken from specific cost categories

- Amounts to be added to specific cost categories

A budget adjustment may be requested at any point in the grant year. Requestors should allow up to 72 hours for the request to be processed.

Budget Amendment

A budget amendment is a request to move funds between cost categories that are more than 20 percent of the total grant award amount. AEL entities must be aware that budget amendments:

- are requests to move funds between cost categories;

- result in formal amendments to the corresponding AEL contracts; and

- require a written electronic request approved by the AEL grantee's program director and fiscal agent or finance department representative.

Electronic requests should be sent to AELContracts@twc.texas.gov with the grantees' program specialists copied.

Performance Incentive Funding

Texas Labor Code §315.007 addresses performance incentive funding for AEL grantees. Performance incentive funding is an outcome-based award for grantees that demonstrate exceptional performance in providing AEL services.

The Commission must establish guidelines for awarding funds, and the criteria developed must evaluate the fiscal and programmatic performances of each grantee based on specific benchmarks.

All funding awards must be approved by the Commission.

Advertising and Public Relations Expenditures

The allowability of advertising and public relations costs is determined in accordance with 2 CFR §200.421. AEL grantees must be aware that the only allowable advertising costs are those that are solely for:

- the recruitment of personnel required by the grantee for the performance the award;

- the procurement of goods and services for the performance of the award; or

- the disposal of scrap or surplus materials acquired in the performance of the award (except when the recipient or subrecipient is reimbursed for disposal costs at a predetermined amount); or

- program outreach (for example recruiting project participants) and other specific purposes necessary to meet the federal award requirements.

AEL entities must be aware that the only allowable public relations costs are:

- costs specifically required by the federal award;

- costs of communicating with the public and press about specific activities or accomplishments that result from performance of the federal award (these costs are considered necessary as part of the outreach effort for the federal award); or

- costs of conducting general liaison with news media and government public relations officers, to the extent that such activities are limited to communication and liaison necessary to keep the public informed on matters of public concern, such as notices of funding opportunities or financial matters.

Unallowable advertising and public relations costs include the following:

- all advertising and public relations costs other than as specified above;

- costs of meetings, conventions, conferences, or other events related to other activities of the entity (refer to 2 CFR §200.432), including: (i) costs of displays, demonstrations, and exhibits; (ii) costs of meeting rooms, hospitality suites, and other special facilities used in conjunction with shows and other special events; and (iii) salaries and wages of employees engaged in setting up and displaying exhibits, making demonstrations, and providing briefings;

- costs of promotional items and memorabilia; and

- costs of advertising and public relations designed solely to promote the recipient or subrecipient.

Meals and Refreshments for Conferences/Meetings

Under the cost principles at 2 CFR §200.432, a conference means an event whose primary purpose is to disseminate technical information beyond the recipient or subrecipient and is necessary and reasonable for successful performance under the award. Under 2 CFR §200.432, allowable conference costs may include the rental of facilities, speakers' fees, attendance fees, costs of meals and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences unless further restricted by the terms and conditions of the federal award. Refer also to the Special Federal Award Terms and Conditions included in the TWC-issued AEL award. Pursuant to the federal award terms, those conditions may specify, "A grantee hosting a meeting or conference may not use grant funds to pay for food for conference attendees unless doing so is necessary to accomplish legitimate meeting or conference business. A working lunch is an example of a cost for food that might be allowable under a federal grant if attendance at the lunch is needed to ensure the full participation by conference attendees in essential discussions and speeches concerning the purpose of the conference and to achieve the goals and objectives of the project." The conditions that costs be necessary, reasonable, allocable, adequately and otherwise allowable under cost principles continues to apply to these costs.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Section 231 Funded Program Activities and Services

There are two distinct programs under TWC AEL, one that is funded with AEFLA Section 231 funds and one funded under AEFLA Section 243 funds. This section of the guide will focus on Section 231 program activities and services as outlined in the state's competitive solicitation procedures.

Popular Services

AEL grantees may use their AEFLA Section 231 funds to implement any activities outlined in 34 CFR §463.30. Texas breaks these allowable services into categories to more easily assign targets that emphasize Texas' vision, mission, and strategy for AEL. Popular services may comprise the following:

- Adult education

- Literacy (including digital and financial literacies)

- Family literacy

- ELA and/or ESL

- Corrections education

- HSE preparation

- Workforce preparation activities

- On-ramp, bridge, or transition to postsecondary education or employment

Adult Education

AEL providers must develop and deliver program designs and operations for better secondary education and career and higher education outcomes for all students, including individuals who have minimal literacy skills or English proficiency. For all AEL activities, Texas has a robust set of academic standards that cover all instructional content areas including English language arts, mathematics, ESL, parent/family literacy, citizen/community member civics, and alignment to industry literacy requirements in four industry clusters that are important to the Texas economy. Refer to the standards listed on the TCALL Institute for Instruction web page.

Providers have flexibility to use a variety of organizational models to provide structured year-round pathways and instruction to adult learners. This approach

provides students with a specific path to help them plan for their futures and supports a program's ability to measure success and redesign as needed to meet the program's, the students', and the community's needs.

Financial and Digital Literacy

Literacy Services

Serving eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language arts, and ESL is an important requirement for grantees (34 CFR §463.24). Those in the community identified as most in need of AEL activities include individuals who: a) have low levels of native language literacy skills or b) are ELLs.

Building robust services so that learners achieve substantial learning gains contributes to Texas' ability to meet the state-adjusted levels of performance. Instructional design and service pathways should reflect research-based practices, enable learners to achieve substantial learning gains, use instructional practices with sufficient intensity and quality, and include the essential components of reading instruction. Programs have the flexibility to design service delivery across all eligible populations within a framework that addresses the needs of the community and ensures support for students to attain learning goals and demonstrate progress.

Refer to the AEL Testing Guide and AEL Performance Guide for more information about placement options for nonliterate learners.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is an allowable AEL activity that builds math life skills in the context of:

- managing personal finances;

- budgeting for family and personal activities;

- calculating costs of time and resources on life activities and career opportunities; and

- setting goals.

AEL grantees must provide financial literacy services or coordinate with other entities for provision of these services within their programs. Financial literacy may be incorporated into many AEL activities. Financial literacy enhances learners' content-area knowledge, builds foundational skills, and supports a variety of workforce-readiness skills.

Refer to the TCALL Institute for Instruction website for curriculum resources and the Content Standards version 4 for Family and Financial Literacy resources.

Digital Literacy

Under WIOA, Title II (AEFLA) (34 CFR §463.34), "digital literacy" is included as a component of workforce preparation activities. Designated as an allowable activity within adult education, digital literacy training provides a unique opportunity to support adult learners. Prior to the pandemic, Texas made curriculum for digital literacy available and highlighted the digital skill building learners need by providing curriculum and professional development resources.

Digital literacy is a component of adult education, but not an eligibility qualifier. Individuals must qualify for AEL services to participate in digital literacy as a workforce preparation activity. The Content Standards version 4 includes a digital literacy content standards section.

As a strategic objective in Texas to provide access to and support for adult learning and digital skill building, Texas released a toolkit for learners in support of digital literacy integration for all. Resources for both learners and teachers can be found on the TCALL website , and a copy of the Digital Literacy Toolkit developed by the Texas State Library Archives Commission (TSLAC) and TWC is available for use in the classroom. Digital Access & Resilience in Texas (DART) also offers a foundational digital literacy ESL curriculum.

Family Literacy

TWC acknowledges that students participate in AEL for a variety of reasons, not all of which pertain to credential attainment or the transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. TWC policy aims to improve the percentage of AEL students who, after finishing the program, are either ready for a job, enroll in higher education, or enroll in workforce training programs.

This does not preclude programs from serving eligible individuals whose primary motivation for participation is to become full partners in the educational development of their children and improve economic opportunities for their families as these are acceptable goals for participating in an AEL program.

WIOA §203 outlines the required elements for family literacy 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 full partners in the education of their children

- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences

Providing services to support adults in being the primary teachers for their children and full partners in their children's education is an important component of the AEL system. The Texas AEL Content Standards v. 4 contains a Parent/Family Content Standards section to guide providers in developing content for this population of learners.

Programs should revisit goals with learners throughout their participation to assist parents with resetting objectives as their learning and circumstances change, which may allow more time for them to participate in AEL classes that lead to credential attainment, transition to postsecondary education and training, or employment. Parents who enter into and complete career training and higher education greatly increase their potential earnings and serve as important role models for their children.

English Language Acquisition Program

Background

WIOA Title II expands and clarifies the variety of programs, activities, and services available to ELLs. AEFLA includes four ESL program requirements (34 CFR §462.31) and provides the flexibility necessary for ESL programs to support ELL attainment of secondary completion and transition into postsecondary education, training, or employment, including through career pathways. These requirements expand the ESL program from its traditional focus on developing basic communication skills to a program that maintains these aspects but intensifies requirements for increased rigor to support credential attainment and employment outcomes. The expanded program objectives are supported by more-rigorous ESL content standards and provisions for educational and career counseling services and align with WIOA modifications to the IELCE program.

Among the popular services for ELLs are educational services provided to adults, including professionals with degrees or credentials in their native countries, that enable those adults to achieve competency 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. For Texas ELLs, programs must include instruction in literacy and ELA leading to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and include instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. These IELCE services may be provided concurrently with any popular or career pathway service.

Refer to the [Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program](#) section below for more detail on IELCE activities.

English as a Second Language Program Objectives

AEFLA §203(6) includes a statutory requirement that ESL programs be designed to help ELLs achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of English. In addition, the AEFLA statement of purpose for services to immigrants and other ELLs includes instruction in mathematics. The federal [English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education](#) (ELP Standards) emphasize these requirements through skills development well beyond basic life skills and outline the specific language and content knowledge needed to promote college and career readiness for ELLs at all levels.

AEFLA final rule §463.31(b) also clarifies a requirement that the instructional program must lead to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and transition into postsecondary education or training or employment. Although these outcomes might not be realized initially by students who have emerging English literacy skills, the instruction must be offered at all ESL levels to provide an interconnected sequence of coursework that supports the ultimate achievement of these outcomes.

To achieve these outcomes, the program may:

- align the curricula, lesson plans, or instructional materials to the Texas AEL content standards;

- offer educational and career counseling services that assist an eligible individual to transition to postsecondary education or employment; or

- be part of a career pathways program.

The Texas AEL content standards for English language arts and literacy, mathematics, and ESL were updated and aligned with academic and college readiness standards, as well as with federal ELP Standards, to provide a

resource for developing curricula, instructional strategies, professional development, and enhanced program designs.

Bilingual Education

Under state law authorizing AEL, bilingual education may be used to instruct ELLs whenever it is appropriate for those students' optimum development. Programs may offer dual-language options, for example, one for ESL and another to prepare for high school equivalency tests offered in Spanish. Assessments for the TxCHSE are available in English, Spanish, or a combination of the two languages across test subjects. TWC reports TxCHSE completions in both languages combined in state and federal reports.

Providers that offer bilingual instruction to support high school equivalency completion in a language other than English must assess students accordingly and place students in concurrent and appropriate ESL instruction simultaneously with high school equivalency preparation courses in Spanish.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

IELCE is defined as "education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency 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 ELA and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include workforce training" (WIOA §203[12]). With Section 231 funding, Texas supports popular services as itemized under the IELCE guidance in the AEFLA statute, including:

- civics education activities based on the Texas AEL Civics Content Standards; and

- linguistic support related to a pathway to citizenship.

These would be considered popular services for ELLs for whom civics and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship may be enhanced through contextualized ELA instruction.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may provide funding for adult citizenship education programs for eligible immigrants preparing for the naturalization exam. AEFLA-funded programs should not provide or pay for these services to avoid duplicating services available from other federal agencies. Grantees may support citizenship preparation by:

- using intake processes to identify students who may be seeking eligibility for citizenship and refer them to organizations that are able to assist in this process; or

- embedding civics content and linguistic support in IELCE courses and activities that will prepare learners for formal citizenship classes and knowledge of U.S. government structure and social systems. This may be useful in preparing individuals to be fully engaged in their communities as active participants.

Corrections Education

Authorized under Title II of WIOA (§222[a][1]), up to 20 percent of funds statewide may be used to support educational programs for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including those residing in facilities operated by a state mental health agency or in civil confinement institutions. For this purpose, a correctional institution is defined in WIOA §225 as a:

- prison;

- jail;

- reformatory;

- work farm;

- detention center;

- halfway house or community-based rehabilitation center;

- or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of second-chance individuals.

