

**STATE OF ALASKA**

**Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

Division of Employment and Training Services



# **WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT**

## **Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**

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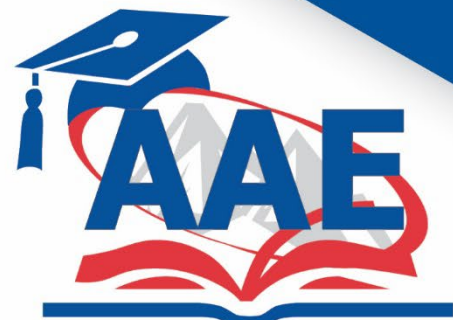
**Federal Program Year 2022**

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**ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT**

Alaska Adult Education Program

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**Alaska Adult Education**

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## State Leadership Funds (AEFLA Section 223)

### Alignment with Partners to Implement Combined State Plan (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 \(WIOA\) Combined Plan for Program Years 2020-2023](#).

The Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) leadership team consists of the Assistant Director of Workforce Services and Development, Regional Managers from the Alaska Job Center Network, the Employment and Training Technical Unit Manager, and the AAE State Director. The team meets virtually bi-weekly and in-person bi-annually. These meetings include programmatic touch points, such as strategies for overlapping and integrating service delivery. The meetings help all participants to better understand communication expectations and strategies to local programs and services available through the One-Stop job centers, access to workforce development opportunities, and adult education programs.

In the spring of 2022, the AAE Office used integrated education and training (IET) materials provided by the American Institutes for Research to adapt a training for all WIOA Title I, II, and III leadership. The training provided foundational knowledge on IET development in regional programming and allowed for collaboration across all Titles.

### Professional Development (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 held in Anchorage. These meetings are used by the leadership team to disseminate information regarding regulations, policies, and promising practices. In addition to these conferences, the AAE State Director held monthly meetings for program coordinators to provide relevant program information, training with guest speakers, and technical assistance.

Alaska's PY 2022 Hybrid Statewide Adult Education Conference was held on February 28-March 2, 2023. The State AAE Office partnered with the Alaska Adult Education Association (AAEA) to provide a conference platform that brought Alaska's teachers, program coordinators, and staff a viable and accessible hybrid conference option. The conference began with a keynote address by Janet Romig an Alaskan Adult Education Student who received her high school equivalency diploma through GED testing and went on to become the Assistant District Attorney on the Kenai. The two-and-a-half-day conference included dedicated trainings and informational presentations for Program Coordinators as well as presentation strands including English as a second language (ESL), workplace literacy, correction, Integrated Education and Training (IET), assessments, and adult education instructional practices.

The AAE Program Coordinator Annual Meeting took place October 25-27, 2022. The meeting was held with a hybrid option, and while most Program Coordinators attended in person the virtual platform allowed for a wider range of presenters. The State AAE Director and professional development team presented topics including AspireAlaska Training, OCTAE Listening Session/Assessment Discussion, Desktop Monitoring and Data Validation, and Educational Strategies. The New Program Coordinator intensive training was held on October 25, 2022, and topics included Grant and Fiscal Responsibility, Professional Development, Measurable Skill Gains, and Introduction to National Reporting System (NRS) Tables.

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. Depending on their job functions, AAE staff are required to attend a specific number of hours of annual 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 through the AlaskaJobs system. Alaska AAE

program coordinators, teachers, and staff participated in virtual on-line training offered by the Center for Applied Linguistics, LINCS, GED Testing Services (GEDTS®), Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE), and Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS).

### **Technical Assistance (223(a)(1)(C))**

The AAE State Director and Education Associate provided technical assistance as needed 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 restriction requirements
- Grant management and allocations
- Intake policies and procedures
- AlaskaJobs (the state’s Monitoring Information System) training, technical assistance, and data entry procedures

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

Prior to the end of the program year, the AAE Office traveled to Kotzebue to provide much needed technical assistance to the local one-person program. AAE staff assisted with data collection, ordering curriculum and education materials, securing and archiving old files, and procuring testing supplies and materials needed for programmatic success.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation (223(a)(1)(D))**

The AAE Office traveled to Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nome, and Mat-Su to conduct on-site monitoring of four programs. The AAE Office used monitoring tools, including on-site monitoring, financial monitoring, and teacher observational tools to evaluate each program. The local programs were provided with technical assistance, recommendations, and placed on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) if necessary. The AAE Office also highlighted best practices during on-site monitoring that can be utilized during technical assistance and training of other providers.

