


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

ID/No:	AEL 02-17
Date:	April 3, 2017
Keyword:	AEL; Fiscal Administration; WIOA
Effective:	December 2, 2016

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

From: 
Reagan Miller, Deputy Director, Workforce Solutions

Subject: **Assessing English Language Learners in the Adult Education and Literacy Program**

PURPOSE:

To provide Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) grantees¹ with information on assessing English language learners (ELLs).

This AEL Letter provides guidance on:

- identifying an ELL;
- conducting an English proficiency assessment; and
- establishing a baseline assessment.

RESCISSIONS:

None

BACKGROUND:

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) received guidance from the US Department of Education on December 2, 2016, that gives AEL grantees greater flexibility in assessing ELLs by authorizing them to use the full range of tests approved for the English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs listed in the Texas Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Guide (Texas AEL Assessment Guide). This flexibility makes it easier to enroll in the Integrated English Literacy and Civics (Integrated EL Civics) program ELLs who test out of ESL tests.

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

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 explanations:

English Language Learner: An ELL is an individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending English and whose native language is a language other than English, or an individual who lives in a family or community where a language other than English is dominant.

Identifying Participants as ELLs: AEL grantees must establish that a participant is an ELL and must document that demographic characteristic on the student enrollment form and in the participant profile found in the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS).

Comprehensive Assessment: AEL grantees must conduct a comprehensive assessment of all participants, that is, one that takes into account the participant’s goals, strengths, interests, motivation, and need for outside support in addition to the participant’s need for academic development, as outlined in the Texas AEL Assessment Guide.

For individuals identified as ELLs in the TEAMS participant profile, 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 the ELL is adequately proficient in English to meet his or her goals, the AEL grantee must document in the student’s file how English proficiency was determined.

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

- the student tested out of range on a state-approved ESL test;
- the student completed an alternate ESL assessment, including locally developed assessments, that verified sufficient English proficiency for the student to meet his or her goals; and
- the student is entering an AEL program from a community college with information from the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) that identifies the student as an ELL who is deficient in one or more content areas

on the TSIA.

LF: **ABE or ASE Baseline Assessment for ELLs:** AEL grantees may use any test approved in the Texas AEL Assessment 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 student's file. ABE- or ASE-approved tests may be used for reporting measurable skills gains for ELLs through pretesting and posttesting. The participants will be considered ABE or ASE participants in the National Reporting System (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 Assessment Guide.

NLF: **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 student'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 student's file. Grantees must adhere to the pretesting requirements as outlined in the Texas AEL Assessment Guide.

INQUIRIES:

Send inquiries regarding this AEL Letter to aelpolicy.clarifications@twc.texas.gov.

REFERENCES:

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and appropriate regulations
Implementation Guidelines: Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education, February 2016
AEL Letter 02-16, "Implementing the Integrated Education and Training Service Approach," issued March 23, 2016, and any subsequent issuances
AEL Letter 03-16, "Adult Education and Literacy Enrollment Targets for Program Year 2016–2017," issued July 14, 2016, and any subsequent issuances
AEL Letter 04-16, "Implementing Integrated Education and Training English Literacy and Civics Education," issued September 15, 2016, and any subsequent issuances
Texas Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Guide