Priority must be given to programs serving individuals who are likely to leave correctional facilities within five years of participation in the program. WIOA expanded the allowable program components for corrections education to include integrated education and training, career pathways and transition to reentry initiatives, and other post-release services. Per 34 CFR §463.60, corrections education includes providing the following allowable academic programs for incarcerated or other institutionalized individuals:

- AEL activities

- Special education, as determined by TWC

- Secondary school credit

- IET

- Career pathways

- Concurrent enrollment

- Peer tutoring

- Transition to re-entry initiatives and post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism

Funds for corrections education and the education of other institutionalized individuals may be used to support education programs for transition to reentry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism (34 CFR §463.60).

For those with scheduled release dates, this activity provides initial planning for next steps and for continuity of services for individuals released directly into communities without parole or transition services. Use of funds may provide educational counseling or case work to support incarcerated

individuals' transition to reentry and other post-release services. Examples include assisting incarcerated individuals to develop plans for post-release education program participation, assisting students in identifying and applying for participation in post-release programs, and performing direct outreach to community-based programs on behalf of students.

AEL collaborates with the [Windham School District](#) (WSD), providing professional development opportunities for teachers and access to the Texas AEL LMS to engage with AEL for general educational best practices. AEL and WSD also collaborate on release and referrals to AEL grantees in local areas for those exiting facilities to support student reengagement with education and the workforce.

To ensure Texas AEL supports corrections education and serves those incarcerated in need of AEL services, TWC monitors correction education services through student reporting in TWC's data management system and budget expenditures, as reported in the CDER System.

Refer to [Career Pathways](#) and [Intensive Services](#) for information on post-release services for second-chance individuals, which is an intensive service option for AEL providers to offer to individuals who have been released from incarceration or another institutional facility within the past three years.

High School Equivalency

Achieving a HSE certificate is a core program activity in AEL. AEL programs provide services to support learners in achieving the TxCHSE, and TEA is the state agency that manages TxCHSE. Texas learners may earn the TxCHSE by successfully passing the GED test administered by GED Testing Services. The State Board of Education currently contracts with GED Testing Service to provide the GED test. Upon successful completion of the four GED tests, the test taker will be issued a state of Texas HSE certificate.

As a Texas AEL strategic objective, TWC continues to coordinate AEL efforts to serve high school non-completers using related TEA policies and data, including further refinements to HSE preparation and testing processes. As

of 2021, a high school equivalency voucher program was implemented and continues to support the provision of testing vouchers across Texas. Refer to the [High School Subsidy Use and Tracking](#) section of this guide for additional process information.

AEL providers serving specific counties across Texas are required to design services for all learners that move individuals who have not achieved a high school diploma or an equivalent level of education toward HSE completion. High school diplomas and equivalencies are launchpads to other postsecondary services and training opportunities across the Texas workforce system. Bilingual Instruction and Spanish High School Equivalency

AEL grantees may provide bilingual instruction within ESL programs, including instruction to prepare for the TxCHSE, when appropriate for an individual's development.

Effective bilingual instruction requires that students share a common native language. Thus, instructors teaching classes with multiple languages represented are encouraged to refrain from using bilingual methods or to do so only with subsets of students who share a common native language.

Programs may use the Spanish GED Ready Test as an Alternative Placement assessment for Spanish TxCHSE courses. Programs must have an Alternative Placement policy in place. It is recommended that AEL grantees offer Spanish TxCHSE preparation alongside an ESL class where students are assessed as ELLs according to the Texas AEL Testing Guide.

Workforce Preparation Activities

Workforce preparation activities are allowable as a AEL popular service. Per 34 CFR §463.34, workforce preparation activities include activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of the following:

- Basic academic skills,

- Critical thinking skills,

- Digital literacy skills

- Self-management skills, including competencies in:

  ➢ utilizing resources;

  ➢ using information;

  ➢ working with others;

  ➢ understanding systems;

  ➢ skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or, training, or employment; and

  ➢ other employability skills that increase an individual's preparation for the workforce."

Per the current RFA, all grantees must develop workforce preparation activities curriculum in all levels of ABE, ASE, and ESL instruction that includes, at a minimum:

- critical thinking skills;

- learning frameworks;

- digital literacy;

- financial literacy; and

- learner leadership skills.

Workforce preparation activities, when provided independent of an IET, may be implemented in a variety of ways. These activities support lifelong learning, implementation of the Texas AEL Content Standards, successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education and training, and enhancement of employment preparation or advancement. Preparation activities may be implemented as activities, programs, or services, including as:

- the context for general basic academic skills and ESL curriculum (for example, an ESL curriculum module on employment norms and expectations in the United States. or a HSE curriculum module on preparing for a successful first semester in college); or

- part of an on-ramp program.

For more information on workforce preparation activities within an IET as one of the core IET requirements, refer to the [Workforce Preparation Activities in the Integrated Education and Training Model](#) section of this guide.

On-Ramp, Bridge, and Transition Classes

"AEL popular services" include specific academic or college readiness activities for students with a goal to enter postsecondary education as TSIA-complete or enroll in a co-requisite option. To prepare for the rigor and intensity of these postsecondary enrollment models, students may enter an AEL service such as an on-ramp, bridge, or transition class in preparation for enhanced services in AEL such as an IET or prior to an exit from AEL on a pathway to postsecondary education or training.

The terms "on-ramp," "bridge," and "transition classes" are used interchangeably and refer to an AEL pre-activity in preparation for a next step. These transition services support learner success through a variety of models, for example, providing basic skills in the context of college knowledge and career exploration or enhancing foundational skills as a preparation activity for an exit from AEL and enrollment in college. On-ramp, bridge programs, and transition classes may prepare learners for more-rigorous academic enrollments that require homework, frequent exams, or self-paced learning.

These service models may be a prerequisite for an IET to prepare the learner for increased intensity and rigor of the education and training activities. An on-ramp allows the student to gain basic skills, experience the intensity of the academic instruction, better understand the program or pathway or financial obligations they may encounter, and what academic outcomes are expected. All three models often focus on fostering student independence, self-efficacy, problem solving, and financial literacy while learning in real time how to mitigate work and personal obligations that might impede completion before there are consequences, such as dropping out, loss of financial aid, or academic suspension.

Career Pathways

WIOA underscores the use of flexible career pathway service-delivery options within its various core programs and titles (WIOA §3[7]). The career pathways approach connects levels of education, training, and support services for specific occupations to optimize progress toward the career goals of individuals of all ages, abilities, and needs. Each of the 28 Board plans include the Board's local vision for career pathways as may be implemented across systems from kindergarten through 12th grade to AEL and postsecondary education. Board plans are submitted to the TWC for approval every four years with revisions required every two years.

Career Pathways Across the Education and Workforce System

Under WIOA, adult education has a distinctive role in contributing as a full partner to the robust workforce development system. Whether building a program with an employer and incumbent workers, helping a student prepare for and navigate postsecondary education, or designing rigorous reading, writing, math, or ESL activities for future electricians in an IET, AEL assists learners with foundational skills and their next steps along a career and employment path.

The following AEL career pathway models are assigned negotiated targets.

AEL Career Pathway models with annual targets for Section 231 funding include:

- IET and

- intensive services.

AEL Career Pathway models with annual targets for Section 243 funding include:

- IELCE + IETs.

This following section describes AEL grantee requirements related to career pathways. Refer to the 2025 Career Pathway Guide for additional information.

Integrated Education and Training

As defined in 34 CFR, Subpart D, §463.35-463.38, "IET" refers to a service approach that provides AEL activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster. The goal is educational and career advancement that results in a recognized postsecondary credential(s), entering or advancing in employment, or enrollment in postsecondary education. IET programs must include three components:

- AEL activities as described in 34 CFR §463.30

- Workforce preparation activities as described in CFR §463.34

- Workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster as defined in WIOA §134(c)(3)(D)

The Integrated Education and Training Model

The IET model, as described below, applies to IET services, whether delivered with Section 231 or Section 243 funding. Refer to [Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Section 243 (IELCE)](#) in this guide for additional program requirements.

The IET model aligns with the definition of career pathways in WIOA and represents a hallmark for innovative AEL instruction and workforce training for individuals who are basic skills deficient. A critical objective of IET models is accelerating student completion and placement into high-demand and targeted occupations. Research clarifies the weaknesses of traditional sequential models, which require learners to progress through a sequence of remedial courses to achieve college readiness.

To accelerate progress, IET models admit learners below standardized academic admission levels set by a training program, or without HSE, into college-level workforce training concurrently with contextualized AEL and workforce preparation activities. This concurrent approach supports the acquisition of basic skills, improves college readiness, and delivers student success through credential completion to employment or into further postsecondary education or training for those seeking stackable credentials.

Under Title II of WIOA, and to ensure an IET program of study meets the requirement that it be "for the purpose of educational and career advancement" (34 CFR §463.37), the provider must ensure:

- the AEL activities are aligned with the Texas AEL Content Standards; and

- that the IET program is part of a career pathway so that learners know the next step in the employment and education path.

Texas requires providers to offer IET programs to individuals on a pathway to employment. In other words, upon completion of the IET program of

study, **the individual is expected to be ready to seek and be placed in a job related to the area of training**. Additionally, in Texas, all IETs must result in a recognized postsecondary credential within one year of exit from the IET. This timeline provides some flexibility for providers because national credentialing exams can be difficult to schedule and access to testing seats may be in high demand.

IETs must provide workforce training that is for a high-demand or a targeted industry per workforce area in which the AEL grantee is providing services. In rural areas, aligning with multiple Boards within a region for high-demand industries is allowable when participants have received an orientation that includes information about local versus regional employment opportunities.

For programs to meet the IET requirement that the AEL activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training be integrated, all three activities and services must be provided within the overall scope of the program of study so that:

- all three components occur concurrently and not sequentially;

- each are organized to function cooperatively;

- they are of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available, particularly with respect to improving reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency;

- the AEL activities use occupationally relevant instructional materials; and

- it includes a single set of learning objectives is included that identifies specific adult education content, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training competencies.

Integrated services may be delivered in a variety of programmatic arrangements using a hybrid or online setting for the AEL activities. For example, TWC allows flexibility in the IET design to ensure programs are responsive to learners' ability to travel to a classroom setting. Additionally, flexibility in design may include alternative delivery timelines for programs

that require a full-time (40 hours per week), practical (on-the-job, laboratory, or hands-on) component that precludes AEL activities during that time. In those cases, it's important for the AEL provider to front-load the basic-skills portion prior to the laboratory component to ensure that appropriate academic support is provided.

Rigor and intensity of the AEL component should not be reduced, but addressed along the program timeline to ensure learners are successful. Program outcomes and completion should inform a continuous improvement process, and the intensity and duration of the IET components must be reviewed and revised annually to meet the needs of the target population and to improve performance and credential outcomes.

AEL grantees may apply additional program entry requirements for learners when implementing the IET program with Boards, Workforce Solutions Offices, workforce training providers, and other stakeholders. Any additional program requirements must be documented in the IET implementation plan and relevant SOPs.

AEL grantees must register IET implementation plans with TWC through the **Career Pathways Plan** portal prior to enrolling learners. IET pathway plans must be submitted each PY and should reflect any changes that have been made to improve the model and learner outcomes. IET implementation plans provide a road map of how the grantee will meet required IET targets and provide a snapshot to TWC of planned intensity and duration of IET activities. TWC does not provide written approval of plans submitted but will provide feedback or request changes to a plan if requested by a grantee or if plans are incomplete.

In addition to the minimum syllabus elements, as outlined in the [Program Design and Implementation](#) section, AEL grantees must provide the following in the syllabus for a course in an IET program of study:

- A description of each of the three core components of an IET program of study:

  ➢ 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 at points within the overall scope of the program

- Information on the recognized postsecondary credential that participants will prepare for, including how the credential is earned, related costs if applicable, what organization administers the credential, and how testing will be arranged at the end of course completion

- A description of the civics component that aligns with AEL civics content standards for IET programs of study for ELLs

AEL grantees must actively follow-up with IET learners and must complete the **Employment Outcomes** page in the TWC data management system for each IET participant after any milestone or benchmark is achieved (course completion, MSG, credential attainment, job placement, or enrollment in postsecondary education).

Adult Education and Literacy Activities in Integrated Education and Training

When taught as one of the core components of an IET, AEL activities are the programs and activities in the content domains of reading, writing, ESL, and mathematics, which are essential for adults to succeed in education, training, and employment.

The AEL activities must be aligned with the Texas AEL Content Standards, and they must be occupationally relevant to the workforce training being

taught in the IET to fulfill the requirement that content contains integrated services and is contextual (34 CFR §463.35).

More information is located in the Workforce Preparation Activities section under Popular Services.

Workforce Preparation Activities in Integrated Education and Training

AEL grantees must be aware that "workforce preparation activities" are not the same as "workforce training" because, in isolation, workforce preparation activities do not teach skills that allow an individual to attain a recognized postsecondary credential and enter or advance in employment for a specific occupation.

