Grant Competition Q&A

General

Q: Will the grant readers be familiar with ABE, its history, its status, guidelines, policy, etc.?

A: Yes. All individuals on the review committee will have competent knowledge of adult basic education. The review committee will score the applications using a rubric. To ensure a fair and equitable review process, ODCTE ABE staff will not score applications. ODCTE ABE staff will be utilized throughout the process as a resource to provide consistency and calibrate scoring.

Q: Are we able to start the RFP in a word document and then paste it into the PDF version?

A: Sure! You may start the RFP document in a word document and then, paste it into the PDF version. However, do not convert the PDF document to a Word document when completing. By doing so, it would remove built-in formatting and auto-calculating features within the document. Per grant specifications, the RFP documents should not be modified in any way.

Q: On the last page of the RFP application, whose signature should be included as the "Executive Officer/Authorized Representative of the Applicant"?

A: The "Executive Office/Authorized Representative of the Applicant" should be the individual who oversees the entire organization. For example, this may include the organization's CEO, president, superintendent, etc. By obtaining their signature, it ensures that the organization fully supports the applicant applying for the grant.

Q: If we are an individual provider and not part of a consortium, do we need to complete the Demonstrated Effectiveness for Consortiums piece?

A: No. The Demonstrated Effectiveness for Consortiums document is only for organizations that applying as a consortium.

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Q: Can we work as a grant reviewer if we are also applying for a grant?

A: Yes, grant applicants can apply to be a grant reviewer. If you are selected to review grants, you will be assigned grants that are not in your workforce development area. Additionally, you will be asked to disclose any conflict of interests that may inhibit your ability to objectively review grants.

Q: The Adult Education and Family Literacy, Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education, and Correctional/Institutional Education grant applications look almost identical. Is there an expectation to adjust narrative and budget beyond answering the questions in the two applications?

A: The responses, data, and budget on each grant application should be specific to the grant in which you are applying. The IELCE and Correctional/Institutional Education grants have questions that are specific to each of these programs. Although the grant applications may be very similar, the implementation of the programs have different components and requirements.

Q: Do you happen to have a training online that I can refer to so that I know what my expectations are aside from the rubric?

A: For more information, you may reference our Bidders Conference presentation, Q & A Document, Obtaining LACES Data for Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 tutorial, and the directions for each individual grant. You may find directions for each grant listed on their individual pages: Adult Education & Family Literacy, Correctional/Institutional Education, and Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education.

Q: The instructions for submission say to email the application. Is it best to print a copy and scan it to attach to the email, even if I use a certified digital signature?

A: We do not recommend printing a copy and scanning the application. By doing so, it may remove built-in formatting that is essential to reviewing the application. We highly recommend signing the application digitally and emailing the signed document directly to abe@careertech.ok.gov. If you need technical assistance when submitting, please contact Jill Reavis at (405)743-5556.

Q: Do I need to give my application file that I'll attach to my email a specific title? For instance, do I name the PDF document "*Insert Program Name*ABE Adult & Family Literacy Grant Application" or a similar format?

A: You are not required to name your application in any specific way.

Q: Last time we applied, we were required to attach a letter from Workforce supporting our application. I have not seen this in any of the requirements for the application this year. Is this a requirement?

A: That is not a requirement for this grant competition. As a part of the review process, the ODCTE will reach out to the Workforce Development Boards for their recommendations on all eligible organizations.

Section One: Determining Eligibility

Q: If our local program is changing organizations, should our Demonstrated Effectiveness in Serving Eligible Individuals data from Section One: Determining Eligibility reflect Previously Funded or Not Previously Funded data?

A: The data on the tables on Demonstrated Effectiveness in Serving Eligible Individuals data from Section One: Determining Eligibility should reflect a Not Previously Funded program. However, you may include information about the previous subrecipient in the narrative on question 2.

Q: For a *Previously Funded* program completing Table 1.1 and Table 1.2, do all of the boxes need to be filled in, or can boxes with 0 be left blank?

A: For a *Previously Funded* program completing Table 1.1 and Table 1.2, all boxes should be filled in. If the answer is 0, simply put "0" in the box(es). This data may be obtained using LACES.

