Texas Adult Education and Literacy Guide

Effective Date: July 2017

1. Introduction

A. How to Read this Guide

The Texas Adult Education and Literacy Guide (Texas AEL Guide) is a 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.

Capitalized terms in this document represent terms that are defined in this guide in §13, Definitions. Additionally, terms that are not capitalized are defined there as well.

Other resources are essential to a full understanding of adult education in Texas. The following are referenced throughout the document:
- Texas Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Guide (Assessment Guide), http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/texas-ael-assessment-guide-twc.pdf
- AEL Letters and Workforce Development Letters (WD Letters) and Guides http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/workforce-policy-guidance
- The Professional Development (PD) Center, http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/index.htm
- TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/financial-manual-grants-contracts
- TWC AEL Rules
  - Chapter 800: General Administration: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/twc/rules-chapter-800-general-administration-twc.pdf
  - Chapter 802: Integrity of the Texas Workforce Commission, Subchapter D Agency Monitoring Activities: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/twc/rules-chapter-802-integrity-texas-workforce-system-twc.pdf
  - Chapter 805: Adult Education and Literacy: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/twc/rules-chapter-805-adult-education-literacy-twc.pdf
- WIOA Regulations
  - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Joint Rule for Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions - Final Rule (Effective Date: October 18, 2016). https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15977.pdf
- Programs and Activities Authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) - Final Rule (Effective Date: September 19, 2016, with the exception of subparts H, I, and J of part 463, which become effective October 18, 2016): https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-16046.pdf

Additional information can be found on the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) AEL website:
- Program Overview: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/programs/adult-education-literacy-program-overview
- For Students: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/students/adult-education-students

- For Teachers and Providers: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/adult-education-literacy-teachers-providers
- Advisory Committee: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/adult-education-literacy-advisory-committee

B. Welcome

Texas is leading the transformation of adult education and literacy in the United States. It is implementing a system that is integrated with Workforce Partners, with the goal of increasing employment, postsecondary transition, skill gains, and secondary school completions through proven approaches that combine system services and leverage community partnerships.

Since 1995, the Texas Workforce System has offered a diverse range of services that support economic prosperity for employers, workers, job seekers, students, and communities. TWC has a long-standing commitment to providing education and training options and employment services that lead to finding and keeping productive employment.

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

AEL augments this initiative by delivering the basic foundational skills, workforce preparation, Workforce Training, and other career advancement services that are necessary to prepare Texans to support their families, careers, and communities. Adult education and literacy supports growth in the state by improving programs for individuals with Barriers to Employment and advancement, by identifying transferable skills valued by employers and by delivering education and training to individuals who want to complete postsecondary education and training and find employment in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Essential to the success of the initiative 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 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.

In 2015, TWC held 10 regional meetings to provide a forum for Boards and adult education and literacy providers and stakeholders to address program enhancement under WIOA. These forums identified gaps in the program and generated ideas for regional system-integration efforts. As a result of these meetings, a plan was developed for each area that is expected to further system integration.

TWC AEL services and activities include the following:
- Preparation for high school equivalency
- English as a Second Language (ESL) activities
- Workplace AEL Activities
- Workforce Preparation Activities

- Integrated Education and Training (IET)
- Integrated English Literacy and Civics (Integrated EL Civics) Education
- Family Literacy activities

Critical to student success are innovation in educational services and leveraging the strengths of education, training, support, and career development resources. AEL shares with Workforce Partners the goal of increasing the array of services for students and better assisting them in educational goals that support career development, higher education transition, and strengthened families and communities.

2. Adult Education and Literacy in Texas

A. Brief History of Transition

Over the past decade, Texas has worked toward scaling both adult education and literacy and developmental education innovations to support underprepared learners for either college-level coursework or career and technical programs leading to success in in-demand careers that pay livable wages.

As a result of Senate Bill (SB) 307, 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2013), on September 1, 2013, the state's adult education and literacy program transitioned from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to TWC. In enacting SB 307, the Texas legislature recognized the importance of acquiring basic skills, pursuing education, and being employed that are needed for literate functioning while addressing the administrative and programmatic aspects of the program outlined as system challenges in the legislative Sunset Commission report[1].

To learn more about the major issues in adult education, TWC held nine public meetings across the state to hear from stakeholders concerning the transfer of the program from TEA to TWC and to get information about what is working well and what needs improvement. Stakeholder communication continued throughout the program transition, and TWC continues to value the thoughts and recommendations provided by the stakeholder community.

In the winter of 2013, TWC completed rulemaking for the AEL program and conducted the first statewide competition for adult education and literacy services in 10 years. This ushered in a restructuring and transformation of the local provider system and of the state administration and Professional Development (PD) services that deliver teacher training and program support and innovation.

The transition of the AEL program to TWC strengthened and expanded both TWC's workforce development and education capacities and the AEL program's capacity to deliver

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[1]https://www.sunset.texas.gov/public/uploads/files/reports/Education%20Agency%20Staff%20Report%202013%2083rd%20Leg_0.pdf

career and postsecondary education and training to Texas Workforce System customers. Additionally, it aligned TWC and AEL with the network of Workforce Solutions Offices.

B. Strategic Plan

In December 2014, TWC's three-member Commission (Commission) approved the outline for the first strategic plan for an adult education and literacy program. The outline included a vision, mission, and goal for the program. The outline was further developed by the Adult Education and Literacy Advisory Committee with input from the public, and was later expanded as part of the final strategic plan, "Strategic Plan for Adult Education and Literacy 2015–2020," which was approved by the Commission on June 21, 2016. The overview of the final strategic plan is available at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/programs/adult-education-literacy-program-overview.

C. Vision, Mission, and Goal

1. Vision

TWC's vision for AEL is to deliver education, workforce, and postsecondary education and training transition outcomes for students through innovative service delivery and partnerships that result in efficiencies, alignments, and accountability.

2. Mission

The mission 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 adult education and literacy customers, businesses, and community stakeholders.

3. Goal

TWC's goal is to support increases in employment, postsecondary education and training transition, skill gains, and secondary completion through demonstrated approaches that integrate system services and leverage community partnerships.

D. Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Workforce System

1. 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. The workforce areas are geographic designations that were developed in 1993 to deliver integrated workforce development services.

Adult education and literacy statewide grants are allocated and aligned by the Workforce Area and not by the service area of the Grantee, such as school districts or community colleges' service or tax areas. 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.

2. The Texas Workforce System

TWC's AEL program and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, in partnership with the 28 Boards and their contractors, offices, and service providers, form the Texas Workforce System, a workforce development system available to employers, workers, job seekers, and youth throughout the state.

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 and workers. Collaboration across these agencies and local entities is critical role to the success of the Texas Workforce System.

Through the integrated Texas Workforce System, TWC administers several federal programs, including all the Core Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as follows:
- Title I Adult program
- Title I Dislocated Worker program
- Title I Youth program
- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program
- Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Vocational Rehabilitation program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title I

Other federal and state programs include the following:
- The Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Choices, the employment 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 Funds/Child Care Development Funds programs
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program
- Apprenticeship program
- Skills Development Fund training (customized training for businesses)
- Self-Sufficiency Fund training

Jobs and Education for Texans (JET), which comprises grants for community colleges, nonprofit organizations, and school districts that provide opportunities for students to pursue new career and technical education programs in high-growth industries.

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

The 28 Workforce Areas are governed by Boards that are identified and designated by the governor. Boards manage many, but not all, TWC programs.

3. Program Authority

A. Overview

AEL administers WIOA funds for adult education and literacy services, matches state General Revenue funds and federal TANF funds appropriated by the Texas legislature as allocations to Workforce Areas, and contracts service providers through competitive procurement.

B. Primary Laws

1. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

WIOA provides the largest portion of funds for Texas. WIOA guidelines support an alignment of program services and associated accountability measures to support new opportunities and increase student success in relation to college and career readiness and advancement.

Since the adult education and literacy program transferred to TWC in 2013, WIOA has underscored Texas' expanded focus on services that promote transitions from all levels to postsecondary education and training or employment. That focus includes a shift in programmatic philosophy and service delivery through expanded services centered on the integration of Career Pathways, Boards, Workforce Solutions Offices, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services and an enhanced financial and performance accountability system.

The law authorizes the use of funding for the IET and Integrated EL Civics program models that require contextualized basic academic skills integrated with Workforce Training, including career and technical education programs leading to workforce certificates of value in the regional and state labor markets. To provide a framework for these service-delivery enhancements, WIOA requires states to align adult education and literacy content standards to the state-adopted academic standards under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In Texas, these standards are the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). More information on program content standards is in §6, Local Service Delivery.

2. Texas Senate Bill 307

Effective September 1, 2013, Senate Bill (SB) 307, 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2013), transferred adult education and literacy program authority from TEA to TWC.

SB 307 mandates that TWC:
- develop, administer, and support a comprehensive statewide adult education program and coordinate related federal and state programs for the education and training of adults;
- develop the mechanism and guidelines for coordinated planning and implementation of comprehensive adult education, related skills training services, and other related programs for adults with other entities, including public agencies and private organizations;
- administer adult education funding;
- prescribe rules and standards for teacher certification and accreditation;
- develop a standardized assessment mechanism and monitor and evaluate the educational and employment outcomes of students who participate in AEL programs; and
- establish an advisory committee.

3. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

A portion of local AEL funds are from the TANF program. Collaboration with Boards is crucial to serving TANF-funded participants in adult education.

4. Ability to Benefit

To augment WIOA support for college readiness and credential attainment for underprepared students, the US Department of Education has published guidance allowing for the partial reinstatement of Ability to Benefit in the Federal Pell Grant Program.[2] This allows students without a high school diploma or recognized equivalent to enter postsecondary education in a Career Pathway program and become eligible to receive federal financial aid. TWC has dedicated significant resources to support statewide expansion of Career Pathways and take advantage of these opportunities to increase student success. With statewide adoption of Career Pathways, Texas is well positioned to receive these federal funds.

4. Funding

A. References

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[2] https://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1509.html

Texas Labor Code §800.68 fully describes AEL[3] funding requirements. Funds made available to TWC are used to provide services under WIOA Title II, also known as AEFLA, federal TANF funds, and associated state General Revenue matching and maintenance-of-effort funds.

B. Allocations

The US Department of Education typically releases funding estimates in late spring for the next year. Once the estimates are released, TWC's three-member Commission approves local allocations by workforce area. Allocations can include local Professional Development and Performance Funding, which is earned upon achievement of benchmarks.

C. Performance Funding

Performance Funding is earned by AEL Grantees upon achievement of Performance Funding benchmarks. These benchmarks coincide with other state or federal performance measures as determined by the Commission. Performance levels are stated in objective, quantifiable, and measurable terms. Recipients must meet the benchmarks and show continuous improvement.

D. Funding Types

1. Federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA §231)

a. Allocations

The Commission allots at least 82.5 percent of the federal funds, constituting the total state award of AEFLA state grants, to Workforce Areas. The Commission allocates these amounts using the following federal formula:

➢ The relative proportion of individuals residing within each workforce area who are at least 18 years of age, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and are not enrolled in secondary school, during the most recent period for which statistics are available

➢ An equal base amount

➢ The application of a hold harmless/stop gain procedure

➢ The Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) funding code for AEFLA §231 is "AEFLA."

b. Administrative Costs for AEFLA §231

Grantees must ensure that no more than 5 percent of the funds expended are used for administrative costs, as defined by AEFLA, provided, that the special rule outlined in AEFLA §233(b) shall apply with effective justification, as appropriate.

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[3] More at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/adopted-chapter-800-general-administration-twc.pdf

c. Corrections and Other Institutionalized Services

Up to 20 percent of federal AEFLA funds may be used statewide for corrections and other institutionalized services. Local Workforce Area allocations may go beyond the 20 percent if the state does not exceed 20 percent.

2. State General Revenue

a. Allocations

The Commission allocates at least 80 percent of the state General Revenue matching funds associated with the allotment of AEFLA funds to Workforce Areas using the same established federal formula as for AEFLA.

The CDER funding code for state General Revenue is "State."

b. Administrative Costs for State General Revenue

AEL grantees must ensure that no more than 15 percent of the funds expended are used for administrative costs.

3. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (AEFLA §243)

a. Allocations

The Commission allots at least 82.5 percent of the federal funds provided under AEFLA §243 for Integrated English Literacy and Civics (Integrated EL Civics) among workforce areas according to the established federal formula.

The relative proportion is based on:

> ➢ 65 percent of the average number of legal permanent residents during the most recent 10-year period, available from US Citizenship and Immigration Services data;

> ➢ 35 percent of the average number of legal permanent residents during the most recent three-year period, available from US Citizenship and Immigration Services data;

> ➢ a base of 1 percent for each workforce area; and

> ➢ the application of a hold-harmless/stop-gain procedure

The CDER funding code for Integrated EL Civics is "EL Civics."

b. Administrative Costs Integrated EL Civics

AEL Grantees must ensure that for Integrated EL Civics no more than 5 percent of the funds expended under this allocation are used for administrative costs, as defined by AEFLA.

4. Federal State Leadership (AEFLA §223)

a. Possible Allocations

No more than 12.5 percent of federal AEFLA §223 funds may be used for activities to develop or enhance the system, allowable and/or required under §223(a)–(c). These funds are allocated at the discretion of the Commission.

5. TANF

a. Allocations

The Commission allocates at least 80 percent of federal TANF funds associated with the program—together with any state General Revenue funds appropriated as TANF maintenance-of-effort—to Workforce Areas according to a need-based formula as follows:

- ➢ The relative proportion of the unduplicated number of TANF adult recipients with educational attainment of less than a secondary diploma during the most recently completed calendar year

- ➢ An equal base amount

- ➢ The application of a hold harmless/stop gain procedure

The CDER funding code for TANF is "TANF."

b. Administrative Costs for TANF

AEL Grantees must ensure that no more than 15 percent of TANF funds expended as part of this allocation are used for administrative costs, as defined by federal regulations and Commission policy.

E. Deobligation and Reallocation Provisions

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §800.78 fully describes deobligation and reallocation provisions for AEL.[4]

1. Deobligation

TWC must ensure that AEL funds serve the needs of eligible customers across the state. To ensure that funds have the greatest possible effect, the Commission has established, in rule, procedures for deobligating grant funds from Grantees and subsequent reallocation of those funds to providers that can support performance expectations.

The Commission may deobligate funds from a Grantee during the Program Year (PY) if the Grantee is not meeting the expenditure thresholds set forth in its contract. After a review of the causes for the under-expenditure of funds, deobligation may occur midyear or at the end of months five, six, seven, or eight of the PY. Grantees may request a

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[4] More at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/adopted-chapter-800-general-administration-twc.pdf

voluntary deobligation of funds through a written request from the AEL Grantee's chief executive officer to the Commission.

For AEL consortia, Grantees must ensure that a copy of certain official communications to the Commission related to deobligation are provided to all consortium members.

2. Reallocation

Upon receipt and approval by the Commission of an acceptable plan, any amounts voluntarily deobligated from an AEL Grantee are made available as a first priority to any other AEL Grantees that provide AEL services within the same Workforce Area.

For a Grantee to be eligible to receive deobligated funds, the Commission may consider whether the Grantee has met targeted expenditure levels, demonstrated the need for and ability to use additional funds, and is current on expenditure reporting and other criteria set out in rule.

Any amounts deobligated or voluntarily deobligated from a Grantee are made available as a first priority to any other Grantees that provide AEL services within the same Workforce Area. If the Commission decides that such a plan within the Workforce Area is not acceptable, it may consider other Grantees.

5. Statewide Competition and Awards

A. About This Section

TWC's Adult Education and Literacy rules found in TAC §805, Subchapter C, outlines procurement and contracting. In general, TWC provides a statewide adult education and literacy program delivery-system that provides coordinated services in each Workforce Area. In each of the 28 Workforce Areas, there is at least one, and possibly multiple Grantees, that may provide services directly or provide services as part of a consortium of providers.

Grant requesters apply directly to TWC for funding. The following section outlines the competitive grant application and awarding processes.

