

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**Department of Labor and Workforce Development**  
**Division of Employment and Training Services**

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**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**  
**Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**

**Federal Program Year 2020**  
**July 1, 2020- June 30, 2021**

**Annual Narrative Report**

**Alaska Adult Education Program**

**Date of Submission: December 29, 2021**

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## State Leadership Funds

*(AEFLA Section 223)*

*Describe how the State has used funds made available under section 223 (State Leadership activities) for each the following required activities:*

### **Alignment with Partners to Implement Combined State Plan**

*Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Unified or Combined State Plan as described in section 223(a)(1)(A).*

The Alaska Adult Education (AAE) program implements strategies that align both regional and statewide activities with partners listed in the [Alaska Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIO\) Combined Plan for Program Years 2020-2023](#). Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners (Title I, II, III, & IV), Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program, and Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) are housed within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD). Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, Title II, and Title III are administered by the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS). The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) administers WIOA Youth, Apprenticeship, and additional state programs. This organizational structure continues to be beneficial for partnerships and developing technical assistance to support eligible providers.

In PY 2020, the core partners collaborated with the AAE program on challenges encountered, innovative practices and strategies for implementation, and strengthening partnerships.

Through strategic planning and alignment of programmatic services, the AAE program partnered with the WIOA Title 1-B Statewide Activities program to fund General Education Development (GED) tests for first-time test takers who are enrolled in an Alaska Adult Education Regional Program. The joint venture creates a clear pathway for individuals who are prepared to test and eliminates the common barrier of costs associated with test completion to improve accessibility. In PY 2020, the program served 800 first-time testers, with plans to extend into PY 2021.

The AAE State Director presented on multiple occasions to internal and external staff and partners to provide information about adult education services. DETS leadership met weekly on programmatic touch points including strategies for overlapping and integrated service delivery. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings became essential to understand what fluctuations in services could be expected and communicated to local programs, including delivery of unemployment benefits and filing, services available through the one-stop Alaska Job Center (AJC), and access to workforce development opportunities.

Examples of Regional AAE partnership activities outlined in written reports and discussed at statewide meetings include:

- The delivery points for the employment and training services are within the 14 AJC locations of the Alaska Job Center (AJC) located throughout the state. As part of the One-Stop service delivery system, AJCs provide the full spectrum of employment related labor exchange services including job search assistance, job referral, job placement assistance for job seekers,

re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services for employers with job openings. As part of the AJC, the following were discussed as integration between Title I, II, and III services:

- Increased client referrals between agencies
- Workforce development support for students, including resume writing, financial literacy activities, and job search
- Job center staff providing on-site college and career readiness activities at AAE locations
- Student referrals to WIOA Title IB and Apprenticeship job training services
- WIOA Title IB Youth grantees serving youth aged 16-24 –In some instances, supports are provided through an interagency partnership when both Title IB Youth and AAE are awarded to the same organization. WIOA Youth grantees provide case management and support services that cannot be obtained through AFLEA funding. Youth are also able to pursue their education while placed in classroom-based training, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, or work experiences. This partnership between AAE and WIOA Title IB Youth programs provide for co-enrollment under DETS/Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) policy 07-050. Providers offers complementary, comprehensive services using multiple funding sources.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), as needed to support students with disabilities – VR services are provided through DOLWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Veteran’s Affairs, and Alaska Native Organizations. Students with disabilities that impact their ability to learn and/or secure or maintain employment are co-enrolled with VR and work with a counselor on an individual employment plan (IEP). VR support services including one-on-one tutors, interpreters, assistive technology devices, and transportation, can accommodate the educational environment to allow students a greater success rate.
- The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) offers programs to support the physical and mental health of Alaskans, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP), Juvenile Justice, and Office of Children’s Services. AAE often refers students to these programs while they are enrolled in college and career readiness activities.
- Alaska Native organization partnerships are critical to many of our eligible providers. Native organizations provide support in the form of village tutors, classroom space, travel funds for students, and internet usage.
- The University of Alaska (UA) is an active partner and, in some cases, a subrecipient of AAE grants. In locations where grants are not administered, GED® tests are offered in Pearson Virtual University Enterprises (VUE) testing centers. The university also provides classroom spaces for local programs, refers students who need additional help in basic math and writing, and provide information to AAE students transitioning to college.
- Local businesses provide support for AAE students. Wells Fargo provides community development grants to several AAE programs, Providence Hospital in Anchorage offers training towards a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) certificate and a Certified Nurse Assistant

(CNA) certificate to Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) students, Municipality of Anchorage offers a Peer Leader Navigator program (PLN), and GEDWorks encourages business to invest in their employees through adult education.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a huge impact on Adult Education in Alaska. AAE activities including GED testing, which declined drastically in March 2020, have begun a slow recovery. Many local programs are integrated into higher education facilities, educational technical centers, and aligned with school districts. Adult Education program services have mirrored schools in Alaska with continued fluctuation between online and in-person learning throughout the PY 2020 school year.

As community COVID-19 case counts continued to rise, programs in rural areas were forced to close, leading to a significant reduction in student attendance across the state. To address obstacles to accessing services such as pre/post-assessment and GED testing, distance education was implemented fully in July 2020. Local programs began to use remote access tools to increase student engagement, and to transition from in-person-only to include both distance and blended learning.

### **Professional Development**

*Establishment or operation of high-quality professional development programs as described in section 223(a)(1)(B).*

Leadership funds support professional development through conferences, in-person and virtual meetings, and other means of programmatic communication.

Program coordinator training and conferences are traditionally held in Anchorage. These meetings are used by the leadership team to disseminate information regarding regulations, policies, and promising practices. Due to pandemic restrictions, Alaska's PY 2020 Statewide Adult Education Conference was held virtually on October 6-7, 2020. The State AAE Office partnered with the Alaska Adult Education Association (AAEA) for the first time, and, with the help of the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE), our state was able to shift quickly from an in-person to virtual conference platform to bring Alaska teachers, program coordinators, and staff a viable, virtual conference option.

The PY 2020 conference began with a keynote address from Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Education, Dr. Michael Johnson. His address on the "Best Treasure Chest Ever" highlighted the importance of education and working together to support at-risk students. The two-day conference consisted of ten sessions with thirty-three different presentation strands covering an array of topics. Presentation strands included English as a second language (ESL) and adult education instructional practices, state policies and procedures, distance education tips and tricks, and curriculum building. Panigkaq Agatha John-Shields, PhD, the closing speaker, described how *Tangerqengiaraucaq* (Being Present) and balance succeed in today's society. This powerful message on the importance of community was, especially poignant during the pandemic.

Alaska was the first state to work with COABE on a virtual conference platform, which offered both drawbacks and advantages. The AAE Office and AAEA worked with COABE through issues with timing, scheduling, unreliable internet access and universal platform support. These were especially significant challenges for rural participants. The lack of interactions between participants and

presenters was apparent in most strands. Also, normal question and answer periods and/or interactions were less dynamic, harder to gauge, and more difficult to hold attendee attention while using the virtual conference environment.