For a *Not Previously Funded* program completing Table 1.3 and Table 1.4, all boxes should be filled in. For the areas that your organization does not have data, you may indicate "N/A" in the box(es). Organizations who have not previously received funds under WIOA Title II must have data in at least one section of the two data tables below.

Q: For a *Previously Funded* program completing Table 1.1 and Table 1.2, are the percentages to be left as is reported in LACES with decimals included, or are they to be rounded to the nearest whole number?

A: All data reported in the RFP application should be as accurate as possible. Therefore, it is recommended that the percentages include the decimals. However, programs will not be penalized for rounding to the nearest whole number.

Q: On 732 and 733 Grants do you suggest giving the entire program data in the table and then specifics within the narrative of questions specific to 732/733 OR put specific 732/733 data in the table?

A: On each RFP application, your organizations would need to provide demonstrated effectiveness data specific to the grant in which they are applying.

- For <u>Previously Funded</u> programs, they would utilize data from LACES. For a step-by-step demonstration on how to obtain this data on LACES, click here.
- For <u>Not Previously Funded</u> programs, LACES may not be available, and data would be obtained via data different sources.

Once the data has been obtained for Section One: Determining Eligibility, all responses within Section Three: Application Narrative should be specific to the grant in which the organization is applying. For example: If the

applicant is applying for Correctional/Institutional Education (WIOA, Section 225; State 733) funding, the responses should be specific to the grant components for Correctional/Institutional Education.

Q: As a <u>Not Previously Funded</u> program, I am not sure that I can provide the demonstrated effectiveness data on *Table 1.4: Outcome Data of Not Previously Funded Applicants*. This table is requesting asking for data regarding eligible individuals. They define eligible individuals as individuals who are 16 years of age or older, not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under Oklahoma State Law, AND are basic skills deficient, or do not have a secondary diploma, or are English language learners. Our organization has not previously served eligible individuals before. Am I required to put data in Table 1.4, or can I leave it blank?

A: To be eligible for the grant, all organizations who have not previously received funds under WIOA Title II must have data in at least one section of Table 1.3 AND Table 1.4 to demonstrate their effectiveness in serving eligible individuals. You may include data in the tables and then, further define your enrolled students and your data in the narrative where you explain the methods that you used to obtain your outcome data.

Q: On Table 1.2: Outcome Data for Previously Funded Applicants, do we answer the info in the left column, or the info across at the top?

A: For a Previously Funded program using LACES, this data may be pulled from Table 5: Primary Indicators of Performance OR the State and Local Performance Table under the Employment Barriers tab. For a step-by-step video on how to obtain this data, click here.

Q: I noticed on the application you all are asking for data from years 18/19 and 19/20. Should it not be date from 19/20 and 20/21?

A: No. We are requesting data from FY19 and FY20.

Q: The Proposal Checklist indicates that I need to include two years of performance data. I've completed the charts embedded in the application. Do I need to also print Table 4 & 5 for applicable years from LACES and attach them to the application?

A: All organizations are required to complete their respective Demonstrated Effectiveness in Serving Eligible Individuals tables. For Previously Funded programs, they are required to complete Table 1.1 and Table 1.2. For Not Previously Funded programs, they are required to complete Table 1.3, Table 1.4, and the question addressing their method(s) for obtaining their program's outcome data. Once those tables are complete, you are not required to attach any additional documentation, including Table 4 and Table 5 from LACES.

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Section Two: Determining Service Area

Q: On Section 2, do we only check the counties we will be serving? Or will there be other information provided that we need to use to fill in the other 3 columns?

A: Yes. Using Table 2, you would only check the box(es) of the counties you intend to serve. Applicants may choose to serve multiple counties in multiple Workforce Development Areas.

The other information in the columns *"# of Eligible Clients"*, *"% of Eligible Clients"*, and *"Available Dollars"* will be added by ODCTE to the RFP applications by January 1, 2022. You will not be required to complete those columns in *Table 2: Section of Service Area*. The applicant is only responsible for checking the boxes within the *"Workforce Development Area and Counties"* columns.

Q: Is each county to be served required to have an onsite class located in that county, or can a class located in an adjacent county and distance learning be used for servicing a county without an onsite class, as it is now?

A: Each county to be served must have services available to individuals within that county. Those services may include virtual, distance learning, and/or in-person instruction.