B. Statewide Competition and Awards

TWC held its first competition for grant awards in 2014. Under TWC rule, contracts are limited to two years, with the option of three one-year renewals, at the Commission's discretion (TAC §805.41). Therefore, competitions must take place at least once every five years, but may occur more frequently. For example, if a Workforce Area loses one or all of its Grantees, or if federal law (such as WIOA) requires a competition, then one takes place. In accordance with AEFLA, only TWC can conduct a grant solicitation for AEFLA services.

TWC uses a competitive grant solicitation process in which all proposals are treated alike in terms of review and evaluation and all applicants receive the same announcements and proposal materials. The RFP provides instructions for preparation of proposals, a deadline for submitting a notice of intent to apply, a deadline for receipt of the proposal, review criteria, assurances, and other legal, fiscal, and program requirements as well as instructions for plans

for cooperative arrangements that the eligible provider will develop with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of services.

TWC ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to funding opportunities. All offerors eligible under WIOA §231 submit proposals directly to TWC. Notice of availability of awards is distributed via e-mail lists of current providers and Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL), Literacy Texas (the state's nonprofit literacy council network), Texas community and technical college systems, Boards, and a public posting on the website and the Texas Electronic State Business Daily (the Texas Comptroller's website, which houses announcements and details of all open procurement in Texas. See http://esbd.cpa.state.tx.us). The process is designed so that direct application to TWC is clearly defined, customary, and nonnegotiable.

In the statewide competitive process, TWC determinations are based on the likelihood of the eligible Grantee to perform all services and activities required to comply with grant performance requirements and with all grant terms and conditions. TWC might be influenced by factors used to determine the allocation of funds and other objective data and criteria.

1. Evidence of Demonstrated Effectiveness

Eligible providers are required to demonstrate effectiveness, pursuant to 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §463.24, by providing data on improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, and ESL. Previous Grantees are required under WIOA §116 to provide data demonstrating past effectiveness, as supported by data from the Statewide Management Information System, currently Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS), to show the extent to which they met state-negotiated performance targets for all state and federal performance measures.

Eligible providers that have not been previously funded under WIOA Title II must provide data that demonstrate effectiveness in serving basic-skills-deficient eligible individuals, including those with low levels of literacy in the domains of reading, writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition. The providers must also demonstrate how they have used objective performance criteria in achieving outcomes listed under WIOA §116.

Eligible providers also must provide participant-outcome information that is related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Proposal review criteria for all proposals include evaluation and scoring based on a standard of demonstrated effectiveness.

2. Thirteen AEFLA Considerations for Making Awards

AEFLA §231(e) describes 13 considerations that states must take into account when making awards to eligible providers. The considerations are as follows:

(1) The degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to—
    (i) Regional needs as identified in the local workforce development plan; and

(ii) Serving individuals in the community who were identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who—
(A) Have low levels of literacy skills; or
(B) Are English Language Learners;

(2) The ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities;

(3) The past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, especially those individuals who have low levels of literacy, and the degree to which those improvements contribute to the eligible agency meeting its State adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in §677.155 of WIOA;

(4) The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under §108 of the Act, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners;

(5) Whether the eligible provider's program—
(i) Is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and
(ii) Uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction;

(6) Whether the eligible provider's activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English as a Second Language instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice;

(7) Whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services and delivery systems, including Distance Learning, in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning, and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance;

(8) Whether the eligible provider's activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

(9) Whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the State, where applicable, and who have access to high-quality Professional Development, including through electronic means;

(10) Whether the eligible provider coordinates with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, [Boards], one-stop centers, job training programs, and

social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, in the development of career pathways;

(11) Whether the eligible provider's activities offer the flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

(12) Whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with §116 of WIOA) and to monitor program performance; and

(13) Whether the local area in which the eligible provider is located has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs. (Authority: 29 U.S.C. 3321)

6. Local Service Delivery

A. Overview

Adult education and literacy services are critical to developing a competitive workforce, strong communities, and well-educated children and to ensuring the strength and durability of the local economy and workforce.

The following section describes the purpose and services of the AEL program and how these services addressed can be structured to serve and transition students toward their goals and objectives.

The section also introduces a new organizational principle for service delivery, the Academy model, which will be promoted in PY'17–'18. The Academy model will be required of statewide Grantees starting in July 2018.

B. Service Delivery Structure

1. Segmenting Service Delivery

Effective service delivery consists of four components:

Component 1: Connection
Connection is the period from when a customer expresses interest in services to enrollment. In the Connection phase, the customer accesses services through partners such as employers, Boards, Workforce Solutions Offices, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, community- and faith-based organizations, libraries, and college developmental education programs that supply the program with potential students. These partners use standard messaging on available services.

Component 2: Entry

Entry is the period from a customer's enrollment in the program to entry into a class. The Entry phase is perhaps one of the most critical phases, as this is when the customer decides whether adult education will meet his or her objectives. If the program does not communicate the available services and how they address the customer's objectives, then the customer might seek services elsewhere. The entry phase also sets the customer-service tone for the potential student. Customers want their objectives to be heard; they want to understand program options and how those options meet their objectives.

Component 3: Progress
Progress is the main service-delivery activity. In most cases, progress consists of enrollment in a class or program designed around the customer's goals and objectives.

Component 4: Completion
Completion is the period during which the customer transitions to work, postsecondary education and training, or continued adult education.

The model for understanding the student experience while participating in educational services is based on Thomas Bailey's *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success*.

2. The Academy Model

a. Educational and Career Academies

Adult education and literacy customers thrive when service delivery is well-structured and easy to understand. Students want to know how the program is going to help them accomplish their goals. Starting in PY'18–'19, providers must ensure that they structure services around students' objectives, including careers and training in specific sectors (for example, health services, construction, and manufacturing) or life goals (for example, family literacy and life skills) through the Academy model.[5] Programs will be encouraged to begin implementing the Academy models in PY'17–'18, with full implementation required the following PY.

The Academy model supports program transparency and ensures that students can more directly identify a program of study within services that addresses their objectives. The Academy model helps them to meet the career, higher education, personal, and familial goals that bring them to receive services.

Historically the system has organized service delivery around the competency levels of participants (for example, "ESL 4") and not the objectives that bring those participants back to education. The exceptions were GED classes, which were designed to help the student get a high school equivalency certificate, and family literacy, which was based on the objective of supporting early childhood education.

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[5] The Professional Development Center at Texas A&M University realigned all Professional Development services for Texas using a similar organizational principle called an Institute. For more information, go to http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/TRAINTex.htm.

The competency-level-based classification model comes from public school models that are organized by grade levels as the path to a high school diploma rather than on higher-education models that are organized by such adult career objectives as degrees, certificates, and certifications in business, health services, engineering, and the like. In college, students declare a major; research shows that declaring a major early dramatically increases completion rates, because students have a goal. Adult education and literacy has lacked an objective-based organizational principle to guide students toward goals and objectives.

b. Flexibility

Providers have flexibility to use the Academy model to align recruitment, assessment, Orientation, and instructional services in ways that match students' areas of interest with programs of study and other services. This approach provides students with a path to help them plan for their futures.

The Academy structure is not new to some colleges and high schools, which have used similar models to organize and brand programs such as the Alamo Aerospace Academy and the Northside Independent School District Health Careers High School, both in San Antonio.

Academies should be structural models that can be applied to both Career Pathways and life skills and family literacy. AEL providers, working with Boards and other community stakeholders, are encouraged to develop Academy models in specific areas, including those areas that are identified in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors (for example, health services, construction, manufacturing), life skills and community (for example, a Community and Civics Academy), and family literacy (for example, Learning Families Academy).

Additionally, Academies should be designed at multiple levels so that all customers are engaged in objective-based education. Customers at all levels should have objective-based services that meet their expectations of returning to education.

C. Content Standards

Texas AEL content standards for Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and ESL were first used statewide in 2007. In 2016, TWC implemented a complete revision of the content standards to align with the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards and the state-mandated TEKS curriculum standards for public schools.

Revised standards include alignment of content standards that specify what students should know and be able to do in the areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics, including alignments of these content areas for English Language learners.

The revision also takes into consideration alignment with other standards, including high school equivalency standards, requirements for enrollment in nonremedial for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions, and the occupational and industry skill standards and certifications widely used and recognized by business and industry.

Implementation of Texas AEL standards is an important element of WIOA, as states are required to align standards for adult education with state-adopted K–12 academic standards and implement them in the adult education curriculum. Therefore, TWC supports Professional Development and training-of-trainers to teach the revised standards and supports a curriculum-development initiative to align reading and math curriculum to the standards.

D. Instructional Facilities

1. Accessibility

Providers must ensure that they provide safe and convenient instructional facilities that are accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USC §12101 et seq., as amended. Additionally, facilities must meet the following requirements:

- Be near public transportation
- Provide free, easy access parking
- Provide an environment that is conducive to learning, including furniture appropriate to adults, proper lighting, comfortable room temperature, reduction in noise and other distractions, and a visible clock
- Ensure that security or restricted access is provided at all times

2. High-Quality Learning Environment

To provide the best learning environment for adult learners, AEL providers must make every effort to have the following items available in each classroom and/or at each site for use in instructional delivery:

- Chalk, white, or smart boards
- Laptops or desktop computers with current software
- Internet access
- Learning tablets
- Tools and resources to support audio and visual classroom needs.

E. Program Purpose

1. Federal Purpose

Federal law and state rule set forth the purpose of the AEL program.

Under WIOA Title II, also known as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, or AEFLA, the purpose of adult education is to:

- assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that:
  - ➢ are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children; and
  - ➢ lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;

- assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- assist immigrants and other individuals who are English Language learners in improving their:
  - reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English;
  - mathematics skills; and
  - understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

2. State Purpose

Under TAC §805.1, the program's purpose is to provide adults with sufficient basic education that enables them to effectively:

- 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.

F. Alignment with Boards, Employers, Colleges, and Other Core Programs

1. The Whole Is Greater Than the Sum of the Parts

To fully support and implement local integration, state and local agencies must collaborate in ways that produce results and create an environment that fosters and drives meaningful partnerships. TWC and local Grantees enjoy active partnerships with a variety of local, state, and federal agencies and other entities.

2. Integration with Boards and Workforce Solutions Contractors

Since the program transition in 2013, TWC has fostered integration with Boards, which are expected to support AEL Grantees with strategic and program design guidance 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 in-demand or targeted occupations or occupational clusters
- Prioritization or targeting of existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations to which Boards direct training resources

Support of direct services for eligible individuals by aligning the education, training, employment, and support services provided through Workforce Solutions Offices with AEL service providers, such as enrollment or Co-enrollment in Workforce Training, related support services, on-the-job training, and employment guidance. Other types of Texas Workforce System integration and alignment through Boards and Workforce Solutions Offices include the following:

- Creation of a memorandum of understanding that states the shared responsibilities of each partner and the infrastructure cost, defined in the WIOA Workforce Systems Operation Guide.
- Executing responsibilities as the AEFLA Grantee in certain workforce areas

- Strategic and program design guidance for Career Pathways through analysis of employment statistics and local labor market information, regional economic development, and industry or occupational demand studies
- Colocation of classes in Workforce Solutions Offices
- Referral and Co-enrollment in other workforce programs to support student retention, transition, and employment success

To fully realize the benefits of system integration for AEL customers, AEL providers are encouraged to take advantage of the multiple avenues available, not only to learn more about the assets of the Workforce Solutions system but also to participate in it.

Each of the state's 28 Workforce Areas has a Board made up primarily of private-sector employers, among them representatives of local education agencies, labor organizations, vocational rehabilitation, community-based organizations, economic development councils, and Workforce Solutions Office partners, with one position for an individual from a local literacy council, and one for an individual from adult basic and continuing education.

AEL program leaders are encouraged to attend Board and subcommittee meetings to be informed of local and regional economic trends, Board performance, and partnership opportunities.

Additionally, participation on the Board provides a way to provide input about Board strategic and local operational plans as well as to stay informed about the larger efforts and changes in the local workforce and economy, which can influence service delivery.

3. Community Colleges and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

For Texas to lead in a global economy, students must be able to benefit from the state's diverse postsecondary education and training options and achieve Recognized Postsecondary Credentials, licenses, and certifications that are portable and stackable. AEL has collaborated closely with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) since AEL transferred to TWC in 2013, when TWC and THECB began to expand the former Career Pathways initiative, Accelerate Texas, through a $1 million expansion investment. Since then, TWC has funded Accelerate Texas across the state in partnership with community colleges and other entities in collaboration with community colleges.

State and local collaborations augment THECB's strategic plan, 60x30TX, and address participants' desires for a better life, employers' desires to remain competitive, and the state's need for a robust economy.

TWC's partnership with THECB also supports data sharing and efforts to align curricula, credentials, and assessments to bring greater value to participants and the business community.

Information about THECB is available at http://www.thecb.state.tx.us.

4. Independent School Districts and the Texas Education Agency

As the state agency charged with public education, TEA is a critical partner for TWC and local providers in ensuring AEL alignment in key areas, including high school equivalency (HSE), dropout recovery, and standards alignment.

a. Dropout Recovery

In 2014, TWC collaborated with TEA to expand, continue, and further develop innovative models to support recent high school dropouts through the Texas Adult Completion and Skills Initiative (TACSI). TACSI is TWC's innovative High School Drop-out Recovery Program. It offers multiple options to address Career Pathways success for customers up to 26 years old. Customers participate in either credit recovery or HSE options that are matched to their career interests and offered concurrently with Workforce Training, college and career transitional support, and job development and employment services.

b. Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency

AEL programs provide services to support participants in achieving the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE), and TEA is the state agency that manages TxCHSE.

On January 29, 2016, the State Board of Education, TEA's governing body, voted to award contracts to three companies to provide the assessments that serve as the basis for TEA to issue the TxCHSE. The following tests are available:

> ➢ Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC)—administered by Data Recognition Corporation

> ➢ High School Equivalency Test (HiSET)—administered by Educational Testing Services

> ➢ General Education Development (GED)—administered by GED Testing Services

Information about the deployment of these tests as well as locations for testing centers is available at the TEA webpage: http://tea.texas.gov/TxCHSE.html.

5. Libraries and Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Libraries are uniquely positioned to be key partners in the state's efforts to recruit Texans for services. Over 550 public libraries across the state can assist state and local efforts in building a stronger Texas workforce by hosting events and classes, providing access to employment and educational resources, supporting recruitment, and providing public access to the Internet to facilitate Distance Learning and job searching. In their role as technology anchors in their communities, libraries are also key partners in addressing the digital divide and Digital Literacy efforts.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) is the agency that assists patrons to effectively use information, archival resources, public records, and library materials.

In 2016 and 2017, TSLAC and TWC developed a free-use Digital Literacy toolkit that contains lesson plans, workbooks, activity worksheets, and resources for seven Digital Literacy training modules.

More information about TSLAC is available at https://www.tsl.texas.gov/. The Digital Literacy tool kit is available at https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ld/AEL/LandLtoolkit.

7. Essential Program Activities and Services

A. Recruitment and Advertising

1. Overall Requirements

As part of the connection phase of service delivery described under §6B, Service Delivery Structure providers must ensure that they are using a recruitment strategy 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. This requires creating a standard written procedure to ensure the following:

- Use of consistent, asset-focused, and empowering messaging in all recruitment communications
- Use of branding as stipulated in provider grants
- Provision of 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, community colleges, health services, and the like in recruitment efforts
- Recruiting and serving, at a minimum, the contracted number of students in each contracted category and ensuring that recruitment efforts are customized according to the target student population

2. 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 practice shows that strategic recruitment identifies the best customers for the services offered in adult education and literacy 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 such programs as Career Pathways.

Increasingly, adult education and literacy programs in Texas have been 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 adult education and literacy services in order to enter training, find employment, or facilitate a career boost.

All recruitment efforts should be based on an alignment of program objectives, performance measures, and customer goals and objectives. When analyzing a program's current student population, programs should consider the students' goals and objectives. and consider these questions:

- Are the goals and objectives of current participants able to be served by the program's services and objectives?
- Are there potential customers whose objectives better match the program objectives, including participants in workforce, vocational rehabilitation services, and college developmental education?

