Montana
Adult Education and Family Literacy Program

Assessment Standards and Guidelines

2019-2020

Assessment Policy Updated December 2019

Contents

Part I – Introduction and Montana Context

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) accountability is defined through the National Reporting System (NRS), which was established to meet the requirements of Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA). (Public Law 1113-128). The WIOA authorizes the state grant program to deliver Adult Education and Family Literacy to provide educational or workforce advancement opportunities for all enrolled learners. The state sets performance standards to meet specific learner outcomes, and the state uses data results to determine a portion of local program funding.

As a necessity for ensuring program compliance, statewide accountability and accuracy for federal and state reporting, funded AEFLA programs are required to follow the state Assessment Standards and Guidelines. The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) AEFLA staff will review the data periodically to determine needs for technical assistance in adhering to the state Assessment Standards and Guidelines.

For the LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System) data to be meaningful on a statewide and national basis, data collection procedures must be standardized among all programs in the state; that is, data must meet the definition of validity and reliability, and data must be defined and collected in the same way by all programs for comparability across state AEFLA programs. The local programs are central to data collection efforts.

- Local program effectiveness is judged, in part, by whether these standards are met.
- Local programs are held accountable for helping learners determine appropriate educational or workforce advancement goals.
- Local programs are held accountable for helping learners attain their goals.

Note: Once yearly data is finalized, local programs may not make any changes. The OPI AEFLA office will notify all local programs when data changes must cease.

Part II – Procedures

Section A – Purpose and Overview

The Montana State Director will work closely with all programs to ensure WIOA standards and guidelines are followed by guaranteeing a quality system through procedure and program monitoring. This will assist in checks-and-balance compliance, provide ongoing professional development and training, and establish a dependable data process for accurate collection and reporting outcomes.

Adult Education programs will ensure all staff have a clear understanding of WIOA standards and procedures and that all state and federal guidelines are adhered to in all areas. Programs will use the following definition from the Workforce Opportunity and Investment Act to determine eligibility of learner for providing AEFLA services.

"The term adult education means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to –

A. *read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;*

B. *transition to postsecondary education and training; and*

C. *obtain employment*

"*The term eligible individual means an individual –*

A. *who has attained 16 years of age;*

B. *who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and*

C. *who –*

   a. *is basic skills deficient;*

   b. *does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or*

   c. *is an English language learner.*

All AEFLA programs will use the WIOA Adult Education Enrollment Intake Form provided by the OPI to collect the information necessary for enrollment. Client demographics, locator scores, pretest scores, and posttest scores shall be entered in the statewide AEFLA database (LACES). Programs may collect additional information as necessary or required.

The purpose of the uniform WIOA Adult Education Enrollment Intake Form is to ensure the consistent collection of client information. *If a universal WIOA Adult Education Enrollment Intake Form is created for use by all WIOA Core Partners, all AEFLA programs will implement use of that particular form as deemed appropriate by the State Director.

All AEFLA Programs will:

- Designate and train staff to administer the WIOA Adult Education Enrollment Intake Form and state approved Consent to Release Personal Information Form according to the standards stated in this document. (No other alterations are to be made to the state approved forms. If programs want to add to the standard state approved intake form, their version must be submitted to the state for approval.)
- Ensure staff have an understanding of the State Assessment Standards and Guidelines and adhere to the policies in the document.
- Collect high school withdrawal letters for students between the ages of 16-18 years old. For students who last attended high school in the State of Montana this must be done within the first five days business days of initial contact/service.

- Administer the assessment tests according to the standards stated in this document and according to the recommendations of the test developer.
- Administer one of the authorized assessment instruments to establish the Subject Area (formerly Primary Area of Instruction) and Educational Functioning Level (EFL).
- Pretest clients within 12 hours of instructional activity each program year, unless they meet the criteria to be carried over. (See Section D – New Program Year for information on carry over requirements)
- Assist learners in educational advancement and goal attainment specific to their needs and academic capabilities.
- Designate staff to enter the collected information into the statewide AEFLA database (LACES) with a verified process for accuracy. The State Director must be given all data entry staff contact information and notified of any staff changes.
- Securely file the WIOA Adult Education Enrollment Intake Form with assessment results in a hard copy permanent file.
- Posttest eligible students in an effort to demonstrate Educational Functioning Level (EFL) or Student Performance Level (SPL) gains.
- Program Directors are required to verify that correct testing procedures are being followed. Client files will be reviewed during desktop, virtual, and/or onsite monitoring for quality assurance.
- Programs are responsible for documenting that all appropriate staff have read and understand the *Montana Adult Education and Family Literacy Program Assessment Standards and Guidelines*.

