

Information Session 2: An Overview of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

August 19, 2014

[Note – Slide content is followed by presenter’s narrative for each slide.]

Slide 1 – Session II: Overview of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

Welcome to the second in a series of information sessions designed for State Directors of Adult Education. The purpose of the series is to acquaint key staff in state adult education offices with the changes in the recently reauthorized Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, in order to facilitate transition to the new law. WIOA will require strong partnerships at the state level. A good working knowledge of the legislation is essential to being effective in that leadership role. This session employs a format known as a “flipped classroom” by delivering content in advance of planned discussion and interaction. This series and format is a result of conversations with the Executive Committee of the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium.

Slide 2 – Topics for Discussion

- Purposes of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)
- Unified Plan and Performance Accountability
- New Activities
- Other Changes to AEFLA
- Authorization Levels
- Public Comment and Resources

This session will focus on the purposes of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act or AEFLA, outline broad provisions of Unified Plans and the Performance Accountability System, discuss three new activities in AEFLA, and outline several other changes to the Act. It will also review authorization levels through 2020 and provide information on how to offer comment about WIOA implementation and ask questions about the Act.

Slide 3 – Review: Purposes of WIOA

- Increase access to opportunity for employment, education, training, and support services
- Encourage alignment and coordination among the primary federal programs that support employment services, workforce development, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation activities
- Emphasize increased accountability and results among the core programs
- WIOA is authorized until 2020

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reauthorizes the Workforce Investment Act, which was due for reauthorization in 2003. It represents the first major reform in the U.S. workforce system in over a decade. Among the overall purposes of the Act, is the intent to increase access to opportunity for employment, education, training and support services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, to the services they need to succeed in the labor market. It encourages new opportunities for collaboration across the federal and state agencies, strengthens partnerships, emphasizes accountability, and promotes connections to employers and to regional needs. The WIOA also supports and makes investments in innovative and promising models – something that is underscored throughout.

Slide 4 – Title II: Adult Education and Literacy

- WIOA reauthorizes and enhances the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)
- State Plan and Performance Accountability provisions moved to Title I-A – System Alignment and apply to all core programs in WIOA

Title II of WIOA reauthorizes and enhances the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Two sections, the State Plan and Performance Accountability that are currently a part of Title II under WIA have been moved to Title I-A, a section of the new law that is focused on system alignment. The provisions under these two sections apply to all four core programs in WIOA. This information session will touch briefly on the State Plan and the performance requirements. Information Sessions 3 and 4 will be devoted to a more thorough discussion of the provisions within these two areas.

Slide 5 – Retains AEFLA Purposes

Create a partnership among Federal Government, States, and localities to provide adult education and literacy services that

- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency
- Assist adults who are parents or family members become a full partner in the education development of their children
- Assist adults in completing high school

AEFLA retains purposes that have been in place over 50 years of legislative history in adult education. They acknowledge the broad role adult education and literacy plays in helping adults improve employment, self-sufficiency and in supporting the educational development of children. The importance of high school completion for adults continues to be of primary importance to achieving these broad purposes.

Slide 6 – Expands AEFLA Purposes

Purpose expanded to:

- Promote transitions from adult education to postsecondary education and training through career pathways
- Assist immigrants and English language learners
 - improve reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehending the English language

- acquire understanding of American government, individual freedom, and responsibilities of citizenship

AEFLA recognizes that completion of high school is not an end in itself, but the means to further opportunity. It adds to the purpose of high school completion, the transition to postsecondary education through the use of career pathways.

A new purpose statement in AEFLA formalizes a role that adult education has played for decades related to assisting immigrants and English language learners learn to read, write and speak English, adding mathematics to scope of services. It expands the focus of English language learning by adding civics-related purposes.

Slide 7 – Unified State Plan under Title I

- Unified State Plan
 - States required to prepare a single, coordinated 4-year Unified Plan or Combined State Plan
 - Plans must include the strategic vision and goals of the State and the operational elements to support the strategy
 - Plan includes AEFLA-specific elements, including:
 - Aligning content standards for adult education with state-adopted content standards

States are required to prepare a single, coordinated unified plan across the core programs, or a combined state plan that adds other specified federal programs including the Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Unified Plans must include a strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and for meeting the needs of employers. Strategic goals must be based on economic conditions, workforce needs, and available resources for workforce development. Operational elements to support the strategy include how the State plans to align and coordinate the core and other programs, engage community colleges and area career and technical schools, and improve access to a wide range of services. States are also required to submit title-specific elements, including for AEFLA, how they intend to align adult education content standards with state-adopted content standards, and assess the quality of adult education providers. States must submit Unified Plans in March, 2016.