Such individuals are prime candidates for services, and providers should consider these populations as primary target customers.

a. Alignment to Program Objectives and Performance Measures

Providers must ensure that recruitment supports program objectives and performance measures. Providers can begin with an analysis of their current or historical service mix to determine gaps in student populations. For example, an English Literacy and Civics (EL Civics) program that has historically served low-level English Language Learners who were not in the workforce would benefit from developing a strategy to recruit higher-skilled English Language Learners with employment objectives, including professionals with degrees and credentials from their native countries.

Effective recruitment can be measured by:

➢ the provider's responsiveness in developing and delivering services that meet the demands of the community; and

➢ the level to which the provider's current recruitment strategy has engaged organizations serving populations that would benefit from the wide variety of services, including Career Pathways models

b. Effectively Engaging the Community and Communicating the Program

Providers should realize that a community might not be aware of the diversity of programs available to them. Programs that have long been established in neighborhoods or centers may be known for providing only ESL instruction, high school equivalency preparation, and/or family literacy services. Community members might not know that providers across the state now offer job training through IET, access to vocational rehabilitation services, and integration with Workforce Solutions Offices services.

Providers must take extra steps to ensure that the community member knows about the services that are available. Providers can update promotional materials and signage, host open-house events, collaborate with community partners, and expand the program message to reflect the array of AEL services being offered.

When evaluating program promotion, AEL providers must consider whether their advertising publicizes the new service delivery options available. Some AEL providers, like many community colleges, have shifted from generic course names like "ESL Level 2" and "GED" to names that reflect the aspirations and goals of students, such as "High School Equivalency to Careers Academy" or health-focused ESL "Health Services Academy" programs.

3. Recruitment through Partner Integration

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 customers who do not have career or college objectives continue to receive services, providers will achieve better performance results if they do 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 workforce, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, social services agencies, and college developmental education departments to help bring students, including those with career and college goals, to the programs.

a. Recruiting Students with Career and College Goals

Strategic recruitment is also key to the success of programs in required programs such as IET and Integrated EL Civics. Participation for these models requires specific customer characteristics that should be identified during intake and screening. Characteristics to look for include the following:

➢ Available and eager for work

➢ Intrinsic motivation (desiring higher wages and more satisfying work)

➢ Desiring and willingness to meet the demands of accelerated, short-term training

➢ Being able to benefit from well-defined course sequences and Career Navigator support

➢ Having external constraints (for example, child care, work schedule, or transportation issues) relatively well-managed (such customers may benefit from Supportive Services and educational case management)

B. Comprehensive Assessment Orientation

1. General Requirements

Comprehensive Assessment is part of the entry phase of service delivery described in §6 B, Service Delivery Structure, and it 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 the student but also identifies his or her goals, educational and employment background, and potential barriers with which the customer may need support to ensure retention and completion; it also includes disability accommodation needs, if applicable.

Research by Thomas Bailey, a leading expert on community college redesign as it relates to developmental education students, and others show that programs which spend quality time with students throughout the duration of the program pays off later in better retention, faster progress and higher completion rates.

WIOA has allowed greater flexibility in program design as well as the opportunity to offer increasingly diverse services, such as Digital Literacy, curriculum for college knowledge, and job-search assistance, through Workforce Preparation Activities.

All providers must ensure that they have a written procedure for Comprehensive Assessment and Orientation that, at minimum, includes the following components:

a. Collection of Required Reporting Elements

Providers must ensure that they collect information required by the Assessment Guide.[6]

b. A Signed Release of 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, including entry into TEAMS statewide database. 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;

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[6] The Texas AEL Assessment Guide is available at
http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/texas-ael-assessment-guide-twc.pdf.

- ➢ names of entities authorized to release the information;
- ➢ names of entities authorized to receive information; 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 the student understands the consent that he or she is giving when enrolling in AEL services. Local programs may add language to the following TWC-approved language in the release of information, as programs might have data-sharing agreements with other entities that would require additional language. Grantees must use the following TWC language in the release of information form:

Participant Acknowledgement and Release of Information

The information provided is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I agree to abide by Adult Education Program policies, rules and regulations. I further understand the submission of false information is grounds for rejection of my application, withdrawal of acceptance, and cancellation of enrollment. My signature below shall constitute acknowledgement to statistical use of my records of enrollment, progress, credential obtainment, and transition to postsecondary enrollment or employment. My signature below also authorizes use of my personally identifiable information, including my employment and wage information pre-, during and post- enrollment for audit, study and evaluation of the Adult Education and Literacy program performance and other state and federally-funded programs. Such programs may include but are not limited to those under the laws administered by the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. I acknowledge that the Adult Education and Literacy program and that TWC may release personal identifiable information to other local, state, federal, partners and/or stakeholders for verification of state and federal program requirements, performance reporting, audit, evaluation, study and to monitor the programs performance. Participants who are 17 and 18 years of age must have written parental permission or qualify for another exemption from compulsory attendance law. Additional information may be found at: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/twc-website-privacy-security-information#confidentiality.

If an individual refuses to sign the release, a referral to another educational organization might be appropriate. AEL may not serve individuals who refuse to release information for data sharing.

AEL will be releasing guidance with more specific language that focuses on who is covered under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and how sharing participant information at the local level to enhance service delivery can and should be outlined in a separate process and form.

c. *Collection of Eligibility Documentation*

AEL providers must ensure that eligibility screening is performed before a student 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 student is eligible for the Orientation process. Checklist items should include, at a minimum, the following:

➢ Enrollment form—Includes all required elements as outlined in the Assessment Guide, locally designed, fully completed, and signed and dated as required

➢ Release of information—One release form that incorporates all the language required to share student data and acknowledge the participant's consent

Providers must ensure that all forms are in a legible font, contain sufficient space for requested information, and are created in a way that protects the student's Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Student eligibility requirements for AEL include the following:

➢ Proof of basic-skills deficiency or English language in the form of an approved assessment

➢ Proof that a participant between the ages of 16–18 who has not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent meets an exemption defined in Texas Education Code (TEC) §25.086 (See Table 1 for more information.)

Table 1: Required Documentation for AEL Participants Who Are Within Compulsory Attendance Age and Lack a High School Diploma or Its Equivalent

Age	Required Documentation
16	Court order
17	Attestation that student is not currently enrolled and **Any** of the following: Parent permission (on enrollment form) • Court order • Proof and/or attestation that 17-year-old lives separate from parent/guardian • Proof and/or attestation of homelessness

Age	Required Documentation
18	Attestation that student is not currently enrolled

and

Any of the following:

- Parent permission (on enrollment form)

- Court order

- Proof and/or attestation that 18-year-old lives separate from parent/guardian

- Proof and/or attestation of homelessness |

For individuals to be funded with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), proof of eligibility, as outlined in AEL Letter 01-15, Change 1, issued May 14, 2015, and entitled "Adult Education and Literacy Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Eligibility—*Update*," and any subsequent issuances.

d. *Referral for Other Services*

Providers must have strong referral systems to ensure that a participant's needs are met by another organization when necessary, such as collaborating partner entities that can assist customers who refuse to release information. This includes having the following:

➢ A referral system for adults who are not eligible for adult education and literacy services or who will benefit more from other services. For example, participants who are college ready or prepared to test for the TxCHSE.

➢ Identification of participant areas that require further assessment and review, including, but not limited to:

- o homelessness

- o substance abuse

- o counseling needs

- o identified or suspected disabilities

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

- o eligibility for college remedial or developmental education services

e. Waitlists Management

Providers should avoid waitlists. Adult education and literacy customers need and desire immediate service to address often pressing economic and educational objectives.

AEL providers must ensure that 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 in which customers may participate while waiting for services;

➢ a plan for enrolling students in Distance Learning activities; and

➢ follow-up contact procedures to enroll wait-listed customers when space becomes available.

f. Testing and Placement

AEL providers must follow the requirements for testing and placement stated in the Assessment Guide.[7] Providers should defer to the Assessment Guide and associated AEL letters for official policy and guidance. A summary of these requirements is as follows:

➢ Texas requires that participants be assessed before they can be enrolled in a class.
➢ The testing process must be transparent and explained in advance to participants. Before testing, participants must be told why they will be tested and what the test results will be used for. As soon as possible after testing, participants must be informed of the test results with a thorough explanation of the results and the associated performance levels. Providers must ensure that a participant's test results are used to inform other Comprehensive Assessment activities, such as goal setting.

See the Assessment Guide for basic practices in orienting participants to the testing process.

C. Orientation

Important Change: Effective July 1, 2017, orientation hours will not be counted as direct contact hours for any performance reporting. See the Assessment Guide for more information on these changes.

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[7] The Texas AEL Assessment Guide can be found at
http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/texas-ael-assessment-guide-twc.pdf.

Like Comprehensive Assessment, Orientation is part of the entry phase of service delivery. AEL providers must provide a student Orientation, and it must be described in a standard operating procedures document. Providers must document that a participant attended Orientation.

The Orientation is part of the entire Comprehensive Assessment process, assessing not only participants' academic skills but also their personal, academic, and employment strengths, as well as possible information, supports, and resources that might facilitate success in meeting their goals and objectives.

1. Customization for Program Type

The duration of Orientation must directly correlate to a participant's goals and desired outcomes as well as be customized for the different types of adult education and literacy 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.

In general, all Orientations should be customized for the activity for which the Orientation is designed. Elements that most Orientations contain and document in a written participant handbook or syllabus include:
- Information about program and collaborating organization services
- Review of attendance policy and class participation expectations
- Review of available support and partner services
- Information about learning styles, learning strategies, and success skills
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Grievance procedures
- Rights and responsibilities of participants
- Program code of conduct

Programs should ensure that all participants, including English Language Learners and individuals with disabilities, understand and have access to program information.

2. 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 and that it informs placement decisions.

The goal of the ITEC Plan is to identify and prioritize long-term and short-term academic and career goals. The following are examples of ITEC Plan topics:
- Management of home, life, child care, and transportation needs

- Access to AEL services, including counseling, tutoring, technology, and Distance Learning
- Access to support services
- Occupational assessment
- Establishment of career goals
- Access to college and training services
- Access to internships and on-the-job training
- Job development and employment search

3. On-Ramp, Bridge, and Transition Classes

Programs often provide a more intensive type of service activity for students entering IET or Integrated EL Civics to ensure that students are academically prepared for the rigor and duration of these models and are making the best career choices. This type of service is often called an On-Ramp to Postsecondary Education or Training (On-ramp Program), bridge, or transition class and may be delivered in an intensive but short term design with topics, content, and activities over several days or weeks, or of longer duration as a postsecondary college readiness program including:

- Preparation for a 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, and employment expectations and work culture for an occupation or sector;
- 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, housing assistance); and
- Intensive academic readiness and remediation for student success to support transition to postsecondary education and training.

This activity supports program success by ensuring that students understand and are committed to the duration and intensity of the program, have made arrangements to mitigate work and personal obligations that might impede completion and are well informed about the resulting employment options and expectations to support success.

D. Instruction

1. Instructional Services for Native English Speakers

a. Basic Literacy

Basic literacy is instruction and support in the basic reading components necessary to develop beginning readers' ability to deconstruct, interpret, and use text. Reading develops according to identifiable stages—acquiring alphabetics (learning to read), fluency (smooth expressive reading), and reading to learn (the ability to use reading to acquire new information). The reading process, often facilitated through one-on-

one instruction, includes word recognition, spelling, word meaning, silent reading comprehension, and oral reading rate.

b. Adult Basic Education (ABE)

ABE activities and instruction are provided across a continuum, from pre- and basic literacy through elementary levels, culminating with competencies equivalent to the eighth-grade level. Instruction includes reading, mathematics, communication skills, social studies, physical sciences, health, Digital Literacy, and career and college readiness competencies. Assessment and performance guidance organize ABE into 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)

c. Adult Secondary Education (ASE)

ASE activities and instruction are comparable to the competencies developed in secondary high school and college developmental education. Assessment and performance guidance organize ASE into two levels:

> ➢ Level 5 (grade level 9–10.9)
>
> ➢ Level 6 (grade level 11–12)

d. Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE)

Participants may earn the TxCHSE by successfully passing one of the following tests issued by TEA:

> ➢ TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion)—administered by Data Recognition Corporation
>
> ➢ HiSET (High School Equivalency Test)—administered by Educational Testing Services
>
> ➢ GED (General Education Development)—administered by GED Testing Services

Additional information on the TxCHSE is available at http://tea.texas.gov/TxCHSE.html.

2. Services for English Language Learners

a. English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL activities and instruction are designed to support English Language Learners in achieving competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of English that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, followed by transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. Programs can meet these requirements using one of the following methods:

➢ Ensure that the ESL program curriculum or instructional materials are aligned to the Texas AEL Content Standards

➢ Offer educational and career counseling services that help participants to transition to postsecondary education or employment

➢ Provide ESL services as part of Career Pathways

Assessment and performance guidance organize ESL into six levels. ESL levels one to six have no grade-level equivalencies as second-language learning is not organized by grade-level equivalents.

b. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (Integrated EL Civics)

Integrated EL Civics provides education services to adult English Language Learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, and enables them to achieve competency in English and acquire the basic and more advanced skills necessary to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States.

Additional information is in AEL Letter 04-16, issued September 15, 2016, and entitled "Implementing Integrated Education and Training English Literacy and Civics Education," and any subsequent issuances.

c. Bilingual Instruction

Under state law authorizing adult education and literacy, bilingual education may be used to instruct English Language Learners whenever it is appropriate for those students' optimum development.

AEL providers supporting students toward Spanish-language high school equivalency completion must also ensure that English Language Learners are assessed according to the Assessment Guide and AEL Letter 02-17, issued April 3, 2017, and entitled "Assessing English Language Learners in the Adult Education and Literacy Program," including any subsequent issuances.

Gaining competency in English is an important goal for English Language Learners, but high school equivalency is often an equally important goal for participants, as it opens access to jobs, career lift, postsecondary education, training, and financial aid. While bilingual instruction is allowed in Texas, federal performance accountability does not include Spanish-language tests; thus, English Language Learners must be assessed using the options described in AEL Letter 02-17, "Assessing English Language Learners in the Adult Education and Literacy Program," including any subsequent issuances, and the Assessment Guide.

Providers that offer bilingual instruction to support high school equivalency completion must assess students accordingly and place students in appropriate ESL instruction, and offer supplemental Spanish high school equivalency preparation courses. More guidance is in AEL Letter 01-17, issued January 25, 2017, and entitled "Implementing Programs, Activities, and Services for English Language Learners," including any subsequent issuances.

3. Career Pathways

a. Overview

Career Pathways and Intensive Service models support students in obtaining the skills and postsecondary and training credentials that are of value to local businesses. This section describes:

- ➢ AEL provider requirements related to Career Pathways and Intensive Services models;

- ➢ the ways in which various student populations can best receive career and college readiness services; and

- ➢ related capacity-building opportunities.

Fully integrating Workforce Training and aligning programs with Recognized Postsecondary Credential requirements and the skills valued by employers ensures that students develop both requisite foundational skills, as well as technical and workforce preparation skills to help ensure that Texas' workforce can compete at the highest levels to maintain a strong state economy.

b. What is the Career Pathways Program and Intensive Services?

Starting in 2014, TWC required providers to implement Career Pathways models, requiring implementation by all AEL Grantees and expanding the IET model through Discretionary Innovation Projects. With the passage of WIOA, the term "Career Pathways" established a specific sequence of services. Because not all the former TWC Career Pathways models met the federal definition, TWC uses the term "Intensive Services" to describe the various colleges and career-focused adult education options. The term "Career Pathways" will be used when referring to models that meet the WIOA definition.

Career Pathways are a comprehensive approach to career development. Career Pathways models include IET programs, including Integrated EL Civics. Intensive Services models include:

- ➢ Workplace AEL Activities

- ➢ Services for Internationally-trained English Language Learner Professionals

- ➢ Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services

These models are described below.

20x2020 Career Pathways Goal

TWC has committed to investing in the education of Texas students and the future of the state's economy and has established a transformative vision for Texas by setting the 20x2020 goal in "The Texas Strategic Plan for Adult Education and Literacy 2015–2020." That goal is to have 20,000 adult learners enrolled in Career Pathways programs through partnerships among Texas employers, community and technical colleges, AEL providers, and Boards by 2020. The use of the term career pathways in the strategic plan encompasses an array of service options including IET, Integrated EL Civics, and Intensive Services.

