

# Adult Education and Literacy

Fiscal Year 2022

**Policy  
Manual**  
July 1, 2021

**Vermont's Adult Education and Literacy System**



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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

Vermont’s adult education and literacy system (VAEL) is composed of the local adult education and literacy (AEL) providers holding grants for the purpose of delivering services to eligible adult learners statewide, and is regulated by the Vermont Agency of Education. For the period of July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023, the (AEL) providers are: Central Vermont Adult Basic Education (CVABE); Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS); The Tutorial Center (TTC) and Vermont Adult Learning (VAL). These organizations, through a competitive process, have been given the responsibility to implement a statewide system for the provision of adult education and literacy services. The following vision and mission statements are intended to inform all aspects of the VAEL system’s operations.

## **A. Vermont Adult Education and Literacy Vision**

VAEL will provide the highest quality adult education and literacy services. It will do this by providing a comprehensive set of services in a consistent and equitable manner throughout the State in order to meet the educational needs of Vermont’s adult learners. The providers will be accountable for successful learner outcomes as measured in relation to the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education, which define the core knowledge and skills adults need to effectively carry out their roles as workers, family members and community members. The VAEL system will also align its efforts to the collective vision of Vermont’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan. It will develop services and programs for this purpose and be an efficient and accountable steward of available resources.

## **B. Vermont Adult Education and Literacy Mission**

It is the mission of VAEL to meet the educational needs of Vermont’s adult learners through supported goal-setting and literacy skill acquisition, English language acquisition, high school completion, transition to post-secondary education and training, and transition to employment.

It is the mission of VAEL to meet the commitment made by the State of Vermont to those adults seeking the knowledge, skills and credentials necessary for success as workers, family members and community members in today’s world.

It is the mission of VAEL to encourage and facilitate learner persistence, defined as a continuous learning process that lasts until an adult learner meets his or her educational goals.

It is the mission of VAEL to encourage learners to engage in a lifetime of inquiry and learning.

## **C. Statement of Common Practices**

In order to fulfill the vision and carry out the mission of VAEL, certain common practices will become the norm throughout the VAEL system. These common practices have been identified,

through research and field experience, as having efficacy in relation to the vision and mission. The statement of common practices will be regularly reviewed and revised as dictated by emerging research and experience. In order to provide a comprehensive set of services in a consistent manner throughout the state the current statement of common practices will inform operational decisions until revised.

In order to encourage and facilitate learner persistence and success:

- outreach will be broad and targeted in order to serve those in the community most in need of AEL activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills, who are English language learners, and individuals with other barriers to employment;
- intake and orientation will help students understand the available programs, set realistic expectations, build a working relationship with program staff, and establish learning goals;
- initial assessment will provide students and teachers with information on student learning needs, be integrated with instruction, and form the foundation for measuring progress;
- each learner will have an education plan (also known as a personal learning plan) that reflects his or her learning needs and personal learning goals;
- programs and instructors will measure and recognize student achievement;
- staff, instruction, and support services will be sufficient to support effective learning, using evidence-based approaches to the essential components of reading such as Orton-Gillingham, or Wilson; and learning needs screening capacity such as the Learning Needs Screening Tool by Dr. Nancie Payne;
- learning opportunities and curricula will be aligned with Vermont's Education Quality Standards Transferable Skills and [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education](#).
- technology will be integrated into service delivery to extend and enrich learning opportunities;
- a variety of instructional modes will be available to learners; and
- learner accommodations will be available when appropriate to facilitate learning and to make materials and instruction accessible to all learners.

#### **D. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) created a new vision for how the United States prepares an educated and skilled workforce that expands opportunity for workers and employers.

WIOA aligns workforce development, education, and economic development programs with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of local and regional employers. WIOA provides for a comprehensive, accessible and high-quality workforce development system. The vision of a One-Stop system under WIOA provides all participants, including those with barriers to employment, access to high-quality services in their communities to find jobs,

build basic educational or occupational skills, earn postsecondary certificates or degrees, or obtain guidance on how to make career choices. The Adult Education and Literacy funded program under Title II is a required One-Stop partner.

Burlington's Career Resource Center (CRC) is the State's federally-recognized One-Stop Job Center. This Job Center, which is operated by the [Vermont Department of Labor](#), is part of the American Job Center Network through the U.S. Department of Labor. The AOE requires that funded AEL providers will work with local regional one-stop partners, including [local CRCs](#) and [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation regional offices](#), to provide information to students on core partner services, develop and implement agreements for referrals, and collaborate with partners to provide services to those customers who are co-enrolled in programs.

