



Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education

Under Section 243 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Overview

The U.S. Department of Education's ("the Department") Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (AEFLA), enacted as Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act¹ (WIOA), is the principal source of federal funding for States' adult education programs. AEFLA, administered by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), provides a variety of services to youth and adult learners aged 16 and older, including (but not limited to) adult education, literacy, workforce preparation, English language acquisition activities, integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE), and integrated education and training (IET). Additionally, section 243 of WIOA includes a program for expanded IELCE activities, which provides education services for English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials from their native countries. Section 243(d) of WIOA requires the Secretary of Education to make available to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate a report on the activities carried out under the IELCE program.

Under Title II of WIOA, AEFLA funds are reserved specifically for the IELCE program, and IELCE services also remain an allowable adult education and literacy activity² that eligible providers may include in their services using non-IELCE AEFLA funding. IELCE, as defined in WIOA, must include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and *may* include workforce training.³ Allowable activities under the IELCE program established under section 243 of WIOA differ from IELCE services in that providers receiving funds for this specific program must

IELCE programs include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. IELCE programs may also include workforce training.

¹ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub. L. No. 113–128 (2014).

² Section 203(2) of WIOA defines "adult education and literacy activities" as "...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."

³ Section 203(12) of WIOA defines "integrated English literacy and civics education" (IELCE) as "...education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training."

provide IELCE activities in combination with IET⁴ activities. Furthermore, programs that receive section 243 funding are required to prepare English language learners for and place such adults in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Eligible providers must also integrate with the local workforce development system to carry out the program activities.⁵ For example, States and local providers develop partnerships to support IELCE programming through participation on local workforce development boards, coordinate job placement services with local one-stop centers for IELCE students, and include IELCE programming in state workforce development board initiatives.

This biennial report includes available data from the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), covering program years (PYs) 2020–21 and 2021–22. This report sets forth activities of the section 243 IELCE program in the following sections: Funding, Enrollment, Participant Outcomes, Promising Practices, and COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts.

Funding

WIOA requires the Secretary of Education to reserve 12 percent of the AEFLA appropriation available for grants⁶ to carry out the IELCE program under Section 243. Section 243(b)(1)(A) requires the Secretary to allocate 65 percent of the IELCE funds to States based on a State's need for integrated English literacy and civics education. This is determined by calculating each State's share of a 10-year average of the data of the Office of Immigration Statistics of the Department of Homeland Security for immigrants admitted for legal permanent residence for the 10 most recent years. Section 243(b)(1)(B) requires the Secretary to allocate the remaining 35 percent of IELCE funds to States that have experienced recent growth among the target population as measured by the average of the three most recent years for which data for immigrants admitted for legal permanent residence are available.⁷

Congress appropriated \$656,955,000 for AEFLA in fiscal year (FY) 2020 and \$674,955,000 in FY 2021. The Department reserved a portion specified by appropriations language for national leadership activities (authorized under section 242). As shown in Table 1, \$578,120,400 was available for AEFLA Basic Grants to States, and \$78,834,600 was available for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education in FY 2020, which represented a \$1.8 million increase in the IELCE program from the prior FY 2019 funding level. In FY 2021, \$593,960,400 was available for AEFLA Basic Grants to States, and the IELCE program also saw an increase of \$2.16 million from the previous fiscal year, with \$80,994,600 available for the program.

⁴ Under Section 203(11) of WIOA and 34 C.F.R. § 463.35, "integrated education and training" (IET) means "...a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement." IET is further described at 34 C.F.R. §§ 463.36–463.38.

⁵ 34 C.F.R. §§ 463.70–463.73. Retrieved from: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title34-vol3/xml/CFR-2019-title34-vol3-subtitleB-chapIV.xml#seqnum463.70>.

⁶ Section 211(a)(2) of WIOA requires that 12 percent of the AEFLA total appropriations amount that remains after reserving 2 percent for National Leadership Activities be reserved to carry out the IELCE program. Language in appropriations acts have, for many years, routinely overridden the 2 percent set-aside for National Leadership Activities with a slightly different amount.

⁷ Office of Immigration Statistics of the Department of Homeland Security at <https://www.dhs.gov/office-immigration-statistics>.