Advantages of the virtual conference platform were both anticipated and surprising. The first benefit seen was increased attendance. Traveling in Alaska is not always easy, nor feasible to accommodate all teachers with limited funding, resulting in more teachers attending the virtual conference than have been able to attend in person in the past. An outside agency hosting the event was another surprising advantage. With COABE hosting the virtual platform and attending to all technical assistance needs, the conference committee were able to focus on participation. Virtual delivery also allowed easier recording and archiving of presentations so that participants could review their favorites and catch any they might have missed, for a year after the conference.

Registration was open to program staff, teachers, program coordinators, data entry clerks, tutors, and adult education staff. The virtual conference was also open to any individuals involved or interested in adult education in Alaska and other state who were interested in the professional development opportunities available. Training topics included:

- Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) 101: Community, Courses and Resources for Adult Education by Cherise Moore
- Alaska Job Center Network by Demetria Veasy (Anchorage), Rene Nordin (Fairbanks), and Sara Bieber (Kenai)
- Registered Apprenticeship: Adult and Youth Opportunities by Anne Velardi
- Fast Track Math Methods by Sheila Butler
- Green Screen Strategies: Teaching Like a Meteorologist by Shawn Story
- Teaching the Skills That Matter in Adult Education by Marcela Movit
- Does Bradley Leave Samantha? A Soap Opera by Meryl Becker
- Understanding the Barriers Surrounding Dropout: Emotional and Psychological Experiences of Non-completers by Christine Park
- Understanding the Basics of Running an AEFLA Grant by Windy Swearingin
- Boot Camp: Get your Diploma in 12 to 20 hours by Sheila Butler
- Digital Tools for the ABE Classroom by Kate Redmon
- Tools to Enhance Learning and Function by Cathy Stingley
- Financial Literacy for Low Level Readers: A Series of Classes About Banking and Credit by Janet Sodell
- Supporting Students with Disabilities by Jackie Wood
- Short Films in the ELL Classroom: Student Motivation and Comprehension by Teresa Barton, PhD.

The AAE Program Coordinator Annual Meeting took place March 2-3, 2021, followed by intensive New Program Coordinator training on March 4, 2021. Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases, this meeting took place virtually as well. Several programs presented strategies that are considered best

practices in their communities and can be replicated. Local programs used this opportunity to present innovative class ideas and new strategies. The Correctional grant provided updates on current Department of Corrections COVID-19 restrictions and strategies used with inmates due to the pandemic. The State AAE Director presented on topics including the WIOA Combined State Plan PY 2020-2023, National Reporting Services (NRS) for Adult Education – Performance Accountability, and Diving into Reporting. As with the Statewide Conference, there were many advantages and disadvantages with transitioning to a virtual meeting platform. The biggest advantage for this meeting was the ability to record each session to be viewed at a later date.

Training topics:

- Performance Accountability Work Groups
- The Forgotten 90 Percent
- IET Strategies
- Distance Education Strategies
- GED Update and Q&A Session
- A Walk Through of the Rural Study Tool

For the second year in a row, the third day of the meeting was reserved for new program coordinators. This intensive training allowed for new program coordinators to ask questions on training topics including Grant and Fiscal Responsibility, Professional Development, Measurable Skill Gains, and Introduction to NRS Tables. The AAE Office has found that this training is beneficial to new and seasoned program coordinators that would like to brush up on grant management skills.

New Program Coordinator training topics included:

- Grant Requirements
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Data Collection Requirements
- Professional Development
- Fiscal Responsibility

In addition to these conferences, the AAE State Director held monthly meetings for program coordinators to provide relevant program information, training with guest speakers, or technical assistance.

Each year, depending on their job functions, AAE staff are required to attend a specific number of hours of professional development courses. The State AAE Office provides opportunities for professional development, training, and technical assistance. Local programs are required to report annual professional development hours for all staff to the AAE Office by the end of the program year. Alaska AAE program coordinators, teachers, and staff participated in virtual on-line training offered by Center for Applied Linguistics, LINCS, GED Testing Services (GEDTS®), Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE), and Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS).

## **Technical Assistance**

*Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223(a)(1)(C)*

The AAE State Director and Education Associate provided technical assistance on as needed and group bases to eligible providers. Daily communication with programs regarding updates and questions were handled through the AAE office on topics including:

- Administration of TABE, Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), and Basic English Skills Test (BEST) tests
- Age restrictions requirements
- Grant management and allocations
- Merging accounts and duplication of records
- Intake policies and procedures
- Assessment guidelines
- AlaskaJobs (MIS system) training and technical assistance
- Data entry procedures
- Accommodations.

The AAE Office sends group and individual emails to programs keeping them up to date with announcements, program changes, and areas of need.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

*Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of adult education activities as described in section 223(a)(1)(D).*

Adult education monitoring activities are tracked through various outlets. The State AAE Office monitors student information digitally through AlaskaJobs (MIS system) and GEDTS®. These records are compared for accuracy in reporting student outcomes and credential obtainment. In PY 2020, the State AAE Office, in partnership with WIOA Title I (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and III (Wagner-Peyser) programs, created common data validation procedures for monitoring participant case files and validating data. The State AAE Office pulled five percent of all student files to monitor and validate data from PY 2020. Programs that had files out of compliance were given examples of how they can improve and asked to correct data. Under data validation protocol, severe data accuracy issues may result in a program improvement plan (PIP). PY 2020 data validation revealed no severe data accuracy issues resulting in PIPs. Smaller issues were immediately addressed and corrected.

Financial reimbursement reports are submitted monthly or quarterly to the State AAE Office through the grant management system. Records, receipts, and allowable costs are evaluated against regulations in Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200) and state policies prior to processing for payment. During PY 2020, DETS worked with a third-party vendor to develop a new grant management system, still in planning stages. The new system is expected to go live by PY 2022 and will provide financial reports and monitoring tools to both the eligible provider and the AAE State Office.



COVID-19 has had an adverse effect on monitoring programs. On-site monitoring in Alaska has a very tight window of time due to inclement weather impacting travel and program operation. Further COVID-19 travel restrictions and put on-site monitoring on hold until PY 2021. Alaska used this opportunity to revamp all monitoring tools, including desk monitoring, data validation, on-site monitoring, financial monitoring, and teacher observational tools. The AAE Office provided programmatic training to program coordinators on the new tools. As a mitigator to the inability to perform on-site monitoring of programs, the AAE Office performed desk monitoring of all programs in PY20.

In May 2021 Alaska was chosen for targeted federal monitoring. The federal team reviewed Alaska's implementation of the performance accountability requirements in WIOA Title II to determine compliance. The federal team conducted a review of Module 1: Performance Accountability protocols. They virtually reviewed Alaska's MIS system, conducted performance site visits with three providers, and interviewed state staff. A corrective action plan (CAP) was instituted for one item in the MIS System. This action item was integrated into the MIS system and the CAP was finalized on August 18, 2021.

## Performance Data Analysis

*Describe how the adult education program performed in the overall assessment of core programs based on the core indicators of performance. Discuss how the assessment was used to improve quality and effectiveness of the funded eligible providers and any plans to further increase performance in future reporting years.*

### Participant Eligibility Requirements

The data for the period of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, shows significant changes from preceding years. COVID-19 appears to have had an adverse effect on all areas of performance, including overall enrollment, measurable skill gains (MSG), educational functioning levels (EFL) gain, and employment gains. Though the AAE Office has noticed numbers starting to recover throughout the course of the year, the increase does not compare to pre-pandemic numbers.

