

California Narrative Report 2020–21

The United States Department of Education (ED), Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) requires all states and territories receiving federal funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) to provide an annual narrative report following the federal outline.

Introduction

The California Department of Education (CDE) provides adult literacy services to one-fifth of adults enrolled in the AEFLA program in the United States. The adult education program addresses literacy needs of individuals by providing adults with the skills and knowledge necessary to (a) gain employment or better their current employment; (b) obtain a high school diploma (HSD) or high school equivalency (HSE) certificate; (c) attain skills necessary to enter postsecondary education and training; (d) exit public welfare and become self-sufficient; (e) learn to speak, read, and write the English language; (f) master basic academic skills to help their children succeed in school; and (g) become US citizens, exercise their civic responsibilities, and participate in a democratic society. In the 2019–2020 year, WIOA AEFLA grantees shifted from mainly in-person programs to distance learning because of COVID-19.

Overview of California Literacy Needs

The lack of basic education and literacy skills continues to be an issue that affects millions of adults in California. A significant percentage of the population lacks English literacy skills and basic education to secure employment, obtain citizenship, pursue postsecondary or higher education, and participate in their children's education. In California, 28 percent of the population (ages 16-74) is at or below Level 1 Literacy and 36 percent is at or below Level 1 Numeracy. The following section quantifies the literacy needs into four primary areas:

- **High School Diploma or Its Equivalent:** Approximately six million California adults do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent even as California's graduation rate continues to improve, which currently stands at 83 percent. The dropout rate in California has fallen below 10 percent (9.7 percent in 2018) but is much higher compared to the national average of 5.3 percent. Although graduation rates have improved, significant achievement gaps among student subgroups persist.
- **Labor Force:** The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a much higher unemployment rate of 16.4 percent in April and May of 2020 compared to 4.2 percent in April of 2019. The number of unemployed Californians rose to 2.9 million in just two months, surpassing the 2.2 million peak during the previous recession. The unemployment rate has dropped to 8.2 percent as of November 2020. The need for workplace readiness skills, reskilling, and upskilling is of significant in California.
- **English Speaking Ability:** More than six million California adults speak English less than "very well." More than one-fourth of the national non-English-speaking population resides in California, and more than one-fourth of California's population is foreign-born (26.7 percent).
- **Economic Impact:** A projection of California's economy shows a trajectory of steadily increasing demand for a highly educated workforce. However, with the recent recession and budget constraints, because of COVID-19 the state remains challenged in meeting this demand.

Source of statistics: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/skillsmap/>. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2019: ACS 1-Year estimates and 2018: ACS 5-Year Data Profiles.)

State Leadership Funds

California used state leadership funds to implement strategies identified in our unified state plan, develop and deliver high-quality professional development, provide technical assistance to sub-grantees, and monitor sub-grantees for compliance with grant requirements.

The majority of California's state leadership funds are used to contract services from three providers known as State Leadership Projects (SLPs). These organizations annually develop and deliver high-quality professional development and technical assistance. In March 2020, as it was evident that adult education programs would be closing down and preparing for online/distance learning, the CDE held a conference call with the SLPs to ensure that we were ready to support adult education teachers as they moved to teaching online. The SLPs moved quickly to provide training for teachers and continue to do so as online and distance learning is becoming the norm in California. During the 2020–21 year the SLPs continued to support sub-grantees with training and technical assistance related teaching and assessing in a remote environment. This also included professional development related to hybrid education environments.

CALPRO (Professional Development) is responsible for designing and implementing a large-scale statewide professional development project for all California WIOA, Title II: AEFLA-funded and California Adult Education Program (CAEP) agencies. CALPRO provides opportunities for adult educators to interact and learn collectively in a group setting about evidence-based instruction. Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, CALPRO served 2,689 adult educators from agencies funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIOA, II: AEFLA) and/or the California Adult Education Program (CAEP). CALPRO provided professional development services on a wide variety of topics and delivered them in myriad formats, from written publications, online videos, and self-assessments for individuals to intensive six-month institutes for cohorts. Throughout 2020–21 all institutes, Community of Practices (CoPs) and trainings were available virtually. Regional CoPs were conducted via moodle, Adobe Connect, and Zoom. Moodle-based institutes offered statewide, were facilitated and self-directed on-line courses.