Q: Will there be agencies that will be giving up their grant? If so, will we know what counties are available?

A: This grant is a four-year grant cycle in which providers must compete for their desired service area. A service area is defined by counties within the state's Workforce Development Areas. Therefore, all counties are available. If more than one applicant requests funding for a particular county, the projected federal provision by county could be allocated between multiple providers.

Q: For the next grant cycle, can programs served eligible individuals that do not reside in counties within their service area?

A: Yes! Programs are not limited to serving only individuals in their service area. Local programs will receive funding based on their counties served within their service area. However, individuals who reside outside a program's service area can still be counted towards the program's performance data.

Section Three: Application Narrative

Q: What if your local Workforce Board does not yet have a local plan posted? Do we use their state plan?

A: All local Workforce Boards plans will be posted by January 1, 2022. In the RFP applications, *Figure 3: Oklahoma Workforce Development Area* will have links to the local plans. References may be made to the Oklahoma Works State Plan, as well as regional plans. Applicants who intended to serve multiple Workforce Development Areas may want to consider multiple plans.

Q: On question 2, it says to refer to Figure 3 - Workforce Development Area Plans by Region. If you click on Green Country, there are no plans. Can I get a copy of Green Country's Plans?

A: Yes. Here is a link to Green Country's plan: https://greencountryworks.org/. Scroll down towards the bottom of the page and they are linked.

Q: On question 3, can you please clarify what information you are asking on this question? Are you asking how we are planning to follow progress after they leave us?

A: The ODCTE and its local programs are required to meet state-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance. This question is asking the applicant to discuss how their program plans on gathering data for these indicators. The primary indicators of performance are: Credential Attainment Rate, Measurable Skills Gain, Effectiveness in Serving Employers, Median Earnings, and Employment Rate. Additionally, applicants should discuss their methods and processes for collecting state-adjusted levels of performance data following a student's exit of a program.

Q: Question 3c, 3d, and 3e are about employment. Can you provide more guidance on these employment-specific questions?

A: Local programs should report student employment and potential employers that the local program has connected with.

- *Question 3c*: For funded programs, this data will be recorded via surveys sent out by the ODCTE.
- *Question 3d and 3e*: For funded programs, this data will be recorded using LACES. For more information on how to extract data from LACES, click here.

This question is asking the applicant to discuss how their program will collect and utilize this data following a student's exit of a program. This data should be utilized to assist the local program in making data-driven decisions involving employment. This is a data requirement of WIOA.

Q: On question 8 of the Adult Education & Family Literacy grant application, it asks about 3 content domains in the rubric. Do they want ESL, HSE or are there other content domains in general that maybe I am forgetting?

A: The Educational Content Domains are:

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- English Language Acquisition
- Civics/Citizenship Education
- Workforce Preparation/Employability Skills.

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Question #8 is asking the applicant to describe how your organization is improving the Education Content Domains to meet State Adjusted Performance Levels. The rubric is evaluating where the applicant addressed at least three of the Education Content Domains in their response.

Q: On question 8, do I put "N/A" if I have not been previously funded under WIOA Title II?

A: Although your program has <u>not</u> been previously funded under WIOA Title II, your program may have helped improve the literacy of eligible individuals, especially those individuals who have low levels of literacy, in some capacity without WIOA Title II funding. To qualify as an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness, your organization is required to complete Table 1.3 and Table 1.4. In these tables, your organization has been asked to show how your organization has improved the literacy of eligible individuals in the following Educational Content Domain Outcomes: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, English Language Acquisition, Civics/Citizenship Education, and Workforce Preparation/Employability Skills.

In question 8, describe how your organization improved at least one of the Educational Content Domain Outcomes based on the data from Table 1.3 and Table 1.4. Additionally, discuss how your organization has improved literacy levels related to the Educational Content Domains to meet state-adjusted levels of performance. Therefore, every eligible organization should be able to describe how they demonstrated past effectiveness in serving eligible individuals.

Q: On question 10, is that question complete, or is their supposed to be something after "and"?

On question 10, it is a two-part question.

- On question 10a, the applicant should describe how their organization's program is of sufficient intensity and quality and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains.
- On question 10b, the applicant should describe how their organization's program uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.