[Program Memorandum OCTAE 17-2](#), Attachment 7 – Table C, lists the careers services that must be provided through the one-stop delivery system by WIOA Title II programs.

The State of Vermont has developed a WIOA Combined State Plan to meet the requirements of WIOA, Public Law No. 113–128. The plan includes the six core WIOA programs:

- Title I (3 programs): Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
- Title II: Adult Education and Literacy Act (AEL)
- Title III: Wagner-Peyser Act Program under
- Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation

Under the Adult Education and Literacy Act (Title II Section 202 and Section 243) the four-fold purpose of federally-funded AEL programs is to assist:

- adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that:
  - are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children and
  - lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
- adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in
  - improving their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics skills; and
  - acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

To read more about WIOA's Adult Education and Literacy Act (including the final rules/regulations), visit the [U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education](#).

Per WIOA, Section 203(3), "the term 'eligible agency' means the sole ... agency in a State ... responsible for administering [and] ... supervising policy for adult education and literacy activities in the State ... , consistent with the law of the State. . ." The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is the eligible agency for Vermont's WIOA Title II program and funds.

## II. SERVICES

The VAEL system will provide comprehensive services necessary for learners to accomplish their goals and for VAEL to accomplish its mission. Many terms identified here are defined in the glossary at the end of this document. Each local AEL provider must maintain full-service centers, strategically located statewide, and each center will provide the following range of services:

### A. Eligibility, Access, and Enrollment

The VAEL system will actively seek out and enroll identified target populations as described below.

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) does not require social security numbers or proof of citizenship to access AEL services. However, the purposes of WIOA and AEL are to serve those who meet the “eligible individual” definition in order to provide access to secondary school completion, basic skills instruction for those who need it, and transition services to postsecondary and employment as part of the workforce development system.

For the purposes of grant-funded services, adult learners meet the definition of “eligible individual”. Per WIOA, Section 203(4), “eligible individual” means, a person who:

- has attained 16 years of age;
- is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and
  - is basic skills deficient;
  - does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
  - is an English language learner.

In addition, adult learners must be Vermont residents. Eligibility under Vermont’s High School Completion Program (HSCP), [16 V.S.A. § 943](#), is “. . . any Vermont student who is at least 16 years of age, who has not received a high school diploma, and who may or may not be enrolled in a public or approved independent school.” An adult learner who meets the definition as an enrolled-in-school student may be eligible for services funded under the HSCP, but grant funds may not be used to provide services for enrolled students. An exception is made when it is necessary to TABE assess enrolled-in-school students for the sole purpose of determining eligibility for HSCP-funded services. If the student is found to be ineligible for services, the assessment services may not be entered into DataWorks (see Data Quality Specifications section below.) A further exception is made for those incarcerated who wish to transition to AEL services upon re-entering the community. Assessments may be administered by an AEL provider when the incarcerated individual is scheduled for release within three months of assessment date. For these exceptions, *State grant funds only* may be used.

Notes on eligibility:

- Grantees will not deny services to eligible students without reasonable cause and prior consultation with the Vermont Agency of Education.
- Home study students are not eligible for AEL services except as supported by High School Completion Program reimbursements. Home study students are essentially enrolled in a secondary course of study, which makes them ineligible for VAEL grant-supported services. AEL providers should consult with the AOE if approached by a home study student seeking VAEL services.
- Those incarcerated in Vermont have access to Community High School of Vermont, an approved independent school. Incarcerated individuals are not eligible for AEL or HSCP services, except as indicated above for assessment, and for initial intake/enrollment services using State grant funds only. This exception is made in order to reduce the risk of disengagement from educational services and increase equitable access through coordinated transition to community re-entry. The student must be scheduled to re-enter the community within three months of service dates.
- Temporary visa holders:
  - Those who have student visas types F-1 and M-1: Both programs require that the accepting United States school or university be approved by the Federal government to accept international students. The plan for the student will outline their access to their education, and will not include access to Adult Education and Literacy services, which is not a “public or private school.” Those with student visas must meet a standard of English language proficiency and are required to be enrolled in a school. Therefore, those with student visas are not eligible for VAEL services.
  - Those with exchange visitor program type J-1 visas may be professors, college or secondary school students, au pairs, teachers – there are 15 categories of participants. See the [fact sheet on the Exchange Visitor Program](#) published by the United States Department of State. They also have a program plan that will describe any access to education, which will likely not include AEL.
  - Those with F-2, M-2, and J-2 visas: these visas are issued to spouses and dependents accompanying visa type F, M, and J holders.
  - Those with B-1 or B-2 visitor visas are allowed to participate in particular activities, not including study.
  - AEL providers may consult with the AOE if anyone with a temporary visa seeks services.



