

# Adult Education and Literacy in Texas: Part 1

## Slide 1: Adult Education and Literacy in Texas

Good morning this is Anson Green, the State Director for Adult Education and Literacy at the Texas Workforce Commission and I want to welcome you to the first in a series of webinars on an introduction to adult education and literacy in Texas.

## Slide 2: Overview

The two-part series will include Part 1 which is a basic overview of adult education, our objectives in our program, models that drive performance and an overview of the Texas workforce system at large. Part 2 will be focused specifically on federal and state funding and grants, and the grant process.

## Slide 3: What is Adult Education?

So let's do some background on "what is adult education?"

## Slide 4: Our History

Well, the program history at the Texas Workforce Commission really begins in September 2013 with the program transfer after the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature transferred the responsibility to the Workforce Commission from the Texas Education Agency. The Commission adopted rules on February 4, 2014 and in February 2014 we also held our first statewide grant competition. The priorities established by the Commission outlined in the rules include: a focus on career advancement across all levels of adult education and literacy; an integrated service delivery design that links workforce, college, community-based organizations, libraries and other organizations; a strengthening of digital literacy and distance learning; and, overall, an increased accountability and performance-drive perspective for the program.

## Slide 5: Our System

Our system is very large and very broad. Multi-year grants across the state go to community colleges, independent school districts, educational service centers, non-

profits and workforce boards to fully flush out through sub-contracts or sub-recipient grants. We also have grants in housing authorities through our library systems and in correctional institutions. Overall, it's about a \$73 million dollar investment with about 100,000 students. In 2016--to kind of reflect a revised focus on on career advancement-- in 2016, we had already achieved 295 unique career pathways programs across the state. 72 different programs with employers and over 13,000 students in distance learning. And all of those numbers have grown since 2016.

## Slide 6: Our Customer

When we think about the customer for adult education and literacy, we are first considering individuals that either have a high school diploma but are low-functioning-- meaning they are doing reading, writing, math below at 12.9 grade level. Or they lack a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. And, amongst that population there are English Language Learners that span that spectrum of skills, going from 0 literacy all the way to 12.9. So, the customer in adult education and literacy is a very broad customer and the eligibility requirements are very open for a wide variety of individuals.

## Slide 7: Our Basic Services

Our basic services are outlined in this slide and we see that we have categories in adult basic education and adult secondary education which basically are stratified similar to grade levels in public schools. English as a Second Language and the English Literacy and Civics programs which are focused on English Language Learners, our largest population actually in the adult education and literacy program, focus on transition to postsecondary education and training models, Workforce Preparation Activities that represent those marketable skills, or employability skills or soft skills that are vital in going to work and in entering higher education. And then, of course, preparation for the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency.

## Slide 8: Our Career Pathways Services

These basic services are augmented by what we call Career Pathways Services. And in Texas this has become the default model that what we see in the future for service delivery because these models bring the greatest return on investment for the individual and the tax-paying public. The Career Pathway models are found in multiple options. And so we have our Integrated Education and Training option which

integrates basic education with training for under-skilled adults. The Integrated English Literacy Civics, or EL Civics model, which is a similar integrated training model but for English Language Learners.

We have new for 2017 what we call Intensive Service Models. These are broken into three different sections. One, Services for Internationally-Trained Professionals; those individuals that come to the United States with degrees, certifications, and skills from their home countries, and want to leverage and build those skills out to work in those similar occupations in the United States. Then we have Transition to Re-entry and Post-release Services for individuals who are in corrections or other institutions. These services help individuals who are exiting institutions and entering the workforce. Then we have Workplace Literacy projects, which are projects within a workplace working on specific skills as defined by Texas employers.

## **Slide 9: AEL Objectives**

Let's turn our attention to the objectives of the adult education and literacy program.

## **Slide 10: Strategic Plan: Goal**

The Adult Education and Literacy Strategic Plan establishes a single goal for adult education and literacy. This goal is to increase employment, higher education transition, skill gains, and secondary completion through demonstrated approaches that integrate system services and leverage community partnerships. You'll notice here the focus on employment, education and training and higher education and training transition, skill gains across these programs, and secondary completion or high school equivalency completion. And then also a similar model that is really focused on leveraging the integrated service systems of our partner organizations and agencies and including those community partnerships that are so vital to service delivery.