Section Four: Budget

Q: If carryover is limited to 25% of the following year's allocation, but allocations for years 3 and 4 are determined by many factors, will grantees know their projected allocations in early spring?

A: All allocations and MOUs cannot be completed until July 1st of each year. An estimated allocation for the next fiscal year will be provided to sites by April.

Q: Should the grant budget reflect one year or for all four years?

A: Using the "*AEFLA Funds Request Proposed Budget*", the grant budget should reflect only FY 2022-2023.

Q: Will the State office still be purchasing the curriculum licenses or is this something we should budget for?

A: ODCTE will continue to purchase curriculum licenses for subrecipients. Currently, ODCTE purchases curriculum software from Aztec, Essential Education, Reading Plus, and Burlington English. If an applicant's organization wishes to purchase curriculum beyond our current contract with these vendors, the organization should include that in their *AEFLA Funds Request Proposed Budget*.

Q: Will the Administration side still be limited to 5%?

A: No. It is 5% unless your organization negotiates a higher rate. In cases where five percent is too restrictive to perform administrative activities, the eligible provider may negotiate with the ODCTE an adequate level of funds to be used for non-instructional purposes. As with all Adult Education & Family Literacy expenditures, administrative costs must be allowable, necessary, and reasonable. The five percent (5%) administrative cost limit or negotiated administrative cost limit applies to federal, state, and local Adult Education & Family Literacy activities. Funds that are considered local income must follow the federal guidelines of allowable, allocable, necessary, and reasonable, but may be spent on any budgeted area, including Administrative costs.

Q: Could you provide the specifics of the funding formula?

A: ODCTE staff will determine an allocation amount for each Workforce Development Areas by using demographic data for each of Oklahoma's 77 counties. This allocation for each ABE Workforce Development Area will include the number of eligible individuals within the counties of each Workforce Development Area. This will include population, eligible individuals 18-24 years of age that do not have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and eligible individuals 25+ years of age that do not have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. A formula will be determined using these variables to determine an allocation amount for each Workforce Development Area.

Q: Should our organization's budget reflect a pre- or post-negotiated administrative cost amount?

A: In the RFP application, your organization's budget should reflect a pre-negotiated administrative cost rate. Not more than five percent of a grant to an eligible provider can be expended to administer the Adult Education & Family Literacy grant. However, in cases where the five percent administrative cost limit is too restrictive to allow for the activities described in section 233(a)(2), all local programs have the ability to request a negotiation with ODCTE.

Q: How will the funds designated per county be divided if more than one provider asks for those funds? What criteria will be used? Will it be an equal 3-way split if 3 providers ask for funds or will there be some sliding scale used to determine what percentage will be given to each provider?

A: Eligible providers will <u>compete</u> for the allocation of their selected counties. If more than one applicant requests funding, negotiations will occur for the allocation of that specific county. The criteria utilized to determine the allocation may be based on multiple factors including the reasonableness of the budget relative to the service area, quality of the eligible provider application, past performance including Measurable Skill Gain attainment relative to the state performance target, expected number of individuals to be served, workforce development area board recommendations, previous year allocation, past expenditures, and results from the pre-award risk assessment. Allocations will be based on need, <u>not</u> an equal split between providers. It is possible that not all applicants for the grant will receive funding.

Q: On the budget portion of the grant, I do not find a category on the form to include class advertising in instructional, nor do I see a place to include indirect costs in administration. Where should they be included?

A: Advertising can be categorized as "Information Services (Instructional)", and indirect costs will be categorized as "Indirect Cost Federal Entitlement Programs". Please refer to 2 CFR Part 200.421 for allowable/unallowable advertising and public relations cost.

However, there is not a space on the AEFLA Funds Request Proposed Budget worksheet in the RFP application for these categories. The following categories can be reimbursed; however, they aren't commonly used and aren't listed on the AEFLA Funds Request Proposed Budget worksheet:

- Information Services (Instructional and Admin)
- Library/Media Services (Admin)
- Operation of building (Admin)
- Security Services (Admin)
- Vehicle Operation (Admin)
- Indirect Costs (Admin)

If you would like to request funding for those specific categories, you may include an outline these in your Budget Narrative.