Alaska is unique in geographic, cultural, and economic barriers which can hinder access to training, education, and employment. Some examples of Alaska’s regional barriers include:

- The Southeast regional program serves 48 communities. It is roughly the geographical size of Virginia, and the majority of the region is inaccessible by road. Without a road system, the regional program must access communities by boat, ferry, seaplane, or distance delivery.
- The Interior region is the largest region in the state and serves 78 communities. The geographical size of the region is larger than the state of California with a road system which only connects larger, more populated communities. The majority of Interior villages are without a road and must be accessed by bush plane, snow mobile, dog sled, or distance delivery.
- The Aleutian-Pribilof Island regional program serves 13 island communities in the Bering Sea. The region is approximately 1,100 miles long and 6,800 square miles. The length of the island chain is the same distance as driving from Los Angeles, California to Amarillo, Texas and is the same geographical size as Oklahoma. The communities on this chain are only accessible by boat, seaplane, or distance delivery.

Each regional program serves vast areas with barriers unique to Alaska. Transportation, weather, and the digital divide are among the most prominent barriers to adult education.

The pandemic has had a profound impact on both urban and rural students’ ability to access education, as well as retention rates. Some challenges include:

- The digital divide is of great concern to AAE programs. Reaching students through digital means, including the internet, continues to be the largest barrier to instituting distance education and working with rural students. Internet issues include:
  - Slow internet speed – Students in some villages were unable to use online platforms, including the official GED test.
  - Expensive, unreliable, and unaffordable 3G network, preventing access to online distance education options –

- Internet in rural Alaska can run up to \$450 per month. There is an additional cost for setting up equipment, and providers put a cap on data in rural communities.
    - While there are distance education options that don't require internet access, the added cost is prohibitive.
  - Lack of internet access and technology, as well as lack of safe and comfortable places to access class (attending classes from unheated garages, cars, etc.) – Many students did not have access to either a computer and/or internet due to living at or below the poverty line.
  - Internet providers installing equipment were unreliable during the pandemic.
  - Students struggled to pivot to remote learning in many areas after being accustomed to drop-in classes. Students with access to in-person learning preferred this style and many were frustrated with the lack of access to the internet or limitations of their own digital literacy.
  - Distance education was not a choice for some students as they were overwhelmed with taking care of their children, learning how to participate in online classes, and lack of proper space and time to dedicate to online classes.
- GED testing for students in remote villages traditionally involved taking a flight to the nearest local program, arranging room, board and study time, and taking the exam. For the duration of PY 2020, this process was interrupted by pandemic travel restrictions. Remote testing provided some options for village students with adequate internet access.
- Local programs have agreements with school districts and community partners, such as Alaska Native Associations, to provide a location for studying, pre/post testing, formative assessments, and tutoring. The pandemic shut down partner agencies, and local programs were not able to provide services to students.
  - Many students in the village do not have phones due to high cost.
  - Contact with students is often through community partner case managers rather than traditional means such as phone or internet.
  - Local programs corresponded with students by mail to enable continued study.
  - Village facilitator programs were placed on hold until further notice due to school closures caused by the pandemic.
- With the heavy reliance on technology during this time, students willing to learn and/or those more adept with technology had little or no difficulty with online learning environments. On the other hand, students who were less adept struggled to follow directions and became easily frustrated while learning basic commands.
- USPS mail service to remote villages relies on private air carriers and contractors has always been slow. Due to COVID-19, the lack of planes flying, lack of staff, and shutdowns due to community contact restrictions, USPS mail services in some villages were reduced to one day a week. Programs struggled to mail information out to students and/or get homework back.

Local and state program successes during PY 2020 include:

- New policies for statewide implementation of distance education went into effect July 2020, as well as training on maintaining instructional proxy hours via clock time, learner mastery, and teacher verification models.
- Transition from face-to-face to online teaching resulted in increased students' ability to access education, including attendance via Zoom by students who had been unable to commute or were limited by care giving needs in the past. Students and teachers were able to adapt multiple modes for presentations and meetings, such as Zoom. Programs also integrated devices such as OWL and SWIVL robotic camera systems into classes.
- To combat the lack of computer access, local programs, in collaboration with Native Corporations, community partners, and other grants, were able to utilize Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to provide those students actively working on Adult Education approved online curriculum. with new computers and internet access where it was available.
- Local programs were able to write additional grants to hire Information Specialists to assist students with hooking up internet, connection issues, and computer literacy skill building.
- NRS level classes provided teachers a means for scaffolded learning including one-to-one tutoring, visual icons, and oral and written information using online methods.
- Local programs continued to use social media to inform students of closures, hours, graduations, success stories, and other important program information.

The overall enrollment numbers decreased in PY 2020 as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The yo-yo effect of the pandemic mitigation responses remained one of the largest obstacles programs faced. With the increase in cases in Alaska, it was unclear which program would be open for face-to-face learning on a particular day. Many programs were required to shut down services for long periods of time. Once reopened, most required appointments. Once vaccinations were available, some programs elected to require proof of vaccinations to participate in person.

Alaska reported 823 full time students, a 24 percent decline from the previous year's totals. Measurable skill gains (MSG) by entry level as indicated on Table 4: Measurable Skill Gains by Entry Level, showed 20.49 percent of total number of period of participations (POP) and 20.19 percent MSG throughout all POPs. This was a 10.41 percent increase, which was a significant increase over PY 2019. Although both entering educational functioning levels (EFLs) were below the desired level, local programs are working to continue to increase MSG levels. In previous years, English language learners (ELLs) maintained a higher trend of MSG performance and overall success rates. In PY 2020 the adult basic education (ABE) and ELL levels plateaued and were more comparable. The ABE MSG rate was 22.08 percent and the ELL MSG percentage rate was 16.17 percent. Although there was an overall increase in MSG in PY 2020, additional analysis is needed to determine if this is an overall trend based on intensive professional development or a cohort of students. With continued COVID-19 closures transpiring around the state, it is difficult to determine whether data is inflated due to over or underrepresentation.

Through research from past and present MSG data, ABE/ELL performance increased in PY 2020 significantly at many NRS levels. The largest MSG increase occurred in NRS ABE Level 5. In PY 2019, only 9.52 percent of students made gains, whereas 42.86 percent of students in this level made gains in PY 2020. The data continued to show increases in all but two NRS levels; ABE level 1 and ELL level 5. The State AAE Office will continue to monitor this trend to determine what additional supports will foster growth in overall MSG, including analyzing students in NRS ABE level 1 and ELL level 5 to determine if a trend is emerging.

Even during a global pandemic, PY 2020 performance measures remained steady, as seen in Table 5: Core Follow Up Outcome Achievement. Employment and post-secondary performance outcomes reflect intensive professional development provided by the AAE Office. The data integration process in AlaskaJobs has been strengthened and integrated further with partner agencies to better reflect the data in the MIS system. Additionally, the AAE State Director continued to collaborate with partner agencies to maintain policies and procedures for collecting common data elements for future reporting. Data in Table 2.1 below shows Alaska is meeting three of the five performance indicators. Further analysis from NRS Table 5, demonstrates that Alaska is on track with employment goals to meet the negotiated levels for PY 2021.