IELCE awards to States ranged from \$60,000 to \$15,141,055 in FY 2020 and from \$60,000 to \$15,465,205 in FY 2021.⁸

Table 1. Congressional Appropriations for FYs 2018–2021

Fiscal Year (FY)	Section 243 – IELCE Estimated Award Amount	AEFLA Basic Grants to States Estimated Award Amount	Congressional Appropriations
FY 2018–19	\$74,034,600	\$542,920,400	\$616,955,000
FY 2019–20	\$77,034,600	\$564,920,400	\$641,955,400
FY 2020–21	\$78,834,600	\$578,120,400	\$656,955,000
FY 2021–22	\$80,994,600	\$593,960,400	\$674,955,000

Enrollment

Figure 1 illustrates enrollment data for the last four years of the IELCE program by program type. The IELCE program saw a decline in enrollment between PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20, with a decrease of nearly 11 percent. Between PY 2019–20 and PY 2020–21, IELCE program enrollment declined by almost 50 percent, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, IELCE programs rebounded between PY 2020–21 and PY 2021–22, with enrollment increasing by more than 66 percent. Moreover, during the past four years, IELCE enrollment as a percentage of overall AEFLA enrollment remained relatively steady (representing 13.1 percent, 13.6 percent, 10.6 percent, and 13.9 percent of overall enrollment, respectively, between PYs 2018 through 2021).

Enrollment	
<i>PY 2018–19:</i>	<i>167,439</i>
<i>PY 2019–20:</i>	<i>149,424</i>
<i>PY 2020–21:</i>	<i>74,932</i>
<i>PY 2021–22:</i>	<i>124,832</i>

A key requirement of the IELCE program is that educational services be delivered in combination with IET activities. The AEFLA regulations⁹ clarify that a program may meet the requirement to provide IELCE in combination with IET by co-enrolling participants in IET activities provided within the local or regional workforce development area

⁸ Section 243(b)(2) of WIOA requires that no state receive an allotment for IELCE of less than \$60,000. The states that received \$60,000 in Section 243 IELCE program funds in Fiscal Years (FY) 2020 and 2021 are Montana, West Virginia, and Wyoming, and Vermont received \$60,447 in FY 2020 and \$60,670 in FY 2021. The five states that received the largest amount of Section 243 IELCE program funds in FYs 2020 and 2021 are California, Florida, New Jersey, New York, and Texas.

⁹ 34 C.F.R. § 463.74. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title34-vol3/xml/CFR-2019-title34-vol3-subtitleB-chapIV.xml#seqnum463.74>.

offered through other public workforce system partners or by using IELCE funds to support IET activities.

Despite the challenges States may face in implementing the IET component of the IELCE program, States have continued to make strides in increasing participation over the years. Between PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20, the number of participants in the IET component of the program increased by nearly 7 percent, from 16,407 participants in PY 2018–19 to 17,494 participants in PY 2019–20 (see IELCE-IET data in Figure 1).¹⁰ During this time, the Department continued to increase its training and technical assistance efforts to help States improve and expand IELCE programs. States have also continued to provide technical assistance to local programs to enhance IELCE services and implement the IET component. Like the IELCE program, the IET component saw a 47 percent decrease in participants between PY 2019–20 and PY 2020–21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program saw a significant increase in the IET component of the IELCE program between PY 2020–21 and PY 2021–22, with enrollment increasing by 35 percent.

Figure 2 provides disaggregated information regarding IELCE program participants by age. As indicated in the figure, there was a significant increase in the number of IELCE program participants in all age groups between PY 2020–21 and PY 2021–22. The highest number of participants, representing more than half of the IELCE participants (approximately 56 percent in PY 2020–21 and 55 percent in PY 2021–22, respectively), was in the 25–44 age group, and this group saw a 63 percent increase in participants between the two program years. The second largest age group, representing 20 percent of IELCE participants in PY 2020–21 and 19 percent of participants in PY 2021–22, was 45- to 54-year-olds. This group saw an almost 57 percent increase in participants enrolled between the two program years. While 16- to 18-year-olds represent the smallest age group in the IELCE program, this group saw the highest increase in participants between PY 2020–21 and PY 2021–22, with nearly a 180 percent increase in participation.