Slide 8 – Performance Accountability

Measures include:

- 1) Percentage of program participants employed during the second quarter after exit
- 2) Percentage of program participants employed during the fourth quarter after exit
- 3) Median earnings of program participants
- 4) Percentage of participants who obtain a postsecondary credential or high school diploma (subject to special rule)
- 5) Percentage of participants who during a program year achieve a measurable skill gain
- 6) Effectiveness in serving employers

The Act establishes common performance measures that all core programs must use and requires the Secretaries of Education and Labor to consult with a variety of stakeholders to develop definitions for the indicators. This will ensure national comparability of data, one of the hallmarks of the current National Reporting System. The indicators differ from the performance indicators in Title II of WIA, adding among other things, a requirement to report on earnings and a measure for “effectiveness in serving employers.” The performance accountability provisions go into effect on July 1, 2016.

Slide 9 –Three New Title II Activities

1. Integrated education and training
 - aims to provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training
 - targets training in occupations or clusters that assist adults in their educational and career advancement

AEFLA creates three new activities that are added to the definition of adult education and literacy services and become a part of required activities for local adult education programs under the Act. First it creates integrated education and training services that provide adult education concurrently and contextually with occupational training. Congress issued a Managers Report that accompanied the introduction of WIOA. The report stresses the delivery of adult education in conjunction with occupational skills training as a primary reform principle of AEFLA reauthorization.

Slide 10 –Three New Title II Activities (Continued)

2. Workforce preparation activities
 - Activities, programs or services to help individuals gain basic academic, critical thinking, digital literacy, and self-management skills
 - Includes competencies in utilizing resources and using information, and acquiring other skills necessary for successful transition into postsecondary education, training, or employment

Second, workforce preparation activities were added to the definition of adult education and literacy services. The definition supports teaching employability skills – services that help individuals gain basic academic critical thinking, and digital literacy skills, as well as other competencies.

Slide 11 – Three New Title II Activities (Continued)

3. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE)
 - Codifies the IEL/CE program, previously funded through annual appropriations
 - Provides instruction in literacy and English language acquisition, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and workforce training

- Focuses program design and goals on integrated education and training activities and coordination with local workforce system
- Reserves 12% of appropriations to support IEL/CE activities

The Act also creates a new Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program. This replaces the English Literacy and Civics program, which was previously funded through annual appropriations. The inclusion of it into AEFLA makes it an authorized program and eliminates the need for it to be funded annually through the appropriations process. The Act requires the Secretary of Education to reserve 12% of AEFLA appropriated funds and distribute those funds to States using a formula provided for in the Act. The new program retains the focus on English language proficiency and civics education instruction and creates stronger ties to employment and the workforce system.

Slide 12 – Change: How States Compete Funds

- Changes Eligible Provider definition
 - Organizations must have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services
 - Broadens eligible provider list to “may include” existing organizations, as well as organizations with employer partnerships

The Act contains changes that effect how States will compete funds to local adult education agencies. The definition of “eligible provider” increases the importance of all eligible applicants having “demonstrated effectiveness” in providing adult education and literacy services. The list of eligible providers under WIA was a definitive list of providers who could apply for funds. WIOA contains provisions that make the list illustrative allowing any organization of “demonstrated effectiveness” eligible to apply for funds.

Slide 13 – Change: How States Compete Funds (Continued)

- Revises considerations that must be used in awarding grants
- Sets forth five new local application requirements, including those aimed at alignment with local workforce plans and participation in the one-stop system
- Title I-B requires AEFLA applicants to submit applications to local Workforce Boards for alignment with local plans

Other changes in WIOA affect how States may award funds. The 12 considerations under WIA used in the application process have been revised, adding an emphasis to alignment of local adult education programs to local workforce plans and one-stops, as well as coordination of support services. In addition to the considerations, the Act establishes 5 new application requirements a state must use, including those aimed at alignment with local workforce plans and participation in the one-stop system. Under Title I-B, which includes local plans under Title I, AEFLA applicants must first submit applications to local workforce boards to review for alignment with local plans.

