



Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education

Under Section 243 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Overview

The U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (AEFLA), enacted as Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act¹ (WIOA), is the principal source of federal funding for states' adult education programs. AEFLA, administered by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), provides a variety of services to youth and adult learners aged 16 and older, including (but not limited to) adult education, literacy, workforce preparation, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education (IELCE), and integrated education and training (IET). Additionally, WIOA codified in section 243 a program for expanded IELCE activities that had previously been authorized through appropriations language since 2001. The program provides education services for English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials from their native country. Section 243(d) of WIOA requires the Secretary of Education to make available to the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, a report on the activities carried out under the IELCE program.

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

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

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

² Section 203(2) of WIOA defines “adult education and literacy activities” as “...programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training.”

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

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

This biennial report includes available data from the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), covering program years (PYs) 2018–19 and PY 2019–20. This report sets forth activities of the section 243 IELCE program in the following sections: Funding, Enrollment, Participant Outcomes, and Program Challenges and Promising Practices.

Funding

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

Congress appropriated \$616,955,000 for AEFLA in fiscal year (FY) 2018 and \$641,955,000 in FY 2019. The Department reserved a portion specified by appropriations language for national leadership activities (authorized under Section 242). As shown in Table 1, \$542,920,400 was available for AEFLA Basic Grants to States, and \$74,034,600 was available for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education in FY 2018, which represented a \$4.2 million increase in the IELCE program from the prior FY 2017 funding level. In FY 2019, \$564,920,400 was

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

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

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

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

available for AEFLA Basic Grants to States, and the IELCE program also saw an increase of \$3 million from the previous fiscal year, with \$77,034,600 available for the program.

IELCE awards to states ranged from \$60,000 to \$14,683,382 in FY 2018 and from \$60,000 to \$15,097,875 in FY 2019.⁸

Table 1: Congressional Appropriations for FYs 2016–2019			
Fiscal Year (FY)	Section 243 – IELCE Estimated Award Amount	AEFLA Basic Grants to States Estimated Award Amount	Congressional Appropriations
FY 2016–17	\$69,834,600	\$512,120,400	\$581,955,000
FY 2017–18	\$69,834,600	\$512,120,400	\$581,955,000
FY 2018–19	\$74,034,600	\$542,920,400	\$616,955,000
FY 2019–20	\$77,034,600	\$564,920,400	\$641,955,400

Enrollment

The first full year of program implementation for the Section 243 IELCE program was PY 2016–17. Figure 1 illustrates enrollment data for the first four years of IELCE program implementation. Between PY 2016–17, PY 2017–18, and PY 2018–19, states reported a steady increase in participants enrolled in the IELCE program nationwide. However, the program experienced a 10 percent decrease in participants between PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20 due to challenges faced by states during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹

A key requirement of the IELCE program is that educational services be delivered in combination with IET activities. The AEFLA regulations¹⁰ clarify that a program may meet the requirement to provide IELCE in combination with IET by co-enrolling participants in IET activities provided within the local or regional workforce development area offered through other public workforce system partners, or by using IELCE funds to support IET activities.

⁸ Section 243(b)(2) of WIOA requires that no state receive an allotment for IELCE of less than \$60,000. The states that received \$60,000 in Section 243 IELCE program funds in Fiscal Years (FY) 2018 and 2019 are Montana, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. The five states that received the largest amount of Section 243 IELCE program funds in FYs 2018 and 2019 are California, Florida, New Jersey, New York, and Texas.

⁹ See *COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts* section on page 8.