## **Slide 11: Milestone 20,000 in Career Pathways**

The plan, the Strategic Plan, also establishes a bold milestone: 20,000 students in Career Pathways programs by the year 2020 and doing so in these vital partnerships with Texas employers, community and technical colleges, and adult education and literacy providers, and Workforce Boards.

## Slide 12: 20,000 by 2020

We're doing really well in how we are moving towards that 20,000 by 2020 goal. As of July 2017, two years into this process, we're halfway through there with three years to go sitting at about 9,000 students. So we're very confident that we'll exceed this goal. Our robust provider system has been delivering for their customers very strongly to meet these objectives.

## Slide 13: Key Strategies

The Strategic Plan also has three or four strategies embedded in it and those won't be no surprise. Increasing our workforce and postsecondary education and training outcomes, addressing the demand in Texas for adult education and literacy services, increasing our coordination in system integration, and in performing – improving performance excellence across the system.

## Slide 14: Models that Drive Performance

So how do we do this? Well we've seen the goal and the milestones of Texas but let's talk a little bit about what models we see that we're finding great success in across the state.

## Slide 15: Local Effectiveness

One of the first things that stands out about our high-performing programs is a very strong staffing pattern amongst those programs. So with a focus on strong student success and commensurate program accountability, we see that we have strong and strategic thinking leaders and directors that drive these programs. They are committed to understanding the focus of where we need to go in Texas and how to take their local programs in that direction. Strong programs also have a very keen focus on performance accountability. And for us, that means understanding the data, the teaching and learning performance data as well as the transition data for employment and higher education, and recommending improvements in their systems and using that data for data-driven performance.

That means a strong connection to a Professional Development, or a PD Coordinator, that takes the data information and helps connect it to professional development that helps teachers primarily do better in classroom and meet their gaps as well as excel in the areas that they're strong. Of course, the bulwark of our service delivery is through

our instructors and we see there that strong and committed instructional leadership helps a largely part-time workforce of teachers connect the dots and support student success.

Program integrity is always a focus for us. And strong programs have someone who is dedicated to fiscal and program compliance. This is especially important to make sure we're being good stewards to the public funds, that we're held to our accountability framework.

For the student delivery side of things, we see strong programs investing in career navigators. These are the guides on the side that help students through employment or transition to college and success in college and Workforce Training programs. Career navigators have become a very vital element to service delivery and really help students navigate through areas that are often confusing or complex.

So, in the three years since we've implemented the program, we've really seen new grantees come on board and the ones that are delivering great success have these strong staffing patterns in play.

## **Slide 16: Models Driving Performance**

When we think about the models that drive performance, we'll talk about these in a second. Previously we've looked at these and these are the integrated models—these intensive service delivery models—and, of course, a strong focus on integration with our community college system. We'll spend a little more time on these models.

## **Slide 17: Yes! We do Workforce Training**

One of the first things that I'd like to underscore with everyone because it's been such a great paradigm shift for us. Now, in addition to just reading, writing, English as a Second Language, and mathematics, we do Workforce Training in adult education. This has really helped us go from good to great in terms of bringing great return on investment for students that are struggling with basic skills but also need Workforce Training to help them get higher wages and help them be more commanding in the labor market in terms of competitiveness.

## **Slide 18: Integrated Models**

We've looked at these integrated models – advancement in these intensive service models – and now we're going to dive a little deeper on what do these models actually

look like. So I want to focus first on the integrated models—the Integrated Education and Training models and the Integrated EL Civics model.

## Slide 19: Integrated Education and Training – Accelerate Texas

So if we look at the Integrated Education and Training model, this model is often known as the Accelerate Texas model here in Texas. That is a brand that has been used by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as well as TWC. This model really ties together three critical elements that really boost the employability and higher education success of students. First, there is a Workforce Training component, meaning training in a high-demand occupation. A job that has good openings in the local area, pays a good wage but is also accessible at an entry level for individuals that are exiting adult education and literacy services. This Workforce Training is combined with a contextualized adult education and literacy – so the reading, writing, math, English language – that is taught, is designed to support success in Workforce Training and on the job. This would mean that the textbooks that are used in the Workforce Training are really the material for contextualization in the adult education and literacy component, so that students can find success and compete with their peers in Workforce Training and college classrooms.

