

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

(a) Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under Section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The content standards for the Minnesota Adult Basic Education (ABE) system are comprised of three components:

1. The federally-developed [College and Career Readiness Standards \(CCRS\) for Adult Education](#), which identify key English Language Arts/Literacy, Math, and Foundational Reading Skills
2. The Minnesota-developed [Academic, Career and Employability Skills \(ACES\) Transitions Integration Framework \(TIF\)](#), which identifies key professional or soft skills in the areas of Effective Communication, Learning Strategies, Critical Thinking, Self-Management, Developing a Future Pathway, Navigating Systems
3. The Minnesota-developed [Northstar Digital Literacy Standards](#), which identify key basic digital literacy skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online.

The CCRS for Adult Education are drawn from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Minnesota state-adopted K-12 standards for English Language Arts and Literacy align with the CCSS. The current Minnesota state-adopted K-12 standards for Mathematics encompass some content that is beyond the scope of the CCSS, but are largely aligned with the CCSS.

Eligible providers will be required to demonstrate that their curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned to these MN ABE content standards and that their staff have been trained on the use of the standards.

In order to ensure that all ABE practitioners are knowledgeable of the above listed standards and understand how to use them effectively to guide instruction and programming, the Minnesota ABE system will provide systematic professional development and other support to eligible providers including:

- face-to-face workshops and online trainings;
- training modules based on the College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action training tools and processes;
- technical assistance to eligible providers focused on standards implementation;
- support for local Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on standards implementation;
- online standards resource libraries; and
- support for the use of standards-aligned Open Educational Resources (OERs).

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

(b) Describe how the state will, using the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education and Literacy programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

Adult Education and Literacy eligible providers approved under Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requirements will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhere to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During grant year 2016–17, the Minnesota Department of Education will implement a new competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that will determine what local providers will be grantees starting July 1, 2017. The local AEFLA program grant process will rate responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and include additional state ABE priorities and context.

TIMELINE

The following steps will be taken in the WIOA AEFLA competition:

February 2017	MDE publishes and promotes WIOA-aligned federal AEFLA grant application request for proposals (RFP)
February 2017 - ongoing	MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers
February-March 2017	MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
March 2017	Due date for WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
March-April 2017	Reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
April 2017	MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the RFP
April-May 2017	MDE announces WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding
July 1, 2017	WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding

ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

1. A local education agency;

2. Community-based or faith-based organization;
3. Volunteer literacy organization;
4. Institution of higher education;
5. Public or private nonprofit agency;
6. Library;
7. Public housing authority;
8. Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
9. Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
10. A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION

In February 2017, the grant competition for the 2017-18 grant year will be publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and Minnesota Department of Education policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. A fair and equitable process will be followed for the federal AEFLA grant funding that follows other federal grant procedures. The Minnesota Department of Education publishes and promotes all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) can submit a proposal.

ALLOCATIONS

The Minnesota Department of Education will dedicate 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount will be divided based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, and regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives.

In addition, 12.5 percent of the state allocation to Leadership Activities to provide support for activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

13 CONSIDERATIONS

The Minnesota Department of Education will use the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers. As part of the RFP process, agencies will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

1. Needs Assessment: The degree to which the provider is responsive to (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under Section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills and who are English language learners.
2. Individuals with Disabilities: The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
3. Past Effectiveness: The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for

the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.

4. Alignment with One-stop Partners: The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under Section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
5. Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.
6. Research Based Educational Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.
7. Effective Use of Technology: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
8. Integrated Education and Training: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
9. Qualified Staff: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.
10. Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.
11. Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with Section 116) and to monitor program performance.
12. Information management system: The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and
13. English Language Acquisition and Civics Education: The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

In addition to the above considerations, the grant application will require description of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- Capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming including evidence of the organization's AEFLA-eligible activity services in the prior year.
- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation);
- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services; and
- The ability to match federal funding with other funding from state, local, organizational or other sources that would directly go to providing AEFLA-eligible activities.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals are rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office, which will be completed in April 2017. The review process for selecting successful applicants includes formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. The Minnesota Department of Education will select applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on proposals with the highest scores, noting also the additional criteria listed above. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding that is WIOA-aligned will be notified in May-June 2017 and will be eligible to start programming July 1, 2017.