Career Pathways models were first implemented as a state effort in Texas community colleges in 2010[8], and, since then, with the adult education program transfer to TWC in program year 2013-2014 providers have been progressing toward the 2020 milestone through various models, helping set the stage for the transformation of the adult education system in Texas. Enrollments in Career Pathways have increased each year. In program year 2016-2017, Career Pathways enrollments reached over 4,000.

c. *Effective Career and College Planning*

It is best for students to begin Career and College Planning at intake and Orientation, when initial information on the career objectives of customers is collected and short- and long-term goals are established. The development of employment and training awareness, career and college readiness, and transition opportunities should be incorporated throughout service delivery.

Career and College Planning is essential to addressing the Commission's goal[9] for the AEL program and for WIOA's mandate for increased career and college performance for all students. Effective strategies and requirements of Career and College Planning include the following:

> ➢ Collaborating with Boards and other community partners

> ➢ Determining appropriate testing instruments and proper placements for higher-skilled English Language Learners

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[8] The Accelerate Texas grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

[9] The goal, as outlined in the Strategic Plan for Adult Education and Literacy for the Fiscal Year of 2015–2020 (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/twc/twc-strategic-plan-adult-education-literacy-fy2015-2020.pdf) is to support increases in employment, postsecondary education and training transition, skill gains, and secondary completion through demonstrated approaches that integrate system services and leverage community partnerships.

- ➢ Providing college and career Workforce Preparation Activities integrated into or aligned to instruction, with continual updating of ITECs and short- and long-term goals

- ➢ Implementing On-Ramp Program classes, which provide academic readiness, Career and College Planning, academic preparation, and transition services to prepare students for postsecondary education or training

- ➢ Implementing Career Pathways and Intensive Services program requirements

d. Not Just for Higher-Skilled Customers

Developing skills needed for collage or training is relevant to all students—not just those who seek services with defined career and higher education goals—who have previous work experience or who may be functioning at higher levels and need targeted remedial instruction. Many students functioning at lower education and literacy levels are already working in low-wage, low-skill jobs and often enter AEL services to gain the skills or English fluency needed to advance in the workforce.

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.

e. Career Pathways and Intensive Service Models

Programs must provide the following models in order to meet Commission-approved targets:

- ➢ Career Pathways

- ➢ IET, which may be combined with

  - o Integrated EL Civics in combination with IET; and

- ➢ Intensive Services, which be combined with one or more of the following:

  - o Workplace AEL Activities

  - o Services for Internationally-trained English Language Learner Professionals

  - o Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services

Career Pathways targets set by the Commission are published in an AEL Letter each program year.

Integrated Education and Training (IET)

Starting in PY 2016-2017, Grantees are required to implement IET programs and must provide IET services to individuals seeking AEL and Workforce Training

options. IET models provide AEL Activities concurrently and contextually with Workforce Preparation Activities and Workforce Training for specific occupations identified as existing and emerging in in-demand or targeted occupations or occupational clusters for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

AEL Grantees meet contract requirements related to delivering IET programs, which may be implemented in combination with Integrated EL Civics.

Within the overall scope of services, IET programs must provide Core Components of an IET that include the following:
- AEL Activities Contextualized for Workforce Training and aligned to the Texas AEL Content Standards;

- Workforce Preparation Activities;

- Workforce Training for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and

- Services that ensure that IET Components:

  o are of sufficient intensity and quality and based on the most rigorous research available to support the advancement of education and career development;
  o are provided simultaneously at points within the overall scope of the program;
  o use occupationally relevant instructional materials;
  o have a single set of learning objectives that identify specific competencies across the IET Components, which may include established learning objectives and/or trade-related benchmarks or competencies for a particular in-demand or targeted occupation or occupational cluster required for attaining a Recognized Postsecondary Credential; and
  o are organized to function cooperatively

More information can be found in AEL Letter 02-16, Change 1 issued October 13, 2016, and subsequent issuances, and entitled "Implementing the Integrated Education and Training Service Approach—*Update*."

Intensive Services: Workplace Adult Education and Literacy

Workplace AEL Activities are provided by adult education and literacy providers in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location and are designed to improve the productivity of the workforce. In Workplace AEL programs, providers should understand and respond to the demands that drive business needs, employee safety, productivity, and advancement.

Intensive Services: Services for Internationally-trained English Language Learner Professionals

Grantees may provide Services for Internationally-trained English Language Learner Professionals including, but not limited to:

- skills preparation for credentialing exams;

- specialized career advising; and

- ESL services that are contextualized for targeted occupations and are rigorous enough to allow rapid progress with the use of proper English language assessment to determine whether a participant's academic or professional English makes it possible for the participant to pursue academic coursework, credentialing exams, or professional opportunities.

Intensive Services: Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services

Grantees may provide Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services to a formerly incarcerated individual upon or shortly after release from a correctional institution. The services must be designed to promote successful adjustment to the community and prevent recidivism. These are further described below in the §7D, Corrections and Re-entry Education.

f. Integrated EL Civics

Integrated EL Civics is a program designated under WIOA §243 for adult English Language Learners, including professionals with degrees or credentials in their native countries. The program enables ELLs to achieve competency in English and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States.

The addition of workforce transition components to the program under WIOA enriches the EL Civics program previously authorized under US Department of Education appropriations.

Integrated EL Civics services must include instruction in literacy, ESL, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. It includes Workforce Training when integrated with IET for participants for whom IET services are appropriate. Additionally, the Integrated EL Civics program must:

- be designed to prepare adult ELLs for, and place them in, unsubsidized employment in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or targeted occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and

- integrate with Board and Workforce Solutions Office functions to carry out program activities.

Integrated EL Civics service must include instructional services in literacy and ESL and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and must be delivered

- in combination with IET;

- to prepare and place participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and

- in collaboration with Boards to carry out program activities.

Grantees must meet Commission-approved targets for Integrated EL Civics.

More information can be found in AEL Letter 04-16, Change 1, entitled "Implementing Integrated Education and Training English Literacy and Civics Education—Update" and any subsequent issuances.

g. Capacity-Building Initiatives for Career Pathways

To support innovation and system capacity, TWC has invested over $13 million to date in projects that enhance the quality and responsiveness of local communities to meet the demands of employers. These initiatives, also referred to as Discretionary Innovation Projects, vary in scope and focus and provide increased opportunities for both students and employers as well as increases the capacity of providers through projects centered on addressing the needs of high school dropouts, incumbent workers, and students in lower-level developmental education.

The following is an overview of adult education and literacy's special initiatives in support of Career Pathways.

Site-Based Workplace

The objective of the Site-Based Workplace initiative is to expand employer-based AEL services. In 2016 and 2017, this project served nearly 1,400 employees across the state, from businesses ranging from hospitality to manufacturing plants.

Career Pathways Expansion

The Career Pathways Expansion initiative expands IET programs through mentoring services provided by colleges and other eligible entities, with demonstrated performance in integrated Career Pathways models.

Texas Adult Completion and Skills Initiative

The objective of the Texas Adult Completion and Skills initiative is to support integrated high school completion and training for out-of-school individuals from 16–25 years of age. In 2016-2017, this project served over 400 students.

Accelerate Texas

Accelerate Texas has been a shared discretionary grant initiative between TWC and THECB to expand integrated education and training models. Students work toward an array of credentials, including postsecondary (credit and non-credit) and industry-recognized certifications for occupations in demand in their local communities. The model delivers adult education and literacy, Workforce Preparation Activities, and Workforce Training concurrently and contextually to accelerate progress through common learning objectives and integrated activities. Between the agencies, over 7,064 students have benefited from service delivered by over 28 Grantees working with their local community colleges and Boards.

Capacity Building for Ability to Benefit

The objective of the capacity building for the Ability to Benefit initiative is to implement activities that develop institutional capacity to recruit, enroll, and serve students without a high school credential in eligible Career Pathways programs and to fast-track student access to Pell grant financial aid.

4. Educational Technology and Distance Learning

Distance Learning is a formal learning activity in which participants 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 participants through various methods, including, but not limited to, communication by mail, telephone, e-mail, online technologies and software, and face-to-face instruction.

Requirements for implementing Distance Learning can be found in the Assessment Guide.[10] Included in these requirements is information given in "*a*" through "*e*" below.

a. Requirement for Direct Contact Hours

Participants in Distance Learning must have at least 12 direct contact hours with the program before the participants can be counted for federal reporting purposes. Direct contact hours involve interaction between the participant 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 participant 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.

b. Proxy Contact Hours

In addition to direct contact hours, programs may also report proxy hours to track time that participants spend on Distance Learning activities. Proxy hours differ from direct contact hours in that the identity of the participant 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 the Statewide Management Information System (TEAMS) separately from direct contact hours. All proxy hours must be documented using the method described by the approved Distance Learning curriculum.

c. Distance Learning Participant Descriptions

For federal reporting purposes, a distance learner is a participant in Distance Learning education who has more proxy hours than direct hours at the end of the program year.

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[10] The Texas AEL Assessment Guide is at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/texas-ael-assessment-guide-twc.pdf

d. Assessment

The Assessment Guide states that all participants engaged in Distance Learning courses will be post-tested after the same amount of instructional time as other participants. Both direct contact hours and proxy contact hours are counted to calculate the amount of instructional time required for progress testing. Participants must appear in person at a proctored program site for baseline tests and any subsequent post-tests. Assessments must be conducted through face-to-face interaction.

e. Distance Learning Curriculum Models

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

Clock Time Model

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

Clock time model curricula electronically track the time that the participant spends interacting with instructional material and stop 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 level of quality, as verified by the instructor.

Proxy hours for teacher certification model curricula are awarded based on the teacher's certification of a participant'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 participants in order 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.

5. Corrections and Re-entry Education

Authorized under WIOA §225, programs for Corrections Education and other Institutionalized Individuals require TWC to carry out specific activities for individuals

who are institutionalized or incarcerated, including AEL Activities, IET, and Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

The addition of Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services help ensure that incarcerated individuals and those under community supervision become productive members of society. Although there is no one approach, a growing body of evidence shows that providing offenders with access to specific services helps reduce their likelihood of recidivating. The US Department of Education has supported the development of correctional education re-entry model[11] illustrating an education continuum to bridge the gap between prison and community-based education and training programs and services. The model focuses on:

- Strengthening and aligning education services provided in correctional institutions and the community to support successful movement between the two.

- Establishing a strong program infrastructure to support and improve education services. Ensuring education is well integrated into the corrections system by making it a critical component of intake and prerelease processes and closely linking it to support and employment services.

- Encouraging individuals to identify and achieve education and career goals, while recognizing that their education path is not linear or uniform.

Each step on the continuum requires the correctional institutions, providers and their partners to collaborate, communicate, and work toward the shared vision of helping those who are incarcerated and under community supervision move out of the corrections system and become productive members of society.

AEL Grantees must give priority of corrections funding to programs that serve individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

6. Financial Literacy

AEL Grantees must provide or coordinate for provision of Financial Literacy services with other entities in the Workforce Area.

8. Data Management and Documentation

A. About This Section

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[11] See US Department of Education (2012). A Reentry Education Model Supporting Education and Career Advancement for Low-Skill Individuals in Corrections available at: http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/reentry-model.pdf

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

B. General Requirements

AEL providers must follow the requirements for data management and documentation as outlined in the Assessment Guide[12] as well as the requirements outlined below.

C. Standard Operating Procedures

1. General Requirements

AEL Grantees must have written Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for grant execution in, at minimum, the following areas:
- Recruitment and advertising
- Intake and screening
- Assessment, testing, and placement
- Customer profile data collection

Grantees must also disseminate and train project and partner staff on SOPs and monitor compliance with SOPs.

2. Key Components for Success

AEL Grantees must revisit their SOP each year as well as anytime there is a specific challenge related to program implementation (for example, timeliness of data entry). Grantees also must train and retrain program staff regularly to ensure that SOPs are understood, followed, and working as intended.

3. Statewide Management Information System

In Texas, grantees are required to track data in the Statewide Management Information System, TEAMS. Data entry into TEAMS must occur at least biweekly, with no more than a two-week delay between actual activity and activity reported in TEAMS. All data must be validated monthly.

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

Directors must also ensure that all staff has initial and ongoing training in using TEAMS. All TEAMS users must have training before using the system.

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[12] The Texas AEL Assessment Guide is at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/texas-ael-assessment-guide-twc.pdf.

Information on getting access to TEAMS can be found on the AEL web page at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/adult-education-literacy#teams.

Data collection and verification require the sharing of PII. Programs must develop data review procedures that ensure protection of all PII. See §8E, Managing Personally Identifiable Information, for more information.

4. Standard Forms for Collecting Data

Staff must collect, record, and secure information on locally developed intake and other data collection forms and ensure that the information is noted in TEAMS in a timely manner, as required in the Assessment Guide. All collected forms must be available for monitoring. Required data elements are listed in the Assessment Guide.

Class sign-in sheets must document the following:

- Class number
- Class name
- Date
- Class location
- Teacher name and signature
- Participant names and signatures
- Time in and time out

5. 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 to review immediately after data entry. To do their job, staff members assigned to review data must have access to all staff—teachers, intake staff, data entry staff, and administrative staff—and the authority to obtain their cooperation and to access test information and participant data.

6. Analysis of Data for Program Monitoring and Improvement

For program monitoring and program improvement purposes, AEL providers must review participant data and outcomes, including such variables as number of instructional hours received, length of enrollment, the instructors and classes enrolled, participant educational functioning level, and Data Sign-off. This type of analysis is available in TEAMS through a variety of reports.

7. Timely Data Entry

Program procedures for data entry must specify at least one individual whose job it is to enter participant and class information into TEAMS. All staff members should know this individual's role, and he or she 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 biweekly, with no more than two weeks between an activity and the activity being reported in TEAMS. 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 15th, January 15th, April 15th, and July 15th). A final Data Sign-off report that represents the PY data is due July 15th.

8. Staff Member Roles in Data Collection

Collecting, managing, and using participant assessment information and associated data involves every staff member in a program, and programs must provide staff development with respect to standard operational procedures for program data management and documentation to ensure that all staff members understand their roles and responsibilities. All staff members also must understand the kinds of data collected, how they are collected, how they are 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 that is compatible with state definitions.

9. Document Collection and Management

AEL providers must ensure that 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:
- pre-tests and post-tests

- sign-in sheets

- TANF eligibility documentation

- 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[13]

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[13] TWC's Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts, Appendix K, specifies that copies made by microfilming, photocopying, or similar methods may be substituted for the original

D. Key Components for Success

AEL providers that are successful in data management and collection have clear processes, procedures, and staff members who understand their roles in the data management and collection process. Additionally, successful providers regularly attune staff to requirements, processes, procedures, and issue resolution.

Generally, all hard-copy documentation[14] must match data entry in TEAMS. For example, a participant's contact hours, as verified by sign-in sheets, should match exactly the contact hours in TEAMS. All assessments given to a participant should match all assessments noted in TEAMS, 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.

Backup documentation must exist for all items noted in TEAMS and used for eligibility purposes. For example, there should be a copy of a participant's assessment results or the actual assessment in his or her file that matches the assessment information entered into TEAMS. (See Table 2 for more on documentation types and entry into TEAMS)

The following table lists eligibility documents and the associated TEAMS entries.

Table 2: Common Documentation Types and Associated Entry into TEAMS

Documentation	Associated Entry into TEAMS
TANF eligibility documentation, as outlined in AEL Letter 01-15, Change 1, and any subsequent issuances	Participant profile, "Expanded Eligibility for TANF" "TANF" funding and sub-fund codes used*
Age eligibility documentation	Date of birth under participant record
Assessment	"Assessment" screen in TEAMS; each assessment given should be noted in TEAMS
Sign-in sheet	"Contact-hours" screen for each class, month, and participant. Contact hours in TEAMS should match each sign-in sheet.

*If TANF funds are used, the entry must be coded as TANF in TEAMS.