Table 1. 1 PY 2020 Indicator of Performance

	PY 2020 Negotiated Levels	PY 2020 Indicators of Performance	+ or - Achievement
Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit	28.0%	38.05%	+10.05%
Employment 4th Quarter After Exit	28.0%	35.93%	+7.93%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,100.00	\$4,721.94	+\$621.94
Credential Attainment	28.0%	22.81%	-5.19%
MSG	28.0%	20.19%	-7.81%

Table 1.2 below show full time student counts over the last five years, and are used with programs to prompt discussions about recruitment needs, training delivery methods, and retention.

Table 1. 2 Full Time Student Data

State Fiscal Year:	Full-Time Students
SFY 17 (PY 16)	2,074
SFY 18 (PY 17)	1,917
SFY 19 (PY 18)	1,643
SFY 20 (PY 19)	1,080
SFY 21 (PY 20)	823

Most AAE students enter programs due to a desire to complete high school or improve their English skills. Based on trend data from Table 1.2 above, the need for recruitment and retention are essential components of professional development and brainstorming efforts. While it is not yet clear what fallout local programs will see due to the pandemic, resulting changes in traditional school structure,

or how this will affect both recruitment and retention moving forward, PY 2020 saw significant change to recruitment efforts. For example, programs used social media campaigns for outreach, and met with partner agencies online. Retention has been more difficult, as programs are unsure from week to week what kind of classes they will be able to teach. Programs and students have had to be flexible with scheduling.

Data related to full-time student cohorts show some clear trends in enrollment numbers based on EFL. The Alaska ELL population had remained stable over the last several years with only slight fluctuations. The pandemic impacted ELL student enrollment, especially in the urban areas with the highest concentrations. For example, the Fairbanks region saw a drop in enrollment compared to previous years due to international immigration and travel bans to and from the United States, and prospective students delaying their move here due to worries about the pandemic. There was a 43 percent drop in enrollment numbers this program year. We continue to struggle to transition these students to adult education classes.

As indicated in Table 1.3 below, enrollment in adult education basic skills classes dropped slightly, with a 12 percent drop in attendance. This is a direct correlation to the pandemic and it is unclear how long recovery will take. However, Alaska saw a 12 percent increase in secondary education students from the previous program year. The following table shows statistics in adult education and ELL student population trends:

Table 1. 3 Adult Education and English Language Learner Trends

<b>State Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Adult Ed</b>	<b>Secondary Ed</b>	<b>ELL</b>
SFY 17 (PY 16)	1,299	109	661
SFY 18 (PY 17)	1,183	65	665
SFY 19 (PY 18)	1,046	20	580
SFY 20 (PY 19)	605	23	452
SFY 21 (PY 20)	535	26	262

PY 2020 was the fourth year of a three-year grant competition after the PY 2020 grant cycle was delayed by one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with OCTAE Program Memorandum 20-3. There were no new regional grants or eligible providers, renewal grants were awarded at the beginning of the grant cycle. The PY 2021 grant competition was release in March 2021 and new grants are scheduled to be awarded in July 2021.

## Integration with One-Stop Partners

*Describe how the State eligible agency, as the entity responsible for meeting one-stop requirements under 34 CFR part 463, subpart J, carries out or delegates its required one-stop roles to eligible providers.*

### **Required One-Stop Roles to Eligible Providers**

*Describe how the state carries out or delegates its required one-stop roles to eligible providers*

Alaska's Adult Education (AAE) program, Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services, and WIOA Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker services are all housed in the department's Division of Employment and Training Services, which provides a natural link between AAE, Title I and III services. The employment and training services provided through the Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) are the foundation of the One-Stop delivery system in Alaska, providing universal access to labor exchange, career, and training services. The goal of universal access is that workers, job seekers, and employers may all obtain services under one roof from easy-to-find locations. Services are delivered through 14 Alaska Job Centers throughout the state. Each community has an inclusive partnership that allows for eligible providers to not only provide services within job centers, but also job center staff, in some communities, provide services in adult education facilities.

Alaska integrated most WIOA programs into a unified Monitoring Information System (MIS), AlaskaJobs, on June 30, 2020. AlaskaJobs houses Alaska's online labor exchange, WIOA Title I, II, III, JVSG, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Alaska's state funded employment and training programs' participant data management and reporting tools, as well as a Work Opportunity Tax Credit module. AlaskaJobs enhances user experience, co-locates data, and provides for a single sign-on for the Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser Employment, WIOA Title IB, and Unemployment Insurance programs. The system allows for federally required common participant performance reporting.

AlaskaJobs links each of the programs through common identifiers to provide data matching for performance indicators. The common reporting built into the system reduces the need to pool data, but rather has a data sharing component. The system is built as a federated system with common intake as well as data sharing. The interagency partnership offers joint accountability requirements between the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) and National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS).

The AAE section of AlaskaJobs has enhanced Alaska's data collection measures to further meet the federal guidelines and WIOA requirements of the NRS reporting requirements. The State AAE Office continues to work with programmers to implement standards, resources, and support for the data collection process. AlaskaJobs establishes a statewide system for local programs with uniform technical standards, including error checking capabilities, for data collection. Technical assistance and training continues for local programs. The State AAE Office also works with the Employment and Training Technical Unit to cross-train individuals on reporting requirements associated with Title II, including definition, reporting tables, and data integration.

Local programs continue to integrate with job centers in their regions to provide wrap-around services to students. While job centers were closed to in-person access throughout PY 2020 due to the

pandemic, local programs were able to continue to integrate with the AJC during this time. The following were some highlight successes and challenges:

- Regional programs had established referral systems connecting students to jobs and training. During the pandemic, they revised systems to include virtual options for students.
- Although referrals are either established or being built, programs found it difficult to provide a warm handoff during PY 2020, and that not all students followed through with referrals.
- Several programs worked with their local job centers to build integrated education and training (IET) programs, some reaching implementation during the program year.
- In the past, job center staff have treated job acquisition and job training as separate processes from AAE. The AAE program worked with job center staff to change the perception of adult education from focus only on GED and ESL acquisition to include College and Career Readiness (CCR) course for students.
- AAE teachers proficient in Zoom provided a statewide training for job center and technical unit personnel to allow them to pivot to providing online services.

The AJC, in partnership with local agencies, work with communities and employers to organize job fairs around the state. This includes specialized job fairs annually for veterans and individuals with disabilities. Local programs work with students to access job center services and prepare for interactions with employers during job fairs.

### **Career Services Provided in the One-Stop**

*Describe the applicable career services that are provided in the one-stop system.*

Employment Service Technicians in the AJC provide both job seeker and employer services. Job seeker services include job search assistance, referral, and placement. Additionally, job center staff provide assessments of skill levels and abilities, aptitude testing, and career guidance. Many job centers offer regular workshops including job seeking tips, resume writing, cover letters, interviewing skills, employment after incarceration, and annual free IRS-certified tax services provided through the My Free Tax Initiative. AJC staff routinely provide referrals to partner agencies, veteran's representatives, and all WIOA partner programs for assistance with education, training and support.