The following best practices were noted during on-site monitoring:

- The local provider of Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) funding built digital literacy classes with a lab to teach introductory computer skills and how to access local resources. Classes include looking for job applications, how to fill out forms, and sending emails. These classes work in conjunction with pathway courses and focus on specific skills and information needed to be successful in that pathway. The local provider is building a Statewide Distance Delivery Class/Train the Trainer Model based on the digital literacy classes and resources put together by a local teacher.
- The local provider in Fairbanks has set up an English Café class where students can attend as they are able. The class delivers language tutoring, and it is centered around themes such as holidays, soft skills, topics in the community, food, or any subject that will inspire the students to practice speaking and listening skills. The class has helped to build a sense of community and students feel freer to share and collaborate with their peers and tutors.
- The local provider in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MatSu) has built a resource room where students can budget and “buy” interview clothing, toiletries, etc., with the “Nine Star Bucks” they earn for various accomplishments like attendance, level completion, test taking, and other various successes. Teachers are educating students how to budget and “shop” within their means, while “buying” things they need; invaluable life skills which is community supported and managed by the MatSu staff.

- Project Remote is a grant that was written by our local provider in Nome and compliments our AE grant. Students who do not have the ability to come into the office for AE, higher education, middle school, high school, vocational, or other educational classes and opportunities are eligible for Project Remote. The grant provides students with the ability to engage with distance education and build the skills to be able to transition into employment and training. The grant provides the resources needed to participate in education including computers, phones to keep them connected, and 6 months unlimited data.

### **Additional Permissible Activities (223(a)(2))**

The AAE Office used funds for additional permissible activities to work with the American Institutes for Research to write and adopt standards for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Digital Literacy.

## **Performance Data Analysis**

### **Participant Eligibility Requirements**

The data for this program year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 (PY 2022) continued to show increased numbers in almost all areas of performance, including Overall Enrollment, Educational Functional Levels gain, and Employment gains. Measurable Skill Gains increased this program year but remained below negotiated performance.

Alaska’s unique geographic, cultural, and economic barriers can hinder access to training, education, and employment. Each regional program continues to serve vast areas with barriers unique to Alaska. Transportation, weather, and the digital divide are among the most prominent barriers to adult education. Some examples of Alaska’s regional barriers include local programs:

- Serving vast numbers of communities with regions the size of most states in the Continental US.
- Large areas without roads that can only be accessed by boat, ferry, bush plane, snowmobile, dog sled, or distance delivery.
- Serving communities with little or no internet access.

AAE contends with challenges that have a profound impact on both urban and rural students’ ability to access education, as well as retention rates. Some of these challenges include:

- The digital divide - reaching students through digital means, specifically the internet, continues to be the greatest barrier to effectively instituting distance education and working with rural students. The most prominent issues continue to be slow internet speed; expensive, unreliable, and unaffordable 3G networks; lack of internet and technology availability; and students struggling to pivot to remote learning.
- Physical distance - GED testing for students in remote villages often involves taking an expensive, weather dependent flight to the nearest local program; arranging room, board, and study time; and taking the exam with no guaranteed outcome. Whereas remote testing provides viable options for village students with adequate internet access.
- Limitations of essential services - the USPS service to remote villages relies on private air carriers and bush pilot contractors and continues to be a slow process. This can be frustrating to students and programs alike who must wait for materials, correspondence, information, homework, corrected work, etc. to travel long distances in inclement weather.

Despite these challenges, enrollment numbers increased in PY 2022. Alaska reported 1,255 full-time students, a 26 percent increase from the previous year’s totals. Table 4: Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) by Entry Level of the NRS report AAE submitted in October, showed 18.39 percent of total number of period of participations (POP), which was an increase from PY 2021. The MSG for English language learners increased significantly to 15.36 percent, while the adult basic

education (ABE) levels continue to increase slightly on an annual basis to 21.53 percent. The AAE Office addressed concerns with Educational Functional Level (EFL) gains through pre/post assessments this program year and saw a 19 percent increase in EFL gains.

In PY 2022 the Core Follow-up Outcome Achievement measure remained high for employment outcomes and Credential Attainment. See MSG data noted above. The AAE State Director continued to collaborate with partner agencies to maintain policies and procedures for collecting common data elements for future reporting.

