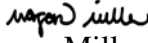


**TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION
ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY LETTER**

ID/No:	AEL 02-16
Date:	March 23, 2016
Keyword:	AEL; Fiscal Administration; WIOA
Effective:	April 23, 2016

To: Adult Education and Literacy Grant Recipients
Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers

From: 
Reagan Miller, Director, Workforce Development Division

Subject: **Implementing the Integrated Education and Training Service Approach**

PURPOSE:

To provide Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) grantees with information and guidance on implementing an integrated education and training (IET) service approach.

BACKGROUND:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) strategically positions AEL to play an integral role within a broader, interconnected workforce development system and greatly expands the service-delivery options for students with employment and postsecondary education and training goals. This strategic position provides customers with greater access to workforce and education services through Texas Workforce Solutions, and increases access to a broader array of services available.

WIOA strengthens alignment among AEL providers, Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), postsecondary education and training providers, and employers, and reinforces that AEL's core purpose is to educate and prepare customers with basic workforce preparation, workforce training skills, and knowledge needed to succeed in the Texas workforce.

WIOA underscores the use of flexible career pathways service-delivery options within its various programs. IET is a career pathways model and represents a hallmark for innovative AEL instruction and training services for individuals who are basic-skills deficient.

Many states have well-recognized IET programs. Examples of these are the I-BEST service approach in Washington state, Minnesota Fast Trac, and Accelerate Texas. To implement these approaches, AEL instructors and workforce training staff jointly design and deliver college-level occupational classes that admit customers who are basic-skills deficient and underprepared for college-level programs.

Accelerate Texas is a shared initiative between the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Accelerate Texas' objective is to build capacity and expand deployment of career pathways programs, which support robust employment, higher education transition, skills gains, and secondary completion through demonstrated approaches that integrate system services and leverage community partnerships. TWC and THECB share common program objectives under Accelerate Texas, but each has unique program requirements.

Accelerate Texas meets the WIOA definition of an IET service approach through the integration and delivery of rigorous and high-quality AEL workforce preparation activities and workforce training services. Accelerate Texas represents programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available supporting accelerated learning and skills attainment for basic-skills deficient customers. THECB and TWC have developed agreed-upon tenets for the Accelerate Texas model that include:

- admitting customers to workforce training while maintaining program rigor;
- basic skills support concurrently integrated and contextualized with the workforce training program of study and aligned with linked or common learning objectives and specific integrated activities;
- organizing basic skills, workforce preparation activities, workforce training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of that individual to the extent practicable;
- successfully completing a recognized postsecondary credential that assists an individual to enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster and aligned with the skills needs of local industries;
- designs to meet the particular needs of adults, including multiple entry and exit points, flexible and non-semester-based scheduling, alternative class times and locations, and the innovative use of technology;
- academic and workforce preparation activities and support services provided through the Boards, sector partners and other entities, or other leveraged resources; and
- collaboration with Boards, business, industry, institutions of higher education, and other partners for local/regional economic and labor market needs, credentialing demands, and data and wage information.

WIOA authorizes using AEL funds to implement IET models including workforce training services, creating exciting new options that AEL grantees can implement to meet career pathways objectives and TWC's priorities for AEL.

PROCEDURES:

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware of the following definitions:

Basic-Skills Deficient—an individual who is unable to:

- read, write, or speak in English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society; or
- compute or solve problems.

Digital Literacy—technology skills that enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information.

Integrated Education and Training—a program of study that provides AEL 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. Accelerate Texas is the unique brand that describes an IET model in Texas.

Workforce Preparation Activities—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 using resources and information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

Workforce Training Services—may include the following:

1. Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
2. On-the-job training;
3. Incumbent worker training;
4. Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
5. Training programs operated by the private sector;
6. Skills upgrading and retraining;
7. Entrepreneurial training;
8. Transitional jobs;
9. Job readiness training provided in combination with services described in 1 through 8;
10. AEL activities, including activities of English language acquisition and IET programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services described in 1 through 7; and

11. Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware that AEL funding may be expended to support the IET service approach, including workforce training and workforce preparation activities, of which digital literacy may be included.

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware that before implementing the workforce training services under the IET service approach, they must submit the proposed IET program of study to TWC through the Career Pathways Implementation Plan portal at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CareerPathway-Information>.

LF: AEL grantees may fund workforce training out of all funding sources, in accordance with applicable eligibility guidelines. AEL grantees may submit a proposed revised contract budget to AELcontracts@twc.state.tx.us.

NLF: AEL grantees must report workforce training expenditures by funding source as part of the monthly expenditure reports submitted through the Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting system (CDER).

INQUIRIES:

Direct inquiries regarding this AEL Letter to aelpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.

RESCISSIONS:

None

REFERENCE:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

FLEXIBILITY RATINGS:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that AEL grantees must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this AEL Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This rating indicates that AEL grantees have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this AEL Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”