APPLICATIONS BEYOND 2017

Beyond 2017, all approved and potential new providers will be required to comply with all state and federal regulations, policies and expectations for AEFLA grantees with routine reporting.

This routine reporting includes:

1. Reporting and use of the state AEFLA database system;
2. Annual reporting requirements with performance data;
3. Reauthorization every five years with an updated description of programming, articulated implementation of accountability procedures and policies, performance analysis, and plans for continuous improvement; and
4. Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The focus of adult education instruction in Minnesota will be the above noted content standards contextualized to enhance readiness for employment, citizenship, postsecondary education and training provided through comprehensive services that meet the diverse educational needs of students.

In accordance with federal regulation, eligible providers may receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:

- adult education;
- literacy;
- workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- family literacy activities;
- English language and acquisition activities;
- integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/Civics);
- workforce preparation activities; or
- integrated education and training, which
 - provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 - is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Eligible providers will be required to implement such activities in accordance with the following federal definitions:

- **Adult education** means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment.
- **Literacy** means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.
- **Workplace adult education and literacy activities** means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Family literacy activities means activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family, and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

- A. Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency.
- B. Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children.
- C. Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- D. An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

SPECIAL RULE FOR FAMILY LITERACY

The Minnesota Department of Education will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that the agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy

activities under this title, the Minnesota Department of Education will attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

English language acquisition program means a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment.

Integrated English literacy and civics education means 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.

Workforce preparation activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, or employment.

Integrated education and training 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.

All funded programs will be required to offer the above listed kinds of programming concurrently based on the needs of the population served and encouraged to blend as much programming as possible into coordinated occupational training, employment, and academic pathways as possible by addressing all standards (CCRS, ACES, and North Star) in all program components, contextualizing secondary credential programming and providing “navigation” support.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of nonfederal funds that would be available in the absence of federal funds, and, in no case, replace those nonfederal funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

(c) Describe how the state will establish and operate programs under Section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for: Adult education and literacy activities; Special education, as determined by the eligible agency; Secondary school credit; Integrated education and training; Career pathways; Concurrent enrollment; Peer tutoring; and Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The Minnesota Department of Education will award funds to carry out corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals within correctional institutions in accordance with the requirements of Section 225.

Section 225(a) of WIOA states, “from funds made available under Section 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals. The funds described shall be used to provide: (1) Adult education and literacy services, (2) Special education as determined by the eligible agency, (3) Secondary school credit, and (4) Integrated education and training; (5) Career pathways; (6) Concurrent enrollment; (7) Peer tutoring; and (8) Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

The Minnesota Department of Education will reserve no more than 20 percent of its federal grant received under WIOA to provide programs for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 and will use the same application process being used for section 231 funds. A single applicant will be approved to provide services to Minnesota’s Department of Corrections system. County corrections facilities as well as other facilities such as state hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and limited retention facilities will be must be addressed by applicants competing for the service area in which they are located.

INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

(d) Describe how the state will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the program is designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The goals of IEL/Civics Education are to:

1. prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
2. integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Successful applicants may receive up to \$50,000 per site annually for their IEL/Civics program that embeds the four instructional components as noted in WIOA through IEL/Civics:

1. English Literacy
2. Civics
3. Workforce Preparation
4. Work Training and Certification

Minnesota grantees will be required to address the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS), Minnesota’s Academic, Career and Employability Standards (ACES) and North Star Digital Literacy

Standards. In addition, grantees will be required to provide English instruction contextualized to both civics content and occupational training with the occupational training opportunities comprising both short-term certificate programs and well as more extended career pathways.