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

Enrollment	
PY 2016–17:	116,683
PY 2017–18:	160,124
PY 2018–19:	167,328
PY 2019–20:	149,281

Despite the challenges states may face in implementing the IET component of the IELCE program, states have continued to make strides in increasing participation over the years. Between PY 2016–17 and PY 2019–20 the number of participants in the IET component of the program almost tripled, from 5,916 participants in PY 2016–17 to 17,494 participants in PY 2019–20.¹¹ During this time, the Department increased its technical assistance efforts to assist states with improving and expanding IELCE programs, and states have continued to provide technical assistance to local programs to ramp up IELCE services and the IET component over the years. In PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20; specifically, the IELCE program saw a slight increase of nearly 7 percent from the previous year (see IELCE-IET data in Figure 1), due in large part to notable increases in two large states. In comparison, IET enrollment for all AEFLA participants saw an increase between PY 2017–18 and PY 2018–19 (increase from 29,926 to 35,508) but experienced a nearly 12 percent decline in enrollment between PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20 (35,508 to 31,370, respectively).

Figure 2 provides disaggregated information regarding IELCE program participants by age. As indicated in the figure, there was a slight decrease in the number of IELCE program participants in all age groups between PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20. The largest overall number of participants, representing more than half of the IELCE participants (approximately 52 percent in PY 2018–19 and 51 percent in PY 2019–20, respectively), was in the 25–44 age group, and this group saw a 12 percent decrease in participants between the two program years. The second largest age group, representing 19 percent of IELCE participants in PY 2018–19 and 20 percent of participants in PY 2019–20, was 45- to 54-year-olds, and this group saw an almost 8 percent decrease in participants enrolled between the two program years.

¹¹ States saw a 136 percent increase in participants in the IET component of the IELCE program between PY 2016–17 and PY 2017–18, a 17 percent increase in participants between PY 2017–18 and PY 2018–19, and a 7 percent increase in IET participation between PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20.

