PROGRAM STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COMMUNITY COLLEGES & WORKFORCE PREPARATION

PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION

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Standards Framework

The standards framework can be used by programs to assess their own performance in providing quality instruction and services to adult learners. By reviewing the standards, indicators, and criterion, programs can identify their strengths and areas in need of improvement. The standards framework consists of three components:

- Standards that are broad descriptors of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to effective adult education instruction.
- A series of indicators that are sample concepts for implementing a standard.
- Criterion of practices that demonstrate the principle or application of a standard.

Using Standards to Improve Program Performance

The standards are meant to establish benchmarks for making informed decisions regarding resource allocation, professional development activities, and program capacity. These standards set clear expectations to ensure programs are high-performing and capable of meeting the diverse needs of adult learners.

A self-assessment is a non-threatening way for programs to evaluate their current capabilities to meet these standards. Additionally, the results should be used to complete a continuous improvement plan, provide focus for the application plan, and to update the local plan with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners.

Purposes

The overarching purpose of having program standards is to guide the planning, delivery, and evaluation of all adult education programs in Iowa in order to improve services for learners. The program standards have three primary purposes:

- Guidance in Proposals to the Field: The program standards are used to guide the development of Iowa's Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and WIOA Title II funds.

» Program Self-Assessment: Adult education and literacy (AEL) programs are advised to use the program standards as benchmarks in designing high-quality programs and in measuring progress in key areas.

» Site Visits and Desktop Monitoring: The state will use the program standards as a guide in conducting site and desktop monitoring. During the monitoring, Iowa's AEL team will identify promising practices and areas where further improvement and technical assistance are needed to help support the AEL program.

Organization

The program standards are meant to support one another and are not sequential. They are divided into two categories:

» Learner Success: Includes standards that help programs support learners' progress towards their next steps in postsecondary education, training, or employment leading to a family-sustaining wage.

» Organizational Capacity: Includes standards that help programs support their staff and guide directors in administering a quality program.

FIGURE 1: IOWA AEL PROGRAM STANDARDS

Program Standards and Alignment with WIOA

Alignment to WIOA		
	Learner Success	**Standard 1: Learner Progress** Learners demonstrate progress toward attainment of literacy skills, including reading, writing, and speaking English, computing, and solving problems at levels of proficiency and are able to demonstrate the ability to transfer learning from the classroom to real life skills necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.
		Standard 2: Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development The program has a written, standards-based curriculum and provides instruction matching learner needs while supporting an ongoing, professional development process that is linked to a professional development plan supporting the program's vision and goals.
		Standard 3: Program Design and Leadership The program implements the key design elements articulated in its funded proposal and program leadership ensures that the vision for success is shared by staff and learners and that the program engages in a continuous improvement planning process.
	Organizational Capacity	**Standard 4: Accountability** The program has policies and best practices to demonstrate fiscal responsibility, accuracy and reliability of data reporting, and protection of data according to federal requirements and shows progress toward achieving state performance benchmarks.
		Standard 5: Community Interaction and Outreach The program builds a visible and valued presence in the community, which in turn supports the program by recruiting learners and talents and coordinating local resources for support services, economic opportunity through career pathways, and further education and training opportunities.
		Standard 6: One-Stop System Integration The program takes steps to implement WIOA's vision as expressed in Iowa's Unified State and Local Plan for a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways.

TABLE 1: STANDARD 1 — LEARNER PROGRESS

Standard	Indicator
Learners demonstrate progress toward attainment of literacy skills, including reading, writing, and speaking in English; computing and solving problems at levels of proficiency; and exhibit the ability to transfer classroom learning to real life situations necessary to function on the job, in the learner's family, and in society.	1.A. Program provides an interactive intake procedure with information presented using adult education principles and is accessible to ALL learners. 1.B. Informal and formal assessment and collaborative goal development are used to gauge learner progress and guide instruction, advising, and other services that support a "successful" transition and demonstrate gains in abilities.

