

What is Adult Education in Wyoming?

Wyoming's Adult Education (AE) programs are grant funded service providers with accountability to the U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. In Wyoming, AE annually serves approximately 2,000 students in both synchronous and asynchronous classroom models across even the most remote regions of the State. The primary reason for enrollment in AE is workforce preparation so that participants are skilled in areas needed to be productive members of society.

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Who we serve



Anyone who is:

- 16 years of age or older
- not in school
- Is basic skills deficient
- Non-native speakers of English

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Where we are



- Adult Education centers are located at each community college and respective outreach centers, the WY DOC, and at one non-profit organization in Evanston.

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What we do

Workforce Ready

- Industry recognized credentials
- Micro-credentials

Occupational Training for:

- Academic skills
- IET, ESL IELCE HSE, Corrections Ed, Bridge Programs.
- Digital & financial literacy
- Soft skills/life skills

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WIOA Core Partner



AE is one of four core partners identified in the 2014 WIOA legislation:

- 1.WY Dept. of Workforce Services (Titles I/III)
- 2.Adult Education (Title II)
3. WY Dept. of Voc. Rehabilitation (Title IV)

Adult Education Areas of Expertise



Integrated Education and Training (IET): IET's offer innovative combinations of education and job skills training for adults at all skill levels, with the aim to enhance the learner's potential for greater success in school and in the workforce. Learners are concurrently enrolled in two programs: basic education and industry-recognized training, which results in a credential or certification on completion. Learners receive support and contextualized instruction from adult education and workforce training partners to ensure they have the tools needed to successfully transition to college or to work.

Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education (IELCE): IELCE's are designed to help individuals who are not native speaking individuals improve their English language and Civics skills while preparing to enter the U.S. workforce through IET trainings.



English as a Second Language (ESL): Multi-level English language classes which provide instruction to students whose native language is not English.



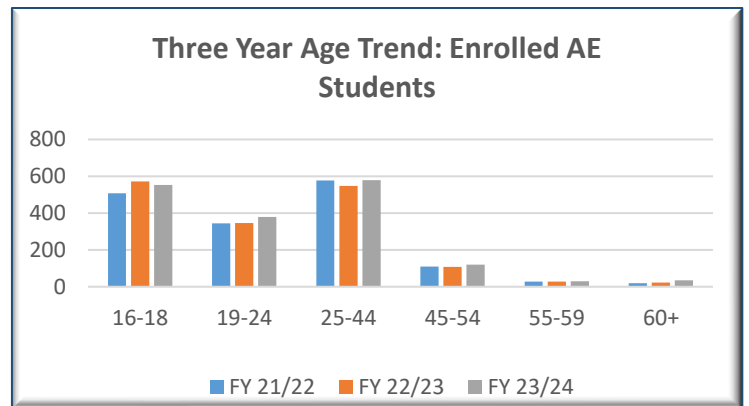
Bridge Programs: Multi-subject programs designed to help students who may not meet entry requirements of higher education. The goal of these programs is to 'bridge' the gap between current academic levels and the necessary qualifications required for success in more advanced education.



High School Equivalency (HSE): Multi-levelled, multi-subject structured educational pathways that prepare a student to earn a high school equivalency credential.

What Age Groups Are Enrolling in AE?

In recent years, enrollments in the 16-18 age group have increased, likely due to the lingering impacts of COVID. During this same time frame AE has been enrolling higher numbers of students in the 19-44 and 25-44 age groups. This trend highlights growing participation in Integrated Education and Training, bridge programs and other educational pathways that lead to credential attainment and workforce placements.



Wyoming's Adult Education Program Ranks Among the Nations Highest But Reports Low Median Income

Wyoming's Adult Education programs are a national model of success, consistently ranking among the top in the nation for outcomes in literacy, numeracy, and workforce readiness. Our state's commitment to providing high-quality education and tailored support services ensures that adult learners acquire the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing economy. With these top-tier rankings, Wyoming demonstrates its leadership in creating pathways to economic mobility, reducing skill gaps, and enhancing the long-term success of our residents.



