Adult education programs in the United States reach a large number of people and enrollment has started to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enrollment in the adult education program authorized under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was 920,567 for program year 2021–22.1

Most participants are enrolled in Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning programs.

The three program types that make up Adult Education are adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and English as second language (ESL). In program year 2021-22, 42% of participants were enrolled in ABE, 9% were enrolled in ASE, and 49% were enrolled in ESL.

ABE, ASE, and ESL participants have access to specialized programming.

In program year 2021–22:

- 49,572 participants were enrolled in Integrated Education and Training (IET) Programs, which integrate basic skills and work skills instruction.
- 271,155 participants were enrolled in distance education programs.
- 124,832 participants were enrolled in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs, which includes ESL, work skills and civics instruction.
- 96,075 participants were enrolled in programs in correctional institutions.
Participants from all program types participate in Integrated Education and Training programs (IET).

IET Program Enrollment in 2021–22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total IET</td>
<td>49,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABE-IET</td>
<td>26,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASE-IET</td>
<td>5,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA-IET</td>
<td>4,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELC-IET</td>
<td>12,488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adult education participants come from a wide range of backgrounds.

- **Age**
  - 16–18: 87,353
  - 19–24: 159,109
  - 25–44: 469,777
  - 45–54: 125,057
  - 55–59: 35,909
  - 60+: 43,362

- **Employment Status**
  - Not in the Labor Force: 23%
  - Unemployed: 34%
  - Employed: 42%

Adult education participants make measurable skill gains.

Measurable skill gains (MSG) are used to demonstrate participants’ progress toward achieving a credential or employment. Consistent with program design, participants may demonstrate MSG in several ways.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult basic education</td>
<td>26,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult secondary education</td>
<td>5,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a second language</td>
<td>12,488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Participants with Measurable Skill Gain

- **Total**
  - 2020–21: 35%
  - 2021–22: 41%
- **Adult basic education**
  - 2020–21: 37%
  - 2021–22: 42%
- **Adult secondary education**
  - 2020–21: 39%
  - 2021–22: 40%
- **English as a second language**
  - 2020–21: 32%
  - 2021–22: 39%

¹ 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).

² Depending upon the type of program in which a participant is enrolled, documented progress is defined as one of the following: (1) Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level; (2) Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; (3) Postsecondary transcript for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting academic standards; (4) Satisfactory or better progress report towards established milestones from an employer or training provider; (5) Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html
Learn more at https://nrsweb.org/