Criterion
1.A.1. The program has a written orientation procedures with designated staff member(s) for coordinating and monitoring the enrollment process to ensure consistency across sites and dates.
1.A.2. Orientation is conducted in compliance with policies of federal disabilities legislation, takes place in a comfortable, adult-appropriate environment with materials presented orally, in print, and with accompanying visuals in order to reach learners through multiple learning styles.
1.A.3. The program provides each learner with information, or a handbook, detailing the orientation procedure (length, fees, expectations, and standardized assessment), along with policies and practices which may include, but is not limited to: attendance, absenteeism, grievance procedure, educational and career advising, support services, course offerings, severe weather, safety procedures, privacy and record keeping, drug and alcohol and/or behavioral expectations, and other appropriate program specific information.
1.A.4. The program has a system (policy, staffing, and resources) in place to provide reasonable accommodations for learners with self-disclosed disabilities through its own resources or by referral to outside agencies.
1.A.5. The program helps learners to identify and understand positive and negative forces that impact persistence while providing current community resource materials to help learners address personal/family needs, build support and reduce barriers.
1.B.1. Approved standardized adult education and literacy assessments are administered by certified staff member(s) in conditions conducive to testing and with appropriate accommodations according to publishers' guidelines, Iowa's Assessment Policy and federal disability legislation.
1.B.2. The program achieves the minimum required state target for learners pre- and post-tested on a state approved standardized assessment.
1.B.3. The learner participates formally and informally to identify goal(s) that consider the learners' needs, skills, assessment results, education, and employment experience.
1.B.4. The program has a system used by staff and learners to record, monitor, and recognize progress toward goal(s) achievement that includes documented and dated evidence.
1.B.5. Instructors use diagnostic information from learners' standardized assessment, along with learner goals and needs to inform instruction.
1.B.6. The program has a process for advising the learner, with designated staff member(s) who have an ongoing relationship with the learner, to explore options for education, training, and/or careers with related skills and knowledge, provided as necessary in the native language of the learner.
1.B.7. The program has developed and uses retention strategies to help learners persist in their educational pursuit, which may include, but are not limited to, a process that follows up on learner absences.

TABLE 2: STANDARD 2 — CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Standard	Indicator
The program has a written, standards-based curriculum and provides instruction matching learner needs while supporting an ongoing professional development process that is linked to a professional development plan supporting the programs' vision and goals. ***Note:*** This standard is intended to implement IAC 281.23.7 and Iowa's AEL Instructor Standards (06.15.2015)	2.A. Curriculum is embedded in real-life contexts while anchored in standards. 2.B. Instruction meets learners' needs and learning styles. 2.C. The program provides opportunities for all instructors to participate in ongoing professional development with support in integrating new evidence-based strategies into instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation to improve instructional practice.

Criterion
2.A.1. The program has documented curricula that include a scope and sequence and units of instruction aligned with the level specific standards in the College and Career Readiness Standards, inclusive of English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics and English Language Proficiency, and Iowa's 21st Century Learning Skills.
2.A.2. Staff members are trained in the use of standards, the relevant curriculum, and the development and use of aligned lesson plans.
2.A.3. The curricula, or units of instruction, are contextualized with the goals, interests, and needs of the learner and aligned with regionally developed career pathways.
2.A.4. The curricula and associated materials are readily available to each classroom and reflect the diverse educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the learners served.
2.A.5. The program uses instructional materials with context relevant to learners in their role as family members, workers, community members, and lifelong learners.
2.B.1. Instructional strategies adhere to principles of adult learning and language acquisition and demonstrate rigorous research, evidence-based practices and high expectations for all learners.
2.B.2. Instructional methods include interactive activities to engage a range of learning preferences (visual, aural, tactile, and kinesthetic) by a variety of tools and technologies (audio-visual, computers, and smart boards) used to support learning.
2.B.3. Instructional strategies include whole group, small group, and individualized instruction to respond to the needs of the learner at diverse levels and with different learning styles.
2.B.4. The program supports instructors in the effective integration of current technologies in the curricula and instruction to learn adult education content and address real-world needs.
2.B.5. The program uses resources to effectively provide all learners with instructional materials for classroom use and for review at home at no or reasonable cost.
2.B.6 Instruction offered by the program meets at least 5 hours per week and is of sufficient duration to complete the sequence of instruction with enrollment consistent with the capacity of the class.
2.C.1. Every staff member (including administrators) creates an individual professional development plan annually that addresses individual professional goals and relevant program improvement goals, and all new staff receive orientation on the professional development system within the first 30 days of employment as evidenced by administrative documentation.
2.C.2. Documentation is on file that each staff member has engaged in relevant staff development activities for at least 12 hours/year, as appropriate, and the program has a policy for when staff does not meet the requirements.
2.C.3. The program provides access to professional development opportunities for all staff by promoting professional development activities, encouraging peer groups, and budgeting resources to support staff through planning time or other strategies.