A major topical focus of the year was the subject of equity. CALPRO marketed and conducted the Success for All Learners Through Equity Community of Practice in ten regions and produced a Research-to-Practice brief Increasing Engagement and Student Persistence Through Distance- and Blended-Learning Models: What the Research Says and Which Practices Work. This evidence-to-action brief presents recent research on distance learning in adult education and provides an important contemporaneous account of how California adult education rose to meet the challenge of continuing to serve adult learners during the pandemic: <http://calpro-online.org/documents/CALPRO-Research-Brief-15-508.pdf>

CALPRO also provided institutes to help new administrators with leadership development. The various topics covered success for all learners through equity, accelerated learning to facilitate career pathways, Integrated Education and Training (IET), effective teaching, mastering the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), integrated and contextualized workforce (ABE and ESL), implementation of English language arts standards, learning goal-setting, learner persistence, managing the English Second Language (ESL) multilevel classroom, using questioning strategies to improve instruction, lesson planning, understanding the adult learner, optimizing ESL instructional planning, evidence-based writing instruction in ESL and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classrooms, and designing programs for adults with learning disabilities.

A significant accomplishment this year was the uninterrupted and continued service provided while the California governor issued shelter-in-place order because the COVID-19 pandemic was in place. CALPRO was able to respond to the changing situation and be responsive to the needs of the field. CALPRO staff and its network of trained facilitators and subject-matter experts worked swiftly and effectively together to complete the deliverables of the contract, transforming many regional and hybrid offerings into fully online trainings.

The AEO and CALPRO partnered to provide two national webinar with the Coalition On Adult Basic Education (COABE). The two topic areas included California Adult Education's Commitment and Actions to Increase Equity and Digital Literacy. The webinar on digital literacy included one of the other SLPs, Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN) and the technical assistance provided to the adult education field as on-line learning continued and the introduction of hybrid programs.

CASAS (Assessment and Accountability) is responsible for providing a standardized assessment and accountability system for all levels of ABE, ASE, and ELA programs and for reporting program enrollment and outcome data to the state. California agencies use the CASAS GOALS reading and math test series for ABE and ASE, and the CASAS Life and Work listening and reading test series for ESL. CASAS assessments help place learners in appropriate levels of instruction, diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, target instruction, and certify learner mastery at specific levels of instruction or readiness to exit adult education. CASAS offers computer-based assessments, CASAS eTests®, to help place students into programs quickly; monitor learner progress; and generate student, class, and program level reports to inform instruction.

Statewide student and program accountability data is collected and reported using TOPSpro® Enterprise, a learner management and accountability software. The web-based software collects student demographics, records assessment results, and monitors and tracks student and program learning outcomes and goal-attainment data. It offers more than 80 data reports, including the National Reporting System (NRS) and Joint Statewide tables required for federal data reporting and the California payment points reports for California statewide data results.

Since the COVID-19 crisis and state lockdown in March 2020, CASAS has assisted agencies with transition to virtual instruction, remote testing, and online training. Beginning in spring 2020, and continuing throughout PY 2020-21, CASAS helped provide guidance related to creating distance learning classes, collecting virtual instructional hours, and recording learner outcomes in a distance-learning environment. Additional workshops addressed remote administration of pre- and post-test assessment as well as for the Citizenship Interview Test (CIT) and Civic Objective and Additional Assessment Plans (COAAPs) used for EL Civics reporting.

CASAS provides timely training to all funded agencies to meet grant requirements and to improve data quality and student performance. The trainings cover California WIOA, Title II Accountability, Assessment Policy and assessment implementation, and NRS data collection and reporting using TOPSpro® Enterprise. In PY 2020-21, more than 3,000 participants registered online for 150 online training sessions. CASAS also provides the data portal, an online tool that presents California NRS adult learner data (<http://www2.casas.org/dataPortal/>) at the state and local agency levels.