¹⁰ States saw a 7 percent increase in IET participation between PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20. Between PY 2019–20 and PY 2020–21, IET participation significantly decreased by 47 percent, but increased by 35 percent between PY 2020–21 and PY 2021–22.

Figure 1. Student Enrollment in IELCE by Program Type¹¹

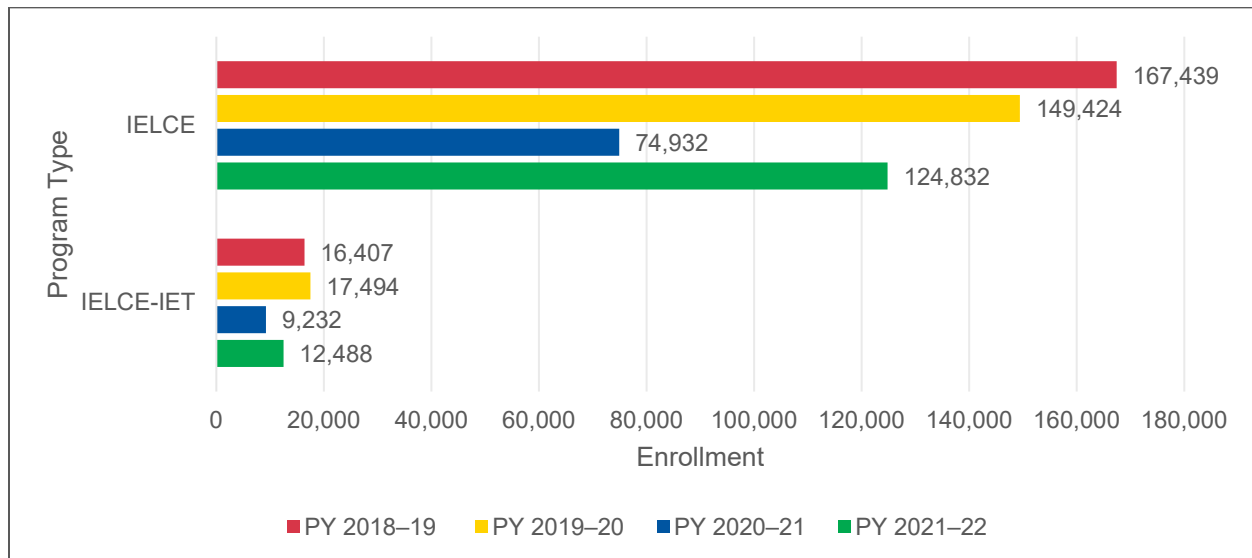
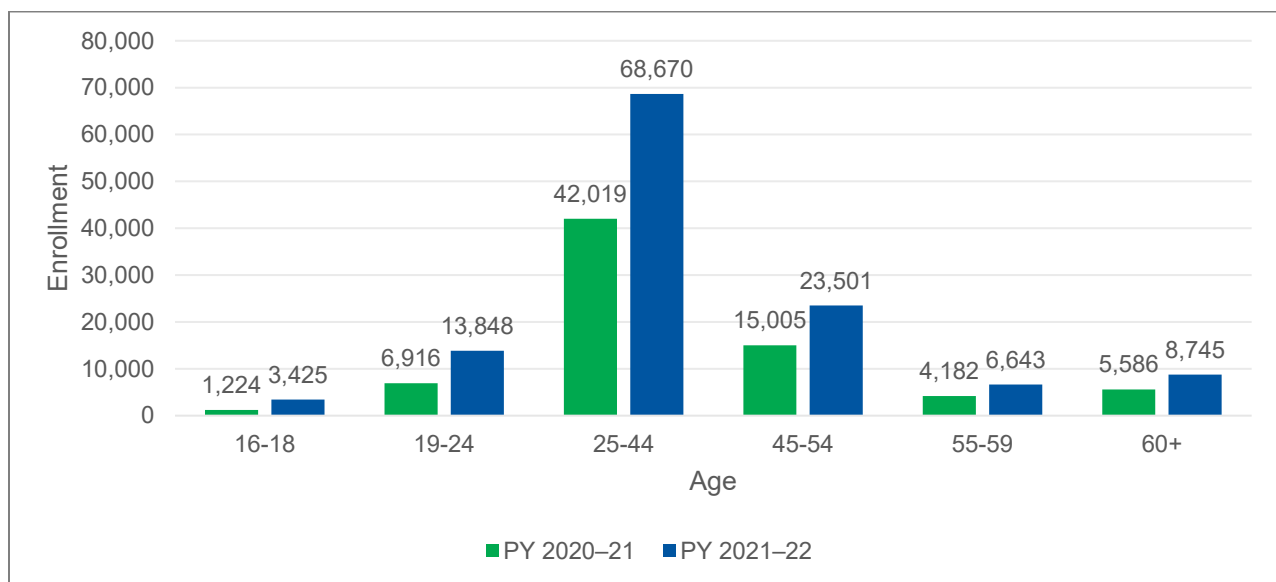