AEL providers will establish intake and enrollment policies and procedures that welcome learners and establish a strong commitment, support, and clear expectations for participation, making full use of personalized learning plans and enabling learners to make fully informed decisions regarding program options. The process will be designed to reduce the risk of early withdrawal before goals are achieved and to identify an appropriate educational program that allows students to take full advantage of VAEL services. VAEL enrollment may occur as early as initial orientation, but must occur no later than the point at which a definable service has been rendered (e.g. assessment). Skill level assessments in reading, writing, math and/or ESOL must be administered to all learners, who receive 12 hours or more of instruction in the State's adult education program with a test that the United States Department of Education (US DOE) Secretary has determined is suitable for use in the National Reporting System (NRS).

AEL provider staff may assist learners in overcoming barriers to participation by making referrals to appropriate social service agencies and partners identified through WIOA as part of the One-Stop system in Vermont. Using federal and state AEL grant funds to directly provide support services should always be a last option. Such direct provision of services may be appropriate when the absence of such services would severely inhibit learner participation and such services are not available elsewhere.

As recipients of Federal financial assistance from the U. S. Department of Education, local AEL providers will comply with all relevant federal and state laws and regulations, including the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of WIOA; Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Public Accommodations); 9 V.S.A. § 4502 (Public Accommodations); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Excerpt from AEL grant agreements:

**“Fair Employment Practices and Americans with Disabilities Act:** Party agrees to comply with the requirement of 21 V.S.A. Chapter 5, Subchapter 6, relating to fair employment practices, to the full extent applicable. Party shall also ensure, to the full extent required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, that qualified individuals with disabilities receive equitable access to the services, programs, and activities provided by the Party under this Agreement.”

Both Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are concerned with protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities by ensuring that they have equal access to employment and educational opportunities. AEL learning centers must provide physically accessible spaces that comply with applicable physical accessibility standards, and must ensure communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with individuals without disabilities. The U. S. Department of Justice has provided a [resource](#) regarding effective communications under the ADA. Also, under the ADA, all programs are required to provide reasonable accommodations to learners with documentation of diagnosed disabilities.

VAEL is committed to providing support services that are in keeping with our vision and mission and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, AEL learning centers will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations when it can be demonstrated that doing so would not fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity being provided. It is the participant's responsibility to request accommodations and to provide the necessary documentation in support of the request.

Many participants may not be privy to the rights afforded them and should be informed of protections under the ADA. Therefore, AEL providers should have a published non-discrimination policy, and information must be provided to students at intake. On-going notifications to the public and to participants regarding ADA compliance, and adherence to non-discrimination of protected classes should be implemented.

## **B. Instruction**

FY20 was a transition year as the Vermont AEL system phased out the Equipped for the Future (EFF) standards. DataWorks will no longer track EFF services beginning July 1, 2020. The CCRS and [EQS transferable skills](#) are reflected in the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. The CCRS are a category of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, which Vermont's State Board of Education adopted as part of the Education Quality Standards (EQS). AEL providers were advised to let CCRS guide their work as much as possible in FY20 and work in collaboration with schools to identify the transferable skills and other [proficiency-based graduation requirements](#) that need to be addressed in High School Completion Program personalized learning plans that lead to graduation.