Figure 1. Student Enrollment in IELCE by Program Type¹²

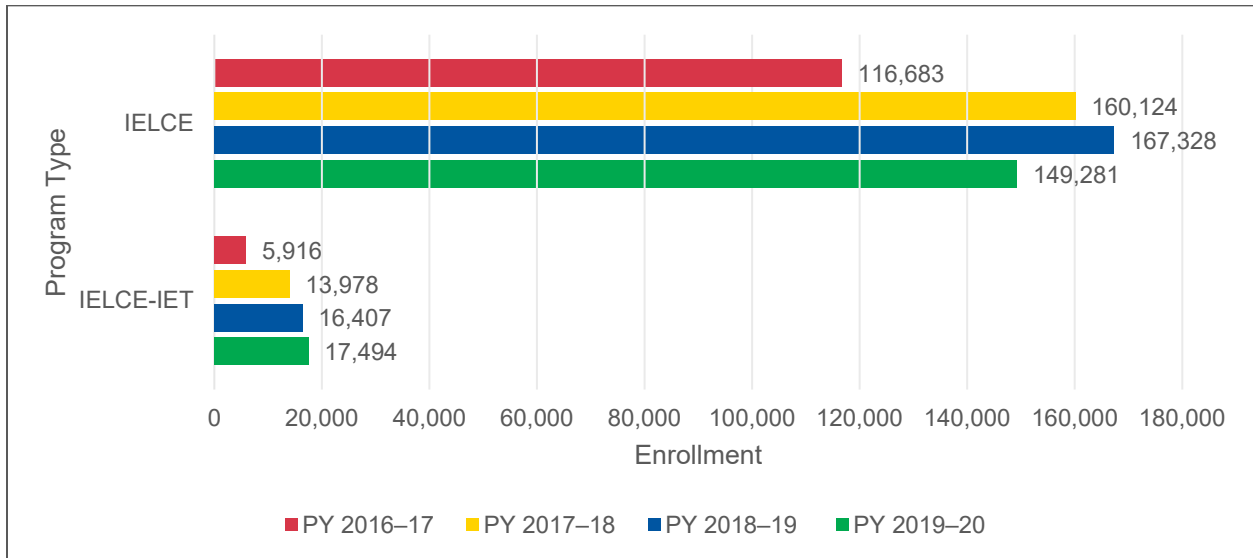
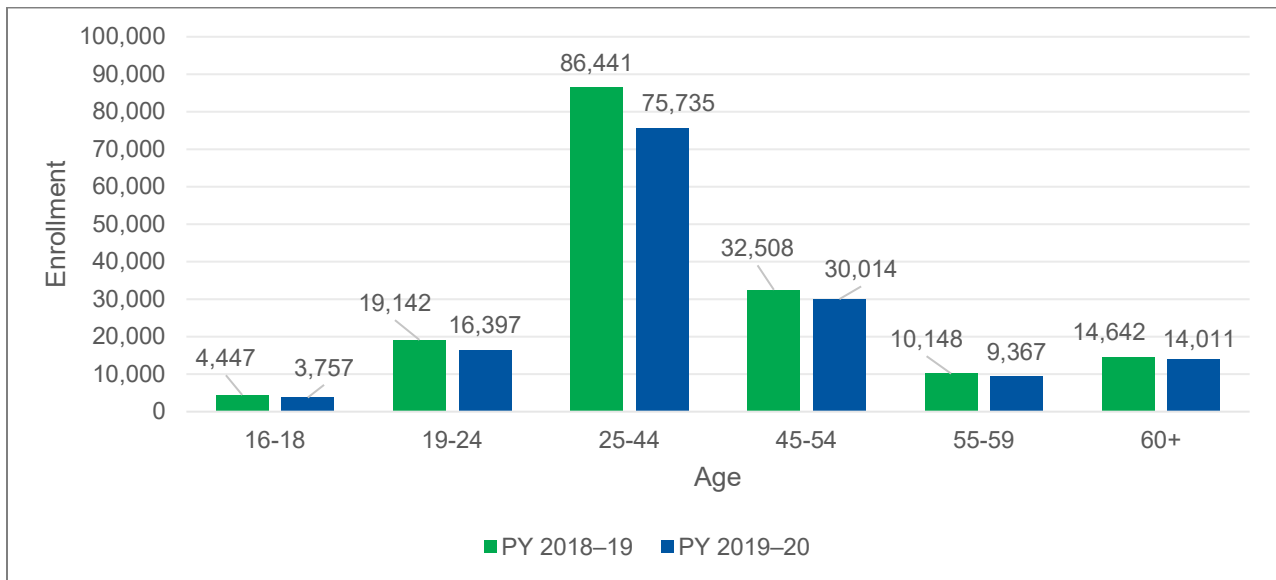


Figure 2. IELCE Program Participants by Age¹³



¹² Data retrieved from the National Reporting System for Adult Education, Table 3: Participants by Program Type and Age.

¹³ Ibid.

IELCE Participant Outcomes

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

- **Measurable Skill Gains** – The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment;
- **Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit** – The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- **Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit** – The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- **Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit** – The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; and
- **Credential Attainment¹⁵** – The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

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

¹⁵ For the purpose of Tables 1 and 2, the credential attainment number and percentage of program participants represent those participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. Participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent are included in the percentage attaining a credential if they, in addition to obtaining a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, have obtained or retained employment or are in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

Table 2: IELCE Program Outcome Achievement – PY 2018–19¹⁶

Performance Outcome	# of Participants Included in Indicator	# of Participants Achieving Outcome or Median Earnings Value	Percentage of Participants Achieving Outcome
Measurable Skill Gains	175,965	91,576	52.04%
Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter after Exit	123,770	16,784	13.56%
Employment Rate – 4th Quarter after Exit	104,814	12,991	12.39%
Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter after Exit	97,502	\$5,775	N/A
Credential Attainment	9,772	1,566	16.03%

Table 3: IELCE Program Outcome Achievement – PY 2019–20¹⁷

Performance Outcome	# of Participants Included in Indicator	# of Participants Achieving Outcome or Median Earnings Value	Percentage of Participants Achieving Outcome
Measurable Skill Gains	150,567	64,858	43.07%
Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter after Exit	134,473	30,696	22.82%

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

¹⁷ Data retrieved from National Reporting System for Adult Education, Table 9: Outcome Achievement for Participants in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education, Program Year 2019–20.