Figure 2. IELCE Program Participants by Age¹²



¹¹ Data retrieved from the National Reporting System for Adult Education, Table 3: Participants by Program Type and Age.

¹² Ibid.

IELCE Participant Outcomes

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the six WIOA core programs.¹³ In PY 2018–19, States began reporting outcome achievement for participants in the IELCE program for the following five primary indicators of performance:¹⁴

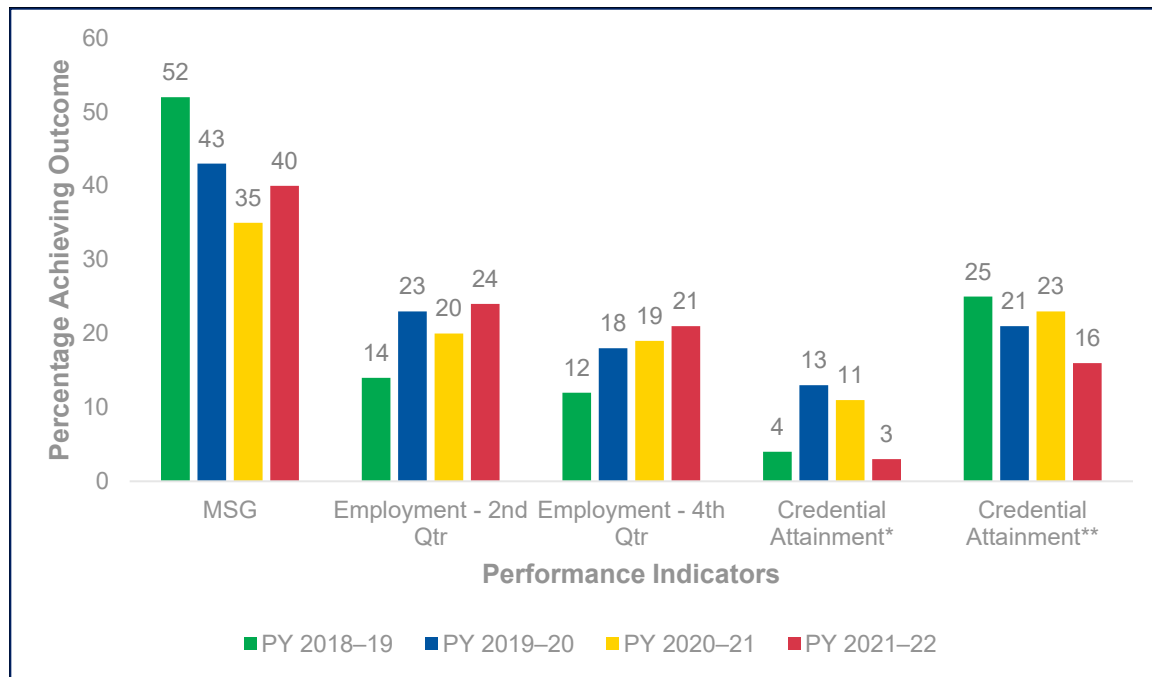
- **Measurable Skill Gains** – The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment;
- **Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit** – The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- **Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit** – The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- **Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit** – The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; and
- **Credential Attainment** – The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

Figures 3 and 4 depict IELCE program outcome achievement for PYs 2018–2021.

¹³ The six WIOA core programs are the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs under title I of WIOA; the AEFLA program under title II of WIOA (which includes IELCE); programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act as amended by WIOA title III; and the Vocational Rehabilitation program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act as amended by WIOA title IV.