Job center staff at each location are trained to serve employers. Job centers in the five largest markets areas also have Business Connection staff dedicated specifically to this effort. Alaska's approach to serving employers emphasizes proactive, staff-initiated outreach designed to meet employers' current and future needs. Staff assist employers with special recruitment, ensure job applicant suitability, conduct job fairs, refer to case managers for Incumbent Worker Training, and provide information that helps ensure compliance with state and federal laws. This focus facilitates long-term business relationships built on confidence and results. The AJC also houses apprenticeship specialists who support employers sponsoring apprenticeship programs. Registered Apprenticeships allow employers to establish their own standards of proficiency while developing a local and loyal workforce.

Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) case managers in the AJC work with participants to determine the appropriate set of goals, programs, and assistance to address the needs of each



individual including comprehensive assessments, career evaluation, and labor market analysis, to develop an individual employment plan, with referral to additional resources if needed. Eligible individuals may receive pre-vocational, vocational, apprenticeship, on-the-job, incumbent worker training and support services to help meet costs of housing, transportation, tools, clothing, books, and supplies needed while participating in program services.

Programs working with CSTS case managers had the following successes and challenges in PY 2020:

- CSTS case managers are located in the job centers and due to the pandemic, they were not offering in-person appointments until June 2021. Case managers provided continuous service via telephone and internet during the program year.
- Programs are working with CSTS staff to set up IET programs.
- Several AE programs are located in the University of Alaska system. The university system offers a variety of training options (millwright, construction, and maritime) with job centers providing necessary support.
- Some programs have Alaska Native career support and training services within their organization. They offer wrap-around services to tribal members and provide warm handoffs to tribal employment and training departments.

WIOA Title IB Youth programs are not offered directly within the job centers and instead are awarded to subrecipients, some of which are housed in the same local programs as Title II grants.

- Current WIOA Youth programs are limited in rural areas of the state.
- In PY 2020, due to limited internet access, some WIOA Youth providers allowed computer/internet access to all AAE students in their facility, not just those enrolled in their WIOA Youth programs.

Vocational rehabilitation services are provided through the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DVR provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities who, because of their disability/ies, have difficulty obtaining or maintaining employment. Disabilities that result in an impediment to employment could include psychiatric, physical, or orthopedic disabilities, as well as cognitive impairments, auditory disabilities, and visual impairments. AAE programs work with DVR to provide services individually with disabilities may needs to reenter employment.

### **Infrastructure Costs**

*Describe how infrastructure costs are supported through State and local options.*

The Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) for Alaska began its design in fall of 2017. The Alaska Job Center Network One Stop Operator Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was finalized and fully executed in September 2018 and became effective in PY 2018.

The IFA was developed in partnership with the agencies listed in the MOU that are either physically or programmatically located in one or more Alaska Job Centers. The infrastructure costs are identified

as the space, equipment, supplies, and network costs necessary for the operation of the one-stop center and benefitting WIOA required partner programs operated by the parties to the IFA.

The IFA states the following:

- **Infrastructure Space**

Space costs are calculated based upon current lease diagrams for each location, identifying areas used by the common participant, notably the resource rooms and workshop rooms where the majority of customers engage in self-service, staff-facilitated, and staff assisted WIOA career services. For each job center, this space is multiplied by the current lease cost to arrive at the Infrastructure Space Total Annual Cost.

- **Infrastructure Operations**

Operational costs are calculated based upon the inventory of public accessible resource room and workshop personal computers (PCs); public accessible copiers, printers, and associated supplies (e.g., paper and toner); and public furniture (e.g., customer workstation chairs, etc...). Server costs are based upon percent of public use. Technology equipment (PC's, copiers, printers, and servers) costs per job center are then multiplied by a factor of 0.25 to represent a four-year, industry standard replacement schedule.

Technology network costs are attributed to each job center based upon annual software and internet service costs.

- **Additional Costs - Technology Staff**

Included in the scope of the IFA is the cost for staff directly supporting the technology related services accessed through the job center's public accessible technology resources. These costs are determined by each job center's number of supported public access PCs.

- **Additional Costs - IFA Management**

These are costs directly associated with the development of and ongoing annual data matching performed by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development Research and Analysis section in support of this IFA.

## **COLLECTION OF FUNDS**

This IFA, as part of the MOU, serves as the master agreement. Under the IFA, state government agencies will develop Reimbursable Service Agreements (RSAs) separately with the One Stop Operator to facilitate the billing and receipt of allocated costs. RSA billing will be conducted on an annual basis once costs are calculated with a year-end true-up as appropriate. If additional, non-state agencies are included in the IFA, then standard billing processes will occur on a quarterly basis.

Adult Education grants are housed within the Department of Labor and costs are calculated and allocated annually.

## **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program**

*(AEFLA Section 243)*

*Describe how the state is using funds under Section 243 to support the following activities under the IELCE program:*

### **IELCE Competition and Grant Awards**

*Describe when your State held a competition [the latest competition] for IELCE program funds and the number of grants awarded by your State to support IELCE programs.*

Alaska held an open competition in April 2017 for the IELCE program. Alaska Literacy Program (ALP) was awarded a three-year statewide IELCE grant for PY17-PY19 and extended to a fourth year due to the broad impact of COVID-19 and in accordance with Program Memorandum 20-3. A new request for grant applications is scheduled for solicitation in March 2021.

### **IET Activities**

*Describe your State efforts in meeting the requirement to provide IELCE services in combination with integrated education and training activities.*

The IELCE provider, Alaska Literacy Program, is a full-service English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. It employs full- and part-time staff to recruit, train, certify, and support volunteer teachers and tutors to teach reading, writing and speaking English to adults. The provider offers year-round classes for adults and families with young children. Classes range from beginning reading and speaking in English, to citizenship classes, to literacy classes to increase self-sufficiency. They run seven classrooms and have an up-to-date computer lab for students to supplement their learning with computer-based curriculum. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ALP moved their services online and ran 92 online classes over four eight-week quarters and a summer session. By June 30, 2021, they were offering English, Citizenship and workforce development courses to 323 students through PY 2020.

Along with English and workforce development, citizenship and civics information and classroom time are high priorities for the ALP. They are offered based on student need and interest and provide students foundational knowledge of U.S. government and civics with an opportunity to enhance their in-depth communication skills. Courses offered include, but are not limited to:

- A Complete Guide for Naturalization – Allows students to practice interview skills and provides them the probability to become involved in their local communities
- Civics and Literacy Skills – Focuses on word pronunciation used in spoken answers and key words for recognizing and answering oral civics questions. This course also offers an official spelling list identified in the Citizenship and Civics test and reviews the possible 100 questions which could be asked during the test.
- Ready for the Interview – Prepares students for various interview situations and to answer questions from the N-400 application. Vocabulary and communication skills are reinforced.
- Interview/Discussion – This language course focuses primarily on in-depth discussions of questions asked during the naturalization interview, how to fill out the N-400 form, and what to expect during the interview, including U.S. history and culture.

- Know Your Rights – Weaves civil rights literacy into English instruction for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) adults
- Preparation for Citizenship – All-inclusive class with citizenship question preparation, writing practice, dictated sentences and reading, U.S. and world maps, and questions and answers for the 65/20 exception.

The Alaska Literacy Program also works with students on workplace literacy skills and provides the groundwork for English language and numeracy skills needed by employees in order to effectively integrate ESOL students into careers. Its workplace literacy courses encompass not only reading and writing, but soft skill development in listening, speaking, problem solving, and critical thinking that are essential to employers. ALP also works with employers to build career pathway courses that integrate English language learning with workplace development skills. COVID-19 has been a catalyst for employers to seek services to increase their workforce. As such, the IELCE provider has worked with partners to strengthen their healthcare pathways and certifications that lead to employment.