Section B – Attendance Records

AEFLA programs must record the hours of direct instruction or instructional activity each learner receives. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to help adults improve their educational and employment outcomes, become self-sufficient, and support the educational development of their children. Examples of WIOA approved activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intake and follow-up
- Goal setting and advising
- Assessment (excluding HiSET testing)
- Classroom instruction and tutoring
- Approved distance learning participation

All programs will enter client attendance records into the statewide AEFLA database (LACES) and abide by the following:

- Attendance will be entered and rounded to the nearest quarter hour
- Attendance will be entered for each learner by class
- Attendance entries will be for 10 or fewer hours per day
- Attendance should be entered weekly, preferably daily
- Attendance may not be entered after 30 days

Section C – Goal Setting

Goal setting is a process that occurs for each client during the span of enrollment in AEFLA programs. Quality goal setting is critical to learner achievement. For each program year and period of participation (POP), program staff should use the following guidelines while setting/reviewing goals with all learners:

- Review/Update information on Client Intake Form
- Discuss client's reason(s) for enrolling in AEFLA program
- Discuss potential barriers clients may have and identify if other WIOA CORE or Community Program referral or services are applicable
- Review results of assessment tests and develop a learning plan to meet the needs of each learner

Short-term and Long-term goals should be set based on the following Measurable Skill Gains and Performance Measure Outcomes to:

- Improve basic skills demonstrated by at least one educational functioning level gain
- Achieve a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalency
- Enroll in Post-Secondary Education or other employment training program
- Complete an On-The-Job Training (OJT) program or attain an industry recognized credential
- Obtain or improve employment

Section D - Assessment Information

The OPI has authorized statewide use of the following assessment instruments.

- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11 & 12
- BEST English Speaking and Listening Skills (BEST Plus 2.0) for ELL Clients
- BEST English Reading and Writing Skills (BEST Literacy) for ELL Clients

The above assessments are approved by the U.S. Department of Education and NRS guidelines. To ensure accuracy and consistency, the Montana OPI requires all programs to use the selected standardized assessment instruments based upon measuring what is intended to be measured (validity) and yielding consistent results (reliability).

All AEFLA programs will administer these assessments according to both test developer recommendations and state standards set forth in this document.

To meet the diverse needs of all clients, particularly as we strive for college and career readiness outcomes, programs are encouraged to use various formative and summative assessments to assist in the development of their program instruction and activities. However, for reporting purposes and meeting NRS requirements, only approved test instruments are allowed. No other forms of assessment will be used for the purpose of pre and posttesting to report NRS educational gains.

Pretesting

- Pretests must be administered within the first 12 hours of participation using the most appropriate authorized assessment. If the TABE is used, clients must be assessed in reading, mathematics, and language. All AEFLA programs will measure learner gains from this baseline.
- Pretesting results are utilized during the goal setting process.
- All clients will be entered into LACES upon completion of the intake form and prior to completion of assessment tests.
- A Period of Participation (POP) begins when a student enters the program and has 12 or more instructional hours, and ends when the student exits, as demonstrated by not having additional instructional activity 90 days. It is considered a new enrollment if the student returns in the current program year after a gap of 90 days. At that time a new POP will begin. The most recent scores are valid.

Posttesting

The length of time between pre and posttests must be long enough to allow the test to measure educational gains according to the test publisher's guidelines. (See Part III TABE Assessment and Part IV EOSL Assessment for specific time requirements for pre and posttesting)

Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) can be made in any subject area when an EFL Gain is realized through pre and posttesting. Scale scores from a posttest will be compared to the scale score of the pretest in the same subject area to determine if a MSG was achieved through an EFL gain.

AEFLA programs must strive to achieve or exceed the state's posttest standard of 60%.

Pre/Posttesting and Periods of Participation (POPs)

Clients are automatically exited when they have 90 days with no participation. If a client returns to classes in the same program year after being exited a new POP begins. Pre and posttesting as it relates to POPs is as follows:

- When POP2 is established, the most recent test in each subject area will be the pretests in the new POP. Programs will also select the subject area using the criteria established in General Assessment Information.
    - If the client has a MSG in POP1, they will be eligible to posttest to determine a MSG in POP2 after the client has 12 or more hours of instruction in POP2.
    - If the client did not have a MSG in POP1, they will be eligible to posttest after they accumulate the minimum number of hours required for an initial posttest.
    - If the client has an EFL gain because of the posttest in POP2, the MSG will count for POP1, if the client did not have an MSG in POP1.
- ELL clients that posttest in the BEST Plus assessment, place at the ESL Exit Level, and establish a subsequent POP, the BEST Literacy assessment will be administered and used

to determine a MSG in POP2.

- ELL clients that posttest in the BEST Literacy assessment, place at the ESL Exit Level, and establish a subsequent POP, will take the TABE as the pretest in the subsequent POP.

New Program Year

All clients, except carry-over clients, must take a new locator and pretest to establish an EFL and subject area for the new program year.

Carry-over clients are those with an initial enrollment date in April, May, or June of the program year who did not posttest prior to the end of the program year. The locator and pretest results for TABE clients tested between April 1st and June 30th will be valid in the new program year. The results of BEST Plus or BEST Literacy pretest for ELL clients tested between April 1st and June 30th will be valid in the new program year.