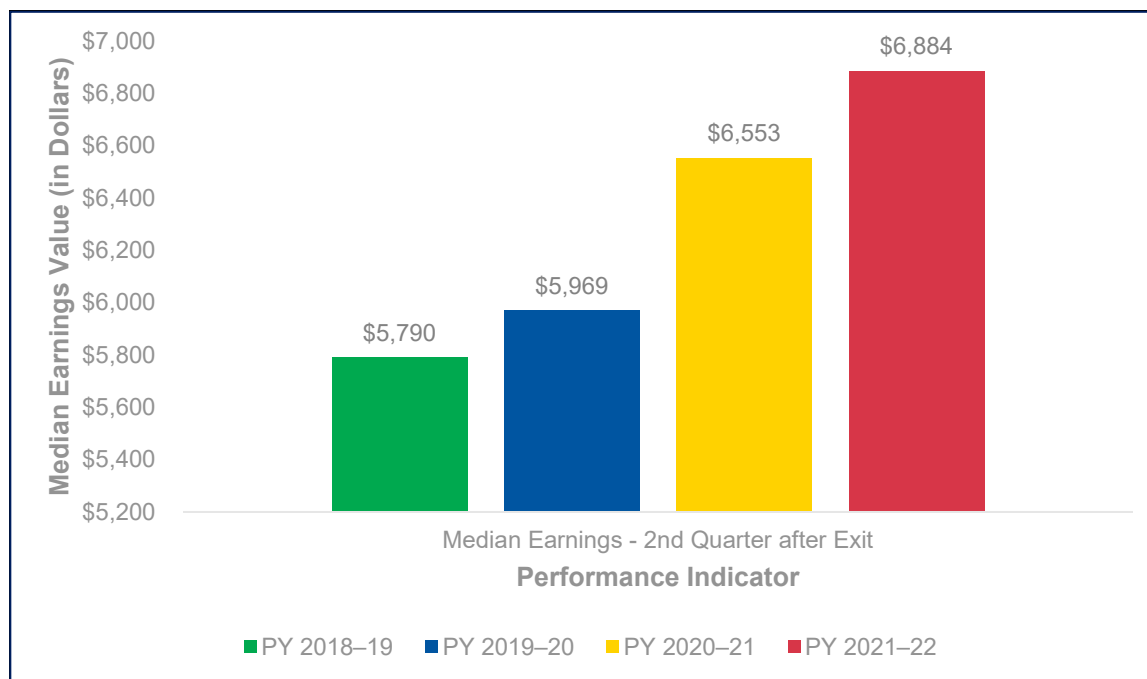
¹⁴ 34 C.F.R. §463.155 defines six primary indicators of performance under WIOA. The sixth primary indicator of performance, effectiveness in serving employers, is measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each State and is not reported at the individual program or participant level. Therefore, this indicator is not reported separately for the IELCE program. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title34-vol3/xml/CFR-2019-title34-vol3-subtitleB-chapIV.xml#seqnum463.155>.

Figure 3. IELCE Program Outcome Achievement for PYs 2018–2021¹⁵



¹⁵ Data retrieved from National Reporting System for Adult Education, Table 9: Outcome Achievement for Participants in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education, PY 2018–19 through PY 2021–22. "Credential Attainment*" represents an estimated percentage of participants that attained a secondary school diploma/equivalent and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or employed within one year of exit. "Credential Attainment**" represents an estimated percentage of participants that attained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within one year of exit.

Figure 4. IELCE Program Outcome Achievement for the Median Earnings Indicator for PYs 2018–2021¹⁶



¹⁶ Data retrieved from National Reporting System for Adult Education, Table 9: Outcome Achievement for Participants in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education, PY 2018–19 through PY 2021–22.