In PY 2020-21 CASAS hosted more than 80 WIOA, Title II online regional network meetings. More than 1,200 participants attended the meetings (all online) that addressed state and federal updates related to accountability, the use of data to inform instruction, and statewide policy. Because all meetings continued online in PY 2020-21, CASAS and CDE began hosting monthly statewide network meetings that averaged well more than 100 participants per meeting.

CASAS also facilitated statewide TOPSpro Enterprise network meetings online focused on more detailed software and data-related topics. These meetings also averaged well more than 100 participants per session. In lieu of the face-to-face EL Civics Conferences, CASAS also delivered 15 EL Civics conference presentations online between December 2020 and March 2021 that attracted approximately 350 participants total.

OTAN (Technology and Distance Learning) provides technology integration training, online curriculum and online courses to support the use of instructional technology to deliver curriculum. OTAN hosts a yearly technology symposium, manages the state Continuous Improvement Plan for adult education agencies, and assists in expanding the ability of adult education providers to (1) communicate with one another and their adult learners through multiple methods, (2) develop digital leadership skills, and (3) provide capacity-building services to adult education agencies. OTAN embraces the vision of leading adult education through support for and the effective application of technology.

The past program year continued to endure the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. Services through OTAN shifted entirely to a virtual setting through online webinars and workshops and virtual training sessions with agencies across California. The OTAN Technology and Distance Learning Symposium (TDLS) was entirely online this year and supported participants and presenters from across the United States.

OTAN collaborated closely with the other leadership projects, CALPRO and CASAS, on distance learning, sharing resources and much more. Through these collaborations, OTAN was able to provide comprehensive training and support in areas related to technology integration, remote testing, distance learning reporting to the state, distance and blended learning models and research, and share open educational resources to support Adult Basic Education and EL Civics education in California. By providing workshops, webinars, and more, OTAN heard from teachers about how services affected them personally and professionally. Another implemented service was OTAN Office Hours, specifically designed to allow teachers to drop in at any time during a designated period, ask specific questions, and receive dedicated assistance from training staff and subject-matter experts. These sessions were particularly helpful for teachers who attended the webinars and workshops about technology tools and teaching strategies. Attendees would drop into office hours with specific questions and OTAN staff and subject-matter experts were there to help. These sessions proved to be very popular and will continue through the next contract year. Often reported was higher teacher confidence with new technologies they never used previously. One comment from a participant using a new technology for remote learner engagement exclaimed: "Hey, I can do this!" As the end of the year approached, OTAN received reports from teachers that they embraced distance teaching. As they built better relationships *with their students*, there was more persistence from learners in completing their studies and gaining more confidence using technology. Teachers attributed these positive outcomes to their ability to work more one-on-one with their learners, spend more time orienting and onboarding learners to technology, and learners reporting they appreciated these new teaching methods because it allowed them to keep up their studies in the event of other barriers such as transportation, childcare, job schedules, or other personal disruptions.