If there is no exit, across a program year, the POP continues in the next program year (a continuous POP) provided the student receives an EFL in the new program year.

Part III – TABE Assessment

Section A- TABE Purpose and Overview

The TABE assessment will be administered consistently throughout Montana AEFLA programs to manage and monitor client educational gains and to identify areas for program improvement.

The TABE measures skill levels in reading, mathematics, and language. There are five overlapping levels for the TABE 11 and 12 as indicated in the chart.

TEST LEVEL	GRADE RANGE
L-Literacy	0-1.9
E-Easy	2.0-3.9
M-Medium	4.0-5.9
D-Difficult	6.0-8.9
A-Advanced	9.0-12.9

There are three types of TABE 11 and 12 Instruments:

1. The TABE Locator Test: is administered to determine the appropriate level of the TABE to administer to the client.
2. TABE Level L (Literacy): is used when an examinee has difficulty reading while taking the TABE Locator Test. It assesses learners in reading, mathematics, and language and is administered 1:1 with the learner using instructions found in the TABE Form 11 and TABE Form 12 Test Directions.
3. TABE 11/12 is a comprehensive set of questions used to assess reading, mathematics, and language skills.

Section B- TABE Administration and Training

All TABE Administration guidelines must be followed to obtain valid and reliable results and programs can administer assessments in computer or paper/pencil format. To correctly use the TABE Assessments they must be timed. The timing for each part of the assessment is programmed into TABE online and can also be found in the TABE Test Directions for Forms 11 and 12.

TABE Locator: The locator will be used during the client intake process and assesses reading, mathematics, and language to determine which level of the TABE learners will take at pretest. Varying TABE levels can be administered in each area.

TABE Forms and Levels: Programs are to use the TABE Test Levels L, E, M, D, or A to assess client skill levels upon entry and to measure progress of learners in reading, language, and math throughout enrollment.

Students must have a valid test in each subject area. If a student has a Scale Score of N/A in any subject area the test must be re-administered in the test level below their initial test.

Establishing Subject Area for Educational Functioning Level (EFL) Gains: Upon completion of pretesting and goal setting, the primary subject area will be selected and is determined based on lowest EFL. *LACES automatically chooses the lowest EFL/SPL from the first day of pretesting. In instances where programs test over two or more days or a student completes a test with a result of N/A, it is the program's responsibility to change the subject area to the lowest EFL. This provides consistent practices for EFL/SPL designation and opportunities to achieve EFL/SPL gains at posttest.*

Recommended Guidelines for Posttesting:

Levels 1-4 (ABE)

The recommended number of instructional hours between a pre and posttest for Levels 1-4 (ABE) is **50- 60** hours of instruction, with **a minimum of 40 hours.**

Levels 5 (ASE Low)

The recommended number of instructional hours between a pre and posttest for Level 5 is **30-59** hours of instruction, with **a minimum of 30 hours.**

Measuring client progress: Clients who need to be posttested more than once in a program year to demonstrate a gain may not use the same TABE Form and Level within any six-month period. Programs will use the alternate form of the TABE that was administered at the pretest. (e.g., Form 11, Level M at pretest; Form 12, Level M at posttest).

Based on instructor input and/or a pretest scale score near the top of a Level, AEFLA programs may administer a posttest in a Level higher than the pretest (e.g. learner tests near the end of range at Level M and has good progress in classroom, posttest with Level D). Client should be scoring at the top of the scale score range on the lower level, if a higher level test will be administered.

Following TABE Administration Guidelines, programs may posttest in any subject area to achieve an EFL gain, to access interim progress, or utilize for teacher evaluation. If a student does not achieve an EFL gain when post tested in one subject, programs are encouraged to prepare and posttest the student in another subject area to show an EFL gain.

TABE Retesting: Retesting refers to the administration of a subject area more than once in a program year to measure EFL gain. The Guide to Administering the TABE recommends a minimum of six months between administering the same level and form of the test to avoid the "practice effect" in which a learner scores artificially high because of familiarity with the test items. To avoid the "practice effect" AEFLA programs may administer the same Form of the TABE more than once every 6 months if they move to a more difficult Level of the test.

TABE Results: TABE results will automatically upload into the statewide database (LACES) within 30 days of administration. The Level, Form and Scale Score for each subtest administered must be reflected.

TABE® Form 11 & 12 – Normed Scale Scores for NRS – Educational Functioning Levels

Educational Functioning Level	Grade Equivalent	Reading Scale Scores	Total Math Scale Scores	Language Scale Scores
ABE Level 1	0-1.9	300-441	300-448	300-457
ABE Level 2	2.0-3.9	442-500	449-495	458-510
ABE Level 3	4.0-5.9	501-535	496-536	511-546
ABE Level 4	6.0-8.9	536-575	537-595	547-583
ABE Level 5	9.0-10.9	576-616	596-656	584-630
ABE Level 6	11-12.9	617-800	657-800	631-800

Prior to administering the TABE, staff must have attended an in-person training which is periodically offered by the State or utilize the online training to become certified to administer the TABE. Certification must be submitted to the State upon completion. Those who attend in-person training may be designated as a program assessment trainer and can provided training assistance for new staff.

