



# Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education

## Under Section 243 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

### Overview

The U.S. Department of Education's Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (AEFLA), enacted as Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act<sup>1</sup> (WIOA), is the principal source of federal funding for states' adult education programs. AEFLA, administered by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), provides a variety of services to youth and adult learners aged 16 and older, including (but not limited to) adult education, literacy, workforce preparation, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education (IELCE), and integrated education and training (IET). Additionally, WIOA codified in section 243 a new program of expanded IELCE activities. The program provides education services for English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials from their native country. Section 243(d) of WIOA requires the Secretary of Education to make available to the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, a report on the activities carried out under the IELCE program.

Since 2001, annual consolidated appropriations have included a set-aside for "integrated English literacy and civics education [IELCE] services to immigrants and other limited-English proficient populations." Under Title II of WIOA, AEFLA funds are reserved specifically for the IELCE program, and IELCE services also remain an allowable adult education and literacy activity<sup>2</sup> that eligible providers may include in their services using non-IELCE AEFLA funding. IELCE services, as a defined term in WIOA, must include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and *may* include workforce training.<sup>3</sup> The IELCE program established under section 243 of WIOA differs in that providers receiving funds

*IELCE programs include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include workforce training.*

<sup>1</sup> Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub. L. No. 113–128 (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Section 203(2) of WIOA defines "adult education and literacy activities" as "...programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training."

<sup>3</sup> Section 203(12) of WIOA defines "integrated English literacy and civics education" (IELCE) as "...education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training."

for this specific program must provide IELCE activities in combination with IET<sup>4</sup> activities. Furthermore, programs that receive section 243 funding are required to prepare English language learners for, and place such adults, in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency, as well as integrate with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program.<sup>5</sup>

This report includes available data from the first two program years (PYs) through the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), covering PY 2016–17 and PY 2017–18. Beginning in PY 2018–19, the NRS will report outcomes for IELCE participants disaggregated by demographic characteristics. This report sets forth activities of the section 243 program in the following sections: Funding, Enrollment, and Program Design and Promising Practices.

## Funding

WIOA requires the Secretary of Education to reserve 12 percent of the AEFLA appropriation available for grants<sup>6</sup> to carry out the IELCE program under Section 243. Section 243(b)(1)(A)-(B) allocates 65 percent of those IELCE funds to states based on a state’s need for integrated English literacy and civics education. This is determined by calculating each state’s share of a 10-year average of the data of the Office of Immigration Statistics of the Department of Homeland Security for immigrants admitted for legal permanent residence for the 10 most recent years. The remaining 35 percent of IELCE funds is allocated to states that have experienced recent growth among the target population as measured by the average of the three most recent years for which data for immigrants admitted for legal permanent residence are available.<sup>7</sup>

Congress appropriated \$595,667,000 for AEFLA in both fiscal year (FY) 2016 and FY 2017. The Department reserved a portion specified by appropriations language for national leadership activities (authorized under Section 242); in both years \$512,120,400 was available for AEFLA Basic Grants to States, and \$69,834,600 was available for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education.

IELCE awards to states ranged from \$60,000<sup>8</sup> to \$13,960,209 in FY 2016 and from \$60,000 to \$13,999,514 in FY 2017.

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<sup>4</sup> Under Section 203(11) of WIOA and 34 C.F.R. § 463.35, “integrated education and training” (IET) means “...a service approach that provides 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.” IET is further described at 34 C.F.R. §§ 463.36–463.38.

<sup>5</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§ 463.70–463.73. Retrieved from: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title34-vol3/xml/CFR-2019-title34-vol3-subtitleB-chapIV.xml#seqnum463.70>.

<sup>6</sup> Section 211(a)(2) requires that 12 percent of the AEFLA total appropriations amount that remains after reserving 2 percent for National Leadership Activities be reserved to carry out the IELCE program. Language in appropriations acts have, for many years, routinely overridden the 2 percent set-aside for National Leadership Activities with a slightly different amount.

<sup>7</sup> Office of Immigration Statistics of the Department of Homeland Security at <https://www.dhs.gov/office-immigration-statistics>.

<sup>8</sup> Section 243(b)(2) of WIOA requires that no state receive an allotment of less than \$60,000. The states that received \$60,000 in Section 243 IELCE program funds in FYs 2016 and 2017 are Montana, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

## Enrollment

The first full year of program implementation for the Section 243 IELCE program was PY 2016–17. Figure 1 illustrates enrollment data for the first 2 years of IELCE program implementation. Between PY 2016–17 and PY 2017–18, states reported an increase of 43,441 participants enrolled in the IELCE program nationwide.