2ND PLACE FOR:

- Credential attainment
- Percentage of students employed in the 4th quarter after exit



HIGHEST IN THE NATION

- WIOA Core partner program co-enrollments
- Percentage of students employed in the 2nd quarter after exit



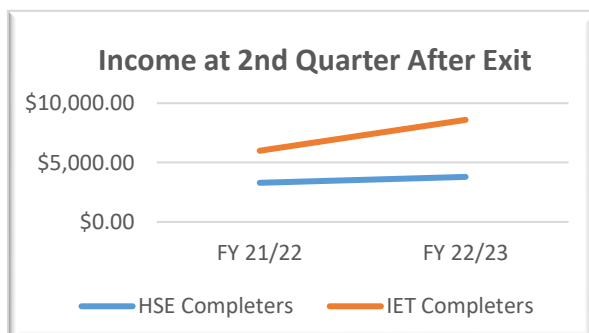
4TH PLACE FOR:

- Measurable Skill Gains

Wyoming's Adult Education (AE) programs are high performing, yet the median income in the 2nd quarter after exit of AE learners in FY 22/23 was among the nation's lowest at \$3,936, with only South Carolina and Louisiana earning less. This disparity is largely due to the low income of Adult Education participants with only a High School Equivalency (HSE), who typically earn 67% less than those with more advanced training. ([NCES, 2020](#)).

To address this, Wyoming has implemented a multi-tiered approach, including a standardized career pathways system and a statewide launch of Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. Key actions have included:

- advanced IET professional development trainings for AE staff
- strengthening of partnerships for training / credentialing
- the implementation of standardized IET syllabi utilizing single set of learning objectives
- contextualized career pathways curricula and
- the use of ARPA funds to support IET program development.



The results of these actions now clearly show that students who complete an IET in Wyoming are earning substantially higher salaries in the 2nd quarter after exit than those who only have a high school equivalency credential.

As we look forward, Wyoming's AE programs will need to seek funding to sustain these IET's as current funding through ARPA will be exhausted in 2026.

NAEP Results & PIACC Study of 2024 Supports an Increasing Need for Adult Education

Across the nation, there is an increasing need for Adult Education due to a combination of economic, demographic, technological and societal changes. The 2024 PIACC study and the [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) highlights this need by revealing declining literacy levels among adults, low international literacy rankings, and widening skill disparities. These results have critical implications upon the workforce and economic and social outcomes as better skills are linked to higher earnings, improved health outcomes and increased civic engagement.

National Challenges

43.5% of adults have low literacy
12.5% of adults have less than a high school credential
21M adults speak another language at home
Employment gaps in in-demand industries
70% of job openings require post-secondary / training credentials

WY Adult Education Solutions

Tailored literacy programs have resulted in 70% gains in literacy.
Approximately 40% of WY adults enrolled in AE earn a high school credential.
ESL learners enrolled in WY's AE programs show literacy skill gains of 50% or higher.
Career Pathways alignment, workplace literacy, IET's and employer partnerships address needs of in-demand industry.
Concurrent enrollments through IET's and other work experience programs are resulting in credential attainment rates of 72%.

Wyoming's Adult Education programs have challenges as they apply to this state.

taken a multi-tiered approach to addressing national

Braided Funding Improves Student Outcomes and Maximizes Program Sustainability

Braided funding from federal, state, local, private, and nonprofit sources has been key in supporting and expanding Adult Education programs across Wyoming, maximizing efficiency and reach.

Comprehensive Support for Student and Workforce Alignments: Funds have been strategically combined to align adult education with workforce development, allowing learners to acquire in-demand skills that meet the needs of local industries.

- Credentials earned include: HSEC, Plebotomy, CCMA, C.N.A., CDL, welding, cybersecurity, manufacturing / industry, teaching certificates
- Career counselor positions added
- Workplace literacy program offered in conjunction with the Jackson Hospital

Expanded Access: Braided funds has enabled the establishment of more programs in rural and underserved areas, ensuring that adult learnings across the state have access to quality education and training opportunities.