Part IV – ESOL Assessment

Section A – BEST Plus 2.0 Purpose and Overview

The Basic English Skills Test (BEST Plus 2.0) can measure the progress of adult learners enrolled in AEFLA programs as learners of English as a second language.

The BEST Plus 2.0 is a performance-based individually administered face-to-face scripted oral interview. BEST Plus 2.0 has either a print-based or a computer-adaptive version. BEST Plus 2.0 measures the speaking and listening skills of adult English language learners communicating about life skills in content areas such as health, work, family, and recreation.

BEST Plus 2.0 provides standardized assessment for placement decisions and instructional planning. Learner's proficiency levels will be based on the National Reporting System (NRS) Student Learner Performance Levels (SPLs). While the BEST Plus 2.0 is aligned with the NRS and SPL levels, their scores are not aligned with any other set of proficiency level descriptors or other assessments. BEST Plus 2.0 will

provide supporting evidence, through pretesting and posttesting, which will measure both progress of the English language learner and the effectiveness of the instructional program.

BEST Plus 2.0 testing materials can be purchased with AEFLA funds after a program has trained test administrators. The print-based version requires the use of BEST Plus 2.0 software for scoring and client reporting purposes.

Section B – BEST Plus 2.0 Administration & Training

BEST Plus 2.0 should be administered in the following ways:

- With adult non-native speakers of English in the United States.
- In educational settings and individually administered by trained staff only.
- Test administrator should allow at least 20 minutes for each Oral Interview – testing can take longer depending on response time.
- Posttesting may occur after the learner has received a minimum of 60 hours. Individuals who are unable to attain 60 hours of instruction may posttest after 40 hours, if it is clear the learner must exit the program and cannot meet the 60 hour requirement.
- For information on pre and posttesting and POPs, see Part II Section D Pages 6-8.
- Training to become a BEST Plus 2.0 test administrator will be provided by the state and only individuals who have been certified by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) are authorized to train individuals to become BEST Plus 2.0 test administrators. This training will also include an overview of NRS policies, accountability policies, data collection procedures, and guidelines for test administration.
- All potential test administrators will be required to attend a 6-hour workshop conducted by a certified BEST Plus 2.0 trainer and be approved by that trainer to begin administering the BEST Plus 2.0. At the end of the training workshop, each newly approved test administrator will sign an agreement to follow all BEST Plus 2.0 administration and scoring procedures exactly as explained in the BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Guide.
- Test administrators are encouraged to demonstrate their scoring accuracy by attending a refresher workshop, engaging in self-study, and completing a scoring activity from the BEST Plus 2.0 Scoring Refresher Toolkit.
- Instructors should not administer or score their own learner's tests but should be allowed to observe the administration of the test of their own clients for the purpose of instructional feedback and improvement. Only trained instructors with experience in the ESL field should administer the BEST Literacy.
- Assessments will be recorded in the statewide database (LACES) and scores have been aligned to the NRS and SPL levels.

BEST Plus 2.0 – Normed Scale Scores for NRS – Educational Functioning Levels

Educational Functioning Level	NRS Score Range
Beginning ESL Literacy	88 to 361
Low Beginning ESL	362 to 427
High Beginning ESL	428 to 452
Low Intermediate ESL	453 to 484
High Intermediate ESL	485 to 524
Advanced ESL	525 to 564
Exit Criteria	565 and higher

Note: If a non-native speaking client is assessed at or above the exit criteria using a BEST instrument, the client can be assessed with *Best Literacy* as an option, not a requirement.

Section C – BEST Literacy Purpose and Overview

The BEST Literacy will measure adult English language learners' functional reading and writing skills in English.

The BEST Literacy is a written, paper-and-pencil test that can be administered either individually or in groups. Test administration takes one hour or less and while training is not required by CAL, when state training for BEST Plus 2.0 occurs, BEST Literacy assessment overview will be included. To ensure the accurate use and scoring of BEST Literacy as a standardized assessment, all test administrators should read and follow the instructions in the BEST Literacy Test Manual.

Programs will have the option of using the BEST Literacy to assess clients who have scored in NRS Exit Criteria range on the BEST Plus 2.0. In most instances the BEST Plus 2.0 will be the initial assessment unless the ESL instructor determines from the initial intake interview that it is highly likely that the student will test out of the BEST Plus then the BEST Literacy can be used as the initial assessment. BEST Literacy provides standardized assessment for placement decisions and instructional planning. Learner's proficiency levels will be based on the National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Levels or the Student Learner Performance Levels (SPLs). While the BEST Literacy is aligned with the NRS and SPL levels, their scores are not aligned with any other set of proficiency level descriptors or other assessments. BEST Literacy will provide supporting evidence, through pretesting and posttesting, which will measure both progress of the English language learner and the effectiveness of the instructional program.