IELCE Program Promising Practices

States award section 243 IELCE funds through the same competitive process that is required to award the basic AEFLA grant funds to eligible providers. States also have the flexibility to implement a variety of IELCE program designs if the programs meet the requirements outlined in the regulations.¹⁷

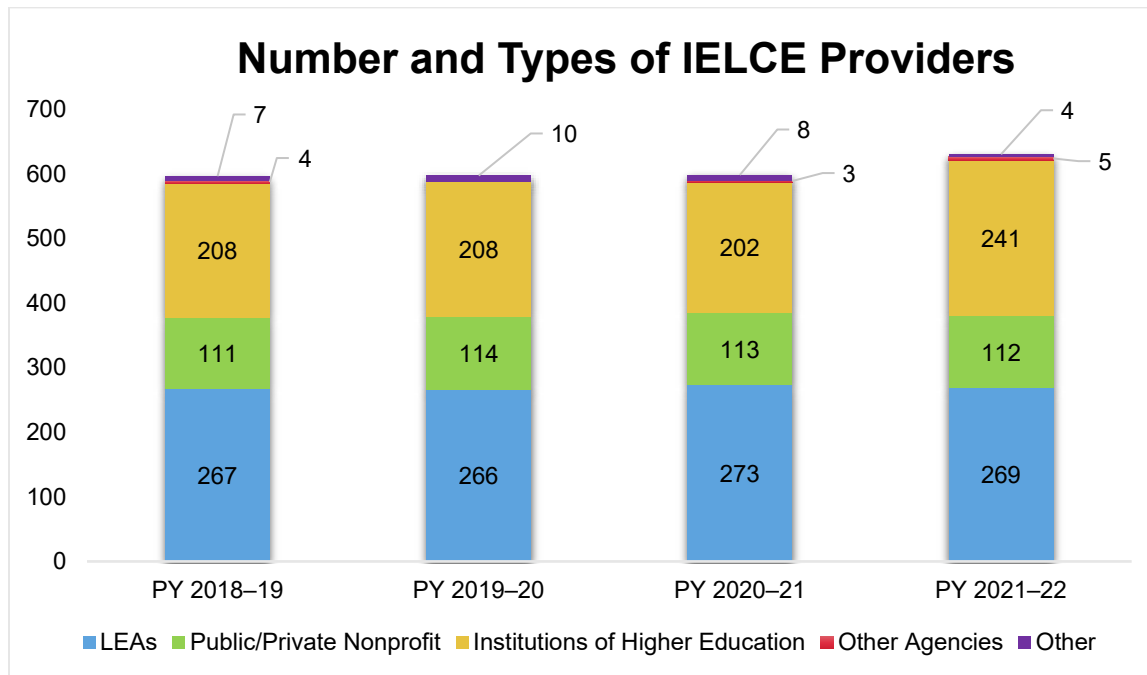
In the annual narrative reports submitted by States in PYs 2020–21 and 2021–22, 50 States reported having at least one IELCE program in the State. The number of grants reported by States ranged from 1 to 112 in PY 2020–21 and ranged from 1 to 111 in PY 2021–22, with the highest number of IELCE providers and participants reported in California for both program years. Figure 5 depicts the total number of IELCE providers funded between PY 2018–19 and PY 2021–22 by provider type.¹⁸ The figure indicates a five percent increase in the total number of IELCE providers between PY 2020–21 and PY 2021–22 (599 and 631 IELCE providers, respectively), with institutions of higher education seeing the largest increase (19 percent) between the two program years. Most States reported providing IELCE services in combination with IET, with the most frequently reported types of IET programs within industry sectors ranging from health care, hospitality, business/information technology, manufacturing, construction, and skilled trades, among others.

States are required to submit a narrative report summarizing States' efforts and progress in implementing the IELCE program and other WIOA requirements as part of its annual performance reporting requirements.

¹⁷ 34 C.F.R. §§ 463.70–463.75. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title34-vol3/xml/CFR-2019-title34-vol3-subtitleB-chapIV.xml#seqnum463.70>.

¹⁸ Data retrieved from National Reporting System for Adult Education, Table 14: Local Grantees by Funding Source. The provider types collected on Table 14 are: (1) Local Educational Agencies (LEAs); (2) Public or Private Nonprofit Agency (includes community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and libraries); (3) Institutions of Higher Education (includes community, junior, or technical colleges, four-year colleges or universities, and other institutions of higher education); (4) Other Agencies (includes correctional institutions and other institutions that are non-correctional); and (5) Other.