- New programming added: Adult HSEC, IET, work experiences
- Reduction in duplication of services between partnering agencies
- Hybrid classes utilized for students in remote areas
- Extensive referral system provides needed support to students
- Systemic use of an integrated career pathways systems includes most rural areas of the State

Improved Program Quality:

The integration of various funding streams has allowed providers to hire qualified instructors/staff, develop high-quality curriculum, and provide hands-on learning experiences, leading to better student performance.

- 87% measurable skill gains
- 89% completion and retention rates
- 15% increase in enrollments
- 35% WIOA Core partner co-enrollment rate

Sustainable Programs: By leveraging multiple funding sources, AE programs have achieved greater financial stability, reducing reliance on single funding streams and enabling long-term planning and implementation.

- Added 29,709 additional hours of instruction
- 20% increase in co-enrollments in postsecondary
- Partnering agencies provide supportive services
- Integration of digital and financial literacy

This collaborative funding approach demonstrates Wyoming Adult Education's commitment to strengthening workforce readiness skills, reducing skill gaps, and promoting lifelong learning. Continued support for braided funding strategies will be vital to sustaining these successes.

The FORCE of Wyoming's WIOA Trilogy

Wyoming's core partner trilogy of the Dept. of Workforce Services (Titles I & III), Adult Education (Title II) and Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) are a powerful FORCE that is transforming lives. Together, the trilogy has developed effective strategies that support participant successes.

Co-location/Shared Facilities

- allows partners to directly assist individuals in need of multiple types of support all under one roof.

Joint Planning/Governance

- coordinated by the Wyoming Workforce Development Board provide regional support for the development of workforce plans.

Data Sharing & Common Outcomes

- efficient tracking of participant progress across agencies to ensure alignment with common federal/state goals, such as increasing employment and improving educational outcomes.

Integrated Service Delivery

- new programming includes **IET** models to provide on the job trainings and/or nationally recognized credentials.
- 95% increase in enrollments with credentials being earned in C.N.A., C.D.L., Phlebotomy, C.C.M.A, manufacturing, welding, IT, & early childhood education. IET's are currently being planned in plumbing, business, entrepreneurship, and other fields

Effective Resource Allocation

- cross-program funding and resource sharing among core partners support diverse job seekers. In Wyoming, aligned training and education programs have led to the high co-enrollments

Customer-Centered Services

- Customer-centered services focus on job seekers' needs, identifying barriers and creating career plans aligned with the State's in-demand industries

The Power of Wyoming's Core Partners!



#1

Highest WIOA core partner co-enrollment rates in the country.

63%

Credential Attainment rate for WIOA co-enrolled individuals.

69%

Of WIOA co-enrolled individuals were employed within 1 year of exit.

95%

Increase in IET enrollments.

100%

Core program services available under one roof, either in-person or through direct linkage.

100%

Career pathways aligned.

Notable Recognitions in 23-24!



Student of the Year- Aynaz Sarjoughi (LCCC-Laramie) joined the Adult Education program in 2021 as a dedicated, inspirational ESL student. She quickly advanced and completed her program. Today, Aynaz is employed at the LCCC center as an Instructional Assistant where she continues to break down barriers for adult education students.

High School Equivalency Honors - This year the AE program in Wyoming awarded top honors awards to Seth McMinn (Northwest College) and Grace Morrison (Gillette College) for earning the State's highest scores on high school equivalency tests. The scores they earned were at College and Career Readiness levels and mark some of the nation's highest scores.



Teacher of the Year- Kristy Young (Western Wyoming Community College) earned this distinction for her dedication to students, the college, and the community. She promotes creativity and critical thinking, swiftly introduced hybrid-hyflex classes during COVID, and co-created a new Networking / Career Pathways course, linking students with industry leaders to develop skills and set career goals.

National COABE SAAEF Fellowships were awarded to AE instructors Michelle Smith and Thomas Lear of Laramie County Community College for advocacy work in national AE initiatives. Through this fellowship they learned how to work with policymakers, the media, and local communities to create lasting change.