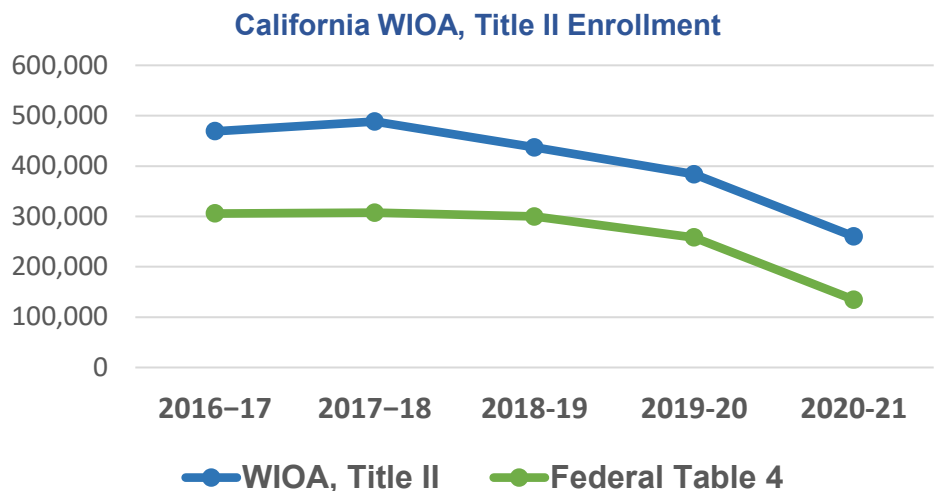
The pandemic has shifted the practice of education in California, and OTAN will continue to help adult educators refine and implement the new tools they learned during the year. These include different models of learning such as hyflex and hybrid, helping teachers with creating and implementing online orientations, and onboarding learners to remote learning, exploring methods with remote assessment, and the wide variety of tools to engage learners in these new environments.

Monitoring: In addition to monthly desk monitoring, the AEO at the CDE uses a risk-based analysis to select sub-grantees for a more formal, comprehensive review process. Criteria used to determine which agencies are reviewed include new administration; overall funding amounts; chronic, late deliverables, and similar issues. The Federal Program Monitoring (FPM) Office at the CDE coordinated and scheduled FPM reviews for all programs required to monitor federal funds at the CDE. Agencies selected for review attend several trainings where they receive detailed instruction on the monitoring process, the Adult Education Instrument used to guide federal reviews, and all evidence requests agencies are expected to upload. Moreover, to ensure the AEO conducts fair, thorough, and consistent reviews of all agencies, reviewers meet yearly for a formal discussion of performance and several times throughout the year informally to debrief all reviews conducted throughout the state.

Performance Data Analyses

Enrollment 2020–21

The WIOA, Title II: AEFLA program offered at 214 local agencies, including three coalitions, enrolled 260,187 learners. Of these, 134,492 (51.7 percent) qualified for NRS federal reporting.



California continued to face unprecedented COVID-19 challenges throughout PY 2020–21. Enrollment in WIOA, Title II: AEFLA programs significantly decreased during PY 2020–21 by 32 percent compared to PY 2019–20. Enrollment in ESL decreased by 46 percent and in ABE by 21 percent. Enrollment in ASE remained steady in PY 2019–20 and 2020–21.

All AEFLA providers including adult schools, community colleges, CBOs, and COEs felt the effects of COVID-19 agency closures and the interruption of services. Enrollment in adult schools declined by 45 percent and community colleges by 70 percent. IET/IELCE program enrollment declined by 70 percent because of training center closures, and some pathways were no longer practical because of COVID-19.

Many AEFLA providers successfully transitioned to distance learning and remote implementation of services during PY 2020–21. In PY 2019–20, 27 percent (70,483) of 258,201 learners and in in PY 2020–21 more than 65 percent (88,749) of 134,492 learners enrolled in distance learning.

Adult learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting in PY 2020–21 reflect the diversity of the state. The largest ethnic groups of learners are Hispanic (67.2 percent), Asian (12.8 percent), White (10.6 percent), Black (6.3 percent), or two or more races (2.6 percent). Adult learners are more likely to be female (62 percent). One hundred thirty-one students indicated non-binary as their gender. The percentage of Asians in the overall adult learners enrolled decreased by three percent in PY 2020–21 compared to PY 2019–20 and PY 2018–19. Similarly, the percentage of females in the total adult learners enrolled increased by four percent. Adult learners between

the ages of 25 and 44 (52.5 percent) comprise the largest age group. Close to 70 percent of learners enrolled are non-English-speaking.