Enrollment	
PY 2016–17:	116,683
PY 2017–18:	160,124
<b>Increase:</b>	<b>43,441</b>

A key component of the IELCE program is that educational services be delivered in combination with IET activities. The AEFLA regulations<sup>9</sup> clarify that a program may meet the requirement to provide IELCE in combination with IET by co-enrolling participants in IET activities provided within the local or regional workforce development area offered through other public workforce system partners, or by using AEFLA funds to support IET activities.

Between PY 2016–17 and PY 2017–18, the AEFLA program saw an increase of 8,062 participants in the IET component of the IELCE program, a 136 percent increase (see IELCE-IET data in Figure 1). In comparison, IET enrollment for the AEFLA program outside of an IELCE program has also seen a significant increase in participants. In PY 2016–17, IET participation across all program types (not including the Section 243 IELCE program) was 17,391 and increased to 29,926 in PY 2017–18 – an increase of 12,535 participants (or 72 percent) between the two program years.

Figure 1. Student Enrollment in IELCE by Program Type

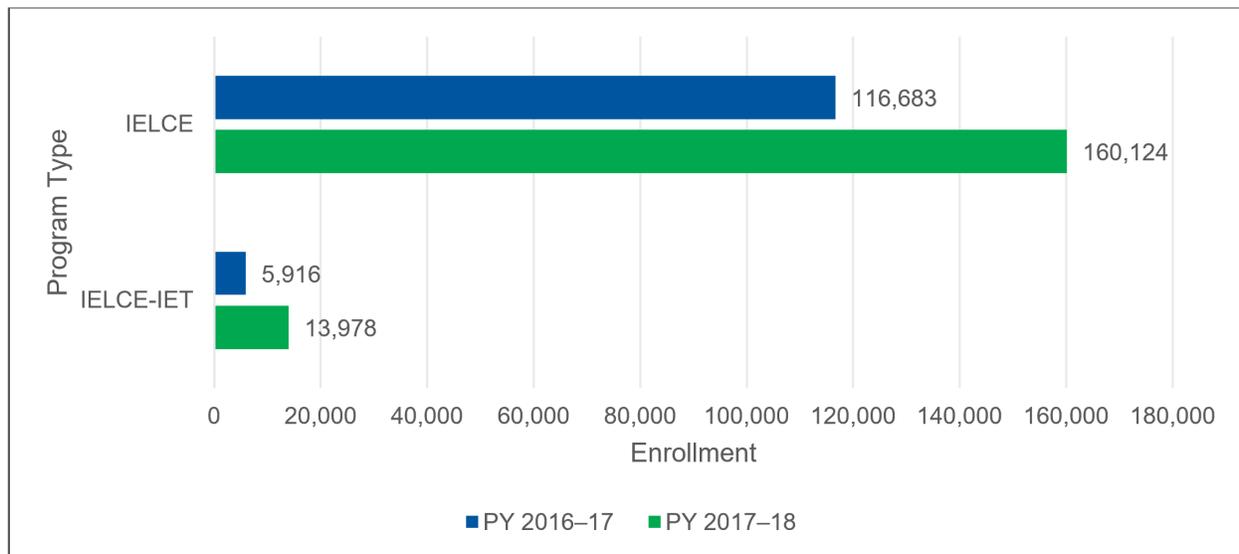
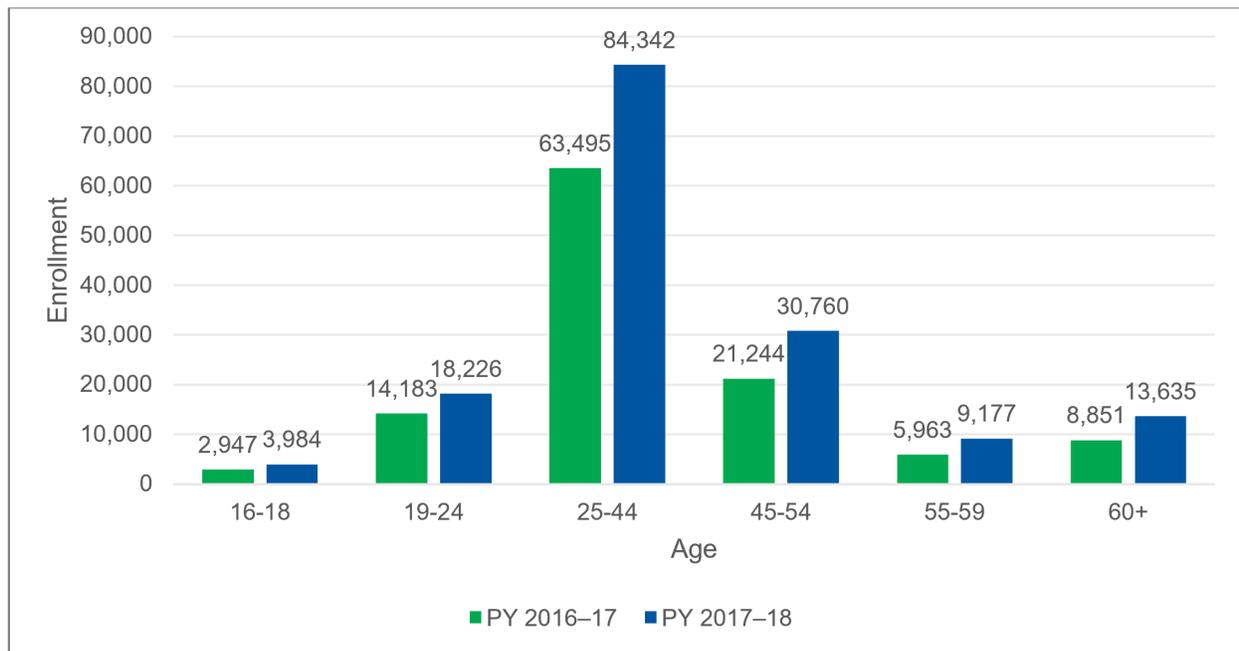