The standards and proficiencies to be used are defined specifically as follows:

### [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education:](#)

- English Language Arts and Literacy
  - Reading Standards
  - Writing Standards
  - Speaking and Listening Standards
  - Language Standards
  - Reading Standards: Foundational Skills K-5
- Mathematics

As part of a personalized learning approach, VAEL instruction will be offered in a variety of schedules, contexts, and formats, and delivered primarily through classes and group programs for intermediate and advanced learners, with supplemental individual instruction as needed. The lowest skilled learners (NRS 1-2) may primarily receive individual instruction, with intermittent opportunities to come together with peers. **Only well-trained and qualified instructors will provide AEL instruction. Volunteers may supplement student learning experiences, but may not substitute for qualified instructors.**

In order to continue receiving VAEL services, an adult learner must demonstrate gains on approved standardized assessments in reading, writing, mathematics or ESOL equivalent to one grade level for every 75 hours of instruction. *If such progress cannot be demonstrated, the AEL provider will assist the learner in obtaining appropriate services that can best meet their individual needs.*

AEL providers must make available both in-person and distance education services, which are described in the [Assessment Manual and Distance Education Policy FY22](#). Some programs may choose to assign distance education instruction to trained and qualified instructors, while other instructors may offer in-person services only. During times of state emergency, providers must comply with orders that may limit or eliminate in-person services until the emergency is lifted. Outside of an emergency order, students shall select how they will engage in instructional and other services, whether in-person, remotely, or some combination of both. Student decisions shall be informed by consultation with AEL provider staff, who will review the options and provide guidance using assessment results and any other relevant data and information.

### **C. Student Assessment**

The Agency of Education has published a policy governing assessments, [Assessment Manual and Distance Education Policy FY22](#). Please read the assessment policy carefully and comply with all requirements. The *DataWorks* system is programmed to disallow assessments that are not in compliance.

Progress assessment is considered valid if the student has received a minimum of 40 hours of instruction and a minimum of 31 days has passed since the previous assessment.

Contact hours that may be counted toward progress assessment hours are defined as follows:

“Hours of instruction or instructional activity that the participant receives from the program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to promote learning in the program curriculum, such as classroom instruction, assessment, tutoring, or participation in a learning lab. Time spent on assessment can be counted only if the assessment is designed to inform placement decisions, assess progress, or inform instruction. Time used simply to administer tests, such as the GED tests, cannot be counted as instructional activity.” – *NRS TA Guide, page 46.*

Where the WorkKeys assessments are available, testing opportunities should be offered on a regular basis and in accordance with local demand. AEL learning centers will also provide instruction designed to prepare students for the WorkKeys assessments. The three assessments that lead to the National Career Readiness Certificate are: Applied Math, Workplace Documents, and Graphic Literacy. Per Vermont’s Distance Education Policy, proxy hours may be tracked for passing the assessments leading to the National Career Readiness Certificate.

AEL providers may offer the WorkKeys assessments only in compliance with the guidelines of the publisher, ACT, and only using assessment proctors who have successfully completed the necessary training to serve as WorkKeys test administrators.

The examining entity is authorized to collect fees for test administration, which will be set by the AOE.

## **D. Credentials**

GED - The General Educational Development (GED) tests are available in Vermont through the AEL learning centers and a few additional sites. As of November 8, 2020, only Vermont residents are allowed to take the GED at a Vermont GED testing center or select Vermont the test-takers jurisdiction. Testing opportunities should be available on a regular basis and in accordance with local demand. Vermont residents 16 and older also have access to online proctoring through the GED Testing Center, but shall not be denied the opportunity to test at a GED testing center in Vermont if preferred. The GEDTS maintains that the primary means of testing should remain in-person at testing centers, and AEL providers must ensure equitable access to the testing centers for Vermont residents. AEL learning centers also provide instruction designed to prepare students for the GED Tests. It is essential to the integrity of the GED testing program that instructional responsibilities are kept separate from test administration functions. Therefore, persons instructing potential candidates for the GED Tests cannot be appointed as GED Chief Examiners, Examiners, or proctors, or otherwise have any access to any secure GED testing materials.

All GED testing centers must adhere to the [GED Program Policy Manual](#).

The examining entity is authorized to collect fees for test administration, per the cost of the tests priced by GED Testing Service. AEL grant funds may not be used to pay for the cost of the GED tests.

AEL providers must inform students and other test takers of the college credits they may receive at the Community College of Vermont as a result of test scores in range for the GED College Ready + Credit program. For details, see the [Adoption of College Ready Recommendations](#) found on the GED Testing Service's website.

VADP - The Vermont Adult Diploma Program is funded and administered by the Vermont Agency of Education under the authority of 16 V.S.A. § 945. The Adult Diploma Program is an assessment process administered by the Agency through which an individual can identify a pathway to earning a secondary credential. This process is accessible to individuals 20 years of age and older seeking a high school diploma or individuals 16 years of age and older seeking a GED.