NRS Performance

COVID-19 greatly affected California's performance in PY 2020–21 compared to pre-COVID years. Significantly, fewer students were able to take a pretest and a post-test in PY 2020–21 (62,315) compared to PY 2019–20 (148,915) and PY 2019–20 (205,589), although more than 22 percent of CASAS pre- and post-tests were administered remotely during PY 2020-21. In 2020–21, of the 134,492 learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting, 45,892 (34 percent) achieved at least one Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gain. The decline in persistence and performance has a direct relationship to the many challenges of COVID-19. Despite the challenges, more than 10,000 learners obtained a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate.

The 134,492 learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting averaged 149.4 hours of instruction similar to previous program years. The learners (62,315) who persisted in the program and took pre and post-tests reported 198.4 hours of instruction.

The CDE has data-sharing agreements with the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and the Employment Development Department (EDD) to conduct a data match to provide postsecondary enrollment, secondary or postsecondary credential attainment, and employment and earnings outcomes. To supplement the employment outcome data match, local WIOA, Title II: AEFLA grantees conduct a universal survey of all students who have not volunteered a Social Security number (80 percent of enrollees).

The CDE uses a standardized automated follow-up survey in the TOPSpro Enterprise management information system to collect follow-up outcomes. This process includes an automated survey notification feature sent via email and text messages sent by agencies to students who have exited the program. When the student completes the survey online, TOPSpro Enterprise automatically receives the results. Agencies are able to customize the survey invitation by adding agency logo and name, a survey greeting, and a thank-you note. Survey invitations and the survey itself are available in eight languages. All agencies conduct the Employment and Earnings Survey each quarter.

Of those students who exited in PY 2019–20, and either had records that could be matched with the EDD, or responded to the employment and earnings follow-up survey, more than 43 percent were employed in the second quarter after exit. However, the overall reported percentage of students who exited their program and achieved employment remains at 18.5 percent, as most could not be matched with the EDD file. For the students who did not volunteer a Social Security number, 28 percent responded to the survey. Response rate on surveys improved by five percent compared to previous program year.

During PY 2020–21, the CDE continued to provide training and guidance for local agencies to conduct remote instruction and testing. Local agencies continued to submit data to the CDE on a quarterly basis. The previously mentioned data submission structure allows quarterly analysis and early identification of incomplete or inaccurate data. The CDE has provided statewide AFELA network meetings to disseminate successful retention and recruitment strategies to more schools. In terms of action and technical support, the state has focused on student recruitment and retention.

Integration with One-Stop Programs

The CDE, the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), and the EDD, in collaboration with other workforce development agencies, coordinate education and training programs to assist individuals with overcoming barriers to employment. From the California WIOA, Title II Implementation Survey revealed some key points about the Title II perspective

- 58.7 percent of the 225 agencies that completed the survey characterized their collaboration with their local Workforce Development Board as effective.
- As a result, 59.1 percent were able to work and communicate with their local workforce development board to understand the regional economic impacts of COVID-19.
- 62.2 percent stated that their agency is represented through a consortium, and 56.9 percent said their staff attend the local WDB meetings

Additionally, the CDE and other core partners developed strategies for co-enrollment – including the PY 2018-19 EL Navigator project that involved five regional participants in California and the PY 2019-20 and PY 2020-21 EL Co-Enrollment grant with four local regions participating. The goal of both projects is to provide extra support to English Language Learners -- many of whom were enrolled in California WIOA, Title II programs.

The EL Navigator helped learners “navigate” the California WIOA, Title I system to receive services such as career counseling and workforce training. The EL Co- Enrollment grant focused more directly on tracking participants receiving workforce training and employment from Title I programs and relating co-enrollment to employment and training outcomes. The CDE has participated and CASAS has provided the data and accountability support on the Title II side to help evaluate the project.

In PY 2021-22, a second EL Co-Enrollment grant began in August 2021 with more regional participants to continue the tracking and promotion of WIOA, Title I and Title II collaboration.