Table 1.1 below shows Alaska is meeting negotiated levels of performance for four of the five performance indicators.

Table 1.1 PY 2022 Indicator of Performance

	PY 2022 Negotiated Levels	PY 2022 Indicators of Performance	+ or - Achievement
Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit	35.00 percent	44.31 percent	+9.31 percent
Employment 4th Quarter After Exit	37.00 percent	45.91 percent	+8.91 percent
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,750.00	\$6,258.76	+\$1,508.76
Credential Attainment	25.00 percent	42.05 percent	+17.05 percent
MSG	24.00 percent	18.39 percent	-5.61 percent

Table 1.2 below shows full-time student counts over the last three program years which are used to prompt discussions about recruitment needs, training delivery methods, and retention. PY 2022 enrollment numbers have exceeded pre-COVID numbers. It is still determined that the majority of students enter programs due to a desire to complete high school or improve their English skills.

Table 1.2 Full Time Student Data

State Program Year:	Full-Time Students
PY 2020 (SFY 21)	823
PY 2021 (SFY 22)	933
PY 2022 (SFY 23)	1,255

As indicated in Table 1.3 below, enrollment in ABE skills classes increased by 13 percent. Alaska continues to see an increase in English language learner (ELL) students, with a 61 percent rise over the previous program year.

Table 1.3 Adult Education and English Language Learner Trends

State Program Year	Adult Ed	Secondary Ed	ELL
PY 2020 (SFY 21)	535	26	262
PY 2021 (SFY 22)	519	27	387
PY 2022 (SFY 23)	596	21	638

### Integration with One-Stop Partners (34 CFR part 463, subpart J)

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

The AAE program, Wagner-Peyser, and WIOA Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker services are all housed in the DETS, which provides a natural link between AAE, Title I and III. The employment and training services provided through the Alaska Job Center Network 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 and distance delivery.

Alaska has an integrated Monitoring Information System (MIS), AlaskaJobs, that 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. 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.

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

The AAE State Director took part in a weeklong training for Title IB, Adult and Dislocated Worker Case Managers. The training was a hybrid professional development training series that included sessions on AAE, working with English language learners, and integrated education and training.

Due to the high number of refugees and immigrants in Alaska, the DETS Assistant Director of Workforce Services and Development requested that all Title I and III staff working within the job centers and technical unit be trained in how to work with English language learners. The AAE State Director established four training sessions for all staff and the technical unit made these trainings available on their professional development training site.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

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 to individuals with disabilities that may need to reenter employment.

### **Infrastructure Costs**

The Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) for Alaska began its design in fall of 2017. The Alaska Job Center Network One-Stop Partner 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 Center. The infrastructure costs are identified as the space, equipment, supplies, and network costs necessary for the operation of the One-Stop center and benefiting 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 the percentage 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 ongoing annual data matching performed by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development Research and Analysis section in support of this IFA.

## **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program (AEFLA Section 243)**

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

Alaska held an open competition in March 2021 for the IELCE program. Alaska Literacy Program (ALP) was awarded a four-year statewide IELCE grant for PY 2021-PY 2025.

### **Integrated Education and Training (IET) Activities**

The IELCE provider, ALP, 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, as well as workplace literacy and test preparation. Through PY 2022, ALP offered 124 in-person classes and 73 online classes over four eight-week quarters and a summer session. By June 30, 2023, the provider had offered classes in English, Citizenship, and Workforce Development to 892 students.

ALP began planning for a new IET in entrepreneurship in PY 2022 to be implemented in PY 2023. With small business accounting for 99.1 percent of all business in Alaska and 52.3 percent of employees in Alaska in calendar year 2022, ALP recognized that small businesses are important to the Alaska economy and is working with a national certification agency to provide certification in entrepreneurship. Upon completion, students would be referred to Anchorage Community Land Trust's Set-up Shop program to start their businesses.

ALP continues to grow their Peer Leader Navigator (PLN) program and graduated nine new PLNs in Cohort 10 to assist community members navigate barriers in health access, food, housing, and financial insecurity. In PY 2022, ALP began expansion of the program into other regions of Alaska; specifically, Fairbanks, Juneau, Valdez, and MatSu. The expansion includes educating regional adult education programs and local partners, but also recruitment of new PLNs in the regions to participate in training in PY 2023.