Employment Rate – 4th Quarter after Exit	137,091	25,258	18.42%
Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter after Exit	98,352	\$5,980	N/A
Credential Attainment	19,303	3,010	15.59%

IELCE Program Challenges and Promising Practices

States award Section 243 IELCE funds through the same competitive process that is required to award the basic AEFLA grant funds to eligible providers. States also have the flexibility to implement a variety of IELCE program designs as long as programs meet the requirements outlined in the regulations.¹⁸

In the annual narrative reports submitted by states in PYs 2018–19 and 2019–20, the majority of states reported having at least one IELCE program in the state, with a median of six IELCE programs per state and as many as 115 programs in one state.¹⁹ Figure 3 highlights the most commonly reported industries by states. Of the states that have indicated industry sectors for the IET component of the IELCE program, the most frequently reported type of IET program within industry sectors for both program years was health care, with 54 percent of states reporting programs within this industry sector in 2018–19 and 97 percent of states reporting programs within this industry sector in 2019–20.²⁰ Other popular IET sectors reported by states were hospitality, business/information technology, manufacturing, construction, and skilled trades, among others.²¹

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

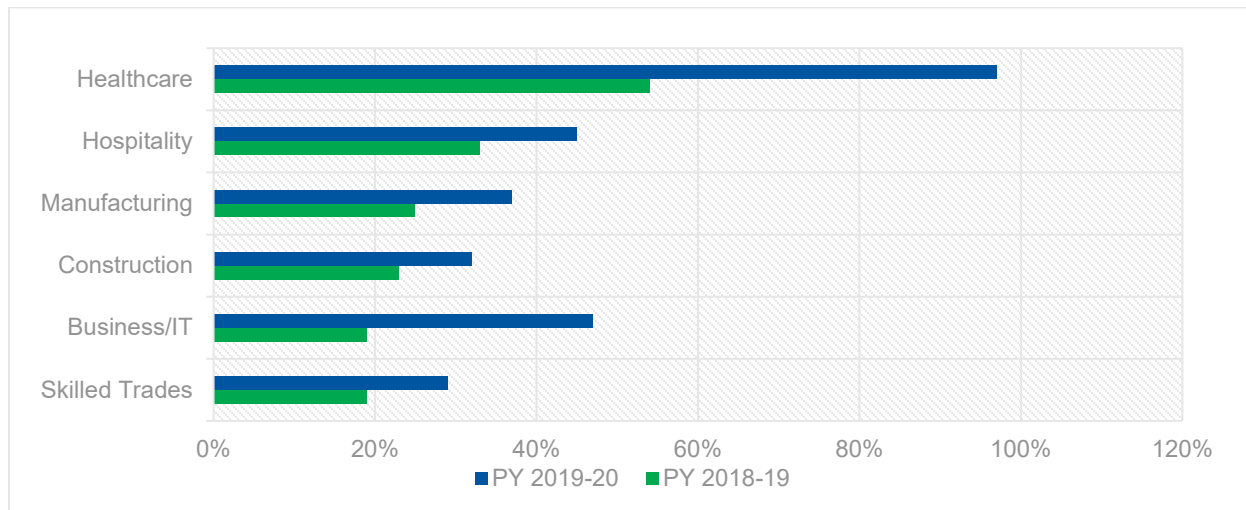
¹⁸ 34 C.F.R. §§ 463.70–463.75. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title34-vol3/xml/CFR-2019-title34-vol3-subtitleB-chapIV.xml#seqnum463.70>.

¹⁹ The Program Year (PY) 2019–20 Annual State Narrative Report indicated five states with one program each (Alaska, Hawaii, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming), and one state with 115 programs (California). The number of programs ranged by state, with a median of six IELCE programs across states.