Slide 14 – State Responsibilities

- AEFLA maintains much of the State fiscal requirements
State Distribution of Funds

- State administrative expenses capped at 5% or \$85,000 (increased from \$65,000 under WIA)
- State leadership may not exceed 12.5%
- Maintains 82.5% for grants and contracts to eligible providers, not more than 20% may be used for corrections education programs
- Match and MOE requirements remain unchanged

States have many of the same fiscal requirements under WIOA. The changes include an increased state minimum which may be used for state administration. It also changes the cap on corrections education and other institutionalized individuals from 10% to 20% allowing a State to increase its commitments to that program.

Slide 15 – Changes to State Leadership

- Adds four new required activities to be supported with funds
 - (1) Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with core programs and one-stop partners to support Unified State plan strategy
 - (2) High quality professional development programs to improve instruction, including essential components of reading instruction and dissemination of models and promising practices
 - (3) Technical assistance to providers based on rigorous research on instructional practices, local one stop responsibilities and effective use of technology
 - (4) Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of adult education activities in the State
- Includes additional permissible activities

WIOA makes significant changes to how States may use State Leadership funds. In preceding versions of adult education legislation, states had broad discretion in how Leadership funds were used to support activities of statewide significance in promoting the purposes of each Act. WIOA, for the first time, requires states to spend Leadership funds on mandated activities. After the State covers the mandated activities, it may expend funds on other permissible activities, including any activities of statewide significance.

Slide 16 – Additional Highlights

- National Leadership Activities
 - From appropriations, 2% of funds (capped at \$15 million) reserved to support national leadership activities
 - Adds four required activities, including:
 - (1) Support for States on new performance measures
 - (2) Assistance to eligible providers in using the new measures and data systems
 - (3) Conducting rigorous research and evaluations on adult education to improve programs
 - (4) Independent evaluation of AEFLA programs every four years

In addition to increasing the cap on national leadership funds to 2% or up to \$15 million, WIOA contains a provision similar to the State Leadership provisions requiring the Secretary of Education to fund four new required activities, with permissible activities thereafter. Included is the requirement to carry out an independent evaluation of the activities under AEFLA at least once every four years.

Slide 17 – Authorization of Appropriations

[Image: Bar chart showing fiscal year authorizations for fiscal year 2015-2020. Authorizations are as follows: \$577,667,000 in 2015; \$622,286,000 in 2016; \$635,198,000 in 2017; \$649,287,000 in 2018; \$664,552,000 in 2019; and \$678,640,000 in 2020.]

The Act authorizes an amount of funds through the appropriations process for each fiscal year, beginning in 2015 through 2020 when the Act expires.

Slide 18 – Blog Inviting Comment on WIOA

- The Department invites stakeholders to submit comments and recommendations to help implement the WIOA.
- Input will help identify issues and concerns to address in order to fulfill expectations of WIOA in development of draft regulations
- Blog post available at: <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/ovae/2014/08/12/invitation-to-comment-on-implementation-of-title-ii-and-title-iv-of-the-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act/>
- Submit comments by August 29, 2014.

In partnership with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, which is responsible for WIOA Title IV Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, is seeking input to help identify issues and concerns that we need to address in order to fulfill the expectations of WIOA, particularly as we develop draft regulations for public comment. Please visit the blog post and submit comments by August 29, 2014. The post includes 4 specific questions related to AEFLA. We welcome your comments.

Slide 19 – Additional Resources

- DAEL’s WIOA Reauthorization Information:
 - www.ed.gov/aefla
 - For questions, please email: AskAEFLA@ed.gov
- Rehabilitation Services Administration Information (Title IV amendments):
 - www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa-reauthorization.html
 - For questions, please email: RSA.WIOA@ed.gov
- DOL Employment and Training Administration Information (Title I):
 - www.doleta.gov/WIOA
 - For questions, please email: DOL.WIOA@dol.gov

The landing pages for partner programs remain available. Please forward questions to the appropriate mailboxes and access information resources listed.

Slide 20: Closing image of Department of Education seal

Thank you for joining this session. Please join us for the third Information Session on Unified Plans under WIOA.