

**TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION
ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY LETTER**

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| ID/No: | AEL 04-17 |
| Date: | September 5, 2017 |
| Keyword: | AEL; Fiscal Administration; WIOA |
| Effective: | October 5, 2017 |

To: Adult Education and Literacy Grant Recipients
Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers

From: 
Courtney Arbour, Director, Workforce Development Division

Subject: Implementing and Reporting Workforce Preparation Activities

PURPOSE:

To provide Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) grantees¹ with information and guidance on implementing Workforce Preparation Activities.² This AEL Letter:

- defines Workforce Preparation Activities;
- differentiates Workforce Preparation Activities from Workforce Training;
- describes Workforce Preparation Activities as part of the Integrated Education and Training (IET) service approach;
- describes Workforce Preparation Activities as an AEL activity outside of IET; and
- outlines data reporting guidelines for Workforce Preparation Activities.

RESCISSIONS:

None

BACKGROUND:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) strategically positions AEL to play an integral role within a broader, interconnected workforce development system and greatly expands the service-delivery options available to providers.

¹ For the purposes of this AEL Letter, AEL grantees are entities that are Texas Workforce Commission grantees funded with AEL funds.

² Certain terms are capitalized to indicate that they are defined either in this AEL Letter or in the documents listed under References.

WIOA authorizes the use of funds for the development and delivery of Workforce Preparation Activities as a critical tool that AEL providers can use to support students in:

- increasing employment outcomes;
- postsecondary education and training transition and completion;
- skills gains; and
- high school equivalency completion.

As one of three core components of IET, Workforce Preparation Activities are required in IET program curricula.

PROCEDURES:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This indicates that AEL grantees must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this AEL Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This indicates that AEL grantees have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this AEL Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware of the following definitions:

Digital literacy—The skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information.

Individual Training, Education, and Career Plan (ITEC Plan)—A plan for the student to meet educational and career goals, designed to promote a discussion and set forth a strategy. The plan delineates short- and long-term goals and their implementation steps.

On-Ramp to Postsecondary Education or Training (On-ramp program)—A class or program, also referred to as a bridge or transition class, that prepares adults to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training. On-ramp programs can run several days, weeks, or longer, and can address the following topics, content, and activities:

- Preparation for college or Workforce Training, including the development of college knowledge in the areas of note-taking, academic advising, time management, study habits, and digital literacy;
- Career development that includes career exploration, career planning, employment expectations, and work culture for an occupation or sector;
- Meeting with career navigators, college advising, or case management staff to 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); and
- Intensive academic readiness and remediation for student success supporting transition to postsecondary education and training.

On-ramp programs often support student 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.

Workforce Preparation Activities—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; and
- Other employability skills that increase an individual’s preparation for the workforce.

NLF: 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.

LF: AEL grantees are encouraged to be aware that Workforce Preparation Activities may be implemented independent of an IET program in a variety of ways, to support life-long 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, as activities, programs, or services, including as:

- the context for general basic academic skills and English as a second language (ESL) curriculum (for example, an ESL curriculum module on employment norms and expectations in the United States or a high school equivalency curriculum module on preparing for a successful first semester in college); or
- part of an on-ramp program;

NLF: AEL grantees must incorporate Workforce Preparation Activities simultaneously at points within the overall scope of an IET program to support

the Workforce Training, adult education and literacy, and employment transition components of the program design.

NLF: AEL grantees must 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.

NLF: AEL grantees must ensure that Workforce Preparation Activities are only entered into the Texas Education Adults Management System (TEAMS) as direct contact hours when the activities are integrated within reading, writing, mathematics, and ESL instruction.

NLF: AEL grantees must ensure that, when delivered without contextualized AEL instruction, for example a presentation on how to conduct online job search, or on understanding the college enrollment process, Workforce Preparation Activities must be entered as training hours into TEAMS. Entering these hours as training hours segregates this time from direct AEL instruction that supports educational progress in circumstances such as pre- and post-testing for Measurable Skill Gains, but it does not mean that these activities are Workforce Training as described in this letter.

LF: AEL grantees may fund Workforce Preparation Activities out of all AEL funding sources, subject to compliance with applicable eligibility guidelines.

LF: AEL grantees have flexibility to find optimal efficiency in leveraging available additional resources to develop and provide Workforce Preparation Activities. Whenever possible, AEL grantees may leverage funds or services from other resources, such as effective coenrollment strategies with Workforce Partners or other entities to maximize overall efficiency.

INQUIRIES:

Send inquiries regarding this AEL Letter to aelpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.

REFERENCES:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, including Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ128/pdf/PLAW-113publ128.pdf>

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act regulations <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/19/2016-16049/programs-and-activities-authorized-by-the-adult-education-and-family-literacy-act-title-ii-of-the>

Implementation Guidelines: Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education, February 2016 http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/NRS_Implementation_Guidelines_February2016.pdf

AEL Letter 02-16, “Implementing the Integrated Education and Training Service Approach,” issued March 23, 2016, and any subsequent issuances

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/acl-02-16-change-1.pdf>

AEL Letter 05-17, “Implementing and Reporting Workforce Training under the Integrated Education and Training Approach to Service Delivery,” issued August 11, 2017

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Guide

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/texas-acl-assessment-guide-twc.pdf>

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Guide

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/texas-acl-guide-twc.pdf>