When implementing workforce preparation activities as part of an IET, grantees must:

- incorporate workforce preparation activities simultaneously at points within the overall scope of the IET program to support the workforce training, AEL, and employment transition components of the program design;

- ensure that workforce preparation activities are only counted as direct contact hours when the activities are integrated within reading, writing, mathematics, and ESL instruction;

- ensure that, when delivered without contextualized AEL instruction (for example, a presentation on how to conduct online job searches or on understanding the college-enrollment process) or delivered by a partner agency, workforce preparation activities are counted as training hours and are tracked as career services; and

- incorporate workforce preparation activities as part of the single set of learning objectives within an IET program and document these objectives in the program syllabus.

More detailed information is located in the [Workforce Preparation Activities](#) section under [Popular Services.](#)

Workforce Training

In Texas, the third required component of IET is referred to as "workforce training." Regardless of whether a local AEL grantee is a community college, ISD, CBO, or regional Education Service Center (ESC), workforce training must be provided by partners with specific expertise in the occupational training.

Workforce training instructors must meet the industry standards for the occupation, such as:

- being credentialed with the industry-recognized certification identified as the outcome for the IET;

- meeting the career and technical education standards set by the entity employing the instructor (such as a college, university, or ISD); or

- meeting the standards set by the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) contractor when using a TWC-authorized entity or career school to provide training.

AEL grantees must enter all workforce training hours associated with the IET in the TWC data management system, including any workforce training that is supported by leveraged funds from other appropriate resources. Workforce training hours do not count as direct-contact hours for use in circumstances such as pre- and posttesting for MSGs.

AEL grantees have flexibility in finding optimal efficiency in leveraging additional resources and funds for the development and provision of IET programs. This may include using effective coenrollment strategies with workforce partners or other appropriate resources, such as federal Pell grants or local funding, to maximize overall efficiency and support for student success in achieving recognized postsecondary credentials and career advancement.

AEL grantees must document daily student attendance in workforce training to ensure that students obtain the intensity of services needed to support advancement and completion of common learning objectives. Examples of adequate documentation include:

- A paper or electronic class roll indicating daily attendance

- A daily sign-in sheet

- A weekly attendance verification signed by the workforce training instructor

- An official completion certificate issued by the workforce training provider or credentialing agency that lists the total contact hours completed by the student

- Other forms of daily attendance verification approved by TWC AEL staff

The Funding

WIOA authorizes using AEL funds to implement all three components of an IET. AEL grantees must:

- expend funds to support the IET service approach leading to employment in or advancement within a specific high-demand or targeted occupation or occupational cluster as determined by the Board and aligned with local and regional, economic and labor market analysis; and

- report workforce training expenditures as part of the monthly expenditure reports submitted through TWC's CDER System.

AEL grantees may coenroll participants in IET services in which the workforce training component is funded from non-AEL funds or is braided with a partner, Board, or other entity subject to applicable participant eligibility requirements. However, grantees must be certain they only supplement and not supplant other state or local public funds expended for AEL activities per WIOA §241(a).

AEL funds may be used to pay for costs related to workforce training–related costs help to pay for:

- uniforms or other required training attire and training-related tools, including eyeglasses and protective gear;

- books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in workforce training; and

- employment and training-related applications, tests, and credential exams or fees.

AEL funds may also be used to pay for co-planning and co-development time for collaboration with workforce training faculty.

Other Considerations for Integrated Education and Training

Bilingual Instruction in Integrated Education and Training

AEL grantees may provide bilingual instruction for an IIET program for a group's optimum development.

Bilingual instruction for IETs requires that:

- students share a common native language;

- evidence-based practices are used that support a bilingual methodology and ensure English fluency is concurrently supported;

- the common native language is used primarily during the workforce training portion of the IET; and

- English is used for adult education instruction, such as reading, writing, mathematics, and workforce preparation activities for optimal linguistic development.

Grantees are responsible for ensuring that learners acquire sufficient English proficiency in workforce training terminology to successfully complete and pass certifications associated with the IET program.

AEL grantees must not offer bilingual instruction in IET unless the class is integrated with an ESL class and learners are assessed as ELLs according to the Texas AEL Testing Guide.

Learner Outcomes

IETs in Texas are guided by state priorities, policy, and available resources. An individual enrolled in IET enters the AEL grantee's credential denominator, impacting performance outcomes. Refer to the TWC AEL Performance Guide for more information.

In Texas, the expectation per policy is that a participant enrolled in IET will complete the course, will attain a credential, and will become employed in the area of training or will continue into postsecondary education for further career advancement.

Determining participant readiness through identifying barriers to participation through a thorough comprehensive assessment process is essential to making referrals to other system partners or to eliminating barriers through advising or other resources available to support the career pathway initiative. An individual that enrolled in AEL as an IET participant and failed to complete the course, attain a credential, enter employment or continue to postsecondary education is prohibited from reenrolling in another IET for a period of two years.

Intensive Services

Intensive services are an option under Section 231 funding for delivering career pathway services. In Texas, three models support intensive services along a career pathway. These include:

- workplace AEL activities;

- services to internationally trained professionals who are ELLs; and

- post-release services for second-chance individuals.

All three activities are referred to as intensive services, and funding is available to design and deliver these career-advancement models. The overall goal of these services is to enhance and expand employment options for special populations through intentionally designed collaborations with employers and other stakeholders.

Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities

AEL and employer partnerships offer unique opportunities to serve employer goals and offer workers career advancement. AEL grantees may provide workplace AEL activities (as allowed under AEFLA Section 231, 34 CFR §463.30(c)) in coordination with no less than one employer or employer organization. Grantees must have a MOU or Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the employer partner for the period of collaboration. There are two models of allowable workplace AEL activities:

- workplace AEL activities; and

- workplace AEL activities with employer-provided training.

Workplace AEL activities are provided by AEL providers to improve the productivity of the workforce. Workplace AEL activities may occur at an employer's workplace or an off-site location in which all learners are incumbent workers with the employer partners. In workplace AEL programs, providers should understand and respond to the demands that drive business needs, employee safety, and productivity of a particular employer or workforce.

Services provided may include a variety of popular AEL services as requested by the employer partner. These services may include ESL (contextualized language for the job), use of technology to support digital

learning and integration on the job, basic digital literacy skills, HSE, or other popular services to improve the basic skills of incumbent workers. Services are provided based on the employer's goals and eligible incumbent worker population served. AEL grantees should work together with an employer partner to understand the employer's needs and develop a customized approach to serve those who meet AEL eligibility.

In addition to general workplace AEL activities, grantees may provide AEL activities aligned with an occupational skills training provided by the employer partner. This is referred to as "workplace AEL activities with employer-provided training." This is a non-IET model with training provided by the employer partner. Workplace AEL activities such as ELA, reading comprehension, and math are provided in support of the training. Training costs under this model are paid for by the employer partner or other workforce stakeholder (IETs with an employer partner are not considered an intensive service and must adhere to all requirements of IET).

AEL grantees must adhere to the following requirements when implementing workplace AEL activities:

- Serve AEL eligible individuals.

- Meet associated targets.

- Have a signed MOU with each employer or employer organization.

- Expend funds budgeted to meet contracted intensive services targets.

- Use information from the comprehensive assessment for instructional purposes.

- Align AEL instruction with the Texas AEL Content Standards relative to the instructional design.

- Include workforce preparation activities in all levels of instruction, as appropriate.

- Provide a syllabus for each class.

- Register a workplace literacy career pathway implementation plan via [the TCALL portal](#).

- Report at least one MSG per PY per participant.

- Report services appropriately in TWC's data management system.

A MOU or LOA with an employer partner is required for AEL prior to initiating services. At a minimum, requirements for an MOU or LOA must include the following:

- Purpose of services

- Duration of agreement

- Employer goals (specific outcomes)

- How progress will be determined and shared with employer

- Specific gain to be reported by AEL in the data system

- Any specific milestones to be tracked

- Employee incentives from employer (if applicable)

Internationally Trained English Language Learner Professionals

Grantees may provide Intensive Services for Internationally Trained ELL Professionals (ITPs) with degrees or credentials from their home country that seek to re-enter their career path or an alternate one in the United States. A significant number of ELLs that enter AEL in Texas self-report they have degrees and credentials from their country of origin. These highly skilled immigrants often work in low-skilled jobs or are unemployed, a phenomenon known as "skill underutilization" or "brain waste." Under WIOA, this population is identified as a priority across the workforce system, and AEL programs have an opportunity to deliver education and employment

services in collaboration with system partners and collaborating organizations.

Individuals qualify to be served as an ITP for intensive services by self-attesting to attainment of a degree or credential from their home country or presenting credential documentation during an intake process and by opting into the service model. In the TWC data management system, the profile elements collected that would qualify a learner for ITP services if reported as attained outside the United States would include:

- attained a postsecondary or vocational certificate (non-degree)

- attained an associate's degree

- attained a bachelor's degree

- attained a degree beyond a bachelor's degree

A secondary education or high school credential from another country does not meet the eligibility requirement. Individuals with degrees or credentials from a U.S. territory may qualify for AEL services as ELLs, but degrees or credentials attained in a U.S. territory (such as Puerto Rico) do not qualify the individual as an ITP per guidance provided by OCTAE.

These specialized intensive services may include, but are not limited to, AEL activities to support:

- career pathway advising;

- contextualized ELA at all levels for occupations and sector-related language fluency

- intensive academic English in preparation for re-credentialing exams in the United States;

- career and college readiness in preparation for entering an IET program of study or postsecondary education pathway needed for re-employment; and

- enhanced civics education content to:

  ➢ increase understanding of U.S. educational systems; and

  ➢ develop cultural competencies and knowledge of the American workplace.

In Texas, the ITP service model allows for credential evaluation and/or translation when the credential is relevant to the individual's next step such as re-employment in the United States, enrollment in postsecondary education, or enrollment in an IET program of study.

AEL grantees must consider the provision of credential evaluation, authentication, and verification services on a case-by-case basis and must document services within the individual's ITEC plan and report them as career services in TWC's data management system. The use of this option should be directly tied to a learner's coursework performance, managed through budgetary controls, and provided consistently within the ITP service model. TWC highly recommends AEL grantees develop and implement an SOP to structure a consistent and documented process for credential evaluation.

These specialized programs and services provide an innovative opportunity to better serve ELLs who are skilled professionals and provide career re-entry, pathways to employment, and economic stability for new Americans, immigrants, and refugees.

AEL grantees must adhere to the following requirements when implementing Intensive Services for ITPs. Grantees must:

- serve AEL-eligible individuals;

- meet associated targets;

- expend funds allocated to meet contracted intensive services targets;

- use information from the comprehensive assessment for instructional purposes;

- align AEL instruction with the Texas AEL Content Standards relative to the instructional design;

- include workforce preparation activities in all levels of instruction as may be appropriate or as required for IETs;

- provide a syllabus for each class;

- register services to ITPs by submitting an ITP career pathway implementation plan via the [TCALL portal](#);

- report at least one MSG per PY per participant; and

- report services appropriately in TWC's data management system.

Post-Release Services for Second-Chance Individuals

In Texas AEL, post-release services for second-chance individuals are considered intensive services when intentionally provided to reduce recidivism and support community integration through education and workforce system services. This is not the same as "transition to re-entry and post-release services" as allowed under AEFLA §231 and §225. Transition to re-entry and post-release services are provided to an individual while incarcerated and who will be released within five years. Refer to [Corrections Education](#) for more information.

The intensive service model of post-release services for second-chance individuals is provided to those who have been released from facilities and are seeking to complete educational and career goals through participation in adult literacy activities. The individuals receiving services must be:

- eligible for AEL services;

- separated from correctional facilities and institutions; and

- released from correctional facilities or institutions within the past three years.

Those served under the intensive services model may include individuals on parole or under supervision but not living in a halfway house or treatment facility. Facilities that house individuals post-release such as halfway houses, community-based rehabilitation centers, or other similar institutions designed for confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders would be considered correctional facilities. Therefore, any AEL services to those living in a halfway house or treatment facility would fall under corrections education services (Section 225 funding) and not meet the requirement of an intensive service to second-chance individuals.

Within the service framework of intensive services for second-chance individuals, AEL may use additional funds to support a post-release service model that provides enhanced AEL activities and career services. AEL intensive services for second-chance individuals offer another pipeline for individuals to enter or continue educational programs, benefit from advising, career navigation, workforce preparation activities or referrals for needed post-release services.

This model is envisioned as a collaborative hand-off between local, county, state, or federal facilities, and an AEL program partner. AEL services may take the form of:

- connectivity to a local Workforce Solutions Office for job search and placement;

- AEL enrollment for educational services;

- referrals to partner programs for housing assistance; or

- an array of social services to support a second-chance individual.

AEL, in collaboration with workforce system partner programs such as the WSD, may ensure second-chance individuals have opportunities to continue AEL, find employment, or enter postsecondary education or training.