²⁰ Of states that reported IET industry sectors in their narrative reports, 54 percent of states reported IET programs in health care in PY 2018–19, which increased to 97 percent in PY 2019–20.

²¹ Some sectors saw significant increases between PYs 2018–19 and 2019–20. Growth in these sectors partially reflects increased reporting of IET sectors by states in the narrative report, as well as actual increases.

Figure 3. IELCE Industry Sectors - 2018–19 to 2019–20 State Narratives²²



Several states reported challenges in implementing the IELCE program. In particular, many states reported challenges offering IELCE services in combination with IET activities and found difficulty designing and implementing the IET requirements. In both PYs 2018–19 and 2019–20, the most frequently mentioned challenge in the narrative reports was recruitment to IELCE programs, especially in states with extensive rural areas. Other recruitment challenges included: finding a sufficient number of students to participate in specific career clusters, delivering IET services to students who worked multiple jobs or had scheduling conflicts, or identifying training appropriate for IELCE learners at very low levels of English proficiency. Some states also expressed challenges in developing partnerships with area employers and local workforce boards, as well as difficulty funding occupational training due to limited resources.

Despite these challenges, several states reported promising approaches and successes in their IELCE programming and described ongoing professional development or technical assistance efforts to strengthen the IET components and ensure local providers fully understood the IELCE requirements. Such strategies included the use of dedicated career navigators to assist students with career counseling and job search support, as well as increased communication and collaboration with employers. Some states reported developing partnerships with employers or local industries to support IELCE participants' placement in employment, including allowing employers to be involved in the development of occupationally relevant instructional materials and offering student participants employment after IELCE program completion. A significant number of states indicated successes in integrating local IELCE providers' activities with the local workforce development board, along with stronger connections with postsecondary institutions and employers, which allowed them to address regional training and employment needs. Additionally, a select number of states reported participating in the Department's federally funded *Building Opportunities through Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education* project, which provided coaching and other technical assistance to support program

²² PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20 Adult Education Annual State Narrative Reports.

design and created a national collaborative that allowed for peer-to-peer learning and sharing of IELCE promising practices and strategies.

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

Near the start of the fourth quarter of PY 2019–20, COVID-19 forced adult education programs to shut down in-person learning. The closures required programs to rethink approaches to providing services and prompted states to figure out how to provide services that met immediate participant needs, as well as continue operations for adult education programs. Similar to the AEFLA Basic Grants to States, the IELCE program experienced a decline in enrollment and performance outcomes between PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20. For many states, the pandemic led to the suspension of many IELCE programs, although about half of states described pivoting to virtual IELCE services in their narrative reports. The pivot came with both challenges and opportunities, as many programs struggled with enrollment and disruptions due to program participants having other responsibilities such as homeschooling children, employment challenges, or barriers to technology access. A few programs that have pivoted online have reported an unexpected opportunity to offer online training to cohorts that could be drawn from all over the state, rather than just one geographic area or community. States also struggled to adapt the IET components to virtual delivery, and employer engagement was challenging in industries that faced shutdowns during the pandemic, while other states reported being able to pivot to other types of IET programs that better lent themselves to online delivery (i.e., computer programming or coding skills), while still meeting regional needs.

Summary

Since 2001, Congress has funded “integrated English literacy and civics education [IELCE] services to immigrants and other limited-English proficient populations.” Under Title II of WIOA, AEFLA funds are reserved specifically for the IELCE program. This report presents funding levels and enrollment trends in the first four years of the program, along with available demographic and outcomes data for IELCE program participants with a specific focus on PY 2018–19 and PY 2019–20. The report also provides insights and analysis of state narrative reports to describe program implementation challenges, progress, and promising practices, along with impacts on IELCE programming during the coronavirus pandemic. While states recover, they continue to develop and expand IELCE programs and provide resources and guidance to local programs to strengthen IELCE programs within their states. OCTAE continues to provide technical assistance, opportunities for states to share promising practices, and other resources and supports to assist states in their implementation efforts.