To kind of weave in and out of the Workforce Training in adult education and literacy services, we find Workforce Preparation Activities. These are college knowledge skills—how to succeed in a high-performing Workforce Training or college classroom. Workforce preparation skills, how to be successful and find work, as well as digital literacy—helping individuals use computers, use core software programs and the internet. Because these are vital to success, not only to finding a job but being competitive in a job and, of course, surviving and thriving in Workforce Training.

## Slide 20: Integrated EL Civics

Our Integrated EL Civics model provides a similar service as the IET, or Integrated Education and Training model. But these programs are specifically designed for English Language Learners, so they include also an ESL component—an English as a Second Language component—as well as civics instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. So the Integrated EL Civics model really is the onboarding model for new Americans that have come into the United States looking for work, they're ready to work, eligible to work. And they need the skills, or Workforce

Training as well as the English literacy and civics information to help them be strong competitors in the labor market and good community members.

## **Slide 21: Intensive Services**

Let's look at those Intensive Services that we previewed earlier, those three different models: Services for Internationally-trained English language learner (or ELL) professionals, Workplace Literacy, and transition to re-entry and post-release services.

## **Slide 22: Services for Internationally-trained ELL Professionals**

The Services for Internationally-trained ELL Professionals are, again, those services designed for individuals that have degrees, higher-advanced certifications in their home countries and they want to take those skills and accelerate more quickly into more professional or skilled occupations in the United States. These are the individuals that come in, they could be doctors, teachers, engineers, accountants from other countries. They have skills. They've been successful in higher education and they want to learn not only English as a second language skills, or ESL skills, they need to be competitive, but also how to navigate through professional credentialing exams and the labor market of the United States which may be very different than that of their home country.

So these services are often very case-management intensive with individuals, helping individuals, be directed to not only the right type of ESL programs that are accelerated and designed for professionals, but also what types of career advising are needed to know how to figure out to become re-employed in their sector that they trained in and also occupations within that sector for which they have skills that would transfer.

## **Slide 23: Workplace Literacy**

Workplace literacy models are those models designed and targeted specifically for employers. These can be very specific programs that help an employer build safety in language needed in the workplace to help ensure strong productivity and safe productivity, as well as services that will help individuals – and education that will help – the individuals advance within that company. Remember these are already incumbent workers. They're already working in the workplace and often times, when it comes time to promote a foreman or a manager for a program, the company would love to hire from within someone who is dedicated, shows commitment to the employer and knows

the employer's processes. But often times, frontline workers lack the skills or maybe the high school completion needed to apply for those jobs and so workplace literacy programs can really bring great value, not only for the worker who seeks promotion, but also for the business who would love to hire from within.

## **Slide 24: Transition to Re-entry and Post-release services**

The Transition to Re-entry and Post-release services is a new program model under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. While it's new under WIOA, it's not new to individuals that have been working in the corrections systems. These are essentially services including educational counseling and casework to help individuals that have been formerly incarcerated or are transitioning out of incarceration into employment and back into society. So these transitions services are really helping individuals be directed and help them develop plans for post-release education program participation and employment.

## **Slide 25: Integration with Community Colleges**

Lastly, I want to take a second look at our work with our community colleges. Community colleges have been referenced several times in this presentation but I've been focusing largely on that Workforce Training component. And while Workforce training, under WIOA, can be with community colleges, I want to underscore here that it doesn't always have to be. Where I want to turn our attention now is really looking at what we're doing in Workforce Training to help offset some of the burden from students that are entering college but that are also entering into developmental education. We've heard a lot about student debt and developmental education and sometimes the very poor performance that students find in developmental education and getting out of it. And so we've seen that as an opportunity for us in adult education and literacy to augment what is happening in colleges and find value-add in integrating with our community colleges.

## **Slide 26: Reducing Student Debt**

So it's really about focusing on a problem, and that problem is reducing student debt as well as the problem of the student's success and getting out of developmental education and getting into college credit-bearing courses.

## Slide 27: Getting Students College Ready

We've released guidance through what we call an Adult Education and Literacy letter, or AEL letter, and that letter directs our adult education and literacy providers and allows them to accept students that have been in remedial or developmental education, or that may be testing into those courses at community colleges and allows our programs to accept those students from community colleges and for colleges to refer those students to adult education and literacy so that they can receive the same remediation but at no-cost to the student. This helps save students' precious dollars for especially time on their Pell grants and other financial aid, and it also allows students to benefit from the flexibility offered through adult education and literacy service delivery. These programs—because in Texas, our Texas Success Initiative Assessment, which is our college readiness assessment, is aligned to the National Reporting System levels, our guidance has been and is that students that have tested on the TSIA between levels 1 to 5 in level in any skill area—reading, or writing, or math—those students can be referred to adult education and literacy for services; thus, saving them precious dollars.