As a part of the curriculum and outreach, the provider incorporates information related to the pandemic. Through the Peer Leader Navigator program (PLN), ALP worked with the Municipality of Anchorage, to ensure information was provided in plain language, also translated into multiple languages. The PLN program is a health education and outreach initiative designed to improve the well-being of Anchorage residents. Participants in the PLN program use the English and health terminology acquired to disseminate information to their communities.

ALP's family literacy program is funded through community partners. The family literacy instructor provides preschool services to children of the ESL students attending classes. As a result of the pandemic, the family literacy instructor's role has changed. The instructor is now focused on one-on-one preschool lessons and direct outreach to families. The instructor assists families with locating resources, understanding the Anchorage School District's policies regarding remote learning plans, and with general technology access needs. The instructor also works with parents who are struggling to teach children at home by offering additional resources and support.

Finally, ALP works with students on financial literacy skills. Their financial literacy course was developed for students from other countries to not only comprehend the U.S. monetary system, but also guide them in basic personal finances. Understanding money management topics, such as bank accounts, insurance, lending, and credit reporting, is vital for students.

### **Unsubsidized Employment**

*Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of preparing and placing IELCE program participants in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency as described in section 243(c)(1) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.*

Alaska's healthcare industry has grown steadily during the past 20 years, a trend which is expected to continue. Healthcare offers year-round employment opportunities, even in Alaska's smallest rural communities where jobs are often scarce. Population growth will most likely equate to continued

industry growth. During PY 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant effect on the healthcare industry. It's continued growth, even after the pandemic, is projected. Alaska Literacy Program continued to focus and expand occupational training in this field. Although they explore other unsubsidized self-sufficient occupations, with the impact of COVID-19, the healthcare field has been the biggest contributor of training, including staying up to date on new innovations, terminology, and progress that affects this field.

Alaska Literacy Program took this trend into account when creating PY 2020 courses and continued to partner with Providence Hospital in Anchorage to provide a viable career pathway for students interested in the healthcare field. ALP's healthcare modules focus on the students' understanding of health-related issues as they are presented and studied in English. This year, that included providing updated information related to the Novel Corona Virus, its effects, and how students can remain safe in and out of the workplace, including information on the vaccines available, and also hosting vaccination clinics for students. Students use the English language to discuss and write about a wide variety of issues that affect health, such as nutrition, exercise, and the human body. ALP also designed a three-level series that provides reading and language activities to assist students with navigation of the U.S. healthcare system. Courses are taught in conjunction with instructors from Providence Hospital and through continued communication.

Students interested in a career in healthcare chose to enroll in the above foundational courses to gain a secure knowledge base, and then had the option to co-enroll in training for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and pre-training for Personal Care Assistants (pre-PCA) through the provider's partnership with South Central Area Health Education Center (SCAHEC). The curriculum for DSP and pre-PCA is taught by an Integrated English Instructor who is a content expert. There were two classes held in PY 2020, in September 2020 and March 2021. Both classes incorporated technology by offering a hybrid model and including digital literacy components. As a result, a total of 32 students graduated from the program, with 80% entering employment and 5% entering additional education or training programs such as those described below.

Upon completion of the DSP and pre-PCA training, students can continue to co-enroll and enter courses which results in a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) certificate and/or a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) certificate. ALP's Integrated English Instructor health content expert provides training to students in an IET model for PCA certification. If a student is interested in CNA certification, the provider refers the student to their community partner, Alaska CNA School. Students enrolled in these courses are offered additional tutoring available through in-person and computer-based learning.

The PCA certificate can provide a career path to assisting older adults or individuals with short or long-term disabilities. Department data shows the number of senior citizens has increased by more than 5 percent each year since 2010, faster in Alaska than any other state. As of 2018, the state had an estimated 87,304 seniors, up from 54,938 eight years before, and is projected to have more than 138,000 seniors by 2035. With this rise, the need for qualified healthcare workers will continue. Furthermore, PCA certification continues to provide students a career ladder into other health career

related occupations such as Pharmacy Technicians, Radiologic Technologists, Medical Assistance, and others.

In Alaska CNAs are required to meet minimum training standards and pass a state licensing board examination. The exam is comprised of two sections, a skills section and a written portion which can alternatively be taken orally. ALP works with ESOL students on making a connection between the English seen or heard on the exam in relation to the realia of patient care.

The occupational outcomes for DSPs, PCAs, and CNAs are thriving in Alaska, with an estimated growth rate of up to 23.1 percent, an average median wage of \$19.84 per hour, and approximately 1,100 annual job openings each year as of 2018

Alaska Literacy Program also encourages Anchorage ELL students to participate in the Peer Leader Navigator (PLN) program created in conjunction with The Anchorage Health Literacy Collaborative (TAHLC) and other community partners. Along with ALP, TAHLC identifies multicultural, multilingual leaders to train as navigators within their community. Although the PLNs come primarily from the refugee/immigrant community in Anchorage, the provider continues to identify leaders that emerge from the classroom setting. Students undergo a year of training to develop knowledge and skills to become a PLN, to promote disease prevention and health activities to their communities. Around 50 PLNs have been trained since the program began in 2013, representing 19 language groups and reaching more than 4,000 individuals and families with 2,400 hours of dedicated service.

The PLN program has a track record of success bridging the linguistic divides that prevent residents from accessing basic and necessary community services and became a valuable link for ELL students during the pandemic. Students were chosen to enter an intense training with a high focus on COVID-19 facts, resources, and assistance. The students in the cohort underwent intensive training with the municipality and other community partners to guide others in resources pertaining to food, access to rental and mortgage assistance, and information related childcare, healthcare, and other critical services in this time of crisis.

The PLN program is funded through the provider's community partners and has grown from an idea to a full IET model pathway into DSP, PCA and CNA certification programs. ALP has found that students who participate in the PLN program are more likely to apply for and be successful in jobs in healthcare fields. Due to the success of the program, the provider and Providence Health Systems have been in a yearlong discussion centered on creating a Community Health Worker (CHW) apprenticeship program. Included in these discussions are strategies for removing traditional barriers for immigrant populations and the best ways to focus on student strengths. As a part of this program, ELL students will receive training for certification, On-the-job training, and increased likelihood to be hired at the end of the apprenticeship. The program started in January 2021 with a pilot cohort of 4 students. The PLN program has become essential as a result of the pandemic. Many ELL students have established a "survive" mentality as they struggle with covering basic necessities such as food and shelter. This has altered the strategies of the provider as they continue to find ways to reach this vulnerable population. The PLN program is one way in which ALP has found to connect to this population.

Through outreach, promotion and advocacy, CHWs inform individuals and communities of healthy behaviors and provide assistance to adopt them. Depending on their training and job description, they may also collect data to help identify health needs within a community.

Alaska Literacy Program will continue to research other in-demand industries in Alaska and ways to provide sustainable career pathway options to their students. They also work closely with adult education programs in their regions and will begin a secondary equivalency test preparation program in PY 2021 to provide their students with options to obtain a high school diploma.

