# 2024-25 AELA Assessment Assurances

**Introduction**

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

Agreement to these assurances ensures applicants commit to follow federal and state laws regarding AELA.

**Local Assessment Assurances**

The purpose of the Local Assessment Assurance is to ensure AELA funded programs are meeting state assessment policy and test publisher guidelines, implementing consistent testing and security protocols, and providing an environment for learners to show an accurate representation of their skills through assessment. These assurances are enacted to ensure assessments administered at the local program level are valid (measuring what is intended to be measured), and reliable (yielding consistent results). The assurances ensure assessments are administered in a standardized and consistent way by all grantees. When test procedures are not followed correctly or consistently, validity is lost, and comparability is compromised. In addition, these assurances help ensure educational progress is tracked consistently, testing and security protocols are consistent to ensure comparability and quality data, instruction is informed and effective, and that state level outcome data is accurate.

**1. Assessment Compliance**

Local grantees must have the most current publisher test administration materials onsite for all approved assessments used at the program to ensure proper test use, administration, scoring, and interpretation of results. Guidelines within the administration materials must be followed by the grantee, including the scripts from the publishers for administering the assessments. Local grantees must always follow test administration practices and assessment publisher guidelines when administering these tests.

Grantees may only use AEI-approved assessments and forms for determining Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) and demonstrating Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) through pre- and post-testing. Grantees must use scores from approved assessments when determining the class(es) in which to place learners and for planning instruction. Assessments being utilized for NRS reporting purposes cannot be used more frequently than within instructional hour windows prescribed by test publishers or for purposes other than those outlined above. Grantees are encouraged to utilize instructional-based assessments between pre- and post-testing to determine learner progress in addition to these approved assessments.

The table below outlines assessments approved in the state assessment policy. In the table below, place an “X” next to each assessment and format the grantee will use within the program year.

Table 1

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Paper** | **Online** | **Offering Remote Assessment** | **Assessment** |
|  |  |  | CASAS Reading STEPS - ESL |
|  |  |  | CASAS Listening STEPS - ESL |
|  |  |  | CASAS Reading GOALS - ABE/ASE |
|  |  |  | CASAS Math GOALS 2 - ABE/ASE |
|  |  |  | TABE 11/12 Language - ABE/ASE |
|  |  |  | TABE 11/12 Reading - ABE/ASE |
|  |  |  | TABE 11/12 Math - ABE/ASE |
|  |  |  | BEST Plus 3.0 Language - ESL 1-4 (paper) and ESL 1-6 (computer) |
|  |  |  | WorkKeys Workplace Documents – ABE/ASE levels 2-6 |
|  |  |  | WorkKeys Applied Math – ABE/ASE |

If the grantee issues NRS tests at multiple sites, please list the sites that will implement each assessment series on Table 2. If your program will not implement a particular series OR your program only operates at one site, please place N/A.

Table 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessment** | **Grantee site(s)** |
| CASAS Reading STEPS - ESL |  |
| CASAS Listening STEPS - ESL |  |
| CASAS Reading GOALS - ABE/ASE |  |
| CASAS Math GOALS 2 - ABE/ASE |  |
| TABE 11/12 Language - ABE/ASE |  |
| TABE 11/12 Reading - ABE/ASE |  |
| TABE 11/12 Math - ABE/ASE |  |
| BEST Plus 3.0 Language - ESL 1-4 (paper) and ESL 1-6 (computer) |  |
| WorkKeys Workplace Documents - ABE/ASE levels 2-6 |  |
| WorkKeys Applied Math – ABE/ASE |  |

**2. Assessment Administration Training**

Grantees must have at least one staff member who is trained to administer any assessments offered by the program. All assessments must be administered by trained assessment administrators only. Administrators must receive initial training before administering tests and refresher training every two years. Grantees must report training certificates of completion for initial and refresher training in each staff record in LACES. Grantees must report certified test administrator staff to AEI. Grantees are encouraged to also maintain a program-level tracking sheet of the assessment trainings staff attended and when they are required to take a refresher assessment training on file.

During in-person testing sessions, test administrators must remain in the testing room throughout the entire session to ensure that everyone follows all testing rules. The testing environment during these sessions must follow test publisher guidelines on creating a focused and distraction-free experience, including but not limited to no cell phone usage, extraneous noise, sufficient spacing between test-takers, etc.

