**WHO PARTICIPATES IN ADULT EDUCATION?**

Adult education programs in the United States reach a large number of people but enrollment has fallen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enrollment in the adult education program authorized under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was 725,127 for program year 2020–21.  

Most participants are enrolled in Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning program. The adult education program has three main programs, **adult basic education (ABE)**, **adult secondary education (ASE)** and **English as a second language (ESL)**. In program year 2020–21, 47% of participants were enrolled in ABE, 11% were enrolled in ASE, and 42% were enrolled in ESL programs.

As part of ABE, ASE or ESL instruction, participants have access to specialized programming. In program year 2020–21:

- 39,071 participants were enrolled in Integrated Education and Training (IET) Programs, which integrate basic skills and work skills instruction.
- 332,046 participants were enrolled in distance education programs.
- 120,670 participants were enrolled in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs, which includes ESL, work skills and civics instruction.
- 72,860 participants were enrolled in programs in correctional institutions.
Participants from all program types participate in Integrated Education and Training programs.

IET Program Enrollment in 2020–21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABE-IET</td>
<td>20,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASE-IET</td>
<td>4,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA-IET</td>
<td>4,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELC-IET</td>
<td>9,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total IET: 39,071

Adult education participants come from a wide range of backgrounds.

Age Distribution:
- 16–18: 64,559
- 19–24: 129,495
- 25–44: 375,157
- 45–54: 96,458
- 55–59: 27,684
- 60+: 31,774

Employment Status:
- 25% Not in the Labor Force
- 35% Unemployed
- 40% Employed

63% Female, 37% Male

Adult education participants make measurable skill gains.

Measurable skill gains (MSG) are used to demonstrate participants' progress toward achieving a credential or employment. For adult education programs, participants can demonstrate MSG in two ways: educational functioning level (EFL) gain and receipt of a secondary school diploma.\(^1\)

Percentage of Participants with Measurable Skill Gain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019–20</th>
<th>2020–21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult basic education</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult secondary education</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a second language</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Adult education enrollment and measurable skill gain numbers for 2020–21 were impacted by COVID-19.

\(^2\) All data are from the Statewide Performance Reports (total enrollment numbers and by age and sex), NRS Table 4 (program enrollment type and participants with measurable skill gain), NRS Table 3 (IET enrollment numbers), NRS Table 4c (distance education enrollment numbers), NRS Table 10 (correctional institution enrollment numbers), and NRS Table 6 (employment status).

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/index.html

Contact NRS https://nrsweb.org/