E. Managing Personally Identifiable Information

PII is information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to that individual.

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records in fulfilling these requirements (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/financial-manual-grants-contracts-appendix-k-record-retention-access-requirements).

[14] For the purposes of this explanation, "hard-copy documentation" refers to paper copies or scanned or electronically generated versions of official documentation.

1. Requirements

All TWC information holders, including TWC employees, contractors, contractor staff, 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.

When developing enrollment and other forms, as outlined in the Assessment Guide,[15] AEL Grantees must develop the form so that sensitive PII is easily separated and secured from information that may be transferred to the instructor in a less-secure manner.

2. Personally Identifiable Information

AEL providers must ensure compliance with the minimum requirements outlined in TWC privacy policy and, as applicable, best practices for protecting PII as established by the TWC Workforce Development Division or AEL Letters. 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

3. Personally Identifiable Information Examples

Violation of TWC policy may result in termination of business relations in the case of contractors or consultants, dismissal of temporary staff or other corrective action. Additionally, individuals are subject to loss of TWC information resources access privileges as well as possible civil and criminal prosecution.

PII is information that identifies an individual. Not all PII is sensitive and/or confidential by law. For example, the following PII is not sensitive or confidential:

- Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and place of work on a business card

- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers in a public phone directory

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15 The Texas AEL Assessment Guide can be found at
http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/texas-ael-assessment-guide-twc.pdf.

- Names of attendees at a public meeting

- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of stakeholders who subscribe to a TWC listserv or distribution list

- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of attendees at a conference

- Lists of agency employee names (separate from an employer tax report or other confidential report)

- Names available through public or open commercial means

- Names, addresses, telephone numbers, or other identifying information available through the Texas Public Information Act[16]

4. Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information

Sensitive PII is information that alone or in combination with other available information can identify an individual and that, if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.

- Sensitive PII and how it is collected vary. Sensitive PII includes an individual's last name and first initial in combination with one or more of the following:

- Social Security number (SSN)

- Driver's license number

- TWC-issued employer tax account number

- Citizenship or immigration status

- Personal health medical information (for example, diagnosis, treatment, or payment for medical- or health-related conditions or the services of an individual. See the definition in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act for details.)

- Alien verification number

- Passport number

- Full date of birth

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[16] Texas Government Code §552.137 provides that an e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body is confidential and not subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act.

- Password or authentication information (for example, mother's maiden name or portions of SSNs)

- Financial information, such as account numbers

- Biometric identifiers (for example, fingerprint, iris scan, and voice print)

- Other data created to identify or authenticate an individual's identity, such as a Fingerprint Identification Number (FIN) or Participant and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) identification number

a. *Personally Identifiable Information That Identifies Individuals Indirectly*

If an individual is indirectly identifiable from descriptions or a combination of information, then that information is sensitive PII. For example, a participant success story published in a program newsletter that describes a specific participant and includes confidential information, such the participant's first and last name, and states that the individual is in a GED class at a specific correctional institution, or is a TANF recipient, or receives vocational rehabilitation services, is a breach of sensitive PII confidentiality.

b. *How Context Affects Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information*

PII that is available to the public can be considered sensitive PII in certain circumstances. The context in which the PII is collected or held and how it is combined with other information may determine whether the PII is sensitive or confidential. For example, an individual's address might be available in a public record maintained in an open source such as voter registration lists or as part of an open court document. However, the same home address belonging to a participant receiving TANF is sensitive PII and, if the source is TEAMS, is also confidential.

In another example, a list of individuals who are victims of domestic violence is protected by a specific law and is sensitive PII. The names of the same individuals in a different context without referencing the individual as a victim may be open to the public, such as a listing in the telephone book, which constitutes PII and not sensitive PII.

5. Successfully Ensuring the Security of Personally Identifiable Information

AEL providers must ensure the security of PII and other sensitive information as stated in this subsection by taking the following measures:

- Maintain PII and other sensitive information in accordance with the TWC standards for information security set forth in WD Letter 13-08, issued April 1, 2008, and entitled "Security of Personal Identity Data," and any subsequent issuances.

- Obtain PII in conformity with applicable federal and state laws governing confidentiality of information.

- Ensure that PII and other sensitive information that is transmitted either by e-mail or by mail stored on CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, and the like, is encrypted using a Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2 validated cryptographic module.[17]

- Ensure that PII and other sensitive information are transmitted only to authorized users.

- Store PII and other sensitive information in an area that is physically safe from access by unauthorized persons at all times and process the data using equipment issued by the Board or TWC Grantee issued equipment, managed information technology services, and approved designated locations.

- Prohibit accessing, processing, or storing of PII data on personally owned equipment and at off-site locations unless explicitly permitted in the TWC Information Security Standards.

- Advise personnel who have access to sensitive, confidential, proprietary, or private data of the confidential nature of the information, the safeguards required to protect the information, and the civil and criminal sanctions for noncompliance with such safeguards in federal and state law.

- Establish policies and procedures under which personnel—before being granted access to PII and other sensitive information—acknowledge their understanding of the confidential nature of the information and the safeguards with which they must comply in its handling as well as liability to civil and criminal sanctions for improper disclosure.

- Restrict access to PII and other sensitive information to those employees who need it in the official performance of duties within the scope of work set forth in the Agency-Grantee Agreement.

- Process PII and other sensitive information in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the records and documents and is designed to prevent unauthorized individuals from retrieving such records by computer, remote terminal, or any other means. If data is downloaded to, or maintained on, mobile or portable devices, ensure that the data is encrypted using FIPS 140-2 validated products.

- Make it clear that PII and other sensitive information that is obtained through a request is not to be disclosed to anyone other than an individual or entity

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[17] For more information on FIPS 140-2 standards and cryptographic modules, see FIPS PUB 140-2 (http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/fips/fips140-2/fips1402.pdf). For examples of FIPS 140-2–certified options (http://csrc.nist.gov/groups/STM/cmvp/documents/140-1/140val-all.htm).

authorized by law to receive the information. Individuals authorized by law include, but are not limited to:

- o program staff with a professional need to know;

- o auditors;

- o state and fiscal monitors; and

- o individuals or entities identified in a release signed by the participant.

- Be aware that disclosure of PII and other sensitive information is authorized when required by court order and in response to a subpoena by a governmental entity with subpoena authority. If a subpoena is not accompanied by a court order or a signed, written authorization from the individual, refer subpoenas from attorneys representing civil litigants to the Agency Grantee's attorney to determine objections.

- Retain PII and other sensitive information only for the period required to use it for assessment and other official purposes, or to satisfy applicable federal or state records retention requirements, if any. Where appropriate, destroy PII, including degaussing magnetic tape files and deleting electronic data or shredding documents, CD's and/or DVD's.

- Never leave records containing PII and other sensitive information open and unattended.

- Report every breach or suspected breach of PII or other sensitive information immediately to TWC's Chief Information Security Officer at CISO@twc.state.tx.us.

9. Professional Development

A. Overview and Objectives

This section outlines the requirements and resources for Professional Development (PD) across Texas.

Texas' PD multifaceted efforts address the following objectives:

- o Ensuring that students get the most value out of their experience by ensuring that program staff understands and responds to student objectives and needs
- o Improving student performance related to students' academic, personal, and professional goals and objectives
- o Improving program operations through structured and interactive capacity-building efforts
- o Improving data integrity and the strategic use of data at the instructional level to increase academic performance
- o Increasing and simplifying the provision of student support services through workforce and community collaborations

o Increasing the application and transfer of learning through Distance Learning and Educational Technology

Grantees have a contractual responsibility to deliver local day-to-day PD training and to continue improving strategies. Additionally, Grantees are responsible for providing training based on a local analysis of performance and staffing needs that support the TWC's strategic priorities.

B. Staff Qualifications and Training Requirements

Staff qualifications and training requirements are governed by TWC's Adult Education and Literacy rule TAC §805.21: Staff Qualifications and Training (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/twc/rules-chapter-805-adult-education-literacy-twc.pdf).

Test administrators and certain key staff that use Distance Learning have specific training requirements, as summarized in §9B, Training for Test Administrators and Distance Learning programs, and more fully outlined in the Assessment Guide.

1. Exceptions to All PD

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

2. 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 program year. Such circumstances must be documented through a formal exemption request to TWC. Approved exemptions must be maintained on file with Grantees for monitoring purposes.

The following is an example of an exceptional circumstance:

Jane Doe was hired in November, but because of an unexpected medical leave of absence, she received only four hours of Professional Development (PD) before June 30. Upon returning to work in August the following program year, her employer (Grantee) must submit a staff exemption for PD to waive her PD requirements that went unmet while on medical leave.

3. Documentation

Records of staff qualifications and PD hours obtained must be maintained by each Grantee and be made available for TWC monitors, as needed.

Documentation for qualifications and PD maintained in personnel file includes, but is not limited, to the following:
o A certificate of completion generated by the PD Portal
o A copy of sign-in and sign-out sheet for a training event
o An agenda that includes the number of PD hours earned
o Materials that show the relevance of the training to the staff person's job duties

- o Approved exemption from Professional Development requirement, if applicable
- o Approved exemption from staff qualification requirement, if applicable
- o Proof of educational qualifications (high school diploma or its equivalent, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and so forth)

4. 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.

Examples of positions may include Career Navigators, TEAMS data entry staff, and test proctors.

a. Educational Requirement and Documentation Required

Staff in these positions must have at least a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate.

Documentation of the high school diploma or high school equivalency results must be kept in the personnel file for monitoring purposes.

b. PD Hours Requirement

Staff must have three hours of PD related to their primary job duties. For example, TEAMS data entry staff must have TEAMS training.

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

All staff members who are paid with adult education and literacy grant funds that provides support services or college and career transitional support, such as Career Navigators, must earn at least three hours of PD each program year.

5. Supervisors, Directors, and Management

The requirements in this section apply to directors, supervisors, 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.

a. Educational Requirement and Documentation Required

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

b. PD Hours Requirement and Exceptions

Each program year, all AEL directors, supervisors, and other staff with program oversight or coordination responsibilities must receive fifteen clock hours of Professional Development. However, staff hired on or after January 1 of a program year are required to receive only half of the PD time required for that program year. For example, if a director is hired December 2017, that director must receive 15 hours

of PD. If a director is hired on January 15, 2018, the director is required to receive half of the 15 hours.

6. AEL 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.

a. Educational Requirement and Documentation Required

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

b. PD Hours Requirement and Exceptions

Requirement

All adult education and literacy instructional staff, except substitutes, paid with AEL grant funds or who acquire student contact hours, including volunteers, must earn at least 15 PD hours each program year, 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 adult education and literacy instructional staff or volunteer is new to the adult education and literacy 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 of the requirements for staff members who are 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 program year, are required to earn only half of the PD time required for that program year. 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 services under IET models must meet the requirements of the associated accrediting or credentialing entity and/or institution, if applicable.

7. Training for Test Administrators and Distance Learning Programs

a. 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 Assessment 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 Assessment Guide.

b. Distance Learning Training

The Distance Learning (DL) Academy is a three-part course that supports programs and staff implementing Distance Learning. Module 1 focuses on state policy and guidance with respect to Distance Learning. Module 2 supports staff in the selection of DL curricula. Module 3 provides the tools to develop an agency plan for the implementation and maintenance of DL programs.

Modules 1 and 3 of the DL Academy are required for key administrative, teaching, and support staff that is engaged in Distance Learning, including any teacher of a class that reports proxy hours in TEAMS. Module 2 of the DL Academy is not required, but is highly recommended before selecting an approved Distance Learning curriculum.

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 3 covers best practices for developing and using a Distance Learning program that is specific to the needs of AEL customers. By the end of Module 3,

participants 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 Assessment Guide.

C. Training, Resource and Innovation Network for Texas (TRAIN Tex)

The Training, Resource and Innovation Network for Texas (TRAIN Tex) strategy represents TWC's investment in Professional Development, relevant research, and capacity-building projects that sustain and advance a robust system of providers and workforce partners to accelerate the advancement of education and training priorities across the state.

TRAIN Tex promotes a fully integrated system that delivers increased employment, postsecondary education and training transition, skills gains, and secondary completion for participants. The result is greater value for the public investment.

TRAIN Tex transforms the limited PD options of the past into a high-quality "no wrong door" integrated network of providers, Workforce Training systems, and the state's Workforce Solutions services. The TRAIN Tex strategy distributes responsibilities across three entities, each one directed and supported by TWC staff:

The Professional Development Center (PD Center) contracted by TWC TRAIN Tex PD at Texas A&M University's Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) is responsible for developing and delivering training, informational resources, and other support to local programs, Boards, nonprofit and community-based adult education providers, employers, and other stakeholders. Further information on PD roles and responsibilities of Grantees and the PD Center can be found at http://www-tcall.tamu.edu.

Capacity-building projects are initiatives that advance development and innovation in addressing specific TWC priorities. Projects are designed to expand the capacity of providers and to develop research-based curriculum and resources, expand Educational Technology, and enhance the integration of services with other education and workforce organizations, including Boards, colleges, libraries, and nonprofit and faith-based providers. For more on these projects, visit TCALL's Capacity Building Project's page (http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/capacityBuilding.htm).

1. Professional Development Center

TRAIN PD @ TCALL is a TCALL project, funded by TWC to serve as the statewide PD and resource center for Texas staff. In that role, TRAIN PD serves as the hub for the TWC TRAIN Tex strategy. For more information, go to TRAIN PD @ TCALL (http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/TRAIN-PD-TCALL.html).

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 (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

a. Role of the PD Specialist

A PD specialist employed by the PD Center is assigned to each Grantee. The PD specialist works in coordination with the local PD coordinator, the program director, and TWC in the review of program performance data in TEAMS, Labor Market and Career Information, and other relevant data to identify deficiencies related to program operations and/or program instructional systems that may be resolved through targeted PD. The PD specialist is in regular contact with the PD coordinator to review progress, provide or request the necessary Professional Development training, and coordinate the development of a Professional Development Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) for the program year.

2. Professional Development Roles and Responsibilities

a. Program Director Role in PD

The AEL program director:

- ➢ must employ a PD Coordinator who is dedicated at least 20 percent full-time to the role;

- ➢ coordinates with the PD Coordinator to develop the program's CIP and guides staff PD;

- ➢ ensures that program data is reviewed regularly by both the data coordinator and the PD coordinator to monitor program improvement and PD efforts;

- ➢ ensures coverage while instructional staff members attend PD training;

- ➢ manages the program's PD budget to ensure that all AEL staff receives, at a minimum, the appropriate PD to satisfy the requirements set forth in §805.21; and

➤ provides instructional staff with access to their data to help inform instruction.

b. *Professional Development Coordinator Role in PD*

The PD Coordinator:

➤ must not also be the program director;

➤ acts as a single point of contact for TWC PD;

➤ effectively leads PD efforts for the program;

➤ collaborates with the assigned PD Center specialist and TWC Program Support Specialist as necessary to ensure that AEL Grantees' needs are met;

➤ coordinates with PD specialist on the PD planning, implementation, and documentation to ensure that all staff members meet PD requirements and are sufficiently trained to support program performance and compliance;

➤ works with the PD specialist and program director to develop the AEL Grantee's CIP;

➤ submits contextualized and/or specialized curriculum developed by program staff to the PD specialist for inclusion as an available resource for other AEL programs;

➤ coordinates PD planning, implementation, and documentation, as directed by TWC if the program is placed on a Technical Assistance Plan or other corrective action; and

➤ provides training to local staff, where local capacity exists, or as directed by TWC, in coordination with the PD specialist.

Local training activities include the following:

➤ Training for the administration of pre- and post-tests in compliance with the Assessment Guide and the test publisher's administration guidelines

➤ Basic training on TEAMS

➤ Student intake, enrollment, and Orientation

➤ Goal setting, as defined in the Assessment Guide

➤ Career awareness

➤ Other training topics in which local staff has subject matter expertise

c. *AEL Staff Needing to Obtain Professional Development*

AEL staff which need to obtain PD work with the PD coordinator to plan for PD based on identified needs with the goal of quality improvement and participate in PD

activities in support of individual PD. Staff may also participate in program improvement efforts, which may include the following:

➢ Participating in a program improvement team

➢ Identifying program improvement goals

➢ Reviewing data related to program improvement goals

➢ Providing feedback on impact of program improvement efforts

➢ Implementing program changes

10. Financial and Contract Management

A. About This Section

This section provides an overview of financial and contract management that is in alignment with TWC, state, and federal laws and regulations.