To understand the specific processes for administering NRS-approved assessments in Colorado, at least one member of the grantees’ staff, the Assessment Coordinator, must complete the Assessment training course available on the shared WIOA Moodle. All staff involved in assessment procedures are encouraged to complete the self- enrollment course.

**3. Using Proctors during Testing**

A proctor is a staff person or program volunteer who has not been formally trained in the administration of the assessment. Proctors are utilized during test administration only if a certified test administrator is present in the room. Proctors may only hand out and collect materials, inventory materials, arrange the room, check in learners, get them seated, answer general procedural questions, and monitor learners as they are testing to ensure a positive, equitable testing environment. Proctors may not provide instructions at the beginning of a testing session, score tests, or advise learners on class placement based on their test scores.

The state assessment policy allows for the use of test proctors. In the space below, indicate with an “X” whether the grantee will use test proctors within the program year.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee does not use proctors for assessment.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee uses proctors for assessment.

**4. Maintain Testing Materials**

Grantees must maintain a local inventory of all assessment materials. All assessment materials in the inventory, including test administration manuals and completed answer sheets (which contain marks or responses) must be stored in a locked, preferably fireproof, file cabinet accessible to the program director or the director’s designee(s).

All assessment materials are protected under copyright. No duplication of any published materials or any portion of any published test materials is permitted for any reason. Grantees may not use displays, questions, or answers that appear on any test to create materials designed to teach or prepare learners to answer test items.

Staff members who administer assessments must return all materials immediately after use to the program director or the director’s designee(s). All answer sheets and scratch paper must be treated as confidential until appropriately destroyed, as outlined below.

Destruction of unusable, defaced, or outdated (longer than three years) testing materials in the local assessment inventory must follow assessment publisher guidelines.

* For TABE, materials must be shredded or burned.
* For CASAS, materials can be shredded and an email with the quantity and types of materials destroyed must be sent to CASAS ([orders@casas.org](mailto:orders@casas.org)). If the program prefers, they may return the materials to CASAS for destruction. In this case, mail the documents to 5151 Murphy Canyon Rd., Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123-4339.
* For ACT WorkKeys, materials should be mailed back to one of two addresses based on scorable or nonscorable type of materials, please visit the ACT WorkKeys [website](https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/state-and-district-solutions/arkansas/workkeys-paper.html#step6) for more.
  + AEI is seeking confirmation about the secure destruction of testing materials from ACT. The guidance above may change pending that confirmation.
* Information around destruction of materials associated with CAL BEST Plus 3.0 is currently unavailable, please connect with publisher contacts to obtain required steps for materials destruction.

Upon destruction, the assessment materials inventory must be updated with the following information:

* Materials destroyed (e.g., five 36-M test booklets)
* Name of the staff person that destroyed the materials
* Date of destruction of the materials
* How the materials were destroyed (e.g., shredded)

**5. Accommodating Learners with Disabilities**

Grantees must inform learners of the availability of accommodations during initial enrollment and orientation, and grantees must provide learners fully accessible services that meet reasonable criteria. Grantees must provide testing accommodations for eligible learners with disabilities that allow the test taker with a disability to demonstrate his or her skills and abilities more accurately than if no accommodations were made. In all cases, testing accommodations must meet the needs of the eligible learner without changing what the test is intended to measure.

Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodations and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after a professional evaluation takes place. Grantees must maintain documentation of the need for specific testing accommodations as confidential information and securely store that documentation separate from other learner records. The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the learner’s ability to demonstrate performance on the assessment. The documentation must come from a doctor’s report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, documentation from a vocational rehabilitation agency, and/or the learner’s secondary school.

The appropriate accommodations for assessment purposes listed in the documentation provided must be followed within reason. For assessment purposes, grantees must use only those accommodations approved by each publisher as [CASAS](https://www.casas.org/training-and-support/testing-guidelines/Assessment-Accommodations), [DRC](http://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE_Guidelines_to_Inclusive_Testing_2017.pdf), [CAL](https://www.cal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/BP2.0-User-Agreement.pdf), and [ACT](https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/WorkKeysAdminManualOnlineTestingNational.pdf) all list different requirements and guidance. Documentation of assessments accommodations provided by grantees must be reported in LACES.