HSCP - The purpose of the High School Completion Program (under 16 V.S.A. § 943) is to provide learners, ages 16 and up, whether enrolled or not enrolled in a high school, with

educational services of the scope and rigor needed for the attainment of a high school diploma through flexible pathways to graduation.

See [High School Completion Program Policy Manual](#).

### III. ACCOUNTABILITY & CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

#### A. Continuous Improvement Process

AOE requires that AEL providers demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. Performance targets have been established, described below, and shall serve as indicators of that improvement. Performance will be measured against Federal and State established targets and may be used as a basis for compliance determinations. If performance targets are not met, a continuous improvement plan (CIP) must be submitted and approved by the AOE. When appropriate, technical assistance for the CIP process will be made available. Technical assistance will be developed and executed through a collaborative process involving the AEL provider and AOE staff.

#### B. Indicators of Performance

Grant performance for the program year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 will be measured in accordance with WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A). As stewards of federal and state funds, AOE must ensure continuous improvement in performance outcomes. AOE has agreed with the U. S. Department of Education, during performance measure negotiations, to meet the overall Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) target of 40% for the program year 2021-2022. The AOE also requires that each local AEL provider meet performance levels on Indicator 1 (see table below) in order to contribute to Vermont’s overall success in meeting or exceeding the agreed upon MSG. AEL providers must also demonstrate continuous improvement in local performance targets.

<b>Indicator 1: Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs)</b>	<b>FY22</b>
Demonstrated improvements in <b>Educational Functioning Levels (EFL)</b> in reading, writing, numeracy, and English language acquisition.	Percentage of Students who increase their EFL based on NRS Approved Assessment.
Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 1	23%
ABE Level 2	33%
ABE Level 3	34%
ABE Level 4	41%
Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Level 5	56%
ASE Level 6	46%
English as a Second Language (ESL) Level 1	36%
ESL Level 2	46%

ESL Level 3	35%
ESL Level 4	21%
ESL Level 5	34%
ESL Level 6	34%
Program exit and entry into postsecondary education/training during the program year (this is another type of EFL)	Tracked by AEL providers through survey method – no specific target for this indicator though it counts toward MSG overall target.
Attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent	Tracked by the Subrecipient and AOE – no specific target for this indicator though it counts toward MSG overall target.
<b>Vermont’s overall MSG target</b>	<b>40%</b>

The MSG indicator is only one of six primary performance indicators under WIOA. For program years 2016-2019, the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) at the U.S. Department of Education, has been collecting baseline data on the five remaining measures. As part of Vermont’s WIOA State Plan for 2020-2024, the State negotiated performance levels for the first time for four other primary indicators, as below, using the baseline data reported in prior years. Baseline data is still being collected for the “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” measure.

AEL providers are required to provide services that lead to successful transition to employment and/or postsecondary education and training in order to contribute to the state meeting or exceeding the employment and credential rate targets below:

<b>Indicator 2: Employment and education/training measures</b>	<b>FY22</b>
Employment second quarter after exit	45%
Employment fourth quarter after exit	46%
Median earnings second quarter after exit	\$4,000
Credential Attainment Rate:	28%
a. Obtain secondary credential and enrolled in postsecondary education while enrolled or within one year of exit;	
b. Obtain secondary credential and obtain employment while enrolled or within one year of exit; and/or	
c. Obtain a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within one year of exit.	
<b>The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers</b>	<b>Baseline</b>

<b>Indicator 3: Additional performance targets for productivity required by the AOE</b>	<b>FY22</b>
Total students served	AEL provider specific target



Percentage of students qualified for inclusion in federal report	65%
Percentage of students with baseline assessment	90%
Percentage of students with progress assessment	50%

## C. Learner Goals

Learner goals are defined as the reasons a learner has chosen to participate in adult education. Every learner shall have at least one goal established. The status of goals, whether open, met, or cancelled, will be a basis for continuous improvement monitoring. Learner goals are to be considered as the intellectual property of the learner and therefore may be revised or cancelled only with the consent of the learner. Upon successful completion of a goal, it may be shown as met in *DataWorks* without learner consent, but such indication must be accompanied by appropriate documentation.