### **Local Workforce Integration**

*Describe how the State is progressing towards program goals of ensuring that IELCE program activities are integrated with the local workforce development system and its functions as described in section 243(c)(2) and discuss any performance results, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing those program goals.*

Alaska Literacy Program relies on partnerships to achieve IELCE program goals. Partners include the Anchorage Midtown Job Center to help place students into employment opportunities, the Municipality of Anchorage's World Education Services Global Talent Bridge, Skilled Immigrant Integration Program (SIIP) to help skilled immigrants fully utilize their talents and education, and SCAHEC and Providence Health Systems to build career pathways for ESOL learners by providing IE, and IET for the DSP, PCA, CNA and CHW certification classes.

The partnership with Providence has been active and developing since 2009. It directly addresses the goal of preparing an educated and skilled workforce, particularly for ELLs, by providing Integrated English and Training classes and programs to establish clear routes to careers that are focused on the individual and their particular circumstances, such as the CHW apprenticeship program. Partnership with SCAHEC was established in fall 2019 as a result of the SIIP partnership to address the need for skilled immigrant workers to receive Integrated English Training so they can fully utilize their talents and education to enter the workforce throughout PY 2020. The IELCE provider, as do other Alaska Regional AAE eligible providers, meets with local job center staff with a specific focus on what is needed for ELL students to access career services. The provider continued to strengthen these partnerships.

Lessons learned: Creating and maintaining partnerships is essential to the growth success of IELCE programming to serve the ELL community. However, it takes time and effort to establish and maintain partnerships outside the targeted healthcare sector. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, partnership discussions have increased in the second half of PY 2020, including with the Alaska CNA School. ALP continues to seek additional partners in other sectors.

## Adult Education Standards

*If your State has adopted new challenging K-12 standards under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, describe how your Adult Education content standards are aligned with those K-12 standards.*

### Content Standards

Alaska adopted College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for Adult Education in PY 2017. CCR standards have been analyzed and discussed at many statewide AAE meetings. Implementation efforts center on identifying and teaching from materials and or texts which are based on CCR standards.

The CCR standards used by AAE's regional programs scaffold student learning, build common knowledge, and explore workforce development skills. Standardized content allows programs to understand common foundational knowledge and build learning communities. College and Career Readiness standards related to ELLs will be reviewed for content and alignment. The AAE Office will implement standards to maximize effective instruction and student preparedness for ELL transitioning students.

Programs use curriculum such as Kaplan, Essential Education, New Readers Press, Burlington English, and other approved text resources aligned with CCR standards for both online and in-person teaching. Professional development is provided by the programs on CCR standards and scaffolding curriculum to strengthen and build upon each NRS level.

The greatest change brought about due to the COVID-19 pandemic is ease of access to professional training and development regarding state standards in teaching. During PY 2020, programs became more familiar with online web sessions and workshops. Online opportunities have also increased access to standard-based training.

### Challenges

A program goal for PY 2020 was to adopt new standards for AAE and ELL. Impacts of COVID-19 have pushed this goal back to PY 2021.

Programs must track details detailing specific CCR standards. Drilling to a very specific skill, while teaching multiple subjects on students whose attendance is not always regular, and assessing to see which areas present gaps in student knowledge

Another challenge facing programs is aligning CCR standards to skill levels of students who pre-test with extremely low literacy levels when CCR standards are too advanced. In this situation, programs focus solely on improving skills. As their skills improve, students are slowly introduced to CCR standards.

Staff turnover remains a challenge in Alaska. Rural areas can go for months without program staff to ensure continuity of services. Once staff are hired, the AAE Office and local program policies require that staff are trained in curriculum to deliver consistent standard-based education.



## Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals

(AEFLA Section 225)

### Recidivism

*What was the relative rate of recidivism for criminal offenders served? Please describe the methods and factors used in calculating the rate for this reporting period.*

According to the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission’s 2021 Annual Report, the recidivism rate has decreased over time. The Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) measures recidivism as the percentage of individuals convicted of felonies who are released from DOC custody within a given year and who return to DOC custody within three years for any offense conviction (felony or misdemeanor) or probation/parole violation. Evidence suggests the recidivism rates in Alaska have declined from 2006 to the 2016 cohort. DOC measured the cohorts over the 3-year span and found the recidivism rate declined 10 percent comparatively. Although the current rates in Alaska show approximately 60 percent of all inmates reoffend and will return to prison within three years, DOC is focusing on education and vocational training as part of the individual’s reentry or case plan.

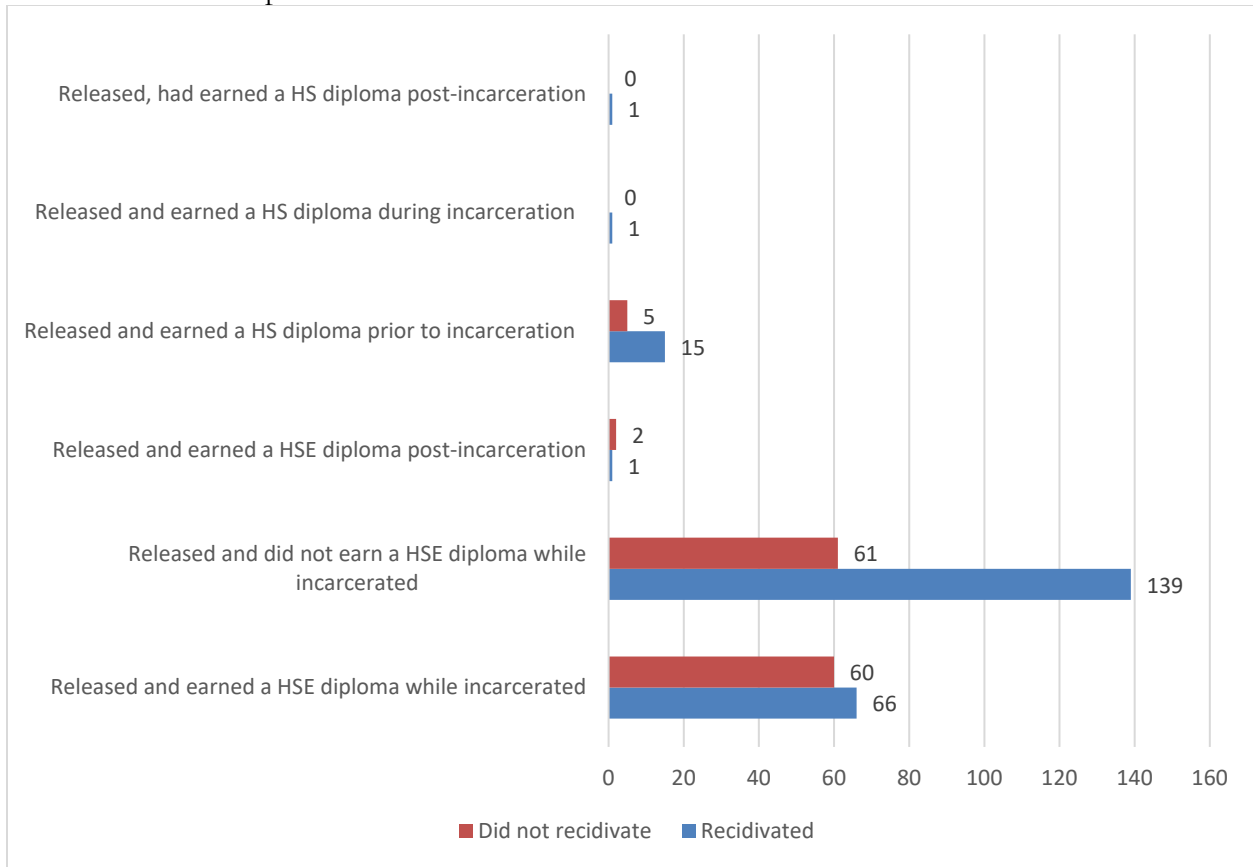
When an inmate is sentenced, the assigned probation officer generates a case plan informed by the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSIR) assessment. The LSIR identifies key criminogenic needs to be addressed while incarcerated for successful reintegration into society. The assessment further identifies areas of education and employment need. Probation officers refer inmates to DOC education services for pre-testing and placement.

