

1 **TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**
2 **Adult Education and Literacy Letter**

ID/No:	AEL 04-20, Change 1
Date:	August 31, 2020
Keyword:	AEL
Effective:	Immediately

3 **To:** Adult Education and Literacy Grant Recipients
4 Adult Education and Literacy Special Project Grantees
5 Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
6 Commission Executive Offices
7 Integrated Service Area Managers
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11 **From:** Courtney Arbour, Director, Workforce Development Division

12 **Subject:** **Workforce Integration and Follow-Up Activities—Update**
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14 **PURPOSE:**

15 The purpose of this AEL Letter is to provide Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)
16 grantees with updated information and guidance on implementing Workforce Integration
17 and Follow-Up Activities, which includes increased funding and expanded allowable
18 expenses as a response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (pandemic).¹

19 **RESCISSIONS:**

20 AEL 04-20
21

22 **BACKGROUND:**

23 On [December 17, 2019](#), TWC’s three-member Commission (Commission) approved \$2
24 million in funding for a state-leadership initiative focused on workforce integration, a
25 required activity under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
26 §223(a)(1)(A). This funding is distributed to AEL grantees to support:

- 27 • increased AEL integration with and referrals to Local Workforce Development
28 Boards (Boards) and vocational rehabilitation (VR) employment services and
29 enrollments in postsecondary education or training services; and
- 30 • the collection of post-exit information on educational outcomes, employment,
31 earnings, enrollment and progress in postsecondary education or training, and
32 credential attainment.

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

1 On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott declared Texas a disaster site due to the
2 pandemic. The declaration led to the closure of most educational and workforce
3 development institutions across the state. AEL grantees and providers transformed
4 service delivery from site-based to distance learning or remote delivery.

5 On April 14, 2020, the Commission approved modifications and additional projects to
6 support AEL grantees as part of a pandemic response package using available funding at
7 TWC’s disposal to make funding immediately available to providers as they redesign
8 services and address local impacts. The Commission rescinded the Quarter 3
9 performance-based funding measure to release approximately \$1 million, or 66.7 percent,
10 of the 3 percent performance-based holdback, included in each grantee’s AEL allocation
11 budget, as described in AEL Letter 02-20, Change 1, issued on June 4, 2020, and titled,
12 “Program Year 2019–2020 Performance-Based Funding and Performance Allocation
13 Holdbacks—*Update*.” Additionally, the Commission approved expanding allowable
14 expenses under the Workforce Integration and Follow-Up Activities initiative, as
15 described in this AEL Letter and its attachment, to support the increases in distance and
16 remote learning resulting from school closures; the funding amounts approved in
17 December 2019 remain unchanged.

18 The Commission also approved other AEL funds and activities in response to the
19 pandemic.²

20 **PROCEDURES:**

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

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

29 **Definitions**

30 **NLF:** AEL grantees must be aware of the definitions below.

31 **Follow-Up Activities** are a variety of services and workforce preparation activities that
32 occur after a participant is no longer active in AEL direct services and for up to 365 days
33 after exit. Follow-up activities support participants in completing education and training
34 objectives, including collecting information on educational outcomes, employment,
35 earnings, enrollment and progress in postsecondary education or training, and credential
36 attainment. While follow-up services must occur after a participant exits AEL services—
37 “exit” is defined as 90 days with no direct contact hours—activities may occur during
38 participation or in the period between the last date of participation and the exit date.
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² The discussion paper, approved by the Commission on April 14, 2020, is available at
<https://twc.texas.gov/materials-april-14-2020-900-amtexas-workforce-commission-meeting>.

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

- 3 • Support for students in the completion of a Texas Certificate of High School
- 4 Equivalency or entering postsecondary education or training
- 5 • Support for the enrollment of participants in WorkInTexas.com
- 6 • Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand
- 7 industry sectors or occupations available in the local workforce development area,
- 8 such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
- 9 • Regular contact with participants and/or their employers to verify employment or
- 10 help with work-related problems
- 11 • Counseling for participants about workplace culture and expectations
- 12 • Financial literacy education
- 13 • Peer support groups for job-search activities to support employment or postsecondary
- 14 education or training success
- 15 • Mentoring
- 16 • Support service referrals
- 17 • Leadership development opportunities
- 18 • Assistance in securing better-paying jobs, career pathway development, and further
- 19 education or training

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21 **Workforce Integration Services** support the referral to and coenrollment in Board, VR,
22 and other workforce system services as well as success in postsecondary education or
23 training. Workforce integration services may include the following activities, which may
24 be provided in an in-person or virtual setting:

- 25 • capacity building activities that support coenrollment in Board and VR programs; and
- 26 • processes that sustain system referrals and alignment of services among Board,
- 27 workforce intermediaries, and postsecondary education or training institutions.

28 **Funding**

29 **NLF:** AEL grantees must be aware that the per-grantee distribution of funds for workforce
30 integration and follow-up services is a proportionate distribution with a base of \$10,000
31 to ensure that grantees with smaller allocations have sufficient capacity to conduct
32 activities. The distribution is shown in Attachment 1: Workforce Integration Initiative
33 Distribution. Funds will be provided through a separate contract that will have a May 15,
34 2020, start date and expire on June 30, 2021.