## D. Performance Expectations

### i. Data Quality Specifications

In order to track actual performance against established productivity and learner achievement targets, AEL providers are required to enter data on every VAEL participant in the centralized electronic database. This database is referred to as *DataWorks* and is a secure, web-based system designed specifically for the collection and reporting of all VAEL data. *DataWorks* is the repository for data regarding demographics, enrollment, and student goals, services, assessment and achievements, and is the sole source of performance data relative to established targets. It is designed for “real time” data entry, which is the expected norm. Data must be entered at least every two weeks.

It is recognized that after the end of the fiscal year, additional time may be needed to ensure that all student data is entered and accurate. AOE staff requires finalized data in order to compile the Federal report in a timely way. To meet both of these needs, all student service data for the previous fiscal year that impacts Periods of Participation must be completed by August 1<sup>st</sup> each year. For example, all FY22 hours of student instructional (including distance education), assessment, and plan management services must be entered by August 1, 2022. No new student records should be entered for the previous fiscal year after August 1<sup>st</sup>. Other data, such as goals and achievements management, must be completed by August 15<sup>th</sup>. Final narrative reports that are due August 31<sup>st</sup> each year should include the actual and final data as reflected in the database.

**Privacy:** Appropriate use of data in regard to privacy protection, including training on FERPA, must be provided to all AEL staff members or volunteers who may have access to student information. Managers and supervisors must also ensure removal of access to all sources of student information for former staff members (or volunteers) within 24 hours after they have ended employment/affiliation with the AEL provider. In addition, the AOE must be informed when program staff who utilize the database begin and exit employment.

AEL full-service centers must maintain auditable student files as documentation of student achievements recorded in *DataWorks*. Both electronic and hard copy student files are acceptable. All student files with supporting documentation must be kept confidential and secure, and made available to the AOE upon request for monitoring purposes.

*DataWorks* is designed for and maintained to track AEL grant-funded and HSCP-reimbursed services. Therefore, only those services and student records for those eligible for AEL and/or HSCP services shall be entered into *DataWorks*. Services for those who do not meet eligibility as defined in Federal statute or in HSCP policy are not to be entered into the database.

## ii. Compliance

The State will evaluate compliance with grant requirements based on periodic site visits and monitoring of pertinent learner, administrative, and fiscal records of AEL grantees. Compliance determinations may be based on performance targets identified as continuous improvement measures. Compliance determinations shall be based on demonstrated adherence to these policies, and to the terms of the current statewide grant describing operational procedures, [full range of services](#), and vision, mission and common practices. The State will notify grantees of identified performance problems that could jeopardize continuation of the grant award in writing, and will provide the grantee a reasonable opportunity to take corrective action and to demonstrate compliance with 1) meeting established performance targets, 2) implementation of the vision, mission and common practices and 3) the full range of services.

If a grantee fails to correct performance and achieve compliance with requirements within six months of notification, the grant may be terminated. The grant can also be immediately terminated due to gross misconduct. In such an event, prior to or at the time of termination, grantee will be provided with written notice of such termination, including specific identification of the misconduct. Details of grant terms can be located in the grant award agreements between the Agency of Education and grantees.

## IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The ongoing professional development of AEL provider staff is essential to the success of AEL programs and therefore, our adult learners. In order to fulfill its responsibility for providing professional development opportunities to the field, the AOE has dedicated staff and financial resources to this effort. In order to ensure that these resources are fully utilized, the State has established the below policy expectations for professional learning for AEL providers.

AEL teachers, assessors, plan managers, and program administrators will have an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) in progress and updated/revised at least annually. There is an acceptable format for an IPDP provided on the [AOE's website](#). Other formats that address all of the following components are acceptable:



- self-assessment;
- setting PD goals to enhance the individuals' skills or knowledge that are also aligned with the strategic goals of the organization;
- creating an action plan to achieve the goals;
- implementing the plan; and,
- documenting progress with reflection/evaluation on progress and revision as necessary.

AEL providers will support their staff in the development of professional development goals that connect to individual needs and interests, the priorities of the VAEL system, and ways of better serving adult learners. Supervisors will hold staff accountable for developing and making progress on the IPDP. Progress on the plan must be documented at least annually. Supervisors may exclude certain staff (for example, those on a limited contract or some support staff) from this requirement by documenting the reason in the employee's file.

The IPDP will be used to inform regional and/or statewide planning of professional development opportunities. As such, IPDPs will be available for review by the Professional Development Coordinator at the AOE as they are established or updated. Supervisors of staff should ensure that copies of the IPDP are submitted on an annual basis.