Career pathway programs offering stackable credentials for living-wage jobs are among the most important factors in enabling second-chance individuals to be successful after incarceration. Each step on the continuum requires correctional institutions, education providers, workforce development organizations, and their program partners to collaborate, communicate, and work toward the shared vision of helping those who are released into communities across Texas become productive members of society.

TWC as an agency has multiple efforts underway that support second-chance employment and job search opportunities. Information on the Fidelity Bonding program and Work Opportunity Tax Credit can be found at [the TWC Fidelity Bonding](#) web page or at the [TWC Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#) web page.

Section 231–Funded Intensive Services Versus 225 Corrections Funded Services

Determining which funds should be used for second-chance individuals' activities can be confusing, especially when considering residency locations.

Table 4 is a quick reference tool that shows which funding, 231 or 225, is appropriate to use for certain activities.

Table 3: Section 231–Funded Intensive Services Versus 225 Corrections Funded Services

Section 231– Funded Intensive Services	Section 225–Funded Correctional Services
Post-release services for second-chance individuals:	Section 225–funded services are meant for individuals inside a correctional facility or institution.

• are provided to someone who is no longer incarcerated;
 	
 • serve individuals who have been released from incarceration or an institution within the past three years;
 	
 • may include services to those on parole or under supervision, but not living in a halfway house or treatment facility; and
 	
 • may include collaboratio
	Correctional facilities or institutions include:
	
	     • jails;
	
	     • prisons;
	
	     • halfway houses;
	
	     • treatment facilities;
	
	     • reformatories;
	
	     • work farms;
	
	     • detention centers;
	
	     • community-based rehabilitation centers; or
	
	     • any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of second-chance individuals.
	
	 Priority must be given to serving individuals who are likely to leave correctional facilities within five years of participation in the program.
	
	 AEL activities may include any popular services or IET.

Section 231–Funded Intensive Services	Section 225–Funded Correctional Services
n between AEL and a local, county, state facility, agency, or partner to promote a warm hand-off upon an individual's release.	

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Section 243: The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program, Activities, and Services

This section of the guide will focus on Section 243 program activities and services as outlined in the state's competitive solicitation.

Purpose and Program Components

The IELCE program is funded under Section 243 of WIOA (AEFLA final rule 34 CFR §463.70(a)-(b)) for education services to individuals who otherwise meet the definition of "eligible individuals" and are adult ELLs, including

professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries (34 CFR §463.75).

The IELCE program delivers educational services that enable adults to achieve competency 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.

Under AEFLA regulations at 34 CFR §463.73, the IELCE program must:

- include instruction in literacy and ELA and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation;

- include AEL activities and workforce preparation activities; and

- be designed to:

  ➢ prepare adults who are ELLs for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and

  ➢ integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The WIOA IELCE model focuses on the integration of services for civics education, linguistic fluency, and economic integration for immigrants and refugees within their communities. In designing instructional models and course sequences, individuals that enter the program with goals for access to higher education, skilled employment, and economic self-sufficiency should have a clear trajectory to attain those outcomes. The 243 grants provide an opportunity to develop year-round innovative program models with unique solutions for local communities around pathways to higher education and employment for ELLs.

As laid out in federal regulations, while every IELCE program must offer access to IET, not every participant in the program must enroll in IET activities. The IELCE program supports the TWC AEL mission to:

- develop career pathways with Boards and with system partners for all learners;

- promote coenrollment and referral efforts with Boards; and

- provide a "One Workforce" vision through integrated intake, shared case management, and follow-up system support where applicable to enhance the customer experience.

The Texas AEL program has developed, produced, and published Texas AEL Content Standards for English Language Acquisition (Standards 3.0) and Civics Education (Standards 4.0) that outline what adult learners should know and be able to do, and these guide curriculum development and instruction to ensure alignment with state and national expectations.

As with AEFLA Section 231 funding, the IELCE program (Section 243) may provide popular AEL services to the targeted population as outlined for the IELCE program and must meet Commission-approved enrollment and IET targets as specified under Section 243 awards to grantees.

Civics Integration

- In Texas, the IELCE program under Section 243 funding is designed to develop the linguistic, economic, and cultural integration of ELLs in communities across the state. Although WIOA references that IELCE services must include instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, civics activities are not strictly defined in the law, providing adult education programs and instructors with flexibility to determine what civics content will be included in ELA and IELCE classes. Therefore, civics instruction may include gaining the knowledge, skills, values, and actions that contribute to a greater sense of belonging and engagement with one's society as well as the ability to understand, participate in, advocate for, and make change within one's community.

- Texas AEL has developed and produced the Texas AEL Content Standards 4.0, which includes sections specific to addressing civics in the classroom and ESL.

Citizenship preparation instruction itself is not an allowable use of WIOA funding. USCIS has historically funded adult citizenship education programs for eligible immigrants preparing for the naturalization exam, which assesses English literacy and knowledge of American history and government. Adult education programs funded under AEFLA should not duplicate these services. They can instead support citizenship preparation and attainment through methods such as:

- using intake processes and ongoing discussions to identify students who may be eligible for citizenship to refer them to an adult citizenship education program;

- introducing and embedding civics content and vocabulary in IELCE activities that prepare learners for more formal citizenship education activities, such as preparing for a HSE or taking a citizenship or civics test;

- using learner-centered approaches that allow instructors to learn more about the needs of their students for cross-cultural integration that can contribute to a learner's overall community and economic integration; and

- contextualized ELA that addresses content knowledge and understanding of the structure of the U.S. government and the evolution of U.S. history and democracy, including the role of civic engagement of its citizenry.

In addition to helping ELLs and immigrants learn how to navigate and participate fully in their communities, adult educators in Texas are required to provide workforce preparation activities that help prepare ELLs for work. Workforce preparation activities are defined in 34 CFR §463.34 as "activities, programs, or 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 utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment."

Through workforce preparation activities, ELA and IELCE programs can help ELLs understand more about U.S. workplace culture and prepare for economic self-sufficiency. This can include activities that focus on:

- pay systems and structures;

- employer expectations;

- workers' rights and protections; and

- workplace culture.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education + Integrated Education and Training

In Texas, IELCE grantees with Section 243 funding have requirements to provide IET. Often referred to as "IELCE + IET," these activities include workforce training and are delivered under Section 243 funding as IET programs under Section 243 funding. The requirements for each of the three core components as outlined under AELFA §231 also apply to IELCE + IET programs under Section 243. IELCE + IET programs must:

- include the three core components of IET:

  ➢ AEL activities;

  ➢ workforce preparation activities; and

  ➢ workforce training;

- 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;

- be integrated with Board and Workforce Solutions Office functions to carry out the activities of the program; and

- be registered with TWC through the **Career Pathways Plan** portal by submitting the IELCE + IET plan prior to enrolling learners in the program.

The AEL activities, workforce preparation activities, or workforce training component may include targeted civics content to help prepare learners for success in specific careers. Civics activities attuned to a specific IET program of study should be considered when designing and delivering IELCE + IET with Section 243 funds.

AEL grantees may apply additional program entry requirements for learners when implementing the IET program with Boards, Workforce Solutions Offices, workforce training providers, and other stakeholders. Any additional program requirements must be documented in the IET implementation plan and relevant SOPs. Plans for IELCE + IET pathways must be registered with TWC each PY and should reflect any changes that have been made to improve the model and learner outcomes.

IELCE + IET plans provide a road map of how the grantee will meet required IET targets and provide a snapshot of planned intensity and duration of IET activities to TWC. TWC does not provide written approval of registered plans but will provide feedback or may request changes to a plan within seven business days if requested by a grantee or if plans are incomplete.

- AEL grantees must actively follow-up with IET learners and must complete the **Educational** and **Employment Outcomes** pages in the TWC data management system for each IET learner after any milestone or benchmark is achieved (course completion, MSG, credential attainment, job placement, or enrollment in postsecondary).

AEL grantees must report IELCE + IET expenditures as part of the monthly expenditure reports submitted through TWC's CDER System.

Integration with Board Services

AEFLA regulations at 34 CFR §463.74 require that the IELCE program funded under Section 243 be offered in combination with IET activities. AEL grantees must coordinate with Boards and Workforce Solutions Offices when identifying high-demand industries and occupations and carrying out job placement in such industries and occupations. An IELCE program may meet the requirement to provide IELCE in combination with IET by:

- coenrolling learners in IET activities provided within the workforce area offered through Title I of WIOA or other public workforce system partners; or

- using IELCE program funds to support IET activities.

The IELCE program supports the TWC AEL mission to:

- develop career pathways with Boards and with system partners for all learners;

- promote coenrollment and referral efforts with Boards; and

- provide a "One Workforce" vision through integrated intake, shared case management, and follow-up system support where applicable to enhance the customer experience.

Internationally Trained English Language Learner Professionals

ITPs are individuals with degrees or credentials from their home country who are seeking to reenter their career path, or an alternate one, in the United States. A significant number of ELLs who enter AEL in Texas self-report they have degrees and credentials from their country of origin. These highly skilled immigrants often work in low-skilled jobs or are unemployed, a phenomenon known as "skill underutilization" or "brain waste." Under WIOA, this population is identified as a priority across the workforce system and AEL programs have an opportunity to deliver education and employment services in collaboration with system partners and collaborating organizations.

Per the current RFA, 243 grantees must offer IELCE program services and activities to eligible adults, which includes ITPs. Although there is currently no target enrollment for ITPs, they are a required target population to receive AEL services under Section 243 funding.

These specialized programs and services provide an innovative opportunity to better serve ELLs who are skilled professionals and provide career re-entry, pathways to employment, and economic stability for new Americans, immigrants, and refugees.

AEL grantees must adhere to the following requirements when implementing services for ITPs who are ELLs. Grantees must:

- serve ITP-eligible individuals;

- use information from the comprehensive assessment for instructional purposes;

- align AEL instruction with the Texas AEL Content Standards relative to the instructional design;

- include workforce preparation activities in all levels of instruction as may be appropriate with IELCE instruction and as required for IELCE + IET instruction;

- provide a syllabus for each class;

- register services to ITPs by submitting an ITP career pathway implementation plan via the TCALL portal;

- report at least one MSG per PY per participant; and

- report services appropriately in TWC's data management system.

Eligibility

Individuals qualify to be served as an ITP by self-attesting to attainment of a degree or credential from their home country or by presenting credential documentation during an intake process and by opting into the service model. In the Texas data management system, the profile elements collected that would qualify a learner for ITP services if reported as attained outside the United States would include the following:

- Attained a postsecondary or vocational certificate (non-degree)

- Attained an associate's degree

- Attained a bachelor's degree

- Attained a degree beyond a bachelor's degree

A secondary education or high school credential from another country does not meet the eligibility requirement. Individuals with degrees or credentials from a U.S. territory may qualify for AEL services as ELLs, but degrees or credentials attained in a U.S. territory (such as Puerto Rico) do not qualify the individual as an ITP per guidance provided by OCTAE.

AEL program services and activities provided to ITPs may include, but are not limited to, AEL activities to support:

- career pathway advising;

- contextualized ELA at all levels for occupations and sector-related language fluency;

- intensive academic English in preparation for re-credentialing exams in the United States;

- career and college readiness in preparation for entering an IET program of study or postsecondary education pathway needed for re-employment; and

- enhanced civics education content to:

  ➢ increase understanding of U.S. educational systems; and

  ➢ develop cultural competencies and knowledge of the American workplace.

Credential Evaluation

In Texas, the ITP service model allows for credential evaluation and/or translation when the credential is relevant to the individual's next step such as reemployment in the United States, enrollment in postsecondary education, or enrollment in an IET program of study. AEL grantees must consider the provision of credential evaluation, authentication, and verification services on a case-by-case basis and must document services within the individual's ITEC plan and report them as career services in TWC's data management system. The use of this option should be directly tied to a learner's coursework performance, managed through budgetary controls,

and provided consistently within the ITP service model. TWC highly recommends AEL grantees develop and implement an SOP to structure a consistent and documented process for credential evaluation.

Other Considerations

On-Ramps, Bridge, and Transition Classes

Bridge programs as outlined in Section 231 under popular services may help prepare ELLs linguistically for the rigor and intensity of postsecondary enrollment models. IELCE students may enter an on-ramp, bridge, or transition class in preparation for enhanced services in AEL such as an IET, or prior to an exit from AEL, on a pathway to postsecondary education or training.

The terms "on-ramp," "bridge," and "transition classes" are used interchangeably and refer to an IELCE pre-activity in preparation for a next step. These transition services support learners' linguistic and academic success through a variety of models. IELCE activities may use bridge strategies to assist learners to explore careers and gain an understanding of postsecondary education in the United States.