(Continued)

TABLE 2: STANDARD 2 — CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Criterion
2.C.4. Ongoing professional development addresses adult education theory, fundamental teaching skills, classroom management, special learning needs, current research in literacy, numeracy, language acquisition, the use of technology, and cross-cultural communication in a variety of activities – self-study, peer groups, workshops, webinars, trainings, and credit courses.
2.C.5. The program has staff and volunteer orientation procedures and pre-service professional development appropriate to participate and improve the quality of the adult education and literacy program.
2.C.6. The program continuously evaluates the effectiveness of its professional development activities and implements improvements as needed.
2.C.7. The program's administration or designee conducts a professional development observation of a minimum of 70 percent of instruction staff once in the program year utilizing an observation instrument that identifies essential knowledge, adult education instruction best practices, and classroom management skills as aligned with Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy Instructor Standards. However, significant findings will require additional observations.
2.C.8. The program's professional development classroom observation procedure will include, at minimum, a pre- and post-observation conference that focuses on providing ongoing follow-up and support to improve mutually targeted areas of instructional practices.

TABLE 3: STANDARD 3 — PROGRAM DESIGN AND LEADERSHIP

Standard	Indicator
The program implements the key design elements articulated in their funded proposal and program leadership ensures that the vision for academic success is shared by staff and learners and that the program engages in a continuous improvement planning process.	3.A. The program addresses access and equity and is responsive to the regional needs identified by key stakeholders, including learners most in need of services. 3.B. The program leader provides vision, direction, resources, evaluation, and support for all program operations and staff that is effective and equitable in the provision of adult education and literacy. 3.C. The continuous improvement planning process is purposeful, ongoing, and systematic and is focused on the program's effectiveness in supporting learners.

Criterion
3.A.1. The program has a process to scan the needs of the communities served to identify the population of adults eligible for service, including those with barriers to employment.
3.A.2. The program continuously reviews and evaluates program policies and data to ensure that the application and services provided reflect learners' needs and goals.
3.A.3. The program provides access to services to the maximum extent practicable, including, but not limited, to physical access in compliance with ADA requirements, as well as providing services outside of regular business hours and at off-site locations.
3.A.4. The program services are housed in a safe, physical environment with adequate space and access to facilities, technology, and equipment as rated by staff members and learners and which contribute to creating an adult appropriate learning environment.

(Continued)

TABLE 3: STANDARD 3 — PROGRAM DESIGN AND LEADERSHIP

Criterion
3.A.5. The program involves key stakeholders in the strategic planning of their application and in the development of their mission to allow for a smooth transition of services from adult education and literacy to other education, training, and employment leading to family sustaining wages.
3.A.6. The program services are offered in a flexible yet structured delivery with the majority of classes offered in a managed enrollment delivery.
3.A.7. Evidence of a Student Experience Model (SEM) is found in the application and the program services.
3.B.1. The program has clear and compelling short- and long-term goals based on needs that are communicated to all stakeholders and, if applicable, fit within the overall mission of the organization.
3.B.2. The program administration promotes an instructor standards-based approach and strategies for learners and staff members that is based on accountability and college and career readiness.
3.B.3. The program establishes minimum qualifications aligned with state requirements and maintains regionally competitive salaries, benefits (including compensation for paid prep time), and opportunities for full-time employment along with career growth opportunities, as applicable.
3.B.4. The program administration energizes and empowers staff members, delegates responsibility and authority, as appropriate, and provides the necessary support in those endeavors.
3.B.5. The program administration ensures staff members are orientated, receive training on key policies and procedures that may include performance appraisal, a current organizational chart, working hours and professional development, adult education learning theory, as well as a clear and updated job description.
3.B.6. The program administration provides ongoing supervision for all non-instructional and instructional staff and annually conducts performance evaluations that include written feedback and follow-up as part of the evaluation and organizational process.
3.C.1. The program uses a variety of methods to gather and document input from learners, staff members, and key stakeholders in order to determine satisfaction with the program and to inform program improvement.
3.C.2. The program's continuous improvement planning includes a systematic approach to collecting and using data in order, but not limited, to: • access program strengths and needs; • identify priorities and goals for program improvement; • strategies to implement the plan; and • develop methods to evaluate effectiveness of the plan.
3.C.3. The program's continuous improvement process looks at each component of the adult education services and their interrelationship within the program to document the progress, develop the plan, and prioritize the next steps ensuring that staff members and stakeholders are aware of and understand their role, both in the planning process and in helping to achieve the program's goals.
3.C.4. The program holds full staff meetings on a regular basis (at least quarterly) that allows for the maximum possible participation of both full- and part-time staff that includes the ongoing data analysis of the daily operations, program planning, and continuous improvement planning of the program.