During COVID-19, many California WIOA, Title I programs remained in operation, while school and college districts implementing Title II programs largely remained closed. Many districts referred students to Title I services while Title II programs were transitioning to distance learning and remote implementation of services.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program

In program year 2019–20, the CDE completed the second competitive Request for Application (RFA) following the 13 considerations specified in WIOA, Title II: AEFLA. CDE awarded grants for a three-year cycle starting with PY 2020–21. Completing a successful grant competition in the midst of the pandemic was a major accomplishment only made possible by the work done over the past few years to move the RFA process completely online. The RFA solicited agencies to offer IELCE as defined in WIOA Section 243. As a condition of the award, Section 243 recipients must submit an annual IELCE Report that outlines their progress in implementing service approaches to provide 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. In PY 2020–21, 118 agencies submitted IELCE plans. Below are the number of plans submitted by industry sector.

IELCE Plans by Industry Sector	Plans Submitted
Health Science and Medical Technology	85
Business and Finance	70
Education, Child Development, and Family Services	37
Information and Communication Technologies	38
Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation	32
Building and Construction Trades	23
Manufacturing and Product Development	10
Transportation	7
Marketing, Sales, and Service	4
Energy, Environment, and Utilities	4
Fashion and Interior Design	3
Public Services	3
Agriculture and Natural Resources	2
Engineering and Architecture	2

Per WIOA Section 243, the CDE required the provision of language and literacy objectives as a program in combination with IET. The IET model combines workforce preparation activities and occupational skills training with literacy activities to increase a participant’s educational and career advancement. The IET service delivery may incorporate co-teaching or alternate teaching models and must include a single set of learning objectives. For agencies to receive funds under WIOA Section 243, students must have enrolled in an ESL program and a career program.

Civic Participation programs assess students through performance-based Civic Objective and Additional Assessment Plans (COAAPs) that measure attainment of civic objectives categorized under competency areas such as consumer economics, community resources, health, employment, and government and law. The COAAPs are based on a set of [EL Civics Civic Objectives](#) and language and literacy objectives that measure a learner’s ability to access the community. Examples include successfully completing a job application or participating in a job interview, communicating with a health care professional via an online platform, or using appropriate soft skills to interact with a customer. Agencies may select from 75 pre-approved Civic Objectives or may develop their own.

The COAAPs are correlated to Immigration Integration Indicators ([Correlation of CA EL Civics Civic Objectives to Immigrant Integration Indicators](#)) to ensure these important elements are part of instruction and assessment to enable learners to use new skills to enhance their ability to be successful as parents, community members, and workers. To assist instructors in preparing materials to teach the tasks related to the COAAPs, OTAN and CASAS have collaborated to develop the [EL Civics Exchange](#), an online repository of instructional materials organized by Civic Objectives and correlated to the Immigrant Integration Indicators.

In 2020–21, the CDE EL Civics program awarded funds to 191 agencies to provide EL Civics educational services. Most EL Civics-funded agencies (112 agencies) also received funding for IELCE 243. More than 22,000 adults were enrolled in EL Civics and/or IELCE programs. Enrollment in both EL Civics and IELCE programs decreased significantly in both 2020–21 and 2019–20 compared to 2018–19 because of COVID-19.

Responding to the pandemic required moving classroom instruction and assessment traditionally conducted in-person to a remote model. The CDE and its leadership projects (CASAS, CALPRO, and OTAN) provided guidance to providers on implementing effective remote instruction. CASAS also developed guidelines and webinars to assist providers with remote testing. The largest challenge for IET programs was the ability of students to participate in workforce training. COVID-19 increased these challenges, as many workforce programs faced mandatory closure. Despite the challenges, some programs were able to move their workforce training courses online and even increase enrollment.

In 2020–21, there were 2,215 learners enrolled in Citizenship Preparation, 14,435 in Civic Participation, and 14,627 in IELCE. More than 2,000 learners enrolled in IET under IELCE. Learners enrolled in Citizenship Preparation took the CASAS Government and History for Citizenship test and the oral Citizenship Interview Test to be more comfortable and better able to respond to questions. More than 1,710 learners passed the CASAS Government and History for Citizenship test, and 1,233 passed the oral CASAS Citizenship Interview Test. Seventy-five percent of learners enrolled in Civic Participation passed one or more COAAPs. Of those who enrolled in IELCE/IELCE-IET under WIOA Section 243 and took performance-based additional assessments, more than 90 percent passed one or more of 243 COAAPs.