Bridge programs, or on-ramps, may be used to prepare learners for specific IET programs and may integrate specific civics content relevant to the workforce training component of the IET program of study; however, the time spent in a bridge program does not count as part of the IET. The civics content of the IELCE activity may be contextualized to the occupational area of the IET in the same way workforce preparation activities are. The integration of job-specific civics content into English-language instruction helps prepare learners to participate in their next educational step, whether it is an IET program or entry into postsecondary education or employment.

Bilingual Instruction in Integrated Education and Training

AEL grantees may provide bilingual instruction for workforce training programs for a group's optimum development.

Bilingual instruction for IELCE + IETs requires that:

- students share a common native language;

- evidence-based practices are used that support a bilingual methodology and ensure English fluency is concurrently supported;

- the common native language is used primarily during the workforce training portion of the IET; and

- English-language acquisition methodology is used for adult education instruction for optimal linguistic development.

Grantees are responsible for ensuring that learners acquire sufficient English proficiency in workforce training terminology to successfully complete and pass certifications associated with the IET program. AEL grantees must not offer bilingual education in an IET unless the class is integrated with an ESL class and learners are assessed as ELLs according to the Texas AEL Testing Guide.

Definitions

Active Learner: An individual, regardless of how many contact hours, who is receiving AEL services or activities.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)—Activities and instruction provided across a continuum from preliteracy and basic literacy through elementary levels, culminating with competencies equivalent to the end of eighth grade. Instruction includes reading, mathematics, communication skills, social studies, physical sciences, health, digital literacy, and career and college readiness. Assessment and performance guidance define ABE into the following four levels:

- Level 1 (grade level 0–1.9)

- Level 2 (grade level 2–3.9)

- Level 3 (grade level 4–5.9)

- Level 4 (grade level 6–8.9)

Adult Education—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.

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)—This TWC program administers grants to provide adults with sufficient basic education to enable them to:

- acquire the basic educational skills necessary for literate functioning;

- participate in job training and retraining programs;

- obtain and retain employment; and

- continue their education to at least the level of completion of secondary school.

Adult Education Provider—An organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing AEL activities and is eligible to apply for a grant or contract. Providers may include, but are not limited to:

- local educational agencies;

- community- or faith-based organizations;

- volunteer literacy organizations;

- IHEs;

- public or private nonprofit agencies;

- libraries;

- public-housing authorities;

- nonprofit institutions that are not described in any of the bullets above and that can provide AEL activities to eligible individuals;

- a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of the bullets above; or

- a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of the bullets above.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)—Title II of WIOA.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE)—Activities and instruction comparable to the competencies developed in secondary high school and college developmental education. The AEL Testing Guide and AEL Performance Guide divide ASE into the following two levels:

- Level 5 (grade level 9–10.9)

- Level 6 (grade level 11–12)

AEL Activities—One of the core components of the AEL program, "AEL activities" include programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, ELA activities, IELCE, workforce preparation activities, or IET.

AEL Grant Recipient—Refer to **AEL grantee**.

AEL Grantee (Grantee)—An eligible grant recipient within a workforce area that is awarded AEL funds by TWC. In a consortium, the AEL grantee must also serve as the fiscal agent and may act as an AEL lead organization of a consortium or AEL service provider as designated in an agreement with an AEL consortium.

Agency—In TWC rules, TWC is referred to as "the Agency."

Assessment—An inclusive process of collecting information about individuals, groups, or systems that relies on multiple strategies, inputs, and instruments, one of which may be a test. Therefore, "assessment" is more comprehensive than a test.

Barriers to Employment—Per [WIOA §3(24)](#), an individual with "barriers to employment" is a member of one or more of the following populations:

- Basic skills deficient individuals

- Displaced homemakers

- Low-income individuals

- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians

- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities

- Older individuals (55 or over)

- Second-chance individuals

- Homeless individuals (as defined in §41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 [42 USC 14043e–2(6)]), or homeless children and youth (as defined in §725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act [42 USC 11434a(2)]).

- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system

  Note: Any current or former foster youth may meet this qualification. However, the priority of services provision for current or former foster youth only applies to youth up to the age of 23.

- ELLs who need instruction to gain competency in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language

- Individuals who have low levels of literacy

- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers

- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, as defined in WIOA §167(i)

- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601, et seq.)

- Single parents (including single pregnant women)

- Long-term unemployed individuals

- Such other groups as the state governor involved determines to have barriers to employment

Baseline—The placement of a learner into an educational functioning level each new program year

Basic Skills Deficient—A youth or adult that is unable to compute, solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function in a job, in the individual's family, or in society

Bilingual Education—Approaches in the AEL or workforce training classroom that use the native language of ELLs as a support for content instruction offered when it is appropriate for the students' optimum linguistic development in the target language

Bridge Program (also referred to as an **on-ramp** or **transition class**)—Prepares adults with basic skill needs or limited academic English to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training. Bridge programs may run several days, weeks, or longer (as long as postsecondary college readiness programs), depending on the type of program that students are preparing to enter (for example, community college and other workforce training). This program type may address the following topics, content, and activities:

- Preparation for college or workforce training, including the development of college readiness knowledge in the areas of notetaking, academic readiness, advising, time management, study habits, and digital literacy

- Career development that includes career exploration, career planning, understanding college systems, and employment expectations and work culture for training and employment in a specific occupation or sector

- Goal setting and meeting with career navigators or others to expand and customize an ITEC plan

- Guest lectures from employers, former students, and faculty

- Referrals to individual support services (for example, transportation, child care and housing assistance)

- Intensive academic readiness and remediation for student success to support transition to postsecondary education and training

The bridge program for IET often supports program success by ensuring that students understand and are committed to the duration and intensity of the training program, having developed arrangements to mitigate work and personal obligations that might impede program completion, and being well informed about resulting employment options and expectations to support employment success.

Budget Adjustment—A request to move funds between cost categories

Note: Budget adjustments are allowable when the total cost category reduction is less than 20 percent of the total grant amount.

Budget Amendment—A request to move funds between cost categories that is more than 20 percent of the total grant amount

Career and College Planning—The development of employment and postsecondary education and training awareness, readiness, and transition opportunities for students throughout service delivery, starting at intake

Career Pathways Navigator (Career Navigator)—An individual hired by an AEL provider to fulfill duties that may include workforce case management in conjunction with college and career advising, Board coenrollment, and referrals to support services to reduce barriers to customer success and connect with internal/external partners and stakeholders for employment and postsecondary education

Career Pathways—In WIOA, a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:

- align with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the state or regional economy involved;

- prepare an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including

apprenticeships registered under the [National Apprenticeship Act of August 16, 1937](#);

- include counseling to support an individual in achieving their education and career goals;

- include education offered concurrently with and in the same context (concurrently and contextually) as IET with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, as appropriate;

- organize education, training, and other services to meet the needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates their educational and career advancement to the extent practical;

- enable an individual to attain a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and

- help an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

In AEL programs, career pathways models include IELCE in combination with IET and intensive services.

Career Services—Provided by an AEL program to an individual seeking (or enrolled in) AEL services that include any of the following:

- Outreach, intake, and orientation

- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English-language proficiency as well as aptitudes, abilities, and support 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 type and type of provider

- Provision of information on available of support services or assistance and appropriate referrals including child care, child support, medical, or child health assistance through the state's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), assistance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and other support services and transportation

Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) System—The TWC system that grantees use to request cash draws and submit expenditure reports and financial closeout package.

Clock Time—This model assigns proxy hours based on the time that a learner is connected to or engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.

Coenrollment (also **Concurrent Enrollment** or **Coenrolled**)—Enrollment of an eligible individual in two or more of the six core programs administered under WIOA. In AEL programs, the term has a wider meaning, such as coenrollment between AEL and workforce training, regardless of the funding source.

Collaborating Organization—These entities provide services for the AEL grantee's staff or AEL students without financial compensation or contractual obligations. Collaborating organizations do not have to be consortium members, but they may be. Collaborating organizations:

- make or accept referrals for student services;

- make nonfinancial contributions (for example, facilities) to the grant program; and

- assist in the delivery of comprehensive services, including TWC's Workforce Solutions Offices and the Local Workforce Development Boards, and other agencies as appropriate.

College Knowledge—This body of knowledge includes, but is not limited to, the purposes, types, costs, and admissions requirements of colleges as well as the academic and behavioral expectations of college culture.

Combined WIOA State Plan—TWC's 2024–2027 Strategic Plan for programs under WIOA.

TWC's three-member Commission (**Commission)**—TWC's three-member Commission is composed of members appointed by the governor as established under Texas Labor Code §301.002, which includes one representative for labor, one representative for employers, and one representative for the public.

Comprehensive Assessment—The entry phase of service delivery that consists of collecting information from learners and relies on several strategies, inputs, and instruments, one of which must be a test. Therefore, an "assessment" is more comprehensive than a test.

The process consists of:

- required eligibility testing;

- collection of required reporting elements;

- signed release of information;

- identification of goals;

- educational and employment background; disability accommodation needs, if applicable; and

- potential barriers that may need support to ensure retention and completion.

Concurrent and Contextual (also **concurrently and contextually**)—
Service delivery in which IET components:

- are provided simultaneously at points within the overall scope of the program;

- are of sufficient intensity and quality and based on the most-rigorous research available to support the advancement of education and career development;

- use occupationally relevant instructional materials;

- have a single set of learning objectives identifying specific competencies across the components, which may include established learning objectives and/or trade-related benchmarks or competencies for an existing or emerging high-demand or targeted occupation or occupational cluster required for attaining a recognized postsecondary credential; and

- are organized to function cooperatively.

Consortium (or **Consortia**)—A partnership of educational, workforce development, social service entities, and other public and private organizations that agree to partner, collaborate, plan, and apply for funding to provide AEL and related support services. Consortium members must include:

- an AEL grant recipient and fiscal agent;

- an AEL lead organization of a consortium; and

- an AEL service provider.

Consortium members may serve in one or more of the functions in accordance with state statutes and TWC rules.

Consortium Member—Any entity in a consortium.

Contact Hour—The hours of instruction or instructional activity a learner receives within a program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity that is designed to promote student learning in the program curriculum, including classroom instruction, tutoring, or participation in a learning lab. A contact hour is the cumulative sum of minutes during which an eligible adult learner receives instruction, counseling, and/or assessment services from staff that is supported by federal and state adult education funds as documented by local attendance and reporting records.

Contextual (also **contextualized**)—Teaching and learning strategies designed to link the acquisition of basic skills with academic or occupational content by focusing teaching and learning directly on concrete applications in a specific context, such as in a career in which students are interested or a specific occupation. Forms of contextualization include financial literacy, family literacy, health literacy, and occupational training. When the emphasis is on career preparation and higher-level workforce training and credential attainment, teaching and learning basic skills is tied to career or occupational clusters. The following elements are often present:

- Occupationally relevant instruction, including the use of materials, tools, equipment, and items (signs, manuals, procedures) from the workplace (called "realia") that the learner will use after training

- Use of the learner's content, workplace, or professional knowledge

- Assessment that includes context- and content-specific measurement and application of skills

Contextualized Instruction—Diverse instructional strategies designed to seamlessly link the learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing on concrete applications in a real-life context

Contracted Measures—AEL contracts outline these annual target enrollment and performance measures, which grantees are contractually

required to meet each program year as outlined in the RFA and approved by TWC annually

Core Components of an IET (IET Components)—The three required instructional and service activities of an Integrated Education and Training program, including:

- AEL activities contextualized for workforce training;

- workforce preparation activities; and

- workforce training for a specific existing and emerging high-demand occupation, targeted occupation, or occupational cluster described in the local workforce development area Board plan.

Core Program—A program that operates under one of the following:

- WIOA Title I Adult program

- WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program

- WIOA Title I Youth program

- WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program

- Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA Title III

- VR program, authorized under Title I, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV

Correctional Institution—A correctional institution is any:

- prison;

- jail;

- reformatory;

- work farm;

- detention center;

- halfway house or community-based rehabilitation center; or

- any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of second-chance individuals.

Corrections Education—A fundamental component of rehabilitative programming offered in justice confinement facilities, most American prisons, and many jails and detention centers. For purposes of AEL grantees, corrections education occurs inside a correctional institution or facility, and allowable services include AEL activities, special education, as determined by TWC, secondary school credit, career pathways, Integrated Education and Training, peer tutoring, and transition to reentry and post-release services. Programs must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the institution within five years ([29 USC §3305](#), [34 CFR §463.62](#)).

- **Corrections Education and Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals**—Required under WIOA Title II, these are services states must provide to second-chance individuals (any individual who is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense) who reside in correctional institutions.

Credential (also **Recognized Postsecondary Credential**)—An outcome credential consisting of:

- an industry-recognized certificate or certification;

- a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship;

- a license recognized by the state involved or federal government; or

- an associate's, baccalaureate, or graduate degree for purposes of the VR program as required by [section 103(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), as amended by [WIOA Title IV](#).