35 **NLF:** AEL grantees must be aware that funds may be used to support distance learning,
36 including purchasing laptops, computers, tablets, or similar items. Additionally, funds
37 may be used to increase the number of licenses for distance learning and related remote
38 education services, such as mobile messaging applications.

39 **NLF:** AEL grantees must be aware that workforce integration and follow-up funds must be
40 used to develop related deliverables, including, but not limited to, the development of
41 individualized participant case management and referral procedures with Boards, VR,
42 and community-based workforce intermediaries as well as data collection and
43 information-sharing agreements with postsecondary education or training organizations.

1 **LF:** AEL grantees may elect to purchase workforce integration and follow-up services from
2 Boards or from community-based workforce intermediaries.

3 **Standard Operating Procedures**

4 **NLF:** AEL grantees must develop and maintain a standard operating procedure that outlines
5 workforce integration and follow-up services and addresses specifically how the grantee
6 will:

- 7 • implement workforce integration services, including referrals to Boards and VR
8 employment services and enrollments in postsecondary education or training services;
9 and
- 10 • ensure follow-up services through 365 days after exit to collect information on
11 educational outcomes, employment, earnings, and enrollment and progress in
12 postsecondary education and training, and credential attainment.

13 **Services**

14 **NLF:** Workforce integration follow-up activities are designed to support specific activities,
15 from student participation through 365 days after exit. AEL grantees must be aware that
16 workforce integration and follow-up funds must support individualized case-management
17 staff time to provide services and collect data on employment, earnings, enrollment, and
18 progress in postsecondary education or training, and credential attainment. Although the
19 definitions for workforce integration and follow-up activities are unique, the activities are
20 often the same or similar and are distinguished only on the basis of whether the student
21 has exited AEL services. The distinction between workforce integration and follow-up
22 activities is inconsequential to budget tracking and reporting in the Texas Educating
23 Adults Management System (TEAMS).

24 **NLF:** AEL grantees must prioritize follow-up information collection on participant earnings
25 and employment information for participants who have not provided Social Security
26 numbers.

27 **LF:** AEL grantees may assign workforce integration and follow-up duties to career
28 navigators.

29 **NLF:** AEL grantees must be aware that, as one method of student support provided under the
30 AEL program, workforce integration and follow-up services must be explained to the
31 individual:

- 32 • during the individual's comprehensive assessment; and
- 33 • after the individual exits.

34 **Data Entry**

35 **NLF:** AEL grantees must be aware that follow-up services do not extend a period of
36 participation if the participant is no longer attending classes and no direct contact hours
37 are being reported. Similarly, follow-up services do not trigger a change in the exit date
38 or delay an exit flag. Grantees must begin providing follow-up services to participants
39 who have not had a direct contact hour for 30 days or if the participant has indicated that
40 he or she is obtaining employment, changing employment, or entering postsecondary

1 education, postsecondary training, or the military. Follow-up services must be provided
2 to all former participants for a minimum of 365 days after the exit date.

3 **NLF:** AEL grantees must enter workforce integration and follow-up services into the TEAMS
4 Career Services screen.

5 **NLF:** AEL grantees must document information on educational outcomes, employment,
6 earnings, enrollment and progress in postsecondary education or training, and credential
7 attainment in the participant’s file.

8 **Reporting**

9 **NLF:** As required by the 5.2 reporting deliverable of the Workforce Integration Initiative grant,
10 AEL grantees must provide a monthly report on the use of the released funds, using a
11 reporting template provided by TWC staff, by the 24th day of each month. The monthly
12 reporting template is located at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WIIDeliverables>. The
13 survey will be updated and modified as needed to collect information requested by TWC
14 leadership or the US Department of Education. Grantees must send any questions about
15 this survey to AELContracts@twc.state.tx.us.

16 **NLF:** AEL grantees must report supplemental cost categories for the Workforce Integration
17 Initiative grant in the Cash Draw and Monthly Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system by
18 the 20th day of each month.

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20 **Evaluation**

21 **NLF:** AEL grantees must be aware that the TWC Division of Operational Insight (DOI) and the
22 AEL department will review the effectiveness of workforce integration and follow-up
23 services to determine whether these efforts increase WIOA employment and training
24 performance outcomes, including exit-based measures. Depending on the results of
25 DOI’s review, AEL grantees may be expected to budget for such follow-up services
26 through their standard core AEL grant, requesting changes to local administrative budgets
27 when required and approved by TWC.

28 **INQUIRIES:**

29 Send inquiries regarding this AEL Letter to AELTA@twc.state.tx.us.

30 **ATTACHMENTS:**

31 Attachment 1: Workforce Integration Initiative Distribution

32 Attachment 2: Revisions to AEL 04-20 Shown in Track Changes
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34 **REFERENCES:**

35 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act §223(a)(1)(A)

36 AEL Letter 02-20, Change 1, issued on June 4, 2020, and titled, “Program Year 2019–

37 2020 Performance-Based Funding and Performance Allocation Holdbacks—*Update*”