

WIOA Title II

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

Context

The Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) serves as the pass-through agency for the U.S. Department of Education's WIOA Title II funding.¹ The South Dakota Adult Education and Literacy Program (AEL) receives an annual appropriation of approximately \$1.3M; South Dakota's yearly *Maintenance of Effort* on this federal grant currently totals \$449,180.00.

WIOA Title II's Historical Funding		
Fiscal Year	Federal AEFLA Award	State General Funds
2020-2021	\$1,361,245	\$505,000
2019-2020	\$1,342,862	\$505,000
2018-2019	\$1,298,029	\$505,000
2017-2018	\$1,262,167	\$505,000
2016-2017	\$1,178,137	\$505,000
2015-2016	\$1,177,807	\$505,000
2014-2015	\$1,180,314	\$505,000
2013-2014	\$1,183,576	\$180,000
2012-2013	\$1,208,392	\$180,000
2011-2012	\$1,123,523	\$180,000
2010-2011	\$1,055,279	\$200,000
2009-2010	\$1,201,066	\$200,000
2008-2009	\$1,190,368	\$200,000
2007-2008	\$1,222,870	\$200,000
2006-2007	\$1,144,181	\$200,000
2005-2006	\$1,136,291	\$200,000

DLR serves as the administrative entity and is statutorily required to conduct multiyear grant competitions to award this funding; most recently, in spring 2020, seven incumbent subrecipient-providers were awarded agreements. The *Request for Proposal* [process] and contractual language afford DLR the ability to renew these grants for up to a total of four years.

Subrecipient Providers	FY2021 Funding
Career Learning Center of the Black Hills	\$359,000.00
Cornerstones Career Learning Center	\$426,000.00
Department of Corrections	\$142,000.00
Lake Area Technical College	\$161,000.00
Lutheran Social Services	\$209,000.00
Right Turn, The	\$81,000.00
Southeast Technical College	\$306,000.00
Total FY2021 Federal & State Pass-Through Funding	\$1,684,000.00

AEL functions as a key component of workforce development in South Dakota. In partnership with DLR, Adult Education Providers work with local students to identify both educational needs and work-readiness opportunities as part of a learner's program-of-study; the providers communicate, coordinate, and collaborate with other partners (e.g.,

¹ Section 222 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: *State Distribution of Funds; Matching Requirement.*

Workforce Training, Housing, Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Corps, Counseling Services, TANF/SNAP, and postsecondary education) to best meet students’ goals. Beyond preparation for the High School Equivalency exam, the AEL Program offers Adult Basic instruction, Civics/Citizenship instruction, Naturalization Test Preparation, Workplace Literacy, Health Literacy, Trauma-Informed Practices, Digital Literacy, Correctional Education for Prisoner Reentry, and Family Literacy.

Statistics, Participation, and Performance

Approximately 42,500 South Dakotans lack a high school diploma or its equivalency. There are more than 16,700 residents between ages 18 – 64 without a diploma/equivalency and not in the labor force. South Dakota has over 14,500 adults who do not speak English well or at all. Additionally, there are nearly 5,400 adults in South Dakota between ages 18 – 64 without a diploma/equivalency and on public assistance.² Furthermore, low-skilled adults are two times more likely to be unemployed, three times more likely to be in poverty, four times more likely to be in poor health, and eight times more likely to be incarcerated.³

An average of 3,000 students, over the age of 18, each year seek assistance from the AEL program. Those who receive significant instruction are identified as federal participants and included in federal performance measures as identified in the chart below.

Reporting Year	Total Enrollments	Federal Participants	Measurable Skill Gains	GED® Credentials	Employment in Q2	Employment in Q4	Median Quarterly Earnings
PY2019-20	2,485	1,402	246	174	56%	59%	\$6,151
PY2018-19	3,239	2,316	605	398	59%	56%	\$5,576
PY2017-18	3,395	2,274	640	308	51%	46%	\$5,721

Realities

With the necessity to transition to remote learning due to COVID-19, some adult learners have thrived. However, many of our students have been further marginalized due to the vast *Digital Divide*.

- This *Digital Divide* is comprised of: **Broadband Access**, **Device Access**, and **Digital Literacy**. AEL providers are well poised to assist South Dakotans with improving their **Digital Literacy**.

Flat funding has stretched budgets for this program, but the pandemic has **magnified financial concerns**:

- Providers have established a virtual following, so now they are faced with maintaining these services while opening their classrooms to students in need of face-to-face instruction.
- AEL providers have long struggled to attract and retain qualified instructors for wages within their budgets when the state and K-12 system offers a more competitive salary and benefits plans.
- Thus far in PY2020-21, the AEL providers have noted an increase of referrals from parents, school districts, and drug court for minors/young adults seeking a GED® credential.

If passed, the following would have significant impacts on already limited budgets:

- South Dakota Senate Bill 177. The changes made to 37-27-1 would allow 16 and 17 years-olds to be served by AEL providers.
- Federal minimum wage of \$15/hour
- Raising the refugee admissions cap

² National Association of State Directors of Adult Education’s *Fact Sheet*: American Community Survey 2018 ACS 5-Year PUMS Files; National Reporting System; NASDAE Survey of States. [Public Tableau website](#)

³ Coalition on Adult Basic Education’s Data Sheet; U.S. Census Bureau (2016)—American Community Survey.