B. Grant Governance and Administration

AEL Grantees must ensure that they follow uniform grant guidance. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provides this guidance, which incorporates elements previously addressed by circulars OMB A-87, OMB A-122, and OMB A-21. Guidance provided at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_docs supersedes previous guidance provided through the OMB circulars.

Additional guidance on the administration of AEL grants is available as follows:

➢ Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards—Final Guidance, https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards
➢ TWC's Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts (FMGC) compiles federal, state, and agency requirements that apply to recipients and subrecipients of TWC funds. Access to the FMGC can be located at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/financial-manual-grants-contracts

C. Allowable Costs for AEFLA-Funded Grants

TWC provides guidance in accordance with federal and state regulations regarding allowable expenditures in its contracts as well as in subsequent guidance in the form of AEL Letters, WD Letters, and Technical Assistance Bulletins located on TWC's Workforce Policy and Guidance webpage (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/workforce-policy-guidance#abe). AEL grantees should note that TWC guidance listed here may be rescinded or updated with subsequent issuances to the letter or bulletin. The following guidance pertains to AEL grants:

• Allowable Advertising and Public Relations Expenditures—AEL Letter 08-15

- Outreach and Promotional Materials, Advertising, Sponsorships, Employee Apparel, and Award Ceremonies Charged to Grant Awards and Sub-Awards Funded through the Texas Workforce Commission—WD Letter 17-10, as referenced in AEL Letter 08-15
- Provision of Meals and Refreshments—TA Bulletin 259:
- Information and Guidance on Program Costs to Support Instructional Performance—AEL Letter 07-15
  - AEL Letter 07-15 clarifies that grant-funded positions that improve instructional outcomes are allowable program costs. Nonadministrative job duties that support improved instructional quality and therefore support the program include instructional mentoring, training, and using student performance data to improve instruction.
- Implementing the Integrated Education and Training Service Approach—AEL Letter 02-16, Change 1
  - AEL Letter 02-16 clarifies that AEL funding may be expended to support the IET service approach, including Workforce Training and Workforce Preparation Activities, of which Digital Literacy may be included. It also includes relevant IET model definitions and structures. AEL Letter 02-16, Change 1, rescinded and replaced AEL Letter 02-16.
- Implementing and Reporting Workforce Training under the Integrated Education and Training Approach to Service Delivery—AEL Letter 03-17
- Cost Allocation and Spending Priority Guidance for Adult Education and Literacy Grant Recipients and Fiscal Agents—AEL Letter 04-15
  - AEL Letter 04-15 provides guidance on cost allocation and spending priorities as TWC transitions from Workforce Investment Act into the new requirements under WIOA.
  - AEL Letter 04-15, Attachment 1, Cost Allocation Plan Certification
  - Adult Education and Literacy Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Eligibility—*Update*—AEL Letter 01-15, Change 1 AEL Letter 01-15, Change 1, clarifies that participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the School Lunch Program does not satisfy the requirements of determining whether a student is eligible for TANF-funded services, as the CEP does not determine a participant's eligibility based on income. The letter describes a participant's eligibility for TANF-funded services and the required documentation. Additionally, it reiterates that TANF-funded services eligibility must be confirmed and documented before the provision of services that use TANF funds. AEL 01-15, Change 1, rescinded and replaced AEL Letter 01-15.
- Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting System Instructions—AEL Letter 01-13
  - AEL Letter 01-13 demonstrates the correct usage of TWC's Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) financial system, addresses access to the CDER system, monthly reporting and expenditure accruals, and specifies that TWC's CDER system uses an advance payment method, as authorized in CFR Parts 74 and 80.
  - Cost category descriptions are set forth in AEL Letter 01-13, Attachment 1

D. Budget Adjustments

A budget adjustment is a request to move funds between cost categories.

1. Total Cost Category Reductions Less Than 20 Percent

In order to request budget adjustments when total cost category reductions is less than 20 percent, AEL Grantees must submit a request to AELContracts@twc.state.tx.us for review and/or approval, with justifications included in the body of the e-mail and a Budget Adjustment Template indicating, in boldface type, the adjusted budget amounts.

Upon receipt of the budget adjustment request, the appropriate contract manager (CM) in Board and Special Initiative Contracts (BSIC) acknowledges receipt of the request by replying e-mail. AEL Grantees must ensure that they submit requests as needed, with the understanding that budget adjustment requests will be processed as soon as possible after submission receipt and in no more than two business days.

Once the request has been approved, the CM will revise the budget in the CDER system and send an electronic snapshot of the CDER changes to the AEL Grantee's finance department representative, program director, and fiscal agent, if an entity separate from the Grantee, for concurrence. The electronic snapshot can be compared to the CDER tab in the Budget Adjustment Template for accuracy.

2. Total Cost Category Reductions Greater than 20 Percent

To request a budget adjustment when total cost category reductions are greater than 20 percent, AEL Grantees must complete a Contract Action Request (CAR)[18] that includes a detailed description of each change requested and the associated amount by AEL funding source and cost category as well as a revised Contract Budget Summary form with requested changes.

E. Expenditure Reports

The following guidance pertains to AEL expenditure reporting. AEL grantees should note that TWC guidance listed here may be rescinded or updated with subsequent issuances to the guidance.

- AEL Letter 01-13: Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting System Instructions (located on (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/workforce-policy-guidance#abe)
- *WD Letter 04-15: Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting System Instructions— Update (*located on http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/workforce-policy-guidance#abe)
- Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting System Overview, Webinar Questions and Answers (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/cash-draw-expenditure-questions-answers-twc.pdf)

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[18] The Contract Action Request form can be found at http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/ael-06-14-att2.docx

- Adult Education and Literacy Expenditure Reporting
  (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/ael-expenditure-reporting-twc.pdf)

11. Program Monitoring and Improvement

A. About This Section

This section outlines the methods and processes that TWC staff uses to monitor local program performance and compliance with contractual obligation.

B. Overview of the Program Accountability Process

Evaluation of local provider services is a priority for the AEL program. TWC staff has developed an evaluation and monitoring process that draws from best practices across TWC's divisions.

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

C. Program Oversight

TWC staff provides oversight of its AEL programs at regular intervals to ensure program success and compliance.

1. Ongoing TEAMS Data Review

AEL program staff, such as data coordinators, review data available in TEAMS regularly to check for issues and general program health. These reviews may be in preparation for a site visit, in response to a specific question or issue, or as part of regularly scheduled check-ins.

2. Biweekly

Biweekly, AEL program staff review programs' data for a general status update and check of overall program health.

3. Monthly

AEL providers must ensure that they validate their data monthly, and Grantees must submit quarterly Data Sign-off reports through TEAMS. The Data Sign-off report requires Grantees to describe areas of strength as well as concern. Programs also are required to submit monthly expenditure reports in CDER and quarterly narrative reports using a predetermined template that requests information about TWC objectives and overall program objectives.

TWC's AEL program staff meets monthly, at a minimum, to evaluate the overall health of each program, which is measured against the following:

- Contract deliverables

- Progress toward state and federal performance measures

- Expenditures

Program staff discusses trends and issues of concern and develops plans to address those issues. Because services are aligned with workforce areas, staff can see where specific issues exist throughout the state and can work with TWC's PD Center to improve services.

a. Yearly

Each year, AEL performance data is used to develop local, state, and federal targets for the following year. These targets reflect commitment to continuous improvement as well as to TWC's 20x2020 goal, as outlined in the AEL Strategic Plan to have 20,000 adult learners enrolled in Career Pathways by 2020.

D. Monitoring

TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring department performs on-site and desk reviews of AEL Grantees at regular intervals. These reviews are made based on a pre-assessed level of risk to TWC. TWC rules on monitoring activities may be found in TAC §802.

1. Program and Fiscal Monitoring

AEL Grantees must ensure that they cooperate with TWC's program and fiscal monitoring activities, site visits, reviews of documentation, and requests for information. TWC is committed to ensuring the accountability of AEL Grantees; therefore, monitoring activities have been developed to ensure that:

- programs achieve intended results;

- resources are efficiently and effectively used for authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse; and

- reliable and timely information is captured and reported as a basis to improve decision making.

TWC conducts comprehensive monitoring activities to assess the following for AEL Grantees and AEL service providers:

a. Program and Fiscal Monitoring Activities

Program and fiscal monitoring activities include site visits, desk reviews, and analyses of financial and program outcomes to help identify potential weaknesses before they lead to substandard performance or questions about compliance with applicable laws, regulations, provisions of contracts, and official directives and circulars. These documents include, but are not limited to:

- US Department of Labor (DOL) Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs);

- DOL Training and Employment Notices;

- US Department of Health and Human Services guidance letters;

- US Department of Education guidance;

- Office of Vocational and Adult Education guidance;

- TWC rules;

- WD Letters and AEL Letters;

- the Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts (FMGC);

- other TWC guidance; and

- compliance with the appropriate uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements applicable to the type of entity receiving funds, as promulgated in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars or rules.

Monitoring activities are evaluated periodically. Monitoring reviews result in recommendations that lead to immediate corrective action.

AEL Grantees are subject to audit and review by TWC. Additionally, TWC may audit and review all relevant records or a sample of the records as needed to determine Grantee performance.

b. Program Monitoring Activities

TWC conducts program monitoring activities to ensure that programs achieve intended results. Processes and procedures used to determine Grantee performance may include review and evaluation of one or more of the following:

- Program results or outcomes

- Performance measures

- Reporting accuracy

- Record keeping and file maintenance

- Monitoring functions

- Self-monitoring activities

- Service delivery

- Automated systems and reporting

- Human resources

- Policies and procedures

c. Fiscal Monitoring Activities

TWC conducts fiscal monitoring activities to ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively used for authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse. Processes and procedures used to determine AEL Grantee performance may include the review and evaluation of one or more of the following:

- Accounting and reporting systems

- Budget methodologies

- Cash management practices

- Cost allocation plans and processes

- Cash disbursement compliance and documentation

- Program income identification and reporting

- Insurance coverage and risk exposure

- Oversight and monitoring functions

- Payroll administration

- Purchasing and procurement processes and procedures

- Property accountability and safeguarding

Processes and procedures used to determine AEL Grantee performance include a review, evaluation, and determination regarding compliance with the appropriate uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements. Other determinants are the appropriate cost principles applicable to the type of entity receiving funds as listed in OMB circulars or rules and compliance with the applicable requirements regarding cost categories and cost limitations.

d. Agency Monitoring Reports and Resolution

TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring department issues the following monitoring reports listed below, which may include the observations, findings, and recommendations of the monitoring team and as well as the AEL Grantee responses. The reports are as follows:

- Management Letter: If there are no findings (that is, administrative findings and/or questioned costs), a management letter is issued.

- Draft Monitoring Report: If there are findings, a draft monitoring report is issued, which sets forth a specified period in which to respond.

- Final Monitoring Report: A final monitoring report is issued, which may include responses to the findings and recommendations.

e. Process After Issuing Final Monitoring Report

Upon issuance of the final monitoring report, Audit Resolution performs an independent review of the monitor's work papers and the Grantee's response. Audit Resolution issues an initial resolution request letter to the Grantee, stating the outstanding findings and the corrective action(s) needed to resolve the findings.

Grantees are given 30 days to respond and provide additional supporting documentation. If the documentation provided by the Grantee adequately addresses the findings, Audit Resolution will issue an Audit Resolution Report, closing the monitoring report. If the documentation does not adequately address the findings and if the finding is questioned costs, a three-step process is initiated: Initial Determination, 60-day Informal Resolution Period, and Final Determination.

If the finding is administrative in nature and unresolved findings exist after working with the Grantee, then Audit Resolution may make a request to the Workforce Development Division that a sanction be placed on the Grantee. The decision to put a Grantee on a corrective action plan will be made by the Workforce Development Division.

f. Initial Determination

TWC's Audit Resolution department issues an initial determination notifying the AEL Grantee of unresolved questioned costs and the 60-day period, from issuance of the initial determination, to submit a response, including providing evidence or documentation of the appropriate actions taken.

g. Final Determination

If the questioned costs remain unresolved at the end of the 60-day period, TWC's Audit Resolution department issues a final determination to notify the AEL Grantee of allowed or disallowed costs and to establish debts.

If the administrative findings or questioned costs remain unresolved, TWC's Regulatory Integrity Division (RID) may request a sanction, as set forth in TWC's Integrity of the Texas Workforce System rule TAC §802.125.

h. Appeals Process

Only final determinations regarding questioned costs that are issued by TWC may be appealed, pursuant to TWC rule §802.142. Failure by the AEL Grantee or AEL service provider to request a hearing in a timely manner causes the right to a hearing to be waived. The final determination constitutes final TWC action and is not subject to further review. If an appeal is requested and approved, a hearing officer is designated and the collection of debt is pending until final decision of the hearing.

i. Access to Records

All books, documents, papers, computer records, or other records prepared by TWC Grantees that are pertinent to the use of any funds administered by TWC are TWC property. Boards, workforce service providers, AEL Grantees, or AEL service providers in possession of such records must be responsible for their secure and proper maintenance. TWC or its authorized representatives have the right of timely and unrestricted access to any such records in order to conduct monitoring, audits and examinations and to make excerpts, transcripts, and photocopies of such documents.

An AEL Grantee, authorized representative, or executive leadership has the right of timely and unrestricted access to any books, documents, papers, computer records, or other records of workforce service providers or AEL service providers, that are pertinent to the use of any TWC-administered funds, in order to conduct monitoring, audits, and examinations and to make excerpts, transcripts, and photocopies of such documents. The right of access also includes timely and unrestricted access to Grantee personnel for interviews and discussions related to such documents.

The right of access is not limited to any required record retention period but lasts as long as the records are retained. When an AEL Grantee's relationship with TWC ends, TWC's right to access does not end.

j. Custody of Records

TWC may request custody of records from a Grantee if TWC determines either of the following:

- The records possess long-term retention value

- The AEL Grantee is unable or unwilling to physically retain them

To comply with single-audit requirements, AEL Grantees retain the right of access to records in the custody of TWC.

k. Adult Education and Literacy Grantee Oversight

AEL Grantees must ensure that regular oversight of their own activities and regular monitoring of the activities of their AEL service providers that receive public funds administered by TWC are conducted and completed. Monitoring should include monitoring of fiscal and program performance of the service providers that administer and deliver services. Monitoring activities should be designed to ensure that programs achieve intended results and that resources are efficiently and effectively used for authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse. Monitoring activities must focus on the areas of highest risk to help ensure the most effective use of monitoring resources.

Monitoring activities must assess a service provider's compliance with applicable laws, regulations, provisions of contracts, and official directives and circulars including, but not be limited to:

- DOL Training and Employment Guidance Letters;

- DOL Training and Employment Notices;

- US Department of Health and Human Services guidance letters;

- US Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education guidance;

- TWC rules;

- WD Letters and AEL Letters;

- the FMGC; and

- other TWC guidance.

AEL Grantees must assess service providers' compliance with the appropriate uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements that are applicable to the type of entity receiving funds, as promulgated in OMB circulars or rules.

These activities must encompass financial and programmatic monitoring and be evaluated periodically. Each AEL Grantee must conduct regular oversight and monitoring of its service providers in order to:

- determine that expenditures have been charged to the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in the applicable laws and regulations;

- determine whether there is compliance with other provisions of applicable laws and regulations; and

- provide technical assistance as necessary and appropriate.

The monitoring function must include the development and implementation of:

- a risk assessment tool;

- a monitoring plan;

- a monitoring program, including established policies and procedures; and

- reporting and resolution processes.

The AEL Grantee and AEL service provider must develop and implement written policies and procedures that describe and support the monitoring process.

l. Risk Assessment

AEL Grantees must include the use of a risk assessment tool in their monitoring functions.