The DOC Reentry Unit reviewed data from adult education participants from PY 2017 (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018) to study correlation between program involvement and recidivism. Program Year 2017 data is the most recent data set available for analysis as it incorporates the three-year threshold required by Alaska statute to measure the recidivism rate. Full- and part-time student information was compared in AlaskaJobs, GED Manager, and Alaska Corrections Offender Management System (ACOMS) to determine if students were participants, earned a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma remained in custody, had been released and not returned to custody, or had been released and returned to custody. The study also noted details of educational status. Department of Corrections studied 414 participants:

Table 2. 1 Students Who Remain Incarcerated



Table 2. 2 Alaska Department of Corrections Educational Status



\*New Path High School data were not part of this dataset.

The cohort above included 351 individuals released from custody with 223 recidivating, which is a recidivism rate of 64 percent. Further narrowing the cohort to exclude individuals who earned a HS diploma, DOC analyzed a targeted cohort of 383 individuals. Of this group, 329 individuals were released from custody with 206 recidivating. This resulted in a recidivism rate of 63 percent.

When analyzing credential attainment, it was found that individuals who obtained their HSE diploma while incarcerated had a lower recidivism rate. Those who earned an HSE prior to release had a 52 percent recidivism rate (66 of 126), as opposed to a 70 percent rate for those who had not (139 of 200). Furthermore, the study found only three of the 200 participants released earned their HSE diploma in a community program.

Studies also found participation in adult education programming alone did not result in a significant difference in recidivism outcomes, though participants who earned a HSE diploma reoffended at a rate 18 percent lower than those who hadn't. This indicates a statistically significant factor in meeting a key criminogenic need. The data also points to the unlikeliness of adult education follow-through to completion in community-based programming post-release. With just over one percent (three out of 203) follow-through, the study revealed the period of incarceration is a crucial intervention stage in delivering educational services to this population. The study similarly suggested the majority of

participation in adult education was by individuals not serving long prison terms (351 of 414 participants).

Through a joint venture with DOLWD and DOC, adult education is present at all correctional sites throughout Alaska. Education coordinators (ECs) plan, recruit for, coordinate, implement, monitor, and evaluate the educational and vocational programs, activities and opportunities at the thirteen sites. Students are also co-enrolled in vocational programs, although most vocational training courses offered by DOC are not reflected in this report.

Alaska Adult Education services within DOC include:

- Adult Education – Instruction in reading, writing, and computational skills below the ninth-grade level
- English as a Second Language: Instruction on improving basic English speaking, reading, and writing skills
- General Education Development Testing – Secondary education and testing opportunities leading to a HSE diploma
- Vocational Services – Job training, skills development, and apprenticeships in more than 35 specific programs.

In PY 2020, DOC assisted 84 full-time students in adult education and literacy activities. Of the full-time students, 24 percent showed measurable skill gains. The DOC worked to establish an ESL program by acquiring CASAS Life & Work assessment series, training staff, and identifying curricula.

DOC is committed to the reduction of recidivism and also offers many of its own courses in preparation for release. Shorter vocational programs are available to students who are active in adult education. Opportunities for intensive vocational training are available to students who complete GED testing. In PY 2020, DOC replaced outdated parenting programs with an evidenced-based curriculum: Parenting Inside Out, and Parenting with Love & Logic. Education coordinators received training to facilitate these programs to fidelity. In addition, DOC implemented computer literacy training via Teknimedia's Virtual Learning Center.

Per COVID-19 Health Mandate 1.1 issued by Governor Mike Dunleavy on March 13, 2020, visitors, volunteers, contractors and non-essential staff were restricted from entering into DOC facilities statewide. This mandate remained in effect until Spring PY 2020. The restriction resulted in numerous educational services, supports, and contracts being cancelled. Institutions faced unique challenges based on location, population, and additional measures taken to mitigate outbreaks. Four facilities suspended programming for the duration of the year. In some facilities, AAE staff were unable to deliver services or were limited in the services they could provide. In other facilities, classrooms were used to quarantine inmates or as extra housing space to ensure CDC recommended standards. Education coordinators were also required to provide support for staff shortages outside their customary roles during this crisis.

To limit the number of individuals and maintain social distancing, classes were reduced to one-on-one instruction or small groups by housing unit. This put a damper on program engagement and limited

opportunities for assessments, instruction, and engagement in computer-based training. Several facilities implemented inmate tutors to assist with instruction within housing units with the help of ECs distributing customized instructional packets. In PY 2020, while DOC invested in new computers to incorporate programs such as Teknimedia and Essential Education, delays in information technology services were immeasurable and computers were not available to students until later in the program year.

The DOC placed an emphasis on professional development and training throughout PY 2020, providing most training via Microsoft Teams<sup>®</sup>. Management conducted a weeklong educational forum to assist ECs with scope of work, including documentation and instruction. The AAE Office was in attendance and assisted in the forum questioning periods. The AAE State Director instructed DOC ECs on the importance of NRS data collection, building transitional goals, and not just focusing on GED Testing. New ECs job shadowed senior, more experienced staff at other facilities. A criminal justice planner assigned to AAE conducted weeklong in-person training with each new EC as well. The education specialist assigned to AAE conducted several site visits to review duties with the more seasoned personnel. Evaluation, virtual and in-person trainings, and site visits will continue as DOC has determine these as an effective way to provide professional development to education coordinators.

The AAE Office is aware of the challenges faced by DOC throughout the COVID-19 pandemic but has asked for creative solutions to continued education of participants leading into PY 2021 to reduce recidivism. Post-release outcome studies have determined uninterrupted adult education instruction, including obtaining a high school equivalency diploma through GED testing, have a higher rate of individuals who did not recidivate. This is also conveyed in the Alaska DOC study as indicated in Table 2.2 above.

In late PY 2020 the DOC grantee had a gap in services due to staff turnover. The AAE Office provided technical assistance, professional development, and training to grant management staff when hired. At the time of this report, the AAE Office has provide multiple intensive training opportunities to provide staff with the foundations needed for data entry collection, WIOA Title II regulation requirements, and general grant management. It is expected, leading into PY 2021 and beyond, that the DOC grantee will continue to find ways to increase participation as they reopen facilities. The AAE Office will continue to work with the grantee on data entry requirements as a priority throughout PY 2021.