Section D – BEST Literacy Administration & Training

Best Literacy should be administered in the following ways:

- With adult non-native speakers of English in the United States.
- In educational settings and administered either individually or as a group by trained

staff only.

- Test administrator should allow up to one hour
- Posttesting must occur after the learner has received a minimum of 60 hours. Individuals who are unable to attain 60 hours of instruction may posttest after 40 hours, if it is clear the learner must exit the program and cannot meet the requirement.
- Clients who score on NRS level 6 on the BEST Literacy should be transferred and tested in the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
- See pages 6-7 for testing requirements, validity, and carry over related to POPs.
- Training to administer the BEST Literacy will be incorporated with the BEST Plus 2.0 training and include an overview of NRS policies, accountability policies, data collection procedures, and guidelines for test administration. Test administrators should follow all CAL guidelines of the BEST Literacy Test Manual.
- To ensure the accurate use and scoring of the BEST Literacy as a standardized assessment, all test administrators should read and follow the instructions in the BEST Literacy Test Manual.
- Assessments will be recorded in the statewide database (LACES) within 30 days of administration and scores have been aligned to the NRS and SPL levels.

BEST Literacy – Normed Scale Scores for NRS – Educational Functioning Levels

Educational Functioning Level	NRS Score Range	Student Learner Performance level
Beginning ESL Literacy	0 to 20	0-1
Low Beginning ESL	21 to 52	2
High Beginning ESL	53 to 63	3
Low Intermediate ESL	64 to 67	4
High Intermediate ESL	68 to 75	5
Advanced ESL	76 to 78	6

Part V - Use of Accommodations

AEFLA funded programs will provide reasonable accommodations, as required by ADA and other federal and state laws, to adults with disabilities. Program and test administrators may provide and allow accommodation in test administration procedures or in the testing environment for individuals with disabilities, provided that the accommodation does not compromise the validity of the assessment instrument.

Clients requesting accommodations other than category 1 accommodations must provide verification of disability from an appropriate professional. When clients self-report the need for category 1 accommodations, programs must document and maintain a record of accommodations provided.

https://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE_Guidelines_to_Inclusive_Testing_2017.pdf

An adult learner with a documented disability must provide the AEFLA program with

disability-related documentation if he/she requires accommodation(s). If a counselor or other program staff person determines through a screening that there is a strong possibility that the learner has learning, or other disabilities, a formal assessment may be undertaken. A formal assessment of a learning disability must be administered by a licensed professional (e.g., psychologist, school psychologist, or psychiatrist) and is valid for five years from the date of the formal assessment. In some cases, a "licensed professional" may be a speech, vocational, physical, or occupational therapist with verification by a licensed medical doctor, psychiatrist or psychologist.

Programs are responsible for maintaining accommodation records for each student in LACES under the Student Services Tab - Accommodations Section. Supporting documents can be uploaded under the Student Data Tab – Documents Section. This will provide for desktop monitoring.

The state will monitor accommodation documentation through desk monitoring/and or onsite monitoring visits.

TABE accommodations for testing must adhere to the recommendations described by the test publisher for each test used in the state. Refer to Guide to Administering TABE.

BEST Plus 2.0 test administrator cannot show the prompts on a screen or in the test booklet to a person with a hearing impairment nor can a sign language interpreter be used. A permissible accommodation for BEST Plus 2.0 would be the use of hearing aids. Likewise, a test administrator cannot explain the content of a picture cue prompt to a person with a visual impairment. An appropriate accommodation would be the use of a magnifying glass to enlarge the image.

BEST Literacy is not designed to assess the functional literacy skills of visually-impaired learners, unless reasonable accommodations can be made that will not interfere with the measurement of functional literacy skills producing invalid test results. For example, the test administrator cannot read the question to the examinee as BEST Literacy is a test of reading and writing, not listening. Permissible accommodations related to test administration procedures include the use of eyeglasses or magnifying glasses, earplugs, color overlays, or rulers. Testing environment accommodations might include frequent breaks or individual administration.

Part VI – Client Follow-Up

Section A – Data Matching

Every quarter, the state will conduct a data match to track outcomes for the following:

- Employment second Quarter after exit
- Employment Fourth Quarter after exit
- Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit
- Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent and enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training within one year of exit

- Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent and Employed within one year of exit
- Attained a Postsecondary Credential while enrolled or within one year of exit

At the close of the fiscal year, the state database (LACES) will be queried for lists of Social Security numbers and signed release forms to be used for data matching purposes.

All data that is matched must have a signed release form on file that indicates the AEFLA client agrees to the use of their Social Security number for data matching purposes.

The employment information from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry is reported a year later than AEFLA data. The OPI will match employment and earnings each quarter with a one-year lag in data due to the availability from MT DOL.