Q: In the Q&A document, the question, "Will the Administration side still be limited to 5%?" states: "The five percent (5%) administrative cost limit or negotiated administrative cost limit applies to federal, state, and local Adult Education & Family Literacy activities."

Does this statement now mean that only 5% of our State matching grant and 5% of our locally funded budget is limited to administrative costs?

A: The local program may request to negotiate with the ODCTE to determine an adequate level of funds to be used for non-instructional purposes. During negotiations with a local provider, ODCTE will ensure that administrative costs are allowable, reasonable, and necessary, thus preventing excessive expenditures. The administrative cost limit or negotiated administrative cost limit does apply to federal, state, and local Adult Education & Family Literacy activities. To request a higher negotiated administrative cost rate, you may utilize

our [Administrative Cost - Negotiations Request Form](). We will continue allowing our local programs to request an increase to their administrative cost rate.

Q: Using grant funding, our organization would like to be able to hire a full-time teacher, provide transportation and childcare for learners, and technology for the classroom. We weren't sure if the funding amount by county would support this though, if those are the 4-year or 1-year amounts, and if those amounts are split between multiple organizations. Essentially, are these requests typically able to be fully funded by an ABE grant award?

A: The dollar amount by county is a 1-year amount. If multiple providers apply for a specific county, that amount may be split between multiple providers. If no applicants apply for a specific county, the applicant may be asked to serve that county to increase service area and overall program funding. Depending the amount requested and program's needs, the program may be fully funded by the grant. The purpose of the AEFLA Budget request is determine local program's funding needs and help the ODCTE make determinations regarding funding priorities. Each program will also receive a state allocation that is based on their percentage of federal allocation.

Q: How do the Expenditure Functions Definitions correlate to the AEFLA Funds Request Proposed Budget?

A: The Expenditure Functions Definitions are definitions from the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System Manual. When completing the grant applications, these definitions are for reference only. However, these definitions will be utilized by funded programs for coding purposes.

Q: On the AEFLA Funds Request Proposed Budget, I see the Description column, but then also the Budget Narrative on the next page...How does the information needed in the description area differ from what you would like to see in the budget narrative?

A: Under the Description column on the AEFLA Funds Request Proposed Budget worksheet, it should be a very simplified description of the Budget Narrative on the following page. For example, the Description column for *Classroom Instructor Salaries* could include, "3 instructors". However, the Budget Narrative may further outline the type of instructor. The Description column on the AEFLA Funds Request Proposed Budget allows the grant reviewer to get an overview of how the funds will be spent. The Budget Narrative allows the grant reviewer to get a deeper understanding of whether the allocations will be allowable, necessary, and reasonable.

Correctional/Institutional Education
Q: Are Corrections Grants once again available for anyone to apply for or will they only be awarded to the Corrections Facilities?

A: Any eligible organization can apply that has a correctional/institutional agency to serve.

Q: Our organization is interested in applying for the Correctional/Institutional Education grant as we are eligible to apply as a community rehabilitation center. Some of our clients would not fall under that description though, so would we also want to apply for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Grant as well to ensure access for all or do we stay with just one option?

A: To ensure access to all students in your organization, your organization would be eligible to apply for both grants; however, it is not required. The Correctional/Institutional Education grant has the same basic questions as the Adult Education & Family Literacy grant with additional questions for the Correctional/Institutional Education grants. Responses on the Correctional/Institutional Education grant may or may not mirror the Adult Education & Family Literacy grant; however, the data and budget should be specific to the Correctional/Institutional Education, if applicable.

Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education

Q: Can you explain the difference between the Adult Education & Family Literacy and IELCE in layman's terms, as they both reference civics education?

A: Adult Education & Family Literacy (WIOA, Section 231; State 731) and Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education (WIOA, Section 243; State 732) share many of the same components. However, Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education (IELCE) has additional components that must be addressed. Below is the definition of IELCE:

IELCE provides education services to English language learners who are adults, including individuals 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 must include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

The IELCE program must be designed to:

1. Prepare English Language Learners (ELLs) for, and place 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.
3. The IELCE program must be offered in combination with IET activities.

Q: We are interested in applying for both the Adult Education and Family Literacy and Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education. Are we eligible to apply for both grants at the same time?

A: Yes. An applicant may be eligible to apply for both grants at the same time.

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