A recognized postsecondary credential is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical, industry, or occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an

industry/occupation. These skills are generally based on standards developed or endorsed by employers or industry associations.

Neither certificates awarded by Boards nor work readiness certificates are included in this definition because neither type of certificate documents the measurable technical, industry, or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. Likewise, such certificates must recognize these skills for the specific industry or occupation rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, and so forth, even if such general skills certificates are broadly required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in employment.

A variety of different public and private entities issue recognized postsecondary credentials. A list of the types of organizations and institutions that award recognized postsecondary credentials follows:

- A state educational agency or state agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a state

- An institution of higher education described in [section 102 of the Higher Education Act](#) ([20 USC 1002](#)) that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of that act, including community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in federal student financial aid programs

- An institution of higher education that is formally controlled or has been formally sanctioned or chartered by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes

- A professional, industry, or employer organization (for example, National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certification; National Institute for Metalworking Skills, Inc.; Machining Level I credential) or product manufacturer or developer (for example, recognized Microsoft Information Technology certificates, such as Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP), Certified Novell Engineer,

and a Sun Certified Java Programmer) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities

- U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's Office of Apprenticeship or a state apprenticeship agency.

- A public regulatory agency that awards a credential upon an individual's fulfillment of educational, work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (for example, a Federal Aviation Administration aviation mechanic license, or a state-licensed asbestos inspector)

- A program that has been approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons

- Job Corps, which issues certificates for completing career training programs that are based on industry skills standards and certification requirements

- **Note:** Not all credentials by these entities meet the definition of recognized postsecondary credential.

Credential Evaluation (Foreign Credential)—A report assessing a candidate's education which they earned outside the United States to determine the U.S. equivalent. Universities and colleges require credential evaluations from foreign student applicants who apply to college or graduate programs in the United States so the institutions can assess grade point average (GPA), course credits, and the U.S. equivalents. Some employers require credential evaluations, usually for applicants who may need to meet certain licensure requirements for an occupation, especially for healthcare, law, or government roles.

Data Sign-Off (DSO)—A report that grantees are required to submit quarterly to TWC that certifies the validity of data noted in the TEAMS. Grantee directors must certify the validity of the data, and DSO reports are due 15 days after the end of each quarter (October 15, January 15, April 15,

and July 15). A final DSO report representing the program year data is due July 15.

Digital Literacy—Skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information

Digital Skills Building—Provision of services that teaches the use of devices such as computers, tablets, or mobile phones for basic personal and work tasks. Digital skills building includes how to find information on the internet, how to check information reliability, how to be safe and responsible online, and communicating socially and professionally in emails, messaging, and on social media. Additional skills may include what to be aware of when shopping, banking, and accessing services online or applying for a job. Refer to the Digital Literacy Standards section in [AEL 2024 Content Standards 4.0](#).

Direct Contact Hour—A direct contact hour is a contact hour that consists of instruction or instructional activity in reading, writing, mathematics, and ESL, which includes classroom instruction, tutoring, or participation in a learning lab. Hours accumulated through orientation or workforce training do not count as direct contact hours. Hours accumulated through workforce preparation activities count as direct contact hours only when the activities are delivered in the context of reading, writing, mathematics, and ESL. Direct contact hours are entered on the daily class contact hour page in the data management system.

Discretionary Innovation Projects—Capacity-building projects that are directed toward developing, enhancing, and positioning the adult education system for continuous improvement across program outcomes and for innovation related to system integration with core WIOA programs and postsecondary education and training

Distance Education—Per the NRS, this is a formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for most of the instructional period. The NRS requires TWC to define how grantees classify learners using distance education as distance learners. TWC outlines this policy in the Texas AEL Testing Guide, and all grantees must have a distance learning plan that follows this policy. The NRS also defines a

"distance learner" as one who has more proxy hours than direct contact hours.

Distance Learning—A formal learning activity in which learners and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for most of the instructional period where there is a broader range of methods to provide instruction to a student outside of in-person class instruction. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media, such as print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs, and other online technology. Grantees providing asynchronous distance learning instruction must use an approved distance learning curriculum for Texas adult education and outline that curriculum in their distance learning plan.

Distance Learning Curriculum—A TWC-approved curriculum for Texas adult education used to track a distance learning student's proxy hours by clock-time model, teacher certification model, or learner mastery model

Distance Learning Participant—A learner who has more proxy hours than direct hours

Distance Learning Plan—A plan written by programs offering distance learning that outlines distance learning education delivery

Educational Functioning Level—The ABE, ASE, and ESL literacy levels, provided in the AEL Testing Guide, that describe a set of skills and competencies that students demonstrate in the NRS skill areas

Educational Technology—The technology tools, techniques, or processes that facilitate, expand, or enhance learning and assessment or that support teaching practices to improve learning outcomes including, but not limited to, distance learning or distance education and digital literacy

English Language Acquisition (ELA)—Refer to **English Language Acquisition Program** and **English as a Second Language (ESL)**.

English Language Acquisition (ELA) Program—A program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are ELLs:

- achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language;

- attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and

- transition to postsecondary education and training or employment.

In WIOA, this term replaces the formerly used term "English as a Second Language," or "adult ESL." In Texas, the term "ESL" is used interchangeably with "ELA Program."

English Language Learner (ELL)—An eligible individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language—and whose native language is a language other than English—or who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards—A standards-based approach in K–12 education that provides a framework for ELLs to acquire the content knowledge and English proficiency needed for school success. These standards correspond to a state's college- and career-ready standards and reflect a shift in focus from language possession to language use within the content areas.

English as a Second Language (ESL)—ESL instruction helps eligible ELLs achieve competence in English reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension. The program must lead to attainment of a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. To achieve this, the program can:

- align the curricula, lesson plans, or instructional materials to the Texas AEL Content Standards;

- offer educational and career-counseling services that assist eligible individuals to transition to postsecondary education or employment; or

- be part of career pathways program.

In WIOA, "ESL" is referred to as "English Language Acquisition."

Exiter—A learner who exits AEL services after they have not received any qualifying service for more than 90 days. An exit is retroactively calculated to the last day of service after 90 days of inactivity

Family Literacy—Literacy activities that are of sufficient intensity, including the following:

- Making sustainable improvements in the economic prospects of a family.

- Better enabling parents or family members to support their children's learning needs.

- Integrating the following activities:

  - parent or family AEL 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;

  - education for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teachers for their children and full partners in their children's education; and

  - age-appropriate education that prepares children for success in school and life experiences.

Financial Literacy— Instruction on how to make informed decisions and take effective action with respect to money management, which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Supporting the ability of learners to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make informed financial decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, wealth building, or other savings goals

- Supporting the ability to manage spending, credit, and debt (including credit card debt) effectively

- Increasing awareness of the availability and significance of credit reports and credit scores in obtaining credit, including determining their accuracy (and how to correct inaccuracies in the reports and scores) and their effect on credit terms

- Supporting the ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities

- Supporting activities that address the financial literacy needs of non-English speakers

Follow-up Activities—A variety of services and workforce preparation activities that occur after a learner is no longer active in AEL direct services and for up to 365 days after exit. Follow-up activities support learners in completing education and training objectives, including collecting information on educational outcomes, employment, earnings, enrollment and progress in postsecondary education or training, and credential attainment.

While follow-up services must occur after a learner exits AEL services—"exit" is defined as 90 days with no contact hours—activities may occur during participation or in the period between the last date of participation and the exit date.

General Service Provider Grant (Provider Grant)—The statewide system of AEL grantees in each workforce area that deliver a variety of AEL activities under multiyear grants as defined in 50 TAC Chapter 805.

High-Quality Information Management System—In Texas, the "Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS)."

High School Dropout Recovery Program—A program that identifies and recruits students who dropped out of Texas public schools and provides them with services to enable them to earn a high school diploma or complete an alternative path to college by demonstrating college readiness.

Attributes of the model include a wide array of academic and social support, including:

- child care and transportation;

- open entry to and open exit from program;

- a variety of instructional programming, including online courses; and

- multiple scheduling options, including weekend and evening classes.

High-demand—Refers to:

- an industry sector that has a substantial current or potential impact (including through jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the state, regional, or local economy, as appropriate, and that contributes to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses or to the growth of other industry sectors; or

- an occupation that currently has or is projected to have several positions (including positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) in an industry sector that will have a significant impact on the state, regional, or local economy, as appropriate.

High School Equivalency (HSE) Voucher Tracker—The Microsoft Excel reporting tool that grant recipients use to track HSE vouchers released by TWC AEL to the grant recipient for subsidy recipients. This tool serves the following two purposes:

- TWC's mechanism to send voucher codes to AEL grant recipients

- Provides grant recipients with a way to track voucher usage by student name, TWC's data management system user ID, and HSE voucher information in order to reconcile voucher usage data against TEAMS and GED Manager™. The terms "online proctored," "computer-based regular," and "computer-based retake" are used to describe the different types of vouchers available for each GED test.

Hold Harmless and Stop Gain—A procedure that ensures that a relative proportion of an allocation to a workforce area is not below 90 percent of the corresponding proportion for the past two years or that the current year proportion is not above 125 percent of the past two-year relative proportion

Individual Training, Education, and Career Plan (ITEC Plan)—A plan for a student to meet educational and career goals, which is designed to promote a discussion and set forth a strategy. The plan delineates short- and long-term goals and their implementation steps.

Instructional Strategies—Techniques used by instructors and/or educators to determine the appropriate match between the academic content and the learner.

Intake—The holistic process in which a provider, before enrolling a student in AEL services, determines the eligibility of the student, identifies the student's goals and barriers, collects required information for federal reporting purposes, and refers the student to other services, as needed.

Integrated Education and Training (IET)—An overall scope of services designed for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for educational and career advancement, which includes the three IET components: AEL activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training, delivered through integrated services.

IET programs ensure that learners gain the skills needed to succeed in workforce training programs by attaining recognized postsecondary credentials, entering or advancing in employment, or advancing in postsecondary education and training.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Activity—Education services provided to adult ELLs, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables them to achieve competency 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 include instruction in literacy and ELA and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. They may include also workforce training.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program—Funded under WIOA Section 243, the IELCE program prepares adult ELLs for, and places them in, unsubsidized employment in industries and occupations that are high‑demand and lead to economic self-sufficiency and integrate with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program.

IELCE program services are provided to adult ELLs, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, enabling them to achieve competency 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 **must** include workforce training as well as instruction in literacy, ELA, and the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship and civic participation.

Integrated English Literacy Civics IET (Integrated EL Civics IET)—A program funded under WIOA §243 for adult ELLs, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Section 243 IELCE funds require that the program's service approach include IELCE services in combination with IET for learners for whom IET services are appropriate. In addition to providing the three components of an IET, the IELCE + IET program must meet the following requirements:

- be designed to prepare adult ELLs for, and place them in, unsubsidized employment in existing and emerging high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and

- integrate with Board and Workforce Solutions Office functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Also refer to 34 CFR Part 463, Subpart G, for additional guidance.

Integrated Services—Delivery of IET components which are provided concurrently and contextually—that is, IET components are provided

simultaneously at points within the overall scope of the program—that are of sufficient intensity and quality and are based on the most rigorous research available to support the advancement of education and career development and use occupationally relevant instructional materials.

"Integrated services" also means an IET program has program activities organized to function cooperatively so that specific adult education content, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training competencies are aligned to a single set of learning objectives that identify specific competencies across the IET components. The competencies may include established learning objectives and/or trade-related benchmarks or competencies for an emerging or existing high-demand or targeted occupation or occupational cluster required for attaining a recognized postsecondary credential.

Intensive Services—A career pathways service model, which includes one or more of the following:

- Workplace AEL activities

- Services for ITPs

- Post-release services for second-chance individuals

Internationally-trained English Language Learner Professional (Internationally Trained Professional [ITP])—An ELL who is a professional with a degree or credential from their native country.

Limited English Proficient (LEP)—An individual who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, and/or understand English.

Literacy—An individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and to compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

Local Board Plan—A plan required under WIOA in which each Board develops a comprehensive four-year, local plan that analyzes the workforce

area and lays out each Board's strategy to meet the economic and employment needs of the area job seekers and employers. Refer to the [About the Boards](#) page on the TWC website to view these.

Local Workforce Development Area (Workforce Area)—Refer to **Workforce Area**.

Local Workforce Development Board (Board)—Created pursuant to [Texas Government Code §2308.253](#) and certified by the governor pursuant to [Texas Government Code §2308.261](#). There are 28 Boards in Texas.