**6. Demonstrating Educational Gain by Pre- and Post-testing**

All learners must be pre-tested at initial intake and before each new Period of Participation (PoP). Pre-tests occur prior to instruction taking place. Learners are assessed in reading, language, listening, or math (but not necessarily in all content areas).

Before administering a TABE, CASAS, or Best Plus paper-based NRS pre-test, grantees must issue learners the publisher provided Locator or Appraisal to determine the appropriate level form to administer each learner for the first time or after any period of absence of 90 days or more. Pre-tests must be administered on forms indicated by the Locator or Appraisal results.

For Best Plus computer-based tests, warm up questions rather than a locator/appraisal are used to adapt the test level to the learner’s proficiency. For WorkKeys, no locator/appraisal is used, and learners will pre-test on the first available form in each subject.

Under the following circumstances, a learner must be re-pre-tested before being placed into classes:

* A learner has returned to the program after a 90+ days gap in attendance.
* A learner has continued (no 90+ day attendance gap) from the prior program year into a new program year and, it has been more than 3 months (90 days) since their last assessment.
* A test score is invalidated due to non-completion or cheating.
* A scale score falls within the test publisher’s required range for re-testing.
* A CASAS or BEST Plus 3.0 pre-test results in the EFL “Completed ESL L6”
  + Learners must be re-tested on an ABE assessment (CASAS GOALS or TABE 11/12).

Under the following circumstances, a grantee should consider re-pre-testing a learner before being placed into classes:

* A scale score falls within the test publisher’s recommended range for re-testing.

Learners must be placed into classes based on pre-test results. The state assessment policy allows for additional information about learners to inform class placement. In the space below, indicate with an “X” whether or not the grantee will use additional information to inform class placement within the program year.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee does not use additional information about learners to inform class placement.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee does use additional information about learners to inform class placement. If using additional information about learners to determine class placement, list the additional information considered, such as previous placement, learner educational records or goals, class size, etc. in the space below:

Learners are not eligible to post-test until they complete a minimum number of instructional hours per content area. Test publishers generally recommend a higher number of hours be attended before post-testing to better ensure testers are prepared to make an educational functioning level gain. Those required and recommended hours are as follows:

* TABE 11/12 ABE EFL 1-4 (all subjects)
  + Recommended: 50-60 hours
  + Minimum required: 40 hours
* TABE 11/12 ABE EFL 5-6 (all subjects)
  + Recommended: 50-60 hours
  + Minimum required: 30 hours
* CASAS GOALS and STEPS (all subjects)
  + Recommended: 70-100 hours
  + Minimum required: 40 hours
* BEST Plus 3.0
  + Recommended: 80-100 hours
  + Minimum required: 40 hours
* ACT WorkKeys (all subjects)
  + Recommended: 30 hours
    - AEI is seeking confirmation of the recommended hours to post-test. The guidance above may change depending on that confirmation.
  + Minimum required: 30 hours

The state assessment policy allows grantees to set the hours threshold at which they will consider learners to be post-test ready within the test publishers recommended hours range. In Table 4, indicate with an “X” in the “N/A” column if the grantee does not use the assessment. Indicate with an “X” in the “Publisher’s Minimum Hours” column if the grantee post-tests learners at the vendor’s minimum required hours. Indicate as a note in the “Other Hours Threshold” column if the grantee uses a different hours threshold, listing that hours amount. If the post-test hours vary by educational functioning level, indicate that in the note.

Table 4

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment** | **N/A** | **Publisher’s Minimum Hours** | **Other Hours Threshold**  **If hours vary by EFL level, note this:** |
| CASAS Reading STEPS - ESL |  |  |  |
| CASAS Listening STEPS - ESL |  |  |  |
| CASAS Reading GOALS - ABE/ASE |  |  |  |
| CASAS Math GOALS 2 - ABE/ASE |  |  |  |
| TABE 11/12 Language - ABE |  |  |  |
| TABE 11/12 Language - ASE |  |  |  |
| TABE 11/12 Reading - ABE |  |  |  |
| TABE 11/12 Reading - ASE |  |  |  |
| TABE 11/12 Math - ABE/ASE |  |  |  |
| TABE 11/12 Math - ASE |  |  |  |
| BEST Plus 3.0 Language - ESL |  |  |  |
| WorkKeys Workplace Documents - ABE/ASE |  |  |  |
| WorkKeys Applied Math – ABE/ASE |  |  |  |

All learners who attain the instructional hour requirements outlined above, who did not initially place into or have remediated into ABE Level 6 in a subject area, are considered eligible to post-test in that subject area. If multiple content areas are assessed through pre-testing, and the learner attains the hours outlined above in each subject area, the learner must be post-tested each time they are eligible in each subject area in which they are receiving instruction.