TABLE 4: STANDARD 4 — ACCOUNTABILITY

Standard	Indicator
The program has policies and best practices to demonstrate fiscal responsibility, ensure data reporting of learner progress is accurate, reliable and protected according to federal requirements, and show progress toward achieving state performance benchmarks.	4.A. The program maintains a stable financial condition operating in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner. 4.B. The program has a system for collecting and reporting data that ensures its integrity that demonstrates achievement towards the state's negotiated benchmarks for enrollment and performance. 4.C. The program ensures accuracy in reports, reliability, privacy, and security of records.

Criterion
4.A.1. The program has a comprehensive system of internal policies and procedures that utilizes standard accounting and auditing practices to ensure sound, ethical and consistent financial decisions are made with grant funds that are allowable, allocable, and deemed necessary in accordance with federal and state requirements.
4.A.2. The program maintains the required match commitment annually with properly documented and verifiable recipient records which have not been used for other federally assisted programs.
4.A.3. The program prepares an annual budget that supports the services and activities approved in the application and is timely in submitting well documented claims that clearly detail how grant funds are coded, tracked, and expended.
4.A.4. The program has a process to track inventory purchased with federal and state AEL funds that is updated annually with a written policy for disposal of such items when out dated.
4.A.5. The program has a policy to collect and maintain records of time and effort for each staff member that reflects appropriate alignment among the hours worked for AEL services, the hours in the budget, and the payroll.
4.B.1. The program ensures that data collection is aligned with state and federal AEFLA requirements, and utilizing the Assessment Policy Guidelines and data dictionary in conjunction with the state approved data management system and approved forms.
4.B.2. The program reports learners' demographics, attendance, instructional hours, and performance data in conformance with state and federal guidelines.
4.B.3. The program's process for data collection ensures credibility with a documented procedure for correcting errors and resolving missing data.
4.B.4. The program provides regular trainings, at least quarterly, detailing data integrity, National Reporting System guidelines, current performance and state negotiated benchmarks, including the post-test rate.
4.C.1. The program administration ensures that all staff members meet reporting and record keeping requirements, including training, annually or as applicable, defined by the Iowa Assessment Policy Guidelines and state requirements, to secure personally identifiable information.
4.C.2. The program ensures that privacy and security of learners' educational electronic and paper records, including but not limited to, using locked file cabinets and privacy screen filters, for a period of time defined by the Assessment Policy Guidelines.
4.C.3 The program ensures that learners are notified annually of their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including consent for directory and photographic release.
4.C.4. The program provides accurate reports of learner performance, status updates on the activities provided by the program in accordance to funding agreements and professional development tracking in a timely manner through the state's approved data, grant, and professional development accountability systems.

TABLE 5: STANDARD 5 — COMMUNITY INTERACTION AND OUTREACH

Standard	Indicator
The program actively builds a visible and valued presence in the community which supports the program's capacity by recruiting learners and talents and coordinating local resources in the provision of support services, economic opportunity through career pathways, and further education and training.	5.A. The program builds a collaborative system of support services that promote learner achievement and the program goals. 5.B. The program's collaborations result in increased options for learners in postsecondary education, training, and employment aligned with the regional needs and identified in the application and local plan. 5.C. The program successfully recruits learners from the community identified in WIOA as needing literacy services, including those with barriers to employment and hardest to serve.

