# 2024-25 Distance Education Assurances

Introduction

To ensure educational and workforce services are provided at the highest levels of quality for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), the Office of Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) requires the following assurances.

Agreement to these assurances ensures the grantee commits to follow federal and state laws regarding AEFLA.

### Distance Learning Assurances

To align with instructional priorities outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the needs of adult learners across the state, the Office of Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) has developed the following distance education assurances based upon National Reporting System (NRS) guidelines.

The assurances are intended to allow adult education programs a means to accurately document and deliver services to learners using flexible instructional models. The assurances provide guidance on how to apply for, classify, track, and report allowable distance education hours for digital learning activities.

### 1. Distance Education Coordinator Requirements

Grantees providing distance education activities must designate a Distance Education Coordinator. The coordinator must:

* Successfully complete annual distance education policy training as required.
* Act as a point of contact for state-led distance education initiatives and as a local program point of contact to communicate statewide policy to relevant staff.

### 2. Course Requirements

Distance education courses must match traditional, face-to-face, or brick and mortar, courses in terms of the quality, rigor, and breadth of academic and technical standards. The grantee must ensure that programming is of sufficient intensity (such as hours of instruction per month) and duration (the months of engagement in services)[[1]](#footnote-2) for students to make progress toward the grant outcomes.

The program must ensure timeliness of its responses (synchronously or asynchronously) to the requests of learners participating in distance learning by requiring program staff to respond to requests from these learners within 24 hours of receipt of the request within the program’s business hours.

### 3. Distance Education Approvals

Grantees must indicate which AEI approved digital platform(s) they plan to implement at the start of each grant cycle and in subsequent continuation applications. Reporting instructional hours from additional AEI-approved platforms anytime thereafter requires submitting an updated assurance.

Grantees must complete the [online AEI Distance Education Application](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/97aae68d53464b3e960d383943f81da2) for any proposed platform not listed below as an AEI Approved Distance Education Platform. The online application is also available on [AEI’s Distance Education Policy webpage](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/grantees/handbook/distance-learning).

AEI may reject any application(s) where the required description or evidence is insufficient, the platform is not accessible to all learners, or the resource does not support CCRS- and/or ELPS-aligned adult education instruction.

Approved Distance Education Platforms

Grantees selected digital platforms that will be used to award distance education instructional hours during the program year at the time of grant application and will update them at each subsequent continuation. If a grantee wishes to provide instructional hours with a pre-approved platform that was not indicated during the initial application phase or subsequent continuation, an updated assurance is required. Digital platforms can only be used with the proxy hour model for which they are approved. **Platforms indicated with an asterisk (\*) were not available during RFA selection and may be added.**

**Clock Time Model**

ACT WorkKeys

Aztec Learning

Burlington English

Ellii

EnGen

Essential Education (online only)

IXL

Khan Academy

Kurzweil 3000

Mango Languages

My ELT Stand Out Curriculum (online only)

Northstar Digital Literacy (state subscription)

Quill

Rosetta Stone

\*Spark Stand Out Curriculum (online only)

Step Forward (online only)

USA Learns

**Learner Mastery Model**

Colorado Shines (Award vendor-set number of credit hours for 70% mastery.)

Smart Horizons Career Online High School (Award vendor-set number of credit hours for 70% mastery.)

### 4. Administering Assessments to Distance Learners

The program must ensure that pre- and post-tests used to measure educational gain of distance learners for NRS reporting are delivered in person or remotely and follow the test administration requirements outlined in the state Assessment Policy.

Distance learners must be post-tested after the same amount of instructional time as other learners unless otherwise indicated in the local Assessment Assurances. Instructional hours to determine post-test eligibility can be a combination of in-person contact hours and distance learning hours. Time spent completing homework and other supplemental activities that support understanding and learning but are not instructional in nature cannot be included in reportable proxy hours.

For NRS reporting purposes, participants are reported as “distance learners” at the end of the program year when 50% or more of the learner’s total instructional hours are recorded as distance learning for the program year.

### 5. Measuring Instructional Hours for Distance Learners

In addition to meeting all other requirements to become an NRS participant, learners involved in distance education must have at least 12 hours of contact to achieve participant status for Federal reporting purposes. The initial 12 contact hours for can be any combination of in-person contact and contact through telephone, video, teleconference, or online communication, where participant and program staff can interact and through which participant identity is verifiable. The program will track and report distance education hours depending on the model(s) approved for each distance education platform. Two models for tracking distance learning proxy hours are available:

* 1. Clock Time Model
* Distance education hours are assigned based on the elapsed time that a learner is connected to, or engaged in, an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time. The software has business rules in place to time out/log out learners after a specified period of inactivity. Hours must be reported at the daily level. No more than 8 clock time model hours a day may be recorded for distance learners.
	1. Learner Mastery Model
* Distance education hours are assigned based on the learner passing a test on the content of each lesson or unit of instruction. Learners work independently with instructional materials and activities and take a test when they are prepared. A high, or passing, percentage of correct answers (typically 70%-80%) earns the credit hours attached to the material covered in the instructional unit. Learner mastery credit hours must be verified by an external vendor and not by local grantee program staff. Only programs with approval from the AEI Office to report mastery model instructional hours may do so in LACES. Hours may be reported in aggregate but must be reported no less than every 89 days.

The grantee understands that both in-person and distance education instructional hours must be recorded in LACES.

The grantee understands that all distance education instructional hours must be recorded and coded in LACES according to the delivery mode (synchronous or asynchronous), the approved proxy hour model and the most accurate subject area.

1. Instruction – Distance Learning – Subject Area: The grantee must code distance learning contact hours with this label for all classes delivered live using video conference tools like Zoom, WebEx, Google, etc., and any meetings, coaching, and learner support provided through telephone, video, teleconference, or synchronous online communication, where participant and program staff can interact and through which participant identity is verifiable.
2. Instruction – Distance Learning – Async. – Subject Area: The grantee must code all distance education clock time and learner mastery hours where a learner is completing learning on their own without an instructor present. This includes all instructional hours earned on AEI approved learning platforms providing asynchronous instruction.

The grantee understands that distance education instructional hours tracked using the ‘Clock Time Model’ must be recorded in LACES at the daily level and no less than one week after instruction takes place. Partial hours must be reported in 15-minute increments only.

The grantee understands that distance education instructional hours tracked using the ‘Mastery Model’ must be recorded in LACES as aggregate hours no less than every 89 days. Partial hours must be reported in 15-minute increments only.

The grantee understands that distance education instructional hours can only be reported for AEI approved distance learning platforms.

### 6. Accessibility of Distance Learning Platforms

Grantees must ensure that all online courses and digital learning websites are accessible. As defined by the ADA under Title II: [Web accessibility](https://www.w3.org/WAI/) means that websites, tools, and technologies are designed and developed so that people with disabilities can use them. More specifically, people can: perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web. [Course accessibility](https://er.educause.edu/articles/2017/1/ada-compliance-for-online-course-design) as indicated by EDUCAUSE, means that an individual with a disability is given the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability.

**Distance Learning Coordinator Name and Signature Date**

**Program Director Name and Signature Date**

1. Comings, J. (2007). Persistence: Helping adult education students reach their goals. *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)