For the goals of obtaining a high school equivalency (HSE) and postsecondary education, social security numbers will be matched with both the Montana HiSET database and the Montana University System database.

Data matching for HSE and postsecondary outcomes for the previous program year will be reflected on NRS Table 5 for that year. Data matching will occur for all clients that have signed waivers, have a separation date, and have met appropriate demographic indicators that are data-matched. Only those clients with 12 hours or more will be included on the federal reports.

Section B – Survey

Surveys, developed but the state, will be used for postsecondary education or training outcomes for clients who are outside of the above data matching qualifiers. Each program is responsible for contacting their clients who could not be matched with the Montana University System enrollment data. Surveys will also be used for those concurrently enrolled in an Integrated Education and Training Program (IETP) and adult education.

Contact logs will need to be kept for each client surveyed. This documentation will be uploaded to LACES so state staff can confirm and results can be correlated. IETP, Postsecondary Enrollment (PSE), and Postsecondary Credential (PSC) Service Surveys should be kept both in the student's hard file and also uploaded into LACES. To upload into LACES, file under the Student Data Tab – Documents Section.

Part VII- Distance Learning Policy

Section A - Introduction

This policy is intended to define distance learning delivery for all Montana AEFLA programs that integrate distance learning into their Adult Education & Literacy Programs. The goal of this document is to provide guidelines by which programs can report adult learners' distance education hours to the National Reporting System (NRS)

using the state approved data management system (LACES).

The Need

Montana began using distance learning in the 2007-2008 Program Year. In our increasingly technological world, distance learning has provided our state with another means to assist learners' successful achievement gains and increase our program outcomes. The vastness of Montana often prevents those most in need of literacy services from accessing AEFLA programs. Distance education provides a viable option for instruction and a way to recruit a large population of clients that previously may not have had access to AEFLA services.

Distance education is a reality within all educational platforms, from K-12 systems, to higher education institutes, and also adult education programs. By developing information and communication technology (ICT) within the classroom and through the various modes of distance learning, AEFLA programs are increasing educational access and providing options for adult learners. These options allow flexibility and offer a multitude of instructional strategies that will enhance educational gains, engage 21st century learning skills, promote workforce development, and improve the state's adult basic literacy outcomes.

Going to Scale

All AEFLA Programs in the state of Montana can offer distance learning as a means of instruction. Distance learning provides clients the opportunity to engage in instruction during hours when AEFLA programs are not open and provides clients in communities without AEFLA programs access to instruction. The purpose of this policy is to provide standardization for programs who offer distance learning.

Programs that wish to offer distance learning will have the opportunity to contact the state AEFLA director, participate in all statewide required trainings, use state approved curriculum, and manage distance learning according to state policy and NRS guidelines. Distance learning will be a voluntary delivery option, as AEFLA programs must be willing to incur increased costs as well as maintain traditional classroom instruction.

Information and technical assistance for local program distance learning implementation is available by contacting the state office or the state's distance learning coordinator:

Katie Madsen

Adult Education State Director/HiSET State Administrator – (406) 444-4443

Emily Fuller

Adult Education Administrative Assistant – (406) 444-1691

Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 50620-2501
Fax: (406) 444-1373

Section B - Definitions and Requirements

Distance Education Defined

The federal office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) defines distance education for adult basic education programs as follows:

> *Distance education is a formal learning activity where clients and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both, for the majority of the instructional period. * Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to: print, audio, recording, videotape, television broadcasts, computer software, web-based interaction, and other online technologies. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail, or other web-based technologies or software.*

*Completion of instructional activities in a computer lab for traditional classes does not qualify as distance education.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Learners Defined

AEFLA learners are identified in three ways:

- **Traditional Learners** are clients who receive the majority of their instruction through traditional, face- to-face instruction.
- **Distance Learners** are clients who receive the majority of their instruction (51% or greater) through state approved distance education services.
- **Blended Learners** are clients who receive a majority of their instruction through traditional face-to- face instruction and also participate in distance education activities. For NRS reporting purposes, blended learners are usually classified and reported as traditional learners. However, at the end of a program year, if a client's attendance hours are logged as 51% or higher in distance education then the client will be classified as a distance learner.

All programs will keep track of client time in LACES. Attendance hours will be entered in LACES for distance learning classes and traditional classroom settings. Clients will be classified as either a traditional learner or a distance learner depending on where the majority of the client's time was spent (51 % or greater) during the program year.

Approved Distance Education Hours

All clients must have at least 12 hours of contact with an AEFLA program before they can be counted for federal reporting purposes. There are two types of client hours that may be counted: *contact hours* and *proxy hours*.

Contact Hours: are defined as time spent interacting with the learner. Contact hours for distance education clients can be a combination of direct contact and distance activities such as face-to-face contact and contact by telephone, video, teleconference, or other online communication where identity of the learner can be verified. Face-to-

face interaction includes client intake, orientation, assessment, goal-setting, advising, and classroom based skills training.