The risk assessment tool must identify high-risk AEL service providers and high areas of risk within an individual AEL service provider's operation. The AEL Grantee is responsible for determining what constitutes high risk or an area of high risk.

AEL Grantees must establish monitoring schedules and monitoring programs that best use monitoring resources. Additionally, Grantees must quantify (as much as possible) and document areas of risk that are identified for assessment.

m. Monitoring Plan

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:

- 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 they must incorporate the risk assessment results in scheduling decisions.

n. Controls over Monitoring

To ensure comprehensive and effective monitoring, AEL Grantees must:

- require periodic reports from their workforce service providers or 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.

o. 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.

AEL Grantees must provide a copy of monitoring reports to Board members or AEL consortium members.

E. The Technical Assistance Plan Process

1. Decision to Place a Program on a Technical Assistance Plan

If a program demonstrates programmatic or fiscal compliance issues, either as the result of a regular performance review or a monitoring desk review or site visit, TWC places it on a Technical Assistance Plan (TAP). TWC's decision to place a program on a TAP is made after reviewing the areas of concern with the department and division director, applying an objective criterion. For example, TWC may review whether the program is performing in the lowest quadrant on specific measures, and assess the level of risk to TWC or to the public (See Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: The TAP Decision Process
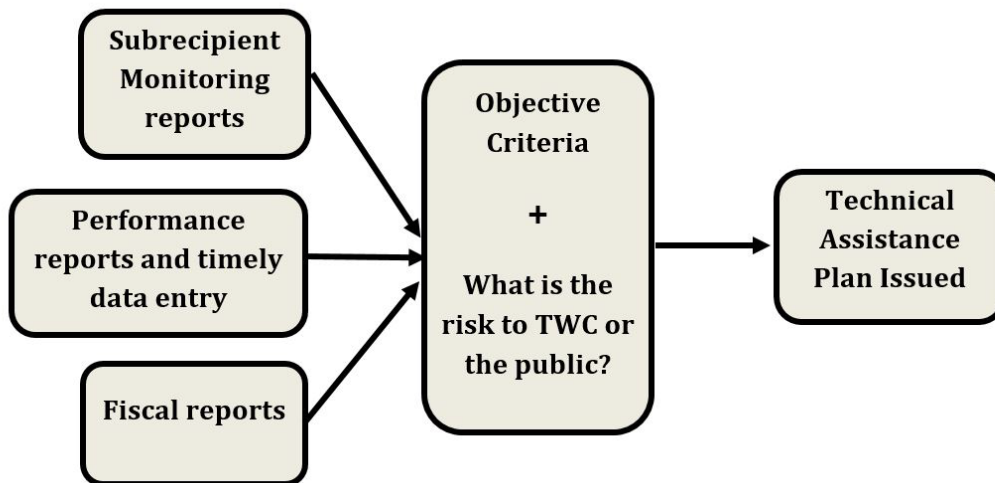
TAPs use a timeline of deliverables to improve and support program function. TAP actions may include additional targeted Professional Development support, one-on-one training in specific areas of weakness or concern, and technical assistance visits by TWC staff to meet and address issues. AEL Grantees must meet specific benchmarks for four consecutive months to have a TAP lifted. Programs that consistently fail to meet contract deliverables once placed on a TAP are placed on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Programs that fail to meet objectives beyond this point are subject to sanctions and deobligation of program funds.

2. The TAP Initiation Process

Once the decision has been made by TWC to place an AEL Grantee on a TAP, AEL staff work with AEL Grantee staff to develop the TAP. The TAP must include measurable benchmarks, a timeline for achieving those benchmarks, and specific strategies to meet those benchmarks (see Table 3). Once the AEL Grantee and TWC staff agree on the content of the TAP, the AEL Grantee's signatory authority will receive a TAP

notification letter and a copy of the TAP to sign and return. The TAP is then signed by the Workforce Development Division director and becomes active.

Table 3: Sample TAP Issue, Benchmark, and Strategy

Issue	Benchmark	Strategies
Failure to enter data on time	Complete six consecutive on-time monthly data validations with less than 5 percent error rate (requiring invalidation)	Create SOP for data entry: Due Date Retrain data entry staff within two months

3. Staff Involved in the Technical Assistance Plan Process

The AEL Grantee determines which Grantee staff should be part of the development of the TAP document as well as the strategies. Staff involved typically includes the following:

- Grantee director—Oversees the TAP rollout
- Instructional coordinator(s)—Addresses instruction-related issues
- Performance, accountability, and/or data lead—Varies across Grantees, but if the TAP contains a data-related issue, the individual who oversees data collection and entry should be involved in the TAP process
- PD Coordinator—Assists in planning professional development to address issues
- TRAIN Tex professional development specialist—Provides additional support in the organization and planning of professional development activities and makes recommendations for any staff development needs

4. The Technical Assistance Plan

a. Carrying out the Technical Assistance Plan

Once a TAP is active, the AEL Grantee works with TWC AEL staff to execute the strategies outlined in the TAP. The TAP is a living document, and strategies may be updated to reflect changing conditions.

The conditions of the TAP will be determined when the TAP is developed and will vary based on the type of TAP executed, but typically, TAPs require:

- monthly status reports—a written report, meeting, or conference call—on the status of strategies outlined in the TAP to address issues;

- observation and/or peer networking with successful Grantees; and

- regular detailed data-monitoring

Additionally, TAPs related to monitoring findings may require:

- development of new SOPs; and

- resolution of specific monitoring issues, for example, correction of student files to address missing documentation.

b. *Engagement of Subrecipients or Consortia Partners*

If the AEL Grantee has subrecipients or is the Grantee for a consortium, the Grantee should analyze its subrecipients to determine if it should initiate a TAP with those subrecipients to address specific performance issues. Subrecipient TAPs may have all or a portion of the issues that the Grantee has and may need the same, or more stringent benchmarks, to ensure overall Grantee success. AEL staff work with the Grantee to develop subrecipient TAPs to ensure success.

c. *Lifting of the Technical Assistance Plan*

A recommendation is made to lift the TAP once an AEL Grantee has:

- met the benchmarks outlined in the TAP for the specified amount of time; or

- made substantial progress toward the achievement of benchmarks as determined by TWC leadership; or

- resolved all monitoring issues.

The AEL Grantee's signatory authority will receive a formal notification that TWC's expectations have been met and the TAP has been lifted.

F. Corrective Action and the Intent to Sanction

As outlined in TWC rule TAC §802.102, at any time TWC may impose corrective actions for failure of an AEL Grantee to ensure compliance with any of the following:
- One or more contracted performance measures
- One or more contract provisions
- Expenditure targets set forth in contract
- Performance targets set forth in contract
- Applicable laws, regulations, provisions of contracts, and official directives
- Appropriate uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements as outlined in OMB's Uniform Grant Management Standards circulars or rules

Whenever possible, TWC first will issue a TAP to attempt to address performance or compliance issues with the AEL Grantee through the development and implementation of strategies, training, or the development of new processes. However, if the Grantee fails to make adequate progress through or comply with the TAP and/or there are issues with a determined level of severity, TWC may call for the issuance of a CAP. TWC may impose the following corrective actions on an AEL Grantee:
- Intent to Sanction
- Level-One Sanction
- Level-Two Sanction
- Level-Three Sanction

CAPs and Sanctions are stated in TWC rule §§802.121–125.

12. Adult Education and Literacy and Other Departments

The AEL department works with other TWC departments as well as with the Training, Resource and Innovation Network for Texas (Train TEX) consortia to deliver oversight, technical assistance, and support to AEL Grantees. Collaborating TWC departments (see Figure 2) include the:

- Board and Special Initiative Contracts (BSIC) department;
- Information Technology (IT) Division;
- Division of Operational Insight;
- Finance Department; and
- Regulatory Integrity Division (RID).

A. Board and Special Initiative Contracts

BSIC provides administration of contracts and facilitates ongoing communication, cooperation, and coordination of contracting processes throughout all components of the Texas Workforce System, including AEL contracts to Grantees.

B. Information Technology Division

Within the IT Division, the Application Development and Maintenance (AD&M) department develops applications and information systems that support TWC's critical business operations. AD&M staff works closely with AEL to create and maintain the Statewide Management Information Systems, TEAMS.

C. Division of Operational Insight

The Division of Operational Insight is responsible for evaluating operational, programmatic, and outcome data to generate ideas about operations that TWC and its partners can use to improve quality throughput and efficiency to better meet the needs of employers and workers in Texas. The Division of Operational Insight analyzes data collected through TEAMS and develops local, state, and federal reports; targets; and recommendations for improvement.

Figure 2: Adult Education and Literacy and Other Departments
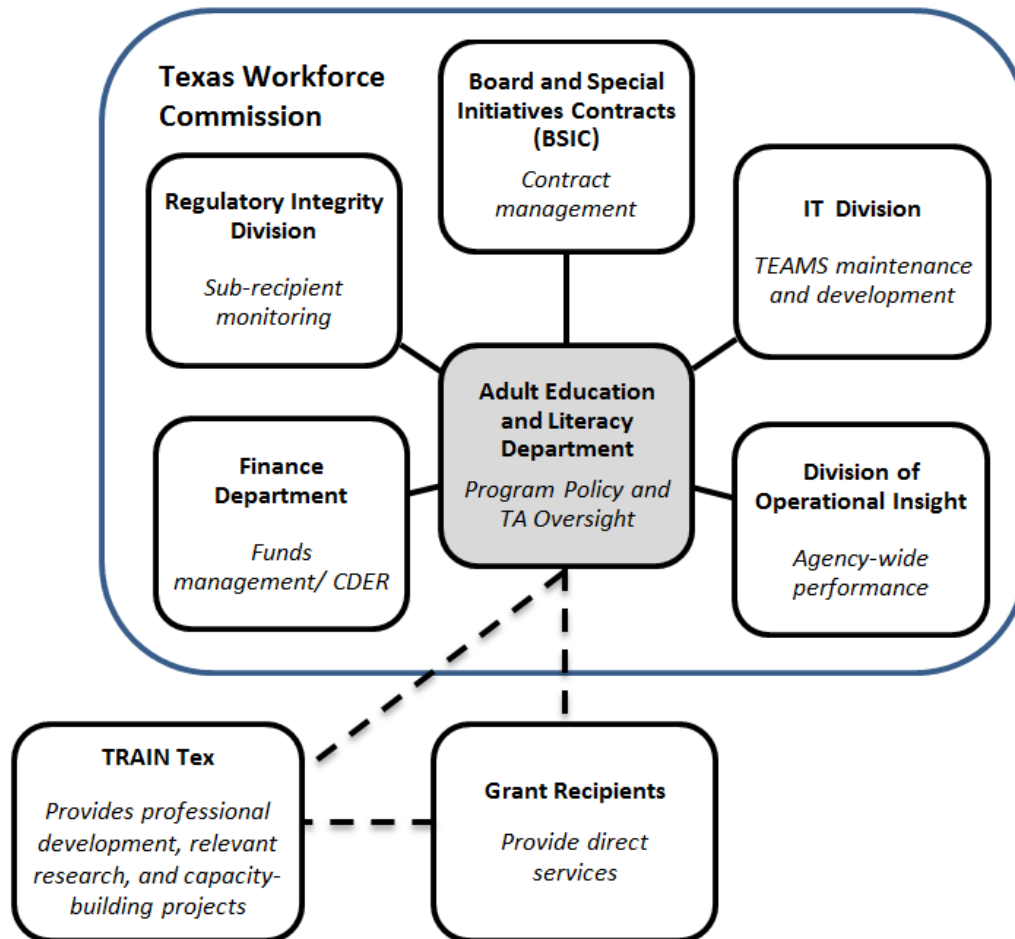
D. Finance Department

TWC's Finance department provides financial services that promote highly effective financial management controls, helps TWC management achieve the efficient use of financial resources, and ensures that accurate financial information is available in a timely manner. Finance department functions include the following:

- Budget Management
- Revenue and Trust Management
- Encumbrances
- Financial Reporting
- Financial Systems Support
- Financial Technical Assistance
- General Ledger Accounting
- Payables
- Payroll
- Reconciliation

- Travel

E. Regulatory Integrity Division

RID enforces all regulatory statutes within the jurisdiction of TWC that affect unemployment insurance, career schools, Board sanctions, wage claims, and child labor. Within RID, Subrecipient Monitoring provides on-site monitoring reviews of AEL Grantees.

13. Definitions

Academy—A new objective-based organizational principle that AEL Grantees must start using in 2018 to arrange services. The Academy model organizes services to match students' areas of interest with programs of study and other services. Programs may organize recruitment, assessment, Orientation, instructional, and other services within an Academy to give students a clear path toward their educational and employment goals. Examples include Academies structured around career training in specific sectors (for example, health services, construction, and manufacturing) or around life goals (for example, Family Literacy and life skills).

Accelerate Texas—A brand shared by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that describes an integrated career pathways model for lower-skilled adults and youth who score at the high-intermediate ESL level (literacy/reading) or low-intermediate basic education level (reading/numeracy). Accelerate Texas includes adult education and literacy integrated with career and technical training that allows students to acquire skills leading to credentials of value in their regional labor markets.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)—Activities and instruction provided across a continuum, from pre-literacy 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 competencies. Assessment and performance guidance define ABE into four levels, as follows:
- 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 do the following:
- 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
- Obtain employment

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)—The Texas Workforce Commission program that 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.

AEL Activities—One of the Core Components of the AEL program, including programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities, Family Literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education, Workforce Preparation Activities, or Integrated Education and Training.

AEL Grant Recipient—See **AEL Grantee.**

AEL Grantee (Grantee)— An eligible grant recipient within a Workforce Area that is awarded AEL funds by TWC. The AEL Grantee also may act as an AEL lead organization of a consortium, AEL fiscal agent, or AEL service provider as designated in an agreement with an AEL consortium.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)—Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA).

Adult Secondary Education (ASE)—Activities and instruction comparable to the competencies developed in secondary high school and college developmental education. Assessment and performance guidance define ASE into two levels, as follows:
- Level 5 (grade level 9–10.9)
- Level 6 (grade level 11–12)

Agency—The Texas Workforce Commission is referred to as the Agency in TWC rules.

Assessment—An inclusive process of collecting information about individuals, groups, or systems that relies on a number of strategies, inputs, and instruments, one of which may be a test. Therefore, assessment is more comprehensive than a test.

Barriers to Employment—Describes challenges faced by individuals who are members of one or more of the following populations:
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- 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
- Individuals who are English Language Learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and 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 governor involved determines to have barriers to employment.

Baseline—The placement of a participant into an Educational Functioning Level each new program year.

Basic Skills Deficient—Unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

Bilingual Education—Instruction to students who do not function satisfactorily in English; offered when it is appropriate for the students' optimum development.

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 Navigator— A position hired by an AEL provider to fulfill duties that may include workforce case management in conjunction with college and career advising, the reduction of barriers to customer success, and working with the Board to identify local employers in in-demand occupations. This position is sometimes referred to as the Career Pathways Navigator.

Career Pathways—In WIOA, Career Pathway is defined as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:
- aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the state or regional economy involved;
- prepares 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;
- includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
- includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context (concurrently and contextually) as IET Workforce Preparation Activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- organizes education, training, and other services to meet the needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one Recognized Postsecondary Credential; and
- helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

In adult education and literacy programs, Career Pathways models include IET services, including Integrated EL Civics in combination with IET, and Intensive Services. Career Pathways models are often referred as Career Pathways.

Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER)—TWC's system that authorized Grantees and vendors use to process cash draws, adjustments, refunds, and expenditure reports on grants and contracts. The CDER system automatically validates all requests before submission to promote swift, accurate processing and payment.

Clock Time—The clock time model, which assigns proxy hours based on the time that a participant is connected to or engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.

Combined WIOA State Plan—TWC's 2015–2019 Strategic Plan for programs under WIOA (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/agency/reports-plans-publications).

Co-enrollment (also Co-enrolled)—Enrollment of an eligible individual in two or more of the six Core Programs administered under WIOA. In adult education and literacy programs, the term has a wider meaning, such as Co-enrollment between AEL and Workforce Training, regardless of the funding source. It also is referred to as concurrent enrollment.

