



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF CAREER, TECHNICAL, AND ADULT EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

**PROGRAM MEMORANDUM OCTAE/DAEL 15-7**

**DATE:** January 11, 2016

**TO:** State Directors of Adult Education

**FROM:** Johan E. Uvin /s/  
Deputy Assistant Secretary,  
Delegated the Authority of the Assistant Secretary

**RE:** Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – Frequently Asked Questions

Title II of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) retains and expands the purposes of the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act* (AEFLA or Title II), which aims to help adults acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to obtain employment, become full partners in the educational development of their children, improve economic opportunities for their family, and aid in the transition to postsecondary education and training. English language learners – representing more than 40 percent<sup>1</sup> of AEFLA participants – continue to be a substantial portion of adults served in U.S. adult education programs. WIOA expands the purpose of AEFLA to assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners to improve their reading, writing, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics, as well as understanding the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify statutory provisions related to the expanded use of integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/CE), which are education services provided to English language learners under Title II of WIOA.

**1. What are adult education and literacy activities?**

Adult education and literacy activities include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, IEL/CE, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.<sup>2</sup> Under Section 222, State eligible agencies are required to use a significant portion of AEFLA grant funds<sup>3</sup> to award grants

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Reporting System for Adult Education, Program Year 2013-14 enrollment.

<sup>2</sup> Section 203(2) of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*.

<sup>3</sup> Section 222(a) requires each State eligible agency receiving a grant for a fiscal year to use “not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under section 231 and to carry out section 225...[and] not more than 12.5 percent...to carry out State leadership activities.” for adult education and literacy activities to develop and enhance the adult education system of the State or outlying area.

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and contracts to eligible providers that would enable eligible providers to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities within the State.

## **2. What adult education and literacy activities may meet the language needs of adult English language learners?**

English language acquisition activities and IEL/CE are two distinct allowable activities that may meet the language needs of English language learners.

## **3. What is an English language acquisition program under WIOA?**

An English language acquisition program is a program of instruction designed to help eligible English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language and that leads to attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent and to the transition to postsecondary education and training or employment.<sup>4</sup>

## **4. How is the English language acquisition program under WIOA different from the English literacy (or English-as-a-Second Language) program under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)?**

Under WIA, the English literacy program focused on instruction designed to help individuals of limited English proficiency achieve competence in the English language.<sup>5</sup> WIOA, however, expands this focus. In addition to requiring that the program of instruction be designed to help English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language, it also requires that the **program of instruction** must lead to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training, or employment.<sup>6</sup>

## **5. What is integrated English literacy and civics education under WIOA?**

IEL/CE is defined 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.”<sup>7</sup>

## **6. How is IEL/CE provided under WIOA?**

IEL/CE is used in two distinct ways in the AEFLA statute. IEL/CE may be provided by an eligible provider as a “required local **activity**” under Section 231(b), in accordance with its grant or contract

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<sup>4</sup> Section 203(6) of WIOA.

<sup>5</sup> Section 203(6) of the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998*.

<sup>6</sup> Section 203(6) of WIOA.

<sup>7</sup> Section 203(12) of WIOA.

with the State to provide adult education and literacy activities. It must also be implemented as a **program** under Section 243 of AEFLA with funds allocated as described in Section 243. The IEL/CE program under Section 243 carries additional requirements beyond those that an eligible provider must meet in implementing IEL/CE as a local activity under section 231(b).

**7. What are the requirements for providing IEL/CE through Section 243?**

Services provided through Section 243 must include education services that enable adult English language learners 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. It 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. Additionally, the Section 243 IEL/CE program must be provided in combination with integrated education and training (IET).<sup>8</sup>

As part of the IEL/CE program requirements, each program that receives funding under Section 243 must be designed to “(1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.”<sup>9</sup>

**8. Must IEL/CE always be funded in combination with IET?**

No, an eligible provider that provides IEL/CE as a local activity under Section 231(b) is not required to provide the services in combination with IET. IEL/CE as a local activity under Section 231(b) must meet the definition provided in question #5 above.

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<sup>8</sup> Section 243(a) of WIOA.

<sup>9</sup> Section 243(c) of WIOA.