Proxy Hours: are defined as the time distance education clients spend engaged in state approved distance education activities. The hours are calculated using one of three approved distance learning models of instruction - the model used in Montana AEFLA programs will vary depending upon the approved curricula:

- *Clock Time Model:* assigns contact hours based on time that a learner is engaged in a software program that tracks time.
- *Teacher Verification Model:* assigns a fixed number of hours based on teacher determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in, or completed, the assignment.
- *Learner Mastery Model:* assigns a fixed number of hours based on the learner passing a test on the content of the lesson.

While using proxy hours, it is important to understand that the identity of the learner and the exact time spent on a learning activity cannot always be verified directly. Proxy hours are an approximation of what the "average" client needs in order to reach a mastery level.

Approved Distance Education Curricula

Montana recognizes a variety of sources as distance learning curricula.

See *Appendix A* for a complete list of current state approved distance education curricula and their respective, approved proxy-hour models. The state will approve additional curricula based on investigation and data analysis and as new distance education materials become available. If additional curriculum is approved Appendix A will be updated.

Programs wishing to use or develop curricula and/or materials not identified in Appendix A, must submit a request to the state agency and the request must be approved before proxy hours can be reported for clients using the proposed new distance education curricula.

Section C - Assessment and Reporting

Assessing Distance Education Learners

AEFLA programs will assess distance education learners utilizing the approved assessments and follow all program and administrative guidelines.

Reporting Distance Education Learners

Programs will count and record both direct contact hours and proxy hours into LACES. Contact hours and proxy hours are recorded separately. At the end of each program year, LACES will classify clients as either a distance learner or a traditional learner, depending on where the majority of their time (51 % or more) was spent.

Under NRS reporting requirements, clients in distance education will be reported in

Table 4C (**Appendix B**) and Table 5A (**Appendix C**). These tables demonstrate the program's performance each fiscal year specific to distance education activities.

- **TABLE 4C** reports educational gains and attendance for distance learners. This table is identical to Table 4 with the exception that only clients identified as distance education learners will be reported. No traditional clients will be reported on this table.
- **TABLE 5A** reports follow-up outcomes on distance learners. This table is identical to Table 5 with the exception that only clients identified as distance education learners will be reported. No traditional clients will be reported on this table.

Application, Approval and Training Process to Operate a Distance Learning Program

Montana will allow AEFLA programs the option of implementing a distance learning program at their centers in addition to maintaining the traditional classroom setting. Each AEFLA program interested in offering a distance learning program will follow these procedures:

- Send the program director and any staff members directly involved to any distance learning professional development training offered by the OPI.
- Maintain communication with state staff via email or telephone if challenges arise with web-based programs that the state provides funding for.
- Develop a yearly distance learning continuous improvement plan to include an assessment of client successes and intended goals to increase the number of distance learners served.
- Provide client intake, assessment, and goal setting activities on-site, face-to-face.

Section D - Funding for Distance Learning

State Contribution

No additional funding will be provided. A reallocation of existing resources may be necessary. Programs that implement distance learning have the potential to increase their total clients served and receive additional state monies accordingly.

Program Contribution

Programs that wish to implement distance learning must adhere to the Montana Distance Learning Assessment Policy and Protocol Guidelines. Programs may need to fund additional time and resources to implement distance education. Adjusting budgets accordingly during the first year of implementation is advised.

APPENDIX A

The state of Montana has approved the following curricula for distance learning.

Class Name	Model	Awarding PCH	Credit	Information
Gradpoint/Nova Net	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of activity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Pearson Learning 3075 W. Ray Road Suite 200 Chandler, AZ 85226 Phone: 888.827.0772 Website: http://www.pearsonschool.com
PLATO	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of activity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	PLATO Learning 5600 West 83rd St, Suite 300, 8200 Tower Bloomington, MN 55437 Phone: 800.427.5286 Website: https://login.edmentum.com
Skills Tutor	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of activity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 181 Ballardvale St Wilmington, MA 01887 Phone: 877.219.1537 Website: http://www.skillstutor.com

Class Name	Model	Awarding PCH	Credit	Information
GED Connections	Teacher Verification	Video: client self- report to teacher Workbook: teacher determines % of work completed Modules: teacher validates w/ questioning whether client has engaged Practice Tests: online	Video=.5 hours Workbook= greater than 75% of activities completed=4 hours 50-72%=2 hours Internet Activities (total possible 43 hours) Modules=3 hours per module Practice Tests=1 hour per test	Kentucky Educational Television Enterprise Division 560 Lexington KY 40502 Phone: 800.354.9067 Website: https://www.ket.org/education/adult-education/
Khan Academy	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet with teacher guiding clients to lesson/serve assessments.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the teacher tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Khan Academy Website: www.kahnacademy.org
IXL Learning	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity. Also demonstrates mastery of topics and levels based on questions and quizzes per individual client.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time and progress. Requires a yearly Subscription.	IXL Learning, Inc. California Headquarters 777 Mariners Island Blvd., Suite 600 San Mateo, CA 94404 Phone: 855.255.8800 Website: https://www.ixl.com/
Burlington English	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Burlington English Inc. 4800 N. Federal Hwy. Suite E207 Boca Raton, Florida 33431 Phone: 561-672-7826 Fax: 561-672-7827 Website: https://www.burlingtonenglish.com/