Post-tests must be administered face-to-face or remotely, following publisher guidelines, between the test administrator and the learner. Grantees must administer post-tests to learners who reach instructional hour requirements by the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction to document learner gains.

Class schedules must be developed so that it is feasible for the majority of learners, 60% of all WIOA Title II participants annually, excluding learners pre-testing at ABE L6 in all subject areas or learners placed into classes using alternative placement assessments, to reach the required instructional hours and be able to post-test.

Each TABE and CASAS assessment has at least two approved forms at each testing level, for the purpose of using alternate test form. When post-testing with TABE and CASAS, an alternate form must be used, unless otherwise indicated in test publisher guidance. Additionally, CASAS and DRC recommend learners attend an additional 60 to 80 instructional hours before re-using a previously administered test form (with an alternate form in between). Using the same TABE or CASAS form back-to-back is not allowed and is a test administration error.

WorkKeys assessments have four forms at the same level. When post-testing with WorkKeys, an alternate form must be used each time the learner post-tests until all four forms have been administered to the learner. If the learner has used all form forms, the first repeat form should not be used again unless 30 days have passed since that form was last administered. Using the same WorkKeys form back-to-back when fewer than 30 days have passed since the form was last used is not allowed and is a test administration error.

Best Plus computer based tests are adaptive and do not have alternate forms. Best Plus paper based tests are semi-adaptive with leveled question sets (1, 2, and 3) determined by a learner’s responses. There are no alternate forms to use when post-testing with Best Plus.

Learners pre-tested with an NRS assessment below ABE L6 who have earned a secondary school diploma or equivalent do not need to be post-tested once that diploma is earned; however, if they have not yet earned such a diploma and become eligible to post-test, they must be post-tested.

Under the following circumstances, a learner must be re-post-tested before continuing or advancing classes:

* A test score is invalidated due to non-completion or cheating.
* A scale score falls within the test publisher’s required range for re-testing.
* A CASAS or BEST Plus 3.0 pre-test results in the EFL “Completed ESL L6”
  + Learners must be re-tested on an ABE assessment (CASAS GOALS or TABE 11/12).

Under the following circumstances, a grantee should consider re-post-testing a learner before continuing or advancing classes:

* A scale score falls within the test publisher’s recommended range for re-testing.

After post-testing, learners must be advanced through class levels based on their post-test scores. The state assessment policy allows grantees to use additional evidence to determine what class a learner is advanced into. In the space below, indicate with an “X” whether or not the grantee uses additional evidence to determine what class a learner is transitioned into within the program year.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee transitions learners between classes based on test scores only. If you check mark this section, please leave the box below blank.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee uses evidence in addition to test scores to transition learners between classes. If using different additional evidence to assess learner transitions, please describe the type of evidence in the space below:

All NRS pre-/post-tests, including NRS Locator and Appraisal tests, and all and alternative placement assessments must follow the required and recommended testing environments outlined in test publisher guidance.

**7. Early Post-Testing**

Grantees may only post-test learners who have not reached the required test publisher’s minimum number of instructional hours under limited and special circumstances. The learner must meet one of the following criteria to be post-tested prior to completing the required number of hours in a subject area:

* The learner is exiting the program permanently; or
* Evidence indicates readiness to demonstrate measurable skill gain.

Grantees must document each post-testing exception. [Early Post-Test forms](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/grantees/handbook/assessment-and-instructional-hour-data-entry-requirements) must be filled out and signed by the program director or a designee before early post-testing occurs. Completed and signed forms must be uploaded into the statewide database at the same time early post-test scores are entered.