Managed Enrollment—A system for enrollment in which student entry points are set at logical break points in the curriculum or at the beginning of short classes or modules (typically three to six weeks, or up to 10 weeks long). Class terms in managed enrollment scheduling are usually shorter than in open enrollment or fixed enrollment, determined by examining program data to identify how long students attend a class before attrition begins. Group intake, orientation, and pretesting sessions occur outside of class before each entry point. Instructors receive information about new students before they arrive in class on designated dates.

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)—The WIOA term for one of the primary indicators of performance across core programs and defined as the documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress toward a credential or employment. It is the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving an MSG, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, toward such a credential or employment. The following options are currently available to providers for reporting MSGs dependent on the type of AEL activity:

- Type 1a: EFL Gain Pre-/posttest

- Type 1b: Completion of Carnegie Units (not applicable in Texas)

- Type 1c: Exit AEL then entry into postsecondary education

- Type 1d: Passing a section of the HSE exam

- Type 2: Secondary diploma or equivalency

- Type 3: Secondary or postsecondary transcript

- Type 4: Progress toward milestone

- Type 5: Passing technical/occupational knowledge-based exam

Note: For AEL, Types 3, 4, and 5 apply only to those enrolled in an IET or workplace literacy program.

Providers should defer to the Texas AEL Testing Guide and Texas AEL Performance Guide and associated active AEL letters for official policy and guidance related to MSG.

National Reporting System (NRS) Implementation Guidelines—AEFLA federal accountability requirements of, which describe measures to allow assessment of the effect of adult education instruction, methodologies for collecting the measures, reporting forms and procedures, and training and technical assistance activities to help states collect the measures

Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)—Office of the U.S. Department of Education that administers and coordinates programs related to AEL, career and technical education, and community colleges. OCTAE was formerly referred to as the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE).

One-Stop Centers (One-Stops)—Also known as Workforce Solutions Offices (or federally as American Job Centers), one-stops are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers under one roof. Established under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and reauthorized in 2014 under WIOA, the centers offer training and education referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services. One-stops are administered by Boards**.**

"One Workforce"—An approach endorsed and recommended by multiple federal programs among WIOA partner programs and stakeholders to foster greater collaboration, integrated service delivery, shared data, and leveraged resources, leading to positive employment, training, and education outcomes for customers.

On-Ramp to Postsecondary Education or Training (On-Ramp Program)—A service, also referred to as a bridge or transition class, that prepares adults with basic-skill needs or limited academic English to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training.

On-ramp programs may run several days, weeks, or longer as postsecondary college readiness programs, depending on the type of program students are preparing to enter (for example, community college and other workforce training). An on-ramp program may address the following topics, content, and activities:

- Preparation for college or workforce training, including the development of college readiness knowledge in the areas of note-taking, academic readiness, advising, time management, study habits, and digital literacy

- Career development that includes career exploration, career planning, understanding college systems, and employment expectations and work culture for training and employment in a specific occupation or sector

- Goal setting and meeting with career navigators or others to expand and customize an ITEC plan

- Guest lectures from employers, former students, and faculty

- Referrals to individual supportive services (for example, transportation, child care, and housing assistance)

- Intensive academic readiness and remediation for student success to support transition to postsecondary education and training

The on-ramp program for an IET often supports program success by ensuring that students understand and are committed to the duration and intensity of the training program, have developed arrangements to mitigate work and personal obligations that might impede program completion, and are well informed about resulting employment options and expectations to support employment success.

Open Enrollment—A system that allows learners to enter and exit a class at nearly any point throughout its term. Students are free to come to class when they can, miss when they must, drop out for a while, and return without any waiting period. Typically, teachers receive no notice of or information about new learners before the learners arrive to class.

Orientation—Part of the assessment process in which a provider gives information to learners about a program and collaborating organization services, the attendance and class participation policies, learner support services, emergency evacuation procedures, grievance procedures, learner rights and responsibilities, and the program code of conduct in a student handbook. Orientation establishes a student's short- and long-term goals and sets the basis for the ITEC plan.

Participant—A participant is an individual who has taken an approved test that establishes basic education eligibility and accrued 12 direct-contact hours or maintains a POP from a previous program year.

Participatory Service—An activity or service that extends a POP after an individual becomes eligible for AEL services. A participatory service begins a POP after a participant is found eligible by taking an approved test and accruing 12 direct-contact hours.

After eligibility is determined, the following services are considered participatory services:

- Testing (excluding official HSE tests)

- Direct-contact ("D")

- Proxy-contact ("P") hours

- For IET participants, workforce training hours (workforce training hours must be entered into data management system as "T" to extend the IET and the POP).

Peer Tutoring—In corrections education, an instructional model that uses one institutionalized individual to assist in providing or enhancing learning opportunities for other institutionalized individuals. A peer tutoring program must be structured and overseen by educators who assist with training and supervising tutors, setting educational goals, establishing an individualized plan of instruction, and monitoring progress.

Performance Funding—Funding earned by an AEL grantee upon achievement of performance funding benchmarks that coincide with other state or federal performance measures as determined by the Commission.

Period of Participation (POP)—An interval of measurement that begins each time an individual is found eligible for the AEL program through a pretest and accrues 12 direct contact hours and ends each time an individual has not received a participatory service for 90 days. POPs can span across PYs, and a learner can have multiple POPs in one PY.

POPs add an additional period of measurement that is used to calculate participation, contact hours, testing intervals, and exit-based performance-measure calculations within and across program years.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)—Information that identifies an individual, as set forth in WD Letter 02-18, Change 1, issued March 18, 2024, and entitled "Handling Sensitive Personal Information and Other Confidential Information—Update" and subsequent issuances. Not all PII is sensitive and/or confidential by law. Refer to the TWC Website Privacy & Security Information page that addresses a variety of website privacy, security, and confidentially information.

Popular Services—AEL term in Texas for allowable service categories for the purposes of assigning targets to services that emphasize Texas' vision for AEL. "Popular services" may consist of:

- adult education;

- literacy (including digital and financial literacies);

- family literacy;

- ELA or ESL;

- corrections education;

- HSE preparation; or

- on-ramp, bridge, or transition to postsecondary education or employment.

Post-assessment (posttest)—A progress or subsequent test administered after a learner has received the minimum hours of instruction recommended in an assessment's publisher's guidelines; also called a "posttest."

Post-Release Services for Second-Chance Individuals—Grantees may provide adult education activities to second-chance individuals who are within three years post release (having been released) from a correctional institution. This is not the same as transition to reentry and post-release services (as allowed under WIOA §225) to incarcerated individuals who will be released from a correctional facility within the next five years. This program targets individuals who are post release and seeking to complete educational and career goals through participation in adult literacy activities, such as HSE preparation, ELA, workforce preparation, or digital literacy.

Posttest—Refer to **Post-Assessment.**

Pre-assessment—A test administered to place a learner into an educational functioning level, generally before instruction takes place; also referred to as "pre-test" or "initial assessment"

Pre-test—Refer to **Pre-Assessment**.

Principles of Adult Learning—A wide variety of research-based PD topics. These include instructional and advising characteristics specific to adults that are concerned with the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities adults bring to education and that define their needs to:

- understand and use information;

- express themselves;

- act independently;

- manage a changing world effectively; and

- meet goals and objectives related to career, family, and community participation.

Instructional principles include, but are not limited to:

- engaging adults and customizing instruction on subjects that have immediate relevance to their careers and personal goals and objectives;

- building on a learner's prior knowledge and experience; and

- supporting learners in taking responsibility for their learning.

Priority Populations (Priority of Services)—A term used throughout WIOA that requires WIOA Title I programs give priority of services to recipients of public benefits, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient when providing career and training services. In Texas, special populations may receive a priority of services per the action of the governor (refer to the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth](#)).

Professional Development (PD)—A wide variety of facilitated learning activities for instructors and staff of AEL programs and organizations that receive services. "PD" refers to the acquisition of skills and knowledge for

career advancement and encompasses all facilitated and professional learning opportunities, including workshops and conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice.

Professional Development Center (PD Center)—The statewide AEL PD Center contractor serves as a central dissemination point for information, networking, technical assistance and development for Texas AEL professionals creating opportunities in education and the workforce for their students. The current contractor is the Texas Research-based Adult Instruction Network Professional Development ([TRAIN PD) Consortium](#) located at Texas A&M University.

Professional Development (PD) Coordinators—Staff members employed by AEL providers to deliver or facilitate delivery of Tier 1 PD services and training as well as a comprehensive plan for local PD efforts in coordination with the PD Center and as directed by TWC.

Professional Development Plan for Continuous Improvement—A set of goals, objectives, and activities designed by a team of local practitioners to bring ongoing improvement to AEL services through periodic review, measurement and action.

Program of Study—Grouping of courses that deliver academic and/or career and technical education to prepare students for postsecondary education and career success.

Program Year (PY)—The AEL program year, which runs from July 1–June 30.

Provider—An organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing AEL activities and is eligible to apply for a WIOA Title II grant or contract. Providers include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A local educational agency

- A community-based or faith-based organization

- A volunteer literacy organization

- An institution of higher education

- A public or private nonprofit agency

- A library

- A public housing authority

- A nonprofit institution that is not described in any of the items above and that can provide AEL activities to eligible individuals

- A consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of the bullets above

- A partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of the bullets above

Proxy Hours—Hours of instruction for which the identity of the learner and/or the exact amount of time spent on a learning activity may not be verified directly.

Recognized Postsecondary Credential—Refer to **Credential.**

Remote Learner—Someone engaging in synchronous learning transmitted via technology (email, chat, discussion boards, video conference, audio) where no physical presence in the classroom is required. Contact hours for remote learning are counted as direct hours if they are greater than 15 minutes. Unlike distance learning, remote learning must occur synchronously in real time, does not use approved distance learning curricula, and the hours are counted as direct hours.

Remote Learning—An instructional approach to learning using technology in which the student and instructor are separated by distance; occurs synchronously (in real time), accumulates direct contact hours, and may use a variety of technologies such as chat, video conference, Zoom, or phone.

Second-Chance Individuals—An individual who was previously incarcerated or institutionalized and is seeking adult education services after being released from a correctional facility.

Section 225 Funding—Funds granted to AEL providers for the cost of educational programs for second-chance individuals in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals. The programs include:

- academic programs for AEL services;

- special education, as determined by TWC;

- secondary school credit;

- IET;

- career pathways;

- concurrent enrollment;

- peer tutoring; and

- transition to reentry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Section 231 Funding—Funds granted to AEL providers to establish or operate programs that provide AEL activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently with other program activities.

Section 243 Funding—Funding that supports IELCE and Integrated EL Civics IET under WIOA §243 for adult ELLs, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. WIOA §243 requires that the program service approach include IELCE services in combination with IET for learners for whom IET services are appropriate.

Additionally, programs funded with Section 243–funded programs must meet the following requirements:

- Be designed to prepare adult ELLs for and place them in unsubsidized employment in existing, emerging, high-demand industry sectors or targeted occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency

- Integrate with Board and Workforce Solutions Office functions to carry out the activities of the program

Services for Internationally-Trained English Language Learner Professionals—Include, but are not limited to, linguistic preparation for professional credentialing exams, specialized career advising, ESL services contextualized for targeted occupations with enough intensity to allow for rapid progress in support of credentialing exams, or professional opportunities.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)—Procedures that AEL providers are required to have and maintain for grant execution in areas that include, but are not limited to, recruitment and advertising, intake, assessment, testing, placement, and customer profile data collection.

State Fiscal Year—The 12-month reporting period across agencies in Texas used for accounting, budgeting, and reporting purposes during which funding disbursement or other financial transactions occur. The state fiscal year for Texas begins September 1 of each year and ends the following August 31. For example, State Fiscal Year 2022 (SFY'22) began September 1, 2022, and ended August 31, 2023.

Note: The AEL fiscal reporting year is July 1 to June 30.

State Leadership Activities—TWC-directed leadership activities in support of AEL that are authorized by the [WIOA §222(a)](#) and described in [WIOA §223(a)](#) ([29 USC §3303](#)). TWC is authorized to use no more than 12.5 percent of its federal grant to carry out state leadership activities, which include PD, technical assistance, technology assistance, support of literacy resource centers, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of and improvement in AEL programs, incentives, curriculum development, and other important statewide activities.

State Performance Measures—State performance measures are those negotiated between TWC and the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) each biennium as a part of TWC's Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR).

Statewide Management Information System—The official database for Texas' AEL program data is currently TEAMS.

Subrecipient—An entity or individual that contracts with an AEL provider to provide a service that supports delivery of AEL services. The AEL provider must determine whether a subrecipient is a vendor or a subrecipient as defined by Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR, Part 200. The provider develops contracts based on the determined relationship.

Subsidy—An amount not to exceed the cost of one GED exam, inclusive of all subject areas or the complete battery, as negotiated by the TEA with GED Testing Service, LLC. The GED exam contains four tests, and individual tests correspond to the subject areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. The test fees per battery and per subject area for the GED exam are on the TEA website.