Criterion
5.A.1. The program identifies learner support service needs by formal or informal assessment as evidenced by documentation.
5.A.2. The program strategically partners with community, educational, and workplace support service providers that share common purposes and goals in serving those with multiple barriers to employment.
5.A.3. The program has a written plan that is made available to all staff members which describes the system for providing learner support services and follow-up, including, but not limited to: • child care services; • transportation services; • special accommodations; and • referral and follow-up procedures.
5.A.4. The program's staff members possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make appropriate, informed referrals to support services offered within the program and in the community to reduce learner barriers.
5.A.5. The program has a written process for addressing retention and low attendance that includes but is not limited to a communication plan, reassessing support service needs and re-engagement.
5.A.6. The program ensures that all sites maintain a current listing of community, educational, and/or workplace support services that is reviewed and updated at least annually.
5.B.1. There is evidence of community partnerships, or a team of cross-agency partners, in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the adult education and literacy application, goals, and priorities in regard to accessing career pathways and engaging in high demand integrated education and training activities.
5.B.2. The program has informal and formal agreements (Memorandum of Understanding) that defines partners' roles/responsibilities and the working relationships that include, but are not limited to, concurrent enrollment, placement assessments, contextualized and team instruction, funding, and follow-up for performance outcomes.
5.B.3. The program reviews ongoing labor market analysis for employment and education trends/career pathways specific to the needs of the region and the population served and is linked to regional sector partnership activities.
5.B.4. The program participates in collaborative activities to connect with agencies and businesses that support adult education and literacy learners in meeting their goals of completing education and/or workforce training.
5.C.1. The program has a written communication and recruitment plan that is evaluated at least quarterly based on cumulative enrollment with appropriate plans for modifications.
5.C.2. The program involves learners, staff members, and stakeholders in the communication and recruitment activities as documented in the plan.
5.C.3. The program evaluates the means by which entering learners became aware of the program and the effectiveness of various communication and recruitment activities; additional regard is given to effective strategies in recruiting those with multiple barriers to employment.

TABLE 6: STANDARD 6 — ONE-STOP SYSTEM INTEGRATION

Standard	Indicator
The program takes concrete steps toward implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) vision as expressed in Iowa's Unified State and local plan for a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways.	6.A. The program has in good faith participated in the development and implementation of the local plan, an infrastructure funding agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with core and required partners, as regionally applicable. 6.B. The program is actively engaged in the coordination of services and resources that support the one-stop system as a comprehensive system that seamlessly provides integrated services that are accessible to ALL job seekers, workers, and businesses. (TEGL 19-14) 6.C. The program shares in the performance measures of the regional one-stop comprehensive system.

Criterion
6.A.1. The program has regular scheduled meetings with core and required partners outside of the regional workforce development board with the opportunity to include agenda items; minutes of the meetings are available for review.
6.A.2. The Title II representative for the regional workforce development board and standing committee member meet the WIOA requirements of having optimum policy making authority defined by WIOA section 107(b)(2)(5) and/or has been appointed from nomination where there is more than one AEL provider.
6.A.3. The program's local plan is inclusive of the services provided by Title II and allows for appropriate linkages, referrals, and aligned services that support education and training in regionally identified career pathways.
6.A.4. The local plan includes details of the "skilled workforce needs", "existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors" and a thorough "analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs" relative to the population served by Title II, including learners with multiple barriers to employment.
6.A.5. The program can detail the process or procedure established to bring partners together to discuss and agree upon shared infrastructure costs of the one-stop center and MOU.
6.B.1. The program has participated in establishing standards for service coordination for programs administered by one-stop required partners that reduces duplication of services, provides seamless integration, and high-quality learner focused delivery.
6.B.2. The program provides access to basic and intensive career services at the regional one-stop center through a full time staff member, a cross-trained partner staff member and/or through technological means.
6.B.3. The program has participated in the annual review of the physical and programmatic accessibility of the one-stop center and associated affiliate sites that provide Title II services in accordance with ADA and WIOA section 188.
6.B.4. There is evidence of cross-training between core partner staff at the one-stop center, including, but not limited to, training agendas, handouts and observations of trained staff members.
6.B.5. The program has evidence of effective referrals received and provided to core partners enrolling and receiving services.
6.B.6. The program has evidence of participating in integrated business services and sector partnership efforts through agendas, minutes, and aligned services that support local industry and employers.
6.C.1. The program presents performance data relative to services provided by Title II, basic career services, and intensive career services on at least a quarterly basis with the regional workforce development board and/or the core and required partners.
6.C.2. The performance and survey feedback of the one-stop customers (employers and job seekers) is used to develop continuous quality improvement for the system.

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COMMUNITY COLLEGES & WORKFORCE PREPARATION

PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION

The Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation within the Iowa Department of Education administers a variety of diverse programs that enhance Iowa's educational system and help to prepare a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Divided between two bureaus — the Bureau of Community Colleges and the Bureau of Career and Technical Education — the division is committed to providing and supporting opportunities for lifelong learning. In addition to working with Iowa's 15 public community colleges on state accreditation, program approval, equity review, and data reporting, guidance is also provided in the areas of career and technical education, workforce training and economic development, adult education and literacy, military education, the state mandated OWI education program, the GAP Tuition and PACE programs, Senior Year Plus, the National Crosswalk Service Center, and the Statewide Intermediary Network program.