Finally, in partnership with Alaska Primary Care Associates, ALP conducted Pre-Apprenticeship Training in Healthcare (PATH) classes to ESL students using the IET model. During PY 2022, two new classes were successfully completed with 15 new graduates. Eighty-six percent of the graduates continued to additional training, post-secondary education, or employment.



### **Unsubsidized Employment (243(c)(1))**

ALP partners with Providence of Alaska and local healthcare providers to determine employer's need for ESL community members. The provider has been successful in offering individualized tutoring to meet the employer's goals in conjunction with PATH classes.

ALP also encourages Anchorage English language learner students to participate in the PLN program, which requires a year of training to develop knowledge and skills and helps to promote disease prevention and health activities in their communities. In PY 2022, PLNs participated in 5 health fairs and taught 2 classes on health literacy. They provided education to hundreds of community members; helped individuals access information, public assistance, the Anchorage School District, and job support; and provided food through food drives to those in need. The PLN program, through the expansion initiative, has identified over 10 new local partners in Fairbanks, Juneau, Valdez, and MatSu.

Through a partnership with Providence, the Community Health Workers Apprenticeship Program is now in its third year. ALP continued to provide tutoring services to individuals in the program to ensure that students are successful. In addition to providing tutoring services, ALP planned and implemented two workplace literacy classes for Providence employees in Environmental and Food Services. The first class is for lower-level ESL students to focus on language improvement, digital literacy, and workplace content, such as accessing training programs at Providence. The second class is for higher level ESL students and focuses on skills needed for pathways identified by Providence into higher paying positions in the organization. These pathways are in healthcare, such as nursing assistants, and also administration, such as accounts receivable. Each class served 12 students in PY 2022. By June 30, 2023, Providence identified two other service departments that want to participate in the classes.

ALP will continue to research other in-demand industries in Alaska and find ways to provide sustainable career pathway options to their students.

### **Local Workforce Integration (243(c)(2))**

ALP relies on partnerships to achieve IELCE program goals. Partners help place students into employment opportunities and assist immigrants to utilize their previous education. Partnerships include: the Anchorage Midtown Job Center, Municipality of Anchorage's World Education Services Global Talent Bridge, Skilled Immigrant Integration Program (SIIP), Anchorage Community Land Trust's Set-up Shop program, South Central Area Health Education Center (SCAHEC), and Providence Health Systems. These partnerships assist IELCE students to build career pathways and IET for Direct Support Professional (DSP), Personal Care Aide (PCA), Certified Nurse Assistant (CAN) and Community Health Worker (CHW) certification classes.

## **Adult Education Standards**

### **Content Standards**

In PY 2022 Alaska worked with the American Institutes for Research to begin creating Alaska specific college and career readiness (CCR) standards for adult education and English language learners for alignment with Alaska's K-12 academic standards.

The first year of the project started with the development of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Digital Literacy standards. The team created a committee that worked to align the projects standards to Alaska's Standards and included Alaskan context. The Alaska Standards can be found [here](#).

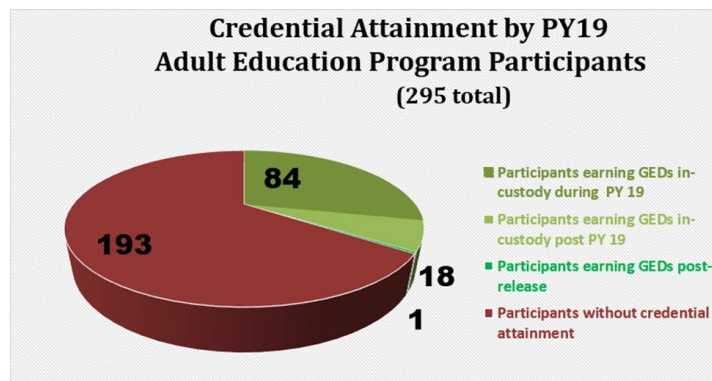
## Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals (AEFLA Section 225)