## **V. FUNDING FORMULA**

In October 1992 a task force of representatives of AEL providers, libraries, human services, corrections, and colleges met to develop a needs-based rationale for distribution of VAEL funds. Their recommendation was amended and endorsed by the Vermont Literacy Board in February 1993 and the State Board of Education in April and became Rule 2410-11 in 1993. The following year the Rule was amended slightly, and this version continues in use.

The formula was developed to "balance service delivery throughout the state" with funding linked to the need for services at the county level. A base amount was incorporated in order to ensure a basic level of services for each county and to acknowledge access and small population issues. The formula was designed to be responsive to the needs of adults and give weight to populations most likely to demand services. Great care was taken to avoid linking the distribution of funds to AEL providers.

The formula, outlined in State Rule 2410.1-3 consists of three parts:

1. Base of \$30,000 to each county;
2. 70% of balance for allocation on basis of statewide need – the need of the county relative to all counties in the state (State Need);
3. 30% of balance allocated on basis of comparative density of need within each county (County Burden).

Indicators of need for services, used in both the State Need and County Burden sections of the formula are:

- 15% ... un- or under-employed persons without a high school diploma;
- 50% ... persons 16 or older without a high school diploma;
- 20% ... persons living at 125% of poverty;
- 15% ... persons in categories of offenders, mothers without high school diplomas, and for whom English is a second language.

Data for indicators are updated annually with the most current information available.

- Population: census data or most recent population estimates published by the Vermont Department of Health.
- Several data categories are based on census and therefore not updated annually:
  - persons 16 or older without a high school diploma;
  - persons living at 125% of poverty;
  - persons for whom English is a second language.
- Data for three indicators is available on a more regular basis from other State agencies:
  - un- or under-employed persons without a high school diploma;
  - offenders;
  - mothers without high school diplomas.

## VI. GLOSSARY

**Adult Basic Education (ABE)** – Describes students and services at NRS levels 1-4, which includes *ABE Beginning Literacy*, *ABE Beginning Basic Education*, *ABE Intermediate Low*, and *ABE Intermediate High*. These levels are roughly equivalent to grade levels preK-8.

**Adult Secondary Education (ASE)** – Describes students and services at NRS levels 5-6, which includes *ASE Low* and *ASE High*. These levels are roughly equivalent to grades 9-12.

**College and Career Readiness** – A student possesses the foundational skills and learning strategies necessary to begin studies in a career pathway and has the ability to enter the workforce or pursue post-secondary education or training without the need for remediation.

**College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)** – These are the academic standards that define college and career readiness in English Language Arts and Literacy (ELA), and Mathematics. These standards consist of a subset of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) adopted by Vermont for use in the PreK-12 system in 2010.

**Distance Education** - Formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time or both for the majority of the instructional period.

**Educational Functioning Level (EFL)** – There are six ABE EFLs and six ESL levels in the National Reporting System. An EFL is achieved when a learner completes or advances one or more educational functioning levels from the starting level measured at entry into the program. The Educational Functioning Level Table and other NRS-specific information is available in the [National Reporting System \(NRS\) Technical Assistance Guide](#).

**Full Range of Services** – Each funded provider must maintain at least one learning center that provides the full range of services. The number of required full-service centers will depend on the local region’s population and demand for services. Satellite offices may be supported by grant funds and may be open less than full-time.

**General Educational Development (GED)** - A group of four subject tests which, when passed, certify that the test taker has high-school level academic skills. In Vermont, successful completion results in a State GED certificate. However, completers are still eligible for high school diploma-related services such as free access to career and technical education.

**Local Adult Education Provider** – an entity that is awarded federal or state grant funds to conduct adult education and literacy activities ([16 V.S.A. § 942](#)).

**Measurable Skill Gain (MSG)** – Documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards a recognized credential or employment. Title II-relevant documented progress is defined in Program Memorandum OCTAE 17-2 as:

- a. Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level; and,
- b. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

**National Reporting System (NRS)** – The outcome-based reporting system for the State-administered, federally funded AEL program, which was developed by the U.S. Department of Education.

**Personalized Learning Plan (PLP)** – A plan developed by the student, a representative of the AEL system and, when appropriate, a parent or legal guardian and a representative of the local educational agency (LEA) that defines the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities for the student to attain college and career readiness. The plan shall be developmentally appropriate and reflect the student’s emerging abilities, aptitude and disposition.