**\_\_\_\_\_**The program director does not designate the ability to sign Early Post-Test forms to anyone else.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The program director designates the ability to sign Early Post-Test forms to the following individual(s). If designating staff, list the full name and title for each below:

**8. Assessment Scores from Other Entities**

The state assessment policy allows grantees to accept NRS test scores from other organizations. Grantees may choose to accept NRS test scores from other organizations to reduce service duplication, increase community partnerships or other benefits to their learners.

NRS assessments scores from another organization may be used by AEFLA grantees provided requirements from the Assessment Assurances and Assessment Policy were followed by the organization when administering those tests. Tests administered by other entities may only accepted by the grantee if:

* The test is an approved assessment listed in the state assessment policy;
* The test was administered within the previous 3 months;
* The test was administered by an individual who meets test administrator requirements outlined in the state assessment policy;
* The learner was given a locator/appraisal prior to pre-testing; and
* All test procedures, e.g., time limits, etc., were followed.

Grantees must ensure that all test results from another entity are obtained in a timely manner, to minimize unnecessary lag time between testing and the delivery of instructional services.

**Note**: WorkKeys Applied Math and Workplace Documents tests have different forms if they are NRS approved tests or non-NRS approved tests. Many partner organizations may be offering the non-NRS approved forms of the WorkKeys tests, but these cannot be accepted from a partner organization to be used for EFL placement if they were not administered on the NRS approved forms.

In the space below, indicate with an “X” whether or not the grantee accepts test scores from other organizations.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee does not accept assessment scores from other organizations.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee accepts NRS assessment scores from the following organizations:

**9. Data Entry and Quality Control Procedures**

Grantees must track instructional hours between pre- and post-testing per content/subject area, and those hours must be entered into the statewide data reporting system, LACES, within one week of instructional delivery.

All AEI-approved assessments a learner takes must be reported in LACES within one week of test administration. This includes tests resulting in an invalid score, tests resulting in an out-of-range score, re-tests, tests administered early, and tests administered on the same form. Any early post-test forms used before test administration must also be uploaded in a learner’s documents in LACES within one week of test administration.

Test administrators must report in LACES that an individual received testing accommodations and the type of accommodations provided by the program. This may be reported with sensitive information redacted through a test accommodations document or comment in the learner’s record in LACES.

Assessments in LACES may only be deleted by AEI staff. If an assessment needs to be deleted due to a data entry error, the LACES System Administrator must email the Adult Education Data Coordinator and CC the Adult Education Program Coordinator with the following information:

* Student ID
* Test Name (including form, level, and subject area)
* Test scale score
* Test administration date (as entered in LACES)
* A brief description of the data entry error
* Rationale for requesting to delete the assessment

Learner assessment results remain confidential. When results are shared with instructional staff, all parties must ensure that learner records are secure. Grantees must maintain data sharing agreements and signed consent forms from learners before sharing any learner assessment data outside of their organization.

Grantees must upload test administrator certificates and two-year re-certifications in individual Staff Records in LACES.

**10. Instructional Hours and Distance Learning**

The AEFLA grant allows instruction to occur via distance technology if approved by the AEI Office. Learners receiving instruction via distance education must adhere to the same assessment and instructional hour requirements described for learners receiving face-to-face instruction. Both contact and proxy hours as defined in the state [Distance Education Policy](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/grantees/handbook/distance-learning) must be reported and count towards the post-testing instructional hour requirements. In the space below, indicate with an “X” whether or not the grantee is opting to deliver distance education. Note that opting to deliver Distance Education requires platform approval from the AEI office.

**\_\_\_\_\_**The grantee is not opting to deliver distance education.

**\_\_\_\_\_** The grantee is opting to deliver distance education.

**11. Remote Assessment**

The state assessment policy allows for testing to occur remotely. If implementing remote assessments, the grantee must follow all test publisher remote testing guidelines and complete required test vendor documentation and trainings which vary by vendor.

\_\_\_\_ The grantee will be implementing remote assessment in 2024-25 and has indicated which tests will be available remotely in Table 1.

\_\_\_\_ The grantee will NOT be implementing remote assessment in 2024-25.

If the grantee isNOT implementing remote assessment in 2024-25, please describe the grantee’s plan to assess learners if their program needs to pause in-person testing due to learner needs or a public emergency in the box below:

**Local Assessment Coordinator Name (Printed)**

**Local Assessment Coordinator Signature Date**

**Program Director Name (Printed)**

**Program Director Signature Date**