Figure 2 provides disaggregated information regarding IELCE program participants by age. As indicated in the figure, the number of IELCE program participants increased in all age groups between PY 2016–17 and PY 2017–18. The largest number of participants, representing more than half of the IELCE participants (approximately 54 percent in PY 2016–17 and 53 percent in

<sup>9</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 463.74. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title34-vol3/xml/CFR-2019-title34-vol3-subtitleB-chapIV.xml#seqnum463.74>.

PY 2017–18, respectively), were in the 25–44 age group and saw an increase of 20,847 participants between the two program years. The second largest age group, representing 18 percent of IELCE participants in PY 2016–17 and 19 percent of participants in PY 2017–18, was 45- to 54-year-olds which saw an increase of 9,516 participants enrolled between the two program years.

**Figure 2. IELCE Program Participants by Age**



## IELCE Program Design and Promising Practices

States award Section 243 IELCE funds through the same competitive process that they use to award the basic AEFLA grant funds to eligible providers. States also have the flexibility to implement a variety of IELCE program designs, as long as programs meet the requirements outlined in the regulations.<sup>10</sup>

The *Building Opportunities Through Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education* project, funded by the Department of Education in June 2016 through national leadership activities funds, supported states and eligible providers in implementing the requirements of the IELCE program. The project provided coaching and other technical assistance to support program design and created a national collaborative that allows for peer-to-peer learning and sharing of IELCE promising practices and strategies. The project

*The Building Opportunities Through Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education project created a national collaborative and identified promising practices for IELCE.*

<sup>10</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§ 463.70–463.75. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2019-title34-vol3/xml/CFR-2019-title34-vol3-subtitleB-chapIV.xml#seqnum463.70>.

identified some noteworthy strategies for program effectiveness, including fostering strong relationships and collaborations with workforce development and community partners to enhance the curriculum and training components; using bridges and on-ramps to IETs that lead to credentials; and delivering contextual instruction that connects English language learning to other wraparound support services, as well as other strategies to support recruitment, retention, and delivery of program services.

## **Summary**

Since 2001, annual consolidated appropriations have included a set-aside for “integrated English literacy and civics education [IELCE] services to immigrants and other limited-English proficient populations.” Under Title II of WIOA, AEFLA funds are reserved specifically for the IELCE program. Although this report presents available data from the first two program years through the NRS, covering PY 2016–17 and PY 2017–18, future reports will present outcomes for IELCE participants disaggregated by demographic characteristics. This first report sets forth baseline data describing funding levels and enrollment trends in the first two years of implementation. States continue to develop and expand IELCE programs and provide resources and guidance to local programs to strengthen IELCE programs within their states. OCTAE continues to provide technical assistance, opportunities for states to share promising practices, and other resources and supports to assist states in the implementation efforts.