## Slide 28: The Texas Workforce System

So, let's conclude the presentation here by taking a brief look at the broader Texas Workforce System, in which the adult education and literacy service delivery model sits.

## Slide 29: TWC Mission Statements

Well first, our mission statements closely augment each other and complement each other. The mission of TWC is to promote an effective workforce system that offers employers, individuals and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity. We see also that in adult education and literacy, we want to match and align with that mission through our own mission to be a responsive and accountable service delivery system that creates value and support local solutions to addressing the educational and workforce development needs for our adult education and literacy customers, for businesses, and for community stakeholders.

## Slide 30: A Workforce System

Our Workforce System is very broad in Texas and we're very fortunate to have all the major programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act housed within

our agency. So, not only adult education and literacy, but we also have our entire workforce system of 28 Workforce Boards, their One-stop Partners, their Workforce Solutions Offices, and our Vocational Rehabilitation services that are offered through our workforce system. So, in Texas our adult education and literacy system has a broad array of other services that can be leveraged through local area collaboration, and I've been very proud of how our local areas have put these program services together so that when students come in looking to build basic skills, they come out with a wide variety of other workforce and disability-related services, as needed, to help them find success towards their goals.

### **Slide 31: 28 Workforce Areas**

We have 28 Workforce Areas in our state and each of those areas has a related Workforce Development Board. These areas span the state and, in Texas, our grants are aligned to these Workforce Areas to help us have aligned performance. So that when we look at entered employment or higher education data in a local area, we can also align it directly with what our other workforce programs—Vocational Rehabilitation or workforce system services—are doing in the state. And that helps us provide a strategic perspective at how we are doing as a state.

### **Slide 32: Board Membership**

Our Board Members also are very instrumental in our success in service delivery in adult education and literacy. Since 1995, Texas has had representation on each of those local Workforce Development Boards from local literacy councils and adult basic and continuing education. Many of our local directors of adult education and literacy sit on these Boards and these become very instrumental in helping make sure the needs of under-skilled individuals in each community has strong representation in that larger workforce system.

### **Slide 33: Building the Texas Economy through Education and Training**

If we look at our system in general, it's actually very impressive in terms of how, as a system, we focus on all areas of the education spectrum. Because we run the state's Child Care system, we begin really thinking of education from a pre-school age, making sure we have quality child care providers so that students find and are prepared for

success in school. And at the same time we support parents of these children in our other programs across the system. For students in school age, especially in high school, we offer a wide variety of initiatives focusing on STEM, career and technical education, dual credit and early college models to help students have options and make informed choices. Of course, for those individuals that don't find success in public school or have come to the United States as English language learners, we have our own adult education and literacy program, for which this webinar is the sole focus of. Of course, as you've learned through the webinar, we have integrated that adult education system strongly with our post-secondary options in colleges and community colleges as well as in our Workforce Training system provider network. So that we have multiple pathways for success for students, including on-the-job training certification. And, of course, all of the driving aspects of this pipeline of education is to help provide our employers in the state with a competitive workforce so they can meet their business demands and make Texas strong as a strong economy in the United States.

### **Slide 34: Conclusion**

So, that's the conclusion—we've reached the conclusion of our webinar here.

### **Slide 35: Resources**

And I wanted to share some resources so that you can do some more information gathering on what we're doing here in Texas. And so have here, general information linked to our adult education and literacy webpages as well as our state professional development center, the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning. Therein you can find webinars on a wide variety of topics we've covered here today as well as others. And a link to our Assessment Guide which will help individuals who want to understand more about the performance model in Texas and what that takes. Our rules that have been adopted by Commissioners are found in Chapters 800, 802, and 805. And for individuals interested in grant opportunities, all of our competitive funding opportunities are found on the Texas Comptroller Public website at the link included at the bottom of this page.

## Page 36: Thank you

I want to thank you for your time today and look forward to seeing you as a customer to the adult education and literacy system and look forward to engaging with you.

Thank you very much for your time today.