

Lit Scan

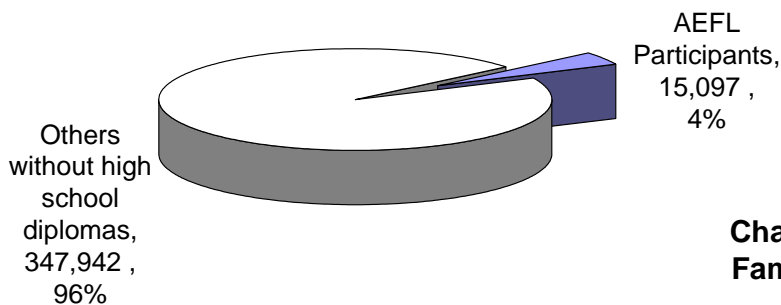
Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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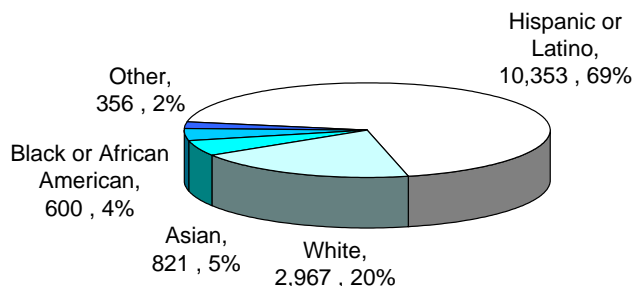
Colorado Adult Education Programs Reach Only a Fraction of Their Potential Clienteles *Hispanics More Likely Served Than Others*

Chart 1. AEFLA Program Participants as a Percentage of Colorado Adults Without High School Diplomas



During 2003-04, Colorado programs funded by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) served 15,097 state residents ages 16 and over. While this figure is impressive on its own, it represents only four percent of adult Coloradans without high school diplomas or the equivalent (e.g., GED). See Chart 1.

Chart 2. Participants in Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs by Race/Ethnicity, 2004



Participants in AEFLA-funded programs represent a variety of racial and ethnic groups, although Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites represent the largest shares. Almost two out of three 2003-04 program participants was Hispanic, and one out of five was non-Hispanic White. See Chart 2.



The distribution of AEFLA program participants by race and ethnicity is different from that distribution of adult Coloradans who did not complete a high school education. (Note: The latest available data on educational attainment by race and ethnicity is from the 2000 Census.) The bulk of this subset of the state's adult population is divided almost equally between non-Hispanic Whites and Hispanics, with only nine percent representing other racial and ethnic groups. See Chart 3.

Chart 3. Coloradans Ages 25 & Over Without High School Diplomas or Equivalent, 2000

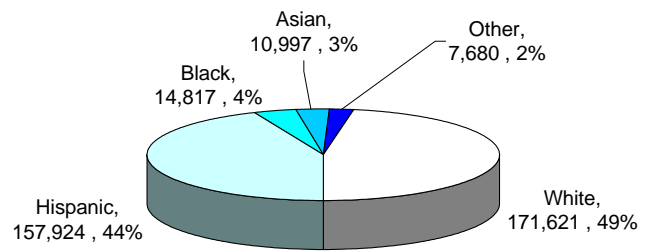
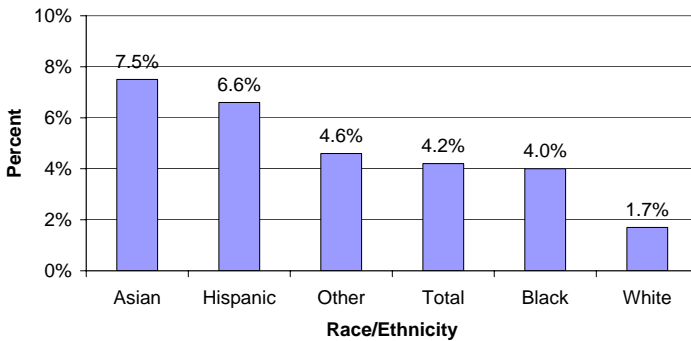


Chart 4. 2003-04 AEFLA Participants as a Percentage of Adults Without High School Diplomas, 2000



The racial and ethnic distributions of AEFLA program participants and adult Coloradans without a high school education are different. What do the differences mean in terms of the relative success of AEFLA programs in reaching potential clients in these groups? Almost seven percent of Hispanic adults without a high school education were served by a program, but less than two percent of White residents with a similar level of education. At seven and a half percent, Asian adults without a high school education were most likely to be served by an AEFLA program; but, the population in question is less than 11,000 and the number served just over 800.

Generally, this data illustrates that the current funding for adult education programs in Colorado—which comes almost exclusively from AEFLA—is inadequate to serve the over 363,000 adult residents in need of such programs. In addition, the differences in the racial and ethnic demographics of this population and AEFLA program participants indicate that existing programs are more successful at engaging the participation of some groups than others. It might be useful for decision-makers to explore why these differences exist and to consider what steps might be taken both to increase the availability of adult education programs and to encourage more participation by potential clients in presently under-served groups.

SOURCES

- Colorado Department of Education. Part I: Statistical Report. AEFLA, 2003-2004, Federal Table 1: Participants by Entering Education Functioning Level, Ethnicity and Sex.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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