### Recidivism

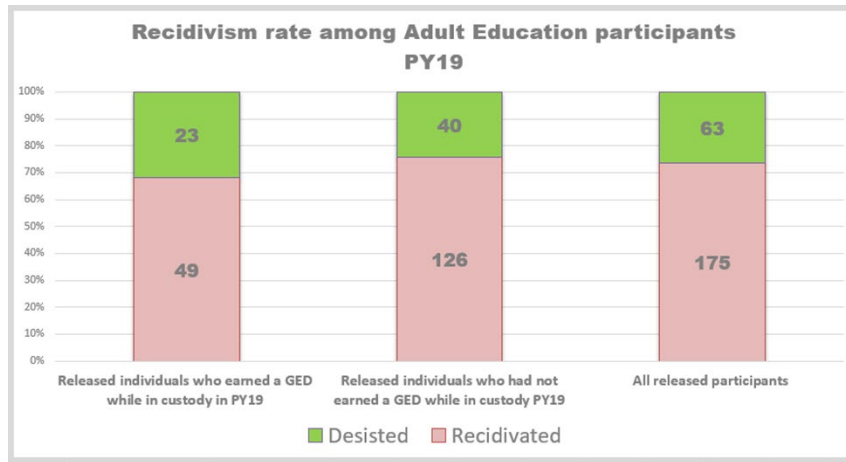
The Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) measures recidivism as the percentage of individuals convicted of felonies who are released from DOC custody within a given year and who return to DOC custody within three years for any remand due to conviction (felony or misdemeanor) or probation/parole violation. Therefore, recidivism rates are looked at retroactively each year to measure the rate of those releasing three years prior.

Inmates are either referred by their Probation Officers to education based on risk-needs assessment or they voluntarily enroll in the program. All participation in programming is voluntary.

The DOC Reentry Unit reviewed data from adult education participants from Program Year 2019 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020) to study if a correlation existed between program involvement, credential achievement, and recidivism. PY 2019 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-time and part-time student participants' information was extracted from AlaskaJobs, GED Manager, and the Alaska Corrections Offender Management System (ACOMS) to determine what education achievement was attained prior to, during, and post their adult education period of participation while incarcerated in PY 2019; in addition, credential achievement and participation was compared to their custody status over the three-year period to analyze what correlation may exist between the high school equivalency achievement and the rate of remand post-release. Those rates of recidivism are then compared to the known state recidivism rate of the general population of releasing offenders. Some individuals captured within the dataset were released at various times within the three subsequent years, not having completed a full three-year post-release period. Thus, the reported rate could potentially be higher.



The cohort data reflected in the chart above reflects the 295 individuals who participated in Adult Education in PY 2019. Of those, 58 have remained incarcerated with 12 having earned GEDs in PY 2019 and 9 earning GEDs in subsequent years. Of the 295 participants, 238 individuals were released from custody with 175 of those individuals recidivating, which represents an overall 74 percent rate of recidivism for program participants.



The data also revealed that those who had released and had earned a GED while incarcerated had a recidivism rate (49 of 72) of 68 percent, to those who had not earned a GED while incarcerated (126 of 166) at 76 percent. The 68 percent rate of recidivism for those earning a GED was higher than the previous two years (PY17 - 52 percent, PY18 - 64 percent), whereas the overall program recidivism rate of 73 percent was an increase of 10 percentage points from the previous two years which each recorded a rate of 63 percent. The Department of Corrections *2022 Offender Profile* (Alaska Department of Corrections, 2023) details how Alaska’s general recidivism rate has ranged from 58 percent to 63 percent from 2015-2019 fiscal years. Alaska DOC has yet to release the statistics from Fiscal Year 2020, which represents Program Year 2019, the cohort reflected in this report.

There are statistical indicators showing that Adult Education program participants who earned a GED while incarcerated were 8 percent less likely to recidivate than those who had not earned a GED. The factors attributed to higher rates of recidivism for Adult Education participants, as compared to the general population of reentrants, haven’t been fully explored; however, it may be deduced that the general releasing population has a higher percentage of offenders who have already attained a high school equivalency credential, post-secondary education, or have had formal training in skilled trades, which would afford them more opportunities for employment and stability upon release. It is not fully understood why there is an increase in rates of recidivism for Adult Education program participants in Program Year 2019 as compared to the previous program years of 2017 and 2018; however, the intervening three years in which remands were recorded and factored into the PY 2019 recidivism rate occurred during the peak of the global pandemic, July 2020 through June of 2023, a time period where reentrants would have faced more limited social service access and higher rates of unemployment (Abraham et al., 2020) and potentially higher rates of drug use (Abrahamson 2021), all of which could have contributed to an increased risk for recidivism.