The Minnesota Department of Education will offer multi-year grants through a competitive request-for-proposal (RFP) process specifically for IEL/Civics Education grant funds. The application RFP asks potential local providers to describe:

- The programming they would implement and how it incorporates the four instructional components;
- How they would use the grant funds; and
- Respond to the 13 considerations from Title II of WIOA.

Each criterion in the application RFP articulates a potential maximum score.

Eligible providers for IEL/Civics grants include local education agencies, community based organizations (including faith-based organizations), volunteer literacy organizations, institutions of higher education, public or private nonprofits, public housing authorities, libraries, and consortiums of the above.

A fair and equitable process is followed to allow all eligible entities the opportunity to apply for the IEL/Civics grant. The Minnesota Department of Education publishes all grant opportunities on its website. IEL/Civics proposals are rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office.

The review process for selecting successful applicants includes formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, and the articulated use of funds.

Grantees receive considerable technical assistance from the MDE-ABE office and will be convened for targeted professional development that emphasizes current best-practices.

STATE LEADERSHIP

(e) Describe how the state will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under Section 223 of WIOA.

Describe how the state will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under Section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

The Minnesota Department of Education will use funds made available under Section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out State leadership activities under Section 223.

The Minnesota Department of Education will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to align and coordinate services for program participants. State-level policy and planning bodies provide an opportunity for Minnesota's ABE system and local programs to partner with workforce development, human services, higher education and other key agencies. Leadership funds will be used to build the capacity of grantees to coordinate and align services. Specific areas of capacity building include intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and referral between partners, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships. In addition, the development of all components of

career pathways will continue to be a priority with a focus on bridge programming and integrated education and training.

Minnesota supports a statewide ABE professional development (PD) advisory committee that meets quarterly to identify key present and future PD needs, develop PD plans and resources, identify and implement best practices in PD, and coordinate and align PD activities for an efficient and effective PD system. This advisory committee has approximately 25 members, and includes state ABE staff, PD providers and local ABE instructors and administrators.

The Minnesota PD system uses a data-driven planning process to identify PD needs and set priorities for each year. The results of an annual statewide PD needs assessment of local providers, along with evaluation data from previous PD efforts, research regarding best practices, and federal recommendations are used to inform PD priorities and the design and delivery of PD activities. Professional development activities are aligned to the MN ABE PD standards, which emphasize research-based features of effective professional development – longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for collaborative participation and the application of new knowledge and skills. Both statewide and regional opportunities are provided for adult educators to develop and share their knowledge and skills in order to improve the quality of instruction delivered in local programs. These PD activities include professional learning communities, study circles, statewide and regional conferences, online courses, webinars, and others. Evaluation of PD outcomes, especially evidence of teacher change and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills, is integrated into every initiative to ensure the effectiveness of PD activities.

State leadership funds will be used to support professional development activities that focus on a variety of areas of emphasis, including content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, volunteer training and management, effective program management, integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to postsecondary education, use of technology, distance education, universal design, serving students with disabilities, and volunteer training and recruitment.

The MDE-ABE office contracts for ABE professional development services related to research-based literacy, numeracy, English language instruction, content standards, and transitions. These PD activities include STAR training and technical assistance; EBRI study circles, online courses, and resource dissemination; and the implementation of content standards. More information regarding existing training provided may be viewed on the [ATLAS \(ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System\) homepage](#).

In addition, the MDE-ABE office contracts to deliver professional development and technical assistance in the arena of serving adults with disabilities and to maintain a [disabilities website](#). The disabilities website has received considerable national attention and may be the leading model for adult education related disabilities web information in the United States. The disabilities service provider also provides training on using Universal Design for Learning principles and strategies to address the varied needs of adult learners. All disability-related activities are consistent with and contribute to implementation of Minnesota's Olmstead plan.

The MDE-ABE office contracts to provide statewide services in the areas of volunteer tutor training, volunteer management, and client referral services (a [web-searchable Literacy Hotline](#) and a phone hotline).