Class Name	Model	Awarding PCH	Credit	Information
ACT CareerReady 101	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	ACT Career Curriculum 500 ACT Drive PO Box 168 Iowa City, IA 52243 Fax: 319.337.1578 Website: http://www.keytrain.com/
Study Island	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Edmentum 5600 W 83rd St Bloomington, MN 55437 Phone: 800.447.5286 Email: info@edmentum.com Website: http://www.edmentum.com/ https://app.studyisland.com/cfw/login/
EdReady	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	EdReady Montana at the Montana Digital Academy 32 Campus Drive, Room 315 Missoula, MT 59812 Phone: 406-203-1812 Website: http://edreadymontana.org/
Desire2Learn	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Bright Space 151 Charles Street West Suite 400 Kitchener, ON, Canada N2G 1H6 Website: https://www.d2l.com/

Class Name	Model	Awarding PCH	Credit	Information
Touch-Type Read & Spell	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Touch-Type Read and Spell (TTRS) Ltd, Chislehurst Business Centre, 1 Bromley Lane, Chislehurst, Kent BR76LH United Kingdom Website: https://www.readandspell.com/us/
Actively Learn	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Actively Learn, 220 2nd Ave S, Fourth Floor, Seattle, WA 98104 Phone: 855.862.5505 Website: https://www.activelylearn.com/
New Readers Press	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	New Readers Press 101 Wyoming St. Syracuse, NY 13204 Phone: 800.448.8878 Website: https://www.newreaderspress.com/
Essential Education	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Clients log in with their assigned passwords, the software program tracks their time which is recorded into LACES.	Essential Education 895 NW Grant Ave. Corvallis, OR 97330 Phone: 800-460-8150 Website: https://essentialed.com
NYSED/CUNY Fast Track GRASP Math Learning Modules	Teacher Verification	Modules – Teacher determines percentage of work completed.	24 hours per module (Part 1 and 2) with greater than 75% accuracy, 50 – 75% accuracy = 12 hours	City University of New York Adult Literacy/HSE Program City University of New York University Offices 205 East 42nd Street New York, NY 10017 http://www.collectedny.org/indexftgmp/ [collectedny.org]

Class Name	Model	Awarding PCH	Credit	Information
No Red Ink	Clock Time Model	Web-based program offered through the internet where the system keeps track of time and logs clients out after preset period of inactivity.	Students log in with assigned passwords, access assignments uploaded by teacher, and complete assignments after accessing lesson materials provided by the program. The software tracks student completion and gives estimates for individual assignments.	No Red Ink 118 2nd Street, 3rd Floor San Francisco, CA 94105 www.noredink.com [noredink.com]

APPENDIX B

TABLE 4C

Educational Gains and Attendance for Participants in Distance Education

Enter number of distance education participants for each category listed, calculate percentage of participants completing each level, and enter total proxy and direct attendance hours.

Entering Educational Functioning Level (A)	Total Number Enrolled (B)	Total Attendance Hours for all participants (C)	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain (D)	Number who attained a secondary school diploma or its equivalent (E)	Number Separated Before Achieving Measurable Skill Gains (F)	Number Remaining in Program without Measurable Skill Gains (G)	Percentage Achieving Measurable Skill Gains (H)	Total number of Periods of Participation (I)	Total number of Periods of Participation with Measurable Skill Gains (J)	Percentage of Periods of Participation with Measurable Skill Gains (K)
ABE Level 1										
ABE Level 2										
ABE Level 3										
ABE Level 4										
ABE Level 5										
ABE Level 6										
ABE Total										
ESL Level 1										
ESL Level 2										
ESL Level 3										
ESL Level 4										
ESL Level 5										
ESL Level 6										
ESL Total										
Grand Total										

Include in this table only participants who are counted as distance education participants.
This table is a subset of the participants reported in Table 4.

APPENDIX C

TABLE 5A

Core Follow-up Outcome Achievement for Participants in Distance Education

Include in this table only participants who are counted as distance education participants. This table is a subset of the participants reported in Table 5.

Core Follow-up Outcome Measures	Number of Participants who Exited	Number of Participants who Exited Achieving Outcome or Median Earnings Value	Percent Achieving Outcome	Periods of Participation		
				Total Periods of Participation	Number of Periods of Participation Achieving Outcome or Median Earnings Value	Percent of Periods of Participation Achieving Outcome
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
Employment Second Quarter after exit						
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit						
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit			N/A			N/A
Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent and Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training within one year of exit						
Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent and Employed within one year of exit						
Attained a Postsecondary Credential while enrolled or within one year of exit						