Collaborating Organization—An entity that provides 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, although they may be. Examples of collaborating organizations are organizations that:
- 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 (Boards), and other agencies as appropriate.

College Knowledge—The body of knowledge that 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.

Commission—The Texas Workforce Commission's three-member Commission, composed of members appointed by the governor as established under Texas Labor Code §301.002 that includes one representative of labor, one representative of employers, and one representative of the public.

Comprehensive Assessment— The entry phase of service delivery that consists of collecting information from participants that relies on a number of strategies, inputs, and instruments, one of which may be a test. Therefore, 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)—IET 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 that identify specific competencies across the IET Components, which may include established learning objectives and/or trade-related benchmarks or competencies for an existing or emerging in-demand or targeted occupation or occupational cluster required for attaining a Recognized Postsecondary Credential; and
- are organized to function cooperatively.

Contextual (also contextualized)— Teaching and learning strategies designed to link the learning of basic skills with academic or occupational content by focusing teaching and learning on applications in a career in which students are interested. Many forms of contextualization exist, including Financial Literacy, Family Literacy, health literacy, and contextualization around 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

Consortium Member—Any entity in a consortium.

Contact Hour—The hours of instruction or instructional activity a participant receives within a program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity that is designed to promote participant 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 participant receives instructional, 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.

Core Components of an IET (IET Components)—The three required instructional and service activities of an IET program, including the following:
- AEL Activities contextualized for Workforce Training
- Workforce Preparation Activities
- Workforce Training for a specific in-demand or targeted occupation or occupational cluster, as determined by the Board

Core Program—A program that operates under one of the following:
- Title I Adult program
- Title I Dislocated Worker program
- Title I Youth program
- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program

- Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Vocational Rehabilitation program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title I

Correctional Institution—A correctional institution is any:
- prison;
- jail;
- reformatory;
- work farm;
- detention center; or
- halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals—Required under WIOA Title II, services that states must provide to criminal offenders (any individual who is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense) who reside in correctional institutions.

Credential (also Recognized Postsecondary Credential)—A 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 or baccalaureate degree, as well as graduate degrees for purposes of the VR program as required by section 103(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA. A Recognized Postsecondary Credential is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation. These technical or industry/occupational skills generally are 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 or industry/occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. Likewise, such certificates must recognize technology or industry/occupational skills for the specific industry/occupation rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, etc., 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. Below is a list of the types of organizations and institutions that award Recognized Postsecondary Credentials (Not all Credentials by these entities meet the definition of Recognized Postsecondary Credential.).

- A State educational agency or a State agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a State;
- An institution of higher education described in §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. This includes 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;
- 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 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.

Data Sign-off (DSO)—A report that Grantees are required to submit quarterly to TWC that certifies the validity of data noted in TEAMS. Grantee directors must certify the validity of the data. DSO reports are due 15 days after the end of each quarter (October 15th, January 15th, April 15th, and July 15th). A final DSO report is due July 15th that represents the Program Year data.

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

Direct Contact Hour— A direct contact hour is a contact hour that consists of instruction or instructional activity in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a second language (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 Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS).

Discretionary Innovation Projects—Capacity-building projects that are directed toward developing and enhancing the adult education system to position the system for continuous improvement across program outcomes and for innovation related to system integration with core WIOA programs and postsecondary education and training.

Distance Learning—A formal learning activity in which participants and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for most of the instructional period.

Distance Learning Curriculum Model—One of the following TWC-approved learning curriculum models used to track a Distance Learning participant's proxy hours: clock time model, teacher certification model, learner mastery model.

Distance Learning Participant—A participant who has more proxy hours than direct hours.

Distance Learning Plan—A plan written by programs offering Distance Learning which outlines the delivery of Distance Learning education.

Educational Functioning Level—The ABE, ASE, and ESL literacy levels, as provided in this guide, that describe a set of skills and competencies that students demonstrate in the National Reporting System (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—See **English as a Second Language.**

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 Literacy and Civics (EL Civics)—Education services provided to adult ELLs, including professionals with degrees or credentials in their native countries, to enable 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. EL Civics services must include instruction in literacy, English as a Second Language, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include Workforce Training.

English as a Second language (ESL) —ESL instruction helps eligible individuals who are English Language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of English. 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 may do the following:

- 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 Career Pathways program.

In WIOA, English as a Second Language is referred to as English Language Acquisition.

Exiter—A participant which exits AEL services after he or she has 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 and quality to
- make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for of a family;
- better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs; and
- integrate all the following activities:
  - ➢ Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency
  - ➢ Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children
  - ➢ Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teachers for their children and full partners in their children's education
  - ➢ An age-appropriate education that prepares children for success in school and life experiences

Financial Literacy—Instruction in how to make informed decisions and take effective action with respect to money management.

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 TWC rule (TAC) §805.

High-quality Information Management System—In Texas, the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS).

High School Drop-out Recovery Program—A program that identifies and recruits students who dropped out of Texas public schools and provides them services designed 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 supports, 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.

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.

In-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.

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.

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 participants gain the skills needed to succeed in workforce training program by attaining a Recognized Postsecondary Credential, entering or advancing in employment, or advancing in postsecondary education and training.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (Integrated EL Civics)—A program funded under WIOA §243 for adult English Language Learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. WIOA §243 Integrated EL Civics funds require that the program's service approach include EL Civics services in combination with IET for participants for whom IET services are appropriate. Additionally, the Integrated EL Civics program must meet the following requirements:
- Be designed to prepare adult English Language Learners for, and place them in, unsubsidized employment in existing and emerging in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency
- Integrate with Board and Workforce Solutions Office functions to carry out the activities of the program

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; 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 in-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 Internationally-trained English Language Learner Professionals
- Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services

Internationally-trained English Language Learner Professional—An English Language Learner who is a professional with a degree or credential from his or her native country.

Limited English Proficient (LEP)—An individual who does not speak English as his or her 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 Workforce Area and lays out each Board's strategy to meet the economic and employment needs of the area's job seekers and employers. Local Board Plans may be located on the TWC website (http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/workforce-development-boards-wioa-plans)

Local Workforce Development Area—See **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 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 MSG, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, toward such a credential or employment. The US Department of Education has not implemented all the MSG options available to other WIOA Core Programs. The following options are currently available to providers for reporting:

- Type 1a: EFL Gain- Pre/post-test
- Type 1b: Exit then entry into postsecondary education
- Type 2: Obtainment of a high school equivalency
- Type 3: Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript
- Type 4: Progress towards milestones

- Type 5: Passing Technical/Occupational Knowledge Based Exam

Providers should defer to the Texas AEL Assessment Guide and associated AEL letters for official policy and guidance related to MSG.

National Reporting System (NRS) Implementation Guidelines—The federal accountability requirements of AEFLA, 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 assist states in collecting the measures.

Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)—The office of the US 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).

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 skills needs or limited English to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training that leads to career advancement in in-demand, middle-, and high-skilled occupations. On-ramp programs can run several days, weeks, or longer, 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) 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, and employment expectations and work culture for an occupation or sector;
- Meeting with Career Navigators or others to expand and customize an Individual Training, Education and Career Plan;
- Guest lectures from employers, former students, and faculty;
- Referrals to individual Supportive Services (for example, transportation, child care, housing assistance); and
- Intensive academic readiness and remediation for student success to support transition to postsecondary education and training.

The On-Ramp Program 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 participants 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 in class.

Orientation—Part of the assessment process in which a provider provides information to participants about program and collaborating organization services, attendance policy, class participation policy, participant support services, emergency evacuation procedures, grievance procedures, rights and responsibilities of participants, and program code of conduct in a written participant handbook or syllabus. Orientation establishes a student's short- and long-term goals and sets the basis for the Individual Training, Education, and Career (ITEC) plan.

Participant Served Targets—Enrollment targets established by the Commission and corresponding cost-per amounts. Participant Served Targets for PY'17-18 are (amounts under consideration now):
- Basic AEL;
- Intensive AEL, which includes one of the following service approaches:
  - ➢ Workplace AEL Activities;
  - ➢ Services for Internationally-trained English Language Learner Professionals; and
  - ➢ Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release services; and
- Integrated Education and Training AEL.

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.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)—Information that identifies an individual, as set forth in TWC's WD Letter 13-08, issued April 1, 2008, and entitled "Security of Personal Identity Data" and requirements in WD Letter 13-13, issued April 2, 2013, and entitled "Handling and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information and Other Sensitive Information." Not all PII is sensitive and/or confidential by law.

Post-assessment—A progress or subsequent test administered after the learner has received at least the minimum hours of instruction recommended in an assessment publisher's guidelines; also called a "post-test."

Post-release services—Services provided to a formerly incarcerated individual upon or shortly after release from a correctional institution. These services are designed to promote successful adjustment to the community and prevent recidivism. Examples include education, employment services, substance abuse treatment, housing support, mental and physical health care, and family reunification services; also called "re-entry services."

Post-test—See **Post-assessment**.

Pre-assessment—A test administered to place a participant into an educational functioning level, generally before instruction takes place; also "pre-test" or "initial assessment."

Pre-test—See **Pre-assessment**.

Principles of Adult Learning—A wide variety of research-based Professional Development topics that include the instructional and advising characteristics specific to adults and that are concerned with the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities that 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 career and personal goals and objectives;
- building on their prior knowledge and experience; and
- supporting them in taking responsibility for their learning.

Professional Development (PD)—A wide variety of facilitated learning activities for instructors and staff of AEL programs and organizations that participate in AEL programs and services. PD refers to the acquisition of skills and knowledge for career advancement and encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, including workshops, conferences, and informal learning opportunities situated in practice.

Professional Development Center (PD Center)—The statewide AEL Professional Development and Support Center contractor that serves as a central dissemination point for information, networking, and Professional Development for AEL professionals working in Texas to create opportunities in education and the workforce for their students. The current contractor, located at Texas A&M University, is the TRAIN PD Consortium (Texas Research-based Adult Instruction Network Professional Development).

Professional Development Coordinators (PD Coordinator)—Staff 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 Year (PY)—The AEL program year, which runs from July 1–June 30.

Proxy Hours—Hours of instruction for which the identity of the participant and/or the exact amount of time spent on a learning activity may not be verified directly.

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, the following:
- A local educational agency
- A community-based organization 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 adult education and literacy 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

Recognized Postsecondary Credential—See **Credential.**

Re-entry and Post-Release Services—Services provided to a formerly incarcerated individual upon or shortly after release from a correctional institution. These services are designed to promote successful adjustment to the community and prevent recidivism. Examples include education, employment services, substance abuse treatment, housing support, mental and physical health care, and family reunification services. 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. See Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services.

Re-entry Initiatives—Services provided to a formerly incarcerated individual upon or shortly after release from a correctional institution that are designed to promote successful adjustment to the community and prevent recidivism. Examples include education, employment services, substance abuse treatment, housing support, mental and physical health care, and family reunification services; also, "re-entry services."

Section 225 Funding—Funds granted to AEL providers for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals. The programs include academic programs for AEL services; special education, as determined by the eligible agency; secondary school credit; IET; Career Pathways; concurrent enrollment; peer tutoring; and transition to re-entry 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 Integrated Education and Training English Literacy and Civics Education (Integrated EL Civics) 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 EL Civics services in combination with IET for participants for whom IET services are appropriate.

Additionally, programs funded with WIOA §243 funds must meet the following requirements:
- Be designed to prepare adult English Language Learners for and place them in unsubsidized employment in existing and emerging in-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 (Services for Internationally-trained ELL Professionals)—Services for Internationally-trained ELL Professionals include, but are not limited to, skills preparation for professional credentialing exams, specialized career advising, ESL services contextualized for targeted occupations with enough intensity to allow for rapid progress with the use of proper English language assessment to determine whether a participant's academic or professional English is sufficient to enough to pursue academic coursework, credentialing exams, or professional opportunities. Services for Internationally-trained ELL Professionals are offered as part of the Intensive Services for Career Pathways.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)—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 period used for accounting, budgeting, and reporting purposes, during which funding disbursement or other financial transactions occurred. For the State of Texas, the State Fiscal Year begins September 1 of each year and ends the following August 31. For example, State Fiscal Year 2016 (SFY'16) began September 1, 2016, and ended August 31, 2016.

State Leadership Activities—TWC-directed leadership activities in support of AEL that are authorized by WIOA §222(a) and described in WIOA §223(a) (29 USC §3303). TWC is authorized to use not 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 activities of statewide importance.

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 adult education and literacy program data is currently the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS).

Subrecipient—An entity or individual that contracts with an AEL provider to provide a service that supports the 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.

Supportive 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—The first step in implementing a corrective action. A technical assistance plan (TAP) for performance improvement may be jointly developed by TWC with Boards, AEL Grantees, or TWC Grantees. 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:

1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes
2. Reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage
3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

For more information, refer to AEL Letter 01-15, Change 1, issued May 14, 2015, and entitled "Adult Education and Literacy Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Eligibility—*Update*," including any subsequent issuances, or the Texas State Plan for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families on the Health and Human Services website at https://hhs.texas.gov/.

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 Assessment Guide (Assessment Guide)—A guide based on the NRS Implementation Guidelines (February 2016 and subsequent issuances), as well as on TWC AEL and WD Letters. The Assessment Guide standardizes the process of determining participant placement, progress toward outcomes, and collection and reporting of data. Grantees are responsible for following the Assessment Guide.

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, and ESL, including how this content aligns to the occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in Texas.

Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS)—The official database for Texas AEL data.

Texas Workforce 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 employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. Workforce Partners administer separately funded programs as a set of integrated streamlined services to customers. TWC's AEL program and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, in partnership with the 28 Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) and their contractors, offices, and service providers form the Texas Workforce System.

Tier One Training (Tier 1 Training)—Core training that an AEL provider must deliver to its employees as part of its TWC grant contract, to include, but not be limited to, test administration, goal setting, integrating career awareness, basic TEAMS usage, and program-specific policies regarding student recruitment, orientation, and documentation.

Tier Two Training (Tier 2 Training)—Diverse adult-learning training, including the Principles of Adult-Learning courses offered through the Professional Development Center to assist AEL providers in improving instructional and performance outcomes.

Title I Services—WIOA Title I–funded services for adults and dislocated workers, 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 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.

Transitions—Preparatory course models designed to increase the transitional success of participants at NRS Levels 4–6 who are enrolling in initial postsecondary education and training courses.

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. See http://tea.texas.gov/TxCHSE.html.

Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services—Such services as educational counseling or case work that support incarcerated individuals transition to re-entry 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 program providers on behalf of reentering students.

Such funds may not be used to pay for participation in post-release programs or services. Transition to Re-entry and Post-Release Services is an Intensive Services model for Career Pathways.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services—Also called "Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services." Vocational Rehabilitation Services helps individuals with disabilities prepare for, find, or retain employment and helps youth and students prepare for postsecondary opportunities. It also helps businesses and employers recruit, retain, and accommodate employees with disabilities. Services include vocational evaluations, counseling and guidance, training and education assistance, and assistive technology.

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 the 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 Partners in Texas differ from those listed in WIOA because Texas may operate certain aspects of WIOA under prior consistent state law. The required Workforce Partners in Texas are the:
- WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs (also a WIOA Core Program);
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service (ES) program (also a WIOA Core Program);
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs (also a WIOA Core Program);
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) WIOA Title IV programs (also a WIOA Core Program);
- Unemployment Insurance program;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program;
- Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program;
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T);
- Subsidized Child Care program;
- Apprenticeship programs (Chapter 133 of the Texas Education Code);
- National and Community Services Act program;
- Senior Community Service Employment Program; and
- Non-Certificate Postsecondary Career and Technology Training programs.

Workforce Preparation Activities—One of the three core IET Components, encompassing 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.

Workforce Solutions Offices—Referred to in federal guidance as one-stops, offer an array of services that include job placement services, training programs, and child care assistance for eligible customers as well as such employer services as job posting and placement and labor market research.

Workforce Training—One of the three core IET Components, including the following training services authorized under WIOA Title I:
- On-the-Job Training as described in WIOA §3(44)
- Skills upgrading (for example, training delivered in an IET by an employer)
- 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 that are designed to improve the productivity of the workforce. 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, which allows 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.