The Minnesota Department of Education will deliver technical assistance to eligible providers to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. Specific areas of focus will include:

1. Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:
 - STAR training and Evidence-Based Reading Instruction study circles;
 - EBRI and writing online courses;
 - Annual Language and Literacy Institute;
 - Low-literacy Adult ESL Study Circles;
 - Minnesota Numeracy Initiative (MNI) cohort training;
 - Annual Math Institute;
 - Distance learning professional development cohorts (DL 101 and DL 102);
 - MN distance learning website
 - Distance Learning Basics online course
 - Online resource libraries in the areas of EBRI, STAR, writing, adult ESL, numeracy, writing, content standards, transitions, content standards, and project-based learning
2. Enabling providers to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers via training on referral systems, data sharing/reporting, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for post-secondary enrollment or employment.
3. Using technology to improve program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education. MDE-ABE contracts to provide professional development in the area of technology through activities such as face-to-face and [online training](#). MDE-ABE contracts to provide online training in a variety of areas, including educational technology, digital literacy instruction, and distance learning. A list of current courses available can be found on their [website](#). Training and technical assistance around distance education and digital literacy is also offered through a contracted provider. More information about current training and resources can be found on their [website](#).

In addition, other training and technical assistance focuses on the effective use of the statewide data system to maintain accurate student data and continuously improve programming. This support is offered in a variety of formats and venues.

The Minnesota Department of Education will provide grantee oversight to include data monitoring, site visits and a program improvement process for low performing grantees. The following strategies will be implemented:

- **Data Reviews** – The statewide MIS will be configured to facilitate ongoing review in the areas of assessment, attendance and compliance.
- **Monitoring Visits** – The Minnesota Department of Education will establish a monitoring system focusing on programs identified via data review. Visits will focus primarily on compliance related issues, but may be incorporated in the more extensive program review, and will result in development and monitored implementation of a local corrective action plan, called the program improvement process. *(For more information on monitoring visits, see the response to (f).)*

- **Program Improvement Process** - Local providers that do not meet state and federal program performance targets and grant expectations will be subject to a program improvement process. Over the course of one year, a provider in program improvement will:
 - Host site visits from staff from the Minnesota Department of Education;
 - Participate in special workshops focusing on analyzing and improving local program results;
 - Develop a program improvement plan that will highlight key local challenges, ensure program compliance with state and federal policy, and identify strategies and timelines to improve program performance; and
 - Receive additional technical assistance from Minnesota Department of Education and other adult education specialists, as needed.

The program improvement process will last at least one program year. At the end of the program year, the provider will complete the process as long as the provider's annual grant performance reports meet state and federal targets and grant expectations. Local providers that continue to not meet state and federal targets and grant expectations will be subject to participate in program improvement again. Providers that do not meet state and federal targets and grant expectations 3 consecutive years, may be subject to a special review by the Minnesota Department of Education to determine if the provider should continue to receive AEFLA funding.

The MDE-ABE office and professional development providers will employ a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to eligible providers and practitioners working in the ABE system. These will include activities such as:

- local program site visits, as described in (f)(5);
- a weekly electronic professional development newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
- sessions at state and regional conferences showcasing promising practices and models;
- webinars showcasing promising practices and models; and
- job-embedded professional development activities, including professional learning communities, study circles and peer observations.

ASSESSING QUALITY

(f) Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in Section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

The Minnesota Department of Education prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

1. The state ABE Management Information System (MIS) data: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.
2. A state AEFLA grantee report card: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.

3. A program improvement process: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. *(For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D).)*
4. Intensive program application cycle: On a five-year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to Minnesota statute governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:
 - a. Consortium
 - b. Program accountability procedures
 - c. Professional development priorities and activities
 - d. Proposed programming
 - e. Local program governance
 - f. Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners
 - g. Technology resources and integration
 - h. Future plans
 - i. Performance

These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from the Minnesota Department of Education and local AEFLA providers.

5. Local program monitoring site visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:
 - a. Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
 - b. All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in-depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with Minnesota statute;
 - c. Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data;
 - d. Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
 - e. Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under Section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in Section 3(32) of WIOA;
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of Section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in Section 203(9) of WIOA; and
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.