Figure 5. Number and Types of IELCE Providers



As the Department continued supporting States to implement the IELCE program through technical assistance and national leadership activities such as the *Enhancing Access for Refugees and New Americans*¹⁹ training and technical assistance project, several States reported promising approaches and successes in their IELCE programming. States highlighted ongoing professional development and technical assistance offered by the Department to strengthen the IELCE program and IET components as a critical component of their successes. Such strategies included:

- employing dedicated career navigators to assist students with career counseling and navigation supports;
- developing partnerships with employers or local industries to support IELCE participants' placement in employment in high-demand careers;
- incorporating work-based learning opportunities and workforce preparation activities, such as pre-apprenticeships and stackable credentials;
- collaborating with WIOA partners and other stakeholders to ensure that curriculum and training are aligned with local and regional labor market information and job sector needs; and
- sharing promising practices with practitioners across the state and nationwide.

¹⁹ See the U.S. Department of Education's Literacy Information and Communication System Federal Initiatives webpage at <https://lincs.ed.gov>, and the Enhancing Access for Refugees and New Americans webpage at <https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/refugeesandnewamericans>.

Additionally, a select number of States reported participating in the Department's federally funded *Enhancing Integrated Education and Training Opportunities for Adults*²⁰ project. The technical assistance project supported States and local adult education staff in planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating effective IET programs to ensure they were responsive to State and local labor market demands and fulfill the requirements of WIOA. A few States reported launching new IETs after completion of the IET Design Camp, incorporating strategies into ongoing work, developing courses using the tools from the IET design camp, and sharing the toolkit and other materials for programs across the state. States reported that the various technical assistance activities resulted in improved implementation efforts, such as revised program design and program goals, improvements in program performance, stronger engagement with workforce partners on IELCE programs, and workforce models that incorporate IETs.

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

Near the start of the fourth quarter of PY 2019–20, the COVID-19 pandemic forced adult education programs to cease in-person learning to ensure the health and safety of staff and students. The closures required programs to pivot from traditional modes for delivering AEFLA services and required States to find and develop innovative ways to provide services that met immediate participant needs as well as continue operations for adult education programs. Like the AEFLA Basic Grants to States, the IELCE program experienced a significant decline in enrollment and performance outcomes between PY 2019–20 and PY 2020–21 but saw increases in enrollment between PY 2020–21 and PY 2021–22 as States began to recover, and participants returned to in-person and/or hybrid programming.

For many states, the pandemic led to the suspension of IELCE programs. However, several States described shifting to virtual IELCE services in their narrative reports. The pivot brought forth a mix of challenges and opportunities as many programs encountered difficulties maintaining enrollment due to disruptions caused by program participants juggling other responsibilities, such as caring for children, employment hardships, or limited access to technology.

Despite these enrollment hurdles, certain States successfully redirected their training to virtual platforms, and some were able to maintain and even increase the number of IELCE participants who were in IET programs. This expansion resulted from venturing into different occupational areas and adopting hybrid models of instruction that combined in-person and virtual models. For industries grappling with pandemic-induced shutdowns, States found it challenging to engage employers. Conversely, other States reported being able to transition to IET programs more suited for online delivery (i.e., computer programming or coding skills) while still addressing regional needs and program participant's interests.

Amidst these circumstances, States reported being able to cultivate and reinforce partnerships with IET activity providers, such as through direct collaboration with postsecondary and

²⁰ See the U.S. Department of Education's Literacy Information and Communication System Federal Initiatives webpage at <https://lincs.ed.gov>, and the ADVANCE Integrated Education and Training webpage at <https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/advance-iet>.

technical education providers, fostering employer relationships, and collaborating with workforce development partners at the onset of program development. As States and programs gradually recover from the pandemic's impact, States continue to make great strides in increasing enrollment and expanding the scope of IET programs.

Summary

Under Title II of WIOA, AEFLA funds are reserved specifically for the IELCE program. This report presents an overview of funding levels and enrollment trends within the IELCE program over the past four years. Additionally, it provides demographic and outcome data for IELCE program participants, with a specific focus on PY 2020–21 and PY 2021–22.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, this report also features approaches States implemented to address the pandemic's challenges and impacts on IELCE programming during this unprecedented period. Overall, States remain committed to the development and expansion of IELCE and IET programs and continue to provide the necessary resources and guidance to strengthen their IELCE and IET programs. OCTAE continues to provide technical assistance, foster opportunities for States to share promising practices, and offer additional resources and support to facilitate the effective implementation of IELCE efforts through national leadership activities and Departmental guidance.