

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Allocation of Title II Funding for Professional Development and Technical Assistance
FY 2021-22

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is requested to approve an allocation of \$100,000 for Reading Connections, Inc. under Section 243 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to provide professional development and technical assistance via the Center of Excellence for English Language Learners (ELL) in Title II programs between October 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.

Strategic Plan Reference(s):

Theme: Student Interest and Access

Goal 1: Increase the percentage of North Carolinians, particularly within underserved populations, pursuing and easily accessing education or training through North Carolina community college.

- Objective 1.3: Identify and reduce access barriers for all prospective students, particularly among underserved populations

Theme: Clear and Supported Pathways for Student Progress and Success

Goal 2: Provide a continuum of education, training, advising, and support to help learners make informed decisions that lead to credentials and careers.

- Objective 2.3: Increase completion of credentials for success transition to careers and/or further education.
 - Strategy 2.3.4: Support effective advising and coaching to help students determine, pursue, and achieve their educational and career goals.
 - Strategy 2.3.5: Promote guided educational pathways within broader career pathways

Background: Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) services mean education services provided to ELL who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enable them 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.

Programs that receive funding under Section 243 must be designed to prepare adults who are English Language Learners for, and place them in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to successfully implement all intended activities of the program.

IELCE 243 program models must include:

- Integrated Education and Training (IET) services:

- Adult education and literacy services
- Workforce preparation activities
- Workforce training
- Integration with the local Workforce Development System and its function
- Instruction on civics participation and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship

Per WIOA guidelines, Title II funded programs must: (1) integrate literacy and English language instruction with occupational skills training, including promoting linkages with employers; and (2) provide activities that promote workplace education and literacy activities.

During program year 2020-21, Reading Connections, Inc. served as the lead provider for The Center of Excellence for ELL Workforce Development. The work provided by the Center of Excellence for ELL Workforce Development expanded professional development and technical assistance to all Title II funded providers.

The purpose of the request for funding is to support all Title II funded programs with the development of instructional and occupational related materials to prepare ELL for in-demand industry recognized certificates that align to local workforce demands. Also, the funds will help support the full implementation of the IET component required for this funding source.

Rationale: The Center of Excellence for ELL Workforce Development is designed to prepare students with the occupational skills and knowledge, and English language proficiency needed to earn industry recognized certificates. The Center of Excellence for ELL Workforce Development focuses on the implementation of successful IET models. The Center of Excellence provides guidance and technical assistance regarding concurrent enrollment in occupational training, workforce preparation activities, civics education, and English language learning activities to include technical assistance with developing contextualized instructional materials that define scope, sequence and single learning objectives for in-demand careers and pathways. Customizing curriculum requires a team that includes an occupation training expert, a trained English language learning instructor, and administrators. The Center of Excellence provides support and guidance for programs regarding how to create a comprehensive curriculum development team to include Curriculum and Short-Term Workforce Development partners. The Center of Excellence will help Title II providers develop seamless partnerships with their Curriculum and Short-Term Workforce Development training providers.

The Center of Excellence for ELL Workforce Development is designed to prepare students with the occupational skills and knowledge, and English language proficiency needed to earn industry recognized certificates and to assist in job placement. As part of this project, the Center of Excellence for ELL Workforce Development will focus on the following activities:

- Training on fundamentals of IET.
- Orientation for newly funded IELCE providers to support IELCE development.

- Providing guidance and technical assistance regarding concurrent enrollment in occupational training, workforce preparation activities, civics education, and English language learning activities to implement a compliant IELCE model.
- Assisting programs in developing instructional materials that define the scope, sequence and single learning objectives for in-demand careers and pathways as required for IELCE.
- Assisting providers with developing contextualized curriculum for each occupation identified as being in a high demand industry.
- Providing support and guidance for programs regarding the creation of a comprehensive curriculum development team.