The CDE awarded Promising Practices and Making a Difference Awards for PY 2020–21, and some agencies received an award for their innovative practices in IET. Examples include Redondo Beach USD in its collaboration with El Camino College and LA County WIOA Title I to establish medical, construction, and computer-technology workforce programs. Mount San Jacinto CCD collaborated with a local union to provide apprenticeships in construction, and Livermore USD started an entrepreneurship program emphasizing customer service and small business management.

Adult Education Standards

The CDE, through the State Board of Education, adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010. In March 2013, the CDE adopted the CCRS. In March 2014, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction announced the Standards for Career Ready Practice (SCRCP). The SCRCP are taught and reinforced in all career exploration and preparation programs or integrated into core curriculum, with increasingly higher levels of complexity and expectation as a student advances through a program of study.

The CDE Adult Education Office has aligned its content standards to the state-adopted challenging academics of CCSS and CCRS. The California adult education high school diploma meets the same standards as required for the K–12 high school diploma. The CDE has developed and implemented curriculum and assessment standards within ABE and ESL to meet the EFLs established by the NRS and to achieve the K–8 academic literacy objectives established by the state’s standards and frameworks. The CDE along with the SLPs delivered technical assistance and professional development to enable teachers to deliver intentional, standards-based instruction in the online environment. CALPRO provided professional learning opportunities on topics including mastering the English language proficiency standards (ELPS) and College and CCRS, implementation of English language arts standards, and evidence-based writing instruction in ESL and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classrooms.

Local adult education programs are aligned to CCSS, CCRS, and ELPS for Adult Education providing standards-based contextualized curriculum, evidence-based instruction, and assessment focusing on the skills that enable learners to participate more fully within society as

citizens, workers, and family members. Please refer to the CDE website for additional information on the Adult Education Standard <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>.

Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals

According to the January 2020 *Recidivism Report for Offenders Released from the California Department of Corrections in Fiscal Year 2014–15*, published by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the recidivism rate for the 39,205 offenders released between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015, was 46.5 percent. After reaching a high of 54.3 percent with the FY 2011–12 release cohort and subsequently declining to a low of 46.1 percent with the FY 2012–13 release cohort, the three-year conviction rate has been markedly stable.

CDCR and other corrections agencies continue to face challenges in response to COVID-19. At the beginning of PY 2020–21, most education programs in all facilities were closed. By the end of the program year, most facilities were open with many operating on a limited one to two times per week basis. Incarceration rates decreased because of COVID-19; therefore, many education programs have undergone consolidation.

In PY 2019-20, only 5 out of 35 facilities were able to complete WIOA, Title II reporting activities such as CASAS pre- and post-testing. However, in 2020-21, most facilities resumed testing. CDCR developed and continued a Peer Tutoring program that has inmates serving as literacy peer mentors to other inmates housed within their immediate vicinity.

All Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and Department of State Hospital (DSH) facilities also have faced serious challenges as the result of COVID 19, especially in the area of managing close living arrangements. All facilities have reopened their training/education outside the living residences. Education programs are near “full strength,” while vocational classes continue to be offered on a limited basis. With rigid COVID testing continuing in PY 2020–21, all facilities were still able to get more than 50 percent of the WIOA Title II pre- and post-testing completed.

All facilities are being very creative in the way they address instruction. At CDDS Porterville, the residence staff who regularly work with learners in the classroom are now working in the living residences and available to assist learners in that environment. CDDS Canyon Springs reports the most activity as most of their instruction occurs outside the living residences. .

State hospitals have operated on a more limited basis overall than developmental centers. COVID-19 rates have been much higher for state hospitals; consequently, the level of restrictions have been correspondingly higher, with most state hospitals continuing to keep all residents “in quarantine” as they did in 2020.