Subsidy Recipient—An individual who is determined to be eligible to receive an HSE subsidy. An individual is eligible if they are:

- at least 21 years of age;

- a Texas resident

- lacking a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

- determined to be HSE test–ready

- a current AEL learner;

- a former AEL learner within 365 days of exit; or

- a non-AEL learner who is otherwise eligible to receive the subsidy.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and Training Program (SNAP E&T)—A federally funded program that promotes long-term self-sufficiency and independence by preparing SNAP recipients for employment through work-related education and training activities. The SNAP program helps low-income families buy nutritious food from local food stores. SNAP assistance is available to qualifying families, elderly people, and single adults. Applicants must reside in Texas and apply in the county in which they reside.

Support Services—Services include providing the transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments necessary to enable an individual to participate in AEL activities.

Technical Assistance Plan (TAP)—The first step in implementing a corrective action, a TAP for performance improvement may be jointly developed by TWC with Boards, AEL grantees, or TWC grant recipients. A TAP includes, but is not limited to:

- identification of one or more specific performance improvement issues;

- assessment of specific technical assistance or training needs;

- selection of one or more specific technical assistance or training activities to be implemented;

- identification of the appropriate entities to provide the technical assistance or training, including the Board, AEL grantee, TWC, other Boards, or other entities;

- identification of a timeline for completion of the technical assistance or training; and

- specific dates for reassessment of technical assistance or training needs and completion of the specific technical assistance or training.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)—A federal program that, in addition to providing temporary financial assistance to needy families who meet certain eligibility requirements, provides financial support

to many initiatives that meet one or more of the four purposes of TANF, as follows:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes.

- Reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.

- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Test—A measuring device or instrument and its associated procedures. Educational tests are typically composed of questions or tasks designed to elicit predetermined behavioral responses or to measure academic content standards.

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Content Standards (Texas AEL Content Standards)—The Texas-adopted academic content standards that specify the content that adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, ESL, and digital literacy, including how the academic content aligns to the occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in Texas.

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Guide (Texas AEL Guide)—A TWC-produced program guide used to support AEL grantees' implementation of programs, services, and activities for AEL grant awards in Texas funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Grant, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Performance Guide (Performance Guide)—Provides information and guidance for employment, training, and educational outcomes on the importance of demonstrated effectiveness as it relates to an entity's ability to apply for AEL grant and AEL grantee

performance measures (also known as contracted measures), composed of:

- federal performance requirements under WIOA; Texas-specific performance requirements and measures and how grantees may measure progress toward required performance outcomes;

- recommendations for tracking the performance and outcomes of AEL participants;

- performance considerations related to performance-based funding and Workforce Awards; and

- how TWC develops AEL-contracted measures.

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Testing Guide (AEL Testing Guide)—A guide based on the NRS Implementation Guidelines (February 2016 and subsequent issuances), as well as on active TWC AEL and WD Letters. The AEL Testing Guide standardizes the process of determining learner placement, progress toward outcomes, and collection and reporting of data. Grantees are responsible for following the AEL Testing Guide.

Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE)—The certificate of high school equivalency issued by the Texas Education Agency, which is the only agency authorized to issue high school equivalency certificates in Texas.

Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS)—The official database for Texas AEL data.

Texas Workforce System—The Texas Workforce System is composed of several programs, services, and initiatives administered by eight state agencies, the Texas Association of Workforce Boards, boards, community and technical colleges, local adult education providers, and independent school districts. Statewide, the system provides workforce development, employment and training, and educational services through a seamless customer-focused service-delivery network that enhances access to all program services and improves long-term outcomes for Texans. Workforce system partners administer separately funded programs as a set of

integrated streamlined services to customers and serve a critical role in the development of a world-class workforce that enjoys a higher quality of life through economic, employment, and educational success.

Tier One Training (Tier 1 Training)—Core professional development training that an AEL provider must deliver to its employees as part of its TWC grant contract, including, but not limited to, test administration, goal setting, integrating career awareness, basic data management system usage, and program-specific policies regarding student recruitment, orientation, and documentation

Tier Two Training (Tier 2 Training)—Diverse adult-learning PD training, including the Principles of Adult-Learning courses offered through the professional development centers to assist AEL providers in improving instructional and performance outcomes

Title I Services—WIOA Title I–funded services for adults and dislocated workers and youth, including core services available for job seekers. Core services include skills assessments, self-service access to job listings, information about careers and local labor market conditions, and limited staff assistance with job-search activities. Intensive services under Title I are available only to individuals who have not obtained employment through core services, or who are employed but require intensive services to retain or obtain employment, allowing for self-sufficiency. Intensive services can include skills assessments, career counseling, development of individual employment plans, and short-term prevocational services. Training services are available to individuals who have been unable to find or keep employment through core and intensive services. These services can include such activities as occupational skills training, on-the-job training, job readiness training, and AEL activities, if they are provided in conjunction with other job-training activities.

Transition to Reentry and Post-Release Services—Such services as educational counseling or case work that support incarcerated individuals

transition to reentry and other post-release services. Examples include:

- assisting incarcerated individuals to develop plans for post-release education program participation;

- assisting students in identifying and applying for post-release programs;

- and performing direct outreach to community-based program providers on behalf of reentering students.

Federal adult-education funds may be used only for activities that promote transition to such services and not for costs for participation in post-release programs or services. These services are reported in TWC's data management system as career services and are not considered intensive services.

Transitions—Preparatory course models designed to increase the transitional success of learners at NRS Levels 4–6 who are enrolling in initial postsecondary education or training courses

Vocational Rehabilitation Services—Also called "Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services," VR services help individuals with disabilities prepare for, find, or retain employment and help youth and students prepare for postsecondary opportunities. They also help businesses and employers recruit, retain, and accommodate employees with disabilities. Services include vocational evaluations, counseling and guidance, training and education assistance, and assistive technology.

Voucher—An electronic voucher code provided to an eligible individual for taking a GED test. GED Testing Service, LLC, is the only approved vendor of the HSE exam in Texas for the purpose of TxCHSE attainment. The amounts for vouchers may vary due to the cost differences in test administration methods, such as online-proctored or computer-based.

Workforce Area—An area designated by the governor and functioning as a local workforce investment area by which integrated AEL and workforce services are organized. Workforce areas must consist of more than one

contiguous unit of general local government, including at least one county, and must be of sufficient size to have the administrative resources necessary to plan, manage, and deliver workforce development services.

Other factors used in developing workforce areas in Texas are the economic development needs of each area, analyses of local labor markets, commuting patterns of residents, and community needs, including those of employers seeking skilled workers and individuals seeking jobs and skills training.

Workforce integration services support the referral to and coenrollment in Board, VR, and other workforce system services as well as success in postsecondary education or training. Workforce integration services may include the following activities in an in-person or virtual setting:

- Capacity-building activities that support coenrollment in Board and VR programs

- Processes that sustain system referrals and alignment of services among Board, workforce intermediaries, and postsecondary education or training institutions

Workforce Partners—in Texas, workforce partners differ from those listed in WIOA because Texas may operate certain aspects of WIOA under prior consistent state law ([40 TAC §801.27](#)). The required workforce partners in Texas are the entities that administer the following programs in the local workforce development areas:

- Jobs for Veterans State Grant program ([38 USC §41](#) et seq.)

- AEL (WIOA, Title II)

- Senior Community Service Employment Program ([42 USC §3056](#) et seq.)

- Apprenticeship Training Program certified by the States Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship Training ([TEC, Chapter 133](#))

- Carl D. Perkins Career and technical education programs ([20 USC §2301](#) et seq.)

- employment and training activities carried out under Community Services Block Grant programs ([42 USC §9901](#) et seq.)

- employment and training activities provided through grantees of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

- education and vocational training programs through Job Corps (WIOA, Title I);

- Native American programs (WIOA, Title I)

- YouthBuild programs (WIOA, Title I)

- Programs authorized under [§213 of the Second Chance Act of 2007](#) ([42 USC §17532](#) et seq.)

Workforce Preparation Activities—One of the three core IET components, "workforce preparation activities" encompasses activities, programs, or 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 the following:

- Using resources

- Using information

- Working with others

- Understanding systems

- Skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment

- Other employability skills that increase an individual's preparation for the workforce

Workforce Solutions Offices—Referred to in federal guidance as "one-stops" or "American Job Centers," and in Texas as "Workforce Solutions Offices," these offer an array of services to eligible customers, including job placement, training programs, and child care assistance, as well as employer services like job posting and placement and labor market research.

Workforce Training—One of the three core IET components, "workforce training" includes the following training services authorized under WIOA Title I:

- On-the-job training as described in WIOA §3(44)

- Skills upgrading

- Entrepreneurial training

- Customized training, as described in WIOA §3(14)

- Other occupational skills training (for example, training delivered in an IET by a community or technical college)

- Prerequisite training

- Registered apprenticeship training

- Youth occupational skills training

Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Workplace AEL Activities)—AEL activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location. These activities are designed to improve workforce productivity. Workplace AEL is one of the intensive services models for career pathways. This is sometimes referred to as "workplace AEL."

Year-Round Service Delivery—Refers to instances when AEL services are provided by an AEL provider using a managed enrollment model that includes flexible schedules to allow customers to begin orientation or workforce preparation activities at no less than two-week intervals and instructional services no fewer than four times a year.

Resources

Texas Workforce Commission Adult Education and Literacy Contact Information

For technical assistance and questions, email [AELTA@twc.texas.gov.](mailto:AELTA@twc.texas.gov)

For contract and fiscal help, email [AELContracts@twc.texas.gov.](mailto:AELContracts@twc.texas.gov)

For data management assistance, email [TEAMS.technicalassistance@twc.texas.gov.](mailto:TEAMS.technicalassistance@twc.texas.gov)

Federal Resources

Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), Program Memorandum [17-2, issued June 11, 2024, and titled "Performance Accountability Guidance for Workforce innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Core Programs"](#)

OCTAE Program Memorandum [17-3, issued January 18, 2017, and titled "Infrastructure Funding of the One-Stop Delivery System"](#)

OCTAE Program Memorandum [17-4, Change 3, issued June 16, 2017, and titled "One-Stop Operations Guidance for the American Job Center Network"](#)

OCTAE Program Memorandum [24-3, issued January 31, 2024, and titled "Use of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Funds for Participant Child and Dependent Care and Transportation Costs – Frequently Asked Questions"](#)

Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

Title 34, CFR, Part 463: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

Title II: Adult Education and Literacy of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (29 USC §3101)

State Resources

AEL Letter 01-23, issued February 14, 2023, and titled "Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting System Instructions for Adult Education and Literacy Grant Awards,"

AEL Letter 02-19, issued September 1, 2019, and titled "Collection of Certain Participant Information for Performance Reporting"

AEL Letter 02-23, issued July 1, 2023, and titled "Reporting Adult Education and Literacy Career Services and Training Services"

AEL Letter 04-21, issued July 7, 2021, and titled "AEL Enrollment and Data Validation Requirements"

AEL Letters and Workforce Development (WD) Letters located on TWC's Policy Letters and Guidance web page

Cash Draw & Expenditure Reporting (CDER) System

Digital Access & Resilience in Texas (DART)

TCALL Career Pathways Plan Portal

Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin 259, issued April 22, 2013, and titled "Provision of Meals and Refreshments"

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Content Standards v. 2

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Content Standards v. 4

[Texas Adult Education and Literacy Performance Guide](#) (published 7.24.2024)

[Texas Adult Education and Literacy Testing Guide PY 2024-2025](#)

Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning ([TCALL](#))

[Texas CIVICS: Citizen/Community Member Content Standards](#)

[Texas Grant Management Standards](#)

Texas Labor Code, [Chapter 315: Adult Education and Literacy Programs](#)

Texas State Library and Archives Commission: [Digital Literacy Skills](#)

Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [Chapter 800: General Provision](#)

Title 40, TAC Chapter 802: Integrity of the Texas Workforce Commission, [Subchapter D: Agency Monitoring Activities](#)

Title 40, TAC [Chapter 805: Adult Education and Literacy](#)

[TWC Adult Education and Literacy Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2021-2026](#)

[TWC Adult Education & Literacy Teachers & Providers](#) web page

TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts ([FMGC](#))

TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts (FMGC) [Supplement on Procurement](#)

[TWC WIOA Guide to Texas Workforce System Operations](#) (published 2024)

TWC Workforce Development [(WD) Letter 02-18, Change 1, issued March 18, 2024, and titled "Handling Sensitive Personal Information and Other Confidential Information – Update"](#).

TWC [WD Letter 17-10, issued May 11, 2010, and titled "Outreach and Promotional Materials, Advertising, Sponsorships, Employee Apparel, and Award Ceremonies Charged to Grant Awards and Subawards Funded through the Texas Workforce Commission"](#)