Funding for this project will produce high quality instructional strategies and curriculum that aligns with the North Carolina Adult Education Content Standards. Additionally, with this funding, the Center of Excellence will help Title II providers identify and expand basic need services that support students such as childcare, transportation, and creation of community partnerships. The Center of Excellence for ELL Workforce Development will provide career-focused recruitment strategies, comprehensive intake processes, and development of inclusive student data tracking systems. Funds will be used to implement a research-based professional development model that uses a mentoring approach. The Center of Excellence will be a vehicle to provide training and mentoring on best practices for ELL instructional methods and workforce development.

The overall management of the project is supported by Reading Connections Inc. Reading Connections, Inc. has the programmatic ability unique among IELCE providers to fulfill the objectives for which the funds are allocated. Reading Connections, Inc. serves approximately 800 adult learners yearly. Of these 800 adult learners, approximately 230 are ELL. Additionally, this provider has demonstrated excellent outcomes and has a documented track record of providing innovative workforce development training for underserved populations. They have also delivered work-based learning opportunities to employers in their region and displayed strong collaboration with community agencies serving the ELL population. Currently, Reading Connections, Inc. partners with seven corporate organizations, seven outreach organizations, and 17 community organizations. To provide wrap-around services for adult learners, and partners with many local agencies in Piedmont area including the Guild Workforce Development Board, Chamber of Commerce, Guilford County Schools, and Guilford Technical Community College. Additionally, Reading Connections, Inc. partners with many faith-based organizations and other non-profits to plan and provide IELCE instruction. Reading Connections, Inc. works closely with the Guilford County Public Transit System to ensure that all adult education classes are easily accessible. Over the years, the program has demonstrated the commitment to meeting the Federal outcome performance measures. During the 2018-19 program year, Reading Connections, Inc. exceeded the Federal performance measures by earning an overall Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) percentage of 50.9%. Using a local provider such as Reading Connections, Inc., offers more field-based assistance to other providers and, therefore, provides an authentic implementation of the project.

Reading Connections, Inc. can provide support in developing a framework through which providers are working more collaboratively towards a robust and fully interdependent adult literacy and workforce system. The intent of closer partnerships is to ensure that programming can be developed collaboratively to work in the students' best interests and to ensure that opportunities for future collaboration are easily identified and acted upon. Providers will continue to improve their understanding of best practices in digital literacy, including contextualization within an IET.

For program year 2021-2022, the following services will be delivered by the provider:

Lead Provider:

1. Manage and provide oversight of the Center of Excellence for English Language Learners.
 - a. Lead colleges and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) on improving credential attainment through IECLE models.
2. Assist programs with implementation and integration of Digital Literacy plans for workplace activity in their respective IELCE programs.
 - a. Monitor implementation of the digital literacy plan into programs.
3. Implement and integrate Digital Literacy plans for all IELCE funded programs.
4. Complete best practices article for newsletter for professional development team.
5. Maintain online training regarding the implementation of the IELCE program.
 - a. On-going best practices information will be uploaded and disseminated via the Virtual Learning Community (VLC).
6. Provide technical assistance to programs identified by the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) College and Career Readiness (CCR) team to provide training on IET implementation and instructional models to support ELLs.
 - a. Provide on-boarding and orientation to new providers
 - b. Maintain ELLs Workforce Development program self-evaluation tools for Title II programs in conjunction with the Coordinator of IELCE.
 - c. Provide continuous training regarding how to use the program self-evaluation tools on ELL workforce development in conjunction with the Coordinator of IELCE.
 - d. Provide technical assistance and best practices around new Measurable Skill Gains permitted through the delivery of IET services from the National Reporting System (NRS).
7. Provide on-site/virtual technical assistance for providers as deemed necessary.
8. Provide a series of three topical trainings for providers regarding the implementation of IELCE program requirements.
9. Provide mid-year and end-of-year written reports via email.
10. Report monthly project progression to the Coordinator of Compliance and IELCE.

Funding Amount and Time Period: The \$100,000 request is for the period of October 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.

Fund Source and Availability: Funding is available from the grant award from the US Department of Education Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Section 243 Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE).

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